



# THE VOTER

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 8, No. 10

December 2003/January 2004

### STANDING-ROOM-ONLY TURNOUT FOR USA PATRIOT ACT FORUM

There were more than 150 people in the Santa Rosa City Council Chamber for a very informative discussion. Pictured are Moderator Betty Ann Bruno, Attorney and ACLU Board Member Judith Volkart, Asst. U.S. Attorney and Chief of the Anti-terrorist Section Mark Zanides, and SSU Political Science Professor Dr. David McCuan.

Photograph is courtesy of Craig Scheiner.




**COME TO OUR HOLIDAY PARTY**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7**  
**2:00 TO 4:00 PM**  
**SEE P. 5 FOR DETAILS.**

**Forum Meeting on January 17, 2004**  
*Update on voting systems and resources*  
See p. 6 for details.

Please note that this issue of the VOTER is extended over two months. The next issue will be February 2004 and the deadline for article submission is January 10, 2004.

Happy Holidays,  
-The Editors

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**SANTA ROSA BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Consistent with our transportation position in the County and State, which promotes alternatives to single occupant vehicles such as increased number of bicycle lanes, the League has a seat on the Santa Rosa City Council's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

You have seen "Share the Road" signs, but those have been county signs. Now the City is ready to put up similar signs in most needed spots around town. The City has also been able to procure grants to help finance the Prince Memorial Greenway and Pierson Reach, which will connect bike paths. (If you like to bike and haven't tried that area, please do. It begins at 6th and Pierson and is tucked behind a house at that corner.) Bike lane striping has been done on Calistoga Road and Summerfield Road and plans are also for Hoen Ave., Franklin Ave., North Street and Sonoma Avenue.



The Committee is recommending to the Junior College an overpass for pedestrians and bicyclists on Highway 101 connecting to the campus. Also being considered are the problems of bike parking for commuters downtown and at schools. A survey of bicyclists has been done to determine their needs. And still there is much more to do to make continuous cross-town bike lanes and to build and maintain bike paths.

**Beth Martinez,**  
LWVSC Rep. to B/PAC

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of Sonoma County**

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**2004 SONOMA/MARIN ENTERTAINMENT  
BOOKS FOR SALE – A GREAT GIFT IDEA!**

Save on dinner, shopping and entertainment while earning dollars for our League.

We are selling the 2004 Sonoma/Marin Entertainment Books for only \$25. Participating merchants include Airport Cinemas, River's End Restaurant, The Cantina, Topolos Russian River Vineyards Restaurant, Sweet River Grill, Papa Murphy's Pizza and many others.

Please call or email to arrange for payment and pickup.

**Susan Gorin**  
525-8335  
gorins@sonic.net

**LATE VOTER?**

Some of you reported that the November VOTER did not arrive until November 7. The VOTER team strives to have the VOTER delivered by the first day of each month by allowing the postal service 6 days for delivery. Usually this is sufficient except in very busy bulk mailing periods like the end of October in an election year. Such late delivery should not be a common occurrence.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was not many years ago that I was dragged kicking and screaming into the world of computers and 21<sup>st</sup> century communication. Through patience, guidance and instruction I slowly succumbed to the subtle seduction of my computer. First I decided that it was much easier to correct my many mistakes with a word processor than it was with a standard typewriter. Then I sent emails, received messages, filed addresses, looked up topics and so my discoveries continue. For instance, have you clicked on to the local League website, <http://sonco.ca.lwvnet.org>? Not only is our local current VOTER there, it's in full color. This site also has the monthly League calendar of events, League positions, local action and links to the websites of the 9 cities of the County as well as to the County itself.



"...I was dragged kicking and screaming into the world of computers..."

As was mentioned in the last VOTER, the website [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) recently received an award. This site gives you all kinds of information on elections, all the way from where you go to vote to who are the candidates running for office, what are the issues on the ballot and what were the results of past elections. The Santa Rosa City Council recently voted to provide a link to SmartVoter on the City website. The Bay Area League at [www.lwvba-ca.org](http://www.lwvba-ca.org) is made up of Leagues from the 9 Bay Area counties. There is a link to the *Bay Area Monitor*, a most informative bimonthly newsletter that addresses regional issues and is strong on transportation issues. So after you have discovered all the local stuff you can move on up and out to state and national League. Click on to <http://ca.lwv.org> to discover what is going on at the State level. This site gives you the issues that the State League is working on, the status of

### MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

bills that League is following, analysis of legislation of interest, the positions of League, information on contacting your legislators at the state and national levels, as well as action alerts.

