



**LWVEA ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKER COMPARES CURRENT HEALTH CARE COVERAGE PROPOSALS**

The LWVEA Annual Meeting on June 2 featured Dr. Deborah LeVeen, Professor Emeritus, Political Science who compared the major health care insurance proposals being discussed in the state legislature currently.

Dr. LeVeen, who taught health policy at San Francisco State University of 30 years, discussed the pros and cons of each of the proposed plans by Governor Schwarzenegger, Senator Perata, Assembly Speaker Nunez and Senator Keuhl.

A summary of the comparison showed that the “leadership” proposals would provide incremental expansion of coverage through: employer mandate to “pay or play”—either the employer pay for the coverage or contribute to a pool which would then be used to pay for coverage for those not insured by the employer.

The “leadership” proposals would also expand public programs and include a modified individual mandate to purchase insurance. The Governor’s plan would also have a fee on hospitals and doctors to pay to insure the poor.

SB840, authored by Senator Kuehl would provide universal health coverage for all California residents through a single-payer health system, run by the state and replace existing public-private insurance.

Dr. LeVeen explained that there are good and not-so-good aspects to most of the proposals and that there will be amendments and compromises before a plan that all can agree upon emerges.

A side-by-side comparison of the original five proposals can be found at

<http://www.assembly.ca.gov/acs/newcomframeset.asp>

The State League supports SB840 using the National League position which states that it promotes a health care system that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all residents and controls health care costs.

The State League support of SB840 indicates that it will provide fiscally sound, affordable health insurance to all Californians, provide the right to choose their own physician and control health care cost inflation.

**2007-2008 LWVEA BOARD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

At the Annual Meeting, the following new Board Officers and Directors were elected: Co-presidents– Alison S. Lewis and Angelina Reyes, VP Membership – Jo Murdach, VP Program – Marian Handa Treas – Patrisha Piras, Sec – Maria Palmari **Directors:** Brian Foster, Alexandra Matteucci, Beverly Reliford, Patricia Taylor, and Winnie Thompson



**Left to right:** Trish Taylor, Supervisor Gail Steele, Winnie Thompson, Maria Palmari, Angelina Reyes, Patrisha Piras

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Nancy Van Huffel,  
Outgoing President**



As I leave the Executive Board and my position of President, I have been reflecting on the work that we do in the League of Women Voters, and particularly in our local Eden Area League. It is good work; important work; work worth doing; and work that becomes more complex with each passing decade.

First and foremost, the League must remain the objective source of information on ballot measures and other legislative issues. Our reputation as the source of unbiased information for voters of all perspectives and political persuasions is central to our core, and one we must protect at all costs. Its value in the political spectrum is immeasurable and once lost, is gone forever.

We also remain the guardians of transparency in government and good governance, including untainted and clean campaigning. These, too, are critical and require constant vigilance by our organization and our individual members. The victories in this area are often small and known only to us, but they are fundamental to democracy, and we can never stop and rest on our laurels.

Advocacy on issues is also a role that we play, and the issues are extremely complicated these days as opposed to fifty years ago. In our early history, the League advocated for a woman's right to vote, equal education, fair housing, and other civil rights. These, too, were complex issues in their time, but the advocacy was much clearer: it was a matter of education, persuasion, and compelling arguments. Once hearing the

arguments, a voter could decide if they were for it or against it, and cast their vote; and the legislation was simpler to enact.

Over the past several years, the issues have become much more complex. For example, most everyone agrees that our healthcare system is in shambles. Yet, there is no agreement on how to fix it or even who should or should not benefit from the repaired system. Each legislator and interest group approaches the issue and the solution from their own, different perspectives. Currently, the California State Legislature has several competing plans for health care reform, all favoring different interest groups; yet, basic changes such as standardization of medical claim forms to reduce the cost of insurance are barely being discussed. We may not see meaningful reforms for years, or even in our lifetimes.

