



ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 5, 2013, 2 p.m.

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Marys Road, #14, Lafayette, CA

MENDING THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Saturday, March 2, 10 a.m. to 12 noon

[Diablo Valley College, Humanities Building](#), Room 109

Speakers include:

- **Paul Buddenhagen**, Program Manager, Spark Point Center, will deliver an update on budget changes and County demographic shifts. He shares his experience as an innovator in collaborative service delivery between public agencies, non-profit and faith-based groups, and philanthropic organizations.
- **Larry Sly**, Executive Director of the Contra Costa Food Bank who will showcase hunger in our own backyard, and how it has changed in the twenty-first century. What are the causes of hunger now? How do unemployment and poverty affect hunger?
- **David Gerson**, Executive Director of Loaves and Fishes, will talk about his organization's work in bringing food to families in poverty, with a focus on how we can attack hunger in the future. What can we do to help mend this gap in the safety net?
- **Carol Carrillo**, Executive Director of the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa, will outline abuse and neglect within families, problems that are most often hidden from sight. She will also highlight programs that stress educating the public and providing resources to support families. Ms. Carrillo and her organization are now working with Lamorinda schools, communities, and families to build a public child abuse awareness program, expose risk factors surrounding abuse and neglect, and to assist the community in developing a common vocabulary. The ultimate goal is to shine a light on this 100% preventable problem.

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley is presenting this forum as part of its ongoing series of public educational programs, on Mending the Social Safety Net in Contra Costa County as our economy improves. Previous programs have included presentations on Homelessness and Services for Senior Citizens.

Free parking is available in Parking Lot 7, adjacent to the Humanities Building.

The public is welcome to attend this free educational program. For more information, please contact Ann Flynn, LWVDV Action Director, at (925) 935-1643.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Lee Lawrence, President, LWV of Diablo Valley

A Busy Spring! 2013 so far has been packed with forward looking League activities! This January we established three **priorities for our local League**: see the article on page 5.

In February we will complete our participation in the **Initiative and Referendum state update study** with our answers to the Consensus Questions safely in the hands of the League of Women Voters of California. Several LWVDV members attended the **Bay Area League Day** in Oakland. In March we will also conclude our **Legislative Interviews**, hour-long meeting with each of our state elected representatives: State Senator Mark DeSaulnier and Assemblymembers Joan Buchanan, Susan Bonilla, and John Frazier.

The state League has also received our input about possible priorities and issues for education and action this year, with final decisions to be made at the May 17-19 **League of Women Voters of California Convention** in San Jose. We hope all League members will be attending this important event. The possibilities of significant majorities in the Legislature suggest this could be an historic year. There will be a variety of League workshops as well as plenary sessions. It's a great way to see the statewide power of the League with over 65 chapters across the state. LWVDV's own Pat Snyder has submitted a possible workshop on Single Payer Health Care with our League's support. We hope to see you there.

Events in the Making: We will be hosting several events this spring. Ann Flynn has created an excellent program on the **Social Safety-net for Children and Families** on March 2: see page 1.

Carol Murota and I are planning a **Money in Politics forum** for late March/early April. Interest in alternatives to the open-season for big money since the *Citizens' United* decision has dramatically increased nationally. Harvard Law professor Lawrence Lessig recently spoke at the University of California Berkeley on alternatives—such as citizen vouchers each voter could donate to their candidate of choice—and he has started a group called Root-strikers to organize citizens outside of the Washington D.C. area to press for change. Locally activists have founded a MoneyOutPeopleIn group. Lawrence Tribe has written a potential constitutional amendment to thwart the *Citizens' United Decision*, as has MoveToAmend.

Pat Snyder has planned a showing of the video on the Canadian **single payer system** in mid-May in Walnut Creek. The League is supporting the implementation of "Obama-care" this year and explores the possibility of passing single payer legislation as well like the state of Vermont has done.

Our **LWVDV Annual Meeting** will be May 11, 8:45 a.m. to noon, in the Lafayette Library Community Hall. We have invited state Senator Mark deSaulnier to speak. If you are interested in helping out with any of these events, please let us know!

