

Voter

The League of Women Voters
Of Fremont, Newark and
Union City



Mother's Day, May 8



May, 2005

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FREMONT, NEWARK AND UNION CITY
PRESENTS:

Salt Pond Restoration Tour May 21, 1:00—3:00 PM

View a thriving tidal marsh and visit newly acquired salt ponds during a docent led walking tour in Menlo Park. Learn more about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and how this project can change the South Bay. Directions: From Highway 101, take the Marsh Road Exit. Head east toward the Bay. At the intersection of Marsh Road and Bayfront Expressway, go straight through the gate into Bayfront Park. The docent will be in the parking lot furthest in, past the restrooms. They will be holding big maps.

Or if you want to do this:

We will meet for carpooling at the Parking lot at Mowry and Farwell, behind Massimo's at 11:45 and leave there for a picnic at the park at Menlo Park at 12:15. Please bring a blanket, a drink and some food to share.



Nature lovers, Ursel Bloxsom, Susan Gearhart and Ellen Culver planting trees at the Quarry.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we approach the last months of the League year we have to crow a little about our accomplishments this year. We served our community in the General Election with many candidate forums and educated many groups with our presentations about the ballot measures. We continued to provide all three cities with general meeting topics that informed and educated everyone about the sustainability and the environment, the state budget, Medicare, local school district character education programs. Consensus on updating the state position on education, program planning at the state level, and unique ways to extend outreach to our diverse community filled out our general meeting activities.

We co-sponsored the meeting on sustainability and the environment with Tri-City Ecology and drew a large audience of about 75. We continued to follow the proposed inclusion of Measure T into the Fremont General Plan by offering our perspective to the group hired by the city to evaluate all viewpoints. We also co-sponsored the meeting "Our Community – Who Belongs?" with many other groups. We reached out to sponsor the kick off for the Afghan Story Creative Writing Contest with a fascinating meeting featuring two noted Afghan writers. Our Action Committee took on the goal of interviewing newly elected and re-elected members of local entities and was very successful. We gave \$500 to the Irvington High School state champions of the "We the People" contest for their trip to Washington, D.C. to compete at the national level. One of our members organized the auction items for the LWVCEF fundraiser "Democracy Dinner". Another member served on the state budget committee.

The crowning moment for our League was the successful monitoring of the Sikh Gurdwara election in January. With help from many other Bay Area League members we toiled all day on Sunday and then counted the over 4,500 ballots cast on Monday. We reconciled all but 5 votes cast. This was the temple's first even handed election in years. So for all of the members who helped in our many endeavors this year, Congratulations! Our League Rocks!

BOARD BRIEFS

- ◆ Decided to offer a change in the bylaws for annual meeting approval.
- ◆ Decided to offer a local study for members to consider adopting at annual meeting.
- ◆ Accepted Ellen Culver's offer of a week of a timeshare for an auction item for Democracy Dinner.
- ◆ Decided on a tour of the Salt Pond restoration for May meeting.



MAKING THE TAX SYSTEM REFLECT CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMY

The League has often looked at tax expenditures as one good way to address the state's structural budget deficit. (Another article in this series reports on a bill to require regular evaluation of tax expenditures.) However, there are many changes that would help our tax system more closely align with our 21st century economy and also help address the deficit. Thoughtful League members will want to consider the varied proposals for changes to our tax system that are being discussed around the state.

Our state's sales tax base has not reflected the changes in our economy to a more service-oriented one. Because a sales tax is meant to capture a small amount of the money spent by citizens in order to help finance public expenditures, the sales tax is a logical place to look for added revenue. Lenny Goldberg of the California Tax Reform Association suggests that there are many untaxed "services" that are actually a temporary use of tangible commodities which should be taxed. These include admission to golf courses, gyms, concerts and sporting events. Even without taxing labor services per se, adding such taxes for use of a commodity to our tax structure would add more than \$800 million annually. Another consideration is that broadening the tax base would allow the possibility of lowering the sales tax rate

Although progressive, our personal income tax base and rate structure has several weaknesses that should be considered. Having a top tax bracket that begins at the \$40,000 income level for an individual (\$80,000 for a couple) means that this tax system may not be as progressive as warranted. Additionally, high-income earners have received windfall savings due to federal income tax cuts—but federal spending cuts continue to lead to California budgetary losses. Reinstating the top tax brackets of 10 and 11 per

cent that the state had under Governor Pete Wilson in the early 1990s would greatly benefit California's treasury and more closely reflect the income distribution of today's families.

