

MY WORD ARTICLE in Daily Review 4/6/2007
FOR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, THE FUTURE IS NOW

“Honoring our Past—Looking to the Future” is the theme for the League of Women Voters Eden Area 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner, April 13 at the City of Hayward Rotunda. In preparing for this event, League members searched their archives and found they showed fifty years of significant accomplishments—the League has indeed, “walked the talk.”

That “talk” is encapsulated in the League’s Mission Statement – “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.”

The key to implementing that Mission is “education and advocacy” and that is what the Eden Area League has done for the past fifty years. The League has conducted studies and/or educational forums on children’s mental health, health care, energy, the education system, juvenile justice, transparency in government, voting systems, state and local finance, land use, parks and open space, and boards and commissions. In the 1960’s, because of the League’s outstanding reputation, it was asked to review the Hayward City Charter and recommend changes. The League drafted those recommendations into ballot changes that led to the direct election of the Mayor and many other significant changes.

Members of the Eden Area League have given thousands of hours to their communities, which include the cities of Hayward and San Leandro, and unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview and San Lorenzo. The League has worked to improve voter knowledge of local, state, and national issues, encourage community members to become involved with local issues, especially focusing on educating voters on state ballot propositions, local issues, and to understand the governance structures and information within which we all vote.

The League has conducted hundreds of candidates’ forums for all levels of local government, distributed more than 100,000 of the highly sought after Pros and Cons on ballot measures in several languages, registered thousands of voters, maintained over 100 voter affidavit sites in the Eden Area and provided speakers to various organizations to explain the Pros and Cons on ballot measures during election years.

The Eden Area League has also participated in national, state and county studies on important issues such as reapportionment of state and national legislatures, revision of the state constitution, the role of the government in control and responsibility for water quality, development of human resources in employment and education, foreign economic policy of the United States, civil rights, long-range land use and the evaluation of regional agencies and multifunctional government for the San Francisco Bay area.

League meetings and programs are open to the public and membership is open to all men and women. Local League members are automatically members of the state and national League. For further information, the League maintains a website at www.lwvea.org or email questions to lwvea@aol.com.

Suzanne Barba, Past President
and Eleanor Parker, Historian
League of Women Voters Eden Area