



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 54 No. 1 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Jan 2011

JOIN US

Setting the League's Education & Advocacy Goals for 2011-2012

Saturday, January 22, 2011
9 a.m. to Noon

Eden Medical Center
20410 Lake Chabot Road, Castro Valley • Conf. Room B

WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?

We will review the State League's positions and let them know which to retain or update and which to prioritize for education and advocacy.

WHY IS YOUR PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

We need diverse opinions on what issues we want for emphasis for education and/or advocacy in 2011-2012.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We will discuss important current issues and try to find a position that we can use to support or oppose what is proposed.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IF I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE POSITIONS?

Information on the State and local positions is available now on our website, www.LWVEA.org. We will have copies at the meeting on January 22 and you may request a copy by email by contact suzbarba@comcast.net.

WILL IT BE INTERESTING OR WILL I FALL ASLEEP?

It will be interesting. Setting the League's Education and Advocacy Goals for the future is one of the most important tasks that local League members can do. We will be discussing issues that will impact you and your community.

***The League will provide a continental breakfast.
There is no cost, but an RSVP would be appreciated
so we know how much food and materials are needed.***

Please RSVP to suzbarba@comcast.net or call Suzanne at 538-9678.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

"A report card for good government"

by Nancy Van Huffel

Yes, it is that time of the year when we think about what we have and have not done in the past year. In writing this column today, I have been thinking of how we can all be better Leaguers.

The League believes that . . .

- The responsibility for good government rests on the shoulders of its citizens.
- Empowering new generations of voters will shape better communities.
- Citizenship requires knowledge as well as the ability and will to act.
- Citizen participation in the democratic process builds better government.

We actively . . .

- Empower citizens to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.
- Educate the public on new voting equipment and changes in election law.
- Provide nonpartisan Voter Guides during each election cycle.
- Conduct studies on government, social, and environmental policy.

I believe this past year we have been involved with events and forums that have helped us make progress on many of these activities. This coming year my wish would be to develop a "report card" to identify local government organizations that are outstanding in good government practices and to assist others in improving practices where needed.

My vision would be to recruit some League volunteers to identify the activities of our cities, county, school districts and other elected boards to see how well they are dealing with the public.

If a sufficient number of members are interested in volunteering for this project, I would envision us starting by developing the categories of importance to us (e.g., areas such as transparency, constituent communication, inclusive policy development, and other areas we identify.)

Once we identify the categories, we would then develop the goal for each category, and objective criteria to measure each agency's performance in each category. The end result could be an annual "report card" for the Eden Area...and ultimately Alameda County.

Through this project, we could address our program areas of "empowerment", "education", "system improvement", etc. It could be an ideal way to possibly include some internships for young women in our local area colleges to help develop the project tools. Let me know if you think this a good project for the year and if you might be interested in participating.



WHEN: Week of January 17, 2011

TIME: 11am—till 5pm (with at least 1 evening)

WHY:

Assist with one of LWVEA's major fundraisers by helping us process 1605 ballots for a homeowner association election.

CONTACT:

LWVEA@aol.com or call Nancy 562-4473

BOARD BRIEFS

Dec. 16, 2010

Membership Report – Of our 130 total members, 24 have not renewed. Board members volunteered to call those who have not renewed yet. We recently picked up six new members which is encouraging. Jennifer suggested several other recruitment ideas from the MGIK (Membership Growth is Key) state league program.

Holiday Party Critique – The consensus was that it was successful and our auction brought in \$1200 and 45 people attended.

Letter on Ranked Choice Voting – Approved the draft of the letter to be sent to local newspapers in support of Ranked Choice Voting. The letter will be signed by the LWV Alameda County Council chair representing the seven Leagues in the county.

Cinnamon Girls – Discussed a new pilot project to provide a class on Civic Engagement and the Importance of the Vote, to an organization that is dedicated to empowering young girls 12-17.

Speakers for Upcoming Meetings – Confirmation was received that we will have the Honorable Betty Yee, member of the State Franchise Tax Board as our speaker on March 18 and Senator Mark Leno will be our speaker at the Annual Meeting on June 4.

Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:45 at the San Lorenzo Conference Room.

The Board extends a Happy New Year to all of you and your families. May 2011 bring us peace, improved prosperity, and good health with affordable health care for all!

WELCOME TO NEW LEAGUE MEMBER

STEPHANIE RANEY - As a young child, I was extremely interested in learning the history behind women achieving the right to vote, and their involvement in all levels of government. This interest has never wavered, but has actually grown with time.

Throughout the years I have volunteered my time to local lobbyist/special interest groups that represent individuals within our society that are the most disenfranchised. I want to help provide these individuals with not only a voice, but with an understanding of what civic engagement can do for them. To this end, I attended law school at Santa Clara University focusing on international human rights.

