



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!

HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY, LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DIABLO VALLEY!!!

AGRICULTURE UPDATE COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, November 8, 2013, 3-5 pm

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

ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 2 p.m.

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

LWVDV BOARD MEETING

Thursday, November 14, 2013, 2 p.m.

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

MOVIE SHOWING: Food, Inc.

Friday, November 22, 2013, 2 p.m.

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

LEAGUE LEADER'S LETTER

By Lee Lawrence, VP Action

This letter was submitted to the Tri-Valley Herald, by request:

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley has endorsed both Measure D and Measure E in the November 5th, 2013 election. Measure D would amend the Municipal Code to change the general municipal election from November of odd-numbered years to November of even-numbered years. Measure E amends Article III of the City of San Ramon Charter to reflect this change. The change would save the city approximately \$142,000 per election. Terms would be extended from 2 to 3 years for the mayor and city council members elected in 2013. Measure E would also extend the cumulative total number of years the mayor elected in 2013 may serve, from 8 to 9 years.

The League of Women Voters has a long history of supporting citizens' engagement in political processes, particularly in voting. Moving the municipal election to match gubernatorial and presidential elections, when voter turnout is at its highest, will ensure greater voter participation in San Ramon's races for city council and Mayor. For example, in 2012, more than 22,000 votes were cast in San Ramon elections compared to 9,800 in 2011. The League also supports efficiency in government; the change in election dates should save significant money over time. We urge all San Ramon voters to vote Yes on Measures D and E this November 5.

The League of Women Voters is non-partisan; we never support or oppose candidates or political parties.

OUR LEAGUE IN THE COMMUNITY

League Consults with the Next Generation

By Ann Flynn

Students from the Advanced Placement U.S. Government class at San Ramon's California High School decided one way to bring a real world experience to the high school would be to host a candidate forum. San Ramon has four candidates running for two City Council seats on the November 5 ballot.

All four candidates were invited to attend a forum on Thursday, October 17th, at California High School. The students hoped to get a good turnout (government teachers promised extra credit for attendance).

The students learned that LWVDV had already moderated a Candidate's forum, and requested help in planning the forum and coaching on moderation techniques. Kay James and Ann Flynn responded to the request and met with a group of students, along with their class adviser. We used training materials created by LWV Oakland and our own Sharon Burke, shared moderator scripts, discussed how to solicit questions from the audience, how to sort the questions, and how to keep the discussion moving. One

student idea to interrupt the Q&A session with a "crossfire" exchange, where candidates could question each other, was constructively discouraged.

The students were eager and fully engaged in the democratic process. This hands-on exercise was educational for students and their audience alike. Since this is not a heavy election season, all public appearances by candidates are valuable for voters. Kudos to California High School's support of the next generation of voters -- and perhaps future candidates for public office.

LWVUS AGRICULTURE POSITION UPDATE ACTIVITIES

Farm Tour - Brentwood

On October 26, several members of the Ag Update committee took a tour of Smith Family Farms in Brentwood (East County). They were joined by members from the Piedmont, Oakland, and Berkeley-Albany-Emeryville Leagues, on behalf of their own local Ag Update committees.

The tour guide, Janice Smith, took the group around the main features of the farm and explained what crops they grow, how they handle fertilizer and water, and practices such as crop rotation. She said that her family had been farming in the area since the 1900s, and that the farm was their primary source of support, through diverse means such as a farm stand, children's tours, and events. Smith Family Farms has both organic and conventional acreage, but does not use pesticides on any crops.

The tour was a useful glimpse of the production end of agriculture, and left our members inspired to learn more. Many thanks to Smith Family Farms for their time, and their enthusiasm for educating the public.

Film: Food, Inc. - First Showing

Friday Nov. 22, 2 - 4 pm, LWVDV Boardroom, 500 St Mary's Rd #14, Lafayette

Join other league members to view **Food, Inc.**, an exposé of the modern food industry. We predict that, after seeing this film, you will be motivated to participate in our study sessions regarding updating the national LWV position on agriculture.

If you cannot attend at this time, we will try to add another showing in January. Contact Ashley Coates (or leave a message at the office) with your day of week and time of day preferences.