Those of you that have been involved in redistricting and clean-money campaigns also recognize the many proposals that have been suggested for fair and equitable ways to hold elections. However, little has been done or successfully proposed to change the system, despite everyone agreeing that changes are needed. We must make our government responsible to all the people, not just the special interest groups, or the ones with the most money or best advertising campaign.

So dear Leaguers, my departing message to you is to keep going. Over the years, I have worked with many of you who have been concerned and have devoted your time and talent to making our society a better place in which to live. You are marvelous crusaders. Never give up the causes of good government and educated and involved voters.

### BOARD BRIEFS – May 9, 2007

- Received financial wrap up for 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration showing we made \$1,000+ over expenses.
- Reviewed plans for Annual Meeting covering venue, food, materials and volunteers.
- Approved a donation to SmartVoter of \$300 which is the website that provides up-to-date election info.
- Approved plans for the annual fundraiser for a baseball skybox.
- Received a financial report on the Palomares HOA Election services and received \$1260 payment.
- Received a report that there will be 4 elections for FY 07-08 where our services will be needed.
- Reviewed a report on current Observer Corps action of the Alameda County Board of Education as part of the Alameda County Council request for monitoring that governmental agency.
- Received a report from the new LWVUS Immigration Study Committee from Trish Taylor, chair.
- Reviewed a survey Nancy Van Huffel sent to the membership to evaluate high, medium, and low priority Action and Advocacy projects for 07-08.

## NOTES ON LWVC CONVENTION

LWVEA send two delegates to this years LWVC convention, May 18-20, 2007 in Bakersfield- Marian Handa and Angelina Reyes. The following is a summary of their notes.

M.H. - The workshop topics were great the presenters were really knowledgeable and inspiring. It was just a shame that so many good workshops were offered concurrently and that we had to choose.

It was great hearing about what exciting things other Leagues are doing and it naturally gets you thinking about how you can apply them back home. Angie and I keep adding to the "list."

The dinner was an especially fruitful evening for me as I got to meet and network with some interesting folks.

A.R. – I attended two really great workshops: one on recruitment (Oakland presenter) and one again on what Oakland does to promote itself to the community. The Smart Voter dinner was very informative; Marian and I were able to "catch" Debra Bowen, newly elected Secretary of State as she was being escorted out. We chatted with her about the Instant *Runoff Voting Roadmap*.

We also listened to Dolores Huerta, best known for her activism on behalf of farm-workers in the 1960's. She currently heads the Dolores Huerta Foundation to establish Communities of Conscience focusing on community organizing and leadership training in low-income under-represented communities with an emphasis on women and youth. Ms. Huerta is dedicated to promoting women to leadership roles.

### Convention Urges State to Solve Structural Budget Deficit

*League of Women Voters of California delegates approved a resolution urging the Governor and Legislative leaders to address the structural budget deficit.*

Delegates to the recent LWVC convention approved a resolution calling upon the Governor and state legislative leaders to enact a responsible state budget that will:

- 1 Give priority to eliminating the ongoing structural deficit
- 2 Not make early repayments on the deficit reduction bonds
- 3 Increase revenues (roughly equivalent to the Vehicle License Fees (VLF) that were reduced) through sources that would diversify the revenue mix to reduce the reliance on income and sales taxes
- 4 Use new revenues to address priorities such as global climate change that would have additional benefits of changing behavior
- 5 Review existing tax incentives (tax expenditures) to identify those that are ineffective or no longer needed, and include a sunset provision for any new incentives.

In letters to Governor Schwarzenegger and leaders of the legislative houses and their budget committees, LWVC President Jacqueline Jacobberger stated, "The time has come to make real choices about the services the state provides and the funding that is needed, and to heed the importance of establishing prudent reserves."

The resolution cites the fact that state structural deficits ranging from \$3 billion to \$5 billion are expected to continue between now and 2010, according to the Legislative Analyst's Office. It further states that although the economy has recovered from the downturn in 2000, the prospects for "growing out" of this deficit are not likely and the establishment of prudent reserves may not be achieved, even with any number of transfers from other funds such as public transportation.

Proposed cuts in programs like CalWORKs and SSI/SSP target those most in need and would make only a small contribution toward balancing the operating budget.