Corporate taxes provide a smaller percentage share of tax revenues than they did in the 1980s, even though the economy is growing. Addressing loopholes and incentives that may not be effective and making other reforms to the corporate tax structure could generate substantial revenue.

The local property tax is another area that must be addressed for the state as a whole to be solvent. An area of property tax law that may require changes is the complex "change of ownership" rules that define when investment property is reassessed. Currently, these laws allow for very similar commercial properties to pay disparate amounts in property taxes. This is not fair to newer owners or to the citizens of California. Another reform supported by League positions would be a constitutional amendment to require the periodic reassessment of nonresidential property at market value. The California Tax Reform Association has written extensively on this subject; to research it more thoroughly, visit their Web site, www.caltaxreform.org.

It is clear that substantial revenue could be generated through changes to some of California's tax policies. Such changes would also help alleviate the ongoing structural budget deficit. A review of the current tax system will certainly uncover many reforms that are appropriate, including some mentioned here. California needs the revenue that will provide a good education system, public services, and sound infrastructure. Our state's future depends on a tax structure that is sustainable—one that is fair, efficient and equitable.
—LWVC

ACTION COMMITTEE

City(ies) Issues. Mayor Wasserman put the following Council referral on the 4/5 council agenda and pulled it off at the last minute. "Approval of Appointment of Mayor Wasserman and Councilmember Natarajan to meet with ACTA and other Interested Parties Regarding Route 84."

Alex was asked to contact Diaz again and set a date for a Brown Act Forum. When the Forum is set we should buy an ad in the Argus to publicize it.

Fremont is starting an update of its General Plan. Be thinking who might apply for the committee. Sam Neeman, John Smith, Sandi Pantages, Judy Zlatnik, & John Landers were suggested.

Environment Issues. The new toe-of-the-hill consultant Spangler Associates is holding public meetings. The Implementation issues should reach the Planning Commission and City Council in May or June. Hopefully it will be completely finished by August recess. The Patterson Ranch people are also in the "gathering data from the public" mode. Possibly will hold some walks or tours in the spring.

Ohlone Issues. The College sold off several acres of land and are planning to lease the front section of the campus for 66 years.

Alameda County Issues: Alameda County Medical has not even called for applications for their oversight committee yet. The Alameda County Board of Education needs to be closely watched after their agenda shenanigans

CUT OUT AND POST BY YOUR T.V.**CABLE PROGRAMS
AND REBROADCASTS****Ohlone:**

Live meeting: 2nd and 4th Wed. at 7:15 - Channel 28
 Rebroadcast: Following Thursday at 7 PM and Friday at 10
 AM- Channel 28 Rebroadcast in UC on 1st Monday at 6 PM
 Channel 15

Washington Hospital:

Fremont-4th Monday 10 AM-Channel 27
 Union City- 4th Wednesday at 3:00 PM - Channel 15
 Washington Hospital website: www.whhs.com
 About Us: Board of Directors Video-Streamed Meetings)

Fremont City Council:

Live on 1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7 PM - Channel 27
 Scheduled Study Sessions on the 3rd Tuesdays - 4 PM
 Rebroadcast on Wed. at 10 AM following the meetings

Fremont Planning Commission:

Live on 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7 PM- Channel 27
 Rebroadcast the following Fridays at 10 AM

Fremont Unified School District Board:

Live on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 6 PM- Channel 27

Newark City Council:

Live on 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7:30- Channel 26
 Tape in Newark Library

Newark Planning Commission:

Live on Tuesdays before Council Meetings- Channel 26
 Tape in Newark Library

Newark Unified School District Board:

Live on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 7:30- Channel 26

Union City Council:

Live 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7 PM - Channel 15
 Rebroadcast on following Fridays at 6 PM

Union City Planning Commission:

Live on 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 6 PM.- Channel 15
 Rebroadcast on 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 6 PM

