




**ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, November 13, 2012, 2 p.m., and Tuesday, January 8, 2013, 2 p.m.**  
**[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Marys Road, #14, Lafayette, CA**

**POLL OBSERVERS**  
**Tuesday, November 6, 2012**

We are planning to do poll observations on Election Day, particularly to prevent any voter suppression. We are focusing on minority precincts in Concord (Monument Blvd.) and Pittsburg, and will watch inside the polls from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 5 to 8 p.m. We will have a brief training at the Contra Costa Elections Office on Thursday, November 1, at 3 p.m. to make sure we understand the rules of poll observing. Challenges often come to newly registered minority voters. We have not heard of challenges occurring in Contra Costa County, but these have become increasingly prevalent across the nation along with Voter ID laws, reduced early voting hours, etc. Prevention is worth a pound of cure. It is also a way to partner with diverse organizations for whom this issue is an important priority. If you would like to join us, please call the office at (925) 283-2235.



**EARLY VOTING CONTINUES**

Get a jump-start on voting by casting your vote way before Election Day at the Contra Costa County Elections Office, 555 Escobar, in Martinez. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and this Saturday, November 3, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is a great way to ensure your vote will count, and it will prevent getting overbooked, or deterred by crowds on Tuesday, Nov. 6th. We have asked if it is possible to do early voting in West County or in East County this year, but it is only available in Martinez in Central County. We will ask the Elections Office to make early voting convenient and accessible throughout the county in future elections.

**HOMELESSNESS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY:  
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?**

When: **Saturday, December 1, 2012, 10 a.m. to noon**  
Where: Bortin Hall, **[Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church](#)**, 56 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek, CA  
Cosponsors: Social Justice Council, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church  
Social Justice Alliance, Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

**Panel Discussion 1:** The Problem at Ground Level

- Rev. Sylvia Vasquez, Trinity Center (formerly Fresh Start), Walnut Creek
- Officer Ryan Hibbs, Downtown Police Team, Walnut Creek Police Department
- Gwen Watson, Executive Director, Winter Nights Program

**Panel Discussion 2:** Resources Available to Solve the Problem

- Lavonna Martin, Assistant Director, Contra Costa County Homeless Programs
- Timothy O’Keefe, Executive Director, Shelter, Inc.
- Louise Bourassa, Executive Director, Contra Costa Interfaith Housing

**Questions and Answers:** Where Do We Go from Here? What Can We Do?

# THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By Lee Lawrence, President, LWV of Diablo Valley*

It's been very moving to see how much our League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley has done in the last month. Led by Kay James, fifteen volunteers have completed over thirty Pros and Cons presentations, reaching over 1500 people in central and eastern Contra Costa County. Ann Flynn has organized 30 televised candidate roundtables moderated by Lisa Vorderbrueggen and staffed by Gwen Watson and Sharon Burke; she has also arranged four live candidate forums, and joined Lee Lawrence and Joan Lautenberger in presenting the Rep. George Miller and Virginia Fuller televised/live candidate forum at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church. Ann also put together our Last Chance Voter Registration program, which, combined with our National Voter Registration Day applications, drew in over 200 newly registered voters. She expanded our sites from four Safeways to five BART stations and eight grocery stores, engaging over twenty member/volunteers. Seeing our League work as a team, getting to know many members better, dreaming dreams of new possibilities, makes League participation a very meaningful activity: community impact, personal growth in skills and organizing, civil discourse and reasoned, evidence based dialogue, all making democracy possible.

We still have much to do before the election. Precinct walking and phone banking with CCISCO (Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organizing) in support of Proposition 30, which the League has endorsed; poll observing in minority precincts on Election Day; and staffing our phones in the League office to answer voter questions on Monday and Tuesday, November 5th and 6th.

