



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

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PUBLIC EDUCATION STUDY TO BEGIN SOON

Our League is looking for members and others interested in participating in a LWVUS study on the "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education."

The study is well underway at the national level and materials will be sent to local Leagues in May. In the meantime, there is already a great deal of material that has been circulating online to start us off.

Leagues are encouraged to participate in the study and educate members and communities about the issue. We will have from May through November to conduct our local study and come to consensus.

The study will focus on the components of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which speaks to the equity issues, and also Common Core Standards and subsequent Assessment Issues.

It is recommended that our local League form a study committee, select a chair and join the Public Education Listserv for access to information and discussion with other League members throughout the country.

To assist members who are new to the process of or to participate in a study, the LWVUS will be hosting a webinar scheduled for April 21, at 1 p.m. PST.

Registration information will be forwarded to interest League members by email.

If you are interested in participating in this study group, please contact Suzanne at 538-9678 or email suzbarba@comcast.net.

IMPORTANT NEWS

We are unhappy to say that Senator Mark Leno cannot speak at our Annual Meeting in June on Healthcare. Due to the uncertain schedule caused by the state budget stalemate, Senator Leno can't make any speaking commitments for June.

However, we are inviting him to speak at a September or October 2011 Forum and believe that it will happen!

In the meantime, the Program Committee is working hard to invite another well-known speaker on a topic that will be of interest to our local communities for the June Annual Meeting.

So far, the date is still June 11 and it is scheduled at the Castro Valley Library Chabot-Canyon Room. However, if there is a change of date because of the speaker's schedule, we will let you know in the next VOTER and by email blast.

The June meeting is our Annual Meeting and we have important business to conduct, including electing the 2011-2012 Board.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello League Members:

I want to introduce myself. My name is Linda Slater, and I am your new League president. I accepted the appointment in April when Nancy VanHuffel, your past president, needed to resign to have a necessary knee operation. Reports indicate the operation was a success and she's healing nicely.

I have had the opportunity to meet many of you since I joined the League in 2008 at holiday parties, annual meetings, and educational forums, but I wanted to tell you a little bit about myself. I am a widow with two grown children and six grandchildren.

I work full time as the Assistant Director of the Alameda County Workforce Investment Board where I oversee program planning and implementation of employment and training programs for unemployed/underemployed adults and youth. I am a Tax Advisor for H&R Block for the last seven years, a Notary Public, and the current treasurer and member of AAUW Hayward/Castro Valley Branch. I hope at the next event, that you'll come up and introduce yourself. I would love to get to know each and every one of you.

I hope all of you will come out for our annual meeting on June 11th. It is your opportunity to tell the League Board about your priority issues for the upcoming program year.

Our League has a strong base, an active board, and interesting and thought-provoking programs. Let's keep up the motivation. Get involved! Come to the Board meetings, they are open to all members. Find out what we're planning, then come to the events to learn and share. See you soon.

Linda Slater

BOARD BRIEFS

March 16, 2011

Membership – Jennifer reported that we are down to 111 members after removing the members who had not renewed for 2011-2012 after invoices and phone calls. However, we have picked up six new members, so the recruiting is going well. It was agreed that Jennifer should form a membership committee to help with recruitment, retention and recordkeeping.

Financial - The financial reports were reviewed and accepted. Our League will look into setting up an Educational Fund locally since funds donated to that Fund are tax deductible.

Homeowner Election – The ballot counting was successfully completed on March 15 with the help of volunteer counters: Connie Rusk, Maria Palmeri, Ron Palmeri, Susan Kleebauer, Lillian Kline, Suzanne Barba and Nancy Van Huffel. This service is now the local League's biggest fundraiser and allows the League to keep its membership dues low.

Affidavit Servicing - Doris indicated we have 59 sites that have agreed to provide a convenient place for the public to pick up registration forms. However, we need about 20 more to meet our commitment to the Registrar of Voters in conjunction with the other six Leagues in Alameda County.

Meeting Site – The LWVEA board meetings will be held at Supervisor Wilma Chan's District Office in San Lorenzo (not far from the previous site at the SLVHA) starting with the April 20 meeting.

All LWVEA board meetings are open to the public.

