

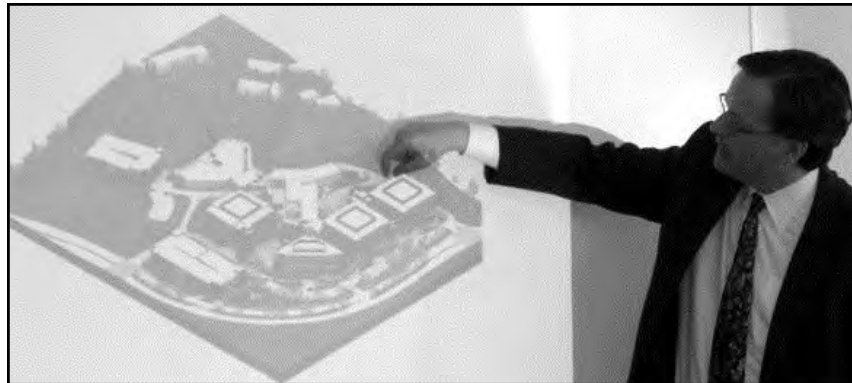


THE *VOTER*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARIN COUNTY

VOLUME 30 ISSUE 5

February/March 2012



A NEW MARIN GENERAL HOSPITAL IN OUR FUTURE

Our January Action meeting featured a presentation by Jon Friedenber, Chief Fund and Development Officer of Marin General Hospital. He clarified why a new, not just renovated, hospital will be built to meet the state's requirement for completing a seismically safe building. The date for compliance has been extended by the state legislature to 2020. Many smaller or financially weaker hospitals in the state are having trouble completing upgraded facilities by the original 2015 deadline. However, Marin General Hospital remains on-track to complete its new facility because a disaster could happen at any time.

Marin General staff are now developing a sister city relationship with the remaining staff of Japanese hospitals that suffered devastating damage in the recent earthquake/tsunami. MGH staff have been studying and conferring about problems that follow a disaster. Even a well-built modern hospital can lose its essential connections to electricity, water, roads, and most seriously - staff. Few Marin General staff speak Japanese, but many Japanese professionals speak excellent English.

Mr. Friedenber was in Southern California when the Northridge earthquake struck in January, 1994. He was able to see the enormous damage and loss of function that hospitals suffered, leaving them unable to care for patients or victims of the disaster. Hospitals must be built to higher standards so they can function after a quake. Jon's experience has been helpful in planning details for bringing Marin General up to required standards.

MGH staff are working with a planning team of hospital architects, medical and nursing staff, and experts in funding hospital construction. There will be a bond election to raise necessary funds. MGH Foundation is also seeking contributions. After funding is assured MGH will submit plans to the County, and obtain permits needed to proceed with construction. In addition to strengthening the buildings there will be changes, expanded and upgraded trauma and emergency facilities, new rooms for surgery, labor, and delivery, and redesigned one patient rooms, with other modern features. The hospital promises that it "will reinvent MGH from the ground up." Detailed information about the hospital can be found at http://www.maringeneral.org/jsp/releases_052110.jsp



JANUARY ACTION NOTES

Jon Friedenber, Chief Fund and Development Officer of Marin General Hospital was the speaker. Please note article on page 1.

An online survey has been sent to all members with emails and has been passed out and mailed to those without email asking for opinions on program for the local, Bay Area and National Leagues Discussion will take place at the February Action meeting.

Local Governance: Consolidation of sanitary districts in Southern Marin- the League board will consider supporting a hearing of the resolution of consolidation by LAFCO at its next meeting. The committee will support Voter Service re tax measures and June election changes.

Transportation, Land Use and Housing: Action heard reports on TAM and SMART as well as an announcement on Bay Area League Day attendance. The topic is housing.

International Relations: Chairman Linda Deer announced that the January program is on Afghanistan; the February on Indonesia, and March on exporting democracy. In April the League will host Zaida Arguedas, the LWVUS Deputy Executive Director and Director of Global Democracy programs, a League initiative for activists and nongovernmental organizations worldwide.

Natural Resources: Annie Layzer is serving on the MMWD Water Rate Structure Committee. Julie Monson reported on the county planning department hearing on local coastal planning. There is also controversy over windmills.

Education/Libraries: Nancy van Ravenswaay announced that IJ columnist Mark Philips will be attending the next Education Committee meeting on January 19th. Kay Noguchi told us the College of Marin is looking into joining Marinnet. The Education Committee will inquire about the resources available in the COM library.

Voter Service: Anne Layzer mentioned the changes for the June election.

