



## News From the LWVC Convention

At the convention, LWVC president, Jackie Jacobberger quoted a LWVUS president in the 1950's who said, "The League should turn its attention to areas of public policy in which it can make a unique contribution." She urged delegates to remember as they make choices about program that it is "by focusing our efforts that we will be effective."

## What Will Candidate Forums Look Like in the Future?

State Director Robbie Davis opened what became a very heated discussion on the LWVC Referendum on Candidate Forum Criteria. At issue was this question: Under what circumstances should League use polling criteria (rather than some other criteria or none at all) when admitting candidates to a candidate forum?

A "pro/con" debate brought out the issues: inclusivity, fairness, the value of participation by non-major candidates, too many candidates, too little time for each, the fact that major candidates tend not to participate in less exclusive candidate forums, leading to no forum at all. What to do?

With little time left before the speaker for Q&A from the delegates, many people went to an impromptu lunch meeting and heard a passionate argument on the pros/cons, where argument against using polling as a criterion was strong. As a result, leadership announced that the issue needed more discussion prior to making new League policy on polling criterion. Thus, a non-binding straw vote on the issue was taken. Fifty six percent voted for polling criterion to be used only when four or more candidates are involved, with 38% voting for polling criterion to be used all the time, consistently. The issue will return to Council 2006 for a decision.

## **Save the Date!!**

## **KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON LWVEA's Annual Meeting**

Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup>

9 a.m. to noon

At the Eden Medical Center

With Guest Speaker

## **Loretta Lynch**

Former director of the State Public Utility Commission during the time of the energy crisis.

Will we have blackouts this summer?

Will our PG&E bills be going up?

Has the energy problem been fixed?

## **THREE HOT ISSUES FOR EMPHASIS**

*Redistricting, State and Local Finances and Health Care* were adopted as LWVC's Issues for Education and Advocacy. As such, the LWVC positions will provide the basis for education and action. The education focus will include educating our members, encouraging local Leagues to engage in community education activities, monitoring current proposals, and encouraging public involvement.

Don't be confused. LWVC LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2005, adopted by the LWVC Board of Directors March 2005, are indeed the same. No accident, this indicates the seriousness of League members' commitment to our positions on *Redistricting, State and Local Finances and Health Care*.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am very proud of what our League has accomplished this past year. Our activities have helped us achieve our mission to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. The job has not been easy as we have so many diversified issues with which we are constantly dealing, and with which we must keep current and informed.

Voter service was the major focus of the League's activities this past year. We sponsored and held candidate forums for the San Lorenzo School Board, San Leandro City Council, San Leandro School Board, Castro Valley Sanitary District, AC Transit District, BART, and H.A.R.D. We conducted 20 State and County Pros & Cons presentations. Our fall educational forum was on three of the State propositions. We serviced LWVEA affidavit boxes for voter registration at 75 businesses and agencies in the Eden Area. We distributed 3,500 Pros & Cons, and 1,500 copies of Easy Voter; and we registered several hundred voters at community fairs, churches, schools, and grocery stores. We worked with Chabot College students, and went into 18 classrooms in eight high schools to explain the importance of voting.

We wrote letters, emails, and or attended meetings on the following issues: Proposed housing for Boundary Creek, Governor's State Budget on Education, Library support for Castro Valley, Koi Nation Casino proposal for land purchased from the Oakland Port, CA\$H proposal for Hayward, and support of SB840 for universal health care insurance. We initiated and/or participated in developing and supporting the following countywide issues in collaboration with the six other Alameda County Leagues such as the County Medical Center, Alameda County Board of Education open meetings, and the County Probation Department.

We applied for and received a \$500 mini grant from the State LWV for the two Education Forums we held; updated the Board positions and portfolios; reintroduced "unit" meetings; wrote and distributed a new member orientation handbook; initiated a study to update our local position on incorporation for the unincorporated area; and produced and mailed a monthly copy of the Voter to the membership.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who have helped in various activities to make the League essential. There are so many of you who dedicate your time helping with League activities, and it is YOU that make the organization a success.

