



THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 10, No. 8

November 2005

MAKE SURE YOUR VOICE IS HEARD ON ELECTION DAY – VOTE!

The League Recommends:

Proposition 73 Waiting period and parental notification before termination of minor's pregnancy

OPPOSE



Proposition 74 Public school teachers • Waiting period for permanent status • Dismissal

OPPOSE



Proposition 75 Public-Employee Union Dues • Restriction on public-employee contributions

OPPOSE



Proposition 76 State spending and school funding limits

OPPOSE



Proposition 77 Redistricting

OPPOSE



Proposition 78 Discounts on prescription drugs

OPPOSE



Proposition 79 Prescription drug discounts • State-negotiated rebates

SUPPORT



Proposition 80 Electric Service Providers Regulation

NO POSITION

Measure M Sonoma County Genetically Engineered Organism Nuisance Abatement Ordinance

NO POSITION



Please refer to last month's VOTER for more detail on each proposition and measure and the rationale for positions taken. Also, consult Smart Voter at <http://www.smartvoter.org>.

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The League of Women Voters of Sonoma County

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 Helen Sundergill, VP Administration
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 Chlele Gummer, Secretary
 Susannah Likins, Treasurer

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 Laurie Hall & Susan Milstein, Public Relations
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 Rosalie Gillmore & Amy Southwick, Voters Service

VOTER Team:

Jack Dupre, VOTER Editor
 Marsha Vas Dupre
 May Huddleston
 Lynda Hungerford
 Caroline Ramberg
 Nancy Richards

HOLIDAY SOCIAL IS COMING UP!

The Holiday Season always catches us with more activities than days on our calendars it seems. So, now is the time to secure the date for the League's



Holiday Social and Silent Auction Fundraiser.

When: Sunday, December 4, 2:00 to 5:00 PM

Where: The home of Anita and William Cedar
 3251 Cobblestone Drive
 Santa Rosa

What to Bring: Each member is asked to bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Wine, coffee and tea will be provided. Guests are welcome.

This is a wonderful way to begin the holidays. Share good conversation and good food with your fellow League members and our guests in the Cedar's beautiful home as you bid on interesting silent auction items.

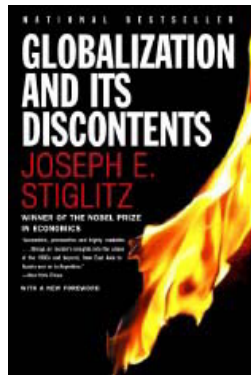
No need to RSVP... but if you have questions call: Sandy Benson, 763-1629
 Email: rwnatbenson@comcast.net.

Directions

- Take Mendocino Avenue to Chanate Road toward Sutter Hospital.
- Past the hospital, just before the curve, turn left onto Cobblestone Drive.
- Bear left on Cobblestone about one block to Scrub Oak Drive. 3251 Cobblestone is on the corner with ample parking. There is a side path that leads from the driveway up to the house for those who prefer to not climb stairs.

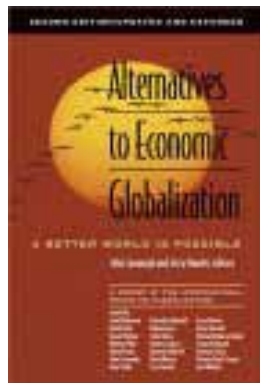
BOOK CLUB CORNER

Members of the book group invite you to join them to discuss *Globalization and Its Discontents* by Joseph E. Stiglitz and *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible*, a collection of essays. The meeting will be Thursday, November 17, 10:30 AM at the League Office, 100 E Street, Suite 209, Santa Rosa.



We picked these books to complement our August discussion of Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat*. We have looked at Stiglitz once before. Taken together, the three books represent three views of globalization: unabashed enthusiasm, a call for change, and rejection.

League members and guests are invited to join in our book discussions the third Thursday of every month from 10:30 AM until noon. For current information, consult the calendar on our website, <http://www.lwvsonoma.org>, call the office, or call 539-5770.



