

Valley Voter

League of Women Voters
Livermore-Amador Valley

December 2005

WANTED

**Studious!
Enthusiastic!
Energetic!!**

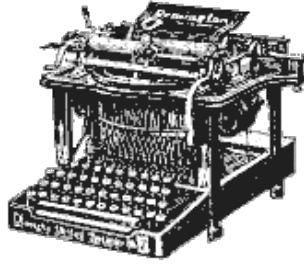
**League Members at the
Energy Study Update
Unit Meetings**

**January 11 and
January 25, 9:30 a.m.,
Livermore Police Station
Public Meeting Room
(1110 S. Livermore Ave.)**

See p. 5 for details

President's Message

The League Board has planned many interesting opportunities for you to participate in activities in the coming months. As you read this issue of the *Voter*, be sure to note these events on your calendar (details on p.5).



As we pay more for gas at the pump and see our winter home heating bills increase, we are constantly reminded of the important role energy plays in our lives. That's why you will want to participate in the State Energy Study unit meetings planned by Julice Winter for **January 11 and 25**.

Following the State Study of Education last year, Vivian Thorson volunteered to coordinate our local Education Finance study this year. Scoping meetings are set for **January 17 and 31**.

Particularly if you are a new member, I urge you to take advantage of learning more about the organization and activities of the League of Women Voters at all levels. Pat Mann has planned just such an informational program for **February 4**.

Vivian Thorson will also hold a meeting on **February 7** to evaluate the forums and other activities held by our League prior to the November 2005 election. At that same time, Vivian will also train members who want to work at future forums as moderators, timers, and question organizers.

From experience, I know that the more actively you participate in the League, the more you will value your membership. Not only that, you will meet other members and make lifelong friends while having a good time.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for the New Year,

Barbara

LWV Orientation

New and not-so-new Livermore-Amador Valley members are cordially invited to come to a member orientation about the League, how it started here, how it operates here and across the United States, and how you might be a part of it!

- Saturday, February 4, 2006
- 10:00 a.m. for about an hour
- 2200 Marina Avenue, Livermore

Please call for information or directions: Pat Mann (925) 447-3672, or grandmamann@yahoo.com



Local Study Committee Meets January 17

Members interested in Education Financing are invited to attend the first local study meeting on Tuesday, January 17 at 10 a.m. at the home of Vivian Thorson, 5442 Greenfield Way, Pleasanton. Bring your concerns and any information you have about our state's funding for local education. Let's talk about it. Hope to see you on January 17. Phone 846-5001 for more information.

Vivian Thorson



Results of Meeting Survey

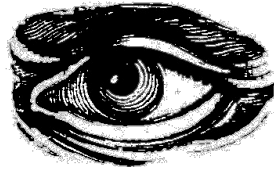
Our recent e-mail survey of League members regarding preferred meeting times shows:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| • First choice | Weekday lunch |
| • Second choice | Saturday lunch |
| • Third choice | Saturday morning |
| • Fourth choice | Weekday evening |

Thanks to those who participated. Your Board will keep your preferences in mind when scheduling meetings.

Barbara Hempill

League Leads in Voter Information



A very busy election season has drawn to a close. The League conducted **six forums** as follows: Livermore Council and Mayoral Candidates, the North Livermore Initiative, Measure D (two of these), and state ballot propositions (two of these). Most of the forums were televised on Channel 26. Thanks for Jim Burt of Comcast for his expertise.

Thanks to the following **organizers and participants**: Mary Beth Acuff, Eileen Barr, Dolores Bengston, Jackie Cofield, Becky Dennis, Mary Ann Hannon (who compiled the outstanding pros and cons pamphlet on the Pardee initiative, Measure D), Barbara Hempill, Audrey and Fred Lovell, Pat Mann, Larry Moyer, Ann Rathjen, Barry Schrader, and Anne White.

Voter affidavits were distributed by Fred and Audrey Lovell, Dolores Bengston, Elva Cooper, Larry Moyer, and Vivian Thorson. We distributed almost 700 **voter information pamphlets**, which clarified and explained the proposals on the November ballot.

The following served as **canvassers** on election night: Dolores Bengston, Susan Davis, Jim and Mary Ann Hannon, Barbara Hempill, Larry Moyer, Bernice and David Oakley. Thanks for coming out on a dark night.

