



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

December 2013

Volume 48, Number 3

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Calendar

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

1 -3 P.M.
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz

Tuesday, January 7, 2014

1-3 P.M.
Local and National Program Planning
24 Oak Road, Santa Cruz

Tuesday, January 14, 2014

1-3 P.M.
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz

Sunday, February 9, 2014

12:30 to 2:30 P.M.
Valentine Luncheon & Silent Auction
Hilton Scotts Valley
6001 La Madrona Drive, Scotts Valley

February Fundraiser

Save the date for our annual Valentine Luncheon and Silent Auction Luncheon to be held on Sunday, February 9, 2014 from 12:30 to 2:30 P.M. at the Scotts Valley Hilton. Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission Executive Director George Dondero and Project Manager Cory Caletti will bring us up to date on the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan and plans for a train service.

Donations for our silent auction fundraiser will be gratefully accepted. New and gently used items from plants to platters are all welcome. Look for more details in January.

LWVSCC Program Planning

Tuesday

January 7, 2014

1-3 P.M.

24 Oak Road, Santa Cruz

Free and open to all LWVSCC members

This year's Program Planning meeting will be held from 1 to 3 P.M. on Tuesday January 7, 2014 at the Pasatiempo home of Judy Brock, 24 Oak Road in Santa Cruz (access is from Pasatiempo Drive through the main gate of the Pasatiempo Golf Club; note that there is no access from Graham Hill Road). We will be discussing both local and national program planning.

Local planning is your opportunity to decide what topics or governmental issues you want LWVSCC to explore at our monthly members' meetings for either education or action. Our programs are completely member-driven: tell us what interests you about our local community and who you want to hear speak on the topic. Suggested topics will be discussed at the planning meeting and a list of recommendations chosen; then, after approval by the LWVSCC board, members will vote on the topics at our annual meeting in June.

In addition to program planning, members may suggest a study topic on either a local or national level. We will not review individual positions, so be sure to review them on your own prior to the meeting.

A brief description of the national League's positions is available at <http://www.lwv.org/content/public-policy-positions> To review national positions in detail, you can download a copy of Impact on Issues <http://www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues-online-edition>

Local positions can be viewed online at <http://lwvsc.org/positions.html>

If you would like to propose a program or study but cannot attend the meeting, you can contribute by sending your recommendations to league@lwvsc.org or call 426-VOTE (8683).

President's Message

Dear Members,

My message is longer this month as we will not have an issue of the VOTER in January.

We are on schedule with our program planning events for the year here in Santa Cruz County with two having occurred (Community Safety and a Library Update), and three already scheduled (Rail/Scenic Trail at our February Silent Auction Fundraiser, and Program Planning in January); with water and immigration being in the planning stages for speaker panels. Your dedicated board is working hard with members towards our mission's goal of maintaining a working democracy.

At our November meeting, I was pleased to hear Supervisor Bruce McPherson commend the League for its continuing and valued studies of the voting issues and our helpful input on legislation and elections at the state and local levels.

Because the League strongly advocates for a working democracy, I want to take an opportunity to remind all our busy members to keep alert and aware of all the pending and proposed actions that will affect all of us and our future generations. Here are some issues in which to maintain a scrutinizing vigilance.

- New voter registration laws and polling practices are being proposed in many states that present challenges to many of our citizens in their quest to have and maintain a voice in their Democracy. The LWVUS has already challenged some of these in the courts and it is pertinent to stay alert and aware and actively advocate for everyone to have free, equal, and unhindered access to the polls.
- There is much being said about how campaigns are being financed, especially after the Supreme Court's decision in the *Citizens United* case, with the public wanting to "follow the money" on who is funding political activity. California is once again ahead of the flock in its disclosure laws and proposals to strengthen them. Stay alert & aware on this issue by keeping up with the news: find out about the recent settlement in a case of secret money donated to defeat two propositions in California during last year's election at ca.lwv.org
- The EPA's new strict regulations on greenhouse gas emission standards for new power plants prompted a coal industry backlash that is sure to present court challenges. House Rep. Whitfield has also proposed a measure *not* to limit carbon emissions. Stay alert & aware: [send the EPA a message](#) in support of carbon pollution limits. You can also help protect the planet by using the League's [Climate Change toolkit](#).
- Fracking is now a local issue. California is the fourth largest oil and gas producing state, and natural resources extraction is an important contributor to our state's economy. Our Monterey Bay has one of the largest shale formations in the USA, containing an estimated 15.4 billion barrels of recoverable oil. Fracking is already widely practiced in California and is likely to increase. Santa Cruz County's Board of Supervisors has passed a moratorium on the controversial practice, hoping to make it permanent. Will it hold up? Looking beyond fracking, there are other well-stimulating techniques such as acidization with chemicals used being an unknown threat. Find out more about fracking in California at ca.lwv.org Stay alert & aware!
- Affordable Care Act. Please be vigilant about all the many forces coming at us in trying to destroy the health care act. Bettering it is a given, but going back to what we had is not. We are lucky to live in California, a state that has done better than most with its health insurance exchange, [Covered California](#), that has enrolled over 80 thousand Californians so far.

Whether it's helping on a local level, answering the League's call to action, or making a donation, I encourage you to keep active, alert, and aware of the issues facing our country. In 2013 the LWV of California saw the passage of 19 of the [26 bills it supported](#) in the California Legislature. This success was due in no small part to the informed and active participation of our members.

