



**FILM: A Place at the Table**

**(The Crisis of 49 Million Hungry Americans)**

**Sunday, December 1, 2013, 6:15 – 9:00 pm**

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette  
Beverages and hors d'oeuvres followed by film and discussion.

Suggested donation \$10/person, \$15/family.

Please bring a can of healthy food to donate.

**AGRICULTURE UPDATE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, December 19, 2013, 3-5 pm**

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

**HOLIDAY GREETINGS! The League, and the Voter Editor, will be less active during December. Your next Voter will arrive at the beginning of February. Please add the January events list to your calendar now – we will try to send e-mail reminders.**

**ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, January 7, 2014, 2 p.m.**

**LWVDV BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday, January 9, 2014, 2 p.m.**

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

**HOW YOUR FOOD IS GROWN: A Panel Discussion**

**Thursday, January 9, 2014, 7:30 - 9 p.m.**

Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, CA

**AGRICULTURE UPDATE: First Discussion Meeting**

**Saturday, January 25, 12-2 pm**

Supervisor Andersen's Offices, 3338 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, CA

**All are welcome!**

## LEAGUE LEADER'S LETTER

*By Leslie Stewart, VP Administration*

Let's start this month's column with a round of applause for our Water Committee members – Carole Woods, Janet Thomas and Martha Goralka – and their able assistant Jan Howe. These members were responsible for the very successful Water Forum on November 9, which was attended by 30 League members, friends, and elected officials. All were treated to an informative presentation and some lively Q&A.

Next up, our Agriculture Update Committee has begun an exciting schedule of information opportunities for members as we prepare for a March consensus meeting on this complicated topic. Be sure to check the calendar of events as well as the background materials in this Voter.



“Survey says . . .”

- Members who responded to last month's question about using Paypal to pay dues were generally favorable, especially if using Paypal was optional. The fee was not a deterrent for most.
- Janet Thomas has been compiling the results of the member surveys. One interesting finding – LWVDV members prefer weekday afternoons for meetings.

## OUR LEAGUE IN THE COMMUNITY

*By Carol Murota, LWVDV Boardmember*

### **Meeting with George Miller Staff on Carbon Tax:**

League members participated in a visit by the Contra Costa Chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) with Damian Alarcon, Field Representative for Congressman George Miller's office, to discuss carbon tax-rebate legislation. This supports the LWVUS position on reducing carbon emissions. Marti Roach, CCL Chapter leader and LWVDV member, has led the strategy to build local support.

Damian confirmed Representative Miller's support for a carbon tax. Sadly, he also confirmed the inability of the current Congress to pass meaningful legislation despite clear support for specific issues from their constituents. A carbon tax is one of these issues lacking traction. CCL will continue to strategize on local action. LWVUS continues to follow the issue as well.

### **Money in Politics Coalition Action:**

The LWV-Livermore Amador Valley League has joined LWVDV as part of the growing \$\$\$Out People In Politics coalition. Their first action was a very well attended Money in Politics forum organized by Joe Ely. A member of the \$\$\$ Out! Coalition, Jay Costa, of Rootstrikers and Maplight, outlined ways to use Maplight and other internet resources to track the flow of money in the political arena. LWVDV Action Vice President Lee Lawrence clarified the non-partisan role of the League and the flow of positions and actions from National LWV to our local League work.

# LWVUS AGRICULTURE POSITION UPDATE ACTIVITIES

## **FILM: *A Place at the Table*, December 1**

In Contra Costa County, 1 in 5 children and 1 in 6 adults do not have enough food to eat. Meanwhile, the food stamp program is about to take a cut in funding. What can be done?



This documentary was a nominee for the Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize. The showing is hosted by LWVDV, The Urban Farmers, and Our Savior's Lutheran Church. Please bring a can of healthy food to donate. Suggested donation is \$10/person or \$15 per family.

Join us Sunday, December 1, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Reception with beverages and hors d'oeuvres starts at 6:15, film at 7 pm followed by discussion.

## **LWVDV Ag Update Study Committee Meeting, December 19.**

Our next planning meeting is Thursday, December 19, from 3-5 pm in the LWVDV Boardroom at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd #14.