To all of you: your dedication to the League and your spirit of volunteerism has made my job pleasant. Thanks!

On February 7, we will have a meeting to provide information for those interested in participating in future forums and to evaluate the quality of this season's forums. Join us at 10 a.m. at 5442 Greenfield Way, Pleasanton. Come with your ideas and concerns. For more information, call Vivian at 846-5001.

Vivian Thorson

Help Plan Program for LWV Bay Area

The Bay Area LWV Board is suggesting that there be no new regional studies or updates in the coming year. They are only looking to local Leagues to address priorities for regional action. Please read the following four potential action issues for 2006-08 for the Bay Area and **pick two that you think are the most important**.

If you have e-mail, you can e-mail your two choices to Barbara Hempill at barbehem@comcast.net, or you can call 846-9739 and tell her your choices, or you can mail her at note at 3186 Berkshire Ct., Pleasanton 94588.

Please note that in addition to what has been provided by LWVBA under #4, I suggest our League add that we **urge a BART extension to Livermore**.

1. Continue monitoring the Joint Policy Committee (ABAG – Association of Bay Area Governments/MTC – Metropolitan Transportation Commission/BAAQMD – Bay Area Air Quality Monitoring District) and their Consolidated Regional Workplan, including an emphasis on Housing needs in the Bay Area, and implementing the Smart Growth Vision linking land use and transportation.
2. Monitor and comment on Hetch-Hetchy System improvements, Bay Area Water Agency Seismic Improvements, and CALFED project; participate in ABAG Smart Water Study Group
3. Follow the BAAQMD Ozone Plan and Diesel issues.
4. Monitor the Regional Rail Plan and options for High Speed Rail in the Bay Area, Transbay Terminal and BART extension to the South Bay.

Barbara Hempill

What You Can Do to Support Clean Money Elections

Public funding of elections in California, which would remove much of the influence of special interest money from our elections, is the goal of Loni Hancock's Assembly Bill 583, now in the California legislature.

At a meeting on December 3, sponsored by the Alameda County Leagues, Loni Hancock, Assemblymember Johan Klehs, and Susan Lerner, Director of the California Clean Money Organization, addressed the following points:

- Candidates who agree to accept public funding must demonstrate a minimum level of support by gathering a set number of voter signatures and \$5 contributions from a specific number of voters in their district.
- Each candidate receives money for his/her candidacy based on levels determined for each office. While the funding system is voluntary, efforts are made to create parity with privately funded candidates.
- Clean Money candidates have the advantage of advertising themselves as free from special interest money. Where this system has been used there is a greater diversity of candidates, and candidates ran for office who never could have raised enough money to do so otherwise.
- Candidates who raise corporate or private money have the burden of proving their allegiance to their constituencies, not to the big donors. Candidates who used Clean Money said it relieved them of the burden of raising huge finance chests and enabled them to spend time reaching out to individual voters.

Help get AB 583 through the legislature:

- Write Don Perata, Room 313, Senate Post Office, State Capitol, Sacramento 95814, asking him to support AB 583l.
- Write Speaker of the Assembly Fabian Nunez, State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento 94249, asking him to support AB 583.

Barbara Hempill

Election Reform: Next Steps

The League of Women Voters Education Fund and The McCormick Tribune Foundation sponsored a forum to discuss the 2004 election and the next steps on election reform. The March 2005 forum highlighted a number of urgent priorities for policymakers, election officials, and others. Participants agreed that government at all levels should ensure that all eligible Americans who want to vote are able to do so freely and efficiently – and with full confidence that their votes will be counted as they intended.

Participants called attention to a number of needed improvements, which the League has refined to four key steps: professionalization, a new focus on service, research and development, and new federal resources and commitment.

- **Professionalization** – We need to rethink how we recruit and train poll workers. We need uniform standards, training to the standards, and accountability. We need to be clear what the jobs of all players are.
- **Focus on Service – Government** has a responsibility to help voters. States need to have uniform policies for accepting or rejecting registration applications. The current system seems designed to exclude and inconvenience eligible voters.
- **Research and Development** – Polling place operations need to be redesigned to accommodate modern technology and the advent of computerized voter databases. We need improved ballot design, in the interface between the voter and the machine and in error rates. Voting technologies must be secure, accurate, recountable and accessible.
- **Federal Resources and Commitment** – We need continued, permanent federal funding, with associated oversight, to make the transition to a 21st Century system that delivers efficiency, security, accessibility, and fairness.

