



# THE VOTER

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 11, No. 10

December/January 2007

### AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED FOR MIDWINTER BRUNCH AND FUNDRAISER



This social is always fun; try to bring a guest. Donations toward expenses appreciated but not required

Date and Time: Sunday January 14, 1:00 to 4:00 PM at the home of Alexandra and Dick Benson, 14 Chrisdumar Lane, Petaluma. There will be an elegant brunch and good conversation.

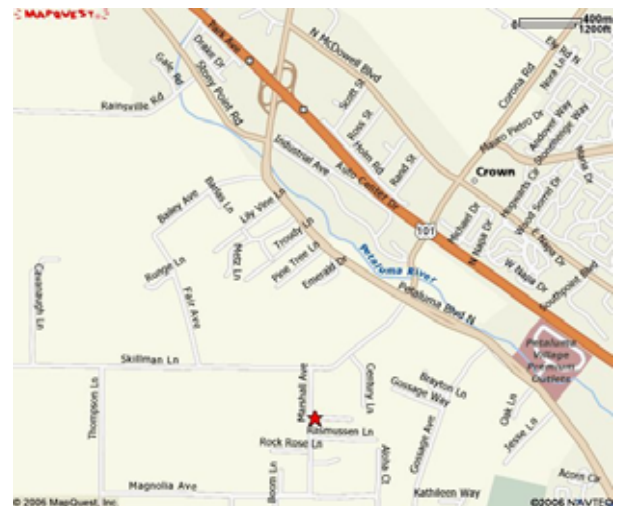
Following brunch we will have one of our intriguing auction fundraisers; the more interesting your donation the more fascinating the sale will be! Phone Phyllis Clement at 823-0925 to describe your contribution so we can prepare bid sheets and plan for an attractive layout.

Funds raised will go to the operation of the local League office.

We urge everyone to carpool; it's good for the environment!

Any questions call Janie Hawker 584-5210.

**Directions:** Coming from the North take Route 101 to Petaluma Blvd North, go south for about 1/2 mile to a traffic light and turn right (west) onto Skillman Lane. In about 1/4 mile at a stop sign take a left (south) onto Marshall. Shortly turn left (east) onto Chrisdumar. The phone number is 763-1629.



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Of Sonoma County**

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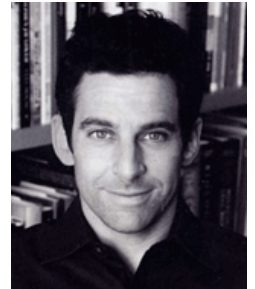
**VOTER Team:**

Helen Sundergill, VOTER Editor  
Marsha Vas Dupre  
May Huddleston  
Betty Keefauver  
Caroline Ramberg  
Nancy Richards

**BOOK CLUB CORNER**

League members and the public are invited to join the book group at 10:30 AM on Thursday, December 14 for a discussion of *Letter to a Christian Nation* by Sam Harris. The group will meet in the League office, Suite 209, 100 E Street, Santa Rosa. Please note that the December meeting is on the **second** instead of the usual third Thursday of the month.

*Letter to a Christian Nation* challenges the influence of faith on public life in our nation. Author Sam Harris, is a graduate in philosophy from Stanford University and has studied various religions and religious disciplines for 20 years. His earlier book, *The End of Faith*, received the 2005 PEN award for non-fiction. You can learn more about Harris and his books at his website, <http://www.samharris.org>.



The book list for the next six months can be downloaded in PDF format from the [calendar page](#) of the LWVSC Web site, <http://www.lwvsonoma.org>. Check the newsletter or the Web site for the place of a particular meeting, since, although the group usually meets in the office, occasionally it meets elsewhere.

If you have questions about the book group, please call or send me a message.

*Lynda Hungerford*  
539-5770  
[info@lwvsonoma.org](mailto:info@lwvsonoma.org)

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDY  
GROUP**

There will be **no** meetings in December and January. The next discussion group meeting will be on February 13, 2007, at 12:00 NOON in the Santa Rosa League office.

If anyone has a question about the group, please contact me at 769-8826.

