



VOTER

Vol. 50 No. 7 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Nov/Dec 2007

LWVEA HOLIDAY PARTY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2007 5:30 TO 8 P.M.

Home of Suzanne Barba • 5787 Highwood Road
Castro Valley — Phone 538-9678



Good Food and Good Fun Auction items include:

- Two nights at Tahoe condo
- Oakland Warrior box tickets
- Congressional Holiday Ornaments
- Lunch with local elected officials
- Many other exciting items



This year we have decided to ask attendees to bring some holiday cheer to children and families who are in need. These items will be donated to the Family Emergency Shelter Coalition (FESCO) in honor of long-time League member and retiring director of FESCO—Nancy Schlunz.

FESCO has need of clothing (pajamas, sweats, socks, etc.) for infants to high schoolers. Also books or gift cards to stores such as Target, Mervyn's, Safeway, etc.

Gifts should be brought to the holiday party UNWRAPPED. FESCO will supply families with wrapping paper and the gifts.

Cost: \$10.00. Please RSVP using the form on the back page or contact: suzbarba@comcast.net or call (510) 538-9678

Questions?? Marianne Dimick @ maddk9@earthlink.net

Co-President's Report

As we enter November, the Thanksgiving month, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of our LWVEA Board Members for their participation and arduous efforts in making our recent Immigration Forum a success. Even if you feel your task or input was small, it was certainly appreciated. There were four excellent speakers and an interesting audience with a wide array of perspectives on immigration. With the assistance of Marian Handa, the San Leandro Library was an excellent location and the menu was great.

Thanks to our co-sponsor, the AAUW. Evelyn Gertler was there ready and available! Our study on immigration continues as we seek additional input. Keep in mind that we must submit our responses to the consensus questions to Trish Taylor, our Immigration Study Chair.

One of the attendees at our forum was Jacqueline Coats, a resident of San Leandro and native of Kenya whose dilemma was in recent news articles. Ms. Coats may be deported because of the recent death of her husband, who died while saving the lives of two children. Legislation is being carried by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein to help. A national campaign to assist her in seeking permanent resident status was initiated by local State Assembly Member Hayashi. You can find out more about this effort at www.helpjackie.net.

A quote once stated by Madeline Albright:

"As world events reflect, we remain far from mastering the art of human relations. We have invented no technology that will guide us to the destinations that matter most.

After two world wars, the Holocaust, multiple genocides, and countless conflicts, we must ask how long it will be before we are able to rise above the national, racial, and gender distinctions that divide us, and embrace the common humanity that binds us.

The answer depends not on the stars or some mysterious forces of history; it depends on the choices that you and I and all of us make."

Angelina Reyes

Board Briefs --October 10, 2007

- Selected Suzanne Barba to represent LWVEA at a health care forum being sponsored by Supervisor Gail Steele on Oct. 18.
- Finalized plans for attending the Hayward Volunteer Dinner, Oct. 25 where our nominee Beverly Reliford will be honored.
- Received a report from Trish Taylor regarding the Immigration Study and Community Forum scheduled for Oct. 26 at the San Leandro Library. Trish has four excellent speakers lined up. Marian will be responsible for the logistics. It was also recommended that the Immigration Consensus meeting be held in January.
- Discussed the venue for the upcoming holiday party after holding the last board meeting at the home of Maria Palmeri. It was agreed that Maria's home was beautiful and perfect for such an event except that it would be difficult for people who were disabled or unable to walk up several sets of steep stairs. It was with deep regret that the board declined Maria's kind offer. Suzanne volunteered her home for the event. It had been used successfully for this event several times in the past.
- Received a report that we still need to recruit three people to take small portions of the Voter Service assignments.
- Received applications for anyone interested in participating in the Alameda County Leadership Academy.
- Received an update on Eden Medical Center. Public hearings are set for the following week and information will be posted on the Eden District website.
- Received a report on the opposition to the siting of two power plants in the west Hayward area. Suzanne will draft a letter requesting reconsideration of the CEC decision and mail to the board. She will also take the information to the Alameda County Council which is meeting Oct. 13.

Next Board meeting will be held November 14 at 5 p.m. at the Hayward City Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

HAYWARD VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION Congratulations to League Board Member Beverly Reliford

League member Beverly Reliford was honored at the City of Hayward Volunteer Recognition and Awards Dinner on October 25, 2007, along with 41 other Pearls chosen by their local organizations as outstanding volunteers. The pearl motif represented Hayward's thirty years of honoring volunteers.



