

The Diablo Valley VOTER

League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley 925-283-2235

www.lwvdv.org

Volume 62 #8

California Water: Delta Challenges

Tuesday, September 20, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Cal State East Bay, Concord Campus
4700 Ygnacio Valley Road, Concord

California faces serious water challenges. Speakers Dr. Gregory Gartrell and Dr. Robert Pyke will critique past policies and discuss current proposals regarding the Delta, and will address options on water supply and quality.

Co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley and Scholar Olli

Save the Date! Celebrating 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote in California

A Celebration and Fundraiser for the
League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley

Meet Your Electeds! Meet Suffragettes!
Wine tasting, food, friends. All are welcome! Bring a Friend!

Saturday, October 15, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
\$10.00 – \$25.00

Bortin Fellowship Hall, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
55 Eckley Lane (off Mt. Diablo Blvd/Walker)

National Education Study, First Meeting Thursday, September 22, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

County Office of Education
77 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill
John Muir Room Third Floor

Be involved at the local level in discussion and consensus-making that will help shape the League's policy and direct lobbying and advocacy efforts around National Education Policy. The study will focus especially on core standards, assessment, and equity. We anticipate that developing a consensus around the study questions will involve 4 - 6 meetings. Our plan is to meet every other week through mid November. Future meeting dates will be determined at the first meeting. Copy and paste or type the URL below into your browser to review the background materials (on right) and questions (at bottom).

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=167&ContentID=16

September 2011

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League of Women Voters®
of Diablo Valley

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

Sample Consensus Questions for the Education Study

Common Core Standards

1. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one)
 - a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
 - b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
 - c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
2. Should there be a **national assessment aligned** with the common cores standards?

Yes	No
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If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)
 - a. Voluntary
 - b. Mandated
 - c. Mandated, if fully fundedIf No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)
 - a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
 - b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.
 - c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically
3. National standards should lead to: (choose one)
 - a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
 - b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
 - c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.
 - d. No national curriculum.
4. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (rank order)
 - a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.
 - b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
 - c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
 - d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
 - e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.
5. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)
 - a. Data should be “norm referenced” (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
 - b. Data should be “criterion referenced” and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
6. Data should be used to determine “cut” scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.
Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):

- f. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
- g. Reward schools that achieve high scores
- h. Rank teachers based on student test score data
- i. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
- j. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

Funding and Equity

- 7. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)
 - k. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
 - l. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
 - m. Competitive grants only
 - n. No federal funding
- 8. If the federal government's role is the concern of the "common good" then: (choose one)
 - o. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
 - p. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
 - q. Funding should be provided through grants only.
 - r. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
 - s. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

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http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=167&ContentID=16957

Education Study Kickoff with Rep. George Miller's Town Hall a Success by Lee Lawrence

With many thanks to Education Study Chair Anita Johnson for organizing the event, the Town Hall on the Federal Role in Education with Rep. George Miller, ranking member of the House Education and Labor Committee, was a huge success. Over 150 people attended the forum at the Christ the King church in Pleasant Hill, including two reporters from the *Contra Costa Times* and staff from Assembly Member Susan Bonilla's office. Gwen Watson, past president of our League and member of the church's Social Justice Committee, introduced League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley President Lee Lawrence who moderated the event. After Rep. Miller addressed the national League's Education Study questions, we had over 30 questions from attendees, including several teachers and parents. Rep. Miller stressed the importance of a rich, engaging curriculum, and the impact of parental involvement in increasing student achievement. Several drawbacks to the No Child Left Behind Act were addressed, including its negativity, punitive approach to 'failing schools,' and over-emphasis on testing, and rigid, unachievable goals. We look forward to the next Education Study meeting on September 22nd at the County Office of Education, 77 Santa Barbara, John Muir Room, third floor, Pleasant Hill. All interested League members are invited to participate. We salute Anita Johnson for her excellent work and Gwen Watson for her help in organizing and facilitating the event.



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

As we approach October 10th, the 100th anniversary of the referendum giving women the right to vote in California, I've been thinking of the courage, cooperation, inspiration, and perseverance of all the leaders who made it possible in our state and in our nation. I think of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls in 1848, Susan B. Anthony's focus on the right to vote, California's referendum of 1911, and the Aug 26 ratification of the 19th Amendment. Carrie Chapman Catt and her sisterhood then transformed the main National American Women's Suffrage Association into the League of Women Voters, and we are truly continuing their work today. These thoughts have brought renewed energy and purpose to what our League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley does daily, and a sense of awe and honor to be part of the same traditions and work of our forebears.