The next step up, of course, is the LWV of the United States website. The web address is really simple, [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). Go here to read about what the National League is doing and the national issues that League is speaking to. There is also a link to current action alerts on the national level. These alerts refer to issues such as the Arctic wilderness, clean air, and election reform legislation as well as information on which representative to contact regarding current legislation. Here again, there are links to the various interests and positions of the League. There is also a link to the LeagueE-News.

In addition to all of these sites, there is a League Topics Listserv where members throughout the country discuss current topics, ask for help with organizing forums, and request advice on a wide range of topics. A current hot topic is the pros and cons of paper trails for voting machines - DREs. To subscribe, send a blank email to [lwvcnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:lwvcnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

You can also subscribe to the LWVC News, which sends out news bulletins about State issues from time to time. To subscribe, send a blank email to: [lwvcnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:lwvcnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

Happy surfing!

Nancy Richards

### HOW TO ENTER WEB ADDRESSES

To go to the websites mentioned in Nancy's article, simply enter the address into your browsers address window. Web addresses, also called URLs (Uniform Resource Locators) technically all begin with <http://>. However, web browsers allow you to omit this.

If you are reading the on-line version of the VOTER, websites within the text are *hyperlinks* meaning that you only need to click on the text to open the website.

## STATE AND LOCAL FINANCES

**Delegates to the LWVC convention in May chose State and Local Finances (SLF) as one of their Issues for Emphasis. Excerpts from the goal for this emphasis state, "The education focus will include educating our members, encouraging local Leagues to engage in community education activities, monitoring current proposals, and encouraging public involvement. Citizen education on the state budget process and state/local fiscal relationships and proposals for improvement will be a focus. The action agenda will include tracking legislation and advocacy in the state legislature based on the LWVC position and legislative priority." This is the third in a series of articles on this important issue from LWVC.**

## What About Tax Expenditures?

Tax expenditures were instigated as a special tax treatment to achieve particular social purposes. They may serve worthy goals and in California currently include the deduction for mortgage interest expense, sales tax exemption for food, bank and corporation tax exemptions for employer contributions to health plans, and rate reductions for small corporations.



A tax expenditure is defined as a revenue loss which occurs because of deductions, credits, exclusions and preferential rates in a tax code. Tax expenditures shrink the tax base, and several other aspects of tax expenditures are also problematic to the budget process.

Tax expenditures are enacted with a simple majority vote of the legislature. To repeal a tax expenditure, however, requires a two-thirds majority vote, in that repeal is considered a tax increase. Rarely is a tax expenditure put in place with a sunset clause; with little review, no one really knows if the expenditure's desired effects are being reached.

Money not collected is not a part of the budget, so once in place, tax expenditures no longer appear as part of any budget document—they are "off budget." Yet, they account for more than \$20 billion in taxes not collected.

The November 2004 ballot may have an initiative measure known as the Corporate Tax Accountability Act that will address some of the more egregious components of California's tax expenditure practices.

## THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

### Education Fund:

Jean Schulz

### General Fund:

Anne-Therese Ageson

Joy Reynolds: in honor of Phyllis and Bob Clement's birthdays

Gladys Sawyer

Martha Bentley

Patricia Wiggins

Linda Curry

Florence Buckley

Paulene Goddard

Lynda Hungerford

## Join the Gang – Become a member of the Charles M. Schulz Museum



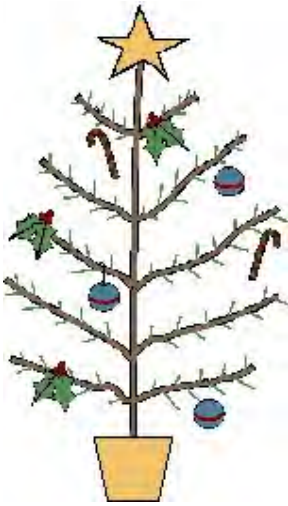
We have a world-class museum as an attraction in our county. Memberships are important to sustain the museum, and every membership level rewards YOU!

Call Maite @ 579-4452 ext. 108  
or visit the Museum web site:  
[www.SchulzMuseum.org](http://www.SchulzMuseum.org)  
Click on Membership.



