



IMPORTANT DATES:

Saturday, April 23
Earth Day
(see page 7)

Saturday, May 7
LWV Bay Area
Convention
9:30 am - noon
San Mateo

Saturday, May 21
Third Saturday: Water
3 – 4:30 pm
Concord Library
2100 Salvio St.

Tuesday, June 7
Primary Election

Saturday, June 11
LWVDV Annual Meeting
Speaker: Helen Benjamin,
Chancellor, Contra Costa
Community Colleges
10am – noon
Lafayette Community Ctr.
500 St. Mary's Rd,
Lafayette

June 16-19
LWVUS Convention
Washington, DC

Third Saturday Meeting
Saturday, April 16, 2016

Higher Education
Consensus Meeting



The LWVDV Higher Education Consensus committee has been meeting for the past six months to study important issues having to do with higher education.

Committee members will give a presentation and lead the general membership in a discussion. Then members will come to consensus on questions based on the material. Member input and opinions are important so that we can submit a report that reflects our local League's views. *More information, page 3.*

12:00 – 4:30 pm
(note longer time!)
Cedar Room
Lafayette Community Center
500 St Mary's Rd., Lafayette

League and non-League members welcome! But only League members will be part of consensus decisions.

Light refreshments served



LEAGUE LEADER'S LETTER

By Ann Flynn, LWVDV President

Your League continues its fast-paced work in Contra Costa County. Read **Gwen Watson's** article on planning for June Primary televised forums at CCTV studios (*page 3*). There will be plenty of roles where we need volunteers, so don't be shy about contacting Gwen to offer an hour (or more). You'll meet candidates, see democracy in action and witness our excellent public partnership working together to educate voters. We are a well-oiled machine! We owe a big THANK YOU to Gwen for all her work over the years that brings us to this demonstration of excellence; we won an award at last year's California LWV Convention for our voter service activity. And watch for news from **Marian Shostrom** on the brand new Voters' Edge for online candidate information. Marian needs help--at your most convenient time and place!

Earth Day

For Earth Day this year, we've joined the Interfaith Climate Action Network (ICAN) with a table on April 23 at their event in Walnut Creek (*page 7*). Learn more about the event here: <http://uuoakland.org/events/earth-day-interfaith-gathering-unites-for-action-on-climate/> If you would like to join **Audrey Albrecht** at the table to chat up LWVDV, just contact Audrey. Let me know if you need her contact info.

Programs

Our March 19 program on "Health Care in Contra Costa" was well attended and provided information about the status of health care in the county. Yes, ACA (Obama Care) helped to increase numbers of insured residents, but much more remains to be done. The audience was attentive, and asked insightful questions of our panel of four medical experts. Kudos to **Janet Thomas** and her able team for arranging this timely presentation.



Our April 16 program meeting will be the Higher Education Study Consensus Meeting (*page 5*). **Carol Murota** and her committee have spent many hours studying the issues. At this April meeting, LWVDV members will hear the facts and come to consensus on how we want our views explained to LWVC. You don't need to have attended the many study sessions, but please come with an open mind and be ready to discuss the important issues surrounding higher education in California. Our input will then be sent to Sacramento.

Volunteers Needed:

We would like to put together a team to plan and host the June 11 Annual Meeting. Location is secured; speaker is confirmed; shopping list prepared from last year. If you are able to be there on June 11 and want to help plan the event, contact me. We need just a few good women to pull this off! (no prejudice intended--a few good men will do just fine!) Thank you!

In League,
Ann Flynn
info@LWVDV.org

VOTER SERVICE

Televised Roundtable Team Holds Kickoff Meeting

Gwen Watson, LWVDV Voter Service Chair

Diablo Valley League members Ann Flynn, Marian Shostrom, and Gwen Watson met on March 23 at CCTV with Paul Burgarino, Contra Costa Elections Department Community Outreach Director, and Betsy Burkhart and Chris Verdugo, CCTV Director and Production Manager respectively, to begin making plans for a series of televised Roundtables for the June 7 Primary. LWV West County will participate but was unable to attend due to a previous commitment.

The group agreed to hold **12 televised Roundtables:** Board of Supervisors, District 3 and 5 (no contest in District 2); Assembly Districts 11, 14, and 15; U.S. Representative, Districts 5, 9, 11, and 15; and State Senate, Districts 3, 7, & 9.



Tentative filming dates of April 13-15 or April 27-29 are being considered.

Assigning moderators for the roundtables will be on the agenda of the March 30 team meeting. Diablo Valley League has proposed Steve Weir as a moderator. He has expressed a willingness to do it. His answer will depend upon his schedule and whether he has endorsed anyone yet. In the meantime a working list of possible moderators for November is being created.