Barbara Hempill

State Energy Study in January

The Energy Study Update Unit Meetings will be held on January 11 and January 25, Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 12:00 a.m. Both meetings will be at the Livermore Police Station Public Meeting Room at 1110 S. Livermore Ave.

The current LWVC Energy position dates from 1980. However, the energy situation in California changed radically in 1996 with deregulation legislation and the resulting impacts of that attempt to introduce competition into the system. In response, delegates at the 2003 LWVC convention called for a study to update our position.

The study deals with the reliability of electricity service, measures to increase conservation, and energy efficiency. The use of renewable resources and environmental protection play a role in our discussions. Government regulations and accountability and public participation in the process are important to the League.

In order to come to consensus, we will provide background information on the current structure of the decision-making authorities in California and at the Federal level (as it affects the state), energy resource planning, the role of transmission in resource planning and cost considerations, distributed generation, land use impacts, and the impact of market forces.

If you read the *Voter* electronically, you can find study information on the LWVC Web Site at www.lwvc.org (click on the Energy Study Update.) Four issue papers that will give you a good background for the study are "Keeping California's Lights On," "Flipping the Switch," "A World of Its Own: Electric Utility Regulation in California," and "Designing an Energy Portfolio." If you get the *Voter* by U.S. Mail, please call Julice at 373-6623 to have the articles mailed to you.

Only League members can participate in coming to consensus; however, if you have friends interested in energy issues, please invite them to the meeting for the information. Of course, we are always glad to have attendees join the League.

Julice Winter

Who's Who in the League

- President, Barbara Hempill
(925) 846-9739 barbehem@comcast.net
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- Director, Elteen Stone
(925) 447-3195 elteen@compuserve.com
- Director, Julice Winter
(925) 373-6623 julicew@sbcglobal.net



Calendar

Monday, January 2, Board Meeting, 4083 Compton Court, Livermore, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, January 11 and 25,
State Energy Study Units.
Livermore Police Department
Meeting Room, 9:30 a.m.

