



League of Women Voters Eden Area

# VOTER

Vol. 53 No. 12 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Dec 2010



WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE  
LEAGUE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Friday, December 10, 2010  
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.



Barba Home at 5787 Highwood Road, Castro Valley

Remember to bring your mystery gift for the White Elephant Gift Exchange

You may also bring an unwrapped toy, clothing or gift card for needy families through 4 C's (Community Child Care Council) of Hayward.

The cost is \$10. RSVP to [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net) or 510-538-9678

## SAVE THE DATE

*ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING TO SET PRIORITIES FOR  
THE STATE LEAGUE AND OUR LOCAL LEAGUE*

**January 22, 2011 • 9 A.M. to Noon**

As a valued member of this grassroots organization, you have the opportunity and the responsibility to indicate the issues on which you believe the state League and our local League should focus their time, talent, money and reputation

We will review the League positions and choose which ones we want to focus on for educating the public or for advocacy. Will it be: Campaign Finance Reform, State and Local Finances, Air Quality, Healthcare, Education, Transportation, Water, Childcare, Community College System, Juvenile Justice, or Mental Health?

**SAVE THE DATE AND PLAN TO TAKE PART IN THIS IMPORTANT MEETING WHERE YOU GET TO CHOOSE WHAT THE LEAGUE DOES.**

Watch for more information in the January VOTER.

**Questions?** Contact Suzanne Barba, [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net) or 538-9678

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

*By Nancy Van Huffel*

As Administrator of the San Lorenzo Village Homes Association for the past 22 years, I have had the opportunity to work closely with our two retiring Alameda County Supervisors, Gail Steele and Alice Lai-Bitker. Their bios follow, but I also wanted to make some personal comments.

Gail has been a County Supervisor for 18½ years and represented the San Lorenzo area when first elected prior to the last change in District boundaries. She did much to connect the Board of Supervisors to our community with a sense of transparency and a willingness to listen to our issues and concerns, including bringing transparency to the County budget process. She started the County Budget Committee and appointed me as the representative for the unincorporated area (a committee on which I continue to serve). And to further encourage representation for our area, she started the Unincorporated Services Committee. This is the only Board of Supervisors Committee that meets outside of Oakland.

The one thing I will remember most about Gail is that she was elected several times and rarely accepted money from any group or organization. She is living evidence that campaign finance reform works: she was continually re-elected by her constituents because of all her hard work and devotion, not campaign contributions or negative campaign tactics.

I have known Alice for the past ten years, and she has proven to be a dedicated representative for San Lorenzo. One of the biggest battles I remember was when San Lorenzo was attempting to get a library grant from the State. It first had to be approved by the Board of Supervisors, and that was just about the time the State was taking funds away from the County. Needless to say some Board members were totally opposed to approving any County funds for a library in San Lorenzo, but Alice fought very hard, along with Gail, in an attempt to submit the application. Of course democracy dictates that the majority wins, so it was defeated with a 3-2 vote.

Alice has initiated and staffed many committees in our area. She is the very first Supervisor who had her office in the San Lorenzo area. She truly cares about improving the quality of life for our residents.

I am very lucky to have known and worked with both of these exceptional women. Both have been sterling examples of ethical, dedicated elected officials, who represented our County with style and commitment. I will truly miss them.

## **BOARD BRIEFS – November 17, 2010**

- Membership - It was reported that there are still 25 members who have not renewed. Board members were asked to contact those who they know and call to remind them to renew.
- Energy Fair Critique - Although there was a low turnout for the Fair, the exhibitors appreciated the fact that those who did attend were really interested and there will be some follow up on their part. It was agreed that the Farmer's Market going on at the same time across the street did not bring people to the Fair as hoped. League people who participated, praised the staff at the City of Hayward for the tremendous help they provided.
- Program Planning - A committee was established to do the planning for PP that will be held on January 22 from 9 to noon. The committee members are Rene Besold, Helene Carr, Jewell Spalding, Linda Slater and Suzanne Barba who will chair.
- Holiday Party – It was agreed that the League would provide all the food for the event. The board reviewed the list of auction items which consists of Warrior tickets, lunches with elected officials, a golf game, gift baskets, Blue & Gold Cruise tickets for 4 and Congressional tree ornaments.
- Homeowner Association Election – The League has been contacted by the Palomares Homes Association to conduct their Board elections next year. The Board agreed that we should contract with them.

