



LOOKING AHEAD

**MAY 3RD
LWV BAY AREA
CONVENTION**

**BAY MODEL IN SAUSALITO
9:30 Registration
10 Program**



**Bay
Model
Visitor
Center**

**May 17-18
LWV California Leadership
Council
San Jose, CA**

**June 6-9
LWVUS Convention
Dallas, TX**

**June 14th
LWVFNUC Annual Meeting**

**CONSENSUS MEETING ON
AGRICULTURE STUDY**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 5
LEAGUE MEETING ROOM
3375 COUNTRY DRIVE
FREMONT
10 – 2**

**BROWN BAG LUNCH
LEAGUE WILL PROVIDE
REFRESHMENTS**



**LEARN ABOUT HOW
IMPORTANT THE AGRICULTURE
POSITION IS ESPECIALLY FOR
CALIFORNIANS**

**RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
AND
FOOD SAFETY
WILL BE FEATURED TOPICS FOR
DISCUSSION**

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



. Wow, we have been busy! Our Voter Services team, led by Andrea Schacter has already set up our June Primary forums being held on the evenings of Friday, April 27 and May 3rd beginning at 6:45pm each evening. Many thanks to Marilyn Singer for organizing the forums. This is the first time our League has run forums for primaries. We are doing it this year because of changes made by CA Proposition 14 or the Top Two Primaries Act which took effect in April 2011. **THIS ELECTION COUNTS!** Please read the explanation of this act and let your family and friends know how important this election is to determining our elected leaders in November.

Andrea's focus this April and May are voter registration drives. Please email her at schacter@comcast.net to help with these drives.

Miriam Keller and the Education team have organized and gotten donations for the Y Vote contest for tri-city high school students. The Award Ceremony is on Monday evening, May 9th.

In March LWVFNUC and the Northern California Islamic Council co-sponsored an event, Talking Taxes with Kim Kline, using funds from the One Nation Grant. Syeda Inamdar spearheaded this very well attended event. We celebrated Women's History Month with a screening of Iron Jawed Angels at our first League Night at the Movies. Sunshine week was marked by testimonies to several local bodies by Miriam Keller and John Smith and published letters to the editor in the Mercury News and Fremont Patch.

Sunshine Week is the time to discuss the importance of open government. Unfortunately, here in California we had a setback with the failure by the California Senate to pass Senate Bill (SB) 27 authored by Senator Lou Correa. This bill would have closed a loophole allowing campaign contributions to be hidden by sending money through nonprofit groups. It was only our last election that an Arizona nonprofit corporation made an anonymous \$11 million donation to influence Props 30 and 32. Check out our web site for information on activities and how to take action on matters of concern.

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TOP TWO PRIMARY and REDISTRICTING

It is more important than ever that voters turn out for California's June Primary election. Voter participation in primary elections is always far lower than in November General elections. The new law, approved by California voters in 2010, now calls "partisan" statewide offices "voter-nominated" offices. The Top-Two Primary will list all candidates running for statewide offices on the same ballot regardless of their party preference. All voters will see the same list of candidates, regardless of the voter's party registration. For instance, a registered Republican can choose any candidate from any political party – Peace and Freedom, Libertarian, Democrat, or Republican. The top two vote-getters for each office will advance to the General Election in November.

This new election system applies to all partisan offices except U.S. President, U.S. Vice President and political party County Central Committees. The new primary act does not apply to non-partisan offices, such as school superintendents, community college trustees or judges.

The new voting rules make it possible for two candidates from the same political party to appear on the November general election ballot. It all depends on the results of the primary election.

Among the offices appearing on the June 3 primary ballot, to which the **Top-Two Primary Act** applies, are

Governor, U.S. Congress, State Senate and State Assembly, as well as Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, Treasurer and Secretary of State. Redistricting brings another wrinkle this year. Redrawn U.S. Congressional, State Assembly and State Senate district boundary lines were re-drawn in 2011. Our three cities are now represented by the 15th and 17th Congressional districts, the 10th State Senate district, and the 20th and 25th State Assembly districts.