Four to One: Happy marriages and successful prisoner rehabilitation have something in common with the League: a **4 to 1 ratio between praise and appreciation** on one hand and a more negative comment on the other. Our League board has been trying this, particularly as volunteers don't get paid in any other way, and I've received feedback that it's a very helpful ratio to keep in mind. I'm also finding it's a great ratio to keep in mind in all my relationships, and I count up to 4 positives before suggesting a possible change or alternate strategy a volunteer or friend might try instead of a dysfunctional process. I'm finding after four positives, people are much more open to hearing input that might involve change on their part as they know it is input coming from a friend, and someone who really supports them. Another way in which being an active League member can change our lives for the better! Try it, inside the League and outside too!

MEMBER PROFILE: LESLIE STEWART

Leslie joined the League in 1981 after being impressed by a League member's knowledge while working on a third-party campaign. Thanks to LWVDV's active membership chair, she was quickly involved in Concord unit activities and the local campaign finance study. Leslie served on the LWVDV board for many years, and thinks she's held every LWV board position except Voter Service and Treasurer. She was elected LWVC Secretary from 1989-1991, and after that served for several years as an LWVC mentor for local leagues. She co-chaired two LWVC study committees on hazardous materials and transportation. She also served briefly on the LWVBA Board before going to work for the Bay Area Monitor, where she worked for nineteen years, the last eleven as editor. Leslie has been the LWV representative on the County Hazardous Materials Commission for over twenty years. She recently retired as the Finance, Contracts, and Grants Manager at the Rainbow Community Center in Concord and is now Treasurer of that organization's board. We are delighted Leslie is back on the LWVDV board as our liaison to the Bay Area League.



CALIFORNIA VOTING...HOW DO WE RANK?



Earlier this month the Pew Charitable Trusts released the Elections Performance Index (EPI), which examines election administration across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Using data from 17 key indicators, the EPI makes it possible to compare election administration policy and performance across the states and from one election cycle to the next. The 17 indicators included wait times, lost votes, and problems with absentee and provisional ballots. The data featured in this report cover the 2008 and 2010 elections and will be updated when official 2012 data becomes available in late 2013. In 2010, California had:

- An overall EPI of 48%. Only New York, Mississippi, and Idaho had worse percentages.
- The worst percentage—.07%—of absentee ballots rejected.
- The 5th worst rate—16.2%—of absentee ballots mailed and not returned.
- 11.2% of California nonvoters responded that they did not cast a ballot due to an “illness or disability (own or family’s).” This places California in the bottom third, indicating that our disabled and permanently ill voters have better than average access to voting.
- 4.5% of military and overseas ballots rejected, placing us squarely in the middle.
- The highest percentage—5.2%—of provisional ballots cast.
- The second worst percentage—.06%—of provisional ballots rejected.
- 5.2% of nonvoters who did not vote due to registration or ballot problems, which includes not receiving an absentee ballot or not being registered at their current resident address.
- 45.1% of eligible voters voted, placing us better than average.
- 75.9% of eligible voters are registered, placing us in the top quarter.
- The worst ranking for availability of online tools (absentee ballot status, provisional ballot status, registration, polling place, and precinct level ballot information lookup tools).
- 98.5% of our jurisdictions reported statistics on 18 core items in the U.S. Election Assistance Commission’s Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) for 2008 and 2010. A key component of managing elections is gathering and reporting core data in a systematic fashion, so our high ranking enables California to have the data to identify problems.
- No online registration, but only 5 states did in 2010.
- We require a post-election audit, which just over half the states do.

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY, 2013: “WATER, CALIFORNIA’S GOLD”

by Audrey Albrecht, LWVDV Program Director



Matt Weiser of the *Sacramento Bee*—who has developed a specialty in the reporting of the plans and reactions to improve the Delta—was the keynote speaker for Bay Area League Day, February 2. Several LWVDV members were at the well-attended event, organized by the Bay Area League, a regional inter-league organization comprised of all the local leagues in the nine Bay Area counties. The content for the day, devoted to California’s “Gold”, included a background of the state’s water problems, the governance of water resources and arguments for and against the “Delta Plan,” and alternatives.

Included in the presentations were conservation efforts, habitat considerations, and problems, transportation, and storage issues. Panelist Felicia Marcus of the Water Resources Control Board highlighted the problems over the years as seen by an environmentalist activist as well as in her official roles. Steve Ritchie of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, offered a very positive view of the work being done in his city. The biggest controversy presently is between those who favor the dual tunnels proposed by the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and those who favor a number of less extreme measures, represented by the “Restore the Delta” coalition.

