



The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY

December 2005

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Inside:

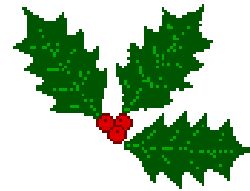
Board Briefs....2

Great Decisions
/Facilitator ...3

New Voices
for youth...3

President's
Message...2

Voter Service...2



HOLIDAY GATHERING AND NATIONAL, BAY AREA and LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING

Thursday, December 15, 2005
6:30 - 8:30

At Barbara Boles' home
964 Durlston Rd., Redwood City

Celebrate the Holidays by getting together with other League members, and have a brief opportunity to have input in to Program priorities for the LWVUS and LWVBA for the next two years, and locally for the next year. For information on current programs, please refer to your Roster for the highlights. We will have handouts and a summary of important activities during the past year or two.

For any questions in the meantime, contact Linda Craig, Program Vice President, at craighughes@earthlink.net.

Potluck - please bring a dish to share and RSVP to the LWV office 325-5780 to tell what you plan to bring (salad, bread, side dish, beverage or dessert).

Directions: Going west on Whipple from El Camino, turn right at the second stop sign, Copley, after two blocks, Copley dead ends into Durlston, turn left, seventh house on the right.



President's Message

As I am watching the election results come in, I am certain that the League has made a difference. Our voter registration team and many more of our members distributed 10,000 Pro & Con brochures as well as several thousand Easy Voter guides in both Spanish and English. Our Speakers Bureau made 17 Pro & Con presentations to nearly 500 voters. We conducted or assisted with five candidate forums, including one that was bilingual (in Spanish). Many calls came into the office asking what position we were taking on the eight ballot proposals. Members staffed the office on election day to answer those "where do I vote?" calls. We all can take pride in being part of such a well respected organization.

Praying for a more peaceful world in 2006,

Barbara Boles, President

BOARD BRIEFS: At the meeting on November 1, discussion covered:

- Ideas for future "Timely Topics", including a screening of the "First to Worst" documentary on the California public schools.
- Plans to staff the League office in downtown Menlo Park surrounding the November election.
- Tentative plans to hold a fundraising event with candidates for local elections at the British Banker's Club next Fall.
- The need to identify more volunteers from among the membership to staff the League office in downtown Menlo Park and to be available for various League volunteer opportunities.

VOTER SERVICE – THANKS FOR VOLUNTEERS:

Candidate Forums were held for:

* Menlo Park Fire Protection District (Moderator, **Kirsten Keith**; timekeeper, **Kathy Armstrong**, question organizer **Judy Orttung** and collector **Carol Dorshkind**)

* Redwood City Council (moderator, **Linda Liebes**, timekeeper, **Joanne Bruggemann**, question organizer **Gerry Felix**, and collector **Ellen Hope**)

* Portola Valley Town Council (moderator, **Lisa Bohannan**, timekeeper, **Linda Craig**, question organizer **Onnolee Trapp**, collectors **Bud Trapp** and friends)

This year we were again able to broadcast live in Menlo Park and Redwood City, to have re-broadcast on local access cable stations, and to webstream the videos on the smartvoter webpage for each election. Finally, late in the process we were asked to moderate a forum for the Redwood City School District Board (thanks to Judy Orttung for moderating and Joanne Bruggemann for timekeeping) and to work on a Spanish language forum for the RWC Council at the Fair Oaks Community Center (thanks to **Noemi Ruelas** for moderating in Spanish!).

Linda Craig, Candidate Forum Coordinator

Speakers' Bureau served over 400 voters at 17 different venues to explain and discuss the 8 complex and controversial Ballot Measures in the November 8th Special Election. Special thanks go to **Judy Orttung** who shouldered both speaking and some administrative arrangements while the Chair was out of town. **Kathy Armstrong's** hosts were especially impressed with her presentations. **Mitzi Henderson** also teamed with speakers new to Speakers' Bureau. We are delighted to add **Judy Borcz**, **Carole Dorshkind** and **Jamie Shepard** to this year's efforts. The speakers encountered a variety of situations at the different venues including some very large groups and some quite small. These speakers' dedication to learning about the measures and educating voters earns our thanks and gratitude in continuing the League's important mission. Kathleen Braunstein, Chair

