



VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

January 2012

Volume 39 Number 7

In This Issue

Bay Area League Day - Housing	3
Calendar	6
Climate Change	4
Email VOTER	3
Initiative and Referendum	1
League News	5
Meet the Mayor	3
President's Message	2
Regional Meeting	1
Santa Clara Valley Water District - Clean Safe Creeks	2

LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale Board of Directors

President	Russell Howard
Vice President	Susan Hough
Secretary	Katharine Turner
Treasurer	Roberta Hollimon

Directors	Suzanne Ford
	Marilyn Howard
	Bruce Kendall
	Louise Levy
	Lois Smallwood
	Jason Spiller

Off Board

Dues Secretary	Delores Carson
VOTER Mailing	LaVerne Prentice

LWVC INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM UPDATE STUDY

Editor's note: Studies are the basis for League action. Our advocacy is always based on current program positions/League Principles. Positions are developed by member study and consensus. This year our League has completed the study of the Federal Role in Education and now has the opportunity to engage in two new studies, Privatization (see December 2011 VOTER p. 3) and the Initiative and Referendum Update. If you are interested in either of the new studies contact Roberta Hollimon at lwvcseditor@comcast.net.

During the LWVC Convention in May, delegates adopted an update of the initiative and referendum process in California. The state study committee has been chosen, has met once in person, adopted a study scope, budget and tentative timeline. They are responsible for developing the study material that all local Leagues in California will use to come to consensus. The consensus meetings will be in late 2012 or early 2013—after the 2012 presidential election.

The study committee divided into subgroups, each taking a topic to research:

- history of the initiative and referendum process, with an emphasis on California
- description of the initiative and referendum process as it exists today in California
- a comparison of other states and how they are using the processes for direct democracy
- identification of key issues with the processes
- ideas or methods for reforming the process

The group also agreed to create community education and outreach material as part of its work, with the help of some as-yet-to-be-identified grant money.

There are multiple ways to find out more about the study, and join in the ongoing discussion. There is a Facebook group (League of Women Voters of California Initiative and Referendum Study), a Yahoo Group that you can link to via the LWVC members only page (contact your local League leadership if you need information about how to find this), and a page on the League's website (<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/issues/initiativeand-referendum.html>), where the study committee will provide a continually updating list of articles and reading materials.

SAVE THE DATE!

LWVC Regional Meeting

Saturday, February 25, 2012, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, San Jose

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A new year is upon us! Here's hoping that the Holidays brought with them the peace, celebrations, and joyous family traditions that we are so fortunate to celebrate in a Free Society. Now, once the decorations are carefully boxed away for another year, and perhaps a "diet" plan worked out for the next few weeks, it's time to look ahead to what promises to be a monumentally important election year. If you're like me, you have heard friends and relatives struggle to make sense of the whip-sawing polls and the bombardment of diverse opinion. They may even be expressing frustrations over their belief that the "system" may not even work any longer, given the repeated gridlock of ideas in Washington and elsewhere. You, as members of the League of Women Voters, can offer some encouraging words. We believe that the much-maligned "system", even though convoluted and overwhelming at times, still offers the best way forward in our process of self-governance.

We have a great deal of work to do this year, and let me take this opportunity to thank you in advance for any and all efforts made on behalf of the LWVCS to advance the rhetoric, and help the process work well.

Have a safe, exciting, and wonderful New Year!

Russ

SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT: CLEAN SAFE CREEKS PROGRAM

Susan Graham

At the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) Special Board meeting on November 15, 2011, there was a discussion of an audit of the Clean, Safe Creeks program. The Clean, Safe Creeks program was created by a parcel tax passed in 2000 for a duration of 15 years. The parcel tax generated \$32.9 million dollars in 2009-2010; a total of \$259 million dollars has been collected since the program started. An Independent Monitoring Committee (IMC) was formed to review the implementation of the intended results of the program. The League is represented by Nancy Hobbs.

A concern that has been raised by the IMC is whether the Water District has made reasonable progress towards meeting the outcomes of the program. This, in and of itself, is important, but it becomes more so as the Water District plans to put another bond on the ballot in November, 2012. The Santa Clara County Leagues of Women Voters, under Chair Pat Khan, was the first listed signer in favor of Measure B (2000 election) under the argument in favor. We will surely be asked to support a new bond measure in 2012.

Susan Graham is a member of LWV Los Altos/Mountain View and serves as an observer of the Santa Clara Valley Water District for the LWVs of Santa Clara County.