Lynda Hungerford

AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED!

"Fast away the old year passes ..."



Lovely words from the Olde English Carol remind us that to move swiftly with pens for the Holiday Social and Fundraiser. Every year the Holiday Silent Auction has raised welcome sums that augment our local

League's operating budget. Member participation and donations of quality items for the auction are paramount and add so much to the fun and bidding action. Recycle those great treasures and trinkets! Give them to the LWVSC auction (tableware, collectibles, linens, books, CDs, jewelry, art work, wine, use of a cabin, a catered meal or other service).

Call Phyllis Clement, 823-0925 or Janie Hawker, 584-5210 to list your donations. They will be pleased to arrange for pickup if necessary.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Now that the special election is fast approaching, I'm sure many of you are being asked by your friends about League positions. Please be sure to direct them to the League of Women Voters of California at <http://www.LWVC.org> for detailed information about our positions on the ballot measures. Smart Voter at <http://www.smartvoter.org> is our source for answers to any questions about general voting procedures and also gives them details about their specific ballot. Our Voters Service committee is providing an outstanding service for our community through forums and pros/cons presentations. Thank you Amy Southwick, Rosalie Gillmore and Janie Hawker for your unwavering dedication to this aspect of League work.



As we move into the fall, please keep an eye on our calendar and note that in December we will have our annual holiday social. The development committee is planning a silent auction, so, if you have any special item to donate, I'm sure Phyllis Clement would love to hear from you.

Carol Ann Fontana-Cary

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DISCUSSION GROUP

The International Relations discussion group will meet on Tuesday, November 8, at 12 Noon in the Santa Rosa League office. It is a brown-bag lunch session.

The topic for discussion will be **U.S. Intelligence Reform**. *The report of the 9/11 Commission and questions of pre-Iraq war intelligence have placed unprecedented attention on the workings of U.S. intelligence agencies. Are U.S. intelligence agencies out of date with dealing with post cold war realities? Are the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission adequate for reforming U.S. intelligence?*

The group meets the second Tuesday of the month. The topics are selected from the *Great Decisions* briefing book published by the Foreign Policy Association in New York City. All members and friends are welcome to join the group discussion, with or without the briefing book. We also refer to the most current news items and articles pertaining to the discussion topic. The topics for 2006, according to the Foreign Policy Association, will most likely be: **U.N. Reform; Global Health; China and India: comparison and contrast; Iran; Brazil; Turkey and the European Union; Energy Issues; Human Rights and Terrorism.**

There will **not** be meetings in December and January. The next discussion group meeting will be on February 14 at 12:00 Noon in the Santa Rosa League office. If anyone has a question about the group, please contact Rosalie Gillmore at 769-8826.

Rosalie Gillmore

LEAGUE CO-SPONSORED GMO FORUM DEBATES PROS AND CONS OF MEASURE M

The GMO debate organized by the League and co-sponsored with the Santa Rosa Junior College Social Studies Department and the Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy was deemed successful by those working on it as well as by many of the about 75 people who attended.

Edith Mendez, Professor at Sonoma State University and League member, presented a summary of Measure M to clarify the basic language and intent of the measure.

Betty Ann Bruno ably presided over a lively debate of the issues by the Pro and the Con representatives for Measure M, Dave Henson of Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, and Lex McCorvey, Farm Bureau of Sonoma County.



Photo by Craig Scheiner

Left to right are Dave Henson of Occidental Arts and Ecology Center; Lex McCorvey of the Farm Bureau of Sonoma County; moderator, Betty Ann Bruno; and Edith Mendez, Professor at SSU and League member.

Thanks go to the many League members who worked on the event to produce a forum on this important issue that will be of benefit to the voters of Sonoma County.

Special thanks go to Betty Ann Bruno, moderator, Lynda Hungerford and Caroline Ramberg, who vetted the written questions from the audience, and Alice Richardson, time keeper, as well as Nancy Richards and Carol Ann Fontana-Cary who worked with the audience to keep questions coming smoothly.

