



League of Women Voters Eden Area

V O T E R

Vol. 53 No. 11 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Nov 2010



LEAGUE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Friday, December 10, 2010

5:30 to 7:30 p-m.

Barba Home at 5787 Highwood Road, Castro Valley

There will be good food and good fun and terrific auction items to bid on. PLUS something new we started last year. Bring a wrapped White Elephant gift with a value of approximately \$10 for a fun mystery gift exchange (see last page)

Auction Items Include:

- * Oakland Warrior Box Tickets
- Congressional Holiday Ornaments
- Lunch with local elected officials
- and lots more

Once again we will be collecting gifts and donations for a local organization that helps needy families. This year it is 4 C's.

This non-profit community-based organization does a wonderful job of helping families and children with basic services and needs. Bring unwrapped new clothing for infants to adults, children's toys or gift cards. 4 C's will wrap

the gifts and give the gift cards to deserving families for the holidays.



The cost of the Holiday Party is \$10.00 and check is made out to LWVEA.

Please RSVP by November 30th

Mail your check to: LWVEA Treasurer, P.O. Box 2324, Castro Valley 94546
or call Suzanne Barba at 538-9678 or email to suzbarba@comcast.net

PRESIDENT REPORT by Nancy Van Huffel

This past month has been busy and I think quite productive for the League. We have been involved in two major activities. The first was an Energy Efficiency Fair which was co-sponsored by LWVEA, Alameda County and the City of Hayward. Jennifer Ong, co-chaired this committee. Suzanne Barba and I served on the planning group with representatives from the County and City. The purpose of the Fair was to help individuals learn how to make their home or small business more energy efficient, reduce their utility costs and learn more about visionary clean energy programs and technologies. We recruited 20 plus vendors and had several interesting presentations from PG&E on Smart Meters to Doug Grandt's movie on "The Next Frontier".

Suzanne sent out press releases to the local media, we passed out 500 plus flyers, and information on the Fair was included on many email lists. Unfortunately, despite all this, we had a very small turnout. For those of you reading this article, perhaps you could help me come up with some reasons. Do you think there are too many informational fairs on ways to save energy? Do you think folks believe the whole climate change is a hoax? Or, are folks just too darn busy to attend things like this? Please email me your thoughts:

lwvea@aol.com

And, what an active October this has been for Voter Services. Nine candidate forums and eight Pro and Con presentations were conducted. Many special thanks to the following Leaguers who participated:

*JoAnn Ainsworth, Suzanne Barba,
Liz Bathgate, Evelyn Cormier,
Sue Kleebauer, Sara Lamnin,
Miriam Lens, Jo Loss, Marian Handa, Gail
Lundholm, Dorothy Partridge,
Julie Quayle, Jewell Spalding,
Cossette Sun and I.*

It would be impossible to provide these services without these very dedicated volunteers. Kudos to ALL!

BOARD BRIEFS October 20, 2010

- **Financial Audit** - The financial audit for July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 was submitted and accepted by the Board. All findings were in order and no recommendations for changing the accounting process were made in the report.
- **Membership Report** - Approximately 30 people have not renewed yet and Board members volunteered to call with another reminder. We have been notified that nationally recruited member information will not be forwarded to local leagues after January 2011. The Board approved contacting the nine nationally recruited members now on our roster to ask them to renew with our local League instead of renewing with LWVUS.
- **Eden Area Energy Efficiency Fair** – The board approved an expenditure of \$500 to pay for a portion of the contract to rent the Hayward City Hall facilities and the paper and printing of programs and handout material for the event.
- **Pro & Con on State Props Video** – The videotape which the LWVEA filmed with the help of the City of Hayward technicians has been shown at eight events and has gotten good reviews. The use of outside experts to “debate” the three most controversial propositions was effective. We also had help from members of the Berkeley and Fremont Leagues who either moderated or did the pros and cons for the other six propositions.
- **Program Planning** – Program Planning was set for January 22 from 9 to noon. The venue to be determined.

The Board generally meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:45 p.m. at the SLVHA Community Conference Room.

HAYWARD VOLUNTEER BRIGHTSTARS OF THE YEAR



Four local League members were honored by four different organizations at the recent Hayward Volunteers Awards Dinner. From left, **Betty Moose**, Hayward Area Shoreline Planning Agency, Citizens Advisory Committee; **Eleanor Parker**, League of Women Voters Eden Area; **Doris Marciel**, CA Retired Teachers Association, So. Alameda County Division #59; and **Helene Carr**, American Association of University Women. Once again, we congratulate these four outstanding women for the amazing amount of volunteer work they do for their communities.