I was able to intern for the National Human Rights Commission of Korea and the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda, where I was able to propose changes to legislation and to rules governing the court. In addition to my interest and involvement in civics, over the years, I have also taken on numerous leadership roles in multiple community organizations. I hope to continue my participation in volunteer work with civics and the community, and to expand my role as a leader in my community.

I decided to join the League of Women Voters for numerous reasons. I want to be part of a prestigious and historic organization that celebrates and continues to fight for a woman's right to vote. I want to help educate and inform the public, so as to encourage them to vote, and become more involved in local government. Additionally, I would like to be associated with, and volunteer my time with, the tremendous and inspirational individuals that make up our local chapter of the League.

HOLIDAY PARTY GREAT SUCCESS

This year's holiday party was a great success with over 40 people in attendance. Among those who attended were: Senator Ellen Corbett, Assembly Member Mary Hayashi and Supervisor Gail Steele. Former Assemblyman Johan Klehs was the auctioneer, cajoling and encouraging people to up their bids.

The auction, which brought in \$1200, included three sets of four tickets each, to a Warriors game in choice seats—contributed by Supervisors Gail Steele, Alice Lai-Bitker, and Nate Miley. Other highly sought after auction items were a Congressional ornament contributed by Congressman Pete Stark and two books on the history of African Americans in the Congress donated by Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

There were many "Have Lunch with Your Favorite Elected Official" certificates bid on, as well as a ride on a fire engine in a parade and San Francisco cruises and paintings. The mystery gift exchange provided a lot of fun and gift stealing.

Thanks go to Helene Carr, Suzanne Barba, Nancy Van Huffel, Jennifer Ong, Shelia Young and Rene Besold for putting this holiday treat together.

IN MEMORIUM

Jessie Lou Rogers passed away on December 14, 2010. She had been a League member for over 40 years. She was well known for her kindness, compassion, hard work and keen wit.

Her long-time friend Eleanor Parker submitted this story: *"Jessie always had two adorable Dachshunds who would give me a yapping welcome. One day I arrived and was greeted by only one dog. 'Where's his pal,' I asked Jessie. She sighed and said that her dog had died. Then she smiled shyly and said that the dog always patrolled the fence line between her home and the*

neighbor's, barking furiously at the neighbor's dog. Jessie, smiling in remembrance of her sweet pet, said that she had her dog cremated and sprinkled her ashes along the fence line."

Other friends related stories about how she was an outstanding nursery school teacher and how their kids attended that school and enjoyed being in her class.

After she retired, she took on the job of collating, labeling, stamping and mailing the League's newsletter. She used students from a special education class to help with the task, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Jessie graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Journalism. After she married, she was the director and teacher at the Fairview Hills Nursery School in Hayward. She was a pioneer in the Headstart Program and devoted to Early Childhood Education, Equal Rights and was an advocate for peace.

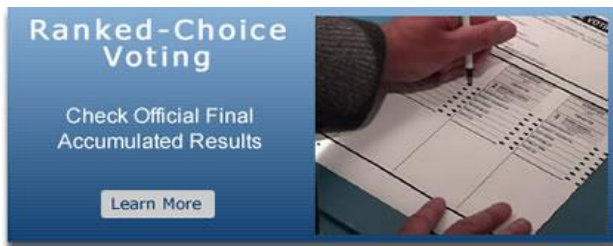
SAVE THE DATE!

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY -

Saturday Jan 29, 2011, 9 am – 2:10 pm
MetroCenter, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland,

League of Women Voters Bay Area presents *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Taking it to the Next Level* featuring a keynote address by Dan Reicher, Director of Energy and Climate Initiatives at Google. There will be three panels of regional and state experts on what government is doing, what science is doing and what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint and *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*.

Cost: In advance: \$30 (\$20 without lunch); at the door \$35 (\$25 without lunch). To register please write a check payable to "LWVBA" and mail with your name and any guest names to LWVBA, 1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612. Registration is also available online through January 20 via PayPal at www.lwvbayarea.org. For more details, call (510) 839-1608 or send an email to editor@bayareamonitor.org.



RANKED CHOICE VOTING

(The following is a letter sent to the local media in support of the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in the recent election. RCV was used in San Leandro, Berkeley and Oakland. This letter was written in response to the anti-RCV campaign led by one of the unsuccessful candidates in San Leandro.)

Letter to the Editor:

When Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) was first introduced, I was skeptical but kept an open mind. It was clear that it would likely save public money by reducing the cost of elections. I was not certain it would reflect the actual will of the voters.