The forum was carried live on Channel 70 by the Community Media Center, and a tape of the event has been made available to Community Access Channels in Sonoma County.

Sandy Benson

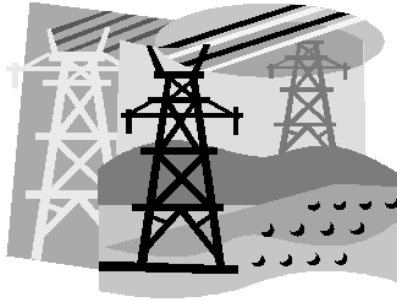
DESIGNING AN ENERGY PORTFOLIO

This is the fourth in a series of articles from LWVC on California's energy situation. Previously published were:

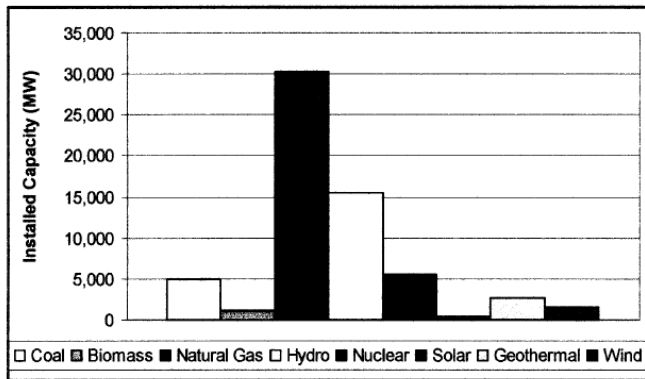
- Keeping the Light On (March 2004)
- Flipping the Switch (April 2004)
- Electric Utility Regulation (September 2004)

The League and Energy

THE ELECTRICITY NEEDS of California are currently met by a mix of about 56,000 MW of in-state capacity and more than 6,200 MW of capacity in nearby states. The latter is largely coal-fired; in-state capacity is diverse, but more than half is natural gas fired. And most of the natural gas capacity is owned by independent “**merchant generators**,” not regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission. The deregulation legislation of 1996 required utilities to sell much of their generation, so they now



Capacity by Fuel/Technology Type



own only 42 percent of the total capacity.

As a result of the financial problems faced by the investor-owned utilities in 2000 and 2001, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), negotiated long-term contracts with the merchant generators. During the crisis many of these merchant generators had sold into the **wholesale spot market** at exorbitant prices. The prices negotiated by DWR are not exorbitant but they are high, and most contracts run until 2010. Utility customers are paying these costs. Most of the natural gas-fired generation that has come on line in the last several years is being sold into the spot market. The price of power from these plants largely reflects the current market rate. Since these plants are fueled by natural gas, they are affected by natural gas market conditions.

The Energy Commission attributes the stabilization of spot market prices since 2001 to three factors:

- Energy-efficiency measures by consumers.

- Addition of the 9,400 MW of new capacity, along with an economic downturn.
- Dramatic reductions in the amounts of energy purchased on the spot market.

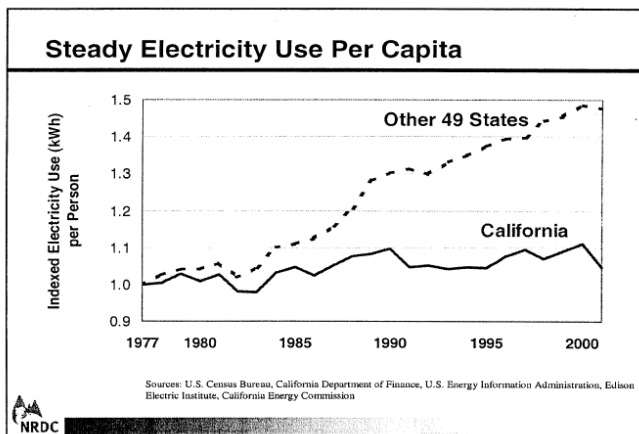
The future is not bright, however. With the economic recovery now under way, demand is growing faster than supply. Although construction permits have been issued for six large merchant plants with almost 4,000 MW of capacity, none are expected on line before 2006. In addition, drought throughout the West has reduced the amount of hydropower that can be imported from the Northwest. Recognizing the need to plan for peak power demands, the CPUC has set a 15 percent reserve capacity requirement. Assuming a 1.5 percent annual increase in peak demand, (it is currently 3.5 percent in Southern California) capacity requirements in 2030 will amount to 92,000 MW. (Currently 62,000 MW)

