



THE VOTER

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SONOMA COUNTY**

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September 2011

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Save the Date

October Sat.15
*Juvenile Justice
Consensus*

See page 6

This Year's Events!
See page 10

Community Impact Reports: An Essential Information Tool for Community Decision Making



*Saturday September 24, 2011
Santa Rosa City Council Chamber
100 Santa Rosa Avenue
10 am to 12 noon*

Panel and Discussion

**Mike McGuire, Supervisor, County of Sonoma,
4th District**

Teresa Barrett, Petaluma City Council

Scot Stegeman, Land use and Planning Consultant

Martin Bennett, Co-Chair, Living Wage Coalition

The League advocacy forum on Saturday, September 24th will focus on a new policy tool, Community Impact Reports (CIR), adopted by many city and county governments in California to better understand and evaluate the economic and fiscal impacts of proposed large commercial development.

Note that if you are not able to attend in person, the forum will be televised in Santa Rosa on Channel 26 of the Community Media Center.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

*The League of Women of
Women Voters of Sonoma
County*

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Santa Rosa, CA 95401
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*league@lwvsonoma.org
http://www.lwvsonoma.org*

*See CONTACT US page to email
our directors.*

Directors on Executive Committee

*DeeDee Bridges, President
Alice Richardson, VP
Max Bridges, VP of Advocacy
Willard Richards, Secretary
Nancy Richards, At Large
Susannah Likins, Treasurer*

Directors

*Linda Garcia, Voter Service
Chair
Shirley Johnson-Foell, VOTER
Editor
Juanita Roland, Membership
Chair
Chlele Gummer, Programs*

WE WANT YOU! This phrase was used a lot during World War II, but I'm using it to encourage YOU to become involved in the League. We have a great board this year and we are dedicated to having a robust and active League, so let's start off this New Year with our Kickoff Meeting on September 24th. Having you involved in our nonpartisan organization is more important than ever with all that is happening --contentiousness between political parties, economic upheaval, and global turmoil. We can be the voice of civility and thoughtfulness.



The California Citizen's Redistricting Commission has adopted final district maps for Congressional, State Assembly, State Senate and Board of Equalization districts. This shows the power of the California League of Women Voters and the citizens of California that supported Proposition 11 to ensure good government. See the new district maps at <http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/> It will be crucial to follow the challenges to the new district boundaries.

The National LWV is beginning two new studies: The **Role Of the Federal Government In Public Education** and a second study, Privatization in Government. The second study will focus on the impact of privatizing government services on local communities. We will need many of you to work on these studies so we can adopt positions on these two very important issues.

Linda Garcia, our new Voter Service Chair, leads our capable Voter Service committee. She will be working with Anita Lytle and Muriel Smith to provide strong ongoing leadership for this very important group.

Juanita Roland, Director of Membership, is ready to work on growing our membership and on getting more of our members actively involved in League activities, whether it is just a small one time job such as helping with coffee and cookies at a general meeting or perhaps something a little bigger like attending meetings of the Board of Supervisors, or working on a national study.

Our Advocacy Vice President, Max Bridges, is focusing on our local positions and issues. He is eager to get members involved in attending meetings and following local government.

Shirley Johnson-Foell, our VOTER editor consistently puts all of our messages together in a very accessible format. Yea, Shirley!

Our Director of Programs, Chlele Gummer has been hard at work to provide interesting and valuable programs for our general meetings. Unless you have been responsible for this job, you have no idea how much time and effort it takes to bring everything together for our general meetings. Thanks Chlele!

Also on the Board this year are our staunch leaders and League historians. We are so lucky to have Alice Richardson, Susannah Likins and Willard and Nancy Richards. They are a rich source of information and invaluable help to the rest of us.

As your new President, I am committed to making this League a positive voice that is well respected in our community. See you at the Kickoff on September 24th.

MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. We do, however, take action on selected government issues in the public interest.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT

I have succeeded Chlele Gummer as VP Advocacy. She will not be an easy act to follow. Under her direction many high profile issues were studied, League positions established and action taken in support of those positions.



DeeDee and I relocated to Sonoma County when I became the Executive Director of the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA). NCRA is the legislatively established multi-county special district charged with re-establishing freight rail service on the former Northwestern Pacific track from American Canyon to Arcata. Prior to NCRA I was Director of Public Works in San Benito County and prior to that held a similar position in Del Norte County. Upon retiring from public service in 2002, I managed a small local engineering office for Willdan Engineering. Currently I am a mostly retired Civil Engineer who still does some very limited work for Willdan.

