



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 21 Issue 8

Visit us at www.lwvsonoma.org

December 2015

It's time for our
HOLIDAY PARTY

Join us and enjoy
a sparkling afternoon
with League Friends.

We will celebrate the holidays
and our appreciation for
all the League volunteers.

Come and share the Festivities at
LaRosa Restaurant
500 Fourth Street
Santa Rosa
On Courthouse Square

Sunday Afternoon
December 13, 2015
2-5 pm

There is no charge for members.
A holiday giving tree will be
available for donations.

See you there!

**RSVP at 546-9543 by Thursday
December 10**

LWVSC Calendar

Board Meeting:

Wednesday, December 2nd,
10:00 am to Noon.

Advocacy Committee Meeting:

Wednesday, December 9th, 10:30 am.

Book Club: Thursday,

No Book Club in December. For
additional information, see page 4.

Holiday Party: Sunday,

December 13th, 2-5 pm. **Please note
the time correction from last month.**

Bay Area League Day: Saturday,

February 6, 2016. Topic: Transportation

LWVSC Higher Education Consensus

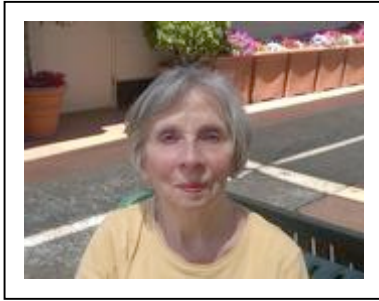
Meeting: Saturday, April 9, 2016 in the
afternoon at the Rincon Valley Library
See page 3 for further information.

LWV Bay Area Convention: Saturday,

May 7, 2016

LWVSC meetings are in the third floor
Conference Room at the LWVSC office,
555 5th Street, Santa Rosa.

LWVSC Board meetings are open to all
LWVSC members, and to the public upon
request. All other meetings are open to
the public.



President's Message: Bringing the Spirit of the Holidays

I had been pondering the holidays when the disturbing news of the Paris terrorism attacks plunged us into darkness. I had been trying to find a word or a phrase that could describe a trait, an attribute, maybe a feeling that we could all bring to share at our holiday party on Sunday, December 13.

Honoring the dead. We have passed Dia De Los Muertos and All Hallows Eve but with the vicious attacks in Paris, it brings it home how many people's lives have recently been affected by loss. Both holidays are dedicated to a fond remembrance of the loved ones who have departed life. With a remembrance of those we have lost it is just a short step to appreciating and honoring those who are still with us, who we see frequently, our dear friends, coworkers, even casual acquaintances that bring warmth to our hearts. Hopefully many of those will be at our party.

Gratitude. When you read this we will have enjoyed our national holiday of Thanksgiving, which honors the sharing of the abundance of the harvest. While you probably ate turkey rather than venison, you can be sure that any event offered by the League will be generous in its offerings of food and drink and sharing with our neighbors. So come to the party and nosh and give thanks for living in an agricultural environment of farm to table abundance that we share.

Light over Darkness. Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of a day's supply of oil that burned for eight days proclaiming the strength of a small community of Jewish faithful standing for their principals against the bully that was the Seleucid Empire. If there was ever a time when we need to stand for our principals in the face of the viciousness and bullying of Jihadism it is now. Come to the party and celebrate the League's iconic role of standing strong in the hurricane of the political winds that are blowing in our country and the world.

Strength of community. In around 1965 the African-American community started celebrating Kwanzaa. With deep roots to the African diaspora, it celebrates many things but primarily the strength of community, standing together in the face of adversity. Come together with us on December 13 to celebrate our community and its strength since its inception in 1920.

Hopefulness. Of course the holiday that still seems to overtake our country and communities—Christmas. While Christians still celebrate the birth of their savior, the holiday has become so commercialized that it is hard for many to recognize its significance. While I will never be a grandmother, and most of the babies born will not be expected to save the world, I experience that with my friends, a new baby in the family brings new hopefulness for the future. Bring that hopefulness to the party. All of these holidays have symbols in common, but one of those most prevalent is candles—light over darkness. So bring your light to the party. And thanks to the technology of NOW, we have battery candles (no fires, lives saved). So if you wish, bring a candle to honor these principles that underlie the traditions of the holidays.

