



Santa Cruz Voter

League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County

November/December 2011

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featured speaker

Mary Jo Walker

Elected Auditor-Controller
for the County of Santa Cruz



Saturday,

November 19, 2011

11:30 A.M to 2 P.M.

Calendar

Tuesday, November 8, 2011, 1 - 3 P.M.

LWVSCC Board Meeting

Santa Cruz County Bank

720 Front Street, Santa Cruz

Saturday, November 19, 2011

11:30 A.M. - 2 P.M.

State of Santa Cruz County's Financial

Condition: Lunch with Auditor-Controller

Mary Jo Walker

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall

6401 Freedom Boulevard, Aptos

Tuesday, December 13, 2011 1 - 3 P.M.

LWVSCC Board Meeting

Santa Cruz County Bank

720 Front Street, Santa Cruz

Thursday, January 12, 2012, 1-3 P.M.

National Program Planning

150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz

Sunday, February 12, 2012

Fundraiser and Luncheon Scotts Valley Hilton

6001 La Madrona Drive, Scotts Valley

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall
6401 Freedom Boulevard, Aptos 95003

One mile east of Highway 1;

look for the red, white, and blue balloons.

Open to League members and the public.

Cost: \$22 per person

Includes admission and buffet luncheon

Prepaid reservations required by November 12.

Send checks payable to LWVSCC to: Sandy Warren, 150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The presentation will focus on:

- Revenue and spending patterns, including recent cost cutting measures
- Staff reductions and pension reform
- The status of redevelopment agencies and state revenue realignment

For more information call Maria Nesheim at (831) 662-8845. A flyer to share with your friends and colleagues is available at <http://lwvsc.org/files/2011-11-19WalkerFlyer.pdf>

Thinking Now About the February Silent Auction

Begin saving those items (used or new) you would like to donate for the League's annual luncheon fundraiser at the Scotts Valley Hilton February 12th.

--Peggy Marketello, 1st Co-Vice President/Program Co-Chair

Membership

The 2011-2012 local rosters for the Santa Cruz County League of Women Voters were mailed to all members who had not received them by October 21. Get-acquainted events in homes are being scheduled for members who have joined in the past year or two. If you would like to attend, please contact Barbara Lewis by e-mail at bobbi44@gmail.com or telephone at 335-7816. If you are only available on certain days or weekends, please include that information.

--Barbara Lewis, Membership Chair

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.

LWVSCC Holds Education Study Meetings

On October 14 seventeen members of our local League attended the first of two consensus meetings on the LWVUS study on the "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" at John and Sandy Warren's home in Santa Cruz. After refreshments, members introduced themselves with a brief background of their experience with the educational system. Committee member Joyce Aoyagi gave an excellent presentation on Core Standards and Assessments, then facilitator Barbara Lewis kept the discussion moving through the nine consensus questions; Sandy Warren recorded the consensus results. Members debated the merits of the various options, with ideas from many differing viewpoints represented, and eventually the group reached consensus on all nine questions before the meeting ended on time at 3 P.M.

At the second consensus meeting on October 28, attended by sixteen members, Jack Dilles presented information on Funding and Equity and Ann Wise facilitated. We came to consensus on all but one of the questions asked by the study.

The answers arrived at during both meetings will go to our local League Board for approval on November 8 before being submitted to the national League. From December 2011 to February 2012, the national League committee will analyze the data from League consensus meetings across the country, and then write the position paper for the "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education." In March 2012, the LWVUS Board of Directors will review the results for comment and approval of the position, which will form the basis of future action by LWVUS.

--Barbara Lewis, Vice President/National Program

President's Message

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check payable to League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745.

___\$65 Individual annual membership

___\$97.50 Two members in a household

___\$30.00 Student membership

___Contribution \$ _____

Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWV Education Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

Thanks to our Education Study Committee members for their excellent work that enabled us to participate in the national study consensus process. I especially want to thank Barbara Lewis, National Program Chair, who did an outstanding job organizing this important undertaking which included a public luncheon with Superintendent Michael Watkins at the County Office of Education and two consensus meetings for League members, graciously hosted by Sandy Warren. Thanks to all the committee members who worked hard to prepare for the consensus meetings and, of course, thanks to our members who attended the meetings and participated in the consensus process. You can all be proud of a job well done.