WELCOME TO NEW and RENEWING MEMBERS

CIMBERLY E. TAMURA from San Leandro is our newest member.

Almost 30 members have not renewed yet. Invoices were sent out in July, reminders sent out in August, notices were featured in monthly issues of the VOTER and calls were made in October. How did we miss you?

What else can we do to have you renew your bargain-rate membership? Our League has the lowest dues anywhere because we have managed our budget very well. We can subsidize dues so the cost will not be a barrier for anyone to join. Please whip out your checkbook now and write a check for \$50 made out to LWVEA and mail to LWVEA Treasurer, P. O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546. Thanks!

REGISTRATION HELP NEEDED

This year new Board member Doris Marciel took over the task of straightening out the League's system of setting up and servicing sites where voter registration forms are made available to the public

Because our League covers Castro Valley, San Leandro, San Lorenzo,

Hayward, Cherryland and Ashland—there are a lot of sites to cover. We put the Registrar of Voters boxes and registration forms in most post offices, libraries, governmental agencies, school districts, senior centers, real estate offices and other sites that get a lot of foot traffic.

To cover this large area, Doris has recruited people to check with these sites monthly during non-election cycles and weekly during election cycles.

Some members who are already helping Doris are: Rene Besold, Suzanne Barba, Miriam Lens, Alison Lewis, Shelia Young, Nancy Van Huffel, Marian Handa, Julie Quayle and Doris Marciel. But more helpers are needed, especially in Hayward. Most sites can be checked with a phone call, but those needing forms need to be visited.

Why is this task important? It is a service to new voters and those who have had a change of address or political party and have to re-register, to have convenient sites where they can pick up registration forms. It saves the Registrar of Voters lots of time and money NOT to have to answer calls from voters looking for these forms. And, our League is paid for providing this service so it is a fundraiser for LWVEA.

UPDATE REPORT: JUVENILE JUSTICE IN ALAMEDA COUNTY – Sept. 2010

Lois Brubeck, League Member, Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission

In 2004, the Huskey Committee finished an exhaustive study of the county's juvenile justice system. Supervisor Gail Steele has hosted a monthly meeting to monitor progress on its recommendations. While there is still much to be done, the county has moved ahead.

The Probation Department funds and relies on ten youth services centers that work with at-risk youth and their families to prevent entry into the juvenile justice system. The centers also provide services when they leave. Under the County's Health Care Services Department, the ICPC (Interagency Children's Policy Council) meets monthly to promote collaboration between health care, social services, schools, law enforcement and Probation in a Delinquency Prevention Network. Now only the more serious offenders are taken into Juvenile Hall to await a court hearing and disposition. There is an assessment tool to help determine which youths should be held.

Though built to serve over 300 youth, the Hall's population has stayed under 250. More first and second time offenders are being released on electronic monitoring or GPS systems to ensure their compliance with terms set by the judge. There is also a Collaborative Court system for low-level offenders who ended up in Probation because of serious mental health needs. Because it entails intensive management of the youth's therapeutic needs, it can only handle sixteen youths at a time at present.



The new Juvenile Hall is a great improvement over the old: so much so, that last June the Prison Law Office announced that it would use Alameda County as a model throughout the state. The courts are on the ground floor. The detention units are above. The new design includes units of 30 beds that enable staff to work more closely with the youth. Staff are trained to be role models and a behavioral health specialist is assigned to each unit.

When admitted to the Hall, all youth are given full assessments for health, emotional, and educational needs. This guides the services they receive during the short time they are in the Hall awaiting court appearance. A new data system is being installed to store all mental health, behavior, and education records for each youth. The record is to be available on a need-to-know basis and should greatly improve the services provided.

Most youth are in the Hall for about 20 days. They are then either returned home or placed in Camp Sweeney or a Probation group home. Offenders are rarely sent to CYA (California Youth Authority). However, there are still major stresses on the Hall. There are an increasing number of violent offenders, who may spend up to six months in the center awaiting transfer to adult court or actually serving time in the Hall. (Like many Halls built around the state in the last five years, it complies with high security standards.)

Unfortunately, budget cuts have meant losing highly successful programs, such as Project Crisis that is run by ex-convicts who make a strong impression on the youth to not follow the path that leads to prison.

Bare bones staff means they have had to reduce visiting hours and keep youths confined more than desired. Cuts in the number of probation officers mean many released youth lack sufficient supervision and recidivate. On average, those in the Hall have had four prior detentions. For many, it is where they feel safe.

