

**CALL THE GOVERNOR NOW!!** See details, page 2.



### **AGRICULTURE UPDATE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Friday, October 4, 2013, 3-5 pm**

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA

### **ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, October 8, 2013, 2 p.m.**

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA

### **LWVDV BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday, October 10, 2013, 2 p.m.**

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA

### **ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, November 5, 2013, 2 p.m.**

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA

### **CONTRA COSTA WATER: NOW AND FOREVER?**

**Saturday, November 9, 2013, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm**

Contra Costa Water District, 1331 Concord Ave., Concord, CA

*(CCWD offices are just off Hwy 242 and there is plenty of free parking.)*

Get the truth about our water supply straight from area leaders and experts: County Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho; Marguerite Patil, CCWD; and Angela Lowrey, Delta Diablo Sanitation District. Find out what's working, what's not, and what you can do about it. Please invite your friends to this LWVDV forum!

# LEAGUE LEADERS' LETTER

By Leslie Stewart, VP Admin & Lee Lawrence, VP Action

September was a busy month! With elections coming up in Antioch and San Ramon, Voters Service was active and we need to give particular thanks to Ashley Coates and her Voter Service team – see her report below!

We responded to Action Alerts from LWVC on Money in Politics and from LWVUS on Voting Rights and Climate Change. At the local level, the LWVDV Board voted to support two measures on the November ballot, Measure B in Moraga to increase school taxes, and Measure C in Antioch to temporarily increase the sales tax rate. At the October 8 Action Committee meeting we will talk about San Ramon Measures D and E regarding setting new election dates for councilmembers and mayor.

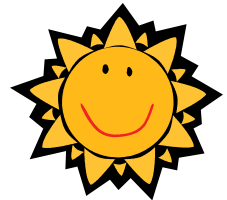
**Don't forget to send in your membership survey – this is the way to be sure you and LWV meet each others needs!**

## YOUR ACTION STILL NEEDED – CALL NOW!

SB 3, one of our 3 Sunshine in Campaign bills, is now on Governor Jerry Brown's desk awaiting his signature. This important bill takes the first step toward a new online campaign disclosure system and requires online training for campaign committee treasurers. It will help preserve the integrity of the election process by letting the sunlight shine in. Please take action!

### 1) Call the Governor's office at (916) 445-2841.

1. Give your name and state where you're from.
2. Say that you're calling to ask Governor Brown to sign SB 3 to improve transparency in campaigns. Californians need to be able to follow the money and cast informed votes at the polls.



OR

### 2) If you'd prefer, you can send an [email to the Governor](#).

If the link is broken, paste the following in your browser.

<http://govnews.ca.gov/gov39mail/mail.php>

## LWVUS AGRICULTURE POSITION UPDATE



### ***Local Study Committee Forming, First Meeting October 4.***

Like to chew on science-related or budget policy-related material on food and agriculture? Our committee will plan up to two public meetings to review study material or view some documentaries, and

one League-only meeting to go through the consensus process. Results of the consensus process will be forwarded from our league to LWVUS. A sampling of the reading for the study is included in this Voter – look for the barn symbol.

Our first planning meeting is Friday, October 4 from 3 pm to 5 pm in the LWVDV Boardroom at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd #14.

Contact Ashley Coates or the LWVDV office if you'd like to help with the study, even if you can't come to the first meeting!

## **OUR LEAGUE IN THE COMMUNITY: VOTERS SERVICE**

### **San Ramon Candidates Forum on September 25 Well-Attended**

The AAUW of San Ramon initiated planning for a forum for candidates for City Council and asked if we would cosponsor. The Chamber of Commerce joined in as a third co-sponsor and funder. There were approximately 90 audience members! CCTV recorded the forum for later broadcast. We also plan to post the video online. Thanks to Ann Flynn for moderating, and for much of the pre-forum planning. Thanks to Lee Lawrence for question sorting and cookies. Expenses for the forum were about \$600, shared among the organizations. Supporting democracy can be expensive (maybe we should have passed a hat)!

San Ramon's public access TV channel will rebroadcast the one-hour program taped on September 25. Our co-sponsored forum is the only time all four candidates for two open seats on the San Ramon City Council will appear together before the November 5 election. ***Please share this with San Ramon voters.*** Preliminary schedule is: Thursday, October 10 at 8:00 pm; Sunday, October 13 at 8:00 pm; Friday, October 18 at 7:00 pm; and Saturday, October 19 at 10:30 am and 7:00 pm. San Ramon Channels are Astound Channel 32 and AT&T U-verse Channel 99. Additional air dates will also be scheduled, please visit CCTV's program guide at [www.contracostatv.org](http://www.contracostatv.org)

### **League Participates in National Voter Registration Day**

For National Voter Registration Day, September 24, League spearheaded two types of voter registration efforts. Our members registered voters at BART stations in Lafayette and Pittsburg/Bay Point. This November is an "off" election (the only elections in our territory are in Moraga, San Ramon, and Antioch) and interest in registering was light. We distributed approximately 10 voter registration forms during the 3-4 hours we spent at each station. Thanks go to Martha Goralka, Leslie Stewart, Carole and Allan Woods, Lee Lawrence, Joan Conley, and others.



