



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 51 No. 3 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* March 2008

WORKSHOP ON SUNSHINE WEEK AND THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Friday, March 14, 2008

Marina Community Center – Titan Auditorium
15301 Wicks Boulevard, San Leandro, CA 577-6080

The League is co-sponsoring this program with the Northern California City Clerks Association as part of National Sunshine Week. Sunshine Week is an initiative about the importance of open government and freedom of information. The program is designed to "spread a little sunshine" in understanding California's Open Government Laws.

**Speaker: Terry Francke,
General Counsel and Founder of California Aware,
an authority on California's open government laws.**

Registration: 8:30 a.m. – Continental Breakfast
Program: 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
"Spread a Little Sunshine" – Understanding California's
Open Government Laws – Terry Francke



--- Cut here and return reservation form with check- ---

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will attend – breakfast, program and lunch** | \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will attend – breakfast and program | \$10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will attend the program only | No charge |

**Buffet – Chicken Breast topped with sautéed artichokes, asparagus, artichoke hearts, salad, bread and beverage.

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ payable to LWVEA and mailed to LWVEA, Marian Handa, VP Program, P. O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546. Questions? Call Marian at 577-3367 or email mhanda@ci.san-leandro.ca.us or suzbarba@comcast.net.

Co-President's Report

The League in 2008 has such a big role to play! Many Leaguers have pitched in to educate voters, discuss issues, and keep our League active. Each contribution makes a difference, and keeps the League strong.

Congratulations to League members who participated in the Immigration Study. We approved the Immigration Consensus results in January, completed an excellent, vigorous Program Planning session in February, and have a great "sunshine" open government program coming on March 14. See information on the front page.

Leaguers who love Voter Service presented "Pros and Cons" subjects to groups requesting our impartial explanation of ballot issues for the February 5 election. This premier League activity always brings compliments from the public.

We need some help on our ongoing project to get voter registration forms to each of the 80 sites we have throughout Hayward, Castro Valley, San Leandro and San Lorenzo. Each site needs to be checked to make sure it has sufficient Voter Affidavit (registration) forms. The next election is June 3, 2008 and voters who have moved, or wish to change political parties need to fill out new forms. If you have the interest and time, please contact Angelina Reyes at Angelina.Reyes@hayward-ca.gov.

Please put our local Annual Meeting on your calendar—June 7, 2008. And please say "yes" to the Nominating Committee when it calls-- many League jobs don't take a lot of time and bring great rewards to the League and to the public. Choose one that suits you. Join us!

Alison S. Lewis, Co-President

Board Briefs – February 12, 2008

- Reviewed a report on the Program Planning meeting held February 9. Fourteen members attended which was an improvement over previous years.
- Discussed the need to have 11 members on the Board of Directors, especially the Secretary position. We now have ten until a new Secretary can be recruited.
- Bylaws will be reviewed and Pat Piras offered to help with this task. Any changes will be brought to the Annual Meeting in June for approval.
- It was noted that a Nominating Committee was not elected at the Annual Meeting which means the board will now have to recruit for one board member and two non-board members to serve.
- Reviewed the treasurer's report and approved the suggestion to pay the LWVUS membership dues from our Ed Fund account. The Treasurer's report was accepted.
- Received a report on membership—two more renewals with 19 still on the delinquent list. However, 12 new members since June.
- Discussed the forum we are co-sponsoring with the City Clerks Association on "sunshine" in government. It will be held March 14 at the Marina Community Center in San Leandro.
- Discussed a plan for making sure our voter registration forms are being distributed to the 80 sites we have and that they are being serviced efficiently. We receive money for this service from the RoV and it is essential that we meet our commitment.
- Next Board meeting is March 9, 2008. All Board meetings are open to the public.

RESULTS OF PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING 2-9-08

Every year, local Leagues meet to review the positions of either LWVUS (national) or LWVC (state) and Bay Area and Local positions. This year, we reviewed LWVUS.

This is an important process because it gives local Leagues a chance to discuss the positions and report back, telling National or State which positions should be reviewed and updated or what new positions should be considered for education or advocacy.

The group reviewed the 30 positions under the general headings of: Representative Government, Natural Resources, International Relations, and Social Policy

The group then picked what they believe should be the highest priorities for the LWVUS to work on in 2007-2008. They are in rank order. Members discussed the fact that many of these issues were already on the “front burner” for the LWVUS and others issues were being supported and lobbied for by other groups.