And we are dreaming of how we can continue to contribute to the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley after the election. A post election panel on the implications of all our votes? A look at the role of Money in Politics? A holiday party? We will continue with our priority Overview of the Social Safety-Net in a Time of Economic Down Turn. In October our kickoff look at the Social Safety Net for Seniors, organized by Jan Howe at Rossmoor, was very successful and a good eye-opener to what programs have been cut back and how the League may help protect others. Action Director Mary Fenelon and Gwen Watson have created a "Homeless in Contra Costa: How You Can Help" program, 10:00 a.m. to noon on December 1st at Bortin Hall, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek. We will continue in January with a program on children in families organized by Ann Flynn on Children and Families, and Lura Dymond will create a program on cutbacks to the Courts in Contra Costa for February. We have also made contact with a group of leaders/organizations in Contra Costa looking at the Safety Net, and I hope we will have a League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley Action subcommittee gathering our findings and making recommendations. Our second priority, an Overview of Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice, continues with our participation in Community Corrections Partners meetings, work with the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Rehabilitation Processes, and the Community Advisory Board. We anticipate a future concentration on Juvenile Justice under the leadership of our new Item Chair for Juvenile Justice, Gabby Zacco. We are listing the ways you can participate, post elections, on pages three and four of this *Voter*. You may have other ideas—we'd love to hear about them.

As we head towards Thanksgiving, I have a deep sense of gratitude and respect for the League of Women Voters. I have seen the esteem and thankfulness of many Contra Costa residents for the League and the services we provide. Our Pros and Cons, recommendations on ballot measures, and candidate forums lead the list. We were founded in California 101 years and 20 days ago, and continue to have the goals and mission we started with: encouraging informed and active participation in government, having an educated electorate, and working, after careful study and consensus, for the public good. A long and vast parade of League members have carried on this good work since 1911, and it is a deeply meaningful experience to be part of them. We have a portrait of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in our office window. Come by for a look—and bring your friends to join us!

## POST-ELECTION LEAGUE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

By Lee Lawrence, President, LWV of Diablo Valley

Now that we have completed almost all our pre-Election Voter Service activities, it's good to look ahead to see how else you can be involved in the League. While we work intensely in the League in the 2 months before the Presidential Election, our work is really year round, and gives members a whole variety of activities in which they can participate, learn, and grow. Here are a few ideas, and we look forward to hearing your ideas as well.

- Join the **LWVDV Observer Corps** and be a League Observer at your local City Council, School Board, Planning Committee, or special district. Be the eyes and ears of the League, wear your League of Women Voters button, and then report to our Action Committee and the Board. You only need to show up every 3 months or so (once a season) and monitor the agenda for items on which the League has a position. A great way to learn a lot, keep in touch with our grass roots, and provide a visible local presence for the LWV of Diablo Valley.
- Join our **Initiative-Referendum State Update Study**, led by Cynthia Landy. Do you have thoughts about how California could do state ballot measures better? We are looking at our current League positions, and considering possible updates. Join us for a fascinating look at how other states and countries to ballot propositions, and look at California's strengths and weaknesses. Can this process be reformed? Our answers to League consensus questions are due this spring. Learn how the League performs the "careful study" and creates "consensus" that forms the basis for our future actions and advocacy. This is a core League activity and a key to our responsible actions. Join us!
- Join our **Membership Team** and **future Program Team**: at each of our events we need Membership Ambassadors to greet and talk with potential new members, a fun way to meet new people and help them get engaged with the League. We also need help in planning events—outreach to new organizations for co-sponsorships and speakers, locating suitable sites, publicity, and engaging diverse groups.
- Learn about different tiers of the League: **our League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley board, our Bay Area League, our state League of Women Voters of California**. Please come sit in on a board meeting to see how we work, decide, and engage emerging issues in Contra Costa; please come to Bay Area League Day, February 2nd, at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, for a program on the regional issue of Water. Come to our state League's Convention for 2013 at the Hayes Mansion, 200 Edenvale Avenue, San Jose CA 95136, on Friday, May 17th, at 10:00 a.m., through Sunday, May 19, at 3:00 p.m. The state League is comprised of 65 League organizations around the state. It's a wonderful way to see how our power multiplies and see how other Leagues approach core League functions.
- Participate in our **Action Committee and main local Priorities for 2012-2013**. Do you have a particular area of interest? We monitor local and state legislation and advocate for League positions. Become an Item Chair or join with others in Natural Resources, Social Policy, Government, and International Relations position areas. Look at the state of our social safety net in a time of economic downturn or participate in our overview of criminal and juvenile justice in Contra Costa.
- Your ideas?