*Nancy Van Huffel, President*

### Board Briefs Wednesday May 4, 2005

- Accepted Treasurer's report as corrected
- Suggested that if the dues structure is changed for an individual, Board approval be gained first.
- Approved changes to the Local Positions. Changes to be presented at the Annual Meeting.
- Discussed rationale for the Bylaw amendment to increase the voting percentage needed for Board to take action on issues. At present, 75% is needed to endorse a ballot measure and a majority vote to take action on an issue.
- Reviewed the CA\$H proposal to the Hayward City Council.
- Agreed MEET YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS reception a success, but need to improve sign-in process.
- Assigned jobs in preparation for the ANNUAL MEETING.
- Reported on KOI NATION CASINO in Oakland and letter by LWV ACC to the Bureau of Indian Affairs asking for a more open and public process.
- Reported on BOUNDARY CREEK development: The CV MAC turned it down, the Planning Commission approved it with conditions and it will go to the Board of Supervisors for a final decision some time in June.
- Reported on County Housing Element's ongoing public discussions.
- Next board meeting, Wed., June 1<sup>st</sup>

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## SO MANY OFFICIALS!!

This April, LWVEA used a new format for our *Meet Your Elected Officials* event--a reception. Thirty local elected officials attended the event and each spoke briefly about their accomplishments and plans for the future.



This event provided an opportunity for them to share their ideas with elected officials from other communities. More than 40 community and League members listened and learned and participated in the discourse. Wonderful food and drink facilitated casual networking between speeches, and Assemblymember Johan Klehs gave an informative talk about the state budget.

The League received great feedback from the elected officials, who each received our unique League mug as a keepsake. Thanks to their lively and collaborative spirit, the event was fun, informative and productive for everyone. For the generosity of their time and knowledge, the League is extremely grateful. We are so pleased with the event, we will probably use this format again next year. Don't miss it!

## EVELYN COMIER RECOGNIZED FOR LIFETIME OF VOLUNTEERISM

Evelyn Cormier, a long-time League member and environmentalist, was recognized in a *Daily Review* article for her achievements as a community volunteer, especially in the area of the environment.

Presently she is serving on the League Board in charge of Voter Service. She is also on the Fairway Park Neighborhood Association Board, the Hayward Area Planning Association and is president of the Audubon Society.

Evelyn taught first and second grade at Fremont Elementary School for 31 years and when she retired she needed to fill the void.

"I missed the children terribly," she said, "I felt I would only be happy if I was being useful on a day-to-day basis." And, she has done that.

Evelyn has been a community activist for most of her life. She wishes that more people would get involved in their communities.

"I know people are busier now than they used to be, but they should still do what they can," Evelyn said. "Most people have good hearts but they don't see how they can make a difference."

They can make a difference—just look at what Evelyn has done for her Hayward community and for the environment. One person **can** make a difference. Congratulations Evelyn.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE JULY 1<sup>st</sup>

Although our local league doesn't keep much of the total membership dues, it is the lifeblood of the League because a portion goes to the Bay Area League, the State League and the National League. There are members at every level of League that are working hard to fulfill our worthy mission.

Please re-read the accomplishments of our League in the President's column, and go on line to the League's websites to see how much is accomplished at every level of League. We are an organization that every member can be proud of. We are an organization that depends on the support of all its members.

To join or renew, please use the membership application on the last page of this VOTER.

We want to welcome new members who joined since March: William McCammon, Tom Guarino, Sal and Sylvia Tedesco, Cheryl Miraglia, Lillian Litzsey and Don Wiggins. And a special thanks to our elected officials as new members: Matt Jimenez, Felix Elizalde, Joyce Starosiak, and Louis Andrade.

## UNINCORPORATED AREA STUDY

The Local Study for the Unincorporated Eden Area has adopted interview questions and developed a model that will be used to interview individual public agencies. Dorothy Partridge and Nancy Van Huffel were instrumental in validating that the questions would extract the information needed from each agency to develop our consensus questions for the fall. The model was developed for our study by our interview of Linda Wood and Jean Hofacket.