- Health Care
- Voting Rights
- Electoral College—Selecting President
- Early Intervention for Children at Risk
- Reproductive Choice
- Apportionment
- Education
- Individual Liberties
- Campaign Finance Reform
- Abolish the Death Penalty

There was discussion that the LWVUS should have a separate position on Global Warming and that there were elements of that position in the Energy and Natural Resources positions.

The need for a position on Judicial Reform was also discussed.

No changes were recommended for the LWV Bay Area position and they were

commended for doing a good job.

The local League positions were reviewed and no changes were made

*Suzanne Barba
Chair, Program Planning Meeting*

IMMIGRATION STUDY COMMITTEE COMPLETES TASK

On January 24, 2008, the Immigration Study Committee completed its work on the questions submitted by the LWVUS to help in developing a position on this important issue.

The committee met for over a year and read numerous articles on the issue in preparation for reaching consensus. However, it should be pointed out that our study response forwarded to the LWVUS is one among over 800 sent by local Leagues in the country. An LWVUS committee will compile all this information and present it at the national convention this June for members to vote on. That’s grassroots at its best.

We plan to put our responses to the Immigration Study questions on our website and offer just a “taste” in this VOTER. The questions themselves were published in the January VOTER.

One question asked participants to pick the top three priorities from the seven in question number one which asked: *Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as the following (seven).*

- The committee chose these three:
1. Family Reunification and the Rights of Families to Remain Together.
 2. Humanitarian Crises/Political Persecution
 3. Economic, Business and Service Employment Needs

The committee also felt a national I.D. card was not needed if all the other laws and processes were followed.

If you have any questions, contact Trish Taylor who ably chaired this study committee – Taylorfm@sbcglobal.net

LWVC LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO PUT REDISTRICTING ON THE NOV. 08 BALLOT

The LWVC has joined Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California Common Cause, AARP, Common Cause and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce in launching a campaign to place a redistricting initiative on the November 2008 ballot. The **California Voters FIRST** initiative will reform the process for redrawing district lines for the state Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization following each census.

Our local League has petitions, trainings are being scheduled and we are looking for people who are interested in learning more about how to actively collect signature for this vital issue. Whether you get two or two hundred signatures on a petition—every signature is important.

The **California Voters First** campaign will have a workshop on Saturday, March 1 from 2 to 4 p.m. at 741 Santa Ray Avenue, Oakland. If you plan to attend, RSVP to Joann Fuller (916) 443-1792 or at jfuller@commoncause.org.

A summary of the key points of the ballot measure is on the following page. If you are interested in assisting the League in gathering signatures, contact Suzanne Barba at suzbarba@comcast.net or Linda Craig, LWC Advocacy Director at lcraig@lwvc.org

BALLOT MEASURES WHICH WILL BE ON THE JUNE. 08 BALLOT

The following ballot measures have already qualified to be on the ballot in June. There are others circulating to gather signatures.

Proposition 98 **Government Acquisition, Regulation of Private Property. Constitutional Amendment.**

Bars state and local governments from condemning or damaging private property

for private uses. Prohibits rent control and similar measures. Prohibits deference to government in property rights cases. Defines “just compensation.” Requires an award of attorney’s fees and costs if a property owner obtains a judgment for more than the amount offered by the government. Requires government to offer to original owner of condemned property the right to repurchase property at condemned price when property is put to substantially different use than was publicly stated. Summary of estimate by Legislative Analyst and Director of Finance of fiscal impact on state and local government: Increased costs to many governments due to the measure’s restrictions. The fiscal effect on most governments probably would not be significant.

Initiative Constitutional Amendment

Proposition 99 **Eminent Domain. Acquisition of Owner-Occupied Residence. Constitutional Amendment.**

Bars state and local governments from using eminent domain to acquire an owner-occupied residence, as defined, for conveyance to a private person or business entity. Creates exceptions for public work or improvement, public health and safety protection, and crime prevention. Summary of estimate by Legislative Analyst and Director of Finance of fiscal impact on state and local government: The measure would likely not have a significant fiscal impact on state or local governments.

League of Women Voters Celebrates 88th Birthday

The League of Women Voters celebrated its 88th birthday on February 14, with a renewed commitment to help Americans get involved in their democracy in 2008.

