



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 54 No10 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Dec, 2011

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

**Friday, December 2, 2011
5:30 to 8 p.m.**

**Spanish Ranch Community Hall
28400 Granada Circle, Hayward**

Remember to bring your mystery gift for the exchange, a donation of items and/ or money for the South Hayward Parish which we have chosen to support this season, a potluck food item and your enthusiasm for our annual LIVE auction of marvelous items

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Planning Meeting to Set Priorities for the National League and Local League

January 14, 2012 (Saturday) 9 a.m. to Noon

As a valued member of this grassroots organization, you have the opportunity to indicate the issues on which you believe the National League and our Local League should focus its time, talent, money and reputation.

We will review the League positions and choose which ones we want to concentrate on for educating the public or for advocacy.

Will it be: Voting Rights, Campaign Finance, Air Quality, Energy, Water Management, Health Care, Immigration, Housing, or Child Care?

Watch for more information in the January VOTER.

Questions? contact Suzanne Barba, suzbarba@comcast.net or 538-9678.

President's Report

Thanksgiving Day – a time to be thankful for surviving the last year; for the harvest and bountiful food it provides for the coming winter; for the home and shelter that keeps our families safe, warm, and together; for all that we value and hold dear in our lives.

This year, I have much to be thankful for such as surviving two major surgeries and recovering from them – however, getting stronger everyday. Retiring from a job I thoroughly enjoyed to a life of leisure, travel, and volunteerism to which I eagerly look forward. Having loving family and stalwart friends around me to care for me, share with me, and enrich my life. So much fullness and possibility in my life for which I give thanks every day!

So why am I vexed and angry at the same time? Mostly it has to do with the performance of our elected officials, the state of our current economy, the greed of our corporate citizens, the growing disparity in living standards across our country, the continued decline of public education, and the waning hope and belief in the future among our young adults. Meaty and weighty subjects, without a doubt; and not ones you and I can solve in the course of this report. But let me highlight a few that may help members to think about how we might best spend our time as a responsible and engaged organization in the coming year.

Destructive Mono-partisanship – Yes, I know ours is a bipartisan system with two parties representing the conservative and liberal viewpoints in our country. But it appears that our elected officials here and in Washington DC are so mired down in partisan politics and party positions that they have forgotten their responsibilities as legislators, statesmen, and elected representatives of all the people in their respective districts. Both levels of government have been rendered impotent

and irrevocably stalemated at both the legislative and executive levels. Our representatives' responsibility to govern and to enact policies designed to improve our lives and make us safer, more secure, and more financially sound has been subjugated to inane and destructive party politics that have little to do with us, the voters, and much more to do with protecting their own personal position and seeking favor to gain higher office.

Next year, I hope to be thankful for more than one courageous elected representative, who remembers the purpose of their office and acts accordingly with intelligence and perseverance. And, I certainly would enjoy being thankful for true campaign reform.

The Growing Economic Divide – This disturbing and dangerous condition is reflected in many of the items I listed above. It is certainly captured in the "Occupy" movement catching fire across the country, illegal encampments notwithstanding. Many folks on the sidelines devalue the "Occupy" movement because they note that it has no leader and no defined point. I disagree.

The "leaders" are the very people most affected by the current state of the economy and our ineffective government. Their defined point is the seeming collapse of our faltering economy and once-prosperous way of life.

These are the very people suffering from lack of jobs, inability to afford adequate housing, lack of affordable healthcare, and inability to afford a college education. These are the same parents watching their children in public schools fall behind others from families that can afford private schools.

For those of us who enjoy all those things and the benefits they bring, it is easy to dismiss the "Occupy" movement as being temporary and its participants as unfocused and without merit.

But the ranks of the disenfranchised are growing in this country, and they are growing less tolerant of the American dream slipping rapidly out of their grasp. They are reacting to the overwhelming, unexplainable greed and lack of ethics and morality we see reflected in our corporate structures, particularly the financial members. They are desperate to provide healthcare to their children and their elders, as well as themselves; healthcare they do not have and cannot afford.

Their children do not look forward to college and improving their economic lives over that of their parents, because they no longer believe it possible – the first time in American history an entire generation does not believe they will, indeed that they cannot, achieve a better standard of living than that of their parents.

