

Voter

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



ANNUAL KICKOFF



September, 2004

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FREMONT, NEWARK AND UNION CITY
Presents

HAVE YOU BEEN PROPOSITIONED LATELY?

Be Prepared!

Hear and Talk about it at the ANNUAL LWVFNUC KICK-OFF MEETING

**September 20, 2004
Conference Room, Fremont Bank,
37611 Niles Blvd
Fremont**

**Finger Food Potluck* 6:45 PM
Program: 7:30 PM**

**Program: What about the Utility Users Tax, Hospital Bond and
Propositions 59–72?**

What does LWVC have to say about your Propositions?

What do you have to say?

What will our invited speakers have to say?

Come ask questions, seek answers.

We're all in this together, right?



***Bring your favorite finger food to share**

SEPTEMBER PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Welcome back from your summer hiatus! We have some very important decisions to make this November – and I don’t mean on a national level. We have two local measures to consider, a Utility tax in Fremont and a Washington Hospital bond measure. Regionally there are measures from B.A.R.T. and AC Transit, a measure from East Bay Regional Park District specific to Contra Costa County and Western Alameda County, and on a state level, 14 ballot measures. See the inside of the Voter for further details.

October features our candidate forums and registration drives. For further information, check in this Voter and on our website.

We also have many opportunities for you to volunteer with voter registration, the speaker’s bureau, signing up to work on election day as a poll worker, and attending our Kick Off Meeting on September 20th. We will feature discussions about the Washington Hospital bond and the Fremont Utility tax, plus a round robin exchange on the other ballot measures. In November we will be taking a close look at the statewide update on the LWVC Education Position and then in 2005 we will start in on the update on the energy position.

Please take a look at what LWVUS is doing to follow up on advice to the board at the National Convention, placing Civil Liberties at the top of their priority list, following through with HAVA implementation, and encouraging voter registration with new and unusual partnerships.

DEVELOPMENT

Big news! We can now recycle old cell phones and used inkjet cartridges and get paid for it. When final approval comes, we will have envelopes for shipping them back, and no charge for postage. So please save old cell phones and inkjet cartridges. More details to follow.

Sign up

Last call for anyone interested in being a poll worker on Election Day, Tues. November 2. Remember, you can sign up to split a shift with someone. Our League earned several hundred dollars in the primary, thanks to people donating their compensation. It is such an interesting, rewarding experience. Please call 510-792-1645 or email ke45@comcast.net if you are interested.

(And do so SOON.)

—-Kay Emanuele

LWVFNUC Non-Partisan Policy.

As campaigns begin in earnest, many League members begin to work actively. Please remember that our non-partisan policy is rather restrictive for Board members. A Board member may not publicly support or oppose a political campaign or candidate.

The League encourages its members who are NOT currently serving as Board members to work actively in the party or for the candidates of their choice and to run for and hold political office if they choose. This partisan activity of League members who are not Board members must be done in their own names and not in the name of the League.

VOTER SERVICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

To you wonderful Supportive Volunteers: HELP, HELP!

All positions for (not yet scheduled) Candidate Forums are open. Needed are time-keepers, question sorters, moderators and pages. A Forum Training meeting will be held on Monday, September 27, 7 PM, at Miriam Keller's home.

Please volunteer for Voter Registration

August 29, Niles Church at 3rd and H streets, 8—4, 1 person, 2 hour blocks. Call Marilyn Singer, 657-1969 for this one.

October 2, Newark Safeway, 9 -3. 2 persons, 2 hour blocks.

October 9, Mission/Warm Springs Safeway, 9 - 3, 2 persons, 2 hour blocks

October 16, Union City Safeway, 10 - 4, 2 persons, 2 hour blocks.

We will also registering voters at Half-Priced Books and at Ohlone College. Look for dates later.

For new members: Voter registration is fun to do. You work, usually with a partner for two hours, asking people if they are registered to vote, and if not, you give them a registration form and they can fill it out on the spot. Or they can take it home. A table and chairs are provided along with a table cloth, signs, even hats. So don't be bashful. Sign up!

Call Ellen Culver 656-7973

WELCOME TO THE FORUMS ORIENTATION FOR WORKERS

On September 27th, there will be an Orientation for all Forum workers—pages, timekeepers, question sorters, and moderators. It will be held at Miriam Keller's home at 7 PM.