New Haven Unified School District

Live on 2nd and 3rd Thursdays at 6:30 PM—Channel 27
 Rebroadcast on following Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 PM,

LWVBA COUNCIL

Saturday, May 14, 2005

Unitarian Universalist Church, 505 Charleston Road, Palo
 Alto

Registration: 9:30 am

Meeting: 10-noon

In addition to adoption of the budget, reports on actions and
 other activities will be presented by portfolio directors. Will
 hold small group discussions to obtain feedback on LWVBA
 products and priorities and to solicit information from local
 Leagues as to how the LWVBA can
 serve their needs. Cost is \$15 per League. Two delegates
 are suggested but all may attend at this fee. RSVP to tam-
 hege@aol.com by May 11.

Many Thanks to our Individual Sponsors

Susan Neeman/John Matthews

May Chen Mei

Shirley Feeley

Kathy Steel-Sabo

Jean Holmes

Greg and Diane Bonaccorsi

Alice Ching

Pauline Weaver

Sandra Pantages

Bob and Linda Wasserman

Mary Ann and Don Dillon

Margaret Palmer

Mavis Brown

Jeanette Berman-Salot/Stan Salot

Ellen Culver

And to our Corporate Sponsors

Fremont Bank

Dale Hardware

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SPEAK OUT FOR REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE!

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Sheraton Grand Hotel

1230 J Street, Sacramento

9:00—4:30

Educate you Legislators

Caucus with Women's Health Advocates from all over California

Protect Women's health

Learn about emerging Issues

Sponsored by the California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

For more information, contact: Jo Ann Madigan (415) 346-0563

jomadigan@earthlink.net

BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO RECOMMEND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL STUDY

Members and prospective members will be glad to hear about the League's proposed new local study. The Board voted unanimously to recommend a study of the governance of our community hospital district and its role in promoting a healthy community in Fremont, Newark, and Union City. The proposed study will be submitted for approval by members who attend the Annual Meeting on June 4th.

In selecting the hospital district to be the subject of study, the Board considered the following criteria:

- Relevance to League principles
- Lack of existing League positions on the subject
- Need for governmental action
- Member interest in the issue
- Potential for effective action
- Appropriateness of addressing the issue on the local level
- Ability of the League to make a unique impact
- Affordability of undertaking the study
- Existence of potential allies

The proposed study scored high on all counts.

Health care places high on the list of issues that command not only League attention but also public attention. Recent League meetings about health care have drawn

widespread community interest. On the local level, the Washington Township Health Care District occupies a significant position in the local health care picture.

Encompassing 124 square miles of Southern Alameda County, Washington Township Health Care District serves the residents of Fremont, Newark, Union City and part of South Hayward and unincorporated Sunol. The mission of the district is to meet the health care needs of district residents through medical services, education, and research. A publicly elected five-member board of directors governs the district and is charged with the general oversight of the health care district's operations.

League program originates with study. From the study process, the League develops consensus around "positions," the basis upon which the League undertakes lobbying action. If the membership approves the Board's recommended study, a new avenue for action will open.



FORUM A BIG SUCCESS

With only one in 14 California public high schools currently meeting state academic performance goals, education experts convened at EdSource's 2005 Forum, "Shaking Up the Status Quo: The Movement to Transform High School," to debate potential reforms. Tom Vander Ark, Executive Director of Education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and one of the nation's leading experts on high school reform, delivered the forum's keynote address to an audience of education leaders, reform advocates, and parents. California Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell made a special appearance in Manhattan Beach. An afternoon panel discussed the challenging question of whether a college-preparatory curriculum should be the default program at all high schools. Robert Schwartz of Harvard University and others discussed the merits of a college-prep curriculum versus "multiple pathways," including more rigorous career education. Watch for Forum highlights within the next few weeks. Meanwhile, you can download the speakers' PowerPoint presentations at: <http://www.edsource.org/forum05pro.cfm>

CALIFORNIA ED-DATA PARTNERSHIP WEBSITE NOW FEATURES THE NEW BASE API SCORES

Clear, user-friendly reports on the new Base API scores are now available at the Ed-Data website. In addition, new accountability reports provide performance data for school districts and the state

as a whole. Just go to <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us>, select the school or district of interest, and choose Accountability from the Select Report pull-down menu. On the tab labeled API Base, you will see the 2003-04 data just released by the California Department of Education as well as Base APIs from previous years. The reports include information about schools and districts and about their significant subgroups of students, including various ethnicities and students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, disabled, or English learners. Other helpful features that you can find by clicking on the tabs are: API Growth reports for school districts and the state, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports that are required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). These reports give a rounded view of the progress (or lack of it) as districts strive to improve all students' performance.