In the League's mission to encourage all citizens to vote and to be well-informed voters prior to casting ballots, we organize candidate forums where you can meet the candidates, submit questions, and hear in person how they answer. These forums are coming right up in April and May. We will also hold voter registration drives, and distribute non-partisan literature about the election. Let Andrea or another board member know if you can help out with one of these pre-election activities.

For more details visit our website at www.lwvfnuc.org. For important election information about the June 3 Primary Election go to the Alameda County Registrar of Voters — www.acgov.org/rov. And of course, the ultimate source for local and statewide election information is Smart Voter.

So make a commitment. Say **YES** to being a well-informed voter, and say **YES** to casting your ballot during this year's California Primary Election on June

MEET OUR MEMBERS

Martha was born and raised in Nebraska in the midst of politically opinionated family members. Family gatherings were filled with lively and heated discussions with all political parties represented. And after the debates, all rancor disappeared-and life returned to peace and tranquility. A great life lesson!

After graduating from Colorado State College, marrying, and moving to Illinois, she and her husband became involved in the political scene in suburban Chicago, which was a very enlightening and interesting time.

Moved to California in 1963, soon after Fremont became Fremont and has been here ever since. She was divorced and became a "single" mom with three sons, ages 15, 9, and 5. These were "interesting" times. Worked whenever, whatever.

In 1974, she and Bill Crowe joined forces and added Bill's son to the mix. It was NOT the Brady Bunch. However, it all worked out and they just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with all 18 family members gathered in S.F. Just total joy!! (Editorial comment)

Martha spent most of her working life in education—from teaching quilting to E.S.L., to 3rd, 2nd, 6th grades (two of those grades were shared teaching assignments with League members Christine Monkman and Toni Shellen) and the majority of her time was spent in administration at the Adult School and Special Education.

Bill's career had many fields—from airplane mechanic to sales rep for heating controls, to paralegal. Graduated from St. Mary's with a Liberal Arts Degree at age 60.

Both are now busy with volunteering and enjoying—Abode, tax prep with the VITA Program,

AAUW, LWV, PEO, OHAG, three book clubs, theatre, music groups, museums.

The Crowes are so impressed with the League and it's passion for democracy—we are all so fortunate to have this organization guiding and guarding our political process.

Submitted by Martha and Bill Crowe

AGRICULTURE POSITION STUDY AND UPDATE

Introduction to the Study Process

Studies are part of League Program and, in League parlance, League Program includes all of the positions the League uses to affect public policy as well as the procedure for adopting these programs. Program is such an integral part of the League that, according to *League Basics*, “Program is the League’s reason for being.”

Program has three parts: 1) selection of an issue, 2) study of that issue, consensus and formulating a position, and 3) use of that position to influence public policy. All LWVUS positions are included in the League publication, *Impact on Issues, 2012-2014: A Guide to Public Policy Positions*, <http://www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues>.

The purpose of a study, at any level, is to educate members so that they can be informed participants in consensus and provide the necessary data for formulating the ultimate position.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study, as adopted by the LWVUS Board, states:

The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on: 1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, water technology, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

The study committee began its work of refining the areas to be studied, researching and writing background information about the different areas contained in the scope, and preparing consensus questions and other materials to help direct local League discussion to consensus. All of these materials are posted at <http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/agriculture-update>.

As each local League reports its consensus (or lack thereof) the reports are consolidated, and, based on this information, a committee formulates the **position** which, when approved by the Board, can be used for action.

Background Information for April 5th consensus meeting

More than half of our country’s private land is used for agriculture. The choices farmers make in managing those lands affect the quality of our waters, the ability to feed

our people and the future of the land itself. Those choices to a large extent are influenced by the actions of the federal government through the departments and agencies that provide support to farmers and consumers in a variety of ways, promulgate regulations to ensure safe, nutritious food and to protect the environment, and enable competitive markets. Agencies that have a role in this are: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, EPA, FDA, CDC, US Patent and Trade Office. Other issues in this regulation process include Antitrust Agencies and Legislation, Interaction Among Food Safety Agencies, Food Labeling, and the overview of Agriculture’s Role in American Nutrition.

There were five overall topics selected for this study. In the organizational meeting for our League two of these five were chosen. It would take at least two more meetings and several more League volunteers to be able to cover the background material offered by LWVUS. The two topics chosen are: Research and Development and Food Safety. The three not chosen are Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector, Animal Management and Food Labeling.