Working the Forums is interesting and fun because:

- ✓ You get to see. meet and hear candidates
- ✓ You get to see local access TV in action
- ✓ You get to be a real part of the election process

If you are coming, please call Miriam Keller, 683-9377

See you there!

EDUCATION CONSENSUS QUESTIONSS ARE READY

The LWVC has approved the consensus questions for the Education Position Update Study. Now the committee can put the finishing touches to the Study Kit and Leaders Guide which will be mailed to local Leagues in Early September.

A conversation with . . .

Joe Bischofberger, AC Transit Board Member, Ward 5. Ward 5 encompasses Fremont and Newark. Mr. Bischofberger met with League members Marilyn Singer, Ken Ballard, Miriam Keller in May 2004.

What progress has been made to ensure that money generated in Ward 5 is being spent in Ward 5?

Mr. Bischofberger said it is a myth that South County (S.C.) has not received its fair share of funding. Right now, there is a friendly agreement to give S.C. a \$2.5 million subsidy until 2005. An auditor has been hired; there will be a yearly audit and report which will guarantee services and funding will be balanced from now on. AC Transit receives property and sales tax revenue.

How is AC working with school districts to transport students?

Fremont and Newark get Supplemental Services. AC staff works with school superintendents to work out the best ways to transport children. AC would like more cooperation to arrange staggered bell times to best utilize buses. They would also like to be notified of school closures or teacher in-service days so they could skip the buses. They provide a reduced cost bus pass for \$15-\$20 per month.

During peak times, are the buses full? If not, what is AC doing to increase ridership? How many bus trips are full to capacity during the day? Which lines are most used, and what riders do these lines serve?

AC Transit has full buses in dense population areas. School runs and trans-bay runs are filled to capacity. SC will probably not see full buses except during school transport and peak work hours because of its low density. AC is buying 30 smaller buses. Many will be used in S.C.

Can there be special services offered during non-peak hours?

Seniors, the disabled, and kids now ride ½ fare. AC is looking into having no fares for seniors during very slow times during the middle of the day.

How are the Para transit services working?

AC is working better with the cities on Para transit services. They are very costly. The new buses will have low floors so that wheelchairs can roll onto the buses.

What is AC doing to work toward nonpolluting vehicles?

All AC buses now meet the 2007 emission standards. AC has a pilot program with Chevron (which has a local refinery) to work on fuel cell buses. Mr. Bischofberger feels hydrogen powered buses are the way of the future. These buses will be funded from grants.

How is AC working with BART and other transportation agencies to make seamless connections?

BART and AC have not been very cooperative except on a friend to friend basis. We talked about the possibility of having scheduled meetings with BART and AC (and possibly others) so the public can observe them working on issues of mutual concern.

In 2001, AC Transit couldn't find any American companies to provide buses meeting AC's specifications. How has this been resolved?

The European buses AC purchased have turned out to be money makers for AC. The AC Transit general manager Rick Fernandez, was the first to get orders in, and now the orders can be extended. AC is currently selling 28 buses to Washington, D.C. at a profit. AC sent people to Europe because they needed to oversee the requirements that they had chosen. The European buses had low floors

and 3-4 doors for quicker ingress and egress which could tighten schedules and thus save operating money. There are no American companies making the buses AC prefers though a lot of the fabrication is done in the U.S. on the buses AC now purchases. Mr. Bischofberger thinks though U.S. companies have been slow to respond to needs they may catch up someday so buses can be purchased in the future.

Has AC Transit purchased any 30 foot buses? Are any being used in Fremont and Newark?

There are currently no 30 foot buses in Fremont or Newark, but we should get some in 2005. The smaller buses should get 12-15 mpg compared with 4 mpg for the big buses. The 30 foot buses have a flat floor entry which is good for most people. They have multiple entries which saves loading time. AC may go to an honor system for fare collection.

Is AC Transit planning any more new property taxes in Fremont and Newark? Would these new taxes require a vote of the people?

AC is currently doing a survey for a parcel tax proposal in Fremont & Newark.

What will be the effect of the passage of Measure 2 on AC, Ward 5?

AC will receive some money from Measure 2 that can be used for operating expenses.

What is AC Transit's financial situation? What do you see as the solution to these financial problems?

The financial situation is terrible. AC was informed this week the proposed State budget will take \$20 million out of AC's \$300 million budget. AC has a lobbyist in Sacramento working this problem. Joe hopes the lobbyist is pushing for higher taxes to support transportation.