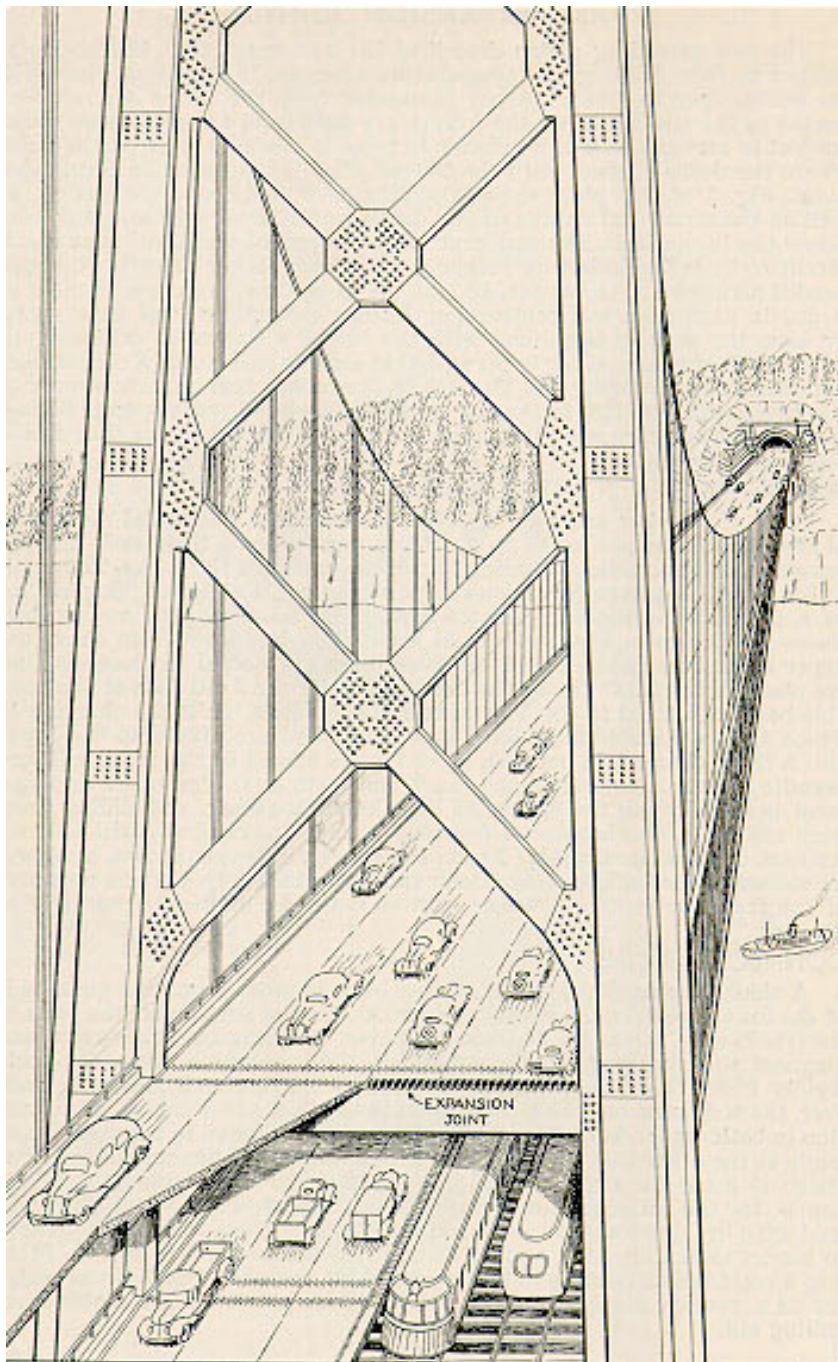


Tuesday, January 17 and 31, Local Study Committee, 5442 Greenfield Way, Pleasanton, 10 a.m.

Friday, January 27, Bay Area League Day: State of the Bay. Unitarian Church, Oakland. 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, February 4, Member Orientation, 2200 Marina Avenue, Livermore, 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, February 7, Information and Evaluation of Forums, 5442 Greenfield Way, Pleasanton, 10 a.m.



LWV Bay Area Update

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY: Friday, January 27, 2006 – STATE OF THE BAY SYMPOSIUM

The San Francisco Bay is the centerpiece of our region, and the Bay's potential decline, restoration, and future health are key to our region's future. Join us on Friday, January 27 to hear about what has happened to the Bay over the past 40 years and how we can protect, use, and enjoy it in the future. For more detailed information, see the agenda following, or check our website at www.lwvba-ca.org. The event is \$30, including morning refreshments and lunch, from 9:30 am to 2:30 p.m., including excellent speakers. Registration begins at 8:30 am.

Linda Craig, President LWVBA

2006 Bay Area League Day
Friday, January 27, 2006
9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
First Unitarian Church of Oakland,
685 14th Street, Oakland

KEYNOTE: "Why the Bay Matters," Will Travis, Executive Director, *Bay Conservation and Development Commission*

HISTORY OF BAY ISSUES

"Wildlife of the Bay," Arthur Feinstein, *Audubon California*
"Save SF Bay Movement," Sylvia McLaughlin, *Save SF Bay Association*
"San Francisco Bay Index," Grant Davis, *Bay Institute*

STEWARDS FOR THE HEALTH OF THE BAY: PANEL

Steve Ritchie, *California Coastal Conservancy*
Bruce Wolfe, *SF Water Quality Control Board*
Laura Thompson, *ABAG Bay Trail*

COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE: PANEL

Russell Hancock, *Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network*
Jeff Blanchfield, *Bay Conservation and Development Commission*
David Lewis, *Save SF Bay Association*
Nadine Hitchcock, *California Coastal Conservancy*

ACCESS TO THE BAY FOR YOUTH

Robert Kidd, *Jack London Aquatic Center*

Send check payable to LWVBA by **Tuesday, January 17** to LWVBA, attn: Bay Area League Day, 1611 Telegraph Ave., Suite 300, Oakland CA 94612. See website www.lwvba-ca.org for details, or call Judy Cox 510-595-7402 for more information.)



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<http://www.geocities.com.lwvlav/newsletterindex.html>

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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.