What I've also re-discovered in my three months as president is that sisterhood is powerful, and it is *really fun!* I've been delighted by the strengths and diversity of perspectives on all on our Board, and thank our Nominating Committee led by past president Martha Goralka, and including Joyce Kingery, Joan Lautenberger, Chris Coons, and Linda Soliven for their outstanding work.

One of our major goals is engaging more of our members in League work. We are delighted that past president Martha Goralka has also volunteered to help organize our Celebrating Women's Right To Vote fundraiser at the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Church on Saturday, October 15th from 2-5. She will also serve as our Fundraising Coordinator. Jean Nickell has stepped forward to help coordinate with this church's Social Justice Council, and Joan Lautenberger helped secure the Fellowship Hall for the event. Working with these women who bring great ideas, enthusiasm, and energy creates a sense of joy and delight. Our League tradition of collective decision making is enriching.

I'm thrilled that past president Gwen Watson has agreed to lead our newly revived Action Committee. Gwen's presence in our Action work is complemented by Sharon Burke, long time League member and candidate debate coordinator, now serving as our Voter Service director. Sharon will be moderating the mayoral and city council candidate forum in San Ramon Valley this October 6. All who wish to learn how to moderate candidate debates in our League tradition are urged to attend.

VP for Administration, Jeanne Melaugh is doing outstanding work in keeping us beautifully organized and up to date with our CA and national Leagues, and also managed to be a grandmother two times over this summer with the birth of two grand-girls within a week of each other!

We also congratulate our Voter Editor and Website Coordinator Ana Spinola on her new job! Another tip of the hat to Anita Johnson for organizing such a significant kickoff to our Education Study: hearing the thoughts of Rep. George Miller, who has such an important

role in education policy in Washington DC was inspiring and energizing. She also created questions for audience input and votes. Thanks to Gwen Watson and to Joan Conley for their important help.

It is great to share each other's lives as we do the meaningful work of the League. Each of us doing something makes the League possible. We will be honoring our wonderful office staff, especially all the work done by Barbara Owens, now off on a well deserved vacation. We will highlight Joan Lautenberger, our voter registration coordinator, and all her volunteers who keep voter registration forms all over the county accessible to voters. Joan Lautenberger and Phyllis Ceaser are also organizing our Adopt a Poll in Lafayette for the November election. Thank you! I also want to highlight Carole Woods and Jan Howe for their great work with Scholar Olli in arranging our upcoming Water programs. And thanks to Jan Howe and Pat Snyder for their continuing work in support of the single payer healthcare bill, SB810.

We want you to be engaged, too. We will be sending out a new revised Interest Survey for everyone to update. We want to know your current interests and availability, and we will be calling you to help find your niche in the League. I'm learning how much fun the League is. And how meaningful it is. And about the joy of working with outstanding people. I think engaging in the League will increase your Happiness Quotient by leaps and bounds! Thanks for being part of our work.

Lee Helena Lawrence, President

LWV-Diablo Valley Observer Corps: Use Your Eyes and Ears for the League

by Lee Lawrence

We have started our Observer Corps training and will have official League Observers at the County Board of Supervisors, the Concord City Council, and the Walnut Creek City Council shortly. Each observer has committed to attending at least one meeting every season (every 3 months), with some committing to once a month. Observers wear a large League of Women Voters button, and also have a pretty bag with membership brochures and a short Observer Report form. We watch to make sure the open meeting laws (Brown Act) are followed and also alert the Action Committee and Board about potential issues at the local level that may involve League positions. We hope you will want to participate and watch your city council or school board or other government committee. **Our next training is Saturday, Sept 24, at 10 a.m. at the League office. It's a great way to connect with your local community, and to be a visible League presence.** As Woody Allen says, "98% of life is just showing up!"

Gwen Watson to chair our new Action Committee by Lee Lawrence

We are thrilled to report one of our former League presidents, Gwen Watson, has agreed to chair our newly revived Action Committee. Gwen joins the board as well. As many of you know, Gwen has had extensive experience in many aspects of Contra Costa County, through her experience in the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, and the Social Justice Committee of Christ the King church. She heads the Winter Shelter program providing beds for the homeless during the winter. We welcome her wide knowledge of the county, her outstanding political talents, and her gracious presence.

Initiative/Referendum Update Study Kickoff October 18 by Lee Lawrence

Our LWV-Diablo Valley board has voted to participate in the California League's Update Study on the Initiative and Referendum process in California. The American Association of University Women (AAUW)'s Lamorinda chapter has invited Helen Hutchison, Action Chair of the LWV-C, and our local president, Lee Lawrence, to provide a redistricting update and discussion of the initiative and referendum process at their meeting on Tuesday, October 18, at 10 am. All LWV-Diablo Valley members interested in participating in our update study are encouraged to attend. What reforms to the ballot measures process would be beneficial? The meeting will be held at the Holy Trinity Serbian Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga.