Nancy Burrington
President

Higher Education Study

The Study Group on California Higher Education met in November to learn about the consensus questions related to Equitable Access and some of the findings related to that topic. Below, the questions are in bold and very brief reports of our findings are in plain text.

Equitable access uses the lens of equity to achieve a fair result by recognizing individual differences when aiming for a proportional participation of racial, ethnic and gender groups in access, completion and opportunity to succeed, regardless of economic status.

CCC=California Community Colleges,
CSU=California State University,
UC=University of California

Equitable access in public higher education is evidenced by:

a. an increase in the diversity of enrollment and completion rates in the CCCs, CSUs and UCs that reflects the diversity of the state's population.

We found that the population is increasingly diverse, but that the college student population is far from reflecting that, particularly at the UC and CSU.

b. an increase in the initial freshman enrollment in both CSU and UC of qualified high school graduates from low income and under-represented minority groups. Research shows that students who first enroll in a 4-year college are much more likely to graduate with a bachelors degree than comparable students who start at a community college. Latino students overwhelmingly start at community college, and California's rate of transfer/degree/certificate completion is 49th among the states.

c. the provision of specialized services for at-risk students in higher education to facilitate their successful certificate or degree completion. In supporting these students, advising is crucial. A variety of other services include faculty involvement and support; peer participation such as with study groups and ethnic organizations so students, especially those who are first generation, do not feel alone; English as a second language; acceleration of completion of remediation classes when needed; financial assistance or incentive. Research indicates that provision of these services does increase the success rate of students at risk.

d. a transparent and seamless transfer path from the CCCs to four-year colleges. Improvements in the paths from CCCs to the CSUs have been made since 2010 with Associate Degrees for Transfer, but these are not as widely utilized as they might be and the UCs have different, often conflicting, transfer requirements. Student advising is critical.

Our next meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2-4PM at the 3rd floor conference room, 555-5th Street Santa Rosa. We will be studying funding and affordability.

Please plan to attend the consensus meeting on the afternoon of April 9 at the Rincon Valley Library.

More information about the study is available at:

<https://lwvc.org/study/education-0>
[the last symbol is a zero]

ADVOCACY NOTES

Advocacy Committee Report:

We have compared what we are working on with what the North Bay Organizing Project has and will be addressing and found several areas of common interest. We are continuing to work with the League Board on completing a new letter to the Board of Supervisors in support of the Living Wage Ordinance, which will be on its agenda in early December. The League Board and the Committee are close to completing an Action Alert process to notify you of important events in the county that you might want to address. Both the state and the national Leagues have action alert processes for the league membership.

The committee meets on Wednesday, December 9th, 10:30 am in the third floor Conference Room of 555 Fifth Street, Santa Rosa. All members are welcome!

Gene Zingarelli
 Advocacy Committee Chair
action@lwvsonoma.org

BOOK CLUB READS

No Book Club in December.

The book selection for January, 2016 is
Notorious RBG, The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsberg
 by Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik,

Have a wonderful holiday season reading, and hopefully you'll try this book.

Book Group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month. The next meeting is January 21 at 10:30 am in the third floor Conference Room of 555 Fifth Street, Santa Rosa.

SAVE THE DATES:

Bay Area League Day
 Saturday, February 6, 2016
 Topic: Transportation

**Higher Education
 Consensus Meeting**
 Saturday, April 9, 2016
 Rincon Valley Library
 (exact time to follow).

LWV Bay Area Convention
 Saturday, May 7, 2016

Welcome new members!

**Linda Allen
 Gwendolyn P. Dhesi
 Susan Rouder**

**We're so glad you're
 here!**

Screening Suffragette: Differences in Media Coverage of the British and American Suffrage Movements

By Elisabeth MacNamara 10/26/2015
LWV National President

Members of the [League of Women Voters of Georgia](#) were among those who got a sneak peek of the new movie *Suffragette*, which details the fight for the right to vote for women in Britain, late last week. I attended a similar event many years ago when *Iron Jawed Angels* was being launched by HBO in a gala affair at the Carter Presidential Library. While last night's showing was much more subdued, it was also much more intimate. Surrounded by League friends in a theater that features reclining seats, it felt just like home.