How would you design the Ward 5 system to provide the most effective and efficient coverage?

AC is in the process of hiring a consultant to help with this problem.

What are some AC Transit services about which you would like to inform our members?

The Stanford line (U Bus) will begin operation in September; it will cross the Dumbarton Bridge. The trans-bay bus across the San Mateo bridge goes from Centerville and from Union City to the AC Transit terminal in SF. It is faster than BART as it makes few stops and utilizes the car pool lanes. A trans-bay bus also crosses the Bay Bridge.

. LEAGUE RUMMAGE SALE!!! SATURDAY OCTOBER 8th-8 am to 2 pm

How would you like to clear your clutter and help the League at the same time?

Here is your chance! Clean out your garage, your closets, your junk drawers. Your store rooms. Make room for more stuff in your house.

Starting Monday October 4th, you may drop off your treasures (books, knick-knacks, clothing, linens, household items, sports equipment. etc.) to Holly Walter's Home: 2754 Olive Ave. Fremont; the site of the annual League Rummage Sale. Your loss is our gain! There will be a pricing party; dinner included; Friday, October 8th. Drop by anytime between 5 and 9 pm. Sign up to help at the sale on Saturday October 8th for a short 2 hour shift starting at 6 am and ending at 2 pm by calling Alison Kieft at 657-8454. Many Hands Make the Workload Light! This is a relatively easy and fun way for the League to make money. Please help us make this a success . Thanks,

---Alison Kieft

QUOTE: "Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters." ---Abraham Lincoln

PROPOSITIONS —UPDATE FROM LWVC

The League of Women Voters of California is supporting two measures, opposing one, and is neutral on nine of the 14 propositions. It has deferred a decision on one measure, Proposition 65, Local Government Funds and Revenues, State Mandates, because it wanted to take into account provisions of the State budget and possible additional ballot measure that might be part of the agreement which produces the final budget.

Proposition 59. Access to Government Information—SUPPORT. LWVC supports this constitutional amendment that would make public access to meetings and public records a constitutional right. It puts the principles behind the Brown Act and other open meeting laws into the State Constitution.

Proposition 69—DNA samples. Collection. Database. Funding.—OPPOSE. The LWVUS position on Individual Liberties states, "The League is convinced that individual rights now protected by the constitution should not be weakened or abridged." DNA samples can help solve crimes by comparing stored DNA of known offenders to DNA evidence from other crimes. However, while fingerprints are useful only as a form of identification, DNA contains an amount of personal and private data which makes its collection extraordinary. DNA samples "can provide insights into the most personal family relationships and the most intimate workings of the human body, including the likelihood of the occurrence of over 4,000 genetic conditions and disease." (ACLU)

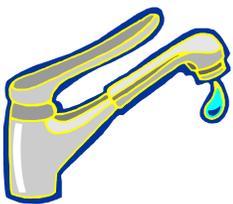
The LWVC opposition to Proposition 69 is based on the invasion of privacy implicit in collecting DNA samples from all persons arrested or charged with felonies, rather than, as present, those convicted of "certain sex offenses or other violent crimes."

Proposition 72—Referendum Petition to Overturn Amendments to Health Care Coverage—SUPPORT. The LWVC decided to support retaining the Health Care Coverage Requirements of SB2. In order to retain the current law, one must vote YES on Proposition 72.

The LWVC decided to take a neutral stand on nine of the fourteen November ballot measures. It decided to use the term "neutral" rather than "no position" in stating its stand. For some measures, the League has no applicable positions or would have to stretch existing positions beyond what the LWVC board deemed advisable. For others the League has conflicting positions and the board decided not to judge that one side should overbalance the other.

KNOW YOUR BAY AREA DAY—SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2004

SF Bay Model, Sausalito 9:30 registration, 10-1:30 Program

Ocean Water on Tap**Issues of Desalination: economic, environmental and political impacts**

Featuring two panels presenting issues on future water supply, regulatory perspectives, regional water providers and proposals for desalination plants

RSVP to Alex Starr

LWVFNUC will pay your registration fee.



EDUCATION FUND

HAVA Grant Applications

At last tally 11 local Leagues and Smart Voter submitted grant applications to the Secretary of State for HAVA money to assist with outreach to underrepresented voters in the November election. A lot of hard work by local Leagues (and by Roberta Hollimon and the Smart Voter support team) went into these applications. The process was made especially difficult because of the time of year, the change in rules midstream, and the short time frame for responses. The total amount requested in these 12 proposals was about \$280,000 with grants ranging in size from \$2000 to \$50,000.