More than a dozen members of the Eden Area League joined Bev's guests in cheering as she walked across the stage before 450 people, and was introduced as the League's nominee. Each Pearl was thanked by Mayor Michael Sweeney and five members of City Council, and given a genuine pearl lapel pin, City of Hayward Volunteer pin, and certificates from Congressman Pete Stark, California Senator Ellen Corbett, Assemblymember Mary Hayashi, and the City itself.

Bev has been a community activist all her life and League Board member for the past five years. She is a Georgia native and began her Hayward career devoted to disadvantaged children and Family Child Care providers in 1979. Beverly works wonderfully with individuals and with groups. Her good humor, sensitivity and commitment to helping people make her tremendously effective. Everywhere she goes, Beverly shows her deeply sincere devotion to families and children.

JOAN SEAVEY THOMAS, FORMER LWVEA BOARD MEMBER PASSED AWAY

Former League Board member Joan Seavey Thomas passed away September 30. She was a woman who belonged to many

community organizations and gave her all to each.

In 2003, she received Hayward's Lifetime Achievement Award, For more than five decades, people in the greater Hayward area cherished the opportunity to work with Joan, a tall, graceful woman with a caring manner. She was born in Oregon, where she obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in education. She served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, and also in the regular Army, during World War II.



After returning home, she was dean of women and dean of students at the Oregon College of Education for 12 years before she obtained her doctorate at Stanford University. She then came to Hayward, joining the new CSU campus as dean of women and later as associate dean of students. She retired in 1985, after helping launch women's study and re-entry programs, services for disabled students and a nursery for students' children. *(Excerpted from Daily Review/K.Holtzmeister)*

NANCY SCHLUNTZ WILL RETIRE FROM FESCO IN DECEMBER

Nancy Schluntz joined the LWVEA in 1984 and served as co-president with Helen Ketchum in 1988-89. She says that one her most significant accomplishment as a League member was completing the merger of the Hayward-Castro Valley and San Leandro Leagues into the Eden Area League.



Nancy was also "famous" for her skills in moderating League candidate forums and presentation of Pros and Cons before many local organizations. Nancy is now retiring as Executive Director of the Family Emergency Shelter Coalition (FESCO) after 12 years of outstanding service. In reflecting on the past, Nancy was pleased to note the many advancements FESCO has accomplished during that time including expansion of programs through development of Third Street Transitional Housing, Banyan House Transitional Co-Housing. FESCO's Counseling Center and program ad increasing on-site employment support services as well as strengthening agency infrastructure.

POWER PLANT PROPOSED FOR HAYWARD HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR SURROUNDING AREAS



On October 26, Supervisor Gail Steele held a meeting to discuss the issue of the siting of the Russell City Energy

Center (RCEC) on Hayward's western shore and the Eastshore Energy Center to be sited 3,000 feet from the RCEC in Hayward's industrial area.

More than 100 interested people gathered at Chabot College to hear speakers discuss the amount of pollutants that would be added to the already problematic air quality in the area caused by the heavily traveled roads that crisscross the vicinity. A staff member from the California Energy Commission (CEC) also attended as well as a representative from the Bay Area Quality Management District. Ten LWVEA members also attended and three spoke as individuals, not representing the League.

Most attendees at the meeting said they were learning about this issue for the first time even though there have been several public hearings and information in the newspaper. Some who didn't live in Hayward said they didn't realize that a power plant as big as 600 megawatts and emitting 90 tons of pollutants a year would impact their community.

At this writing, the CEC has approved the RCEC but because of a last minute request for reconsideration by Alameda County and a coalition of five non-profit organizations, the CEC granted a thirty-day period for receiving petitions. On November 7, the CEC will hold a public hearing in Sacramento to review the petitions for reconsideration.

If the CEC turns down the request to open up the matter for further review by impacted agencies and the public, then we have been told the office of the Alameda County Council representing the Board of Supervisors and the coalition of non-profits

will take their case to the California Supreme Court.

Waiting in the wings for review is the Eastshore Energy Center (EEC). It is a smaller power plant and is to be used as a back up when extra energy is needed.

To read for yourself about the two proposed power plants, go to www.energy.ca.gov which is the California Energy Commission's homepage.

Suzanne Barba, Chair, Health Care Committee, Former Chair, Energy Study Com.