## FUND RAISING TO COVER CANDIDATE FORUM TAPING COSTS

Our League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley has made a significant financial commitment to guarantee costs of our 30 televised candidate round tables, and our live candidate debate taping of the candidate forum for the 11th Congressional District with Rep. George Miller and Virginia Fuller. We have received substantial support from the Leshner Foundation, Contra Costa Council, *Contra Costa Times*, but still have to raise about \$2500 to cover our costs. Please make a donation to the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley (put Education Fund in the memo line) to help us balance our budget! Your contribution will be tax-deductible.

## WORK AT THE POLLS AS AN ELECTION CLERK

There is still time to sign up as an election clerk for the Presidential Election on Tuesday, November 6th. Phyllis Ceaser will be staffing our Adopt A Poll at our office location (it is filled up), but we hope all League members will learn how to help ensure the democratic process. We also hope to adopt more polls in future elections, with stipends donated to the League.

How can you learn to be an Elections Clerk, and after you have served, take the training to be an Inspector? There is a five-step process for registered voters. (You must be a registered voter to serve as an election clerk).

1. Call the Elections Office at (925) 335-7800, extension 6, and sign up.
2. You will get a call assigning you to a certain precinct poll location.
3. You then go on-line to take the training. It's interesting, informative, fun, and takes about 2 1/2 hours.
4. Go to your assigned poll on Election Day.
5. Thank each voter for voting!
6. It's OK to donate your stipend to the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley.

---

## PROS AND CONS A BIG SUCCESS!

Pros and Cons has been a major program of our Voter Service offerings this fall. Again we have served over 31 organizations and groups throughout central and eastern Contra Costa County. We calculate that we have reached over 1500 people. A huge salute to Kay James, who wrote and updated scripts for each proposition, sent out numerous updates, and trained 15 of us in Pros and Cons basics. Bravo



to newly active members participating for the first time: Jean Blaser, Ken Coates, Jen Faught, Jennifer Mahoney, Carol Murota, Gilbert Posadas, and Gabby Zacco! Many of you have great personal presence in front of groups, and excellent public speaking skills. We have received some rave reports as you have joined with longer term members: Ashley Coates, Joan Conley, Ann Flynn, Martha Goralka, Sally Germain, Lee Lawrence, Diane Mader, Linda Soliven, Janet Thomas, Lucia Trujillo, Gwen Watson, and Carole Woods. We also reached out to diverse groups, offering pros and cons presentations to them.

## LWVDV MEMBERS GET CANDIDATES ONTO [Smartvoter.org](http://Smartvoter.org)

By Ashley Coates, [smartvoter.org](http://smartvoter.org) Contra Costa Coordinator

**SmartVoter**®

[SmartVoter.org](http://SmartVoter.org) is "one stop shopping" for learning about candidates and ballot measures. There is some paid staff at the state level, but volunteers drive SmartVoter's success at the local level. We send out invitation emails to every candidate in every race in the county. If we don't have a candidate's email address, we send an invitation via US postal mail. Then volunteers call each candidate to ask if they received the invitation, encourage them to post their information, and refer them to the local coordinator if they have problems.

Thank you to the following LWVDV members who helped make reminder phone calls: Beverly Bilge, Joan Lautenberger, Lee Lawrence, Mary Miller, Dee Sabiston, Linda Soliven, and Maggie Yeaman. After candidates post their information, we need to review what they posted to ensure it meets SmartVoter criteria. We contact the candidate to request corrections. A big thank you to Lura Dymond for taking on this task every other day, alternating with me.