Below are the consensus questions we will be examining on April 5th. Extensive background material is available on the LWVUS site. A summary of information will be provided by the two section leaders at the meeting. Each section will have an opportunity to discuss both topics since they will switch midway through the morning session. After lunch we will tackle the consensus questions together as a whole.

The suggested readings are on the LWVUS web site. The section leaders will have read much of the materials. You are encouraged to read all or part of each of these sections before the meeting.

Research and Development

Question 7: Research and development (R&D) uses science and engineering to gain a basic understanding of processes and structures of organisms, to create new products or processes for agriculture, to determine health and safety of a product, to determine the environmental impact of a product or process, to develop conservation methods, and to improve efficiency, among other things. R&D utilizes scientific methods and statistical testing to achieve valid repeatable results.

Private corporations, universities, consulting organizations and laboratories, and government agencies perform agricultural R&D. Agricultural research by public universities began in 1862 when the Morrill Act established land grant universities across the United States; much of the basic research on agriculture was developed through these universities. Private R&D is generally more applied than basic and is motivated by the desire to produce a profitable product. Government

agencies review this private research when regulatory approval for a product or process is required. And many government agencies conduct their own research.

To learn more about required research and development for agricultural *products and processes*, we recommend you review the study papers addressing

- Overview of Key Agencies (A0)
- the Food and Drug Administration (A4)
- the Environmental Protection Agency (A3)
- US Department of Agriculture (A1 and A2)

For an *overview* of public and private R&D funding, see the paper on Subsidies (F1).

The Patent and Trademark Office paper (A8) discussion of the Bayh-Dole Act is particularly relevant as a driver of agricultural *R&D policy*.

Review the papers on the Plant Breeding (T2), Genetic Engineering and GE Foods (T3), Nanotechnology and other Technologies (T8), and CDC and NIH (A6) for information on *specific types of R&D*.

The papers on Farm Management (T1), Pesticide Management (T4), Water Management (T6), Animal Management (T7) and Soil Management (T5) provide links to R&D on *agricultural processes*.

In evaluating the materials and suggested references and links, please consider the sources. Blogs, newspaper articles, and information pieces from sources with an identified bias may not necessarily reflect all information on the topic and should be treated accordingly. The validity of scientific information increases as hypotheses are repeatedly tested. Thus a *single* paper reporting a research result should not be considered as the final truth.

7. Which of the following approaches to research and development (R&D) should government fund or accomplish? of the following approaches to research and

Note: For the purpose of these questions and some questions below, “**developed using any new technology**” or “**new technologies**” refer to any of many scientific processes for developing new crops or animals with genetic engineering, nanotechnology or other new techniques, which are not the traditional breeding or hybridization techniques.

- a. Basic research
(Yes, No, No Consensus)
- b. Independent third-party (such as an academic institution) risk assessment of

products *developed using any new technology*

(Yes, No, No Consensus)

- c. Research to assess the impacts of *new technologies* on human health and the environment, prior to their widespread adoption
(Yes, No, No Consensus)
- d. Research that advances the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems
(Yes, No, No Consensus)
- e. Seed banking, research, and other means that promote and preserve genetic diversity
(Yes, No, No Consensus)
- f. Both transparency in the reporting of research studies related to approval of new products **and** respect for intellectual property rights of private enterprises engaged in research
(Yes, No, No Consensus)
- g. Research on long-term effects of new crops, products and processes
(Yes, No, No Consensus)
- h. Development of new practices and technologies to promote conservation for all types of farms
(Yes, No, No Consensus)

Comments:

Food Safety

Question 8: The United States has a complex food system. Risks to food safety can occur during the development of new plant and animal hybrids, during the growing of foods, during the harvest and processing of foods and during shipment and storage. Additional risk may accompany imported foods. Risk includes contamination with chemicals used in production, contamination with bacteria, fungi or viruses from multiple sources, nutrient loss due to processing or production techniques, introduction of allergens or other cross contamination.