More than 40 percent of the **natural gas-fired generation** in the state was built in the '50s and '60s. These plants are as much as 50 percent less efficient than the new plants, and over the coming decade many of them will be retired or rebuilt; approximately 3,000 MW of capacity was retired just in the past three years. But some of these plants are strategically located near the demand load, and because of increasing congestion of the transmission system, they receive a pricing bonus associated with “**reliability-must-run**” (RMR) contracts. In-state gas production presently meets only 15 percent of California's needs. Out-of-state supplies are adequate throughout this year, but, with growing reliance on natural gas to generate electricity, concerns about the integration of the electricity and natural gas markets continue to mount. Merchant generators, unlike regulated utilities, are not obligated to serve electricity customers; if it is more profitable, they may sell their natural gas into the gas markets, rather than use it to generate electricity. In any case, short-term supply shocks will lead to increases in spot market electric prices. Demand-side management and increased use of renewable resources are the near-term options to dependency on natural gas.

Renewable resources include geothermal, biomass, small hydro, wind and solar. During 2002, the legislature passed SB 1078, which requires the investor-owned utilities to increase investment in renewable energy one percent annually until each utility provides 20 percent of its energy from renewables. Southern California Edison is already meeting this requirement for 2004. PG&E currently is at about 14 percent and San Diego Gas and Electric less than 4 percent. In mid-2004 4,400 MW of renewable capacity was on line. Almost 14,000 MW more will be required by 2030. Because of ecological concerns, it is unlikely that more small hydro will be developed. Geothermal and wind resources are considered abundant, but are located at considerable distances from load centers. Wind and solar are intermittent, estimated to be available about 25 percent of the time, but often not always near times of peak demand.

Governor Schwarzenegger has enthusiastically called for more investment in **solar rooftops**. Certainly photovoltaic panels can benefit local homeowners in many parts of the state. However, an average residential roof can only accommodate 2 kW of panels (less than half of the power needed at peak power periods). About 125,000 new homes are built in California each year, and solar rooftop systems on 15 percent of these would provide 35 to 40 MW of new capacity. Solar panels can be considered a contribution to peaking power capacity, rather than base load, as it will be available during daylight, when air conditioners are generally in use.

Both the Energy Commission and the CPUC have made **energy efficiency** their top priority: The goal is to reduce energy use, and decrease peak power demands. For nearly a decade, utility customers have paid on their monthly bills a “public goods charge,” and one of the benefits of those monies has been investment in energy efficiency retrofits. The result has been dramatic: Energy use in California is about half of per capita use for the



nation as a whole.

This past year, the three major utilities have been allowed to include energy efficiency investments in their **capacity procurement** planning. It should be noted, however, that investments in energy efficiency – beneficial in terms of diminishing resources and air pollution – often do not reduce peak power demands.

Reductions in peak demands come about largely because of customer response to a definite signal. One such signal may be a radio or television announcement that electricity demands are getting close to capacity, and asking customers to cut back on power use. Some customers, usually larger ones, also negotiate “**interruptible**” contracts with their utilities: In return for favorable prices most of the time, they agree to have their service cut back when reserve margins shrink to a particular point. The present interruptible load is just short of 1,500 MW.