Suffragette focuses on the British suffrage movement in general and on the plight of a group of working class women in particular. The result is a poignant portrayal not just of the political frustration experienced by British women seeking the vote, but also of the social and legal conditions that led them to abandon peaceful means and become, in the words of their leader [Emmeline Pankhurst](#) (played by Meryl Streep), law breakers in order to become law makers. The central character, Maud Watts played by Carey Mulligan, is almost an accidental tourist on the suffragette scene. Married with a young son, Maud works, as she has all her life, in a laundry. She befriends a co-worker who involves her in the movement and as Maud becomes more radicalized, she also discovers how little control she has over the things that matter to her in life. American Women by 1912, the year in which *Suffragette* is set, had achieved some measure of equality under the law. Where

once a married woman's legal identity completely merged with her husband's, by 1912 women had begun to gain some control over their property and their children. The same was not true in Britain. In one scene, the movie depicts a wealthy suffragette pleading with her husband to post bail not just for her, but for the other less fortunate women arrested with her. Despite pointing out that his money had originally come from her, when he refuses she is helpless to do anything about it. When Maud is arrested for a second time, the police don't bother to jail her or her companions. "Take them home," says the chief investigator, "Let their husbands deal with them." And the husbands did. Some were beaten, some were cast out, some lost contact with their children.

The women depicted in this movie were the ones who, as Maud states at one point, never imagined that women could get the vote but who dared to imagine it when they dared to dream that through the vote they could change their lives and the lives of their daughters.

In importing radical tactics to the American suffrage movement, [Alice Paul](#), the protagonist of *Iron Jawed Angels*, attracted great attention to the cause, but she also demonstrated a fundamental misunderstanding about the difference between American and British democracy. In the British parliamentary system, opposing the party in power can bring a government down and force a change in the law. The same tactic when used in 1916 in the United States, resulted in Alice Paul's party opposing Democrats who supported

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

suffrage, including Woodrow Wilson. Many of the suffragists who later founded the League of Women Voters commented bitterly about the damage this did to the overall cause. Similarly, while the [1913 suffrage parade](#) and the Silent Sentinels raised visibility for the movement, the complete freedom of the press in the United States guaranteed that even the more peaceful and process-driven tactics of the mainstream movement got attention in the press. [Carrie Chapman Catt](#) depended on the fact that every town in America had a newspaper to spread the word about women's rights. When the crucial moment came in 1916 that an all-out push for the Federal Amendment seemed possible, she went to great lengths to keep her "Winning Plan" secret so that opposition forces could not organize to stop her.

The same was not true in Britain. One striking aspect of *Suffragette* is the women's lack of access to the media. The British government was able to muzzle the press and keep news of the peaceful protests and even arrests and force feedings out of the public eye. The movie suggests that the radical turn that Pankhurst called for resulted from the frustration the suffragettes experienced in getting public attention for their cause. Throwing rocks through store windows and planting bombs raised the stakes for the British government and made it far more difficult to keep the news barons in check. How the suffragettes finally broke out of this impasse forms the dramatic climax of this wonderful movie.

So little is taught about the fight to get the vote for women whether here in the United

States or around the world. [Movies like *Suffragette* connect voting rights to the plight of those who cannot vote.](#) In a time of great cynicism about politics and apathy among voters, the movie serves as a good reminder to look back and remember what life was like for those once excluded from the political process.

The League of Women Voters is celebrating 95 years of Making Democracy Work® at every level of government. In 1920, the League was founded as an outgrowth of the movement that secured women the right to vote to help new voters engage with their government. Today, the League empowers all voters to improve their local, state and national government. [Learn more about the League of Women Voters and join our celebration!](#)

(Editor's Note: I highly recommend *Suffragette* at local theatres this holiday season. A perfect gift for friends and family, this educational movie (not recommend for children) offers a learning opportunity for teens, young adults, and the rest of us to experience an history we rarely hear.)



Emmeline Pankhurst c. 1913

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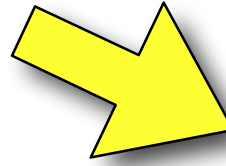
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Remember to sign up for email alerts and newsletters when you visit these websites.

Tell us what you think!
 Send in your comments,
 questions, and
 suggestions.
 Email, snail-mail, or call!

We want to hear from you!

Become a Member of the LWV of Sonoma County



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or

Fill out the form below and mail it to us at:

League of Women Voters Sonoma County
555 5th Street, Suite 300 O
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

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Program	Membership	Speakers Bureau
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Smart Voter	Community Outreach	Website

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. We do, however, take action on selected government issues in the public interest.

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The Voter is published nine times a year by the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County.