Meeting with Elections Department: Much Good News on the Elections Front by Sharon Burke

On Thursday, July 21, Ashley Coates and I were privileged to be treated to a tour and meeting at the Elections Department. Ashley will head up Smart Voter for the next year, and I am to be Voters Service Director, a position I held for six years from 1989 to 1995. So we both were interested in meeting the Elections Department staff face to face, and finding out who would be answering the many questions we have as we go about our League duties.

We met with Eren Mendez, Election Outreach Coordinator, and Rosa Mena, Candidates' Services Manager, both extremely knowledgeable about election rules and procedures. Here are some of the things we learned:

- Local elections: Locally, only San Ramon has city council elections this fall; Lafayette and Pittsburg have ballot measures. 2012 will be a busy year, as it is a Presidential Election year with a primary election in June and a general election in November.
- There is a wealth of information on the Contra Costa Elections website www.cocovote.us, including the ability to: register to vote, verify your voter registration form was received; ascertain if your provisional ballot was received and counted; verify if your mail ballot was received; lookup your polling place, including map and directions; look up all polling places for each election; apply to vote by mail or absentee; lookup sample ballot information; find election results; voter registration statistics, basic candidate information, press releases, and poll worker information. We were thrilled when Mena told us our www.SmartVoter.org website is well received and respected by candidates.
- Beginning this year, every polling place will have an AutoMark machine. This is NOT computer voting, it just marks a regular paper ballot for voters who need assistance of some sort; the voter makes his or her choices, and the machine marks the ballot, which is counted just as other paper ballots are. The AutoMark machine has a touch screen interface, a Braille touch pad, a puff assistive device for paraplegic assistance, an audio function, a zoom feature, and ballots and instructions in English and Spanish. Although the AutoMark was designed principally to help the visually impaired, the Elections Department has found that many other voters use it for various reasons: illiterate voters use it to avoid the embarrassment of admitting their illiteracy and asking for help from another person; paraplegics use it; people who forget their reading glasses use it; dyslexics have found it very helpful; so have folks with arthritic hands unable to hold a marker. A favorite use is a mom with two toddlers in a stroller who used it because she couldn't get her kids in the voting booth with her!
- Rosa Mena as the Candidates Services Manager is involved with working with candidates on their candidates' statements included in the ballot. This is optional for candidates; they pay a pro rata share of the costs, which can be very expensive. The more candidates using this option, the more affordable it is; however, many candidates opt out, especially with websites

now available like www.SmartVoter.org. The County Counsel has ruled the one guideline that must be followed is that no person's name may be mentioned in the candidate's statement – this cuts out personal attacks. The Elections Department can only print the candidate's statement the way the candidate writes it and cannot correct typos or other errors so candidates are advised to carefully proofread their statement.

To be continued in the next Voter...

Videographers, Photographers Wanted! by Lee Lawrence

We are hoping to videotape many of our programs, so that we would be able to post them on the internet. This way many who could not attend in person could see them, and understand the work our League of Women Voters is doing. Do you have videotape experience or skills, or would you like to learn? We could use your help! Photographers also wanted to capture League events and League members creating social change. Please call the League office at (925) 283-2235 to volunteer!

Let's All Recruit New League Members! by Lee Lawrence

I'm hoping we can recruit at least 12 new members by the New Year. Who among your friends might be interested in joining the League? Our friends are our best pool of likely new members. We hope you will invite them to one of our events: our September 20 Water Program with Cal State East Bay, our September 22 Education study at the County Office of Education, our October 15th Celebration of Women's Right to Vote in California, or our program on redistricting and the initiative/referendum process with the AAUW on October 18th. Prospective members can receive the printed Voter for 3 months. Often a friendly invitation from a member is the key to bringing someone to the League. We count on our members to keep the League vibrant and strong!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If your name appears below, 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!

Joana Brueckner	Jean Mosheim
Barbara Hollenbach	Gwen Regalia
Rene Maher	Dorothy Ross
Kerin Baker	Adelia Sabiston
Judith Carney	Frances Schroder
Olga Disney	Arliss Ungar
Claire Holmsen	Gwen Watson
Clara King	Avon Wilson
Sandra Moriarty	

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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.

League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley
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Lafayette, CA 94549



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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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Phone _____ Email: _____

\$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:

- Sept 13 Board Meeting *
- Sept 20 Eye on Water, Program 2
- Sept 22 National Education Study, Part 1
- Sept 24 Observer Corps Training
- Oct 11 Board Meeting *
- Oct 15 100th Anniversary Womens Right
To Vote – Celebration and
Fundraiser
- Oct 18 Initiative/Referendum Study Kickoff
- 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