MEET NEW MEMBERS

CHRISTINE WISE

Since she is a bookkeeper and tax preparer, this is a busy time of year for Christine Wise. And to add to her responsibilities, she just accepted the post as treasurer of the Eden Area League of Women Voters -- and it's her second League post. She has been treasurer of the Bay Area League since last October.

Christine joined our league last year. "I went to the Christmas party and met such interesting people," said the San Leandro resident. "I'm a great believer in networking. As a business person, it's important to meet new people." She also has experience in events work. "I like to make people feel comfortable."

She is married, has no children and has lived in the Bay Area since the early 1980s.

Her first taste of political action was working on a San Leandro campaign. "It was eye-opening," she said. "I got an education in ranked-choice voting. And I believe that government has to live within its means."

BIG READ-A-THON

Do you enjoy sharing stories and reading aloud to children or to others? If you do, then the Hayward Library would like you to join dozens of other community members in reading a book out loud as a part of the [Big Read-a-Thon](#). Each reader will read a short passage from the book entitled *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. Readings will take place on Saturdays April 2, 9, 16 and 23 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the City Hall Plaza. If you'd like to have fun while also encouraging others to read, please contact Melesha Owen at 510-293-5239 or email her at melesha.owen@hayward-ca.gov for more information or to sign up.

IN MEMORIAM – FAITH FRAZIER



Faith Frazier died on February 20, but the positive influence she had on San Leandro, and a generation

of students will live on. She was one of the founding members of the San Leandro League before it consolidated with the Hayward League to become Eden Area.

Faith taught school for more than 20 years in the cities of Hayward, San Leandro and Oakland. She was a pioneer for women's rights and women in government. In the 50's she was a founding member of a group called Civic Information and Education. She wanted to help women become part of government, including working in management at City Hall. This was groundbreaking at the time.

She was a charter member of the first San Leandro Arts Council and a member of the Library Board of Trustees in 1982. In 1974 she won a seat on the San Leandro City Council and served two full terms. She was also a founding member of the Bonaire Civic League and a commissioner on the Alameda County Commission on the Status of Women. She helped found the Southern Chapter of the National women's Political Caucus.

Her son Carl wrote, "She was an incredibly gifted woman who helped numerous people throughout her lifetime learn things about government and how it affects us all. She was a legend in her later life and accomplished much by way of leadership and knowledge sharing."

She will be missed by anyone who was lucky enough to know her.

VOTER SERVICE NEEDS HELP

One of the League's most important functions is to ensure that potential voters are able to register to vote along with educating the public on issues on the ballot. The League works with the County Registrar of Voters to ensure that the voter registration forms are placed at convenient sites in our various communities—post office, libraries, school districts and businesses.

Many years ago, our local League had 140 sites throughout Hayward, Castro Valley, San Leandro and San Lorenzo. Today we have 59. The seven leagues in Alameda County have a contractual agreement with the Registrar of Voters to have at least 300 sites where forms are available and sites serviced adequately.

Our League needs to “recruit” at least 20 more sites to keep up with our commitment to the other Leagues as well as the RoV. Someone suggested that banks would be good sites since they have so much foot traffic. Real Estate firms are also good sites since people who buy a home/change their address, must re-register in order to vote.

So if you know of a good site for placing these registration forms and/or would like to volunteer to bring these sites registration forms when they run out—contact Doris Marciel at OWLv7aol.com. Do it today—we really need your help with this project.

FLOW DOCUMENTARY—WORLD WATER CRISIS

An award-winning documentary into what experts label the most important political and environmental issue of the 21st Century—World Water Crisis--will be shown on Monday, May 16 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Hayward Library, 835 C Street.

Filmmaker Irena Salina investigates the growing privatization of the world's dwindling fresh water supply with a focus on politics, pollution, and human rights.

The film will be followed by a Q&A and discussion with Eleanor Starmer, Western Regional Director of Food and Water Watch.

“An astonishingly wide-ranging film. An informed and heartfelt examination of the tug of war between public health and private interests.” New York Times.

For more information, contact Tom Kersten at kersten.tom@gmail.com.