The proposals contained lots of very innovative and interesting ideas. We hope to summarize them in the near future and distribute them to all local Leagues as possibilities for future voter outreach projects.

Because the Secretary of State's office received more applications than expected (over 300) the date for announcement of awards has been pushed back to August 1. Applicants will be individually notified by mail at that time. We're keeping our collective fingers crossed for everyone who applied!

Student Voter Registration Survey

Thanks to all local Leagues which responded to the Secretary of State's request that the League survey high schools in their area to see whether the Student Voter Registration Act was being implemented. Gathering information was difficult because many district/school offices are closed for the summer, but approximately 15 local Leagues were able to get at least some data. (FYI, we'd still like to get any additional information that comes in.) Unfortunately, the results weren't good. The vast majority of schools reported that they had never heard of the new law, hadn't received the letter telling them about it, and had no idea whether the registration forms had even been delivered.

The one bright note is that districts where the program was most successful often had direct League involvement. This resulted in the Secretary of State requesting that the LWVCEF provide his office with local League contact information. This information would be distributed to the Secretary's five regional offices in the hope that they could work with local Leagues next spring to make sure more seniors are registered. The LWVCEF board approved the concept and the information will be provided as soon as the Resource Directory is updated. Voters Service Director Sue Kelley will notify you when this happens.

—Robbie Davis, Chair, LWVC Education Fund, edfund@lwvc.org

LWV TRAINING WORKSHOPS

September 18, 9:30—3

The Workshops:

1. Voter Service—Finding one's way in Voter Service...and more
2. League 101—Introduction to the League, every thing you need to know...and more.
3. Membership—Diversifying and developing of League membership.
4. Energy Study— All you need to know for the State Energy Study

Registration fee will be paid by LWVFNUC.

Bring a bag lunch or you can buy a hot lunch for \$15.00.

Contact Alex Starr by September 14 if you plan to attend.

KEEPING CALIFORNIA'S LIGHTS ON

The League and Energy

First in a series of informative articles for an Update of the LWVC Energy Position

The LWVC recognizes that a full study of Energy would cover more than electricity. However, due to the timeliness and complexity of questions relating to electrical energy, and due to limited resources, the delegates at the 2003 Convention instructed that this Update should be restricted to electricity systems in California and their governance.

For one startling moment at the LWVC convention 2003, the lights went out all over the auditorium. And for a long hot summer in 2001, the threat of rolling blackouts was part of the daily life of all Californians. And although the West Coast has not had a major multi-state transmission outage since August 1996, the August 2003 blackout of the eastern U.S. and Canada only serves to point up our vulnerability.

All of these warnings point up the crucial need in this new century to find the best way to secure and deliver an adequate and reliable supply of electricity for our state. This needs to be done in a way that respects the social and natural environment. New decisions will be made in Sacramento and in our local communities; new sources of energy and new techniques of delivering it will continue to evolve. The League must be in a position to bring its principles to bear on public energy policy. Unfortunately, our Energy Position was last updated in 1980—a quarter of a century ago! In its day it was a thoughtful position. Today we are critically aware of its limitations.

Our 1980 Position permits us to speak only on:

- Conservation
- Public health and safety
- Environmental protection
- Renewable sources
- Siting of facilities
- Tax incentives for conservation and renewables.

This leaves a number of areas that we have not studied in sufficient depth to be able to comment. Before 2001 there was little concern in California about a shortage of generation capacity and of transmission facilities. Then came a “perfect storm” which peaked in 2001—drought in the northwest, extreme heat in the southwest, excessive and unregulated prices of natural gas from out of state, bottlenecks in related markets, unexpectedly high business growth in the technology sector, and a flawed attempt at deregulation. Through this experience we gained a new perspective on energy questions. We now see many additional areas calling for an updated Energy Position. We need to be able to address:

- Integration of energy policy—from production to transmission to delivery
- Re-regulation or de-regulations----or something else
- State and federal regulatory conflicts
- Differing roles of investor-owned utilities (IOUs) and public utilities
- Issues of social equity
- Role of the public in planning
- Direct access for some users
- Distributed energy resources (DER)*
- Emerging sources of energy—solar, wind, fuel cells and more.