---Linda Tangren

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM LWVEA Writes to City Council**

May 10, 2005

Dear Mayor Cooper and Members of the  
Hayward City Council,

In June, 2002, we sent you a letter stating that the League of Women Voters is a strong advocate for campaign finance reform. As such, our Board at that time unanimously endorsed the CA\$H Proposal on Campaign Finance Reform.

CA\$H's current proposal was discussed at our League board meeting on May 4. In addition, the national League has a position on campaign finance which includes: "Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process..."

Based on the League's review of the proposal and the strong national League position, we urge the Council to consider and adopt the CA\$H proposals to improve the election process in Hayward. We believe that the CA\$H proposal will ensure the public's right to know and will enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Nancy Van Huffel, President*

## **CAMPAIGN FUNDING REFORM LOOKS CERTAIN**

Excerpt: Matt O'Brien, Reporter, Daily Review, May 22

The developers who sent City Council candidates multiple \$1,000 checks last year, and were allowed by law to do so, may find their donations less welcome in 2006.

A majority of City Council members plan on voting to tighten the city's campaign finance law this summer by prohibiting donors from sending large checks from different subsidiaries of the same parent company.

Hayward's voluntary campaign rules cap donations at \$1,000 per contributor, but separate "entities" are allowed to give several \$1,000 checks to the same candidate, even if the checks come from the same person. An aggregation provision to the 2002 campaign finance law would

prohibit anyone who owns a majority of a company from contributing more than \$1,000 to a single candidate.

The topic will be the subject of a City Council work session meeting early next month. Hayward campaign finance law, passed by the council in October 2002, sets a voluntary \$50,000 expenditure limit for candidates. Those who volunteer to abide by the limit, as all candidates did in last year's election, can get \$1,000 per contributor. Those who do not can get only \$250 per contributor.

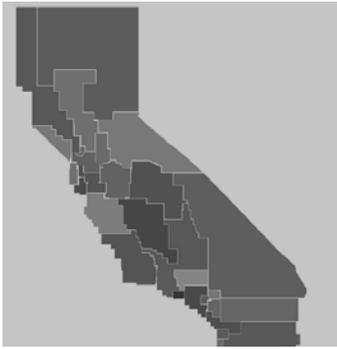
## **CALIFORNIA CLEAN MONEY AND FAIR ELECTION—**

STATE AB 583 did not pass the Assembly Appropriations Committee recently, making it a two-year bill that will be brought up again in the coming year. League of Women Voters strongly supports public financing of campaigns ("clean money"). For several years we have advocated for a comprehensive change in the financing of political candidates and policies. We are increasingly aware that corporations and unions through their financial and other support play a dominant role in determining which candidates get elected. The League believes that candidates should not be supported by special interest groups. "Clean Money" helps candidates focus on communicating with voters, rather than on getting commitments from donors. For these reasons, the League asks that you support AB 583.

## **NATIONAL LEAGUE: Fix the "527" Loophole**

The 2004 elections saw unprecedented fundraising by political groups that are tax-exempt under Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code. Unless the loophole that allows unlimited contributions from corporations, unions and wealthy individuals is closed, our nation will once again face the corrupting influence of huge "soft money" contributions. The "527 Reform Act of 2005," S. 271, will close the loophole for 527s.

## REDISTRICTING— A COMPLETE LOOK



Responsibility for redistricting preferably should be vested in a bipartisan special commission, with membership that includes citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and minority

group interests. This is the LWVC official position, in brief.

Chris Carson, Government Director, [govt@lwvc.org](mailto:govt@lwvc.org), presented at a LWVC Convention Workshop a detailing of the current discussion about redistricting.

Many recent proposals have recommended:

- ✓ A panel of retired judges.
- ✓ Panel of citizens chosen by legislature and governor.
- ✓ Chosen candidates would be restricted as to past or future political activities.

### **The underlying philosophy of panel selection:**

- ✓ Panel of retired judges easier to select but at this time likely to be older male Republicans.
- ✓ Panel of citizens could be much more diverse in background and outlook but the process of selection would be more complex and time consuming.