Mental Health: Wendy Buchen discussed the changes with the merger of alcohol and drug programs with mental health programs. Health & Human Services Director Larry Meredith is looking ahead to a more streamlined approach.

Marcia Hagen, Action



FROM THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

1. **Ensure all eligible voters are registered to vote and can exercise their right to vote without having to overcome unnecessary and restrictive hurdles.**
2. **Educate the electorate on the candidates and issues on their ballots and help them find their polling place.**
3. **Encourage informative and productive debates between candidates so voters can learn about their elected representatives through more than just sound bites.**
4. **Fight to make sure voters decide the outcome of elections, not special interest money.**
5. **Promise for clean air for children and their families, and change the discussion to the important issues facing Americans in**

LEAGUE MEMBERS MEET WITH SUPERVISORS



Each January, LWVMC arranges one-hour sessions with the members of the Board of Supervisors to provide an understanding of their priorities, and ours, for the new year. We asked them to discuss four topics: the county budget in the light of the state's budget crisis; their approach to the difficult employee pension issues common to all public agencies; transportation, including Marin Transit and SMART; and affordable housing. We promise the supervisors that the interviews are confidential. They and the League learn a lot about each other in a relaxed and respectful setting.

IN MEMORIAM

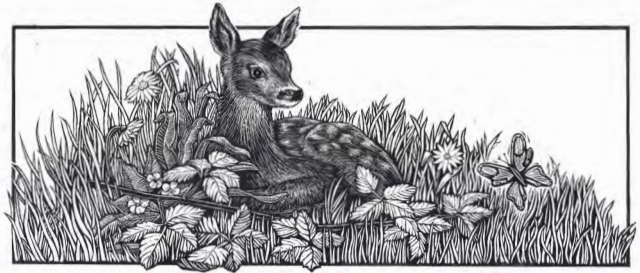
Last month we mourned the loss of Rollin Post and this month we are sad to report the loss of Diane Post. Both Rollin and Diane were loyal members of the League.

We particularly remember Diane for her enthusiasm for life, her constant questioning and wondering and her devotion to the League of Women Voters. Through the years Diane hosted many meetings in her home. Diane had a wonderful way of making people feel welcome and comfortable. Her hospitality over thirty years was greatly appreciated by all.

"League people tend to be news "junkies" (especially political news) and one of the more interesting parts of being in the Post home was picking up tid-bits and insights about how the daily news is boiled down and chopped up to become a daily or weekly program that lasts exactly the same amount of minutes every day," remembers Margaret Jones.

She was also an avid staffer of our office. She staffed every month on the Action meeting morning,

ART IN THE OFFICE



M. Kathryn Thompson, Illustrator
January through March

My chosen medium is scratchboard. It consists of a surface covered with black ink that I scratch away with an exacto knife to reveal the white underneath. Then I airbrush transparent ink on top.

I find inspiration for my work in both people and the natural world.

I graduated from the Art Institute of Seattle and am a member of the San Francisco Society of Illustrators and the Marin Art Council.

IN MEMORIAM

Another long time League member who recently passed away at the age of 95 was Harriet Richards of Greenbrae. She and her husband Muarray founded and nurtured Marin's Buckelew Programs as a way of providing homes for mentally ill people. Harriet worked at creating the kind of warm safe home she wanted her own mentally ill daughter, Charlotte, to have. She managed to build Buckelew into a strong organization still providing something homey, and safe, and supportive. Her goals set a standard for a program that continues to serve the severely mentally ill in Marin. Patients are treated with dignity and respect. Harriet was a quiet but persistent person who loyally sought to represent people like her daughter as part of the Alliance for the Mentally ill (AMI).

She was a longtime member of the League's health committee and was for decades a soft-spoken but very strong public advocate in Marin County.



LEAGUE SEEKS GOVERNMENTAL OBSERVERS

The League Board has formed an Observer Corps composed of members who will attend meetings of city councils, the Board of Supervisors and special agencies such as sewer and water districts. The League wants to know how well these bodies are functioning when dealing with complex governmental issues and whether or not their process is fair and transparent.

If you are interested in learning more about how local government functions, this is a great opportunity. Observers do not need to attend every meeting of an agency nor be an expert on any topic. Observers will wear identifying League of Women Voters buttons but will not speak on behalf of the League. They are only there to observe.

So far 22 League members have signed up to be Observers or are serving in that capacity already. They are covering 15 governmental bodies. However, additional observers are needed for the following agencies: Larkspur Town Council, Mill Valley City Council, Sausalito City Council, Ross Valley Sanitary District and Central Marin Sanitary District. You may also team-up with an Observer who has an assignment already. The Observer Corps would also like someone to be a partner in observing the meetings of the county's Health and Human Services department as it plans for consolidation.