Since the November general election, a lot of pro and con information about Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been flooding cyberspace and newspapers. Much of this information seems to have come from candidates who lost in RCV elections

The League of Women Voters is as interested as anyone else in proving or disproving the value and benefit of RCV. First and foremost on our primary list of evaluative criteria is—Did it benefit the voters? Based on that litmus test, here is what we know to date:

- In the case of the San Leandro election for Mayor and City Council, the Registrar of Voters indicated that 99.8 percent of voters cast a valid RCV ballot.
- Eleven percent more San Leandro voters participated in this year's mayoral election than the November 2006 election.
- Of the 22,484 who voted in San Leandro's mayoral race, only 55 individuals cast an invalid ballot.

- The Registrar of Voters provided RCV voter education materials at candidate forums and for many organizations upon request before the elections.
- The Registrar of Voters provided a poll worker in every polling place dedicated to providing voters information on RCV if the voters had questions.
- RCV boosts electoral competition, because candidates have to raise money for only one election per cycle, not two.
- Ranked choice voting gives voters more choices. There are not just two viable candidates to choose from; it gives minority party candidates a chance to compete helping to break the lock of the two-party system.

It appears that by eliminating the need for a low-turnout first round election, RCV allowed many more San Leandro voters to participate in the process of selecting a mayor from the full-range of available candidates. In addition to encouraging more San Leandrans to vote, implementing the RCV system will save taxpayer money in the future by eliminating the need for a primary and then a general election if no candidate obtains a majority vote in the primary.

Although Mayor Tony Santos, who lost the mayoral race to Steven Cassidy by only 232 votes, is now an opponent of RCV, he once was one of its staunchest supporters. He was a strong supporter because he thought it would benefit voters. The League of Women Voters believes it does benefit voters. We appreciate his past efforts to encourage San Leandro to implement RCV and believe that RCV should be part of his long and dedicated legacy in San Leandro.

Syeda Inamdar, Chair
LWV Alameda County Council

**HEALTH CARE BLOG
BY LWVUS PRESIDENT
ELIZABETH MACNAMARA**



Nearly one year ago, on Christmas Eve, health care reform overcame Senate roadblocks and headed toward final enactment by the Congress, with the President's signature coming in March.

This week, one of the many legal challenges to this new law was successful, with a federal district court judge in Virginia ruling that the individual mandate is unconstitutional. But, importantly, he didn't block implementation of the other provisions of the Affordable Care Act. And other attempts to block the law have failed thus far.

The important legal case, however, will be the one that reaches the U.S. Supreme Court. Many observers see Justice Kennedy as the swing vote on an evenly divided court who will ultimately say yea or nay to the new law. To overturn the law, decades of constitutional interpretation would have to be thrown out the window. By every established measure the Affordable Care Act is constitutional.

This article by HHS Secretary Sebelius and Attorney General Holder explains in clear terms why the individual mandate in the new legislation is so important – and why it's constitutional. One of the reasons the article is worth looking at is that there will be attempts in the next Congress to overturn the law. The League and others who believe that health care is a basic necessity will need to be on our toes for the upcoming fights, not only in the courts, but in Congress

and in the states. As you know, key elements of the legislation depend on state implementation.

For those of us who support Medicare for All, playing defense on health care isn't our first choice. But it's clear after the last election that we're going to need to protect the new Affordable Care Act in many forums before our nation will be ready to take the next step. The League's work will be needed now more than ever.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT LOCAL
TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

Please join the new Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC), in partnership with its Citizen Advisory Committee and sponsoring agencies at a CENTRAL County Transportation Forum (i.e., Hayward, San Leandro) on major transportation projects that will be implemented within the next five years.

**Thursday, JANUARY 20, 2011
6:30pm - 8:30pm
LOCATION: Hayward City Hall
777 B Street, Hayward, CA
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**

Projects are funded through your local sales tax dollars, state, federal, and other funds. Come hear about and discuss project details, schedules, and contracting opportunities.

FORUM PRESENTATIONS:

Alameda CTC and
Local Transportation Plans
East Bay Greenway
I-880 Corridor Improvements
Route 238 Improvements
Lewelling / East Lewelling Project
Senior Travel Training

For information about the Alameda CTC, please visit www.alamedactc.com.

Alameda County May Set New Campaign Spending Limits

By Chris Metinko Oakland Tribune
11/14/2010

(The following is excerpted from the article because campaign finance reform is supported by the League at all levels—national, state and local.)

After record-setting campaign fundraising in the race for a supervisor's seat this fall, the Alameda County board of supervisors is looking at rules regulating the way candidates for county offices raise money.

Supervisor Scott Haggerty has proposed a campaign finance reform ordinance that would limit to \$20,000 how much a candidate can receive from a person or political committee per election.

The ordinance already has been approved by the board, but a second reading is needed to officially pass.

In his letter to the board, Haggerty said the purpose of the ordinance was to "level the playing field for elected officials" in the county. He added that the ordinance "attempts to prevent a person or entity from having undue influence in a county election."