L to R: Cynthia Landy (LWVDV), Guide Janice Smith, Alison Stewart (LWVDV), Carol Stone (LWVBAE), Betsy King (LWV Piedmont) at Smith Family Farms in Brentwood.

Film: A Place at the Table (The Crisis of 49 Million Hungry Americans)

Sunday, December 1, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette
Film at 7 pm, refreshments beforehand (check our website closer to event date)

LWVDV Ag Update Study Committee Meeting November 8.

Our next planning meeting is Friday, November 8, from 3 pm to 5 pm in the LWVDV Boardroom at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd #14.

Ag Update: SAVE THE DATES 2014

All LWV members and friends are invited to our discussion sessions for the Agriculture Position Update. They will be held at the conference room of Supervisor Candace Andersen, in Lafayette, from noon to 2 pm on: Saturday, January 25, and Saturday, February 22. The final Consensus Session will be on Friday, March 14 (same location and time).



AG UPDATE BACKGROUND READING: Fertilized World

Excerpted from "Our Fertilized World", National Geographic, May 2013, By Dan Charles

N. Nitrogen. Atomic number seven. Unnoticed, untasted, it nevertheless fills our stomachs. It is the engine of agriculture, the key to plenty in our crowded, hungry world.

Without this independent-minded element, disinclined to associate with other gases, the machinery of photosynthesis cannot function—no protein can form, and no plant can grow. Corn, wheat, and rice, the fast-growing crops on which humanity depends for survival, are among the most nitrogen hungry of all plants. They demand more, in fact, than nature alone can provide.

Enter modern chemistry. Giant factories capture inert nitrogen gas from the vast stores in our atmosphere and force it into a chemical union with the hydrogen in natural gas, creating the reactive compounds that plants crave. That nitrogen fertilizer—more than a hundred million tons applied worldwide every year—fuels bountiful harvests. Without it, human civilization in its current form could not exist. Our planet's soil simply could not grow enough food to provide all seven billion of us our accustomed diet. In fact, almost half of the nitrogen found in our bodies' muscle and organ tissue started out in a fertilizer factory.

Yet this modern miracle exacts a price. Runaway nitrogen is suffocating wildlife in lakes and estuaries, contaminating groundwater, and even warming the globe's climate. As a hungry world looks ahead to billions more mouths needing nitrogen-rich protein, how much clean water and air will survive our demand for fertile fields?

Full National Geographic Article: <http://goo.gl/kMjeYl>

HOW LWVDV GOT STARTED – 60 years ago

From “*Historical Outline of the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley*” by Dorothy Ross, President, April 1959-March 1960.

“The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley began in November, 1953 as a group hoping to become the Provisional League of Women Voters of Concord. At that time it was a requirement of the National LWV that local leagues be based in incorporated cities. The women who formed the leadership of this early league were residents of Concord although the membership spread quickly throughout central Contra Costa County. Actually it got started because Catherine Long, its first president wrote a lot of letters to the State Board of LWVC. An organizational meeting was held in Williams Elementary School in Concord and was attended by interested women who read about it [in] the local papers and by the Northern Organizational Vice President of LWVC. Two more meetings were held to get committees formed and to elect Catherine provisional president. We were then on our way.

“In the very early years there were times when members wondered if they could keep the group going, but somehow they did, and in 1959 the LWV-Concord became the LWV of Concord-Diablo Valley. Then at the 1964 annual meeting we changed our name once more and became the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley.”



[Dorothy’s history also includes a more detailed version of the beginnings of the LWVDV, a list of past presidents, and lists of the various studies done by LWVDV through 1984. It’s time for an update – old Voters and minutes are available as source material. Any volunteers?]

SHOW OF HANDS, PLEASE – PAY DUES ONLINE??

The LWVDV Board has been discussing an option to pay for membership online. Is this something you would use?