A happy holiday season to all,
Peggy Marketello



Santa Cruz Libraries in the 21st Century

At a meeting at the Scotts Valley Branch Library on November 6, Fifth District Supervisor Bruce McPherson spoke to League members about the future of libraries in the Santa Cruz Public Library (SCPL) system. Teresa Landers, Library Director, attended and helped answer questions after his talk. League members had an opportunity to view the Santa Cruz Public Library System's newest branch that showcases their new library service model whose goal is to provide a 21st century library experience. Key features are a welcoming, comfortable, open space, with shorter, easy-to-browse shelves, and, in view throughout, exhibits of work from local artists; prominent self-service areas; separate teen and children's spaces; sufficient access to data and power for computer users; and a meeting space that can be used by patrons when not being used for meetings.



Bruce McPherson and Teresa Landers address LWVSCC

Since 1996, the Library Joint Powers Board (LJPB), headquartered in downtown Santa Cruz, has run ten libraries and a bookmobile at locations throughout central and northern Santa Cruz County under a joint powers agreement. The board has recently completed a facility master plan, which has resulted in a list of needs and upgrades. The list has been segmented into three categories they refer to as "maintain" (capital repairs and maintenance needed to keep the status quo), "gain" (changes that will improve library services and bring them into line with the new service model), and "attain" (replace or renovate aging facilities and expand space where needed). Estimated costs for these changes range from 21 million dollars to keep the current facilities running to 86 million to accomplish all of the goals.

Director Landers detailed some of the building and maintenance needs of the library. The Felton and Capitola branches cannot be salvaged and must be replaced; only minimal repairs will be done to keep them operating until they can be replaced. The main branch downtown needs either major renovations or replacement; repairs, such as keeping the boiler system working and the plumbing functional, are costing large amounts of money. The Aptos library, one of the most heavily used branches, needs to be expanded and remodeled. Most branches need some maintenance, repair, or upgrades to keep them operating and bring them in line with the needs of 21st century library patrons. A comprehensive description of the SCPL System's needs and plans can be found online at santacruzpl.org under the "Planning Documents" link at the bottom of the page.

The LJPB is currently evaluating means to get funding for these projects. Possibilities include a parcel tax, a bond measure, or an additional sales tax increase. Supervisor McPherson mentioned that the California legislature is currently considering lowering the threshold for passage of taxes from two-thirds to 55% for library operation and capital-related financial measures. To get a measure on the June ballot, the LJPB would need to decide what type of tax and how much to ask for by March of 2014. To get on the November ballot, the deadline is August 2014. The current ¼ cent sales tax for the local library system, passed by voters in 2008, provides operational funds, but no funds for upgrades or capital expenses. Part of the SCPL's goal is to build up a reserve to pay for future planned maintenance, such as new roofs and replacing worn carpets and furnishings.

Since a recent poll of Santa Cruz County residents showed that 91% considered the library system very or extremely important, and that 70% feel our libraries need more money, Supervisor McPherson feels the chances for of passage of a tax measure are good. With 3,000 visitors per day and 1.7 million items checked out per year, the library system is clearly an asset to our community. While its primary purpose as an access point for information is key, Supervisor McPherson stressed that the library is an even more important asset as a community center, providing a spaces and activities for children, teens, and families as well as meeting places for community events. Our community has many needs; roads, water, and parks are important too, and we need to decide where our priorities are.

--Pam Newbury, Editor

LWV-Sponsored Presidential Debates Reconsidered

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

____\$100.00 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_____

At the 2013 Washington State LWV Convention, delegates unanimously voted in a [resolution](#) to encourage the national League to reinstate LWV-sponsored Presidential Debates beginning in 2016. From 1976 to 1984, the LWV sponsored national presidential debates. In 1988, the Democrats and Republicans formed the Commission on Presidential Debates and took over running the debates. The LWV was invited to participate, but refused when they were denied a voice in the planning process. Then League president Nancy Newman voiced her frustration at a press conference, “...never in the long history of the League of Women Voters have two candidates’ organizations come to us with such stringent, self-serving and unyielding demands.”

Since then, the [national League’s position](#) has been not to participate in presidential debates because “...there is little incentive for the candidates to debate outside the ‘safe’ environment created by the party-controlled commission.” The national League has not yet responded to Washington State’s resolution.

In a recent letter to California local Leagues, Amy Davis, former President LWV Mason County Washington, and Barb Parsloe, co-author of the resolution, encouraged League members nationwide to engage in a dialog to consider the need for meaningful presidential debates free from the protective rules that allow candidates to avoid substantive content and controversial issues: “We believe that LWV is making it too easy for the major parties to control the dialogue...we suggest another strategy: issue public invitations to a League debate between the two major party candidates and at least two independent/third party candidates. Then proceed with the event, hosting as many candidates as find the courage to accept, and leaving empty chairs at the table for those who don’t show.” In today’s media-rich environment, there are many ways for the League to showcase the debates; we aren’t at the mercy of major networks anymore.

The board of LWVSCC will be considering this issue and would like to hear from members what their thoughts are on this issue. Please let us know by sending an e-mail to league@lwvsc.org or call 426-VOTE (8683).

For more information:

<http://www.lwvmasoncounty.org/resolution.html#resolution>

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.

League of Women Voters

of Santa Cruz County

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