



Sonoma's Best Read Newspaper and Web Site

Sonoma, CA
93 °F
Clear
at 12:00 PM

[Click for Forecast](#)



Sonoma Valley's Ultimate Events Guide

[Search Articles](#)

[Current Edition](#)

- [Columns](#)
- ['Our View' Editorial](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Club News](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Culture](#)
- [Drive](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Epicure](#)
- [Faith](#)
- [Feature Story](#)
- [History](#)
- [Home & Garden](#)
- [Letters to the Editor](#)
- [News](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Pets](#)
- [Police Blotter](#)
- [Reporter's Notebook](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Springs](#)
- [Sun On The Street](#)
- [Two Minute Warning](#)



[email](#) [print](#)

Just Joan: 05/15/2008

New Leaders for Sonoma in this new century

Joan Huguenard

At my 50th high school reunion, I received stunning surprises. People remembered me as someone they admired in high school, and more than one gentleman said he had never asked for a date because he "knew I was going steady with Paul."

Oh, my gosh. Going steady. I did date Paul a lot because he was the only one who asked me! I left the reunion wondering how my life might have come out differently if the teen-age me had had the opportunity to find myself among an abundance of folks who cared.

A successful debater on the high school team, I nonetheless considered myself a zero. Even with high grades, I felt worthless because I wasn't invited to join the prestigious clubs. And I knew for certain I had little value because those lovely boys didn't ask me out.

For decades I lived in the swamp of self-deprecation while going through the motions of being wife and mother. Linda Lea and Celeste Winders came on the scene 60 years too late for me. But just in time for Sonoma's youth of today.

How many high school students believe their value is determined by others and that their only access to a sense of personal worth is through the words and actions of people outside of themselves? A number of caring folks in this community had been asking similar questions as they met weekly seeking resolution of tensions that erupted in a tragic event last October. When one member of the group, Celeste Winders, met Dr. Linda Lea, she urged the international education consultant to join her at a UCRY (United Community Resources for Youth) meeting. Solutions to the questions Dr. Lea heard at the meeting are precisely the focus of her nonprofit educational organization, The New Leaders Institute. The compassionate dedication to young people of Lea and Winders came together and exploded into effective, dynamic action.

Several local organizations quickly signed onto this impending action to help bring it to fruition. WillMar Center, The Mentoring Alliance, Operation Youth, Hanna Center, UCRY, Challenge Sonoma and the Boys & Girls Club Sonoma Valley will each recommend a few high school students to participate in our town's first exposure to "New Leaders: A New Kind Of Leadership For A New Century."

"This has changed my life...by allowing me to solve my challenges by myself" and "I learned how to trust myself" are representative comments from youngsters who have participated in this work in a number of far-flung communities.

Now the Sonoma Valley New Leaders Workshop Project will bring the interactive, relationship-centered venture to Sonoma in mid-June. This will be the first of an ongoing series of such gatherings focused on awareness, inquiry and laughter from which emerge strong, confident and active community leaders.

Winders has an intimate understanding of teens from her training and experience, which includes previous service as executive



[Audio Help](#)



(707) 996-2082
WWW.SONOMAVALLEYPOL.COM
LICENSED & INSURED #828767

Sun Shots - The year in pictures, photos to buy and more...




David Reber
for 1st District Supervisor

Time to put the
1st District First!

[Click Here](#)
for the Latest on All the
Candidates
PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Marin Independent Journal

San Francisco Chronicle | SFGate.com





director of the Valley of the Moon Teen Center. She emphasizes the need for us adults and elders to be ready to learn from the youngsters, as they have much to teach us. Maintaining an arrogant stance that kids don't know anything and only adults can influence good policy decisions, she suggests, does not serve the community well.

Differences disappear and barriers evaporate when people from varied cultures and economic circumstances share an experience that opens awareness and appreciation of inner wisdom and strength. Leadership that was always there is acknowledged and activated.

Participants in New Leaders create a project in service to something larger than themselves; adults won't be allowed to impose their own ideas. Working as a caring coalition, in unity, collaboration and cooperation, the kids will implement their community project following the workshop.

I'm eager to know what the high-schoolers will come up with in June, and what middle-school participants will come up with this fall. As soon as that, our own young people will be taking action to make this an even better place to live.

Dr. Lea created this course following extensive training designed for adults. When she alerted her trainers to her intention of taking this work to kids, she received eager assistance.

Results have been almost unspeakably gratifying. In Hawaii, in Colorado, even in Tanzania in Africa, Lea has seen kids scoff in the beginning and soon beg for more. There were youngsters who wouldn't utter a word but spoke volumes through drawings and paintings. Aimless kids began to design and create meaningful futures. Forlorn folks found leadership within themselves and responded powerfully.

Would you or your place of business love to facilitate such a rich adventure for Sonoma teens? A range of opportunities is available and described at the Web site: www.newleaders.biz.

Corporate sponsors are welcome to support one to four of the four days of the workshop at \$2,500 each. An individual sponsorship is \$500, a Ropes Course sponsorship, just \$50, and in-kind food donations will be gratefully accepted. New Leaders Institute is a 501c3 organization dedicated to making Sonoma County a national model for Youth Leadership.

Leave a message at 707.939.7572 if you have questions. Or query lindalea@newleaders.biz or celestewinders@yahoo.com.

We welcome your feedback. For general feedback or to contact one of our columnists, please visit the Columns page at www.sonomasun.com.

Recently Published:

05/08/2008 - **"Let's love each other and work together"**

05/01/2008 - **Peace and Justice in the Holy Land**

04/24/2008 - **It matters how your money is used when it's not in your hands**

04/17/2008 - **The surprise and delight of serendipity**

04/10/2008 - **Sociology; the study of human behavior**



© 2006 THREE HOUSE MULTIMEDIA

Powered by communityservers.com

[TO TOP OF PAGE](#)