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## HOLIDAY GET-TOGETHER



**One of the best things about the holiday season is the many get-togethers with friends.**

But it's a busy, busy time, so, be sure to mark your calendars now for one of the most festive holiday get-togethers ever on Sunday, December 7, from 2-4 PM. Member Sandy Benson has offered her lovely home in Petaluma for the occasion with plenty of neighborhood parking. It will be the perfect opportunity for our faithful long-time members to meet

and welcome our newer members, many of whom have just recently joined the League.

We are hoping that all members, their partners and guests who are interested in the League will join us. Please bring your favorite savory or sweet to share. Phyllis Clement and Janie Hawker are coordinating the "Silent Auction" items. This is a great way to recycle lightly used items and to find some super stocking stuffers!

Please help with the following:

- Get the word out quickly. Talk with other members about the party date and refer them to the VOTER for details.
- The social will also be a SILENT AUCTION fundraiser featuring extra nice items suitable for gift giving.
- Please donate quality treasures and "white elephants" for the auction. Call Phyllis Clement, 823-0925 for info.
- Please bring a savory or sweet for the buffet table. Let us know what you will bring. Call Janie Hawker, 584-5210.

Since much of the worthwhile work of the League really is *WORK*, this is finally a chance to relax, catch our collective breaths and enjoy the holiday season with people who care about the things we care about. See you there!

### Directions to Sandy Benson's home:

- Highway 101 to Petaluma
- Exit Petaluma Blvd. North or Redwood Highway (depending on direction heading)
- Take Petaluma Blvd. N. toward downtown
- Right on Skilman Lane/Corona Rd.
- Left on Marshall Ave.
- Left on Chrisdumar Lane to #14

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION 11/10/03

### Local:

Gemma Ellinthorpe  
7560 Meadowlark Dr.  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
824-9657  
[gm@baycrossings.com](mailto:gm@baycrossings.com)

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Joan Neff  
9532 Clint Court  
Cazadero, CA 95421-9608

Paula Blaydes  
634 Scotland Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95409  
537-8727

David Cox  
Joining his wife, Myrtle

Joe Gilmore  
Joining his wife, Jeanne

### National:

Wendy Odlum  
3440 Moriconi Dr.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401-3910

## JANUARY FORUM MEETING: VITAL VOTING INFORMATION

January begins a year in which voters will decide the direction our country will take for many years to come. Not only the Presidency, but also many other offices and issues at all levels of government will be decided upon by those who vote.

In furtherance of the League's goal of encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government, our January 17 meeting will provide an update on voting systems and resources. It will include an introduction to the League's user friendly Smart Voter website which covers state and local candidates and issues. Another nonpartisan website that will be introduced is Project Vote Smart, which provides easy-to-access records and background information on over 40,000 federal incumbents and candidates.

This brown bag lunch meeting will be held in the spacious Regional Branch County Library Community Room, 100 Fairgrounds Drive (East Washington Street) in Petaluma from 12 noon to 2:30 PM. Directions are:

- From Highway 101 take E. Washington St. exit
- From the north, turn left onto E. Washington St.
- From the south, turn right onto E. Washington St.
- Just past the Fairgrounds, turn left into the Library parking lot

All members and interested persons are invited to attend. Call 781-9368 for more information.

Eve Roberson

VP Program

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDY GROUP

The International Relations study group meets the second Tuesday of the month in the Santa Rosa League office. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 9, 2003 at 12:00 noon. The topic planned for the Great Decisions discussion is: "European Integration. The European Union faces the impending challenge of balancing expansion with maintaining cooperation and security. How will the European Union balance its internal and external priorities?" Please feel free to bring current material from publications or invite anyone who is knowledgeable about the topic so we can learn more and add to our lively discussion.

On Tuesday, January 13, 2004, at 12:00 noon, the meeting will be held at Caroline Ramberg's home at 2191 Siesta Lane, Santa Rosa and the group will review the "National Opinion Ballot Report" published by the Foreign Policy Association which compiled opinion ballots from the 2003 topics discussed by study groups

around the country. The 2004 Great Decisions briefing books will be received in mid-January and distributed at that time to everyone who ordered a book.

We follow topics in the Great Decisions briefing book that is published by the Foreign Policy Association in New York City. It is a brown-bag lunch session. All members are welcome.

If anyone is interested in ordering the Great Decisions briefing book, you may do so by calling the Foreign Policy Association at 1-800-477-5836. The topics for 2004 are: (1) Media and Foreign Policy; (2) The Philippines; (3) Weapons of Mass Destruction; (4) The United States and Europe; (5) Diversity in Islam; (6) An American Overview; (7) Middle East Reform, and (8) Public Diplomacy. The cost of the briefing book is \$16.50.