Issues from past Advocacy effort that will need to be reviewed for possible action in the coming year include (but may not be limited to):

Community Impact Reports,
 Campaign Finance Reform,
 and the Preservation Ranch project.

I would also like the Committee to take a look into the Airport Expansion issue, perhaps with a presentation from County staff regarding the status of the project and the decision making process.

An Advocacy Forum is being planned for Saturday, September 24 in support of the League Policy on Community Impact Reports. Better information leads to better decisions. More detailed and complete knowledge of the potential impacts of the issue under consideration will generally produce more informed and meaningful deliberations that will lead to better results. Please plan on attending this forum.

Max Bridges, VP Advocacy
maxbridges@sbcglobal.net

The **VOTER**, a publication of The League of Women Voters of Sonoma County, is published monthly except during the summer, i.e. nine regular issues per year. The deadline is the 10th of the month preceding the issue month.

“Better information leads to better decisions.”

BOARD BRIEFS

July 29, 2011

Roseanna Torretto, our MTA (Management Training Advisor) described her role as an advisor to our local League and as our liaison with the State League.

Nancy Richardson has resigned as chair of Voter Outreach. Anita Lytle volunteered to assume that responsibility.

The Board appointed Chlele Gummer and Nancy Richards to the nominating committee. Shirley Johnson- Foell has been appointed to represent the League on the Sonoma County Water Coalition.

February 8, 2012, has been set for the annual theater party at the 6th Street Playhouse.

Because of scheduling conflicts, Board meetings will be held at 9:30 AM on the second Thursday of the month.

Aug. 11, 2011

The Board accepted the consensus questions for the Juvenile Justice Study presented by Ann Berens and Katie Sanchez.

Chlele Gummer, Nancy Richards and Juanita Roland agreed to meet after the Board meeting to discuss the organization of a study group to participate in the National League study on the role of the federal government in pre-K through 12 education.

Chlele Gummer listed tentative plans for programs for the year: Sept. 24 – Community Impact Reports; Oct. - Juvenile Justice consensus meeting; Nov. - Family Justice Center; and Feb. - Regional Government Agencies. The cost of having the Community Media Center televise programs was discussed. Willard Richards will contact the Center and report back to the board.

The board unanimously approved the appointment of Max Bridges to Action VP. Max will also continue as League representative on the AB 939 Local Task Force (solid waste and recycling).

Nancy or Willard Richards will contact the County regarding the possibility of registering voters at the Harvest Fair.

DeeDee Bridges and Juanita Roland have agreed to represent the League at the first annual Sonoma County Coalition of Women's Organizations to be held on August 20 at the Earl Baum Center.

The Board decided to decline an invitation to sponsor Riverfest.



Juvenile Justice Study Consensus



To have a vibrant active League, we need your participation in this consensus on October 15, 2011 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Windsor Library (9291 Old Redwood Hwy., Bldg. 100, Windsor). Please bring your Voter with the Consensus Questions to the meeting. Beverages will be available. So please **Save the Date!**

Consensus on government issues is the backbone of the League of Women Voters and is the basis for our action program. Several techniques can be used to reach member agreement, but the one most often used by the League is consensus by group discussion. It is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather, it is the overall sense of the group as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions, whether in a meeting of the full membership or a series of smaller discussion meetings. (In League, LWVUS)

Our Consensus Questions:

Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group?
Select one or more from each category.

Establishing a model with the courts serving as an alternative

- 1 Should Sonoma County take action to promote Restorative Justice Practices as the model and primary treatment strategy for juvenile offenders? The court system would serve as the alternative to this model.
- 2 Should Sonoma County take action to promote some other model for juvenile offenders as the primary treatment strategy? The court system would serve as the alternative to this model.
- 3 The group could not reach consensus.

Referrals of youth Under 18 years of age

- 1 Should Sonoma County take action to establish that all youth offenders under 18 have a fitness hearing when the treatment strategy is delivered by the courts?
- 2 Should Sonoma County take action to establish that all youth offenders under 18 be referred to the Juvenile Court when legally permissible?
- 3 The group could not reach consensus.

Continued on page 7

“We hope this provides you with a sense of what we have been doing. In preparation for our discussions at our Consensus Meeting”

Accountability of the Juvenile Justice System

- 1 Should Sonoma County take action to establish criteria whereby data collection and reports result in accountability of the system?
- 2 Should Sonoma County take action to establish transparent and comprehensive data collection and reports for the purpose of increased accountability of the system?
- 3 The group could not reach consensus.

