

**Congressman George Miller
National Education Policy
Town Hall Meeting**

Wednesday, August 24, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Parish Hall, Christ the King Church
199 Brandon Road, Pleasant Hill
(On Gregory Lane, one block east of Pleasant Hill Road)

The Congressman's remarks and the discussion will focus on these questions:

- How can public schools best prepare the young generation for their future roles as citizens, parents, workers, and consumers and how can the Federal Government best support their efforts?
- What does equity in public education mean?
- How should assessment data be used?
- Should federal mandates in public education be federally funded?
- What are the ramifications to the country when a student chooses to dropout? How can dropout rates be reduced?
- Should the Common Core Standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? Should there be a national assessment aligned with Common Core Standards?

Co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley and the Christ the King Social Justice Committee

Eye On Water Series, Program 2 of 3

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

4:00 PM to 5:30 PM

Please visit our calendar at www.lwvdv.org for more details, updates and a map.

Co-Sponsored with CSUEB Scholar Olli

August 2011

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To support our newsletter and other activities, please donate online by visiting our website at www.lwvdv.org.



League of Women Voters®
of Diablo Valley

*where hands-on work to safeguard
democracy leads to civic improvement*



President's Column - Notes from our LWV of Diablo Valley President

We have had a busy two months with our grant for Redistricting workshops, a major board retreat, lots of program planning, observing the board of supervisors, and supporting affordable housing and a house farm for people with mental illness in the East County!

Redistricting final maps have now come out and they are posted in our office windows for public viewing. We put on 4 redistricting workshops, in Concord, Antioch, Pittsburg, and Lafayette, using the poster-boards, easels, and enlarged Xeroxed maps we obtained with our \$500 grant from the League of Women Voters of California. We will be able to use these materials to publicize the final maps at our upcoming events, and the poster boards and easels now permanently belong to the LWV-Diablo Valley.

How do you like the final maps? You can still give input to the Board of Supervisors at their hearing on an ordinance to put the new districts into law on Tuesday, August 9, at 1 pm at the chambers at 651 Pine St. in Martinez. Rep. Gioia suggested we might create a county redistricting commission to take the process out of the hands of incumbents for the next redistricting process in 10 years. What do you think? You can view the map at www.ccredistricting.org –look at map 17 D (amended).

The state map has changed to include Oakley/Brentwood/Discovery Bay in the Contra Costa County senate district, but now excludes Martinez and Pleasant Hill. The congressional district also excludes Martinez and Hercules but now includes Richmond with Central County. Look for assembly, state senate, and congressional maps at www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov and send your feedback to votersfirst@crc.ca.gov

Our board retreat focused on our dreams for our League, increasing membership, diversity, and engagement; creating an Observer Corps; improving Communications, Outreach, and Fundraising; planning future program events to support our League priorities; and reviewing core League procedures and policies.

Our actions this month have included letters of support for affordable housing in Pittsburg, and a statement to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) in support of Bonita House, a planned 10 acre farm to house 10 people with mental illness and substance abuse issues in Knightsen. Future neighbors were anxious about security, and the BOS had imposed requirements far beyond those recommended

by state agencies and professionals, making the planned house farm economically unsustainable. Our League Executive Committee approved a statement that we delivered on Tuesday, July 12 at the hearing on this issue. We are happy to report the BOS requested further negotiations and research by County staff, and on Tuesday, July 26 they removed all these prohibitive restrictions, so this much needed facility, which costs the County nothing, can proceed.

Observing the Board of Supervisors over the past 4 months, wearing a League of Women Voters button, has provided an opportunity to raise our League's profile in the community, and to make important connections with other non-profits and advocates who share our values. On July 9, our board voted to re-establish our Observer Corps for the largest cities in our area: Concord, Antioch, Walnut Creek, Pittsburg, San Ramon, Brentwood, Danville, Lamorinda, etc. We are asking interested League members to attend our Observer Corps Training this month on Tuesday, August 23, from 2-3:30 at the League office, and/or future trainings closer to your neighborhood. Please call the office (925) 283-2235 to let us know of your interest in being the eyes and ears of the League at city council or school board meetings.

Outreach and diversity are key issues for developing our League's presence in Central and Eastern Contra Costa County. We are compiling a contact list for non-profits and groups with similar goals, and will be contacting them about our events, our pros and cons presentations, and voter service activities. If you know of local groups we should be working with, please let us know.

And finally, we are planning a 'League Legacy' program: many of our members contribute significantly to us over the years. Some may want to remember the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley in estate planning. Over the next several months we will be planning this alternative way to support the League, and we will keep you posted.