“Today we stand on the shoulders of generations of incredible volunteers who have proudly served the League and made a measurable impact in their communities,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson. “I am bursting with pride as I wish our nearly 150,000 members and supporters a “Happy Birthday!”



Background: What is redistricting?

- Every 10 years, after the census, new boundary lines for Congress and CA Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization districts are drawn. Currently, the CA State Legislature draws those lines. This is a major conflict of interest.

How would California Voters FIRST Act change redistricting?

- **14-Person Citizens Redistricting Commission.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a politically balanced Commission - 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, 4 others. Commissioners would be chosen for their impartiality, skills, and to reflect our State's demographic and geographic diversity.
- **Protecting communities, cities, and counties.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a list of prioritized mapping criteria for the Commission to follow. This would ensure that our Constitution, federal and state laws are followed. California's communities, cities, and counties must be respected.
- **Open and public process.** The Commission would hold hearings to receive public input. The California Voters FIRST Act would end the closed-door political deals by legislators to draw districts that protect themselves.

How would the Commission be formed?

- California registered voters are invited to participate.
- A pool of 60 (20 Ds, 20 Rs, 20 others) is selected based on their skills, ability to be impartial, and diversity by a review panel of state auditors (1D, 1R, 1 other).
- The 4 Legislative Leaders can strike up to 24 people from the pool.
- Out of the remaining pool, 8 Commissioners are randomly picked - 3 Ds, 3 Rs, 2 others.
- The final 6 Commissioners (2 Ds, 2 Rs, 2 others) are chosen by the 8 Commissioners from the remaining pool based on the balance of skills and diversity they would bring.

What Mapping Criteria would the Commission have to follow? In ranked order, the criteria are:

- a. Districts shall comply with the US Constitution, including equal population requirements.
- b. Districts shall comply with the Voting Rights Act.
- c. Districts shall be geographically contiguous.
- d. The geographic integrity of any city, county, or city and county, neighborhoods, or communities of interest shall be respected. Communities of interest shall not be defined as having a relationship with incumbents, candidates, or parties.
- e. To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be compact.
- f. To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be nested.

* *Incumbent residences may not be considered; districts may not be drawn to favor politicians or parties.*

What is the scope of the Citizen's Redistricting Commission?

- The Commission will draw California Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization seats in the next redistricting, 2011 and after each decennial census.
- The State Legislature will draw Congressional seats, following the same mapping criteria and hearing requirements as the Commission.

Please go to www.commoncause.org/cavotersfirst
for more information and to read the full initiative.

ALAMEDA COUNTY COALITION FOR ALTERNATIVE TO THE DEATH PENALTY

The League of Women Voters of Alameda County has joined this coalition, meaning that members of the seven Alameda County Leagues are invited to become activists in the campaign. The Coalition's Action Plan's goal is to "end the use of the death penalty in Alameda County."

Steps in the Action Plan include educating members of participating organizations, outreach to other organizations and educating them, working with media, and political action.

In order to educate participating organizations, we have scheduled an Activist Training Session on Saturday, **June 7 from 10 to 3**, place to be announced. Please mark your calendar now. If you cannot attend this meeting, you may be able to attend a later one which will be scheduled.

The California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice (CCFAJ) is conducting a four-month study of the fair administration of the death penalty in California.

It is holding three public hearings: the first was in January in Sacramento; the second is in February in Los Angeles, and the final one will be the morning of March 28 at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara. Invited witnesses will include representatives of victims' organizations and advocacy groups concerned with the fairness of California's death penalty law.

More information including time, location, and a list of invited witnesses will be available soon. Interested League members should take advantage of this opportunity to get familiar with current statewide issues. We can organize car-pooling.

For more information ask Marion Taylor, LWV Oakland, who is the League's liaison to the coalition: 510-532-5797, mariontaylor@mac.com

ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TEACH LOCAL LEADERS WAYS TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

(Excerpted from article in Daily Review 2-19-08)

Attorney General Jerry Brown will convene voluntary regional schools for California's more than 500 elected county supervisors and city mayors to advocate tough actions such as new transportation impact fees and energy-efficiency as a way to reduce global warming.

"These workshops launch the first statewide movement to reduce the negative impact of local planning decisions on global climate," Brown said in a letter.

Though attendance is not mandatory, Brown has legally leaned on 23 individual local entities for greenhouse gas reduction. In the East Bay, he negotiated an agreement with ConcoPhillips on specific greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

"California must adopt the necessary changes that will encourage economic growth while reducing greenhouse gases," he said.