There are multiple causes for recidivism. Many of the youth were truants. It could take months before they were re-enrolled or accepted back into a different school. About 35% have IEP's (Individual Education Plans) and many more are well below grade level in reading. A high percentage have mental health problems and many need substance abuse treatment. High Probation Officer loads meant they weren't getting the needed oversight. They were leaving detention without medical insurance and/or medications.

This past year, Probation set up a multi-agency Transition Center to try to deal with this problem--County Mental Health, Behavioral Health, Public Health Nursing, the Alameda County Office of Education and the Oakland Unified School District collaborated in this effort. The Transition Center is dedicated to seeing that youth leave with a needs assessment, education and health records, medical insurance and a connection to community resources.

Youth need a lot of support to deal with family problems, the streets, and peer pressure. The principal of the Hall's school is hoping to find an Oakland location for a transitional school for 45 boys, which would be youth-focused and provide vocational/ internship opportunities. Asked what they want, almost all the youth say "a job."

(Update on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Article to be continued.)

GO GREEN, SAVE MONEY, SAVE THE PLANET



There are lots of things we can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Practicing the 4Rs is one of the lowest-cost alternatives. It's easy to do because 4R programs are in place at home, work and school—REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE & ROT!

You are already doing some of these things, but you can still do more. Here are a few simple things you can do to put the 4Rs into action:

REDUCE your waste. The US goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually⁷. Bring your own bag every time you shop.

REUSE products instead of throwing them away. Donate items to thrift or charity stores. Check out Freecycle.org or have a garage sale.

RECYCLE in every room in the house. Don't forget to recycle your newspaper, magazines, catalogs, junk mail and even your cereal and tissue boxes.

ROT food scraps. Each household in Alameda County generates 12 pounds of food scraps each week—that's 624 pounds a year! Put food scraps into the green waste can or get a compost bin for your backyard at a discount price from StopWaste.org.

With our continued efforts using the 4Rs, we can all make a difference to reduce the waste that goes into our landfills, conserve natural resources, reduce air and water pollution, protect habitat, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Proposal would restore state funding for child care

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times - October 19, 2010 (Excerpt)

Upset that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed \$256 million in child-care money for the poor, State Assembly leader John Perez announced a proposal Monday to go around the governor and restore funding until a new chief executive takes office in January.

The program pays child-care costs for working parents who take jobs to move off welfare but can't afford day care. The governor's action means childcare for 60,000 families will end Nov. 1 unless a stopgap measure is found. It would cost \$60 million to extend the program through Jan. 1, after which the new Legislature could try to pass a measure to restore full funding, according to Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez.

In the meantime, Pérez said he will contribute \$6 million from the Assembly's own operating budget — a highly unusual move — and he hopes the rest will come from groups including First 5 California, a state preschool program funded by a cigarette tax that voters approved in 1998.

"I think the worst thing we could do would be to ask people living on the margin who need this child care to wait until January to figure out how to take care of their families," Pérez said.

First 5 Commissioner Conway Collis said he supports the idea of his panel putting up a substantial part of the funding and is calling for an emergency commission meeting to determine how much it can provide. "I was stunned by this cut," said Collis--it will affect 11,700 families in LA. Here we have families who are working their way off welfare and now we're putting them in a position of staying

employed without safe, quality child care or leaving their job and going back on the welfare rolls," Collis added.

Though it remains to be seen whether the panel will approve funding, it has reserves. Last year, the group provided \$81 million to prevent cuts in a state program providing health insurance to children. The state First 5 commission and its branches in California's 58 counties receive about \$480 million annually from the 50-cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes.

The Assembly's \$6-million contribution would keep the program going for about a week. A representative of the governor said he recognizes that the veto will negatively affect many people but added the Legislature did not take the action needed to put the state's finances in order, including a sufficient emergency fund allocation.

(The State League has a position on Child Care adopted 1989 – "Support state and local policies, legislation and programs which meet the need for accessible, affordable, and quality child care.)

HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM

Confused about how the new health reform law really works? This short, animated movie explains the problems with the current health system, the changes that are happening now, and the big changes coming in 2014.

Produced by the Kaiser Permanente Foundation. It is narrated by Cokie Roberts, a news commentator for ABV News and a member of the Kaiser's Board of Trustees. Click on the link below.

<http://healthreform.kff.org/the-animation.aspx>

DISCLOSE Act Rejected

Despite LWVUS efforts, especially the hard work by the LWVs of Massachusetts and Maine, the DISCLOSE Act failed by a 59-39 vote in October. Here is the League's statement. The League worked hard lobbying Senators to support the Act, which would have partially restored transparency to U.S. elections by requiring disclosure of corporate and union spending in candidate elections. The League also sent a letter to the full Senate, urging quick action on the bill, and a letter with coalition partners to Senators Snow and Collins of Maine and Brown of Massachusetts, urging them to support the DISCLOSE Act. LWVUS focused on these three Senators, who were crucial votes, but they didn't come through for us. The legislation is expected to be brought to the Senate again in a lame-duck session after the November elections.