### **A redistricting plan should include:**

- 1) Substantially equal population.
- 2) Geographic contiguity.
- 3) Protection from diluting the voting strength of a racial or linguistic minority.

### **A redistricting plan should not allow:**

- 1) The goal of protecting incumbents.
- 2) Preferential treatment of one political party.

### **To the extent possible, it should also include**

- 1) Respect for boundaries of cities and counties.
- 2) Preservation and protection of "communities of interest."

### **Other Possible Standards**

- ✓ Federal constitutional or statutory provisions have highest priority
- ✓ Single member districts (current law).
- ✓ Nesting for state offices-- each Senate District to be comprised of two adjacent Assembly Districts.
- ✓ Each Board of Equalization district to be comprised often adjacent Assembly districts.
- ✓ Each district shall be as compact as possible.
- ✓ No census block shall be fragmented unless required pursuant to the US Constitution.
- ✓ No data regarding residence of incumbent or candidate, or the party affiliation or voting history of electors may be used in preparation of plans, except as required by federal law.
- ✓ Final plan submitted to the voters for approval.
- ✓ To the extent possible, district boundaries shall be drawn to ensure a level of competitiveness. (very difficult to define, no agreement on how to achieve).

### **Timing of Process**

- ✓ The year following each national census, so that population data is current.
- ✓ Some recent proposals would require an extra redistricting in 2006, although it is not likely that this is logistically feasible.

### **Procedural Issues: should include (LWVC Position):**

- ✓ Specific time lines for the steps leading to adoption of the redistricting plan.
- ✓ Public hearings on the proposed plan.
- ✓ An automatic non-judicial backup procedure in the event of deadlock.
- ✓ A requirement that any redistricting plan drawn by the legislature be adopted by more than a simple majority vote.

Redistricting is now a League Issue of Emphasis for Education and Advocacy. Get to know the League position and discuss it with your friends. That's the grassroots way.

## Health Care – An Issue for Advocacy



The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports Senator Sheila Kuehl's SB 840, the California Health Insurance Reliability Act (CHIRA). SB 840 will provide fiscally sound, affordable health insurance to all Californians, provide Californians the right to

choose their own physician, and control health care cost inflation. In essence, the bill is the same as Kuehl's SB 921 of 2003-04, with the addition of much more detail.

SB 840 was passed by the Senate Banking, Finance and Insurance Committee. It will be voted on by the full Senate before the June 3 deadline for floor action.

**BACKGROUND:** More than six million California residents, as many as 80 percent of whom are employed, have gone without health insurance in recent years. Cost cutting measures by providers to assure profitability have reduced quality of care, sometimes to tragic consequences.

Insurance premiums are now increasing at double-digit rates and are expected to continue to rise. The system is in worse condition than 10 years ago because of excess administrative costs, overpriced pharmaceuticals, use of emergency rooms for non-emergency care and uncontrolled capital costs. And now, the situation is further compounded by the state's budget woes.

The LWVC strongly supported SB 480 of 1999, a bill which, after four years, came to fruition as California's landmark Health Care Options Project. The HCOP analyzed nine options for expanding health coverage in terms of how many people would be covered, how much each reform would cost, and how each reform could improve the quality of health care. Only the three single payer systems were found to provide universal coverage and operate at net savings over the status quo.

The League supported SB 921 (Kuehl) during the 2003-2004 legislative session. This bill would have provided health care coverage to all

Californians through a publicly financed single payer health care system. A recent analysis of the bill by the Virginia-based Lewin Group, which also did the HCOP analyses, showed SB 840 would provide even greater savings to Californians than the previously studied single payer models. The Lewin Group report is available at [www.healthcareforall.org](http://www.healthcareforall.org).

LWVC News 5/26/05

### ***Democracy Dinner***

On April 22, League's 85th Birthday Celebration Democracy Dinner was held in San Jose. Leagues from across the state were represented by their auction items. Marianne Dimick crafted a Coffee Lover's Delight gift basket that went for \$50.