Observers will receive a copy of the Brown Act, a pamphlet on Open Government Laws, and a summary of the functions and behaviors of elected bodies. They will be asked to complete a brief reporting form after the meeting and return it to Elissa Giambastiani, the Observer Corps coordinator.

If you are interested in being part of this important open government activity, please contact Elissa at 472-3847 or email her at elissag57@comcast.net.

THE JUNE 5, 2012 ELECTION

The offices that are on the ballot in June are: Presidential party nominations; U.S. Congress; State Assembly; County Supervisors Catherine Rice, Kathrin Sears, and Steve Kinsey; Belvedere Town Council seats of Jerry Butler, Sandra Barnand, and John Tallschak; Ross Town Council seats of R. Scott Hunter, Christopher Martin, and Richard Strauss; Almonte Sanitary District seats of Frank Shirado, Gail Ward, and Fredericka Cobey; Ross Valley Sanitary seats of Marcia Johnson and Frank Egger; and the party central committees.

There will be a lot for voters to read about the new features of this election, specifically the recent redistricting in the state and the top-two feature of the party primaries.

Two state ballot measures have qualified for the June ballot:

1. Lowers from 14 to 12 the number of years people can serve in the state legislature, but raises from 6 (Assembly) or 8 (Senate) to 12 the number of years people can serve in one house.
2. Raises the \$1 tax on a pack of cigarettes to \$2, with the funds earmarked for tobacco-related illnesses.

News from LWVCalifornia...

Supports the California DISCLOSE Act!

Support AB 1148, which would require the largest major funders of political advertisements for candidates and ballot measures in California to be clearly and unambiguously identified. It will also require campaign committees to maintain a Web site where the largest major funders are listed so voters can easily access this important information

Expressed Concerns about the Bay Delta Plan

We are concerned that the first amendment to the BDCP MOA was **not negotiated in an open and transparent manner**. Moreover, we are supportive of co-equal goals—to create a more **reliable water supply** for the state and to **restore the Delta ecosystem**.

For more information: LWVC.org

LWVUS STUDY ON PRIVATIZATION

Privatization is a fact of modern life. The objective is to guide the process to serve the public interest, which is why the League is conducting this study, to be completed by May 1, 2012.

Our Marin League Consensus Meeting will be held at the April 2 Action Meeting.

Because privatization is occurring with increasing frequency within various government entities, it is not only a timely topic, but can be large and complex. Here is an opportunity for you to learn, and to help shape the policies and parameters of the privatization process.

What is privatization?

Federal, state and local governments own extensive assets and are major employers. Governments often consider selling assets, and outsourcing some functions and services to the private sector, including “core” government services such as providing for the safety, security and general welfare (public well-being) of citizens, the economy, and our country. Privatization of these government assets, services and functions has been occurring for decades at all levels of government. The consequences of “privatizing” a government service or function, in particular, may enhance the function or service. Alternatively, it may reduce or alter functions and services. Government revenues may be reduced or lost and jobs may be cut. In some instances, this may have a detrimental effect on the “common good” or public well-being.

What is the scope of the study?

The purpose of this study is to identify policies and parameters that should be considered when any governmental entity is planning to undertake some type of privatization process.

Where can I learn more?

The consensus questions and a selection of background papers are available on the National League website. Go to www.lwv.org and type “privatization” in the search box in the upper right hand corner of the homepage. A good place to start is the paper on “Privatization: The Public Policy Debate,” which puts the issue in its historical context. Our local league has formed a Study Committee that will present background information and conduct the Consensus Meeting on April 2.

Kay Noguchi, Privatization Study Committee



A Texas-Sized Political Novel, Recommended by Kay Noguchi

“There are two classic American political novels. One is *All the King’s Men*....the other is *The Gay Place*, a stunning, original, intensely human novel inspired by Lyndon Johnson....It will be read a hundred years

from now,” wrote David Halberstam in the *New York Times Book Review*.

I was introduced to this bawdy, boozy, rollicking novel in a most charming way – by the 80-year-old ex-wife of the author, Nadine Brammer Eckhardt. On a trip to Austin, friends took me to meet Nadine for a spirited discussion of Texas politics. She gave me the book to take back to California.

The Gay Place by Billy Lee Brammer is a 500-page trilogy of related novels set in Austin about a member of the state legislature, the state’s junior senator, and

the governor’s press secretary – and their interactions with Governor Arthur “Goddam” Fenstemaker.