To increase food safety, federal agencies have developed a variety of standards, and guidelines. Testing to meet these standards is performed by private groups and governmental agencies. To learn more about safety requirements we recommend you review the paper on Overview of Key Agencies (A0). Learn more about the role of the USDA (A1), the EPA (A3), the FDA (A4), the CDC and NIH (A6) and the Interaction of Federal

Agencies (A7). Please note that in some instances testing and reporting is mandatory and in other instances guidelines are provided with the onus placed on the producer to meet standards. For specific examples of

8. Which of the following approaches to food safety should government perform or fund?

- a. Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for new foods and food additives *developed using any new technology* (see note below question 7) **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- b. Require developers to monitor all food products *developed using any new technology* after releasing to the market **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- c. Withdraw marketing approval if products are shown to be unsafe **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- d. Require post-market monitoring of approved pharmaceutical applications in animal production for human health and environmental impacts **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- e. Require developers of new products to provide data and other materials to independent third-parties (such as academic

requirements and approaches read the papers on GE and GE Foods (T3), Nano and Other Technologies (T8), Pesticide Management (T4) and Animal Management (T7)

- f. institutions) for pre- and post-market safety assessment as appropriate **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- g. Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to treat and control disease **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- h. Fund independent third-party (such as academic institutions) risk assessment of long-term and multiple exposures from foods on human health and the environment **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- i. Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers) **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**
- j. Fund, train and add personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies **(Yes, No, No Consensus)**

Comments:

League Supports Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area made a statement before the Bay Area Air Quality Management District supporting a pilot program in the Bay Area, which would require employers with 50 or more full-time employees to select one of four commuter benefit options. Included is the option to design their own alternative commuter benefit that would be similarly as effective as the other three options.

The League has long favored measures that are designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and single-occupancy vehicle use, as well as programs to reduce the impact of air pollution. More recently, we place high priority on reducing carbon and other emissions from vehicles that worsen air quality and contribute to climate change. We support efforts to attain reductions of greenhouse gases in the Bay Area to meet the targets that have been established.

By promoting the use of alternative commute modes, this Commuter Benefits Program will decrease drive-alone commute trips to Bay Area worksites, thereby reducing traffic congestion, improving the speed of traffic flow during peak commute periods, thus reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and criteria air pollutants.

The Program was developed through a commendable process which included substantial outreach to businesses and public hearings around the Bay Area.

The pilot program will produce a report to the Legislature, including measurable results from the as to the extent to which the intended objectives of reduced emissions of air pollutants, decreased traffic congestion, and greenhouse gases were achieved.

--LWV Bay Area Board of Directors

April 5	Ag Study Consensus Meeting & Brown Bag lunch	10-2 League Conference Room, 3375 Country Dr, Fremont
April 10	Action Group	12-2, League meeting Room, 3375 Country Dr, Fremont
April 21	Board meeting	6:45-9 P.M., League meeting Room, 3375 Country Dr, Fremont
April 25	Candidate Forums – 20 th Assembly, 15 th Congressional, 10 th Senate	6:45 P.M., Fremont Council Chambers, 3300 Capitol Ave, Fremont
May 3	LWVBA Convention	10 A.M.-12 Noon, The Bay Model, 2100 Bridgeway Blvd, Sausalito, CA
May 3	Candidate Forums – 17 th Congressional, 25 th Assembly	6:45 P.M., Fremont Council Chambers, 3300 Capitol Ave, Fremont
May 19	Y Vote Awards Ceremony	7 P.M., New Haven USD Board Room, Educational Services Center, 34200 Alvarado-Niles, Rd, Union City, CA

ALL MEETINGS ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSIBLE

Mission

The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy

LWVFNUC affirms its commitment to reflect the diversity of our communities in our membership and actions. We believe diverse views are important for responsible decision making and seek to work with all people and groups who reflect our community diversity.

Join the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TODAY!

Any person, man or woman, who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League may join. To be a voting member, one must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen. Members under 18, or non-citizens, are welcome as non-voting Associate Members. Dues include membership in LWVFNUC, Bay Area League, and the California and National Leagues. Financial support for dues is available through our scholarship program. Contact Andrea Schacter, Membership Chair, for information.

Name (s) _____

New Member Renewal
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\$ _____

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Total Enclosed \$ _____