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren was our Master of Ceremonies. Lots of local and state officials were present. Keynote Speaker, Ambassador Nancy Soderberg, spoke on *Global Challenges, Global Realities*. She illustrated her main concerns for long term global stability: 1) hate in Arab media, 2) the education system in Saudi Arabia, 3) nuclear proliferation and the next BIG event, 4) Middle East peace not being achievable without White House involvement and 5) insufficient economic aid to the developing world.

The Democracy Dinner was a perfect example of how much more than money can be raised by fund raising. Minds and heart were touched as well as checkbooks and business cards. Silver Patron Sponsors Applied Materials, Hewlett Packard, and Stanford University got the priceless reward of association with League.

This may be a model we want to look at. Thanks for sending me. --Trish Taylor

Patriotism is simply defined as love and devotion to one's country, while nationalism is the devotion to the interests of a nation; a subtle difference, but a difference nonetheless. –  
*Byron Williams in the Daily Review*

# Voter Outreach

## Contact Your Local High Schools

John Mott Smith of the California Secretary of State's office has asked for League assistance with the Student Voter Registration Act. As you probably remember, this is a state law which mandates that every high school provide a voter registration card in every senior's graduation packet. The process did not work well in 2004. Forms were lost or schools did not know what to do with them when they arrived.



I urge members of all California Leagues to contact your local high schools as soon as possible to remind them about the forms. If you are able, also ask if there is anything your League can do to facilitate the process.

This is a very important activity and a place where we can really gain visibility.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

**Robbie Davis**  
Chair - LWVC Ed Fund

## More from the LWVC Manager of Voter Outreach

John Mott Smith spoke at length at the Smart Voter Workshop at LWVC Convention, reporting that there are still barriers to young adults becoming voters. These barriers are both attitudinal and institutional. His office can work on the institutional issues but there are still too many potential voters whose attitudes make them difficult to approach; they feel their vote "doesn't count," they don't trust politics, and think the "system is broken."

Mr. Smith urged League to explain to people why they should register, working through collaborations and partnerships with other organizations.

He stated that the Secretary of State Office intends to:

1. Form partnerships with nongovernmental organizations such as

the League in order to get their message out.

2. Develop material for 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades for motivation and education of the youth regarding voting.

3. Develop links from college registration sites for voter registration which would transfer student information given on school registration forms directly to the voter registration form, making the process extremely efficient. The college student would just have to print the registration form, sign it, and mail it.

4. Focus on the military, especially overseas service operations. Currently, soldiers sometimes get their ballots after election day. The SOS office will work with international businesses, schools and NGO's as vehicles to reach servicemen and women.

5. Improve the DMV registration process, which currently loses track of too many registrants.

6. Initiate a "Get Ready To Vote Week." --Trish Taylor

## League of Women Voters of Eden Area

P. O. Box 2234 – Castro Valley, CA 94546

Phone: 510/538-9678

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

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Treasurer, Marianne Dimick

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Castro Valley, CA 94546

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Dues: Regular \$48 Same Household \$24 Student \$20  
Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible.  
Contributions to the LWVEA Education Fund ARE deductible  
to the extent allowed by the law.

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.

### CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

*All members and the public are welcome.*

#### June

- 1 LWVEA Board Meeting 12:00pm -1:30 pm  
San Lorenzo Village Community Hall
- 2 Sara Z Conner Court in Hayward  
groundbreaking ceremony
- 11 LWVEA Annual Meeting 9-noon.  
Loretta Lynch, Guest Speaker.

- 25 Ashland's Spring Fling and Health Fair  
at the Ashland Community Center.

#### July

- 1 LWVEA Board Meeting 12:00pm -1:30 pm  
San Lorenzo Village Community Hall

#### September

- 24 Know Your Bay Area Day

### HAVE A QUESTION? CONTACT A LWVEA BOARD MEMBER

- Nancy VanHuffel – President  
562-4473 or [lwvea@aol.com](mailto:lwvea@aol.com)
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- Jo Murdach – VP Membership  
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For more details on Calendar of Coming Events items, visit us at [www.lwvea.org](http://www.lwvea.org).