Next year, I look forward to being thankful that we now at least have universal, affordable healthcare for all residents of the United States. If nothing else, let's at least achieve that!

So there you have it: I am among the lucky ones and for that I am very thankful. Our country is in dire straits, and for that I am angry and worried. As a League, let's work hard this next year to tackle some of these difficult issues and demonstrate once again that the League of Women Voters "gets it", is not afraid to address the difficult issues head-on; and more importantly, can actually make a real difference when we focus and pull together.

Nancy Van Huffel



BOARD BRIEFS – Nov. 15, 2011

- **Candidate Forum** – LWVEA will be conducting the candidate forum for three people running for the San Lorenzo Village Homes Association on December 15.
- **Program Planning** – The date will be January 14 and we will review LWVUS, LWV Bay Area and local League positions to determine which should be emphasized for education and/or advocacy for 2012-13. Volunteers to plan the event: Linda Slater, Helene Carr, Suzanne Barba and Rene' Besold.
- **Healthcare Program** – Discussed doing a program on healthcare in March and what effect the new federal legislation will have in Alameda County.
- **State and Local Finance Program** – Discussed having this program late in April using a panel.
- **Membership Brochures** – Decided to use up the balance of the LWVUS printed brochures and then develop our own based on a model previously used.
- **Membership Chair** - In the absence of a Membership Chair, Jo Murdach who has been working on the Membership Committee for many years, was appointed Chair, effective immediately.
- **Holiday Party** - Final arrangements were discussed including Francisco Zermeno as the auctioneer, a list of great auction items, and selection of the South Hayward Parish as the recipient of donations of clothes, toys and gift cards for the holiday season.
- **Youth Voter Recruitment** – The committee has met, a power point presentation developed and now the league is waiting for a reply from a high school allowing it and the Registrar of Voters to do programs in the classroom.

League meetings are open to the public and are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:45 p.m. at the Eden Multi-Service center in Hayward.

RESULTS OF CONSENSUS MEETING ON FEDERAL ROLE IN PRE-K TO 12 EDUCATION

by Rene' Besold,
Co-chair of Consensus Committee

The committee that studied the Federal Role in Education numbered 10, but the number did not reflect the vast knowledge and experience of the committee members. Together, those in attendance represented over 200 years of educational experience encompassing all grade levels.

They first attended an educational forum wherein three speakers with current education experience spoke on the three areas covered in the study. The first speaker was a former State PTA President and a District Board of Education member, followed by a currently employed Principal of a top-achieving elementary school and next was a sitting District Superintendent of Schools. They shared their knowledge and experience as they related to the 15 consensus questions.

Having learned from the speakers and having read all of the material provided by the League on this topic, the committee members met on November 4. The meeting was chaired by Suzanne Barba.

They had all done their "homework" and came prepared to fulfill their task of answering all of the Consensus Questions and providing additional insight as needed in the Comments Sections.

Below is a sample. If you would like to receive the whole report by email, please send your request to suzbarba@comcast.net.

FIRST OF 15 CONSENSUS QUESTIONS & ANSWER FROM THE COMMITTEE:

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is:

Much too small ___ Too small___ About right___ Too large___ Much too large___

Answer: Too large (6 votes); about right (4 votes)

(Although the committee was able to reach a majority outcome on this question, the members were not able to reach consensus due to strongly held beliefs based on experience and knowledge.)

The entire report is posted on our website: www.lwvea.org

The Board wishes to express its sincere thanks and appreciation to Suzanne Barba and Rene' Besold for the many, many hours they spent on this project.

PROGRAM PLANNING OVERVIEW

On January 14, we will be reviewing the following LWVUS positions to recommend: dropping, updating, or selecting for action and education in the coming year. These are just the summaries of positions. Members will be asked to select their top two in each category to recommend for action and education in 2012.

The complete positions and the history of how they were used can be found at www.lwv.org, and is called *Impact on Issues 2010-2012*.

Even if you are not one of the lucky ones able to participate in Program Planning on January 14, reading through these summaries will make you proud that you belong to an organization that takes action and educates on issues of that have an impact on our lives and communities every day.