*Rosalie Gillmore*

**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.

**“HEALTH CARE FOR ALL”  
CALIFORNIA**

Tuesday, Dec. 12 from 1-3 PM the League will hold a meeting regarding Single Payer Insurance at the Rohnert Park-Cotati Library. Opening the meeting will be a 20 minute video from the "One Care Now" organization followed by a short presentation by Susan Snow and Rudy Laco. Susan and Rudy are co-directors of the Sonoma Chapter of "Health Care for All" California. They will be able to answer questions from the audience. We will have holiday refreshments as this will be our only December meeting.

The library is located at 6250 Lynne Conde Way, which is described as being on the Rohnert Park Expressway just east of State Farm Drive. Hope to see you there!

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm still in awe of the tremendous amount of work accomplished by our Voter Service Committee! Every year brings new ideas and challenges to our League. One thing that would really help is for more of our members to step forward to participate in the elections. Please keep your eyes open for announcements about training sessions for some of the different activities we will be planning in the future.



As you are aware this is a combined December/January VOTER. Updates about meetings can be seen on our website, <http://www.lwvsonoma.org> which is the best place to keep up with new events. Preparation for our local program planning session is beginning. Please give some thought to issues you might like to discuss in the coming year. At the state level, LWVC is developing now a web-based program called GetActive. This program will give local Leagues a way to communicate with each other while they are reviewing program. It is believed that this will enrich the program planning process and also lead to forming coalitions of Leagues to work on issues to bring to the convention this spring. Watch the <http://www.LWVC.org> website for more information about this upcoming feature.

Bay Area League Day will be on Saturday, January 27 in San Mateo. The topic will be Regional Vision for Housing and Resource Protection. Please call George Ellman if you are interested in attending. See below.

Don't forget to come to our January fundraiser and theater party and bring your friends.

*Carol Ann Fontana-Cary*

## UPDATE FROM THE BAY AREA NOVEMBER 2006

### BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY

#### Vision for the Future of the Bay Area; Focus on Housing.

Saturday, January 27, 2007  
San Mateo County location  
Approx. 10 AM to 1 PM



Keynote John King, Urban Design writer, San Francisco Chronicle - Successful Smart Growth Design for the Bay Area

Panels:

Bay Area Focusing Our Vision project - Refining regional smart growth criteria, identifying Priority Development

Areas and Priority Conservation Areas, and schedule to confirm agreement by local agencies within the region.

New Round of Regional Housing Needs Allocations and Housing Element Updates information on legislative changes, criteria for local or sub-regional allocations of affordable housing, and schedule for Housing Element updates.

Final program will be available by the end of November on our website <http://www.lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org>. Cost will be \$10 per person, rsvp to Tam Hege, Treasurer at [treasurer@lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org](mailto:treasurer@lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org).

Please include this item in your next Voter and on your LWV Calendar. Plan to attend and get the word out.

Linda Craig, President  
LWV of the Bay Area  
[president@lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org](mailto:president@lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org)

## BOARD BRIEFS

NOVEMBER 7, 2006

President Carol Ann Cary announced that the Bay Area League would have a forum on Housing on January 27. She also explained that to prepare for our local Program Planning, the State League has a web based interactive program for members to exchange information. Our Program Planning meeting will be Saturday, February 24, 2007, 10:00 AM to NOON, at the Rohnert Park Library.

The LWV United States has created a resource list on their study topic of immigration. One can peruse it on their website.

Program co-chair, Sandy de Lorimier announced that the forum, 'Health Care for All' California, would be held on December 12, 2006 at the Rohnert Park-Cotati Library.

Silent auction items are needed for the Fundraiser on January 14. It was also announced that the Theater Party at the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Playhouse will be in March. The AAUW will cosponsor this event.

Action chair, Willard Richards announced this year's Symposium on Smart Growth would be held on Wednesday, December 6, from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. It will focus on Livable Neighborhoods and Parking and is open to the public. The board decided to cosponsor this event with the Leadership Institute.

Willard encouraged League members to help in a letter campaign surrounding the topic of public finance and the support of volunteer spending limits in the local election campaigns. Willard announced that Stephen Fuller-Rowell would be speaking at the November Action Committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Chlele Gummer*

## SANTA ROSA'S CAMPAIGN FINANCE ORDINANCE A RECENT HISTORY

A mailer by three Santa Rosa Mayors questions the effectiveness of the Santa Rosa campaign finance ordinance for City Council elections. The history outlined below describes the evolution of the present ordinance and some of the debate that occurred during its adoption. This information may be useful if the City Council considers revising the current ordinance.