Jennifer Waggoner, LWVC President, submitted to the Delta Stewardship Council in January an extensive critique of present plans, including this statement:

“The dual tunnel currently being put forward by BDCP will be supported by the beneficiaries paying for it only if it exports water at level that have led to the decline of fish and ecosystems in the Delta and the estuary. BDCP fails to meet the Delta Reform Act goal of reducing reliance on the Delta. The Delta Plan should, at a minimum, include alternatives...”

This area would be directly affected if the Delta Plan is enacted as planned. We need to be educated about the project.

ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

By Mary Fenelon, LWVDV Action Director

At their February meeting, the Action Committee affirmed that the LWVDV 2013 priorities would continue to include the important issues of the “Social Safety Net in Contra Costa County in a Time of Economic Downturn” and the “State of Criminal Justice in Contra Costa County.” They added a third priority: educate members about tobacco use prevention and substance abuse measures in our area.

Mary Fenelon attended a public hearing reviewing the Environmental Impact Report on the Terraces of Lafayette project proposing 315 multi-family moderate-income housing units. Those who spoke at the meeting view this project very negatively. There will be further public hearings with the Planning Commission on the project itself.

She also attended the February 6 community meeting on the Walnut Creek West Downtown Specific Plan. Based on the suggestions presented by the attendees at the meeting, the Walnut Creek Planning Department will now develop some alternative plans for redevelopment over the next few months.

LWVDV §501(c)(3)

After serious internal discussions, as well as consultation with LWV California, the Board of Directors has concluded that it would be advantageous for both our League and its members and donors for the League to apply to the Internal Revenue Service to convert its tax exempt status from Internal Revenue Code §501(c)(4) to §501(c)(3). Accordingly, the Board authorized LWV California to include us in a group exemption request, which has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service, to make such a conversion.

The most certain benefit made possible by such a conversion is that membership dues and contributions payable to our League would be tax deductible for the members/donors who itemize deductions in their personal income tax purposes. We feel that this will be of real benefit to many of our members. Equally, we would hope that such tax deductibility might also make it more attractive for our members and donors to make or increase their contributions to our League.

Equally important to this proposal is that the Board is comfortable that such a conversion will not change or limit our existing activities, and most particularly will not in any way act to limit our League's work in advocacy or action.

For a further explanation about various aspects of this kind of conversion, we have available a document prepared by LWV California, Frequently Asked Questions, which answers questions which have been raised by various Leagues around the state about a conversion to §501(c)(3). Contact the office at (925) 283-2235 if you would like a copy.

The proposed amendments we will present at the Annual Meeting for approval by the members are conditional ones due to the logistics of the IRS application process. The IRS will not approve an application unless the applicant's articles of incorporation and bylaws have been amended to meet the IRS' specifications. On the other hand, if the IRS were not to approve our League's application, there would be no reason to implement these amendments. Accordingly, we will ask at the Annual Meeting that the members approve the proposed amendment language, and delegate to the Board the authority to implement the amendments when the Board, in consultation with LWV California, is comfortable that the IRS will approve the application following implementation of the amendments.

LWVDV PROPOSED 2013 PRIORITIES

by Audrey Albrecht, LWVDV Program Director

The LWVDV Board of Directors approved priorities which were recommended by consensus of those attending the January 26 Program Planning Meeting. The board also recommended an update study to consolidate our of local and unit positions. The final step in adopting the priorities is approval by the membership at the Annual Meeting in May.

1. Social Safety Net in a time of economic downturn
2. State of Criminal and Juvenile Justice in Contra Costa County
3. Educate members about tobacco use prevention and substance abuse measures in our area

We do not specify in our priorities everything that might be done in these areas. Setting these priorities does not constrain us from working on other projects as they may come up, but our program priorities should be our guide in determining where to place our efforts.

SIGN UP FOR THE NEW LEAGUE FORUMS



You can interact with League members across the nation in the change from list serves to League Forums. Now is the time to get started with your discussions on the new League Forums.