RECAP: FORUM ON STATE BUDGET SPEAKER HON. BETTY YEE

If you weren't able to attend the LWVEA forum on March 11 featuring Hon. Betty Yee, chairwoman of the State Board of Equalization, the following article by member René Besold will give you an idea of what you missed. Yee's speech was entitled: The Budget: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

She first provided an overview of her background and said that as a young person she believed that “anyone could have a voice in government.” To that end, while in a fellowship position, she attended a meeting to “see government in action;” and she was “appalled.” As she put it, “My 11-month fellowship became a 17-year career.”

The following are “bullet points” from Yee's presentation:

- In the Capitol, there is a sense of hope with Jerry Brown that the budget can be balanced with cuts and an extension of the current tax rates
- Governor is trying to direct funds where needed while taking into account the \$26.5 billion shortfall
- His preliminary budget includes \$12.5 billion in budget cuts and \$14 billion in revenue solutions; a recommended spending cap of \$2 billion is also included
- The Legislature knows that California is in a protracted downturn promulgated in major part by the collapse of the financial

market and unreal expectations of a continued housing boom

- California has lost 1.3 million jobs during this recession and they haven't come back
- There is a major debate over continued funding to redevelopment agencies in that some local jurisdictions are not following the law
- Another area of debate is funding for enterprise zones; the law has not been followed in terms of the utilization of the program, the funding has instead gone into retail and outsourced jobs have resulted
- Over the years in California, there has been a dismantling of the social safety net comprised of programs that were meant to help people for short periods of time when they were without jobs, homes, etc.
 - CalWorks Program is being cut...in the past this has been an effective program putting people back to work
 - Welfare-to-Work Program is being cut...115,000 families will lose benefits of which 234,000 children will be affected
 - Childcare Assistance is being cut...parents are expected to pick up the costs but they are the people who likely have lost jobs and have not been rehired
 - Medi-Cal being cut...payment to doctors is being reduced...California ranks 46 out of 50 states on payments to physicians
 - Children 11-12 years of age no longer eligible
 - Adult Day Services also being cut

The Good:

- The budget for K-12 remains the same, but the college system will see cuts
- This is an honest budget not filled with accounting gimmickry, but it is a painful budget

- It is also a disciplined budget...during the time of the tax extensions, we will have a balanced budget
- There is a realignment of the juvenile justice system
- Budget seeks to return some of that decision-making back to the local level
- Subject to Prop. 25, the budget can be passed with a majority vote; however, it still takes a 2/3 vote of the Legislature to raise taxes

The Bad:

- Some of the suggested programs for cuts will be litigated
- The budget lacks investment in human capital
- The budget lacks increased investment in education

The Ugly:

- The Legislature will be saddled with "voter budgeting"
- Some people may die in the streets because the safety net programs will no longer be there to help those having "hard times" in the short term

Yee stayed to answer questions at the end of her presentation and received a book on Alice Paul, who was a leading suffragist in the women's fight to get the vote.

LEADING FOR QUALITY EDUCATION FORUM

by René Besold

The "Leading for Quality Education" Forum was held on March 3, and featured State Superintendent Tom Torlakson and Senator Loni Hancock. The VOTER asked René Besold to share her "notes" from the Forum.

Senator Loni Hancock believes California is at a crossroads in terms of a

structural deficit and thinks that the legislature will finally do something about passing a budget soon because:

- The legislature is no longer in denial about the budget deficit and it knows what must be done
- No longer needs 2/3 to pass a State budget
- The deficit will be increased by another \$12.5 billion of the \$90 billion General Fund budget if tax measures are not passed or if the election is not held; we can rebuild if the taxes as they are now are retained for the next 5 years as the economy recovers
- Special election in June to extend present taxes for those 5 years
- Saying “no” is a high-risk strategy—saying “yes” is low risk under our current circumstances

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson said he is conducting functional audits to determine what actually works and that he is optimistic for several reasons:

- Finger-pointing has diminished in Sacramento; we are looking to the future.
- Everyone is getting involved...even the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce said “yes” to the tax rate retention and other businesses are moving in support of the ballot measure.
- Specific areas on which he is working :
 - Technology: There is a digital divide. Need to implement “No Child Left Offline” (which includes critical thinking and problem-solving curriculum). Technology group is going to ask technology companies (like Apple) to help with local schools
 - Healthy Kids Campaign: working with health director to put together a campaign to address health issues...kids who are hurting (like toothaches) can’t

effectively learn; every child connected to healthcare under realignment plan

- Integration of various family service agencies to help kids
- Getting schools off the energy grid by conservation and using renewables – working with experts to save millions of dollars which can be diverted to the classroom
- Getting greater parent involvement in programs
- A ballot measure for 2012 to fund pre-school
- Literacy programs: goal of 95-100% English language proficiency by 3rd grade
- Funding in schools is inadequate...we were in the “Top 5” in per-pupil spending and now at the bottom; should strive to get “back to the top.” Bills are going through the Legislature which would address the inequities in per-pupil funding; diverse schools get less. Turnaround has to begin now—can’t keep cutting. Thinks economic recovery will help. School bonds need to be passed because that is a local investment—should be easier to pass at 55%
- Funding for special education needs to be balanced with the need for other services
- Involving other programs and services—Berkeley is doing it now—involving the school district, the city, the hospitals, the park district and other stakeholders
- Including in defined curriculum, along with math and science, other subjects like woodshop, car and computer repair, arts, bilingualism to meet the diverse needs of students; instituting mentorships with

- o companies that have math and science as their base like engineering fields for example
- o Defining “success” in new ways: teaching effectiveness, whole-student evaluation and proficiency

FEDERAL HEALTH CARE REFORM: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Helen Hutchison, LWVC Advocacy Director



Everyone is unhappy about health care, particularly health care costs, but not everyone realizes that a national health care reform bill is law, or what is in it. Research

shows that many Americans don't even know that a reform bill has passed. Start by informing yourself about what is—and is not—in the bill, and then make it a point to talk to your friends and neighbors.

Some of what is included in the landmark Affordable Care Act:

- a guarantee that insurance companies can no longer discriminate based on pre-existing conditions
- an end to lifetime caps
- a requirement that insurance companies can no longer drop people when they get sick

In addition, the bill:

- gives tax credits to small businesses for providing coverage for employees
- requires insurers to cover preventive care at no cost

There is misinformation being circulated about the bill's effects on Medicare. Don't let the naysayers scare seniors!

- Medicare is actually being improved and strengthened.

- The Affordable Care Act attacks waste and fraud.
- The bill adds benefits for those on Medicare:
 - o helps seniors stay in their homes
 - o bans discrimination based on pre-existing conditions
 - o provides preventive care with no co-pays

Yes, there are taxes—but only for those with incomes over \$200,000-\$250,000. These taxes will provide for the largest investment in the health care workforce ever made. There is a huge need for primary health care providers, and the Affordable Care Act will help fill the gap by investing in education and training, and providing incentives for these desperately needed caregivers.

Finally, for those who advocate repealing the act: this is an even more costly choice than enacting it! Repealing the act would cost an estimated \$455 billion.

What about California?

California is on the forefront of federal health care reform. This fall, the governor signed two bills creating the California Health Benefit Exchange. There are a number of challenges on the road to an operational exchange by 2014; the League will be active both in advocacy and community education. If you are interested in working on this issue, contact Helen Hutchison, hhutchison@lwvc.org.

Sign up for action alerts on the LWVC Web site. Go to lwvc.org and click on “Sign up for E-News” at the upper left. On the sign-up page, choose “Action Alerts.”

Do you want to know more? Here are sites where you can find good information: <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/introduction/index.html>
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform/healthcare-overview>
<http://www.chcf.org/health-policy-office>

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

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

CALENDAR

DATE & TIME

EVENT

PLACE

April 2 (Sat)
 9 to noon

LWV Alameda County
 Council

Nate's Miley's Office 2004
 20999 Redwood Rd., CV

April 2, 9, 16 &
 23 9-1 p.m.

Big Read-a-Thon
 (See article)

Hayward City Hall Plaza

April 7 (Thurs.)
 5 to 7 p.m.

Spectrum Community Services
 Open House

2621 Barrington Court
 Hayward

April 15 (Fri)
 10-11:30 a.m.

Senior Scam Stopper
 Assem. Mary Hayashi

13909 E 14th St
 San Leandro

April 20 (Wed)
 5:45 – 7 p.m.

LWVEA Board Meeting

San Lorenzo Com. Hall
 377 Paseo Grande, SLZ

**Please visit our website for up-to-date event information—
www.lwvea.org**