In 2002, a Charter Review Committee appointed by City Council members reviewed the Charter of the City of Santa Rosa and recommended changes. These recommendations were submitted to the City Council for their review and refinement and then were submitted to the voters on the November 2002 ballot. The Council divided the recommendations into three measures to allow a separate vote on issues that could be divisive. One measure dealt only with changes in the campaign finance ordinance, and the language on the ballot read:

**Campaign Finance Reform.** Shall an amendment to the Santa Rosa City Charter be adopted which adds a section that requires the City Council to enact measures which set lower limits on Council election campaign contributions, establishes a new schedule for reporting campaign contributions for Council candidates, and provides for public financing of Council election campaigns?

This measure passed with a 62.8% yes vote. It required the Council to strengthen a campaign finance ordinance that had been enacted a few years earlier. Immediately after this vote, the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County began a study to review campaign finance ordinances in other California cities and the options for complying with the new requirements. The League's findings and recommendations were submitted to City Council members as soon as they started to address this issue.

The analysis of Common Cause data showed that there were 18 cities in California that had local campaign contribution limits and also had a population within a factor of two of the Santa Rosa population, i.e., between 75,000 and 300,000 people. The contribution limit in more than two-thirds of these cities was \$250 or less. The League therefore recommended that the contribution limit of \$1000 per person per election cycle be lowered to \$250. The City Council chose a contribution limit of \$500. The Council was concerned that a lower contribution limit would drive some contributions underground, where they would be harder to track. For example, money could be given to a friend, who would then contribute it to the campaign.

The League recommended that the second requirement of the Charter amendment be met by requiring that a third pre-election Campaign Disclosure Statement (Form 460) be filed by 5:00 PM on the second business day immediately preceding Election Day (normally Friday). This report would be for the period from the end of the period covered by the second pre-election statement to 11:59 PM on the previous business day. Other cities in California already had a similar requirement for a disclosure just before the election. The League also recommended that all Campaign Disclosure Statements be made available on the City website. The Council adopted both of these recommendations. Now, voters can go to the City website during the weekend before the election and view up-to-date campaign contribution and spending data.

Previously, Campaign Disclosure Statements were only available in the City Manager's Office during business hours. Copies of this information cost ten cents per page. Furthermore, with the exception of \$1,000 contributions, which had to be reported within 24 hours, contributions and expenses during the last 17 days before the election were not reported until January.

The third requirement was some public financing of Council election campaigns. The City was unlikely to provide enough dollars to be meaningful. Therefore, the League recommended that each candidate who qualifies be given a page in an information mailer then called the Quarterly Update, which the City mails to all households in Santa Rosa. It was estimated that this would have cost less than \$10,000 per election for all candidates. The Council chose to approve one-half page for each qualified candidate. This mailer enables all candidates who qualify to get their message into every household. In addition, the Council voted to make this information available on the City website. This public financing helps level the playing field for candidates with limited resources. The Council discussed the possibility that inappropriate messages could be delivered at City expense, but decided that the City review of the messages before they were printed or posted was an adequate safeguard.

It is generally agreed that a candidate should demonstrate some level of support to qualify for public financing, and the Council required that a candidate either raise \$1000 in contributions or obtain 100 signatures. These requirements are simpler and more easily satisfied than those recommended by the League.

Additional eligibility requirements for public financing can be imposed. Almost all jurisdictions in California that provide public financing for political campaigns also require that in exchange, candidates agree to voluntarily limit their campaign expenditures. The League supported such a requirement, but the City Council voted 5 to 2 against the voluntary spending limit when the other provisions were adopted in September 2003. This decision was reversed in 2004 when a voluntary spending limit of \$55,000 indexed to inflation was adopted by the Council.

A key argument against spending limits is that they drive money underground and increase independent expenditures. That may be the case, but independent expenditures have long been part of the election system and will continue with or without spending limits. A key argument in favor of limiting spending is that they also help level the playing field. What is the point of public financing if a candidate can spend \$90 thousand or more on a campaign and still receive public financing?

There is no connection between spending limits and an independent expenditure recently highlighted in the press. Abolishing spending limits would do nothing to remove the incentives for similar independent expenditures in the future. Campaign finance ordinances cannot ensure clean, well-run, and fair campaigns. That is the responsibility of the candidates and their consultants.