Dynamic pricing is a technique that could allow the state to not invest in 2,000 MW of new capacity over the next 25 years. The League has already had opportunities to speak on behalf of this vision. During the past several years, California has paid to install 22,000 real-time pricing meters at commercial and industrial sites. These

meters show customers, at 15-minute intervals, the actual cost of power so they may plan their use. The costs currently range from 5 cents per kWh at 2 a.m. to 33 cents per kWh at 4 p.m. on a hot summer day. It is likely that dynamic pricing will become a reality for residential customers before the end of the decade. Each special meter is estimated to cost a little more than \$100.

A growing trend is the use of **distributed generation** (DG). This refers to small, localized generation systems, close to the load that they serve. DG enthusiasts point to the avoidance of dependence on the transmission system and the economic opportunities that may be available for facilities to generate their own power apart from the utility grid – especially if they can sell any excess power back to the utility. DG is proving to make good economic sense for facilities that can use solar, wind or biogas. It is not succeeding for those sites that would use natural gas-fired turbines for power generation, because of local air emission requirements.

A major consideration still to be clearly addressed involves issues of **direct access** and “**departing load.**” The deregulation legislation of 1996 allowed utility customers to leave their utility and to contract directly with merchant generators for power. A significant number of industrial and large commercial customers did just that at a time when wholesale prices looked attractive. But in 2000-2001, when wholesale power prices skyrocketed, these same customers sought to return to service with the utilities to obtain power at the regulated retail rates. The direct access policy presents a dilemma for utilities, as they likely will have to serve as the default provider if a merchant generator fails.

Late in 2001 the CPUC ruled against any further direct access contracts. About 14 percent of total customer load remained with the merchant generators, and when it became clear that these customers were not sharing in the high-cost, state-negotiated DWR contracts, the CPUC instituted a 2.7¢ per kWh charge on direct access power.

The California electricity system should be flexible enough to take advantage of new technologies and energy sources, and yet be stringent enough to provide economical, reliable service. Integration of the electricity system requires some control over the mix of sources: with the ability to plan for adequate capacity, to promote the use of renewable sources of electricity, and to provide incentives for efficiency and conservation.

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.

VOTERS SERVICE

The November 8 election is upon us and by the time you receive this newsletter, the deadlines to register and to request absentee ballots will have passed. The Sonoma County ballot contains several district elections as well as one countywide measure and eight statewide propositions.

A summary of the eight State propositions and the Sonoma County GMO Measure M were included in the October VOTER. More information on the November 8 election is available on Smart Voter, <http://www.smartvoter.org>. For additional information on the State propositions, go to <http://www.ca.lwv.org> and click on "Recommendations."

At the Sonoma County Harvest Fair (9/30, 10/1, 10/2), Carol Ann Fontana-Cary, who coordinated the volunteer schedule, reported:

- Voter Registration forms completed at the booth: 18
- Voter Registration forms taken away from the booth: 33
- Total Registration forms distributed at the Harvest Fair: 51

Voters Service coordinators are:

Forums: Amy Southwick and Rosalie Gillmore

Pros and Cons: Janie Hawker

Outreach Events: Janie Hawker

Outreach Voter Registration Forms: Glenice Anderson
 Sonoma County Harvest Fair: Carol Ann Fontana-Cary
 Public Relations (all media): Laurie Hall and Susan Milstein

Smart Voter: Lynda Hungerford

There will be a Voters Service meeting on Thursday, November 10, at 10:00 AM in the Santa Rosa League office. We will discuss the results of the November 8 special election and the Pros and Cons presentations. All members are invited to attend the meeting.

Amy Southwick and Rosalie Gillmore

Voters Service Co-chairs

ACTION COMMITTEE TO REVIEW COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The new Sonoma/Marin field representative of the Greenbelt Alliance Daisy Pistey-Lyhne will discuss the Sonoma County General Plan Update with the Action Committee on November 15. This is a good time for League members interested in county issues such as water, transportation, conversion of forest to agriculture, to become familiar with the issues and learn where action could make a difference. This meeting was originally scheduled for October, but was delayed because of a delay in releasing the draft GPU.