*All LWVEA Board meetings are open to the public and are usually on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in San Lorenzo.*

## Supervisor Gail Steele



Gail Steele was re-elected to the Board of Supervisors to represent District 2, in June 2006. District 2 includes Hayward, Newark, Union City, portions of Fremont and Sunol. She was first elected in 1992 and has been President of the Board of Supervisors in January, 1995, 1997, 2003 and 2005.

Some of the goals and accomplishments she is most proud of is the progress Alameda County has made in improving services to children and their families. She has dedicated herself to streamline services for children, and coordinating with schools and non-profits in serving youth at risk.

She also serves or has served on many Board committees including: Alameda County Mental Health Advisory Board, Children's Advocacy Committee, Alameda Alliance for Health, Alameda County Children's Memorial Grove and Flag Committee, Interagency Children's Policy Council, Founder of OUR KIDS, a collaborative project to help kids at risk in the Oakland/Hayward schools, ACTA (Alameda County Transportation Authority), and EBRPD (East Bay Regional Parks District)—to name a few.

Her community involvement includes: Eden Youth & Family Center Board of Directors, Vice President, 2008-Present Hayward Volunteer Recognition Dinner Committee, Co-Chair. She has donated \$100,000 for scholarships for foster care children and is on the St. Rose Foundation Board of Directors.

*The retirement event for Supervisor Steele will be December 3 at the Hayward City Hall from 5:30 to 8:30. The cost is \$40 and the contact person is Alison Lewis at 272-6692 or 538-9422*

## Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker



Alice Lai-Bitker was re-elected to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to represent District 3 in June 2006. The District includes San Leandro, Alameda, San Lorenzo, Ashland, Hillcrest Knolls and the Fruitvale, San Antonio, Chinatown portions of Chinatown portions of Oakland. In January 2009, she was selected to serve as President of the Board for 2009-2010.

During her tenure as Supervisor, Alice has been a strong advocate for increasing health care for children spearheading the No Wrong Door policy in Social Services that allows services to be given quickly and efficiently. Her work on domestic violence includes A Day of Remembrance, honoring victims of domestic violence, and assisting in getting federal funds for a Family Justice Center to streamline services to families suffering with domestic violence.

Alice was unanimously appointed to the Board in 2000 and elected in 2002. Prior to serving on the Board, she served as a staff assistant to Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan from 1995 to 2000. In that capacity, Alice was instrumental in shaping the county's policies and programs related to social services and health care, particularly mental health, child welfare, and welfare reform.

Board of Supervisor's Committees include the Health Committee (Chair), Social Services Committee and Unincorporated Services Committee (Chair).

*The retirement event for Supervisor Lai-Bitker will be December 16 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Rock Wall Wine Company, 2301 Monarch Street, Alameda. The cost is \$35 and the contact is at 263-9399*

## REPORT ON GENDER and RACIAL EQUITY by Dr. Jennifer Ong

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, as the Chair of the Alameda County Commission on the Status of Women's Gender and Racial Equity Committee (GREC), I had the privilege of presenting the resolution to adopt the principles of CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) in Alameda County.



It is with much pleasure that I am reporting the unanimous vote from the Board of Supervisors for the adoption of the CEDAW resolution in Alameda County.

This has been a culmination of the incremental collaborative work of our GREC Committee led by its past chair, Commissioner Desrie Campbell effectively assisted by our Executive Director Ms. Lorraine Provost. Several other women's groups and the Human Relations Commission have also been instrumental in showing the need to adopt the principles of CEDAW in Alameda County. Mr. Ruben Briones from Supervisor Lai-Bitker's office has also been very patient with his assistance during the process.

For reference, CEDAW, is an international agreement affirming the fundamental human rights and equality of women around the world. This is a United Nations treaty that provides a practical blueprint to achieve progress for women and girls. Without imposing changes in existing laws, CEDAW:

- 1) strengthens the United States as a global leader in standing up for women and girls in countries around the world
- 2) CEDAW empowers women as a proven effective path for alleviating poverty

The United States helped draft CEDAW during its adoption in 1979 but to this day CEDAW has been favorably voted out of the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee twice in 1994 and 2002. We are one of seven countries (including Iran, Sudan and Somalia and three small Pacific Island nations) that have not ratified CEDAW--186 countries out of 193 have ratified CEDAW. The current administration has included CEDAW as one of five multilateral treaties it has identified as a priority.

Alameda County today through its adoption of the principles of CEDAW sends a clear message to policymakers in Washington. We recognize the importance of having a clear direction through CEDAW. More work needs to be done in closing the pay gap, reducing domestic violence and stopping human trafficking. Our GREC Committee will continue its work in studying the needs within our county, prioritizing our actions and making the proper recommendations while utilizing the 30 articles within CEDAW as our guide towards these goals.