Board Briefs

The board did not hold a meeting in December. This column will resume in the February VOTER.

Membership News

Membership News will return next month.

The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

Published 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale.

Yearly subscriptions: \$10/year to non-members. Members subscribe through annual dues.

Editor: Roberta Hollimon

lwwcseditor@comcast.net

Mailing: LaVerne Prentice

COME TO BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY!

Housing and the Bay Area's Future



Saturday, February 4, 9 AM to 2 PM
First Unitarian Church of Oakland
685 14th Street at Clay
Oakland, CA 94612
(Note change of location)



DAVID ROSEN, a leading expert in the field of affordable housing, finance, policy, land use, lending and investment strategic planning will be the keynote speaker.

Three panels will look at the problems facing housing today including:

- * implementation of SB 375
- * sources and uses of public money
- * difficulties of community support

In addition there will be panels of experts on:

- * meeting regional housing needs in light of the sustainable communities' strategy
- * difficulties of financing affordable housing
- * how to serve the hardest to house

There will be time for questions from the audience during each panel.

Cost: In advance: \$30 (\$15 without lunch); at the door \$35 (\$20 without lunch).

To register please write a check payable to "LWVBA" and mail, including your name and any guest names to
LWVBA, 1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612.

Registration is also available online through January 27 via PayPal at <http://www.lwvbayarea.org>.

For more details, call (510) 839-1608 or send an email to editor@bayareamonitor.org.

MEET THE MAYOR

Cupertino's new mayor, Mark Santoro, is instituting a new monthly program, "Meet the Mayor," a time when residents can talk with the mayor about issues in the city. The meetings will be held in the old council chamber in city hall. The first will be held January 18 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

LIKE THE PICTURES?

Do you like the pictures and graphics in this issue? Are you seeing them in color or black and white? If you are still receiving the VOTER by mail you are missing some of the color that you would get in an email version of the VOTER. To switch to email delivery, write to the editor at lwvcseditor@comcast.net and ask to be put on the email list.

IS IT TIME TO STOP COMPROMISING?

By Sarah Diefendorf, LWVC Program Director for Climate Change



The Cayuhoga River Burning in 1969

I was born to be an environmentalist. My geography dictated my life. I grew up on the shores of Lake Erie. No, not that Lake Erie, the part that was burning: that was actually Cleveland's

Cayuhoga river that flowed into the lake not the lake itself...but I don't want to digress down that path. I grew up in Buffalo, and rather than watching my lake burn, I just witnessed a long slow agonizing death of black rotting algae, dead fish and dwindling wildlife. But then something amazing happened – the 60s. Radicalism bloomed like the algae on my lake, youth took the streets with new demands and they forced Richard Nixon into being the most environmental president the United States has ever seen.

Imagine that, in just one year, 1970, Nixon created the EPA and Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Air Act. By 1972 we had the Water Pollution Control Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Clean Water Act and by 1973 the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Basically, by 1980 we pretty much had all the environmental legislation we have today and not much more. And by 1987, I had my first environmental job in San Francisco and I was hooked. I wrote environmental impact reports as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act, and which essentially enabled almost all development to move forward with a veneer of environmental protection.

My environmental generation wasn't radical – we were compromisers. We watched the environment suffer through the 80s blowback – suddenly trees caused pollution and ketchup was a vegetable – and so we believed that if we backed off, cut some slack, just worked with the polluters to make them better than before, eventually they would see the light, and by now the world would be a better place. But that didn't happen did it? Today, corporations are citizens, we have the most anti-environmental congress

in history, and the wealthy countries of the world have recently admitted that failure is the only option for a worldwide treaty on climate change. Maybe in 2020, they good heartedly suggest, while we steadily climb past 350.

So last week as I marched with my fellow 99%ers in Oakland California, I wondered, is it time to stop compromising? Is it time to make demands that are difficult? Is it time to ask our elected officials where they stand, and if they occupy the wrong place, vote them out? I think so. I think I'm done with compromising.

So what happened to my Lake? It was saved by the radicals. All that legislation served to cut the pollution and provide for a massive cleanup. The algae receded, the great blue herons came back and the fish reappeared from somewhere in the deep bowels of Erie where they must have been hiding for decades. I think we've been hiding too and I think it's time to come back, to show our strength and stop compromising.