"Our elected leaders must take the bold steps necessary to address both short- and long-term flaws in our fiscal situation. We urge legislators and the administration to work together to put real solutions to our structural budget problems into place," added Jacobberger.

## Eden Area League Elegantly Celebrates 50 Years of Community Service

By Eleanor Parker

An overflow crowd filled the Hayward City Hall Rotunda April 13, 2007 to recognize fifty years of outstanding voter service by Eden Area League members to residents of the cities of Hayward and San Leandro and surrounding unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hillcrest Knolls and San Lorenzo. As guests passed the Greeters table, they received a Souvenir Program and each woman was given a white hanky with the LWV logo; men received a small American flag. Past LWVEA Presidents were given a gold-embossed 50th Anniversary pen.



Three costumed suffragists welcomed guests: Alice Paul (Janice Freisen), Abigail Scott Dunaway (JoEllen Rice) and Eleanor Roosevelt (Liz Bathgate). These same suffragists later, carrying signs proclaiming "Votes for Women", led guests down from the mezzanine reception area to the dinner tables, and subsequently during the program told of their historical achievements.

During the reception hour, guests could review Eden's illustrious history by strolling down an avenue of seven History Boards creatively designed by Marianne Dimick (former League Treasurer):

(1) Women's History—The League Begins (2) Past Presidents of LWVEA (3) Board Members Make it Happen (4) Candidate and Educational Forums (5) LWV Not for Women Only—League Votes to Admit Men-1974 (6) The League: Political but not Partisan (7) The VOTER—League Newsletter

Opening the program, President Nancy Van Huffel enthusiastically welcomed everyone, acknowledging the many generous donors who contributed to the success of the event. She then acknowledged 18 elected officials and 19 former Eden Area Presidents in attendance; representatives from Alameda County's seven Leagues and their Alameda County Council President JoAnn Price, Berkeley LWV; LWV California President Jackie Jacobberger; and LWVUS Vice President Sara Diefendorf, Keynote Speaker.

Other California leagues were represented by Barbara Hopkins, President, Sacramento LWV, Bonnie Hamlin, past

President, Oakland LWV and current LWVC Management Training Assistant for Alameda County, and Carol Federighi, former LWVC President and past President of the San Leandro LWV before that league merged with the Hayward LWV to form the Eden Area League, who is currently Mayor of Lafayette, California.

President Van Huffel instructed guests that the hankies recognize the turn-of-the-century practice of women waving a white hanky instead of clapping, so everyone was asked to wave a hanky or flag instead of applauding. The vigorous waving after each speaker was much cause for smiles and laughter.

Suzanne Barba, Past Eden Area President, served as genial master of ceremonies, introducing Hayward Mayor Mike Sweeney and San Leandro Mayor Tony Santos who extended welcomes from elected officials, adding complimentary remarks about League accomplishments and the talented League members who have worked with them.

California Assemblymember Mary Hayashi and Senator Ellen Corbett presented a proclamation from the California Assembly and Senate. Congressman Fortney "Pete" Stark was represented by Chief of Staff Jo Casenave who presented his proclamation, which was also read into the Congressional Record. Alameda County Supervisor Gail Steele brought greetings and a proclamation from the County Board of Supervisors, followed by remarks from Supervisor Nate Miley.

The evening's program concluded with a duo presentation-- first Eden President Maryly Rinertson and second President Malca Chall telling their personal stories of the League's early beginnings, accomplishments and active members. Several other past Presidents added their comments from the floor.

50th Anniversary Planning Committee Members: Eleanor Parker, Chair, Suzanne Barba, Malca Chall, Alison S. Lewis, Julie Quayle, Angelina Reyes, Alice Sarafian, Nancy Van Huffel; Souvenir Hankies - Julie Quayle; Historical Photographs - Marianne Dimick and Angelina Reyes; Hostesses: Marian Handa, Jo Murdach, Angelina Reyes; Photographer - Henry Taylor; Wine Hosts: Brian Foster, Steven Dimick, Sal Tedesco.