## **How Your Food Is Grown: Challenges and Sustainability, January 9**

Farming has changed a great deal in the past few decades. Do you know the impacts of new techniques and regulations on food production? What's in the Farm Bill being discussed in Congress? This panel discussion will help to bring you up to speed.



Speakers will include Margaret Reeves, PhD, a soil ecologist with Pesticide Action Network, and Darryl Wong, Research Land Manager at UCSC's Agroecology Farm.

January 9, 7:30 to 9:00 pm, Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

## **Ag Update Discussion Meetings – Bring a Friend!**

The topics for the Agriculture Update are substantial and sometimes controversial – US farm policies, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and sustainability. In preparation for the consensus on updating the LWVUS Agriculture position, all LWV members and friends are invited to our discussion sessions.

## *Agriculture Update, continued from page 3*

Sessions 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 or Saturday March 15**, from **11 am – 2 pm** (location TBD).

## **AG UPDATE BACKGROUND READING:**

The LWVUS position on Agriculture was created in 1988 (see page 6). At the last national convention, an update process was approved. The scope of the study is as follows:

The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on: 1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.



We encourage you to read the study materials, attend meetings, and provide input into the consensus process once we receive the consensus questions. Input from our consensus meeting in March will be forwarded to the national level where it will be combined with input from Leagues across the country, and the updated position will be voted on at the LWVUS Convention in June.

To get an overview of the study, recommended Study Readings and optional/ suggested readings, go to the LWVUS website, <http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/agriculture-update>. "Required" readings available so far are in three sections -- for each required section, click on the More arrow then scroll down to Available Downloads. Here's a brief selection from each section:

### **1 . Overview of Key Agencies Supporting and Regulating Food and Agriculture**

More than half of our country's private land is used for agriculture. The choices farmers make in managing those lands affect the quality of our waters, the ability to feed our people and the future of the land itself. Those choices to a large extent are influenced by the actions of the federal government through the departments and agencies that provide support to farmers and consumers in a variety of ways, promulgate regulations to ensure safe, nutritious food and to protect the environment, and enable competitive markets. This section briefly describes the responsibilities and programs of those federal entities.

### **2. United States Department of Agriculture**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its agencies develop, implement, and administer policy and programs related to farming, agriculture, nutrition, food safety, land management natural resources, forestry, and rural development. The actual program content and budget of the USDA is determined by the Farm Bill, which is generally reauthorized by

*Agriculture Update, continued from page 4*

Congress every five years. With its broad reach, USDA agencies impact multiple areas of the LWV Agriculture Update. (This section includes an explanation of the Farm Bill.)

### **3. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

The US EPA is the Federal regulatory agency responsible for protecting the environment. The EPA addresses general concerns of environmental pollution and reviews and registers toxic materials both at the level of use and as residues in food, air and water. Agriculture is impacted in many ways by EPA regulations.

Please continue to check the website for papers in the three areas-- Federal Agencies that deal with Agriculture issues, Agriculture Technology and Agriculture Financing. There are also multi-media resource links on the website that you may enjoy.

Also you can request readings via email or in printed form (if electronic not possible): contact Ashley (you can call the LWVDV office and leave a message for her).

## **News from LWV California**

### **Our Bills: What Passed, Failed or Moved On?**



At the end of September, Governor Brown finished signing or vetoing the bills sent to him before the legislature went on hiatus. Overall, 26 bills supported by the LWVC were sent to the Governor; he signed 19 of them! [Read the report on all 26 bills.](#)

We are disappointed that the Governor vetoed SB 3 (Yee and Lieu), one of our priority Money in Politics bills, which would have begun modernizing the Cal-ACCESS online campaign and lobbying disclosure system and required online training of campaign treasurers. On the positive side, the Governor acknowledged the great need for an upgraded Cal-ACCESS and directed his administration to work on improved campaign disclosure.

***Prepare for 2014 League action by signing up for [LWVC Action Alerts](#).***

### **Smart Voter – a Smart New Look!**

Amid the frenzy of this November's election, the League entered a brand new era in online information with the launch of Smart Voter's "Next Generation" website. In addition to offering you a [personalized ballot](#) in a concise format (easy to use on mobile devices!) the Next Generation platform also supports valuable new content drawn from both League sources and a growing array of media and nonprofit organization partners. These include streaming videos of candidate forums, recorded audio news stories, interactive graphics and more. If you didn't check it out earlier, go to [m.smartvoter.org](http://m.smartvoter.org) now and enjoy!

