



## **Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote in CA and Meet Our Elected Officials**

**Saturday, October 15, 2-5 p.m.**

Fellowship Hall, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church  
55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek, CA 94549

Celebrate this wonderful anniversary with us!

- Learn about local suffragists.
- Meet your elected officials over wine and cheese.
- A \$10 donation is requested. Open to the public.



Co-sponsored by the LWV of Diablo Valley and the  
Social Justice Council of the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church

### **Initiative/Referendum Update Study Kick-off**

**Tuesday, October 18, 2011, 10 a.m.**

Holy Trinity Serbian Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga, CA 94556

Helen Hutchison from the LWV of California will speak at the  
Lamorinda AAUW meeting about the League's upcoming update  
study of the Initiative and Referendum Process in California.

### **Eye On Water Series California Water: The Politics of Liquid Gold**

**Friday, October 28, 2011, 4-5:30 p.m.**

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

- Brett Baker, local Delta family farmer, environmental biologist,  
and Restore the Delta advocate
- Dante Nomellini, JD, Stockton resident and water law expert
- Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, 15th District Representative  
and member of the Protect the Delta Committee

Co-Sponsored by the LWV of Diablo Valley and CSUEB Scholar Olli



## The President's Message

By Lee Lawrence, President, LWV of Diablo Valley

This month we celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in California. The referendum passed on October 10, 1911, by about 3000 votes, having failed to pass 15 years earlier. The suffragists who worked for its passage immediately transformed their organizations into local League of Women Voters chapters after the passage. The measure passed in Contra Costa County by 22 votes. **We hope all League members will attend our Celebration on Saturday, October 15, from 2-5 pm. at the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek.** I hope to see you there!

It will also be an occasion to honor all our League members who each do important things that make our League vibrant and strong: members who keep all the boxes full of Voter Registration forms in the central and eastern county; pros and cons speakers who educate the public about our ballot propositions; our office staff who keep us organized and connected to our community; League members who call our membership to notify them of events; voter registration volunteers who table and staff our Last Chance Voter registration; forum moderators and timers for our televised and live candidate debates; our item chairs who provide depth expertise in our position areas; participants in our national education study and new initiative referendum update study; and our strong board who contribute so much to our vitality and strength.

As a new president, I have learned so much about the League during the past six months. The highlight for me has been the experience of our collective decision-making. Many times I have seen an item come to the board or executive committee in close to final form, only to see how enriched it is by discussion and multiple viewpoints, raising us to an even higher level of functioning and excellence.

I'm learning how we are not simply "women voters," but a *League* of Women Voters. I looked up "League" and learned it applies to individuals, states, and teams united by a common cause. It derives from the Latin "ligare" meaning to bind. It is the same root as the word "religion," which also ties us together. But I'm putting my faith in the League of Women Voters and the awesome creativity that happens when we work together for a common cause. The League of Women Voters has now survived for 91 years, way outlasting the League of Nations founded one year before it.

It has been an honor this month to receive a proclamation from Walnut Creek City Council and Mayor Cindy Silva in honor of our right to vote. We have four League members who became mayor of Walnut Creek: Peg Kovar and Kathy Hicks three times, Gail Murry twice, and Gwen Regalia five times, for a total of 26 of the past 50

years. We were delighted to see Annabelle Cloner, Diane Mader, Jeanne Melaugh, Merry West, and Barbara Owens at the hearing and to hear Gwen Regalia speak.

President Obama has sent the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley a proclamation honoring the ratification of the 19th Amendment on August 26, 1920, Women's Equality Day. I hope you will see it at our Celebration on October 15.

It's also good to see us continuing the work of our foremothers today. We had an outstanding Candidates' Forum in San Ramon moderated by our Voters Service V.P., Sharon Burke, with excellent publicity highlighting the League's participation.

We are continuing our Education Study (contact Anita Johnson to participate), and kicking off our state Initiative and Referendum Study on October 18 with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Lamorinda chapter. And we will complete our three California Water events with Scholar Olli at Cal State East Bay in Concord on October 28. We are also planning a program in November to look at the safety net and social services in our county in a time of economic downturn.

I want to thank our outstanding Jeanne Melaugh, V.P. for Administration, for our new Membership Directory, our new Interest Survey, and our new Manual with Contact Information for our Elected Representatives. These are invaluable resources, which Jeanne has produced in record time, while also taking on our Website, and serving as acting Editor of the *Voter!* Wow!

*Lee Helena Lawrence*

President



## **INTRODUCTION TO THE LEAGUE: Communication Procedures**

Any communication between League and the outside world should go through the Board and the President first. (Internal communication such as setting a committee meeting can be handled without going to the Board and the President.) All intentions to communicate with the public in the name of the League (such as statements, letters, speaker invitations, and contact with elected and government officials and staff) must be **preapproved** by the Board. The request should be made at least two weeks in advance and should be detailed, not just a vague plan. Wait for the Board to decide before you proceed with your communication. If you are not sure whether you should ask the Board, go ahead and ask the Board.