Brown is sending more than 500 letters to elected leaders in 58 counties and nearly 200 cities, with populations of 50,000 or more. Brown's classes will center on complying with the state's Environmental Quality Act—a highly controversial law known mostly for stalling development.

The state's Global Warming Solutions Act, Assembly Bill 32, requires California to cut greenhouse gas emission to 1990 levels by 2020.

The act requires local agencies to analyze and reduce greenhouse gas emission from projects with significant impact, including regional transportation and development plans.

Local government will make thousands of planning decisions that will have decades-long implications

Among all Bay Area counties, Alameda County was the first to join the official national "cool cities and counties registry."

Steve Geissinger, Medianews Sacramento

MEASURE A OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE UPDATE

As background, In March 2004, Alameda County voters approved Measure A which authorized the County to raise its sales tax by one-half cent in order to “provide for additional financial support for emergency medical, hospital inpatient, outpatient, public health, mental health and substance abuse services to indigent, low-income, and uninsured adults, children, families, seniors and other residents of Alameda County.”

Measure A designates 75% of funds to be allocated to the Alameda County Medical Center. The remaining 25% is allocated by the Board of Supervisors to community-based health care providers.

One of the provisions of Measure A was the establishment of a Citizen Oversight Committee whose role is to annually review Measure A expenditures and report to the Board of Supervisors on the conformity of such expenditures to the purposes set forth in the Measure.

The League of Women Voters has two representatives on this Oversight Committee—Sal Tedesco (LWV Eden Area) and Ken Ballard (LWV Fremont, Union City, Newark). The Oversight Committee meets monthly and is now working on its second annual report and review of fiscal year (FY) 05/06 and 06/07 expenditures.

The Committee’s report is based on a review of self-reported information provided by recipients of Measure A funds. Although Measure A revenue saw some growth in FYs 05/06 and 06/07, Alameda County tried to limit the spending of unanticipated revenue in order to work towards building a substantial reserve for years when the revenue either sees no growth or decreases.

In FY 05/06 Measure A generated \$109,868,830, and in FY 06/07 Measure A generated \$113,837,012. The final report of the Oversight Committee will be available to the public by April or May 2008 after it is submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

PLEASE CONSIDER THIS.....

Our League is only as strong and effective as it can be IF we have the people power to do the many things on our action list. We appreciate your membership dues because that indicates you support the important things we are doing to encourage active participation by the public in all levels of government and to fight for transparency in government.

Here are some examples of how you can help:

VOTER SERVICE -

➤ Using our list, visit a few or many of the 80 sites where we have voter registration forms and make sure the agency or business has enough. Sites include Eden Area libraries, schools, and businesses.

➤ Once that task is done, we need people to restock those forms when the site calls for more forms. Political parties and others have a bad habit of raiding our sites when they need forms instead of going to the Registrar of Voters Office to get the forms as we do.

Call Angie Reyes if you can spare a few hours to help—583-4405.

VOTER SERVICE WITH STUDENTS

➤ We need League members to work with students who have been recruited to “table” at various sites and register voters. Having a League member there “who knows the ropes” would be helpful.

➤ Several years ago we had a successful program where League members went into high schools to educate students on the importance of voting. We would like to reactivate that program. Can you help?

Call Trish Taylor if you are interested in working with students – 886-1711.

There are dozens of other short and long-term tasks where you can help the League. For more information call Alison S. Lewis, 538-3692.

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, Hillcrest Knolls 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 citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVEA Officers

Co-President - Alison S. Lewis (538-3692)

Co-President - Angelina Reyes (792-9545)

1st Vice President, Program – Marian Handa (577-3367)

2nd Vice President, Membership – Jo Murdach (581-6794)

Treasurer - Pat Piras (278-1631)

Secretary - Open

DATE	TIME	CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS
Mar. 12	5 to 6:30 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting, San Lorenzo Village Homes Assoc. Conference Room (Meetings open to the public)
Mar. 14	8:30 to 12:30	Forum on "Spreading the Sunshine" open government and freedom of information (See story on front page.)
May 31	TBA	Bay Area League Convention
June 7	9 a.m. to noon	LWVEA Annual Meeting
June 13-17		LWVUS Convention – Portland, Oregon
Please visit our website for up-to-date event information - www.lwvea.org		