*Willard Richards*

Action Chair

## ACTION COMMITTEE

Stephen Fuller-Rowell, Chair of the Sonoma County Water Coalition (SCWC) will discuss water issues in Sonoma County at the November 21 meeting of the Action Committee. For readers who missed the meeting, the SCWC was founded in March 2004 and now has 28 members, including the LWV of Sonoma County. It is actively engaged in improving the Water Element of the Sonoma County General Plan, which is now being updated. Much of the emphasis of Stephen's presentation is expected to be on groundwater in Sonoma County. A handout from this presentation can be obtained from the Action Chair, Willard Richards, on request.

The involvement of the local League in the process of updating the Sonoma County General Plan has been small. The committee work and public involvement in this update began many years ago and produced drafts of each element. The elements address issues such as land use, housing, agricultural resources, open space, water, public safety, circulation and transit, etc. Elements of the General Plan are now being reviewed, refined, and approved by the Planning Commission. The Sonoma County Supervisors will consider these elements in 2007 and are scheduled to adopt the new General Plan during the coming year. There are still opportunities to participate on an issue of your choice.

People who follow the City Council elections in Santa Rosa know that three Mayors have signaled their intention to weaken the campaign finance ordinance. Another article in this issue describes the recent history of this ordinance and the role LWVSC played when the most recent amendments were adopted. If the City Council does choose to revisit this issue this year, the LWVSC will be working to strengthen the ordinance, not

weaken it. Contact me if you wish to help with this effort.

*Willard Richards*

Action Chair

## VOTERS SERVICE

The official canvass of the vote began soon after noon on Friday, Nov. 10, when the Registrar of Voters (RoV) randomly drew the precincts in which 1% of the total votes cast will be counted by hand. The process verifies the accuracy of the vote count by the optical scan counter. The canvass is open to the public and done at the RoV's office. For future elections, LWVSC members are encouraged to observe the canvass.

Eve Roberson has two videos of PBS programs which she would be happy to lend to members for home viewing. "Not for Ourselves Alone" is a two-hour telling of the collaboration between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. "Down for the Count" is a 30-minute documentary on how voting machine problems compromise election results. Voter Services held six events in October: Santa Rosa city council, 10/2; Petaluma city council and mayor, 10/4; Windsor town council, school and fire protection districts, 10/10; 6th CA Assembly District [with LWV-Marin], 10/11; West Sonoma County Union High School (WSCUHSD) and JC Analy District boards, 10/19. All but two events were broadcast live on local cable TV. All were recorded for replays and streaming on SmartVoter.

Co-sponsors for our forums were the AAUW of Petaluma, the Chamber of Commerce of Cotati, the LWV of Marin County, the SRJC Social Science Dept., and WSCUHSD.

Easy Voter Guide was distributed countywide in five languages. Nancy Richardson, Pat Anton, and Carol Adams organized the effort. Elaine Book covered Santa Rosa Junior College. Several institutions received information on ordering directly.

Chlele Gummer organized nine Pros and Cons presentations, reaching over 200 people.

Laurie Hall did an excellent job in getting our events into the Press Democrat.

Lynda Hungerford worked to maximize candidate involvement and to stream video of some of our forums.

Also, many thanks to these members for their work this election season:

Moderators/Panelists, 11/2006:  
 - Railey Album, Petaluma  
 - Betty Ann Bruno, Sonoma  
 - Rosalie Gillmore, Petaluma  
 - Paula Hawkes, Healdsburg

- Lynda Hungerford, Oakmont
- Edith Mendez, Rohnert Park
- Nancy Richards, Santa Rosa
- Ethel Schy, Santa Rosa
- Carole Bennett, Novato, helped in Marin

Forum Coordinators

- Carol Adams, Windsor
- Rosalie Gillmore, Petaluma
- Nancy Richardson, Santa Rosa
- Amy Southwick, Cotati, Forestville

Camera and Editing for TV

- Chlele Gummer
- Will Richards

Other Forum Advisors, Time-keepers

- Linda Curry
- Andrea English
- Janie Hawker
- Olive Horrell
- Lynda Hungerford
- Alice Richardson
- Sue Scott

*Amy Southwick*

**COMING ATTRACTIONS – 2007**

A date to keep in mind –  
Wednesday evening, March 7.