CEDAW creates the blueprint that makes government accountable by meeting benchmarks of success. Alameda County joins San Francisco in signaling to our policymakers that on a local level, we are able to follow the principles of CEDAW and look to the nation to truly stand up as a global leader in advocating for ALL women and girls.

### **DISCLOSE Act Coalition Press Event Nov. 18, 2010--Excerpt of Remarks by LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara**

I stand here today representing a nonpartisan organization of citizen activists and volunteers from communities across the country. In its 90-year history, the League has always fought for a government that is open and transparent and that works on behalf of all Americans.

We support passage of the DISCLOSE act because secret spending in elections undermines the basic pillars of our democracy. Secret cash has no place in America's electoral process.

Fair and clean elections, determined by the votes of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy. Enhanced disclosure is the most basic step toward protecting the role of voters and ensuring that they can make informed decisions.

Voters deserve to know the sources of funding for election advertising. They should be told if it is a corporation, union, trade association, or nonprofit advocacy group making unlimited political expenditures and influencing elections.

In its ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the Supreme Court opened the floodgates for big-money special interests in our elections, but the court also made clear that disclosure of this spending could be required by congress.

Disclosure will require CEOs to stand by their ads, and expose special interest groups behind last-minute attacks. It stops manipulation of elections by fly-by-night hit groups, and prevents special interests from pumping secret money into our elections.

How can individual voters compete with organizations that not only have vested interests in Washington, but millions of dollars to spend in secret to make sure those interests are protected? They can't, and disclosure is the best voter protection plan we can offer right now.

We can and must preserve the integrity of our electoral process by increasing transparency and letting the sunlight shine in. Disclosure is the key to allowing voters to make their own decisions and this bill accomplishes that fundamental purpose.

This is not only common sense – it is crucial if voters are to remain the cornerstone of our democracy. In the recent elections, we were all overwhelmed by millions of dollars in negative ads, but didn't know who paid for many of them. The voters lose out when they can't find out if their elected officials are in Washington to serve the public interest or the special interests.

Secrecy also exposes our elected officials to corruption and extortion. Here's how it works. A lobbyist visits a member of congress and says, 'If you don't do what I ask, we'll spend a million dollars in secret to knock you off in the next election.' What is a member of congress to do? How are the voters served by such a corrupt system? They aren't.

We say once again that sunlight is the best disinfectant. The League will continue to fight for enhanced disclosure because our democracy belongs to all voters.

The League and citizens across the country ask our elected leaders to take action now to protect future elections by passing the DISCLOSE act.

## MEET THE NEW ACTC

Please join the new Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), 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, Hayward City Hall  
777 B Street • Hayward**

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:

ACTC 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 ACTC, please visit [www.alamedactc.com](http://www.alamedactc.com)

## UPDATE REPORT: JUVENILE JUSTICE IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

(Part 2. First part printed in the Nov. VOTER)  
*Lois Brubeck, League Member, Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission.*

Camp Sweeney has been operating this past year under its 105 capacity, (partly due to increased use of electronic monitoring). The boys are assigned there by the court for six months. Having been found seismically unsafe, a new Camp will be constructed in the same area in San Leandro. The state is providing \$35 million and the County is to come up with an additional \$10 million. The new 150-bed facility will be divided into five pods.

With counties now having to house some of the youth who were transferred by the state (which now will keep only the most violent offenders), the Camp will provide secure units for the more difficult youth and a special unit dedicated to girls. Almost all these girls were sexually abused as small children. Many now, down to the age of 13, are being sexually exploited and need to be out of reach of their pimps and convinced that it is hazardous to be free on the streets. There has been no way to keep these girls in foster or group homes--they simply run; and there were no facilities in county suitable to keep them off the streets. They therefore, kept returning to the Juvenile Justice Center, where they now comprise 15% of the population. The hope is that the new secure Camp can prevent their being sent to placements out of county.

Judge Gail Bereola, who was presiding judge for several years, dedicated herself to combating truancy, support positive programs for the youth and incorporating restorative justice into the system. She opened a pilot truancy court at Oakland's Claremont Middle School. A group of youth from the maximum-security unit just "graduated" from the first victim offender program on February 5. Judge Trina Thompson, who replaced her in January 2010, seems determined to continue in this path. She is highly energetic, taking every opportunity to meet with professional and community groups, going to the schools, to group homes, calling for mentors, advocating for the youth.