Please see photos on next page and check the LWVEA website for more photos of the 50th Anniversary Dinner, [www.lwvea.org](http://www.lwvea.org).



**1st Row, left to right:** Past Presidents pose for formal picture; 1st Pres Maryly Rinertson, 2nd Pres Malca Chall, and M.C. Suzanne Barba wrap-up the evening's program. **2nd Row:** Marianne Dimick, and Vice-President Angie Reyes stand beside one of the historical boards created by Marianne; AAUW Women in Living History--Abigail Scott Dunaway (JoEllen Rice), Eleanor Roosevelt (Liz Bathgate) Alice Paul (Janice Friesen); Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley greets guests. **3rd Row:** Jo Loss, Castro Valley Unified School Dist Bd Member and President-Elect of the State PTA, helps set out Souvenir Programs; President Nancy Van Huffel demonstraes with a league handkerchief how to applaud lady-like; 50th Dinner Chair Eleanor Parker, Sacramento LWV President and former LWVEA Board Member; Incoming Co-President Alison Lewis, Past President Nancy Schluntz are all smiles over the exciting evening.

## **INTERVIEW WITH ASSEMBLYMEMBER MARY HAYASHI**

*Each election cycle, the State League requests that each local League interview its legislative representatives pertaining to specific questions. In March 2007, four LWVEA members—Alexandra Matteucci (lead), Nancy Van Huffel, Marian Handa, Suzanne Barba—interviewed Assem. Mary Hayashi at her office in Hayward. The following is a summary of her responses to specific question topics.*

*This information was not published in our VOTER before this because we have switched to fewer issues per year and the last two issues focused on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in April and the Annual Meeting Kit for June.*

**Q – What are your thoughts about the merits of the various health care reform measures?**

**A -** She is co-authoring two bills; Sheila Kuehl's single payer bill, and also Speaker Fabio Nunez's bill. She felt both bills warranted her endorsement but expressed concern about Kuehl's bill in terms of how the bill might be enforced.

Of the two she is leaning towards Speaker Nunez's bill, "play or pay," because she feels the best delivery system would be an employer-mandated system. This system would have a provision to protect small businesses by providing a payer pool to help small businesses cover employees.

The State would provide oversight.

**Q –** What measures can the legislature take to accommodate the anticipated increase in resource demand?

**A -** She felt that the impact from this kind of growth to the Bay Area and California would be felt in many ways. She indicated that by the year 2020 there would be little or no federal monies to help the State deal with many of the issues that would be complicated by that kind of growth. Chief among her concerns were, traffic, affordable housing and maintaining a quality of life for working families.

She also indicated that to maintain economic growth for the state it would be absolutely necessary to deliver a continual stream of educated students to fortify the workforce. She is Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Community Colleges.

In terms of the impacts to energy and water she indicated that legislature was looking at ways to streamline and restructure the water source to the Bay Area. Utilities were another concern; they would work closely with the PUC to ensure affordable and sustainable energy to cover the growing need. They would also need to identify ways to address the global warming effect by sustainable energy resources.

**Q –** How do you think the Legislature should deal with the state's fiscal problems and balance the budget?

**A -** She felt that one of the key components of balancing the budget would be to work towards closing the loopholes that allows large corporations and wealthy Californians to skirt paying their fair share. She was against raising taxes for working families. She was also adamant that small business should be protected against increased taxes as well.

**Q -** What specific redistricting provisions would you like to see?

**A -** She is supporting Fabio Nunez's bill on redistricting reform. Using an Independent commission made up of appointees by the Senate, the Assembly and the Governor should be initiated. These could not be elected officials or people intending to run for office, so it would be made up of citizens. She also indicated that she did not anticipate support by the public on redistricting. This is not an issue that she hears about from her constituents. She feels that it will not make much difference in terms of votes; however, there are some districts boundaries that make no sense.

**Q –** What are the major issues that you see the legislature must deal with in 2007?

**A -** Assemblymember Hayashi indicated that all of the previous questions were identified as the major issues that the legislature would be focusing on in 2007.