“Throughout the three novels Fenstemaker speaks in the unmistakable rhythms and tones of a word-drunk Southern politician, a consummate rhetorician who is half-Isaiah and half skirt-chasing egomaniac,” writes Don Graham in the introduction to the 1995 edition. (The book was first published in 1961.)

Nadine and Billy Lee went to Washington, D.C., in 1955 to serve on Senator Lyndon B. Johnson’s staff, and the character of Fenstemaker draws heavily on the author’s intimate knowledge of LBJ. Billy Lee also wrote Nadine into the book as the flirtatious Ouida. They were divorced at about the time the book was published, and Nadine married Bob Eckhardt who was elected to Congress in 1966. (Her own memoir, *The Duchess of Palms*, was published by the University of Texas Press in 2009.)

This is a window into the world of a master politician, colorfully written and engaging. In this book, a “*nass potty*” is translated as a “nice party.” This is a “*nass*” read!



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/GREAT DECISIONS

On Monday, February 27, the International Relations/ Great Decisions group will discuss *Indonesia: Prospects for*

Prosperity. Nancy van Ravenswaay will present the extraordinary political and economic achievements of modern Indonesia as well as the major issues and opportunities still to be addressed. Nancy will share personal insights and observations gleaned from visits to Indonesia and her long-standing interest in the history, people, and culture of the country.

On March 26th, the group will discuss the Great Decisions topic *Promoting Democracy: Foreign Policy Imperative?* Anne Layzer and Nani Ranken will present differing ideas and perspectives regarding the value of promoting democracy abroad. They will explore strategic considerations, advantages, disadvantages, and challenges associated with the promotion of global democracy as a key element of America's foreign policy. The group will explore questions such as, "Is our national interest best served through the spread of democracy? Have recent efforts led to successful outcomes?"

On April 30th, the International Relations group will host guest speaker Zaida Arguedas, Deputy Executive Director of the League of Women Voters and Director of Global Democracy Programs. Ms. Arguedas will talk about the Global Democracy Program - a League initiative for activists and nongovernmental organizations worldwide. She will discuss her work with groups abroad, stressing transparency, accountability, and good governance, expanding community influence and helping citizens build effective leadership skills.



Ms. Arguedas has managed a variety of international programs including those for Muslim women of Kenya, for civic leaders from Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, and for women in political leadership in Brazil. In addition, she has conducted several workshops, including "Women Making a Difference," in Zambia; "Women in Governance;" in Ukraine, "Mujer y Poder," in Bogota, Colombia, and "Coaching NGOs on Coalition Building for Effective Advocacy," in Armenia.

Coffee and conversation begin at 11:30;
the program begins at noon.

Meetings are held in the League's conference room, F 138,
4340 Redwood Highway, San Rafael.
Linda Deer, International Relations

Bay Area League Day



Housing and the Bay Area's Future

Saturday, February 4, 2012
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**The First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 685
14th Street, Oakland, California**

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area has chosen regional housing as the topic for its next annual

Bay Area League Day educational forum. The event will feature a keynote speech from David Rosen of David Paul Rosen & Associates, and three panels of experts discussing:

- 1) how to meet regional housing needs in compliance with the sustainable communities strategy mandated by California Senate Bill 375,
Ken Kirkey, Association of Bay Area Governments
Duane Bay, San Mateo County Housing Department
Richard Marcantonio, Public Advocates
- 2) how to finance affordable housing,
Jack Nagle, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP
Linda Mandolini, Eden Housing
Susan Friedland, Affordable Housing Associates
- 3) how to provide housing for the poor and the homeless:
Tim Iglesias, University of San Francisco
Mary Murtagh, EAH Housing
Elaine de Coligny, EveryOne Home

\$30 (\$15 without lunch) in advance, and \$35 (\$20 without lunch) at the door. Breakfasts included for both options. Registration is available at www.lwvbayarea.org or by mail (check payable to "LWVBA") to

1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 300,
Oakland, CA 94612.

For more information (510) 839-1608.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

The Balancing Act

Every time I see the image of a juggler it reminds me of someone I know very well. There was a time in my 20s when I worked 3 jobs trying to save money to take a trip to Europe. Before I left on my trip I felt like I needed to sleep for a week. When my kids were young I wondered when I would find the time to just pet the cat (I found time). Now I am “retired” and I feel busier than ever. My husband is retired now too, and he wants to travel. We’ve made our “bucket list” of places and things we want to do and so far we are taking turns because we have different lists.