BACKGROUND: "We are seeing huge sums of money from secret sources going into campaign advertising, much of it the negative advertising that poisons the airways," said Elisabeth MacNamara, national president of the League of Women Voters. "Millions upon millions upon millions of dollars are being spent secretly in this election and it threatens to drown out the voices of individual voters. Because of changes in the law brought about by recent Supreme Court decisions, there are no disclosure requirements that let the voters know who is paying for the ads," she said. "Voters need to know who is paying – it is a vital part of their decision-making process in deciding whether to believe the ads," she said.

"It's just wrong. Secret campaign cash should have no place in our American democracy," according to MacNamara. "That's why we are calling on media outlets and political candidates to act responsibly. The media should refuse these secretly-funded ads and candidates should repudiate the ads – even if they help the candidate get elected," she said. "Protecting our democracy and the vital role of informed voters is more important than any one election," MacNamara argued.

"We understand that political advertising is very lucrative for media outlets, but we believe the public would be better served in this election season if TV and radio stations

required full disclosure of the funders of campaign advertising – and refused such advertising if the sponsor fails to disclose the major funders," she said. "It's not enough to know that an ad was paid for by 'Moms for Apple Pie,' 'Dads for Cherry Pie,' or some other innocuous sounding name. The voters need to know exactly who gave the big money to such organizations to pay for the advertising," MacNamara said.

"Organization like the national Chamber of Commerce proudly announced their campaign advertising, but then refused to disclose which major corporations are funding the ads. Consumers and voters need to know," MacNamara maintained. "Candidates have to 'stand by their ads.' Big donors should stand up and be counted when they are paying for election advertising."

The League of Women Voters has been calling attention to secret money being spent on political advertising for months, but the U.S. Senate has refused to act to require disclosure, even though the House of Representatives passed a strong disclosure bill which was supported by the League.

Though the Supreme Court recently changed campaign finance law, the Court approved of enhanced disclosure. It said that disclosure is important to "providing the electorate with information." It also supported disclaimer requirements "so that the people will be able to evaluate the arguments to which they are being subjects."

Now we are seeing the largest campaign expenditures in history even as organizations accept hundreds of thousands of dollars from secret sources. Essentially, these organizations are functioning as Political Action Committees but without having to follow the laws requiring disclosure of their donors. It should come as no surprise that they lobbied against the DISCLOSE Act in Congress, which would have stopped manipulation of elections by fly-by-night anonymous hit groups, and prevented the infusion of undercover expenditures.

"These activities are directly detrimental to our democracy. Voters deserve to know who is paying for election advertising. The League of Women Voters calls on all candidates to disavow secret advertising and asks media outlets not to accept ads unless the names of the true major donors are made public," MacNamara said.

League of Women Voters of Eden Area

P. O. Box 2234 – Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510/538-9678

Representing cities of Hayward and San Leandro and unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, and San Lorenzo

IT'S EASY TO JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Just cut out and mail this coupon with your check to:
League of Women Voters of Eden Area
Treasurer, P.O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____


Dues: Regular \$50 Same Household \$25, Student \$20

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of the public in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVEA OFFICERS & CONTACT INFORMATION

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Jennifer Ong –VP Membership – jong69@yahoo.com	Suzanne Barba – VOTER Editor – suzbarba@comcast.net

CALENDAR

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| Nov. 17
5:45 – 7 p.m. | LWVEA Board Meeting | SLZ Conference Room
377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo |
| Dec. 10
5:30 – 8:30 p.m. | LWVEA Holiday Party*  | Barba Home
5787 Highwood Rd, Castro Valley |
| Dec. 15
5:45 – 7 p.m. | LWVEA Board Meeting | SLZ Conference Room
377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo |

***WHAT IS A WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE?** Each person brings a wrapped gift worth approximately \$10 and puts it under the holiday tree. Each person picks a number randomly. That number designates in what order guests can pick a gift brought for the White Elephant Gift Exchange. After selecting the gift, the person then opens it for all to see. The person with the next number may “steal” that gift for his or her self and skip their turn. The next number picks a gift and it continues until all gifts are unwrapped and all “stealing” is done. The only rule is to be creative in selecting a gift to bring to the holiday party

Please visit our website for up-to-date event information— www.lwvea.org