The Board has tremendous resources, so it's valuable to have the Board involved in the planning process for any program or event. The Board is not a rubber stamp but a partner. The Board is the brains of the League, knows what each committee is doing, and makes sure all our activities are coordinated, not overlapping, time-conflicting, or contradictory.



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RECOMMENDS

**Vote with the League on November 8, 2011**

Contra Costa County will have elections in three cities this fall: Lafayette, Pittsburg, and San Ramon. THE LWVDV has taken positions on the three local ballot measures:

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### **SUPPORT MEASURE G: Road and Drain Reconstruction—City of Lafayette (Parcel Tax - 2/3 Approval Required)**

*Shall the City of Lafayette be authorized to collect a parcel tax not to exceed \$89 per year per equivalent residential unit for ten years, with the purpose to complete Lafayette's road and drain reconstruction program and bring all failed public streets to a good quality, with a volunteer Oversight Committee reviewing expenditures annually to ensure conformance with the ballot measure, and with the tax terminating if the work is finished in less than ten years?*

The League of Women Voters supports government having adequate funds to perform its services, and specifically supports maintenance of existing transportation systems. This is important for a prosperous, efficient community. This measure also includes a specific ending date for the tax increase and adequate oversight of expenditures.

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### **SUPPORT MEASURE H Transient Occupancy Tax Increase—City of Pittsburg (Majority Approval Required)**

*To provide for and maintain the City's programs and services, including youth facilities, police services, park and recreational facilities; city streets, and other city purposes, shall an ordinance be adopted increasing the transient occupancy tax, which is a general tax charged on persons renting hotel rooms, from 8 percent to a maximum of 12 percent and eliminating the tax exemption for federal and state employees traveling on official business?*

The League of Women Voters supports adequate revenues for government to perform its services and has supported similar transient occupancy tax increases in other California communities. In this period of economic downturn, increased revenues are important for maintaining key services. The hotel tax of 8% is currently lower than those of surrounding communities.

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### **OPPOSE MEASURE I: Urban Limit Line—City of Pittsburg (Majority Approval Required)**

*To protect certain vacant land from development in the City of Antioch, shall an ordinance be adopted amending the City of Pittsburg's General Plan, amending the previously approved Urban Limit Line to include approximately 193.60 acres in City's southeast area; rezoning land within the amended Urban Limit Line to single family residential, high density residential and general industrial; and allowing for over three dwelling units an acre in residential development south of Buchanan Road?*

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley strongly stands by the protection of existing Urban Limit Lines. This land is currently inside the Urban Limit Line and sphere of influence of the City of Antioch. The measure would prezone the land and permit denser development up to 7 units per acre, while the current rezoning is 3 units per acre. The measure was written by the landowner, West Coast Homebuilders, an affiliate of A.D. Seeno Construction.

Pittsburg and Antioch already have an adequate supply of affordable housing; permitting such increased housing density is not warranted. The League supports high density in urban areas, close to public transportation hubs and consistent with surrounding neighborhoods, not the case here.

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## **LWVUS EDUCATION STUDY**

The group participating in the LWVUS Education Study—capably led by Anita Johnson—will meet Thursday, October 20, and Monday, October 31, from 4:00 to 5:30 or 6 p.m. at the County Office of Education, 77 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill. The building is on Oak Park Boulevard next to the Central Library. We will meet in the John Muir room on the second floor. Contact Anita for more information.

## **INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM UPDATE STUDY**

At the same October 10, 1911, California election that passed women's suffrage, California voters also approved a constitutional amendment establishing referendum and direct initiative. The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) adopted a position on the Initiative and Referendum (I-R) Process in 1984, and updated it in 1999. This year, LWVC decided to conduct another update study.



The CA Legislature has also proposed possible changes to our current I-R process, several of which Governor Brown has vetoed. However, on October 8, 2011, he did sign a bill drafted by Senator Loni Hancock to have all initiatives and referendum be placed on the November ballot, so they would coincide with presidential and gubernatorial elections with much greater voter turnout. How would you like to see the process modified? Or should it stay as is?

We begin our consideration of these issues on October 18, 2011, at 10 a.m. as we cosponsor a meeting with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Lamorinda Chapter. Helen Hutchison of the LWVC board and V.P. for Action/Advocacy will be presenting the history and current issues. All League members are encouraged to participate in this update study, a core function of our Leagues prior to establishing positions on topics for future advocacy. Copies of our current League of Women Voters position are available at the office. Also pick up a summary of a recent PPIC report of a poll of public attitudes about the I-R process and columnists' views. We look forward to seeing you on the 18th!