The California Ed-Data Partnership is unique to our state and includes the California Department of Education, the Alameda County Office of Education, FCMAT, and EdSource. Watch the website -- www.ed-data.k12.ca.us -- for a new release coming soon that will provide a robust new way to compare districts. It will use multiple criteria including performance, student demographics, teacher characteristics, and financial data.

As always, if you have questions or problems finding information on the EdSource or the Ed-Data site, please don't hesitate to contact us at ed-source@edsource.org or 650/857-9604.

Convention "Brainstorming Session" on State Studies

For some time it has been a concern of many League people--state board members and local Leagues--that the way we conduct studies to arrive at state League positions has not worked as smoothly as we would like, or as it has in the past.

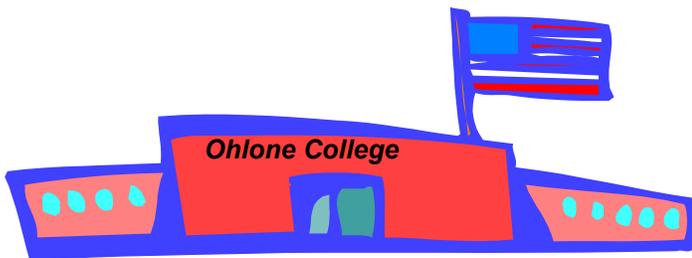
Both the Education Update Study and the Energy Update Study, adopted at our 2003 Convention, had to be extended beyond the standard two years. Sometimes in the past we have done the same for other studies, or could have profited by doing so. Studies are expensive in volunteer time and in needed funding. Seeking funding takes committee time, extending the timeline needed for the actual study, or shortening the time the study committee has to prepare the materials.

We would like to address these issues and come up with some possible suggestions or solutions during our May 2005 Convention. Look in your Convention workbook for a session--not a general session, not a workshop, and no caucus--when local League members, state study committee members and the LWVC board can come together and "brainstorm."

If you have thoughts you wish to share beforehand, e-mail Kathy Webb at kwebblwv@aol.com.

Community College System Special VOTER

The Community College System special VOTER is now in the hands of editors. Look for a special mailing to every member to get this report of our study, completed in 2003.

**Health Care Legislation**

The League supports SB 840 (Kuehl), the California Health Insurance Reliability Act, a new version of SB 921 which the LWVC supported in the last legislative session. We urge local Leagues to be active in support of SB 840. A Call to Action for Leagues with representatives on the Senate Banking, Finance and Insurance Committee, the first committee to hear the new bill, is posted at http://lwvc.org/lwvc/action/call/sb840_2005-03.html.

Kathy Webb, *Social Policy Director*, social_policy@lwvc.org

FIGHTING FOR CALIFORNIA'S FUTURE**We believe California's budget should invest in California's future:**

- We believe in a California that provides high-quality public services for all Californians, protects consumers, the environment and our quality of life, builds the infrastructure we need to prosper, and that fosters opportunity, economic growth and strong and vibrant communities.
- We believe that a responsible California budget would keep its commitment to meet the basic needs of our children, our seniors, our families, and our future. We believe there are budget choices beyond cuts.
- We believe in a balanced budget that invests in the future, rather than one that mortgages our future with more borrowing to fill a structural budget gap.

We support a balanced solution to the budget crisis:

- We support a balanced solution to the budget crisis, rather than a budget that seeks to solve the problem only through cuts and borrowing.
- We support raising revenues needed to prevent cuts, including closing tax loopholes, eliminating some of the tax cuts of the last decade, and updating our tax system to reflect our changing economy.