The Action Committee meets at 10 AM on the third Tuesday of every month in the LWVSC office.

Willard Richards

Chair, Action Committee

BOARD BRIEFS

October 6, 2005

At the October 6 meeting of the LWVSC board, the following key items were covered:

- President Carol Ann Fontana-Cary reported that the response to the membership dues reminders had been slow this year. 91 dues notices have been sent a second time and telephoning will follow. There were 4 new members who joined this month.
- Treasurer Susannah Likins said that the League is in good shape with adequate balances in various funds. Major expenditures are made by Voters Service in providing information and materials to the citizens. The September kick-off event provided some income. The major sources of income were the membership dues.
- Program chairperson Sandy Benson reported the final arrangements of the Forum on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) on October 5th. Betty Ann Bruno will be the moderator. Edith Mendez will summarize the issue. Presenting the Con argument will be Lex McCorvey and Daniel Solnit will present the Pro argument. This presentation will be broadcast live on Channel 70 and rebroadcast at a later time on KRCB.
- An upcoming event is the Holiday Silent Auction on December 4. In January, the Energy Committee will present an all day meeting on the results of their study.
- Voters Service has various Pro/Con presentations scheduled throughout the area. On October 18 there will be one at the Rincon Valley Library. The committee will meet in October and then, on November 10 to evaluate what they accomplished this election.
- Willard Richards announced that Daisy Pistey-Lyhne of the Green Belt Alliance will make a presentation at the next Action Committee meeting on October 18. [Subsequently, this presentation was postponed to the November 15 meeting.] He reported progress on the campaign finance reform effort in that Santa Rosa City Council now lists all donations on its website as they occur. He said the LWVSC Water Committee, chaired by Phyllis Stanley, supported a group of Wikiup citizens in its effort to thwart the creation of a new well. The group of Wikiup citizens will follow this by trying to buy back the company so that its users will control it.
- Willard encourages any member who has an interest in an issue to join the committee. He says there is lots of work to be done.

Respectfully submitted,

Chlele Gummer

Secretary

NEW LOCAL MEMBERS

Carol Anderson

Patricia Cameron

Gail Jonas

For privacy considerations, members' addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses are not provided in the web version of the VOTER

UNA ASSOCIATION MEETING

On Wednesday, December 7, at 7:00 PM, a talk on "Population & the Environment: The Impact of Withholding Funds from the UN's Population Program" will be given by Jane Roberts, founding member of 34 Million Friends. The Sonoma Branch of UNA in cooperation with World Affairs Council is sponsoring this talk to be held at Spring Lake Village Auditorium, 5555 Montgomery Drive in Santa Rosa.



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Charles M. Schulz Museum**



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or visit the Museum web site:
www.SchulzMuseum.org
Click on Membership.



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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. (\$50.00 for individual annual membership, \$75.00 for household, and \$37.00 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.

NOVEMBER 2005 CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are open to the public.

Date	Time	Place	Description
Tuesday November 1	10:00 AM – 12 Noon	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Board Meeting League members are welcome. Board meetings are not open to the public.
Tuesday November 8	12:00 Noon	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	International Relations Study Group U.S. Intelligence Reform See p. 3.
Thursday November 10	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Voters Service Meeting See p. 6.
Tuesday November 15	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Action Committee Sonoma County General Plan Update See p. 6.
Thursday November 17	10:30 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Book Club <i>Globalization and Its Discontents</i> by Joseph E. Stiglitz and <i>Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible</i> . See p. 2.
Sunday December 4	2:00 – 5:00 PM	Home of Anita and William Cedar 3251 Cobblestone Drive Santa Rosa	Holiday Social and Silent Auction Fundraiser See p. 2.
Wednesday December 7	7:00 PM	Spring Lake Village Auditorium 5555 Montgomery Drive Santa Rosa	United Nations Association, Sonoma Branch Population & the Environment: The Impact of Withholding Funds from the UN's Population Program. See p. 7.

LINK TO CURRENT CALENDAR