If you have any questions, please contact Rosalie Gillmore at 769-8826 or Gillmore\_R@msn.com.

Rosalie Gillmore

## BOOK CLUB CORNER

If the topic is the economy, then the December book club selection is the place to start. On Thursday, December 18, at 10:30 AM, we will be discussing Paul Krugman's *The Great Unravelling: Losing Our Way in the New Century*.



Krugman is an economist who teaches at Princeton and a columnist for *The New York Times*. While his columns do appear sporadically in *The Press Democrat*, this book contains many new ones for those of us who do not take the *Times*. Krugman's credentials as an economist are impeccable—he won the John Bates Clark medal for the best American economist under 40. Be advised, on the other hand, that he is definitely partisan.

*The Great Unravelling* is an organized critique of President George W. Bush's policies.

We will meet at the home of Olive Horrell, 87 Greenrock Court, Santa Rosa. Bring a friend, and a suggestion for a book for January.

To learn what book we will read for January, consult the calendar on our website (<http://sonco.ca.lwvnet.org>) or call the office (546-5943).

Lynda Hungerford

## HELP NEEDED WITH MARCH 2004 ELECTIONS

It appears that the March ballot will contain some key candidate races and ballot measures in addition to the Presidential primary. Voters Service is already working to schedule forums and the Speakers Bureau to inform voters.

### Speakers Bureau

It is certain that key issues related to the California budget will come before the voters in March, and it is the role of the Speakers Bureau to provide impartial presentations of the Pros & Cons for each of these issues. In the past, a number of organizations have relied on the League to help their members understand the issues so they may cast an informed ballot.

We are planning training sessions so all League members who participate in the Speakers Bureau will have a good

understanding of the ballot measures included in their presentations. We will also help members new to the League understand the ways in which

Voters Service maintains an impartial, nonpartisan stance in these presentations. If there are many ballot measures and we have enough volunteers, we hope to have the speakers work in pairs. This could make the presentations livelier and would reduce the amount of preparation required by each speaker.

A number of LWVSC members have already indicated they would like to volunteer for the Speakers Bureau and present the Pros & Cons of the ballot measures again this year. There is no better way to really learn the issues than to teach them. Also, there is the satisfaction of helping voters make informed decisions.

If you would like to learn the issues and make one or more presentations about them, please contact the Voters Service Chair, Willard Richards, 575-7160 or Janie Hawker, 584-5210.

### Forums on Candidates and Ballot Measures

The League also sponsors forums at which candidates can present their platforms and answer questions. These forums are held when more than one candidate is seeking the same nomination or office. Also, the forums in Sonoma County usually focus on State Ballot Measures and local elections (including Representatives

and State Senators) instead of candidates running to represent everyone in the State or the Nation.

The work of many volunteers is required to present a successful forum. New League members can begin working at an introductory level, such as bringing the water bottles, timing the speakers, designing and printing fliers, etc. Also, local races for School Districts, Fire Districts, etc. provide an opportunity for new volunteers to play a key role in a forum in their community.

If you wish to participate in organizing and presenting forums, please contact the Voters Service Chair, Willard Richards.

Willard Richards

**“Voters Service is already working to schedule forums and the Speakers Bureau to inform voters.”**



An important role of Voters Service is voter registration. Pictured here are Dina Angress and Janie Hawker on duty at the Progressive Festival. The photograph was taken by Eve Roberson.

## MEMBER PROFILE

## “When is the next train?”



According to Alice Richardson who works part time for the California Welcome Center/Santa Rosa Convention and Visitors Bureau in the train depot at Railroad Square, that is one of the top five questions asked by visitors to the depot.

Richardson's own train arrived here in 1978, after she had successfully engineered a transfer within the Bell System from Central PA to Northern California. Upon arrival in Santa Rosa she found a “community town.” Since then, some things have changed, but others have not. Originally, she could see cows at the end of her street, now she sees over one hundred homes. She adds, “Santa Rosa has become a destination city over the years. We can't pull up the drawbridge; we need to manage growth instead. Being the community town it is, I know we will.” Richardson joined the League expecting it to provide an opportunity to learn more about the community and to become involved. She was not sidetracked.

In our League she has served as Secretary and Voters Service Chair. Now she volunteers in the League office and at various Voters Service functions. In the community, she volunteers at the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center and for the Sonoma County Film Commission.