The ordinance also forbids candidates from setting up more than one campaign committee for a county election, and also outlines punishment for giving or accepting illegal contributions -- including forfeiting the right to run for a county office for four years.

City/ County Websites

Unincorporated Area:

<http://www.acgov.org/uninc>

City of Hayward:

<http://www.ci.hayward.ca.us>

City of San Leandro:

<http://www.sanleandro.org>

CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE

"Climate change is happening now and it's happening in our own backyards and it affects the kinds of things people care about." Jane Lubchenco, NOAA Administrator.

THE IMPACTS ARE HERE AND NOW The United States Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) found that climate change impacts are already under way in the U.S., including increases in heavy downpours and snowfall, rising temperatures, more frequent heat waves, rapidly retreating glaciers, thawing permafrost, and changes in river flows. The USGCRP concluded that these changes—which are already affecting water, energy, transportation, agriculture, ecosystems, and health in the U.S.—will likely grow under projected climate change.

Without taking action now to begin reducing our emissions, coastal areas will be at increased risk from sea level rise and more intense storms; southern states will be at risk from increased droughts, floods and heat waves; midwestern states will face more extreme flooding and more frequent and severe heat waves; and western states will face increased droughts, invasive species, and wildfires. Although the precise future impacts are uncertain, the risks are clear and justify serious action to reduce emissions as soon as possible. PEW Center Report "The Case for Action—*Creating a Clean Energy Future*.

Alameda Co. CDA has completed a draft Community Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from activities within the community. Many of the measures in the plan may have positive benefits for the local community such as improved air quality, reduced energy bills and traffic congestion, as well as global environmental benefits. To view the draft plan, go to alamedacountyclimateaction@yahoo.com.



BE A PART of HISTORIC REFORM

After years of struggle, historic redistricting reform is becoming a reality. Fourteen members of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission have been chosen. All of the meetings are public, streamed live on the Internet and posted soon after the meetings in video archives. For the latest redistricting information and links go to CAvotes.org.

LWVC invites you to join the Observer Corps and Media Watch teams to help make this goal a reality. It's easy. Just sign up for the Observer and Media Watch Report Webinar training that will be held on January 12, 2011. The League's Observer Corps and Media Watch project is monitoring the process of the commission selection and will continue reporting on the commission's work during the mapping process in 2011. We are also monitoring the press coverage of this major government reform throughout the state. To register for free online training email lwvea@aol.com If you have any questions: redistricting@lwvc.org

Once the maps are drawn, we'll issue a report card to California voters on how the process worked. After you've taken the simple training, you can attend a public hearing in your region, or watch the hearings live via the Internet or on delayed broadcast video, and then file a report on CAvotes.org. Or keep an eye on the media coverage of the ongoing commission work and file a report on CAvotes.org.

If your League is jumping into the exciting world of local redistricting, you will certainly want to take the training and use

it to monitor the redistricting process in your community. This is a great way for members to get involved in a project that doesn't demand a large time commitment and will make a real difference to California's future.

LWVUS STUDY OF FEDERAL ROLE IN PRE-K THROUGH GRADE 12 PUBLIC EDUCATION

The study of the federal role in Pre-K through Grade 12 public education is to be limited to issues of equity, funding and standards/assessment. By Spring 2011, information will be provided to Local and State Leagues. In the Fall 2011, Leagues are encouraged to participate in the study by scheduling meetings to educate members and communities about the issue and come to consensus. Across the country, many others have asked to be involved and LWVUS encourages everyone interested to send them information and documents that will help with the study.

The LWVUS committee will begin with an overview of the history of the federal role and where it is today. They will then focus on the components of the elementary and Secondary Education Act which speak to the equity issues. Finally, the committee will address the Common Core Standards and the subsequent assessment issues. For further info, email Peggy Hill, co-chair at hillp@uhcl.edu to submit information on education and to get on the education list serve.

LEAGUE WEBSITES

Eden Area: www.lwvea.org

Bay Area: www.lwvba-ca.org

State League: www.lwvc.org

National: www.lwv.org

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 the public in
government and influences public
policy through education and advocacy.*

CALENDAR

DATE & TIME	EVENT	PLACE
Jan.. 3 – 5:30 p.m.	Meeting to plan Program Planning for Jan. 22	San Lorenzo Conf. Room
Jan. 19 – 5:30 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting	San Lorenzo Conf. Room
Jan. 20 – 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	Transportation Presentation Local Projects	Hayward City Hall
Jan. 22 – 9 to Noon	Program Planning Mtg	Eden Medical Center, Castro Valley
Jan. 29 – 9 to 2:10 p.m.	LWV Bay Area Day Reduce, Reuse, Recycle	Metro Center, Oakland
Feb. 17 – 5:30 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting	San Lorenzo Conf. Room

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