During the coming months we will be producing a series of articles expanding on all of these questions. We hope you will read them thoughtfully and bring your light to the League by joining in the Study to Update the LWVC Energy Position.

*Distributed energy resources are small-scale power generation facilities (typically in the range of 3 to 10,000 kW) located close to where electricity is used (e.g., a home or business) to provide an alternative to or an enhancement of the traditional electric power system.

SMART VOTER

Summertime: Fish are Jumpin', and so is Smart Voter. From the user's point of view, the month of August is a quiet time at Smart Voter: www.smartvoter.org. The only candidates on line are the nominees and run-off candidates from the March election. Nevertheless, this is an especially good time for League members to check out the site. See what your Congressional, State Assembly, State Senate, and Judicial candidates have posted -- or what they haven't posted. Then contact them and let them know either that you appreciate their participation, or that you'd like to see their campaign material online.

For many voters, election time is a season of confusion. Bombarded by campaign ads and political rhetoric, voters find it more than challenging to make accurately informed decisions. The League of Women Voters of California has an answer -- <http://www.smartvoter.org>. This comprehensive web site provides objective, nonpartisan background information on the candidates and complex issues that appear on California's election ballots.

"In order to make an informed decision, voters must have a clear understanding about all aspects of each issue," said Trudell Een, Project Director for Smart Voter. "It is critical that voters have access to objective and impartial information. [Smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) provides the most in-depth information about California elections and does so on a nonpartisan basis."

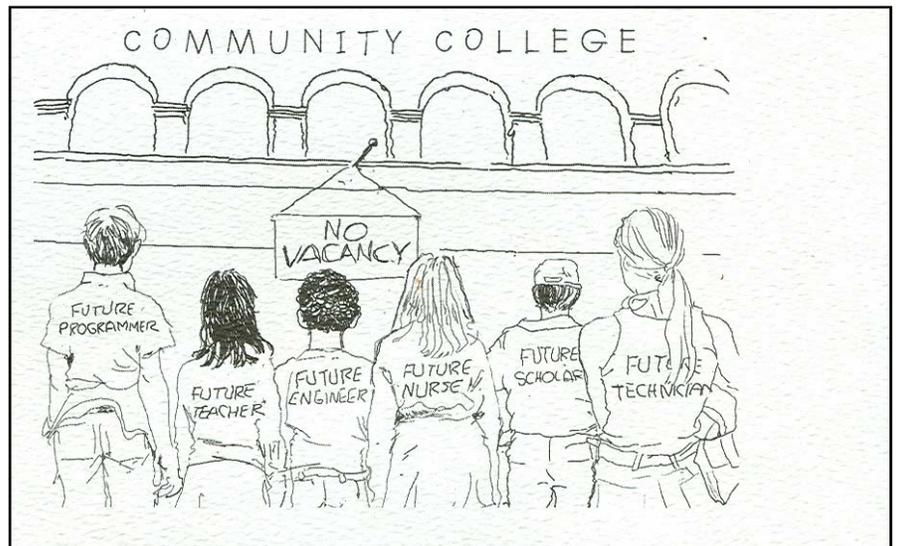
Voters can log on to the site to read nonpartisan information about the elections in their communities, including school and municipal measures and details on candidates. [Smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) includes candidates in school district, municipal and runoff elections in various cities and districts throughout California.

[Smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) also provides a means for all candidates in participating counties to publish information about themselves and their candidacy directly to voters and without cost.

Voters visiting the site can type in their address to find their polling place and receive a customized ballot including measures and seats for elected positions in their areas. [Smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) can also link voters with related newspaper articles, local measure sites and more election sites.

The League of Women Voters of California, long an advocate for education, has recently completed a study of the California community colleges and actively supports a statewide community college system with sufficient resources to fulfill its overall goal: to offer all Californians access to a quality higher education.