## 25 OF US CONDUCT LAST CHANCE VOTER REGISTRATION

League members paired up to cover over 13 sites on October 22nd, the last chance to register to vote to participate in the November Presidential Election. Last year we registered at only four Safeway Stores in Central County. This year we covered five BART Stations: Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, Concord, and Pittsburg/Bay Point. Commuters usually just want to get home, but the idea of Last Chance Voter registration encouraged many to register. We followed up at Lafayette Safeway, Walnut Creek Countrywood Safeway, San Ramon Safeway, Concord Safeway, Monument Blvd. Safeway, and Luckys in Oakley. In all we gathered over 150 registrations, with the biggest yields at the BART stations. Combined with our National Voter Registration Day registrations on September 25, this means **200 registered voters** for these two drives. We will be able to get figures from our Youth Voter Registration Drive, and our ongoing post offices and libraries after the election.

One new variable this year: online voter registration at the Secretary of State's website, [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov). Eren Mendez at the Contra Costa Elections Office reports they got over online 9,000 voter registrations this year. And by 2014 or 2015 we will have Election Day registration, so our wonderful volunteers may get a chance to put their feet up. Ann Flynn did the major organizing and staffing of each registration site, including procuring permits for each site from BART: thank you, Ann, for your good work! Volunteers included Beverly Bilge, Annabelle Cloner, Ashley Coates, Karen Dolder, Mary Fenelon, Elizabeth Flynn, Ed Flynn, Sally Germain, Martha Goralka, Peggy Huston, Joan Lautenberger, Lee Lawrence, Jennifer Mahoney, Kim Lehmkuhl, Gail Murray, Linda Soliven, Leslie Stewart, Lucia Trujillo, Margaret Yeaman, Carole and Allan Woods, and Gabby Zacco. Special kudos to all who drove the completed forms to Joan Lautenberger and to Joan herself, who drove over 150 forms to the Contra Costa Elections Office by 10 p.m. to make sure they are all under the midnight deadline!

## FIVE LIVE MODERATED CANDIDATE DEBATES, ONE TELEVISED

In addition to the 30 televised debates on Contra Costa TV's Election Preview and posted on the *Contra Costa Times* website, the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, under the able leadership of Ann Flynn, Vice President for Voter Service, and with the assistance of Sharon Burke, has moderated four live candidate forums in our area. They were: (1)

- An AAUW-sponsored Clayton City Council forum moderated by Sharon Burke with Carole and Allan Woods serving as timekeepers
- Ann Flynn moderating an Ambrose Recreation and Park Board forum with Martha Goralka and Lucia Trujillo keeping time
- Sharon Burke moderating the Orinda Association's Orinda City Council Debate with time keepers Ashley Coates and Cynthia Landy
- Ann Flynn moderating the Orinda Association's Orinda School District forum, with Joan Lautenberger keeping time.

Lee Lawrence planned our fifth live debate which was also televised: a Live Candidate Forum between Congressman George Miller and his Tea Party opponent, Virginia Fuller, at the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church. Both are the top two candidates running for the 11th Congressional District, which includes Richmond, Walnut Creek, Danville, Concord, Pittsburg, and parts of Antioch. League Action Director Mary Fenelon arranged the co-sponsorship of the Social Justice Council of the church. Lee Lawrence moderated the debate, Ann Flynn provided support in gathering and sorting questions and monitoring hecklers in the audience, and Joan Lautenberger timed the candidates' responses and opening and closing statements. We were very happy that Contra Costa TV chose to cover the event. You can see it streaming online at <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/mediacenter.aspx?VID=29>



## REGISTERING FOSTER CHILDREN

*By Joan Conley, LWVDV Director at Large*

During a visit to the Election Bureau in Martinez recent, Lee Lawrence, myself, and members of the Danville/Alamo/Walnut Creek AAUW were able to introduce foster students to the process of registering to vote. Mr. Steve Weir had kindly invited us and had the wonderful multi-lingual Erin work with the students. I had prepared a packet for each of them: how a bill is passed, legislative terms, and a special book mark listing all the Contra Costa County public libraries, including the addresses and phone numbers.

The students really enjoyed the exercise of “voting” with the Scantron machines and making choices on a ballot. They voted on such topics as best cars, tastiest ice cream, etc. One of the students had brought her three-week old baby. Carla Panchaco, who helped initiate the project, is a liaison to Youth Homes. AAUW member Karen abu Homdeh brought studies of how women are impacted by laws, and LWVDV President Lee Lawrence delved further into the voting process. After our ninety-minute meeting, we felt that this was really a hands-on project and that the students were pleased with their initiation into the voting process.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR DELTA

*By Sally Germain, LWVDV Director at Large*



Two Board members ventured to Oakley on October 13, and what did Lee Lawrence and Sally Germain see? We joined hundreds of neighbors and Delta water fans at Big Break Regional Shoreline for the public dedication of its new \$11 million Delta Visitor Center.