I have a bucket list for our League too. What I learned from the working world was to break things up into manageable pieces. Set priorities based on importance and timelines, then work your way there gradually. It amazes me sometimes how long things take when we haven’t prepared ourselves to give whatever is enough time for our results to come about. It is a continuous lesson. Breathe, take one step, review. Those apply to my lifetime goals for the League: be strong, keep growing and endure. Breathe, take one step and review.

Margy

BOARD BRIEFS

The Board heard a report on consolidation of SASM (Sanitary Agencies of Southern Marin) and were urged to attend the LAFCO January 12 meeting for more information. The schedule and topics for the Board of Supervisors interviews with LWVMC board members was discussed. Upcoming events/issues were discussed: the LWVUS privatization study; LWVC program planning survey; and plans for our upcoming Gala regarding speaker and possible venues.

Sondra Wuthow, Secretary



MONEY FACTS: YOUR LEAGUE DUES

Did You Know –

The Marin League of Women Voters keeps only \$6.30 of the \$60. that you contribute to us each year?

That small amount pays for only a small portion of our expenses. That is why we sometimes ask for contributions to attend our annual Gala, to support our annual fund raising drive, and, naturally, whenever the spirit moves you.

If you join the League directly at the national or state levels, you are not “officially” one of us. We are not even told about you!

Tell us if you have joined the League at another level (LWVUS or LWV California).

We are all the same, great organization, but we need you locally too. And, we want to be able to keep you informed about what we are doing.

When you join the Marin League directly, we send the national organization about \$30 to support the important services they provide us and other leagues across the country.

We send the California League \$23 of your dues because they too help us and other leagues in California with state issues and elections. They also give us organizational advice.

Even the Bay Area League receives a \$1.00 each year from us. Many regional issues concerning the bay, air, transportation, water, housing, and more receive league attention. The leagues around the bay all help the effort.

So, we thank you for your continuing support of the League’s efforts. We need you!

Susan Rouder, Membership

HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE

If you care about healthcare issues you are welcome to attend the meetings of the LWVMC Healthcare Committee, Monday February 15 at 9:30 and Monday, March 19 at 9:30.

We talk about who pays for health care and how much they pay, about measuring quality and access, about the responsibility for decision making, and about what we can learn from others, Canada, Scandinavia, Japan. We sometimes invite experts like Jon Friedenberg who came to the Action Committee, listen, and then ask them questions.

Margaret Jones, Healthcare



League of women Voters of Marin County
 4340 Redwood Hwy. Suite F-108
 San Rafael, CA 94903

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION

US POSTAGE
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 SAN RAFAEL, CA

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- Margy Eller, President
- Ann Batman, 1st Vice President
- Suki Sennett, 2nd Vice President
- Sondra Wuthow, Secretary
- Scott McKown, Treasurer

Return Service Requested

Directors:

- Elaine Biagini
- Judy Binsacca
- Donna Bjorn
- John Eells
- Martha Fleischmann
- Elissa Giambastiani
- Marcia Hagen
- Anne Layzer
- Glenda Lockhart
- Julie Monson
- Kay Noguchi
- Nancy van Ravenswaay
- Susan Rouder

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the active and informed participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- Friday Feb 3 Local Governance
9:30
- Sat Feb 4 Bay Area Day – Oakland See p.6
9-2
- Monday Feb 6 Action – Program Planning,
9:30 Peter Banning of LAFCO (10:00)
Conference Room
- Monday Feb 6 Privatization Study
1:15
- Wed Feb 8 Board Meeting
9:30
- Tuesday Feb 14 Transportation/LandUse/Housing
9:30
- Wed Feb. 15 Healthcare
9:30
- Thursday Feb 16 Education
9:30
- Tuesday Feb 21 Media Outreach
9:30
- Monday Feb 27 Intl Relations - Indonesia: Pro-
11:00 spects for Prosperity See p. 6
Conference Room

MARCH

- Friday Mar 2 Local Governance
9:30
- Monday Mar 5 Action
9:30 Conference Room
- Tuesday Mar 13 Transportation/LandUse/Housing
9:30
- Wed Mar 14 Board Meeting
9:30
- Thursday Mar 15 Education
9:30
- Monday Mar 19 Healthcare
9:30
- Tuesday Mar 20 Media Outreach
9:30
- Monday Mar 26 Intl Relations - Promoting
11:00 Democracy: Foreign
Policy Imperative? See p.6
Conference Room

All meetings are in the League office (4340 Redwood Hwy, F108, San Rafael) unless otherwise noted.