## **MEETING WITH THE ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT: Much Good News on the Elections Front, *continued from September*** 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. 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 more of the things we learned:

- We had a long discussion about new citizens and when they can register to vote. Mendez as the Outreach Coordinator is part of the biweekly swearing in ceremony for naturalized citizens, held at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland. She addresses the new citizens to let them know the importance of voting and how they can register, and then staffs a registration table in the lobby and registers many new citizens who are Contra Costa County residents. State law facilitates the registration of new citizens by allowing an extended registration period up to 7 days before the election, not 15, if they register in person at the Elections Office and show their new Naturalization Certificate.
- Our Elections Department goes to extensive lengths to insure that every citizen can exercise their franchise. They work with the Sheriff's Department to make sure that citizens in detention awaiting trial can vote and send a staffer to help with that. (Only citizens convicted of a felony cannot vote. Citizens awaiting trial still maintain their right to vote). However, they also check incoming registrations against a database provided by the Sheriff's Department to remove any convicted felons still on parole from the voter registration rolls. They work with assisted nursing and senior citizens' homes to provide registration forms and vote by mail applications. They work with hospitals to provide voting materials to those hospitalized. They send ballots overseas to Contra Costa citizens serving in the military. They provide large print ballots for the visually impaired upon request.
- If a polling place is not wheelchair accessible, elections officials are instructed to provide curbside voting and take the elections materials to the voter.
- Even the homeless are able to vote. The Elections Department will accept a registration with a residential address of a street corner or a shelter and a mailing address of a shelter or nonprofit organization.
- "I voted" stickers are very popular with voters!
- Voters should reregister when: change of address, including apartment number change; name change; political party change; and, if the voter's signature has changed so significantly since he or she last registered, the Elections Department will request a new registration to aid in matching up signature on vote by mail ballots.
- The Elections Department always needs poll workers and polling places. Teenagers as young as 16 can be poll workers. Some organizations supply many poll workers, and ask the workers to donate their stipends to the organization. The Elections Department appreciates the LWVDV "adopting a poll" which we have done for several years, as they don't have to worry about staffing it.



- **GOOD NEWS!** If you have registered as many hundreds of voters as I have over the years, you know how you cringe in pain as a voter tells you he or she wants to register "independent" and then chooses the American Independent Party because it is the first party listed and because it sounds like an "independent" choice. And, of course, you can't say anything to influence a voter's choice. There have been many erroneous registrations this way by unaware voters. Although independent voters have been called "decline to state" voters for many years, this is awkward phrasing and folks misinterpret it. Now the newly revised registration form asks the voter: Do you want to choose a political party? And the first box to check is No Party Preference, which is followed by the statement, "No, I do not want to choose a political party." Then the next box is "Yes," followed by all the official political parties of California in alphabetical order: American Independent, Democratic, Green, Libertarian, Peace and Freedom, and Republican. There is even a box for "Other" for those people who are trying to get a new party recognized. This new design of the registration card should eliminate a lot of the confusion for those voters who want to register as "independent" voters.

To sum up, I was very proud of our county elections department after this meeting. It is staffed by intelligent, passionate people who take their jobs very seriously.

**DONATE**

To support our newsletter and other activities, please donate online by clicking on this button or visiting our website at [www.lwvdv.org](http://www.lwvdv.org).

**The League of Women Voters  
of Diablo Valley Voter**

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Acting Associate Editor: Lee Lawrence

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Current/ past issues are posted on our website.

**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. If you already have renewed, thank you!

Sharon Anduri  
Aldene Crowell  
Kenneth Crowell  
Joseph Goralka  
Martha Goralka

Anne Hetland  
Diane Mader  
Donna Preece  
Annette Schmidt  
Susan Thwaites

Carlyn Obringer  
Joan Field  
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Joan Ward



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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 Carole Woods 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)

Gift Membership from: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please write recipient's information below.)

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$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.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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**

- Oct. 15** 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary/Meet  
2-5 p.m. **Elected Officials**  
[Mt. Diablo Unitarian](#)  
[Universalist Church](#)  
Walnut Creek, CA
- Oct. 18** Initiative/Referendum  
10 a.m. **Update Study Kickoff**  
[Holy Trinity Serbian](#)  
[Church](#), 1700 School  
Street, Moraga, CA
- Oct. 20** **Education Study**  
4-5:30 [77 Santa Barbara Rd.](#)  
Pleasant Hill, CA
- Oct. 28** **Eye on the Water, #3**  
4-5:30 [Oak Room, CSUEB,](#)  
[Concord Campus](#)  
4700 Ygnacio Valley  
Concord, CA
- Oct. 31** **Education Study**  
4-5:30 [77 Santa Barbara Rd.](#)  
Pleasant Hill, CA
- Nov. 1** **Action Committee**  
2 p.m. League Office
- Nov. 8** **Board Meeting**  
3 p.m. League Office