Big Break was named for the 1928 collapse of the levies that had protected its site, an old asparagus farm. Now, facing north to the watery result, the lapping shores of San Joaquin River, the District has recently completed construction of a 1,500 square foot Visitor Center building. Built to 3-Green Globes clean design, it brings to life a 17-year dream shared by many regional groups, all who have had to drop out until only the District remained to collect local, state, and federal money for the modern natural museum and educational center. By next year, the District will be attracting visiting school and college groups for learning and research.

We were swept into an informal reception of local officials, District employees, and various political noteworthies: State Schools chief and former local science teacher Tom Torlakson; Senator Desaulnier; and representatives of Assemblyperson Joan Buchanan, Congressman George Miller, and the Federal Representative from Congressman Jerry McNerney’s Stockton office were present. After speeches by District and local officials, the ribbon cutting, and a light lunch, a Shoreline naturalist led us on the well-paved level trail to the Delta Discovery Experience. That creative device—designed and installed by Scientific Art Studio in Richmond—was alone worth the trip. It is a 30-by-50 foot concrete paving model of the Delta showing how rivers and other water courses carry snow melt from the Sierra toward their passages into the Bay, noting familiar landmarks along the way. Not far from it are a fishing pier, a small boat launch, and picnic tables. Fishing for bass is popular on the shore or from the pier; a California Fishing License is required. Turtles, small mammals, and birds are plentiful. Connections to regional trails (to Mt. Diablo and Black Diamond Mines) are found there.

The Shoreline is open every day, but only on weekends 10 to 4, with personnel. Follow Highway 4 east, then north on 160 to the exit in Oakley to East 18th/Main Street, which you take east to Big Break Road, then turn left. To learn more, look at KQED’s [Quest](#) or the East Bay Regional Park District’s [website](#).



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**  
Published monthly except  
June and December

LWV of Diablo Valley  
500 St. Marys Road, #14, Lafayette, CA 94549  
925-283-2235 [www.lwvdv.org](http://www.lwvdv.org)

Editor: Jeanne Melaugh  
Associate Editor: Lee Lawrence

Email delivery is free, but delivery by U.S. mail is \$10/year.  
Current/past issues are posted on our [website](#).

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS AND DIRECTORY UPDATES

If your name appears below, then it is time to renew your membership. Please use the form on the back cover, and send it with your dues to the League Office. If you already have renewed, thank you! There will not be a *Voter* in December, so the list includes both November and December renewals.

## SAVE THE DATE



### Bay Area League Day 2013

What: **Water: California's Gold 2013**  
When: **February 2, 2013, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
Where: **First Unitarian Church, [685 14th Street, Oakland](#)**

Speakers will address the history, policies, and vision of Bay Area water.

Topics will include California Water Background, Governance at the federal, state, and local levels, and Water Conveyance, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and Tunnel Vision.

Registration information will be available in the January Voter.



**LWVDV VOTER**  
 Published ten times per year  
**League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley**  
 500 St. Marys Road, #14  
 Lafayette, CA 94549

**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 \_\_\_  
 (For a student or non-citizen non-voting member)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ 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. Marys Road #14, Lafayette, CA 94549

**CALENDAR**

- Nov. 6 Election. VOTE!**  
**Poll Observers.**  
**Adopt a Poll**
- Nov. 13 Action Committee**  
 2 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Nov. 15 Board Meeting**  
 2 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Dec. 1 Homeless in CC County**  
 10 am Mt. Diablo UU Church

**NO VOTER  
 IN DECEMBER**

**NO BOARD OR ACTION  
 COMMITTEE MEETINGS  
 IN DECEMBER**

- Jan. 8 Action Committee**  
 2 pm
- Jan 10 Board Meeting**  
 2 pm