## **LWV Statement of Position on Federal Agriculture Policy, 1988:**

The LWVUS believes that federal agriculture policies should promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers, farms that are economically viable, farm practices that are environmentally sound and increased reliance on the free market to determine prices.

**SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE.** Federal policy should encourage a system of sustainable, regenerative agricultural production that moves toward an environmentally sound agricultural sector. This includes promoting stewardship to preserve and protect the country's human and natural agricultural resources.



**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.** Agricultural research, development and technical assistance should continue to be a major federal function. Resources should be targeted to developing sustainable agricultural practices and addressing the needs of mid-size farms.

**AGRICULTURAL PRICES.** The LWVUS supports an increasing reliance on the free market to determine the price of agricultural commodities and the production decisions of farmers, in preference to traditional price support mechanisms.

**AGRICULTURE AND TRADE.** U.S. efforts should be directed toward expanding export markets for our agricultural products while minimizing negative effects on developing nations' economies. Consistent with the League's trade position, multilateral trade negotiations should be used to reduce other countries' barriers and/or subsidies protecting their agricultural products.

**FARM CREDIT.** Farmers should have access to credit with reasonable terms and conditions. Federally provided farm credit is essential to maintaining the viability of farm operations when the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the credit farmers need.

Of these policies, the League believes the most essential for the future of agriculture are: encouraging sustainable agriculture; providing research, information and technical assistance to agricultural producers; and increasing reliance on the free market to determine prices.

## **GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT – NOW AVAILABLE!**

The LWVC publication, *Guide to California Government*, has arrived in the LWVDV office. Copies are available to LWV members for \$15 – checks should be made out to LWVC - Education Fund. We will be distributing some copies to schools, libraries and elected officials. If you know someone who should have a copy, please let Leslie know.

**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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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!

- |                |                   |                  |                    |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| June Bedford   | Susan Christie    | Peggy Hall       | Caroline Moyer     |
| Jean Blaser    | Arthur Clarke III | Jan & Robt. Howe | Lillian Ruano      |
| June Boschin   | Ann Flynn         | Peggy Huston     | Elizabeth Williams |
| Phyllis Ceaser | Cynthia Gonzales  | Cynthia Landy    | Margaret York      |

**Welcome, New Members:** Baika Pratt, Jeffrey Heaton, Rachel Dippel, Barbara Coenen, Marcia Cannon, Cheri Smith and Patricia Shanahan – thanks for joining!

**Welcome back,** Barbara Wille!

**Education – Who Cares?**  
Lots of LWV members are interested in Education – we have the member surveys to prove it – so why is there no Education Discussion Group to inform members about issues like the Common Core curriculum, changes in state testing, and school finances?  
The answer? We are still looking for that certain someone to kickstart meetings on this topic. These could be occasional forums, or a monthly get-together with a single speaker or topic. The list of interested members is available from the membership survey, and speakers shouldn't be hard to find – starting with Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla, who wrote the law changing the standardized test schedule. Some LWVDV members have extensive backgrounds on school boards or as educators, and valuable contacts within the local schools which could contribute to committee discussions.  
If you are willing to chair (or co-chair) an Education Committee for LWVDV, please call the LWVDV office, 925-283-2235 or send an e-mail to [info@lwvdv.org](mailto:info@lwvdv.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**

- Dec 1** **A Place at the Table**  
 6:15 pm Our Savior's Lutheran  
 1035 Carol Lane  
 Lafayette
- Dec 19** **Ag Update Study Comm.**  
 3-5 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Jan 7** **Action Committee**  
 2-4 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Jan 9** **Board Meeting**  
 2-4 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Jan 9** **Ag Panel Discussion**  
 7:30 pm Lafayette Library
- Jan 25** **Ag Update Discussion**  
 Noon-2 pm 3338 Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
 Lafayette
- Feb 1** **Bay Area League Day**  
 9:30-2 MetroCenter, Oakland