In addition, we initiated contact with several social services providers in Antioch, offering help in registering their clients. Thank you to Lucia Trujillo and Martha Goralka for this effort.



## Hallmarks of Healthy Farms

From “The Healthy Farm; A Vision for US Agriculture”, Union of Concerned Scientists

Farming for the future must aim to achieve interrelated goals in these three areas:

**Productivity.** Healthy farms must ensure an abundant food supply for U.S. consumers and help nourish (through exports) a growing global population that is expected to reach 9 or 10 billion by 2050. They should also produce a wide variety of foods important to healthful diets.

**Economics.** Healthy farms must contribute to vibrant rural economies, enabling farmers to make a good living and provide their workers with safe working conditions and fair wages and benefits. They should also provide consumers across the income spectrum with access to good, healthy food—this is as much a question of practicality as fairness, since agricultural practices that do not make economic sense for farmers and consumers will not be adopted or retained.

**Environment.** Healthy farms must use natural resources in a sustainable manner, maintaining or increasing soil fertility and making efficient use of increasingly scarce inputs such as phosphorus and freshwater—recycling them when possible. They should also minimize their use of toxic chemicals, their pollution of water and air resources, and their contribution to global warming, while maintaining or providing habitat for wildlife and beneficial insects.

Achieving these goals simultaneously requires a delicate balancing act. But working together, scientists, farmers, and agricultural policy makers can do this by thinking of agriculture—and healthy farms—as:

**Multifunctional.** Policy makers need to invest up front in farms that can serve our environmental, social, and productivity needs, rather than productivity alone. Studies have demonstrated that farmers can adopt well-designed and tested sustainable practices without sacrificing profits (Davis et al. 2012; Boody et al. 2005).

**Regenerative.** Farms can be designed to incorporate practices that constantly improve the fertility of the soil, foster biodiversity on a “landscape” scale (i.e., beyond the boundaries of the farm), and recycle essential nutrients (Blesh and Drinkwater 2013; Tonitto, David, and Drinkwater 2006; Tscharrntke et al. 2005).

**Biodiverse.** In agriculture as in other systems, diversity is critical for longterm stability. Healthy farms—whether small, medium, or large—must incorporate a wider variety of crops, types of land use, and options for raising livestock and poultry.

**Interconnected.** Rather than considering farms as isolated entities, scientists now recognize that uncultivated areas on or near farms can provide important benefits for both the surrounding landscape and the farm itself. For example, hedgerows, fields, woodlots, and stream borders provide habitat for insects that pollinate crops and control farm pests, which in turn can boost productivity and reduce the need for pesticides (Meehan et al. 2011, Tscharrntke et al. 2005).

To read the full 8-page document, download the PDF at

[http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/food\\_and\\_agriculture/The-Healthy-Farm-A-Vision-for-US-Agriculture.pdf](http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/food_and_agriculture/The-Healthy-Farm-A-Vision-for-US-Agriculture.pdf)

## The Truth About GMOs

*Pamela Ronald, UC Davis, on Boston Review Forum*



The world faces an enormous challenge: with changing diets and population growth of 2–3 billion over the next 40 years, UNESCO predicts that food production will need to rise by 70 percent by 2050. Many pests and diseases cannot, however, be controlled using conventional breeding methods. Moreover, subsistence farmers cannot afford most pesticides, which are often ineffective or harmful to the environment.

Yet many emerging agricultural catastrophes can almost certainly be avoided thanks to a modern form of plant breeding that uses genetic engineering (GE), a process that has led to reduced insecticide use and enhanced productivity of farms large and small.

In spite of these benefits, genetic engineering is anathema to many people. In the United States, we've seen attempts to force labeling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In much of Europe, farmers are prohibited from growing genetically engineered crops and so must import grain from the United States. And "GMO-free" zones are expanding in Japan.

The strong distrust of GE foods is curious. Opponents typically profess a high degree of concern for human welfare and the environment. They want the same things that scientists, farmers, food security experts, and environmentalists want: ecologically sound food production accessible to a growing global population. But their opposition threatens the great strides that have been made toward these goals through deployment of new technologies.

For 10,000 years, we have altered the genetic makeup of our crops. Conventional approaches are often crude, resulting in new varieties through a combination of trial and error, without knowledge of the precise function of the genes being moved around. Such methods include grafting or mixing genes of distantly related species through forced pollinations, as well as radiation treatments to induce random mutations in seeds. Today virtually everything we eat is produced from seeds that we have genetically altered in one way or another.

