

VOTER

President's Message

Barbara Murray

I am writing this president's message on Election Day. While I do not know the outcome of the election, I do know that the nation has been gripped in election fever. A record turn out of voters is expected. The Bay Area League has done its part for Election 2008 – conducting voter registration drives, distributing Voters Guides and VOTE411.org cards, and staffing the League phone as an election hotline for voters. The rest is up to the voting public to cast their ballots and elect a new president and other candidates running for office. It has been an amazing experience in “Making Democracy Work.”

Spring Discussion Topics

However, rather than just maintaining the status quo, the League is ready to follow up the election by participating in two studies – one state and one national – that deal with a couple of very timely voting issues. The state study will address voting procedures to increase voter participation. We plan to devote our January/February discussion meeting to this topic. We invite you to attend armed with your own observations of how (or how not) smoothly the voting process was for you and your community. Now is the time to strike while the iron is hot – while the memory of voting is still fresh in our minds. The national study also addresses a hot button topic - the National Popular Vote Compact (Electoral College) which has received a lot of attention in the media. Our March or April discussion meeting will focus on this subject. The election itself may be over in November, but the League will be tackling ways to improve the election process and experience in the months ahead.

November Meeting Report

Speaking of record turnouts, our November discussion meeting certainly qualifies. We had 14 members and two visitors listen as Nelda Tuthill, master naturalist, discussed the status of wind power and its ability to generate electricity in Texas. We learned that the 2005 state legislature has designated renewable energy zones (i.e. areas for wind power farms) throughout the state (primarily in west Texas) and that a plan has been developed to construct transmission lines to deliver electricity to electric customers (majority living in population centers in mid-Texas – I-35 corridor). Since 2005 the amount of electricity produced by wind power has increased every year and will continue to increase in the upcoming years. Currently, 3% of the electricity in Texas is generated by wind power. In addition to government requirements, the private sector, led by T. Boone Pickens, is poised to make significant investments in wind power.

Membership Renewals

Wind power is certainly a very valuable, renewable resource. Have you ever considered the fact that your membership in the League is also a valuable, renewable resource? It is time for many of you to renew your membership in the League. I hope you respond to the membership renewals which will be sent out very soon. We value you as a key resource to the success of our League whether you support the League through membership, monetary contributions, and/or your time. Thank you for investing in the League!

Happy Holidays!

Since this is the last *VOTER* until January, I want to take this time to thank you for all that you have done for the League and to wish each of you a joyous holiday season.

VOTING IN TEXAS

Saturday, January 31, 2009

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

**At the home of Diane Sheridan
1107 Live Oak Lane, Kirby Woods, Taylor Lake Village**

Delegates to the LWV-Texas Convention voted to restudy the *state position on Voting Rights and Election Laws* to consider various procedures to increase voter participation. The study will include, but not be limited to, vote-by-mail, Internet voting, same-day registration, election-day centralized voting, overseas ballot procedures, other procedural barriers to voting, and procedures that may increase voter participation.

On Saturday, January 31, members of the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area and guests will start discussion of topics on which we all have knowledge and opinions. We'll socialize from 9:30 – 10:00 a.m., then talk about voting procedures from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Hope to see you January 31.

Directions: KirbyWoods is off Kirby Road between NASA Road One and Red Bluff. From NASA One, turn onto Kirby at the Jack in the Box. Pass TLV City Hall and the water tower. Turn right at the KirbyWoods subdivision sign. When the short street ends, turn left onto Live Oak; 1107 will be on your left about three-fourths of the way down the block. There is a red fire hydrant and street light by the driveway. Questions? Diane Sheridan 281/326-5253 DBSheridan@aol.com

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.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Thanks to those who have renewed their membership for another year. If your dues are still due this fall, you will receive a personalized reminder in the coming days.

The League's mission is vital, and the Principles we espouse are what make democracy work. The Bay Area League carries out the League mission by holding voter registration drives, distributing *Voters Guides*, sponsoring candidates forums, publishing a *Guide to Elected Officials* each biennium, and operating a Voter Information line--*all of which are nonpartisan*. Several times a year, we discuss public policy issues for our own enlightenment or to contribute to state and national consensus-building efforts. Your local dues also make you a member of the state and national levels of the League and fund the great education and advocacy work of LWV-Texas and LWVUS. We hope you will rejoin when asked to do so – and invite a friend to join also.

Diane Sheridan, Membership Chair
281-326-5253
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Thanks to Lubrizol!

Thanks to Lubrizol for its recent donation to the LWV-Texas Education Fund in support of our nonpartisan voters service activities. Lubrizol has local plants in Bayport and Deer Park. Lubrizol produces specialty chemicals (lubricant additives) used in motor oils, gear oils, automatic transmission fluids and greases to improve their performance. Lubrizol's Chris Hext said, "Our customers include Castrol, Chevron, Citgo, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Imperial Oil, Mobil, Shell, Total, Valvoline and many, many others. When you go into your local Auto Zone or other auto supply store and look at the many rows of motor oils, automatic transmission fluids, gear oils and greases, our products are in a good many of the bottles."

CALENDAR

November 2008

- 1 LWV-BA discussion meeting on wind and solar energy in Texas
- 4 General Election Day
- 14 LWV-BA Board Meeting, 9:30 am, home of Melba Heselmeyer

December 2008

Happy Holidays!

January 2009

- 13 Legislative session begins
- 31 LWV-BA discussion of state position on Voting rights and Election, 9:30-11:00 am, home of Diane Sheridan