In the past, she has served on the Commission on the Status of Women, the Santa Rosa Citizens Participation Task Force, and the Santa Rosa Community Action Team. She has graduated from the Santa Rosa Citizens Academy and from Leadership Rohnert Park, and she has volunteered as a Junior Achievement Mentor and as a Board Member of the Rohnert Park/Cotati Business Education Roundtable.

When she is not working at the train station or volunteering, she hikes, watches classic movies from the thirties and forties, and collects political memorabilia from national campaigns. Her collection, she hastens to add, is totally non-partisan. Favorite items from the collection include memorabilia from William Henry Harrison's presidential campaign and a button for Alf Landon featuring his signature Kansas sunflower.

Anyone who has worked with Richardson on a League project knows how adept she is at staying on track. Clearly others in the community have learned that as well. And our League Transportation Committee is determined that someday she will be able to tell visitors to her community town just when that next train is due.

Lynda Hungerford

## ACTION COMMITTEE NEWS

During the fall, the League has responded to several action alerts including the Climate Stewardship Act (S.139), which is an important step in the reduction of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. The ongoing threat of global warming seriously impairs public health, the economy, and wildlife.

The Help America Vote Act was passed and funded to help improve voting systems in the U.S. It requires states to protect voting rights through new federal requirements, including provisional ballots and statewide computerized voter lists.

The Action Committee heard reports on regional transportation in November. The League is represented in regional groups and one sector being discussed is transportation and the use of energy in future plans and its connections to climate protection and land use. George Ellman acts as our representative to the Bay Area League and Charles Aver represents us at the Sonoma County Transportation Authority Advisory Committee. The Action Committee will follow up with a program later in the year.

The Committee heard an updated report on the water document. This report is an educational document, which resulted from a two-year study on water issues in Sonoma County.

You are invited to attend the Action meeting at 10:00 AM on the third Tuesday of each month in the League office. It's a great way to find out what's going on in our county, our state, and our world.

Phyllis Stanley

VP Action

## NEW MEMBER EVENTS A BIG SUCCESS

Thanks to all who participated in the four new member “get acquainted as you get informed” events held in September and October. Attendees at the Petaluma, Sonoma, Healdsburg and Sebastopol meetings included members, prospective members, new members and interested guests. Sonoma County League board members welcomed the opportunity to meet face to face with those who do not always get to attend League meetings in Santa Rosa.

Local and county-wide issues came under discussion and ideas and suggestions for League action and procedures were offered and explained. Best of all was the sincere interest in League that everyone expressed. It was gratifying to see the number of new members who joined League at these meetings. Special appreciation goes to members who graciously opened their homes to these events: Eliza Meyn in Sonoma, the Scramaglia family in Healdsburg, Bob & Phyllis Clement in Sebastopol and Eve Roberson in Petaluma.

Janie Hawker

### BOARD BRIEFS

The following are the key points from the November 5, 2003 board meeting:


- Jack Dupre has been confirmed as a Board member with the portfolio of co-editor, with Marsha Dupre, of the VOTER.
- The Board heard from Linda Curry, who for many years has been our representative to Sonoma County Conservation Council, about the newly formed "Connectivity Project." The Board voted to endorse and support this project.
- Susannah Likins will organize the legislative interview with Assemblyman Joe Nation and will coordinate with the Marin County League.
- Most members have renewed their membership and the new Roster will soon go to print.
- The 4 membership "get togethers" organized by Janie Hawker were very successful and a number of guests joined the League.
- The Board heard plans for Susan Gorin to speak to new citizens about registration, voting, etc.
- The Board discussed plans for a holiday party on Dec. 7 for fun and fundraising.

Phyllis Clement  
Secretary

### THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

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(707) 523-4444



### League of Women Voters® of Sonoma County Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in the following areas:

Program \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Speakers Bureau \_\_\_\_\_ Social Policy \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Resources \_\_\_\_\_ Voters Service \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_

Cable TV \_\_\_\_\_ Smart Voter \_\_\_\_\_

Community Outreach \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I want to join the League of Women Voters. Enclosed is my check for dues. (\$49.00 for individual annual membership, \$70.00 for household, and \$35.00 for limited income. The membership year is July 1 to June 30.) Please mail check to LWV Sonoma County, 100 E Street, Suite 209, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Thank you.

## **DECEMBER/JANUARY CALENDAR**

[Click here to go to the on-line calendar.](#)