Paul Burgarino will send us contact information so we can begin inviting the candidates to participate in the Roundtables.

Diablo Valley members who signed up to be timers at the Roundtables will be called once the filming dates are decided. Marian Shostrom will coordinate Voter's Edge for Contra Costa and looks forward to West County's Voter's Edge leader joining her and other LWVDV members Sue Brandy, Suzan Requa, and Carol Murota on the Voter's Edge team. Office Manager Barbara Coenen has agreed to help with follow-up communications. Ann Flynn and Gwen Watson, with the assistance of Sharon Burke and Suzan Requa, will organize the Roundtable formats, contact the candidates, and will be at CCTV on filming days supervising the candidates behind the scenes.

Videos of the Roundtables will be available through links on Voter's Edge.

Voter's Edge California

Marian Shostrom, VEC County Co-Chair

Voter's Edge California is the next generation of Smart Voter. A joint project of the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund (LWVCEF) and [MapLight](#), [Voter's Edge California](#) (VEC) is a comprehensive, nonpartisan online guide to elections covering federal, state, and local races in California. It will be up and running for the June 7th Primary.

In one place, voters will be able to:

- Access their full, personalized ballot by entering their address
- Get in-depth information on candidates, measures, and who supports them
- View candidate biographies, top priorities, answers to questions, photos, policy videos, endorsements, and detailed information about who funds their campaigns

(Voter's Edge, continued)

- View unbiased explanations of ballot measures; find out who supports, opposes, and funds them
- Check where, when, and how to vote, including information on their local polling locations
- Share information about the election with friends and family

MapLight obtains its campaign finance data from the bulk files provided by the **Federal Election Commission (FEC)** for federal candidates and the **California Secretary of State** for state-level candidates. The data is processed, cleaned, and updated daily to include both new filings and amendments to previous filings.

If you want to join the LWVDV Voter's Edge Team (add data, make phone calls—everything can be done from home), please email Marian Shostrom at info@lwvdv.org.

NEWS FLASH: County Announces Regional Early Voting!



Contra Costa County voters can now receive and cast their ballots at seven Regional Early Voting sites throughout the county the week before Election Day.

The program will debut on May 31st, a week ahead of the June 7th Primary Election. **All** registered Contra Costa voters will be able to vote at **any** of the locations. They will be open from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm Tuesday May 31st through Friday June 3rd, and 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Saturday, June 4th.

Contra Costa County is adding this third option for voting in addition to voting by mail and voting at the polls on Election Day.

Regional Early Voting sites are structured so that any registered Contra Costa voter can vote at any location. For example, a Concord resident who works at Bishop Ranch in San Ramon can vote at the site in either of those cities.

The sites are geographically balanced and are located in convenient and accessible locations.

- Prewett Water Park Multi-Purpose Room, 4701 Lone Tree Way, Antioch
- Bay Hills Community Church, 4555 Hilltop Dr., Richmond
- Lafayette Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
- San Ramon Community Center at Central Park, 12501 Alcosta Blvd., San Ramon
- Pittsburg City Hall, 65 Civic Ave., Pittsburg
- The Salvation Army Church, 3950 Clayton Road, Concord

In addition to the Regional Voting Center sites, vote-by-mail voters can continue to drop off their ballots at "CoCo Vote-N-Go" drop-off boxes at all 19 city hall buildings and the County Administration building on 651 Pine Street, Martinez.

For more information on Regional Early Voting, visit www.cocovote.us.

LWVC Higher Education Study

Carol Murota, Study Chair

Taxes filed April 15! Now, April 16, you can turn your attention to the state of California's higher education system. The State League has sent consensus questions from which we will build the foundation for an overdue state-wide position on California's higher education system. Join the conversation on **Saturday, April 16** from **noon to 4:30 pm** in the Cedar Room at the Lafayette Community Center.



Your responses to the consensus questions are important. They will allow the League to work toward effective higher education legislation and help keep California the 8th largest economy in the world. On April 16 we will discuss higher education grouped by the following topics: access, funding and affordability, preparedness, and barriers and opportunities. We will consider questions like, should campuses mirror the socio-economic and ethnic range of the state?,

what purpose does higher education serve?, who should pay?, are current high school graduates ready for college?, where do life long learners fit into the picture?

You can read all of the questions using this link to the State League website:

<https://lwvc.org/sites/lwvc.org/files/downloads/studies/Higher-Education-Study-Consensus-Questions.pdf>. The State Study Group also provides lots of background material on the website as well as a helpful power point.

This is your chance to voice your opinions. Bring your questions and ideas!

Action: LWV Diablo Valley

[Editor's Note: We regularly discuss issues from our observer reports at our Action Committee meetings.]