NEW VOICES FOR YOUTH

Sponsored by the Leagues of Palo Alto and South San Mateo County, New Voices for Youth, was initially funded by a legacy grant from Cable Co-op. The core purposes are to increase civic involvement and voter participation using broadcast media. Over the past twelve months, 30 students have been recruited and trained in TV production. In the admission application, 16 students indicated to be of Latino background, 11 Caucasian, two Asian, and one Arab. These students produced five 30-minute programs and three public service announcements. The public service announcements were on the importance of voting and the program topics selected by the students included "Immigration," "Gay and Lesbian Families," "Scholastic Pressure," "Sports and Steroids," and "Teen Drinking: Myths and Realities." These shows are being shown through the Mid-Peninsula Media Center and Peninsula Television, which combined have a viewership of approximately 250,000 households. The project now has momentum.

- We have a 'wait list' of students who are eager to be trained in video production so they can get their views televised. Two-thirds of these students reside in underserved and under-represented communities in East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks in Redwood City and some of these attend Palo Alto schools.
- We are on the cusp of engaging a much larger number of students in civic participation, our goal being all high school students in south San Mateo County and Palo Alto. Noemi Ruelas, *New Voices for Youth* Project Director, has made important contacts with teachers at Menlo-Atherton, Sequoia and Woodside High Schools, Canada College, and through Jeff Steinberg, Director of the *Sojourn to the Past* program, high schools in East Palo Alto.

Personal contact has also been made with all San Mateo County government teachers in League's effort to register all graduating seniors last spring. These teachers are key to furthering the issue discussion in the classrooms that will be stimulated by the *New Voices* videos.

- California will have major elections in June and November 2006. Engaging students in election programming— discussion of the ballot measures and candidate forums—is key to the broader classroom discussion that Noemi is developing and to the accomplishment of our *New Voice's* goals.
- David Iverson, a PEW and Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)-funded expert on election reporting, has offered to train our *New Voices* youth in the Best Practices of election programming. He has been training television reporters in more than 30 cities for better than six years and is currently based at KQED. You may have heard him fill in for Michael Krasny on Forum, KQED-FM.
- John Mott-Smith, Director of Outreach in the Secretary of State's Office, is promoting the *New Voices* program around the state as a successful model. He checks with us regularly for updates and ideas. This project, showcased at the State League convention in May, will be replicated once the model is improved through further experience.
- The California Channel streams all *New Voices'* programs making them easily accessible 24/7 for teachers, students, parents, family, friends, and the media. *New Voices Team: Noemi Ruelas, Coordinator; Sandy Eakins and Kathleen Weisenberg, members*
Elaine Livingston, LWV Palo Alto

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GREAT DECISIONS" PROGRAM NEEDS A FACILITATOR

The San Mateo County Library System has asked if our League could provide a facilitator for their Great Decisions program discussions. The facilitator would not have to be expert in the field being discussed; guides are provided by the Foreign Policy Association. Discussions will take place once a week for an eight-week period. It is not yet decided which libraries will host the discussion groups, nor what time of day. It might be that a morning program for seniors, a lunchtime program, or evening program would best fit the needs of the community.

This is a 50-year old program put on by the Foreign Policy Association. Subjects this year are UN Reform, US and Iran, Energy Resources, Brazil, China and India-Partners or Competitors, Human Rights in the Age of Terrorism, Turkey, Pandemics and Security. For more information, check the Foreign Policy Association website (www.fpa.org). To volunteer, or to talk more about the specifics, call Librarian Charlotte Bradshaw at 851-0148.

WE HAVE LEARNED WITH REGRET that Joan Stiff, longtime League member and former Mayor and Councilmember in Woodside, died at the end of October.

CALENDAR

6 Tues. 7:00 pm Board Meeting
9 Fri. *VOTER* deadline
15 Thurs. 6:30-8:30 Holiday Gathering and National, Bay Area, County, Local Program Planning at Barbara Boles' home, 946 Durlston Rd., Redwood City

 Legislative Interviews to be scheduled
2 Tues. 7:00 pm Board Meeting
6 Fri. *VOTER* deadline
27 Fri. 9-2:30 Bay Area League Day – State of the Bay – Restoration and Access
 First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 685 14th St, Oakland
 Registration Fee, lunch included.

Statement of Ownership: The Voter is published 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County (LWSSMC 713 Santa Cruz Ave., Suite 9, Menlo Park CA 94025.) It is sent to members of the LWSSMC. This publication may be reproduced or reprinted in part or in whole with proper attribution.
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