DMC (Disproportionate Minority Confinement/Contact)

- 1 Should Sonoma County take action to address DMC (Disproportionate Minority Confinement/Contact) at all stages of the Juvenile System?
- 2 Should Sonoma County take action to eliminate DMC (Disproportionate Minority Confinement/Contact) at all stages of the Juvenile Justice System?
- 3 The group could not reach consensus.

As a refresher, the Juvenile Justice study involved:

- Interviews- including youth, parents, 30 plus stakeholders employed in the system, and the general public.
- Tours - 3 major juvenile justice facilities:
 - o Juvenile Hall
 - o Probation Camp for boys
 - o Sierra Youth Center for girls
 - o Statistical data from state and county sources.
 - o Town Hall Forums- convened in March 2007 and March 2008 respectively:
 - o Juvenile Justice in Sonoma County – Choices, Consequences, Community. (A panel presentation of top professionals in the system.)
 - o Building Pressure – Looking at Alternatives. (in lieu of incarceration)
 - o Related events

Research - internet and a wide range of printed material

In May of 2009, the findings were reported to the LWVSC at the General Membership Meeting in a ninety minute presentation, which included a power point, questions and answers.

We hope this provides you with a sense of what we have been doing. In preparation for our discussions at our Consensus Meeting October 15th, you may wish to review the original proposal, the executive summary, the full report and other pertinent materials which will be sent by e-mail to all members.

A LWV Policy on Community Impact Reports

Better informed legislators produce better legislation. More complete knowledge about an issue under consideration will generally produce more intelligent and meaningful deliberations that will lead to better legislative outcomes.

With regard to major development projects, there is a significant body of information that does not enter into the legislative review because the data is unknown to the legislators. The impact of legislating with partial information can have negative long term consequences.



Economic and social impacts of any proposed large development need to be as fully understood by the legislative body, as the information currently developed by an environmental impact report (EIR). A tool for assessing the economic and social effects of a large development project is readily available. It is called a Community Impact Report (CIR).

The League of Women Voters California Growth Management Action Policy, adopted in 1992, states that all levels of government assigned growth management planning and regulatory responsibilities must provide for the following:

- Involvement of citizens in the earliest planning and regulatory stages and throughout the growth management process
- Environmental, social, and economic impact statements on major developments, public and private.

When a project is of sufficient size to have significant social and economic impacts upon a community, a local ordinance should require a full Community Impact Report for that project. The minimum threshold size of a project that requires a CIR can vary from community to community. At minimum, a full CIR should address the following areas:

- (1). Fiscal Impacts: The financial costs and benefits to the municipality, public agencies, schools, hospitals, public safety, infrastructure, and whether net tax revenue will increase, decrease, or be shifted.
- (2). Business Impacts: The effects of the new project upon existing businesses and existing shopping areas in the community.
- (3). Employment Impacts: The number of jobs and the quality of the jobs (e.g. wages and benefits) that are created or eliminated by the project, and whether those jobs are full time or part-time.

Continued on page 9

“An Environmental Impact Report on a major project can sometimes take a year or more to complete and entails considerable expense. In contrast, a CIR can usually be completed within ninety days, at a modest cost.”

(4). Housing Impacts: The project’s impact on the need for additional affordable housing, and whether the project will create additional housing units or eliminate existing ones.

(5). Neighborhood impacts: Provisions in the project that provide special neighborhood amenities such as a park, playground, or day-care center, or any negative impacts such as creating less safe neighborhood streets because of increased traffic or new traffic patterns.

(6). Smart Growth Impacts: The impact of the project on local neighborhoods, including livability, walkability, access to public transit, and alternatives to automobile use.

In California, Community Impact Reports are in use in Alameda County (2006), Los Angeles (2004), San Jose, and other communities. In Sonoma County, the city of Petaluma has adopted a limited form of a CIR (2008).

Since a CIR is examined early in a development project, the concerns of all individuals and interest groups can be addressed before there is a substantial commitment of time and money. An Environmental Impact Report on a major project can sometimes take a year or more to complete and entails considerable expense. In contrast, a CIR can usually be completed within ninety days, at a modest cost. Early public discussion of a completed CIR gets all concerns out in the open, and reduces the chance of costly project delays caused by unexpected litigation arising late in the project approval process.

An outside consultant, approved by the city, works with the developer to prepare the CIR. The developer pays the consultant’s fee. The CIR is reviewed for completeness by the city staff and then forwarded to the Planning Commission, which holds a public hearing. The CIR is then routed to the city council with the Planning Commission’s comments. The city council holds its own public hearing.

Developers, existing businesses, legislators, and interested community members all benefit from Community Impact Reports.



Save the Dates!