The county's Juvenile Justice/ Delinquency

Prevention Commission meets with the Probation Chief, the Presiding judge of the Juvenile Court and the Director of Children's Protective Services on the second Wednesday of each month at noon in the Juvenile Justice Center. We convinced Oakland PD to reinstate its youth desk. Police officers had simply let youth offenders go with no referrals to services or deposited them at Juvenile Hall where detention was not warranted. These youth were often returned home without any useful follow-up. Now with the help of a Probation officer, Oakland police refer these youth to services, or sends them to McCollum Youth Court.

Literacy is always a concern. We lobbied for funding a fulltime Librarian in the Hall. She has been wonderfully successfully at getting kids to read; she brought in authors who inspired the youth, and was given a national award for her work. We have been intent on full intake assessments, early case planning and transition services to see that children have the essential support to avoid recidivating.

We have followed the county's work on disproportionate minority representation which affects youth from their first encounter with police through detainment and eventual incarceration. We are also promoting models of restorative justice. By law, the Commission must do annual inspections of the Center, the Camp and police stations where youth are detained, but some commissioners also spend many hours at the Center or Camp, visiting with the youth, getting to know the staff, observing the workings of the institutions.

At the urging of a former judge, we began inspecting group homes where both probation and foster youth are housed, to check on the quality of care and the preparation of older youth for transitioning out of the system. For foster youth, stability is a major problem. They often move from placement to placement. And many end up as delinquents and in Probation group homes.

The work is on going. As the League has long recognized, the earlier the intervention, the better. We know the human and economic costs of letting children and families fail. The more aware we are of the resources available or needed in our communities, the better. We must provide voices for these youth.

## State Childcare Funding Cuts Delayed Until 2011

Thousands of low-income families that rely on state childcare assistance can continue to receive the subsidy through the rest of the year. A court settlement reached recently delays cuts to the CalWORKs program that were scheduled to go into effect on Nov 1. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger used his line-item veto power in October to eliminate funding for the program. The move was expected to save the state \$256 million a year.

Families were given a week's notice before the subsidies were set to expire, prompting advocates to file a lawsuit.

Under the terms of the court settlement, the 56,000 children who depend on CalWORKs Stage 3 childcare can remain in the program until Dec. 31 if their parents have not identified alternative child care options.

An Alameda County judge has approved the deal. *Mercury News*

### GO GREEN BRING YOUR OWN BAG



What does your bag say about you?

Make a statement by bringing your own reusable bag every time you go to the store. It's one simple way to go green in your daily life.

Why bringing your own bag makes a difference:

- Each year the U.S. uses 30 billion plastic bags and 10 billion paper grocery bags, requiring cutting down 14 million trees and using 12 million barrels of oil.
- The pulp and paper industry is the second largest industrial user of energy in the U. S.
- Only 1 percent of plastic bags are recycled annually.
- More than 46,000 pieces of plastic contaminate each square mile of our oceans.

Tips to remember to take your bags:

- Keep bags in car or office.
- Hang bags on front of doorknob.
- Make it item #1 on the shopping list.

## Alameda County may set new campaign spending limits

By Chris Metinko Oakland Tribune 11/14/2010  
(Excerpt)

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 of the new law has been pushed back until after the Thanksgiving holiday. The ordinance must receive a second reading at a board meeting to officially pass.

The supervisorial contest became particularly intriguing because of the large amounts of money raised and spent in the race.

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.



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

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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**

<b>Dec. 3 (Fri.)</b> 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Supervisor Steele's Retirement Party	Hayward City Hall
<b>Dec. 4 (Sat.)</b> 9 to noon	LWV Alameda Cty Council	Nate Miley's Conf Rm, CV

<b>Dec. 10 (Fri.)</b> 5:30-7:30 p.m.	<b>LWVEA Holiday Party</b> <b>White Elephant Gift</b>	<b>Barba Home</b> <b>5787 Highwood Rd., CV</b>
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<b>Dec. 15 (Wed)</b> 5:45 – 7 p.m.	<del>WV</del> LWVEA Board Mtg	<del>SLZ</del> Conference Room 377 Paseo Grande, SLZ
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<b>Dec. 16 (Thurg)</b> 5:00 – 7 p.m.	<del>Sup</del> Supervisor Lai-Bitker Retirement Party	Rock Wall Wine Co. Alameda
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<b>Jan. 20, 2011</b>	ACTC Forum	Hayward City Hall
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<b>Jan 29 (Sat)</b>	<del>WV</del> LWV Bay Area Day <del>AA</del>	<del>MM</del> MetroCenter, Oakland
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Please visit our website for up-to-date event information— [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)