Over the last twenty years, scientists and breeders have used GE to create crop varieties that thrive in extreme environments or can withstand attacks by pests and disease. Like the older conventional varieties, GE crops are genetically altered, but in a manner that introduces fewer genetic changes. Genetic engineering can also be used to insert genes from distantly related species, such as bacteria, directly into a plant.

Given that modern genetic engineering is similar to techniques that have served humanity well for thousands of years and that the risks of unintended consequences are similar whether the variety is derived from the processes of GE or conventional gene alteration, it should come as no surprise that the GE crops currently on the market are as safe to eat and safe for the environment as organic or conventional foods. That is the

GMOs, from page 5

conclusion reached by diverse agricultural and food experts. There is broad consensus on this point among highly regarded science-based organizations in the United States and abroad, [including](#) the American Medical Association, the National Academy of Sciences, the World Health Organization, and European Commission Joint Research Centre. In the seventeen years since GE crops were first grown commercially, not a single instance of adverse health or environmental effects has been documented.

Read the full posting at <http://www.bostonreview.net/forum/pamela-ronald-gmo-food>

## HELP WANTED

**(Easy Jobs, Training Provided by Experts!)**

- **Voter Editor.** Approximately 1 week per month, familiarity with Word required.
- **City Council Observer.** One evening, once every three months, to watch your City/Town Council, in person or on TV.
- **Voter Service Co-Chair.** Occasional events during election seasons.
- **Co-Chair of the Agriculture Update Study Committee.** Regular daytime or evening meetings through April 1.

***Contact the LWVDV Office to respond to any of these opportunities!***

## IMPROVING ELECTIONS – LWVUS ACTION PLAN

With Election 2012 in the rear-view mirror and 2014—and 2016—looming soon, the League of Women Voters recently released our comprehensive Election Improvement Agenda report, which identifies central challenges facing our complex and outdated election system and provides a targeted action plan for overcoming the fallout from recent state-based voter suppression attempts and the Supreme Court ruling gutting the Voting Rights Act.

You can download the full report at [LWV ElectionImprovementAgenda-Final.pdf](#)

## JUST A REMINDER -- Register to Vote Online or On Paper

Remember to re-register whenever you move, change your name, or change your political party. Go to [registertovote.ca.gov](http://registertovote.ca.gov) or pick up a registration form at our office or your local library or post office.



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. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA 94549  
925-283-2235 [www.lwvdv.org](http://www.lwvdv.org)  
Editor: Leslie Stewart  
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!

- |                  |                |                   |                 |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Janet Abrams     | Joe Goralka    | Joyce Kingery     | Donna Preece    |
| Aldene Crosswell | Martha Goralka | Joan Lautenberger | Annette Schmidt |
| Joan Field       | Anne Hetland   | Diane Mader       | Susan Thwaites  |
| Judith Garvens   | Barbara Hill   | Helen Oliver      |                 |

Address change: Mary Fenelon, 1765 Shuey Avenue, Apt.L325, Walnut Creek, 94596

Welcome, Marti Roach (Moraga) and Juliana Caitlin Boyle (Martinez)!

## **MEMBERSHIP SURVEYS**

Please remember to return your membership interest surveys! This is the way to be sure that you are called for the things you're interested in, and not called for things you can't or won't participate in! Tailor your League experience to you – fill in those check boxes and mail the survey back!!

## **AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE TOWN HALL MEETING**

**Thursday, October 10, 7 pm at Christ the King Parish, 199 Brandon Road, Pleasant Hill.**

Senator Mark DeSaulnier joins Elizabeth Sholes, Executive Director of the California Council of Churches and Amy Peake, Field Representative from US Congressman George Miller's office, at an event hosted by Christ the King Parish to inform the community about Covered California.

In addition to answering questions, there will be an opportunity to register for those who are ready to apply. For more information: Kate Doherty, 925-682-2486, [kate@ctkph.org](mailto:kate@ctkph.org)



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

**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. Mary's Road #14, Lafayette, CA 94549

**CALENDAR**

<b>Oct 4</b>	3 pm	<b>Ag Update Study Committee</b> <a href="#">LWVDV Office</a>
<b>Oct 8</b>	2 pm	<b>Action Committee</b> <a href="#">LWVDV Office</a>
<b>Oct. 11</b>	2 pm	<b>Board Meeting</b> <a href="#">LWVDV Office</a>
<b>Nov. 5</b>	2 pm	<b>Action Committee</b> <a href="#">LWVDV Office</a>
<b>Nov. 9</b>	10:30 am	<b>Water Forum</b> CCWD 1331 Concord Ave Concord