Observer Corps: Danville

Sally Germain, Danville Observer

The Danville Town Council held a Workshop with members of its four or five commissions. I learned that this is held once a year. I stayed for one hour and read the thick packet explaining the important events in the coming year.



I also went to a "forum" at the CCTA offices to hear about the ABAG-MTC discussions. It was led by the staff director of the merger committee. I learned mostly that on March 25 the meeting would be talking about the most important of a range of subjects selected by the merger consultants. Julie Pierce (Clayton City Councilmember and President of ABAG) was present and suggested that there was so much to cover in the merger talks that they will probably go on beyond June 30, the date MTC's financing for ABAG's planning section was to end. On March 25 I saw the main paper presented for discussion on my computer; it was the financial burdens held by each agency. It was apparent that MTC would face a larger one from ABAG due to overhead, etc. It was not an optimistic start of the series of meetings they are to confront each month.

Observer Corps: Lafayette

Carol Murota, LWVDV Vice-President and Lafayette Observer

On Monday March 14, the Lafayette City Council passed the ordinance allowing Lafayette to join Marin Clean Energy. This gives Lafayette more choice regarding their energy provider. Residents will be able to purchase 100% green energy, stay 100% with PG&E or use both providers. Both the city of Lafayette and its residents win, this will greatly reduce carbon emissions and our carbon footprint.

Action: LWVUS

Restore the Voting Rights Act – You Can Help!



Did you see the news about the long lines to vote in the primary in Maricopa County, Arizona? Did you know that this would not have happened if the Voting Rights Act still required Maricopa County officials to get permission to reduce polling places by two-thirds for this election?

Visit the LWVUS website to send a letter to your Congressional representatives to support restoring the full effectiveness of the VRA. Here's the link:

http://participate.lwv.org/c/10065/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=11453

League Opposes SENSE Act and BRICK Act in U.S. House

The League joined other partner organizations on letters to the U.S. House in opposition of the [SENSE Act \(H.R. 3797\)](#) and the [BRICK Act \(H.R. 4557\)](#). These bills would weaken health safeguards for Americans on behalf of special interests and result in more air pollution and health hazards.

Excerpts from the letters:

“The SENSE Act would pick winners and losers under EPA’s signature air pollution program, the Cross State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR), by favoring waste coal-burning power plants at the expense of other in-state coal power plants and the public. This would turn the neutral, performance-based legal standard maintained for 39 years under the Clean Air Act into blunt political favoritism and weaker standards, while replacing existing state decisions with new federal mandates.”

And:

“...the Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2016, or BRICK Act (H.R. 4557), ... is merely the latest in an emerging trend of congressional efforts to delay needed health protections for as long as polluters can keep a legal case alive.

“Not only would the BRICK Act delay needed health protections, exposing Americans to more deadly toxic air pollution, but the BRICK Act would also insert the legislative branch into ongoing litigation and interfere with the authority of our judicial branch of government.”

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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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS & UPDATES

If your name appears below, then it is time to renew your membership in April. Please use the form on the back page. If you have already renewed, thank you! *(We send three notices before deleting but remember: expiration date does not change even if payment is later.)*

Jane Russell

Muriel Sonne

Lori Stevens

Who do you know who should be a League member? Invite them to join!



We're on Facebook! Visit us and LIKE our Facebook page. <http://tinyurl.com/of4o2pj>

And Twitter! Follow us on Twitter -- @LWVDiabloValley

Please help us grow our social media network!



News You Can Use
Did you know that you can use e-scrip when you are dining in, not just when dining out?
E-scrip recently added Lucky, Food Maxx and Lucky Market to the list of participating merchants.
Carole Woods says, "It's pretty interesting to check out the merchants listed on the web site. "

Earth Day 2016
Linking Our Faith to Accelerated Action
Presented by the Interfaith Climate Action Network
1:00 to 4:00 pm
Saturday, April 23rd
Walnut Creek United Methodist Church
1543 Sunnyvale Ave., Walnut Creek
Panel Discussion, Workshops, Networking
Free; donations gladly accepted. Refreshments provided. RSVP appreciated but not required at ICANcontracostacounty@gmail.com.



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 500 St. Mary's Road, #14
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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
- \$ _____ **TOTAL** of ALL above enclosed to LWVDV.
(LWVDV is a 501(c)3 organization. Dues and donations to LWVDV are tax-deductible. Tax ID number supplied on request.)

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
 MONTHLY MEETINGS**

- Apr. 12** **Action Committee**
 1-3 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Apr. 14** **Board Meeting**
 1-3 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Apr. 16** **Consensus Mtng.**
 12-4:30pm Higher Ed
 Lafayette
- May 10** **Action Committee**
 1-3 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- May 12** **Board Meeting**
 1-3 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- May 21** **Third Saturday**
 3-4:30 pm Water
 Concord