The LWVUS' aging discussion list system will close in early February 2013. In its place, they have built the League Forums, a new online community exclusively for League members and leaders. Don't wait any longer, take the time today to log in and join the discussions. Go to www.lwv.org, and then click on LOGIN. Once logged in, use the Forums link in the left navigation bar. If you do not have a password, [register](#) by following the instructions. Members interested in learning more are welcome to view a [recorded webinar](#) introducing the new Forums.

Why should you join the League forums?

1. Like the discussion lists, the League Forums provide an opportunity to interact with fellow League members on specific topics and to share experiences and tools.
2. The Forums notification system allows you to decide if you want to follow a group (topic), a single discussion within a group, or even just a single person.
3. All messages are archived online for future reference.
4. You can easily build and manage your own personal profile.

BART COMMUNITY MEETING



Monday, March 12, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

[Monument Community Partnership](#), 1760 Clayton Road, Concord

Input is sought on three critical issues:

- **Proposed Fare Increase** — Small, regular fare increases have been key to keeping BART's service safe and reliable. For the next fiscal year, BART is planning a small fare increase effective July 2012 in order to raise approximately 5 million. Your input is needed on possible alternative fare change options that could generate that amount and on a long-term extension of BART's current inflation-based fare increase program.
- **ClipperSM Card Distribution for Senior and Youth** — BART is part of "Clipper," the regional fare payment system. Seniors and youth can get their discounted fare automatically by using the discounted Clipper card. BART wants to insure that eligible BART customers can readily obtain discounted cards in their communities. Your input is necessary to determine the adequacy of existing locations to obtain Clipper cards and to comment on what would be adequate for you and your community.
- **Draft Environmental Justice Policy** — Your input is needed on BART's draft Environmental Justice Policy. The proposed Environmental Justice Policy includes three primary components: 1) integrating Environmental Justice principles into BART's transportation planning; 2) evaluating impacts on minority and low-income populations; and 3) enhancing public involvement activities to identify and address the needs of minority and low-income populations in making transportation decisions.

If you are unable to attend one of the community meetings, you may still provide feedback by completing an online survey at www.bart.gov/survey. If you do not have internet access, call toll-free 1-888-579-5911 to take a phone survey.

DONATE

To support our newsletter and other activities, please donate online by clicking on this button or visiting our website at www.lwvdv.org.

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of Diablo Valley Voter**

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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!

Jane Britton
Kay James

Cynthia Curbo
Jacquelin Pels

Miriam Glickman
Joyce Pollack

SAVE THE DATES



LWVC Convention 2013

What: "myLeague: Leading the Charge for Change"

When: Friday, May 17 through Sunday, May 19

(Preconvention workshops on Thursday, May 16)

Where: Hayes Mansion, [200 Edenvale Avenue](http://www.lwvdv.org), San Jose

Registration: begins February 19



Convention registration will begin on February 19, 2013. You will need to arrange for sleeping accommodations separately with the hotel. **[Make your reservation online](http://www.lwvdv.org) or call 408-226-2300 before April 15 to receive the special room rate of \$119 per night.** The hotel has free parking for Convention attendees.

Pre-Convention workshops will occur on Thursday, May 16, including the traditional [SmartVoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) dinner that evening. Friday, May 17, through Sunday, May 19, we will conduct the business of approving the budget, adopting program, reaffirming our positions, and electing LWVC officers and directors. There will be workshops, caucuses, and networking. The three days of Convention will be filled with work, but there will be time to relax.

LWVDV Annual Meeting

When: May 11, 8:45 a.m.

Where: Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., #107, Lafayette, CA

This is an opportunity for the membership to vote on our local priorities for 2013-2014 and elect their new board. We will also vote on new bylaws, which will include our decision to change our status from a 501(c)(4) to a tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization. (See the article on page 5.) We hope all League members will mark their calendars now. A quorum of our membership is necessary for us to conduct business. We are hoping we can retain the excellent caterer who supplied outstanding food for this event last year.



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 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	
Mar. 2	Mending the Social Safety Net: Children & Families 10 am DVC Humanities Bldg.
Mar. 5	Action Committee 2 pm LWVDV Office
Mar. 14	Board Meeting 2 pm LWVDV Office
May 11	Annual Meeting 8:45 am Lafayette Library Community Hall
May 17-19	LWVC Convention Hayes Mansion , San Jose