**THE EVENT** – LWVSC Annual Theatre Party, 6<sup>th</sup>  
Street Playhouse, Santa Rosa.

**THE SHOW** – Preview performance of a new Musical  
Comedy, **THE BIG BANG!**

Look forward to an evening of laughter and luscious  
desserts. Bring a friend or two. The more the merrier.

LWVSC shares the house with AAUW members and  
guests. This is a fundraiser. Complete details will be  
in the February VOTER.

Coordinator,  
*Janie Hawker*  
584-5210

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
THE US REDISTRICTING REPORT  
NOVEMBER 1, 2006**

**GROUPS CALL FOR NATIONAL REDISTRICTING  
REFORM**

On the eve of congressional elections likely to be skewed by gerrymandering, the Campaign Legal Center, the Center for Excellence in Government and the League of Women Voters today released a report that calls for a national redistricting reform movement and offers guidance for state-level redistricting reform efforts. [“Building A National Redistricting Reform Movement”](#) reports on the deliberations and conclusions of a diverse group of individuals from nonpartisan organizations at a conference held earlier this year in Salt Lake City.

The report builds on broad principles for reforming congressional and legislative redistricting set out in the 2005 report, “The Shape of Representative Democracy.” It also looks at lessons learned from unsuccessful redistricting reform attempts in 2005 and suggests strategies to pursue and pitfalls to avoid in future reform efforts.

The sponsors of the report timed its release just a week before the mid-term election to underscore the distorting effects of the gerrymandering of so many congressional districts after the 2000 census. It is a reminder of how drawing district lines to insure safe districts – often done on a bipartisan basis to serve incumbents in both parties – is likely to insulate the U. S. House of Representatives from fundamental democratic accountability.

The new report carefully examines the ballot initiatives defeated last year in California and Ohio. Both drew strong, well-funded opposition and suffered from being tied to other complex proposals and from being seen as partisan power-grabs.

The report recognizes that national redistricting reform will be a daunting task and urges careful attention to content, timing, resources, research and message development, and coalition building and public outreach. The next step in the groups’ efforts will be to bring together a broad coalition to build public support for redistricting reform efforts.

The redistricting reform conference was organized by the Campaign Legal Center, the Center for Democracy & Citizenship at the Council for Excellence in Government and the League of Women Voters with generous support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the JEHT Foundation, and the Joyce Foundation.



There's something special in your own backyard.

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 Become a member.  
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 @ 579-4452 # 108  
 To Volunteer call Kristi  
 @ 579-4452 ext. 116

or visit [www.SchulzMuseum.org](http://www.SchulzMuseum.org)  
 click on "Membership" or "Volunteers"



HURRY TO THE MUSEUM AND REMEMBER WHY YOU LOVE PEANUTS! © 1997



**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. (\$60.00 for individual annual membership, \$90.00 for household, and \$40.00 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 2006/JANUARY 2007 CALENDAR

*Unless otherwise noted, meetings are open to the public.*

Date	Time	Place	Description
Tuesday December 5	10:00 AM - 12 NOON	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	<b>Board Meeting</b> League members are welcome. Board meetings are not open to the public.
Thursday December 7	10:00 AM - 12 NOON	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	<b>Voters Service Meeting</b> See p. 5.
Tuesday December 12	1:00 PM- 3:00 PM	Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library 6250 Lynne Conde Way Rohnert Park	<b>"Health Care For All" California</b> - Film on single-payer universal health care system See p. 2.
Thursday December 14	10:30 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	<b>Book Club</b> <i>Letter to a Christian Nation</i> by Sam Harris See p. 2.
Tuesday December 19	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	<b>Action Committee</b>
Tuesday January 2	10:00 AM - 12 NOON	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	<b>Board Meeting</b> League members are welcome. Board meetings are not open to the public.
Thursday January 4	10:00 AM - 12 NOON	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	<b>Voters Service Meeting</b> See p. 5.
Sunday January 14	1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Alexandra and Dick Benson 14 Chrisdumar Lane Petaluma	<b>Annual Social and Silent Auction Fundraiser</b> See p. 1.
Tuesday January 16	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	<b>Action Committee</b>
Saturday January 27	1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	San Mateo location	<b>Bay Area League Day</b> See p. 3.

**Please consult the web calendar - <http://www.lwvsonoma.org/calendar.html> for any additional meeting times and locations.**