So California, it's time for real change. It's time we leveraged the fact that we set the environmental trends that guide the country. It's time to remember that we control 53 members - 12% of the House of Representatives. It's time to vote for the environment. **It's time to Vote Climate!**



This author (far right) marches with the 99%.

League of Women Voters of California • 1107 9th Street, Suite 300 • Sacramento, CA 94814 • www.lwvc.org

LEAGUE NEWS

National – League Says “No” to Anti-Environmental Riders on Budget Bills The League and coalition partners sent a letter to Senate and House leadership, opposing the attachment of any anti-environmental riders to the spending and tax bills that Congress is trying to get done before the end of the year.

State - L W V C agreed to join *The Children's Movement* organized by frequent partner, Children Now. Children Now's Ted Lempert explains that it's much more effective for children's issues to be taken seriously by the state legislature when we can leverage respected representation across fundamental children's health and education policy issues. The LWVC is joining this Movement on an opt-in basis, meaning that we will continue our traditional analysis of bills relating to children, and will sign on for specific bills when warranted. By joining, we become part of a coalition with dozens of other respected child advocacy organizations. See www.childrennow.org

LWV Fights Voter Suppression Laws

A message from LWV President Elisabeth McNamara

The end of a very busy year is approaching and offers lots of opportunity to reflect on the work that we have done and the work ahead.

I'd like to focus on the work ahead simply because of its urgency. Many state legislatures have managed to make it more difficult for citizens to vote in the upcoming 2012 elections. This week, the Attorney General of the United States finally acknowledged what we, in the League, have known for a long time. Voting rights are being undermined in a variety of ways in a majority of the states. The time for action is now if we want the 2012 election to be fair.

Whatever course the Department of Justice takes over the next few months, we know that state legislatures will be coming back into session next year, and efforts will be renewed to require voter ID, curb early voting and discourage groups like the League from registering voters. We, who understand the importance of full participation, must continue to oppose these efforts in every way possible. Whatever barriers the states throw up, we must work to overcome them. We know this is an organized effort, but regardless of who is behind it or what is motivating it, we must be just as organized and just as determined to make the process work for every voter and to make every vote count.

Our state Leagues have been busy, too, fighting back against these anti-voter measures! Still, there is so much more to do.

This final message for 2011, then, is a call to arms to all Leagues! Let's roll up our sleeves and do the valuable work for which we are best known and best qualified. Let's get out and register new voters, provide Voters' Guides, host candidate debates and forums, and mobilize voters for the 2012 elections!

Join the League of Women Voters

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all 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 LWVCS to LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale, P.O. Box 2923, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

_____ \$60 Individual member

Name(s): _____

_____ \$90 Two members in a household

Address: _____

_____ \$30 Student

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

_____ Contribution \$ _____

Phone(s): _____

Email(s): _____

Membership checks are made out to LWVCS and are not tax deductible.

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

CALENDAR

January

Mon 9 7:00 PM **Board Meeting**
Burnett's
729 Stendahl Lane, Cupertino 95014

February

Sat 4 9 AM - 2 PM **Bay Area League Day**
Housing and the Bay Area's Future
First Unitarian Church of Oakland
685 14th Street at Clay, Oakland 94612

Sat 25 **LWVC Regional Meeting**
Martin Luther King Jr. Library, San Jose

WHO REPRESENTS YOU

UNITED STATES

President Barack Obama 202-456-1414
comments@whitehouse.gov
Senator Barbara Boxer 415-403-0100
senator@boxer.senate.gov
Senator Dianne Feinstein 415-393-0707
senator@feinstein.senate.gov
Rep. Anna Eshoo 650-323-2984
annagram@mail.house.gov
Rep. Mike Honda 408-558-8075
mike.honda@mail.house.gov

CALIFORNIA

Governor Jerry Brown 916-445-2841
governor@governor.ca.gov
Senator Elaine Alquist 408-286-8318
senator.alquist@senate.ca.gov
Senator Joe Simitian 650-688-6384
senator.simitian@senate.ca.gov
Assemblyman Paul Fong 408-277-2003
assemblyman.fong@assembly.ca.gov

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Supervisor Dave Cortese 408-299-5030
dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org
Supervisor Liz Kniss
liz.kniss@bos.sccgov.org

Permission is granted to reprint any part of this newsletter with credit to the League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale.

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.

The League of Women Voters
of Cupertino-Sunnyvale
P.O. Box 2923
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

FIRST CLASS