IMMIGRATION , FACTS & MYTHS



The Immigration Forum luncheon on October 26 was well attended—about 50 people. Trish Taylor, who co-chaired the event with Marian Handa, did a lot of outreach to other groups, including Chabot College. At least a dozen students attended to find out more about this complex and difficult subject—Immigration.

Attorney Jonathan Wong provided a history lesson about Immigration laws and what was happening in our society at that time. He also pointed out that the public seems confused about the important choices it will have to make.

Melissa Michelson, a professor of political science at CSUEB discussed the myths about immigration and how immigrants are not a burden on our economy, but add value. Yolanda Baldovinos, Interim Director, Alameda County Social Services pointed out how some of the laws passed to curb benefits for low-income people, have unintended negative effects on citizens who need assistance as well. Attorney Johnson Lazaro discussed two case studies that pointed out inconsistencies in the application of immigration laws.

Read more about topic next page.

IMMIGRATION - FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND DIVERSITY POLICIES

LWVC Immigration Study Brief #4 U.S. immigration laws have always included provisions designating persons eligible or ineligible to enter the country based on the perceived common good. Originally, paupers, those engaged in immoral activities and the physically handicapped were banned. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act restricted entry for immigrants from China. It wasn't until 1924 that the first quota act affecting non-Asians was passed; it set limits on immigrants from the southern and eastern portions of Europe.

The current policy originated with the Immigration Act of 1965. The new law eliminated the national origin quota system that had favored immigrants from Europe to the exclusion of those from other parts of the world. It created a system favoring diversity of country of birth. The 1965 Act also provided a "family preference" quota framework that systematized the sponsorship of relatives of legal immigrants, emphasizing the reunification of immigrant families.

Among current immigrants, family unity is one of the most powerful motivators. Since 1965, between 50 and 70 percent of U.S. immigrant visas distributed annually have been allotted to close family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. During the past ten years, more than 200,000 persons per year have been admitted to the U.S. as beneficiaries of family preference visas. How effective is the current policy in reuniting immigrant families? For spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens, the wait to reunite is often less than a year. However, many legal permanent residents ("green card holders") are not so fortunate.

These individuals, who themselves have waited many years to enter the U.S. legally, often precede their spouses and children to the U.S. in order to find work and housing and save money for air tickets for the rest of the family. They soon learn that family preference category visa quotas and processing backlogs can delay the legal reunification of their family in the U.S. for many years. For example, the spouse or minor child of a legal permanent resident from Mexico can expect to wait more than a decade to receive a visa to enter the U.S. These deficiencies in the system force many families to resort to illegal immigration rather than wait for years for permission to enter legally. The result is that a significant percentage

of the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. are the spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents who have been approved for family-based visas but are caught in the years-long preference category logjam.

Clearly, the current family reunification system is not working well for many legal permanent residents and their immediate family members. Furthermore, the lack of a reasonably timely family reunification option within the legal system is contributing to the breakdown of the integrity of the U.S. immigration system. There are no easy fixes for our family-based immigration system. However, unless our nation finds the political courage to come to grips with the short-

and long-term implications of our current untenable policy, tens of thousands of families desperate to be together rather than face interminable separation are likely to continue resorting to

unauthorized immigration.

Diversity Policies Diversity of country of birth is integral to who we are, and what our country is, but not everyone agrees about how much value to place on diversity. The U.S. both caps the number of immigrants from a given country and allows for a "diversity lottery" to ensure at least some possibility of entry from all countries. Despite these policies, Mexican-born immigrants composed a predominant segment of the entire U.S. foreign-born population in 2000, and are predominant to an even greater degree today. Critics argue that today's immigrants are too different – they hang on to their culture, stay connected to their native countries and continue to speak their native languages.

Proponents of the diversity policy say these connections have always been a part of immigrants' lives, and that today's immigrants own their homes, intermarry with other Americans and are learning English at rates as high, or higher, than was true for earlier ethnic groups. The differing viewpoints may result from the larger numbers of immigrants living in communities that have never had immigrant populations before. Change can be difficult to manage, particularly such sudden change as many communities have experienced with respect to immigration and diversity. Generally, and over time, change, immigration and diversity have been embraced in this country's communities more frequently than they have been rejected.