League of Women Voters United States—Summary of Public Policy Positions

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

- Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

- Voting Rights Citizen's Right to Vote. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.
- DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation. Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.
- Election Process Apportionment. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.
- Campaign Finance. 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.
- Election of the President. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the Electoral College; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.
- Citizen Rights Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation. Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.
- Individual Liberties. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights. Public Policy on Reproductive Choices. Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.
- Congress and the Presidency Congress. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.
- The Presidency. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

- United Nations Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.
- Trade - Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers achievement of humanitarian, environmental, and social goals.
- U.S. Relations with Developing Countries Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.
- Arms Control Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.
- Military Policy and Defense Spending Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.
- Natural Resources Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.
- Resource Management Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.
- Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.
- Air Quality. Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.
- Energy. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.
- Land Use. Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.
- Water Resources. Support measures to

- reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.
- Waste Management. Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.
- Nuclear Issues. Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.
- Public Participation Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.
- Agricultural Policy Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

SOCIAL POLICY

- Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.
- Equality of Opportunity
- Equal Rights. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.
- Education, Employment, Housing. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.
- Fiscal Policy
- Tax Policy. Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.
- Federal Deficit. Promote responsible deficit policies.
- Funding of Entitlements. Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old age, survivors, disability and health insurance.
- Health Care Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

- Meeting Basic Human Needs Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.
- Income Assistance. Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.
- Support Services. Provide for essential support services.
- Housing Supply. Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.
- Child Care Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.
- Early Intervention for Children at Risk Support policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of all children.
- Violence Prevention Support violence prevention programs in communities.
- Gun Control Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.
- Urban Policy Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.
- Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well-defined channels for citizen input and review.



PRIVATIZATION STUDY COMING UP

At the last LWVUS convention, several studies were proposed. We just completed the one on the Federal Role in Education. The next study is on Privatization and *"the policy agenda to transfer government functions, services and assets to the private sector."*

The materials for this study will be released to local Leagues soon. If you are interested in working on a Privatization Study Committee, please let LWVEA President Nancy Van Huffel know at lwvea@aol.com.

Here is a sample of the information in support of the need for this study.

"Privatization raises particular issues with respect to transparency because such transparency laws apply exclusively to public bodies, and not to private entities. Where the provision of government services are transferred into private hands, what then becomes of the public's right of access to information regarding the provision of those services?"



LEAGUE WORKS WITH REGISTRAR OF VOTERS TO TARGET YOUTH VOTE

A LWVEA committee is working on a program in collaboration with the Registrar of Voter's office to do programs in Eden Area high schools to register youth and "educate" them on the importance of voting.

A power point presentation for use in the classroom has been developed and contacts are now being made with high schools in our area. If you would like to help with classroom presentations, please contact Nancy at lwvea@aol.com.



CLEAN AIR DEFENSE

Did you know that some officials are trying to undermine the Clean Air Act and strip the EPA of its ability to limit unhealthy air pollution and emissions of toxic chemicals?

We are deeply concerned about these attacks and the impact they will have on public health. This fall, Americans from all walks of life will be asked to make the 'Clean Air Promise.'

The League's Clean Air Promise asks citizens, elected officials and community and business leaders around the country and here in Alameda County to join in making a simple promise -- to protect the health of our children and families.

The promise is a social commitment that we make to each other and which we depend on our elected officials and Congress to carry out and safeguard. We call on California's elected representatives to make the promise.

Visit www.peoplenotpolluters.org to make the promise yourself.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

We need a volunteer coordinator to contact candidates and invite them to participate in SmartVoter, follow up with them, monitor the site daily, create links to other sources of info about the upcoming election. 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 _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Dues: Regular \$50, 2nd member same Household \$25,
Student \$20

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

CALENDAR

DATE & TIME	EVENT	PLACE
Dec. 2 5:30 to 8 p.m.	Annual Holiday Party	Spanish Ranch 28400 Granada Circle, Hayward
Dec. 14 5:45 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting (Note change in date)	Eden Area Multi-Service Ctr. Hayward
Jan. 14 TBA	LWVEA Program Planning	TBA
Jan. 18 5:45 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting	Eden Area Multi-Service Ctr Hayward

**Please visit our website for information—
www.lwvea.org**