"We have done so much with so little for so long, it is now assumed we can do everything with nothing forever."
(George P. Melendez, Professor of Fire Technology, Yosemite Community College District)



LWVUS Activities on Civil Liberties as of July 16, 2004

Advocacy

- Letters from LWVUS to Congress:
- July 2003 _ Raising concerns about the Patriot Act
- September 2003 _ Raising concerns about the Patriot Act
- February 2004 _ In support of the Security and Freedom Ensured (SAFE) Act
- June 2004 _ In support of the SAFE Act
- Posted action alerts:
- September 2003 _ In support of the Freedom to Read Protection Act
- March 2004 _ In support of the SAFE Act

Lobbied on Capitol Hill:

- September 2003 _ Lobby Corps visited Capitol Hill raising concerns about the Patriot Act
- February 2004 _ Lobby Corps visited Capitol Hill in support of the SAFE Act
- June 2004 _ LWVUS Convention delegates visited Capitol Hill in support of the SAFE Act
- Have met with the ACLU, American Library Association, and The Constitution Project
- Answering questions from Leagues about the types of action they may take at the local level
- Issued a press release on September 11, 2003 in opposition to the expansion of the Patriot Act
- Sent out sample letter-to-the-editor for Leagues to distribute on the second anniversary of the passage of the Patriot Act (October 2003)
- Created talking points for Leagues in cities where Attorney General Ashcroft visited during his "tour" in support of the Patriot Act (fall 2003)

Information sharing

- Created special section on the LWVUS website, which includes:
 - Liberty Circles materials
 - Examples of what individual leagues are doing on this issue (including upcoming events in the "Events" section)
 - Background information on the issue and League's position
- Created a "Links & Resources" section
- The new section of the web site was highlighted in the September 2003 & June 2004 League E-voice, the November 2003 Presidents' Mailing, and the January/February 2004 & June 2004 National Voter
- Included a "next steps" toolkit on Convention CD, which includes:
 - A press release on the convention panel
 - Questions for candidates (federal and local)
 - Ideas for marking the anniversary of the Patriot Act
 - How to hold a community forum on the issue
 - Ideas for legislative action

Utilization of existing resources (since no new funding was available)

- Created ad hoc staff task force of four interested staff, plus Executive Director, which meets regularly to explore next steps and possible programs
- Recruited/utilized pro bono law student to research key features of Patriot Act and cases of abuses cited in press
- Staff attendance at various free conferences/events in Washington, DC to enhance knowledge on issue (e.g. Council for Excellence in Government, Brookings Institution and Open Society Institute (OSI))
- Organized a panel for Convention 2004 (including outreach to other organizations and potential funders to attend the panel)
- Including piece (in Sounding Off section) of the upcoming (October 2004) National Voter
- Included piece about connecting this issue to developing the organization and recruiting members in the winter 2003_04 issue of Member News & Views

Search for external funding and other approaches to doing Education Fund projects

- Staff task force wrote and submitted proposal to OSI in fall 2003 (no response to date)
- Extensive conversations with creator of Liberty Circles to try and develop a proposal for League wide funding (later incorporated that into the proposal mentioned below)
- Staff task force wrote second concept paper, combining themes of civil liberties and homeland security (submitted to five foundations in May 2004; 2 have declined the proposal, other responses are pending)
- Exploring partnerships with other nonprofit organizations to see if a joint approach or proposal can be developed on the civil liberties issue

Ongoing work of local Leagues

- Continuing to hold panels / forums of experts - some of which have been videotaped and two of which have received recognition/awards
- Signing resolutions of various types
- Responding to action alerts
- Sending out letters-to-the-editor
- Exchanging information on LWV lists



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VOTERS OF FREMONT,
NEWARK AND UNION CITY**
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(510) 794-5783

WATCH VOTING MATTERS

Watch Alex Starr interview her guests.
Topic: Fremont Utility Users Tax, Washington
Hospital Bond
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.lwvfnc.org
Peter Starr, Webmaster,
Jack Keller, Back-up

CALENDAR

Thurs., Sept 2	LWVFNUC Board	7:00 PM	Mary Miller's home
Fri., Sept. 10	Education Committee	9:00 AM	Lara York's home
Tues., Sept. 14	Action Committee	9:00 AM	Mission Coffee
Thurs., Sept 16	Cable Taping	2:30 PM	Comcast Studios
Sat., Sept 18	LWVC Workshops	9:30—3	Agilent Tech, Santa Clara
Mon., Sept 20	Unit Meeting—Propositions	6:45 PM	Fremont Bank, Niles
Mon., Sept 27	Forum Orientation/Training	7:00 PM	Miriam Keller's home
Sat., Oct. 2	Know Your Bay Area Day	9:30 AM—1:30 PM	Sausalito
Sat., Oct 9	Rummage Sale	8:00 AM—2:00 PM	Holly Walter's home