Thanks again to all our members who keep voter registration boxes filled up throughout the community, and to all of you who come staff our office. We love you.

Lee Helena Lawrence
President



LWVDV Board Retreat

By Lura Dymond

A retreat for the new LWVDV Board was held on July 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with President Lee Lawrence presiding. Over the course of five hours, the attendees shared and gathered stimulating ideas and action items to help guide the League through a productive year.

Dreams and goals

Attendees listed League dreams and goals for the year. Some suggestions were:

- Fill the membership chair position; maybe have co-chairs for different membership parts
- Fill the item chair positions
- Bring in younger members
- Have a fundraising party and establish a legacy fund
- Register 500 18-year-olds
- Have more interpersonal efforts with other groups
- Sponsor candidate forums outside our areas
- Keep Smart Voter up to date with good information
- Organize more meetings with LWV groups in Bay Area



The ideas above were developed further during the discussion and processing of several important topics. One such topic covered was:

Reaching out to new members; diversity; Observer Corps

- Solicit invitations to diverse groups to present Pros and Cons, provided we have enough people trained to do them. Use Twitter and Facebook. Offer a student internship. Contact city youth councils and high school government.
- Reach out to women and men retired or nearing retirement.
- Establish an Observer Corps. Train members to be observers. Start with City Council.
- Use community calendars – NPR, KPFA, www.patch.org, www.thepress.net, and others.
- Contact and work with other local organizations – Lamorinda Moms, senior groups, Newcomers clubs, and more.

Other topics discussed included: **League processes and orientation, Redistricting, Communications and fundraising, and Program planning.**

If you would like to share *your* ideas and wish to participate in making a particular topic of interest *happen*, please call our office at 925-283-2235 or contact a board member via our Web site at www.lwvdv.org.

Status of SB 810 (Leno) Universal Health Care Act By Pat Snyder

California's Single Payer legislation, SB 810, passed the Senate Health Committee in May after heavy lobbying in several areas of the state by a number of supporting organizations. It was referred to the Appropriations Committee, but it will not be heard until January. It will proceed then to the Senate floor and to the Assembly in February.



In the meantime, advocates have been busy reorganizing the campaign to strengthen and expand support. The State Strategy Group, of which the League of Women Voters-California (LWVC) was a member, has been reestablished as a Steering Committee for the effort, to be called the **Campaign for a Healthy California**. Organizations able to commit substantial funds, staff or volunteer time, or specialized in kind services will provide leadership to a system of regional coalitions forming in key areas of the state. The Committee is being led by Cindy Young of the California Nurses Association.

A coalition in this area has been meeting regularly since January, led by Dan Hodges of Health Care for All – California, and is coordinating efforts in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. There are League representatives attending.

This interim period preceding legislative activity in 2012 will allow time for advocates to educate members of the Legislature on transition from the federal Accountable Care Act to single payer, and perhaps to fund and accomplish a new study of the fiscal impacts. Numerous studies have shown that single payer is the most fiscally sound way to fund universal access, but presenting updated data would be advantageous at this point.

LWVC remains a strong supporter of single payer and SB 810, believing it to be the only sustainable method over the long term to control health care costs and assure affordable care to all Californians.

Initiative and Referendum Update Study

By Lee Lawrence

At the convention in May, the League of Women Voters of California voted to do update study of the initiative and referendum process in California. Do our Ballot Measures serve our public interest? Is there a way the process could be reformed or improved? Or should it exist at all? **Please let us know if you are interested in participating in an update study. Call the office at 925-283-2235.**



Library Display Windows

By Lee Lawrence

Many public libraries in the county have display windows that non-profits can reserve for one month to publicize their activities. Our redistricting materials, as well as the upcoming Oct 10, 2011, 100th

Anniversary of women's right to vote in California, would make excellent display subjects sharing our League work with the public. Please call the office if you would like to participate in creating displays or in arranging a display in your neighborhood library.

LWV-Diablo Valley Observer Corps

by Lee Lawrence

On Tuesday, August 23, 2-3:30, we will have a training meeting at our League office, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, for our Observer Corps. Observers at city council, school board, and board of supervisor hearings are our eyes and ears for the League, keeping us abreast of all local issues. Each observer, wearing our large League of Women Voters button, creates a League presence noted by our elected officials and the public. The LWV of the United States has an excellent training manual and guidance for handling every situation. We will be focusing on the most important governing bodies in central and eastern Contra Costa County, and will make sure no one is overworked. Please come join us. We will have future trainings at other times and locations.