Evaluation Criteria for Health Care Reform Proposals

Submitted by LWVC Health Care Committee and approved by LWVC Legislation Committee

Rationale:

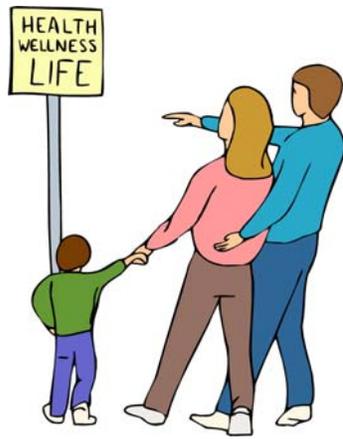
In this legislative session, we are fortunate to see an active interest in finding a solution to the severe crisis affecting health care in California. Several proposals have been brought forward and are under discussion by stakeholders and legislators alike. The LWVC welcomes the wide interest in reform that is being demonstrated and recognizes the role we can play in bringing clarity and leadership to the discussion.

The League of Women Voters of California has long held a position in [support of single payer universal health care reform](#) as embodied in Senator Sheila Kuehl's bill, SB 840. This approach is commonly described as "the gold standard" by those engaged in the policy discussion.

Single payer provides universal, affordable and comprehensive coverage on a continuous basis to all. It ensures maximum choice of provider and exemplifies shared responsibility that is equitable, accessible and requires contributions from individuals and employers that are related to ability to pay. Because it includes robust methods to control costs, it is sustainable over time. It makes significant contributions to improving the quality of our health care system, and because it is patient centered, it will bring measurable improvements to health outcomes.

As the LWVC contributes to the current dynamic discussion, we recognize that an opportunity may exist to improve the situation in the short term by supporting proposals that move us forward toward achieving the ultimate solution of single payer. It is critical that any actions taken in this regard are true to the elements of single payer that make it the best solution, and will not impair our ability to achieve our ultimate goal. We also must not accept compromises that do not protect the most vulnerable among us from further deterioration in their access to affordable and quality care.

In order to inform LWVC decision making as we evaluate various proposals, we have



identified the following elements of various proposals as positive or negative in terms of the above comments.

Our judgment is informed by our understanding of the principles put forth in the [LWVUS Health Care position](#) adopted in 1993.

Elements the LWVC can support:

- Universal access
- Comprehensive coverage
- Expanded risk pools
- Expanded public programs
- Purchasing pools that offer affordable, comprehensive benefits to all residents who choose to participate
- Proposals that ensure affordable comprehensive coverage for the working poor
- Limits on administrative costs of insurers (required medical loss ratio)
- Community rating and guaranteed issue
- Proposals that would improve access to preventive and primary care, disease management, and evidenced-based practice
- Initiatives to support Information Technology development and implementation

Elements the LWVC will not support:

- Individual or employee mandates
- Proposals that promote limited coverage in order to provide affordability—such as high deductible plans and Health Savings Accounts
- Proposals that encourage individual coverage rather than expanding risk pools
- Proposals without effective and assured cost controls
- Proposals that do not ensure the same basic level of care for all
- Employer mandate that does not require employer contributions equivalent to the current average employer contribution
- Employer mandate that does not apply to most employers
- Proposals that shift funds from safety net hospitals before the number of uninsured has been reduced to an equivalent extent
- Insurance regulation that does not include:
 - Community rating
 - Guaranteed issue
 - Minimum medical loss ratio
 - Standardized comprehensive benefit packages
 - Rate regulation

If you are interested in participating on the local LWVEA Health Care Committee contact Suzanne at suzbarba@comcast.net.

LWVC on Global Climate Change



Global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. Recent

scientific studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts.

The State League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change. We can reduce global warming pollution by using existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars go farther on a gallon of gasoline, and shift to cleaner technologies such as hybrids, cleanly-produced bio-fuels, and wind and solar power.

Cities, states and individuals are already adopting many of these solutions, which also reduce our dependence on oil, reduce air pollution, and protect pristine places from oil drilling and mining. State and local initiatives are proving that answers exist. To reinforce and expand on those efforts, the League urges federal action that reduces global warming pollutants on a national and global scale. U.S. businesses can and should lead the world in developing new energy technologies, but most aren't going to without the guidance of mandatory limits.

The good news is that if we act now, and act decisively, we can stop the worst effects of global warming. We must begin to significantly reduce our emissions within 10 years if we are to limit global warming to 3.6° Fahrenheit and avoid the most dangerous impacts of global warming. The window of opportunity is closing, and the time for action is now.

LWVC ON CIVIL LIBERTIES

October 23, 2007

Hon. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman
Hon. Arlen Specter, Ranking Minority Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Dear Chairman Leahy and
Ranking Minority Member Specter:

We understand that the Judiciary Committee will soon consider the FISA Amendments Act (FAA) recently reported by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, or other legislation of its own to replace the Protect America Act, which expires in February.