Save these dates

(there may be changes)

October Sat.15 *Juvenile Justice Consensus Meeting*

November Sat. 5 *Family Justice Center*

Sat.19 *National Education Study Consensus meeting*

December Sun. 4 *Holiday Silent Auction*

January Sat. 28 *Program Planning*

February Wed. 8 *Theater Party , 'Proof'*

Sat. 25 *Regional Governments*

March ----Wed. 21 *Lunch with the League*

April Sat. 21 *Truth in Campaign Advertising*

June Sat. Jun 2 *Annual Membership Meeting*

Explore the National League Education Study

The Education Study scope is broad and includes the following areas under the role of the federal government in public education (pre-K through grade 12): the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments which are required for many federal grant programs but are national, not federal. The culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope.

Every member is important in executing this study. We need members to work on the committee, to help with the proposed consensus meeting on Saturday November 19 by facilitating discussion, recording important points, helping with hospitality.

Please let me know if you can help at chleleg@sonic.net.

Our initial meeting is Monday September 12 at 1 pm in our office.

All members can view the study at <http://www.lwv.org>, For Members, Projects and Programs, Education Study.

Chlele Gummer, Education Study Chair

Book Group

League members and the public are invited to join the book group at 10:30 AM, Thursday, September 15, to discuss Michael Specter's *Denialism: How Irrational Thinking Hinders Scientific Progress, Harms the Planet, and Threatens Our Lives*. The group meets in the conference room immediately opposite the elevator on the third floor of 555 Fifth Street, Santa Rosa.

Published in 2009 by Penguin Press, the full title describes the topic. Specific examples discussed include childhood immunizations, claims for the health benefits of organic food, forms of alternative medicine, and climate change.

The book group meets on the third Thursday of the month, except for December. You may download the 2011 schedule for the book group from the calendar page of the local League website. If you have questions about the group, please call or send me a message.

Lynda Hungerford

lh@sonic.net

539-5770



SEPTEMBER 2011 CALENDAR

Thursday, Sept.8	9:30 a.m.	The Conference Room*	Board meeting. Open to members, and by invitation, open to the public.
TBD	10 a.m.	The Conference Room*	Voter Service Meeting
Monday, Sept. 12	1 p.m	The Conference Room*	Fed. Role in Education study committee
TBD	10 a.m.	The Conference Room*	Membership Committee
Thursday, Sept.15	10:30 - noon	The Conference Room*	Book Group
Friday, Sept.23	10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	151 Second Street, Petaluma	Petaluma Unit Meeting
Weds, Sept.28	9:30 a.m. - noon	The Conference Room*	Advocacy Meeting

**The Conference Room is opposite the elevator on the third floor of 555 Fifth Street, Santa Rosa.*

Check out the **League website**. <http://www.lwvsonoma.org/>
for current dates and time for meetings and for back issues of The VOTER.



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MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR GENERAL FUND

Benioff, Mildred	Hawthorne, Elisabeth	Pickar, Adele
Brennan, Claudette	Hungerford, Lynda	Ramberg, Caroline
Brosbe, Ellen	Kalmar, Linda	Ramsey, Barbara
Castleberry Lymona	Leavitt, Louisa	Richards, Nancy & Willard
De Lorimier, Sandra	Lee, Ardath	Richardson, Freya
De Young, Jane	Lewis, Nancy	Richardson, Nancy
Dhesi, Gwendolyn & Nirmal	Lytle, Anita	Robb-Wilder, Sukey & Natalie
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Gummer, Chlele	Peterson, Ettamarie & Raymond	Stewart, Irene & Roger
Hall, Laurie		Vivio, Priscilla & Joe
Hardin, Lisa		Watts, Carleen

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MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR EDUCATION FUND

Brosbe, Ellen	Lasky, Doris
Cary, Corol Ann	Leavitt, Louisa
Castleberry Lymona	Lyman, Dorothea
Christiansen, Aurelie	Mansfield, Hilda
Clark, Terri T.S.	Mendez, Edith
Clement, Robert & Phyllis	Quibell, Catherine
Dupre, Jack & Marcia	Stewart, Irene & Roger
Giampaoli, Judith	Temko, Judith
Gorin, Susan	Vazquez, Francisco
Keene, Lucie	



League of Women Voters® of Sonoma County Membership Application

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

Zip_____ Telephone_____

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_____

Please consider joining at one of these levels:

- Susan B. Anthony Individual Membership \$60
- Limited Income Membership \$40
- Amelia Bloomer Household Membership \$90
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership \$100
- Carrie Chapman Catt Membership \$200 or more

The membership year is July 1-June 30.

Please send to

LWV Sonoma County, 555 Fifth St. Suite 300 O, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.