The only way we could do this would be to expand our Pay Pal account. The “Pro” side is, (1) the convenience—no check, no envelope, no stamp, and (2) any member can use Pay Pal. You don’t have to have a Pay Pal account. The “Con” part is the Pay Pal fee. For an individual membership of \$65, we would have to charge \$67.50. The LWVDV-earmarked part of your \$65 membership is only \$9, so we can’t afford to absorb the fee.



Before we proceed, we’d like some feedback on whether the convenience would be worth an extra \$2.50. If you have an opinion, please call 925-283-2235 and leave a message, or email Leslie via the LWVDV website.

RECENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

By Mary Fenelon, LWVDV Housing Chair

The continuing saga of central Contra Costa County communities sharing the housing needs for the less affluent has had mixed results:

In Orinda, Citizens Watch sparked much debate and finally set up a committee to propose their own version of the Housing Element for 2009-2014 after several very acrimonious meetings/hearings.

At the same time, Walnut Creek, in preparing for the eight year 2014-2022 Housing Element, held a public meeting attended by non-profit builders, residents and other interested parties. Walnut Creek City Council also just approved a \$1.7 million loan to help finance the 26-unit low/very-low income 1515 Riviera project close to BART. I spoke in favor of that project and it was duly noted in the *Walnut Creek Journal*.

In Lafayette, the September 30 Design Commission hearing for the 315-unit inclusionary multi-family Lafayette Terraces housing development on Deer Hill/Pleasant Hill Roads, ended in the Commission rejecting the design and asking the architect to come back with a totally new design in one month. They then proposed a 208-unit design, which the Design Commission has under advisement, but which probably will also be rejected. Also in Lafayette, Belle Terra, a 46-unit low income assisted living complex is now accepting applications, with opening expected December 1.

And in California legislation. SB-391 (DeSaulnier – the Housing Trust Fund), which would have added a \$75 fee on certain recorded real estate transactions to be set aside for an affordable housing trust fund, was carried over; DeSaulnier promises to strengthen the bill. AB 1229 (Atkins - Palmer Fix bill) which would have put inclusionary zoning ordinances for new market-rate rental developments back in the local jurisdictions, was vetoed by the Governor.



Housing bills of interest that the governor did sign were:

- AB 639 (Perez) places on the 2014 statewide primary election ballot a measure that will ask voters to repurpose \$600 million of existing bond authority for multifamily, transitional and supportive housing for veterans.

- AB 952 (Atkins) for Special Needs Households) – Allows the Tax Credit Allocation Committee to award state Low Income Housing Tax Credits to developments in a Qualified Census Tract or Difficult Development Area under certain conditions, if the project is also receiving federal LIHTC.

- AB 532 (Gordon) prevents the remaining balance of \$8.8 million in the Prop. 1C Local Housing Trust Fund Matching Grant Program from being swept in November and allows existing trust funds to apply if they raise matching funds.

DONATE

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

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!

Nancy Amini
Karrie Connors
Evelyn DeGraetz
Clayton Englar

Robert Fisher
Rachel Irelan
William Jakel
Elsa Ludwig

Holly Mariella
Sue Polgar
Alpha Quincy
Suzan Requa

Don & Sharon Ritchey
Patricia Snyder
Fred Sullivan
Janet Thomas

Welcome, Diane Griffiths of San Ramon and Veronica Jacknow, Walnut Creek!

MEMBERSHIP SURVEYS – Deadline Extended!

Thanks to all who have returned membership interest surveys! But are you saying, “Oops! I forgot!”? You’re in luck! Surveys will now be accepted until the end of November. Tailor your League experience to you – fill in those check boxes and mail the survey back!!

HELP WANTED

(Easy Jobs, Training Provided by Experts!)

- **Education Chair.** Convene regular discussion meetings.
- **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!

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley Voter

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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	
Nov 8	Ag Update Study Committee 3 pm LWVDV Office
Nov. 9	Water Forum 10:30 am CCWD 1331 Concord Ave Concord
Nov 12	Action Committee 2 pm LWVDV Office
Nov 14	Board Meeting 2 pm LWVDV Office
Nov 22	Food, Inc – Movie 2 pm LWVDV Office
Dec 1	A Place at the Table 7 pm Our Savior's Lutheran 1035 Carol Lane Lafayette