## IMMIGRATION STUDY

*On May 24, the LWVEA Immigration Study Committee met to kick off an interesting and important study. Trish Taylor chairs the group and the educational materials are plentiful. Here are excerpts from the first meeting minutes by Trish.*

**The purpose of the study** is to form **consensus** in January after thorough study, but equally, to **educate** membership and the local Eden Area residents. Education is not only bringing information to an audience. In a consensus study, we bring the **conversation** to community. This **active participation in government** is a primary mission of the League.

We want to generate situations where people are **free to speak, so that they are able to hear and learn from each other.**

**We don't have to agree** amongst ourselves. We want to **learn** from each other and **ask questions**. The committee practices being a safe place to speak, knowing that we are listened to. Then, we'll take our practice of **learning from each other's perspectives** out into the community during the fall when we host panels and forums.

We will experience the same difficulty as our legislators: holding onto an overview that makes room for all the perspectives and as many facts as possible, **applying a rational mind while having strong feelings**. If anyone can do this, it's **the League of Women Voters**.

We each have our biases. The committee as a whole does not expect or want individual members to forego their personal focus. However, the committee looks to its members to practice acting as models of inquiry and curiosity about all perspectives. Our job is not to solve problems or make decisions. We simply learn, teach, and let consensus emerge through dialogue.

If you are interested in joining the Immigration Study group, contact Trish at 886-1711 or [taylorfm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:taylorfm@sbcglobal.net)

## MEMBERSHIP ALERT

By now you have received an invoice for your 07-08 membership dues. Please don't delay in responding. Your dues ensure that the League at every level—National, State, Bay Area, County, Local—stays strong and active on your behalf.

In addition, be sure to consider purchasing the raffle tickets you also received

to win a Skybox that seats 20 people at the Oakland A's game which will be played on September 15. Each of our three supervisors donate the use of the Skybox on a rotating basis. This year, Supervisor Steele donated the Skybox. For additional tickets, contact Suzanne at [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net).

## LWVEA BOARD RETREAT

The new LWVEA Board will be holding its Retreat in July to plan the calendar of programs and events for the 07-08 year, prioritize issues for education and/or advocacy—transparency in government, clean money elections, health care legislation and redistricting.

They will also review the "Directions to the Board" that were given at the Annual Meeting on June 2. Those were:

- Use of mediation by the county court system for juveniles.
- Emphasis on registering voters.
- Monitoring media coverage.
- Training ballot pro and con speakers.

They will also discuss membership and how to recruit and maintain members. Fill open positions on the Board will also be high on the agenda.

If you missed the Annual Meeting and would like to give "Directions to the Board" for the coming year, send those comments and suggestions to Alison S. Lewis at [aslewis1215@yahoo.com](mailto:aslewis1215@yahoo.com)

## Eden Area League Recognized in National Government Transparency Handbook

The LWVEA is featured in a new national publication about government transparency, *Observing Your Government In Action: Protecting your Right to Know*. This comprehensive resource guide, part of the national League's Citizen Transparency Initiative, provides useful best practices and tips for observing government activities and promoting transparency.

One of only a handful of the organization's 850 local and state affiliates to be spotlighted in the guide, local president Nancy Van Huffel commented that they were glad to have their efforts recognized in this way. "League members volunteer to observe government meetings to help strengthen our community, and we hope that our experiences can now inspire other civic leaders."

**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

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Dues: Regular \$50 Same Household \$25,  
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“The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan, political organization encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.”

**CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS FOR 2007**

**DATE/TIME**

June 28, 5:30

**EVENT**

Immigration Study Group meets at Hayward City Hall (See information in this VOTER.

July 12

Immigration Study Group meets at Hayward City Hall

July – TBA

Board Retreat

Dates and Times for future Board meetings, events and educational program will be established at the Board Retreat.

Calendar information decided at the Board Retreat will be published in the next VOTER.

Please visit our website for up to date calendar event information.

Also, there is a complete summary of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

[www.lwvea.org](http://www.lwvea.org)