Any such legislation is bound to be very complex and to raise serious concerns about surveillance that, while targeted at persons abroad, is likely to affect the rights of people in the United States. It may also, like the FAA, include broad immunity for telecommunications carriers who assisted with warrantless, illegal surveillance that continued for more than five years. In addition, it may also, like the FAA, include a sunset so far into the future that Congress would not for many years automatically be prompted to adjust the law to address any abuses of the surveillance authorities the law grants. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence conducted no public hearings on the FAA and its mark-up was conducted in a closed session.

We write to ask that the Judiciary Committee chart a different course. The Committee has a strong record of holding open hearings on major re-writes of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, such as would occur if the Committee considered the FAA or other complex legislation of its own to replace the Protect America Act. Prior to considering amendments to such a bill, the Judiciary Committee should hear at open hearings from experts on FISA and civil liberties about how the bill will affect the privacy rights of Americans. We ask that you conduct those hearings as soon as is practicable on the legislation you intend to consider.

(Signed by the LWVC and 25 other organizations)

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There are about 30 of you reading this newsletter who have not renewed yet. We've asking politely, we've sent you notices, we may have even called some of you, but to no avail. Maybe the following will convince you to renew your membership:



"The League stands for participation at a time when all of us need to focus anew on how fundamentally important involvement is to our democracy. The League has always been about coming together to find answers to contemporary concerns and continues to strive for greater participation by the public which is one of the biggest challenges facing this nation."

The League is described as "dedicated, capable, nonpartisan, convener, educator, contemporary, trusted, composed of men and women of all ages, local, national, global."

Doesn't that make you want to belong to an organization like the League? Of course, you do. Just fill out the League application form on the last page and mail it as soon as possible. If you wait, you might forget or it will get lost in your "things to do" pile.

P.S. Please send us your email, too, so you can receive your VOTER electronically which saves the League money and gets to you faster.

WE'VE GOT A DEAL FOR YOU

There are openings on the Board for those of you who would like to participate just a little or a lot. We will need people to help register voters, distribute voter registration forms to various businesses in the Eden Area, assist with candidate forums, and deliver East Voter and the League Pros and Cons.

If you are interested in helping your League, please contact Alison at aslewis1215@yahoo.com

MEASURE A OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Measure A Oversight Committee has been meeting monthly to ensure that the half-cent sales tax we voted in three years ago is spent according to the way that was proscribed in the proposition.

The League has two seats on the Committee—Sal Tedesco (LWVEA) who represents North Alameda County and Ken Ballard (LWV Fremont, Union City, Newark) represents South Alameda County.

Because the committee members were not appointed and did not begin meeting until a year after Measure A was passed, it played catch up last year. They have begun work on their second report to the Board of Supervisors and the public for expenditures made in 2005-2006.

The committee developed a questionnaire which is given to any agency or community-based organization receiving Measure A funding. The Alameda County Medical Center facilities received 75% of the funds and community-based organizations that provide medical services receive 25% of the funds.

The committee reviews the questionnaires, the budget expenditures and has had many of the agencies, including ACMC make presentations to the committee on how the Measure A money was spent. At the October meeting, ACMC made a presentation which indicated that Measure A funds, representing 12% of their budget, was used appropriately in a variety of areas.

If you have any questions, you can contact Sal at greenridge10@comcast.net.

HOME OWNER ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS

Last year we were very successful in conducting elections for various homeowner associations under the new mandated laws. In addition to providing a service, the League also received payment for conducting the elections. If you are interested in participating in the next one, contact Nancy at lwvea@aol.com

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 _____

Day Phone _____ Eve _____

Email _____

Dues: Regular \$50 Same Household \$25, Student \$20

The League of Women Voters, a
nonpartisan political organization,
encourages the informed and active
participation of citizens in government and
influences public policy through education
and advocacy.

RESERVATION FORM for Holiday Party on Friday, December 7, 2007

Please RSVP by Monday November 27th Cost: \$10.00/person

Name: _____ Name: _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Make your check payable to LWVEA and send to:

Treasurer, P.O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546, Phone number 538-9678.

***Give yourself a gift this year--Volunteer your time to the League
Benefits include:***

- Making new friends
- Building self-esteem
- Learning new skills
- Making a difference in the lives of people
- Personal satisfaction

Visit our website for up-to-date information: www.lwvea.org