E-scrip—Bad News/Good News

by Carole Woods



Although Safeway is no longer honoring E-scrip for non-school organizations, that doesn't mean that the income from E-scrip will dry up. There are many businesses that are part of the E-scrip group; and it's automatic. You don't have to present any card but your debit and/or credit card. In addition, you can choose to receive discount offers online.

If you have questions, contact Carole Woods, rdrccwoods@astound.net.

Registration is easy:

1. Log on to www.escrip.com and click on step 1 of the sign up.
2. You can bring up LWVDV by Group Name (League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley), or Group ID 137235362.
3. Provide your name, address, e-mail.
4. There are a series of "pages." You can skip any page that doesn't apply by clicking Next.
 - a. Grocery/Community cards
 - b. Credit and Debit Cards
 - c. Retail Credit and Gift Cards

Bonita House

By Lee Lawrence

On July 12, 2011, our LWVDV President Lee Lawrence gave the following statement to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors at the hearing regarding the Bonita House farm for people with mental illness in Knightsen.



“The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley is a nonpartisan organization serving central and eastern Contra Costa County since 1953. The League never supports or opposes candidates or political parties but the League does take positions after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest.

Establishing a house farm service center for the mentally ill is supported by the League's mental health policy (LWV-CA, 1998), and by its housing policy (LWV-US, 1972,1980). Our local chapter's top priorities for 2011 include support for healthcare and the social safety-net in a time of economic downturn. As state and county support systems for mental health are facing cuts, this private non-profit service center would meet important needs in our community.

Specifically, the League of Women Voters of California position supports “centers for the seriously and chronically mentally ill apart from the county system.” As we have closed large institutional facilities, community services are crucial.

Additionally, the League of Women Voters of the US opposes discrimination in education, employment, and housing, with specific reference to people with disabilities.

Bonita House in Berkeley has a 40 year record of evidence-based successful treatment and has been selected for replication of its services. A 10 acre farm for 10 residents with 24 hour supervision seems appropriate. We hope you will not impose significant expensive and discriminatory conditions, including a long fence, an additional bedroom, and a single entry/exit. These conditions may cause this outstanding non-profit to give up trying to serve the citizens of Contra Costa County. These conditions exceed the Community Care Licensing regulations. They directly contradict recommendations from the County's Planning department. Established by the Board of Supervisors to provide advice, the CCC Mental Health Commission deplors keeping people with mental illness in cages. Please do not insist on expensive security conditions beyond those recommended by professionals for the much needed Bonita House Farm.”

We are happy to report on Tuesday, July 26, 2011, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to retract all the unnecessary conditions they had added, and approved the plan for Bonita House.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If your name appears below, then it is time to renew your membership. Please use the form on the back cover and send with your dues to the League Office. (See page 8.) If you already have renewed, thank you!

Joan Conley	Sharon Burke
Eunice Kilkenny	Chris Coons
Paul Kilkenny	Anna Lee
Carolyn Sheridan	Jean Kitchens
Dolores Morgan	Larry Fielder
Elaine McClellan	Carol Federighi

The Diablo Valley Voter

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages active and informed participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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**ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership: Join Us or Renew!

Membership is not based on ability to pay. To pay alternate dues or to request a scholarship, please contact membership chair Linda Soliven at the League office: (925) 283-2235.

- ___ \$65 Individual Membership Indicate NEW ___ or RENEWAL ___
- ___ \$95 Family Membership (2) Indicate NEW ___ or RENEWAL ___
- ___ \$35 Associate Membership Indicate NEW ___ or RENEWAL ___
- ___ GIFT MEMBERSHIP (circle appropriate category, above)

For recipient name _____
Address: _____
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___ \$10 included to receive printed copies of the Voter by US Mail

\$ _____ Additional Donation to LWVDV (*not tax deductible).

\$ _____ TOTAL of ALL above enclosed to: LWVDV (*not tax deductible).

\$ _____ TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION to LWVC. Please make separate check payable to LWVC - Education Fund.

Your name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email: _____

Please print, complete and mail this form along with your check to:
LWVDV, 500 St. Mary's Road #14, Lafayette, CA 94549

Calendar:

- Aug 9 Board Meeting*
- Aug 23 Observer Corp Training
- Aug 24 National Education Policy
- Sept 13 Board Meeting *
- Sept 20 Eye on Water, Program 2
- Oct 10 100th Anniversary Womens Right
To Vote
- Oct 11 Board Meeting *
- Oct 28 Eye on Water, Program 3

*Board Meetings are held at the League Office from 3 pm to 5 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

League Websites:

- Diablo Valley: www.lwvdv.org
- Bay Area: www.lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org
- California: ca.lwv.org
- US: www.lwv.org