



Santa Cruz Voter

League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County

January 2012

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Calendar

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

1–3 P.M.

LWVSCC Board Meeting

Santa Cruz County Bank

720 Front Street, Santa Cruz

Thursday, January 12, 2012

1–3 P.M.

National Program Planning Meeting

150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz

Sunday, February 12, 2012

11:30 A.M.–2 P.M.

Valentine Luncheon & Silent Auction Fundraiser

Hilton Santa Cruz/Scotts Valley Hotel

6001 La Madrona Drive, Scotts Valley

Thursday, March 15, 2012

1–3 P.M.

Local Program Planning Meeting

Beach Cliff Clubhouse

863 Via Palo Alto, Aptos

Thursday, April 26, 2012

11:30 A.M.–2 P.M.

Status of Health Care in Santa Cruz County

Location to be announced.

Saturday, June 2, 2012

LWVSCC Annual Meeting

Bruno's Barbeque

King's Village Shopping Center

230 G Mount Hermon Road, Scotts Valley

National Program Planning

Thursday January 12, 2012

1–3 P.M.

150 Scenic St., Santa Cruz

At our January National Program Planning meeting, local LWV members have the opportunity to voice their thoughts on issues addressed by national League positions and to suggest future studies. This core League activity builds a strong foundation for all of the League's actions at a national level; member participation is vital to keep the League connected to its grassroots. National Program Planning includes reviews of League positions on Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. Local Leagues have the option to propose one new study, or one review and update, or one concurrence, or to make no recommendation. Additionally, LWVUS has requested feedback on how local Leagues have used national positions in their work in the community.

In preparation for the meeting, members should read "Impact on Issues" for 2010–2012. This publication can be downloaded for free on line; hard copies can be purchased online as well at <http://www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues>

Before proposing a new study, review current positions to make sure the issue is not already covered. Evaluate possible issues by considering these questions: Is there widespread member interest? Is this a timely issue? Is government action the most effective way to address the problem? Before recommending a study, concurrence, or review and update, Leagues need to consider the resource commitment required for their own League, as well as for the national League. Further guidelines are available in the LWVUS Program Planning Leader's Guide 2011–2012, which is available online at <http://www.lwv.org/programplanning>

We encourage all Santa Cruz County LWV members to attend this important meeting, so mark your calendars for the January 12 National Program planning meeting at the home of Sandy Warren, 150 Scenic Street in Santa Cruz from 1 to 3 P.M. For more information contact Barbara Lewis at 335-7816 or by e-mail at bobbi44@gmail.com

—Barbara Lewis, Vice President/National Program

News Briefs

✓ The LWV California supports the **Safe California Initiative** to stop executions and replace the death penalty with permanent imprisonment. The initiative is currently collecting signatures to qualify for the ballot. Find out more at <http://www.safecalifornia.org/>

✓ The Reproductive Rights Network of Santa Cruz County presents a **Pro-choice Brunch** on Saturday, January 21, 2012 from 10 A.M. to noon at the United Methodist Church, 250 California Street in Santa Cruz. Phyllida Burlingame, reproductive justice policy director at the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, will speak on "Current assaults on reproductive rights across the nation." Sliding scale donation; students free. For more information, contact Carol Fuller at 831-423-2356.

✓ The Citizen's Redistricting Commission's **final certified redistricting maps** are scheduled to take effect for the June 2012 primary elections. The maps are still undergoing challenges from many quarters. More information about the redistricting process and links to the maps can be found at the California League's website. <http://cavotes.org/issues/redistricting-implementation>

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



County Administrative Officer Speaks on Prison Realignment

Save the date!

LWVSCC's Annual

Valentine Luncheon & Silent Auction Fundraiser
with *Special Guest Speaker Susan Mauriello, CAO*

Sunday, February 12, 2012

11:30 A.M.—2:00 P.M.

Hilton Santa Cruz/Scotts Valley Hotel

6001 La Madrona Drive, Scotts Valley California 95066

Open to League members and the public.

Cost: \$25 per person (includes admission and buffet luncheon).

Prepaid reservations required by February 6. Mail checks payable to LWVSCC to Sandy Warren, 150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The League's February Valentine Luncheon and Silent Auction Fundraiser features a presentation by County Administrative Officer Susan Mauriello titled "Open Your Hearts and Minds to Prison Realignment." She will explain the changes to the criminal justice system that became law when the California Legislature enacted AB109 in October 2011 and discuss the ensuing impacts to our county jail system.

AB109, also known as "Prison Realignment," changes felony sentencing laws and shifts a portion of future state prison inmates to county jails. Accommodating the new inmate population represents a significant change for our local criminal justice system. To address these needs, the county has established a Community Corrections Partnership (CCP). The CCP has designed a plan to implement AB109 in our community. Since the plan will undergo review this spring, Susan Mauriello's talk is timely.

Also featured at this event is LWVSCC's major fundraiser for the year. You can participate by donating items to the auction, as well as having fun bidding on your favorites. Consider donating your new, gently used, or homemade items of all kinds. Last year's successful silent auction included plants, books, cookies, candy, jewelry, bath and kitchen items, knick-knacks, and more. **Bring your items for donation with you to the event and provide the item's value on the bid sheet when you give it to the auction receiver.** Questions about the silent auction should be directed to Maria Nesheim at 662-8845. Send your reservations in soon to guarantee your place!