We oppose automatic mechanisms to cut vital and needed services:

- We oppose policies, in the legislature and on the ballot, which would hinder the ability of the State to meet the current and future needs of all Californians.
- We oppose proposals that would grant the Governor new powers to make unilateral cuts; formulas that would impose automatic across-the-board cuts; stricter spending caps; and other policy changes that seek to "starve the public sector" and which would damage healthcare, education, and other vital services that all Californians depend on.

3/28/05—The League of Women Voters of California has joined other organizations and individuals who are seeking a fair and sustainable solution to California's ongoing budget crisis in endorsing this statement.

It's easy to JOIN the **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

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

Annual dues includes membership in Local, Bay Area, California and National Leagues.

Make your check payable to: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS and mail it with this form to:

LWVFNUC-MEMBERSHIP, P.O. Box 3218, Fremont, CA, 94539

_____ Individual Membership - \$50 _____ Household - \$75
 Donate to LWVNUC _____ Donate to Ed. Fund _____ Total enclosed \$ _____
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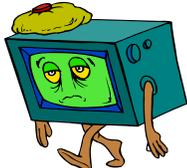
Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to L.W.V. Ed Fund are deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information, or for confidential financial dues assistance, please contact: Ann Crosbie: 510-657-3422, crosbieclan@comcast.net. LWVFNUC affirms its commitment 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's diversity.

*LWVFNUC Voter
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 year by the League of Women Voters
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 PO Box 3218
 Fremont, CA, 94539
 510-794-5783
 President: Alex Starr
 Treasurer: Catherine Souders Manhanpour
 Editor: Vesta Wilson
 Office Hours:
 The LWVFNUC storage office address is:
 4368 Enterprise St., off Grimmer, near
 Automall.
 Materials are available 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM
 with permission from a board member*

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
[Http://www.lwvfnc.org](http://www.lwvfnc.org)
Peter Starr, Webmaster,
Jack Keller, Back-up

Mission Statement
The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City, a non-partisan 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

HELP WANTED



CALLING ALL ASPIRING TV TECHNICIANS:

Once each month, our program, "Voting Matters" microphones to the set, guests and the host, focus, donning rather



League produces a Cable TV program, "Voting Matters". We have lots of fun connecting placing the microphones on the zooming in and out to get a great large headsets*, listener tell us to zoom in or



ing to our direc- out,. The floor director gets to say, "Quiet on the set!" and cue the host in by holding up his/her hand (the director's, not the host's') and counting backward—"5-4-3-2-1" and then pointing to the host to begin the show.. The camera people follow the directions coming from the control room, getting differing views of the set. Inside the control room, the graphics person makes the graphics, the guests' names, the host's name and the program title. Then he/ she helps the director put them on the screen. When the program is over the crew disconnects the microphones, puts the cameras away and congratulate themselves of a job well done. They also congratulate the guests for a job well done. A good time was had by all. **How can you resist joining us?** Sign up with Miriam Keller, 683-9377.



*They are quite fetching, but tend to muss the hair.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS OF FREMONT,
NEWARK AND UNION CITY**
P.O. Box 3218 Fremont, CA, 94539
(510) 794-5783

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WATCH VOTING MATTERS

Watch Julice Winter interview Art Daco, Deputy Director, Alameda County Transportation Agency
Fremont, Channel 29, every Wednesday at 7:30 PM
Newark, Channel 6, every Thursday at 7 PM
Union City, Channel 15, every Thursday at 9:30 PM
Hayward, Channel 28, every Monday at 9:30 PM

Visit our website:
<http://www.lwvfnuc.org>

CALENDAR

Wed., May 4	Action Committee	9:30 am	Miriam Keller's home
Fri., May 13	Education Committee	11::45	Miriam Keller's home
Sat, May 14	LWVBA Council	9:30 AM—12 noon	Palo Alto
Wed., May 18	Cable Taping	2:30—5:00	Comcast Studios
Thurs., May 19	Voter Deadline		
May 20—22	LWVC Convention		Santa Ana
Sat., May 21	Unit Meeting Salt Pond Restoration	1:00—3:00 PM	Menlo Park
Sat., June 4	Annual Meeting	12:00 noon	North China Restaurant
Tue., June 7	Reproductive Justice	9:00 AM- 4:30 PM	Sacramento (See p. 4)