Coming up on November 19 is our luncheon with guest speaker Mary Jo Walker, elected Auditor-Controller for the County of Santa Cruz. The public is invited, so plan to get your reservations in early (for details, see page 1).

Finally, it's not too early to start thinking about our annual silent auction and luncheon fundraiser planned for Sunday, February 12, 2012 at the Scotts Valley Hilton Hotel. When making your shopping list for the holiday season, you might want to add a special gift for our silent auction. Or, you can plan to donate that previous holiday gift that didn't quite fit your need.

*Hope you have a happy Thanksgiving.
Jan Karwin, President*

LWVUS President Speaks on National Public Radio

On October 17 LWVUS president Elisabeth MacNamara spoke about voter suppression as a guest on National Public Radio's call-in show, "On Point," hosted by Tom Ashbrook. The show focused on a new wave of state law changes that tighten voting laws by making registration more difficult, requiring photo ID or proof of citizenship to vote, reducing early voting opportunities, and disenfranchising ex-felons.

"We definitely view it as voter suppression, whatever the motivation," said Elisabeth MacNamara, national president of the non-partisan League of Women Voters. She said that the new laws are not only expensive to implement, but also amount to new and onerous government regulations with "almost no benefit from an integrity standpoint."

To listen to the NPR program go to <http://onpoint.wbur.org/2011/10/17/voting> and click on the "Listen to this show" button at the top (Elisabeth MacNamara is on near the end of the show).

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Campaign for a Healthy California Gets Started

On October 22, the California Nurses Association and Health Care for All, along with other co-sponsoring organizations (including the LWV of Santa Cruz County), kicked off the Campaign for a Healthy California to bring about Universal Single-Payer Healthcare for California at the Watsonville Civic Plaza Community Room.

Introduced by our knowledgeable County Treasurer Fred Keeley, the three excellent speakers were inspirational and convincing that California can succeed in adopting a universal single-payer health care system.

Donna Smith, of National Nurses United and featured in the movie *Sicko*, described her family's experience of nearly going bankrupt because of health care costs, even though they had health care insurance. She cited statistics that about 100,000 deaths per year are attributable to lack of access to health care in the United States, about 12,000 per year in California. In 2010, approximately 60% of the two million personal bankruptcies in the U.S. were due to medical crises affecting 1.2 million people: 2,990 per day in the U.S., 350 per day in California, causing significant impact on the economy. Smith also pointed out that currently 22 states are in various stages of enacting a single-payer health care system.

James Haslam, Executive Director of the Vermont Workers' Center, outlined the grassroots movement that enabled Vermont to get legislative approval and the governor's signature on a single-payer health care reform bill. Like California, Vermont had tried for many years to establish single-payer health care. In 2008, the campaign began to emphasize health care as a human right, moving the discussion from abstract facts and figures to personal testimony and concrete examples for saving lives. People were dying under the old system that was not so much focused on providing health care as it was structured to make money for investors.

During the course of the campaign in Vermont, 15 candidates forums were held that focused on health care as a human right and a public good. Efforts in the Senate to amend the bill to exclude undocumented workers, seen as hateful and racist, were vigorously opposed by the campaign and ultimately defeated. The campaign also refused to take out women's reproductive health when the Catholic Church threatened to pull a \$35,000 grant. What was said to be politically impossible proved to be possible. The lesson here, emphasized Haslam, is not to let elected officials determine what is politically possible. The single-payer health care bill passed with strong bi-partisan support that could have overridden a governor's veto. The Governor signed it.

Andrew McGuire, Executive Director of California One Care, believes that a similar campaign would be successful in California. Occupy Wall Street has changed the political context. The time is ripe to demand that all residents be given full health care coverage. McGuire thinks that the toughest opponents are people who believe that government programs do not work, but he definitely would not promote incremental steps that are flawed. He believes that any system that allows the private health insurance system to exist and expand will not succeed.

McGuire advocates a single-payer campaign strategy that focuses on getting a 2/3 vote in the Assembly and Senate, as opposed to a ballot initiative. He believes that trying to use the initiative process would be too expensive and too risky, given the enormous amount of money on the side of the health care insurance industry and pharmaceutical companies. McGuire described a five-step campaign strategy beginning at the local level to elect candidates who support a universal single-payer health care system for California.

For more information on the Campaign for a Healthy California, contact Carol Robertson, Health Care for All—Santa Cruz, at (831)423-0845 or e-mail at carob@cruzio.com.

-- Jan Karwin, President