LWVUS Privatization Study

From November 2011 to May 2012, the National League will study the effects of proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. The study will identify parameters and policy issues to be considered when government functions are privatized and review the goals and impacts of such transfers. Finally, the study will identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

Our local League will not participate directly in the study, as our resources have been focused in other areas, such as this fall's education study. Members can find information about the study at <http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization>. Topics include subcontracting education, deregulation of railroads, privatization of public utilities, and transparency and accountability.

—Barbara Lewis

Membership Report

New League members had a chance to meet in an informal setting to share experiences connected to the LWV and learn more about how the League works at a get-acquainted coffee on December 3 at the lovely home of 50-year member Ilse Rowe. Discussion topics included Voters Service, the activist aspect of League, and the link between study and action. We also touched on the recently redesigned, user-friendly, national web site at www.lwv.org. After the meeting, new member Nancy Litvak checked out the site and was impressed by its usefulness and the accessibility of information. Clicking on the members link at the top of the webpage gives you access to information about League events, activities, and studies, as well as publications and Leader's Guides.

This was the first of the get-acquainted small group events to welcome new members. To attend a future event, contact Barbara Lewis at 335-7816 or by e-mail at bobbi44@gmail.com.

We welcome new members Eve Roberson, Nancy Abbey, and Dolores (Dee) Takemoto and renewing members Judith Brock, Marilyn Radisch, and Carolyn Lewis. We appreciate our new and renewing members who help maintain the strength of the LWVSCC.

—Barbara Lewis, Vice President/Membership

County Budget Woes Discussed at November Meeting

On Saturday, November 19, the League held a luncheon in conjunction with this year's local program on the impact of the state budget cuts on local government which featured Mary Jo Walker, the Auditor/Controller for the County of Santa Cruz. Ms. Walker, as the County's Chief Financial Officer, is responsible for issuing payroll and vendor checks, auditing the County departments and computing and distributing property taxes and sales taxes. Her department is doing all this with 23 employees, down from 29 due to budget cuts. The annual revenue for the County was approximately \$620 million, of which about \$374 million is in the general fund. The rest is special districts. Road maintenance is funded by the state gas tax; none comes from the County general fund. Most of the general fund has strings attached. Fifty-one percent is spent on salaries and pensions, 26% on services and supplies, and 22% on other things. By function, 30% is spent on public protection, 27% on human services, 31% on health services, and 7% on general government. Of the \$400 million in property taxes collected, 57% goes to schools, 12% to redevelopment agencies, 13% to the County, and 10% to special districts such as fire, water, and roads.

Redevelopment agencies are a means of redistributing property taxes. Projects such as the Simpkins Family Swim Center, the sheriff's facility, and street and road improvements have been or will be financed by redevelopment agencies. The state budget passed this year allows the state to disband redevelopment agencies and take the tax money funding them. AB 26 said that they couldn't exist and the state was entitled to that money, but AB 27 said that they could exist as long as the counties paid a "ransom." AB 27 is being reviewed by the state Supreme Court, which will decide by January 15, 2012.

Cuts in the budget come mainly from social services. State social service cuts translate directly into local cuts. A big part of local budget shortfalls is due to the pension system, which Ms. Walker maintains is unsustainable. All employees except public safety employees are members of PERS, where they do not allow pension "spiking." Spiking is the practice of public employees receiving large raises immediately preceding retirement in order to receive increased benefits. Ms Walker's presentation was very informative and well-received by those in attendance.

—Kathy Van Horn, Secretary

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to 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 League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745.

____\$65 Individual annual membership

____\$97.50 Two members in a household

____\$30.00 Student membership

____ Contribution \$ _____

Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible.

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

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President's Message

I hope you all had a happy and healthy holiday season.

At their November meeting, the board of LWVSCC joined LWV of California in endorsing the California DISCLOSE Act, a bill aimed at mitigating the effects of the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision by revealing the hidden donors behind ballot measures and candidates running for office in California. It will let voters know who really pays for political ads—on the ads themselves in readable print of significant size—by replacing current deceptive “Paid for by” disclosures with real disclosures identifying the top 5 funders. Authored by Assembly member Julia Brownley and sponsored by the California Clean Money Campaign, AB 1148 amends the Political Reform Act of 1974, and so can either be put into effect by a 2/3 vote of the Legislature or a majority vote placing a measure on the ballot as a proposition for the voters to decide on.

During November and December our local Board members gathered signatures on a petition to urge the state Legislature to pass AB 1148. The goal of the CA DISCLOSE Act campaign is to gather as many endorsements as possible to demonstrate to the Legislature and the Governor the breadth of support for this measure. Additional information, as well as an online petition, may be found on the California Clean Money Campaign website at www.CAclean.org

Coming up on Thursday, January 12 is our National Program Planning meeting at Sandy Warren's home. This is the time when members of local Leagues decide at the grass roots level what they would like to see LWVUS focus on over the next two years. What comes out of these planning meetings will provide direction to delegates attending the National League Convention in June.

Looking ahead to our February 12 fundraiser, we have planned a Valentine Luncheon and Silent Auction with CAO Susan Mauriello as the featured speaker. I hope you will plan to come and reach out to your family members and friends to attend this event and help make this a successful fundraiser. We need to raise substantial funds for League Voters Service activities as well as advocacy efforts. The November 2012 ballot is likely to be very crowded with lots of propositions. Our League needs to build up our financial resources in order to provide the level of voter service the community expects. We also need to be prepared to cover the costs of promoting the League's recommendations on the ballot measures. Invitations to our Valentine luncheon and silent auction event should be in the mail soon. I hope you will plan to attend and bring some prospective new League members with you.

—Jan Karwin, President