



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 54 No. 7 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* July, 2011

ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE

In July, League members will be receiving a notice to renew their annual dues to support the League at all levels. Despite having the lowest dues, portions of the \$50 go to National, State, and a small portion to the Bay Area League. That's quite a "bang for your buck" considering that the National and State Leagues monitor and advocate on vital legislation on the important issues that impact us all.

Please make out your check right away so that it doesn't get to the bottom of the "things to do" pile of good intentions. Although we always hope that all members will be active League members, we understand that is an impossible goal. However, member support of the League through payment of dues goes a long way to ensure that we are able to meet our mission of educating ourselves and voters on the issues. Plus, it helps us work to ensure that all eligible voters are registered and vote.

If you don't want to wait until you receive your "official" notice to renew your membership, you can make out your check for \$50 member, \$75 for two at one household, or \$20 if you are a student. If paying dues is a financial hardship for you, please email lwvea@aol.com and you may be eligible for dues help through the ANGEL FUND.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Making Democracy Work[®]

President's Message



HAPPY NEW YEAR League Members!

That's right July is the beginning of a new program year for our League. July represents the first month of PY 2011-12 and as such is your opportunity to renew your commitment to the League through your membership and participation.

At our Annual Meeting in June, League members gave the newly elected Board a call to action for PY 2011-12. Members highlighted several important issues: County Boards and Commissions membership to encourage more League members to accept local political offices; work, in coordination with the State League, on the Initiative and Referendum position to ensure responsible government; and voter education to ensure the voting public is well-informed to make responsible choices.

All worthy issues, but how do we tackle them? With your help and support! What kind of help and support you say?

First, renew your League membership. Our League dues of \$50 a year is still the best deal in town.

Second, let me know what you are most interested in and where you think you can help.

Is it being a voter registration servicer?

Is it learning how to do pros and cons presentations?

Is it helping to coordinate a voter education forum for another group you support?

Is it writing letters/flyers/newspaper articles supporting League positions?

Is it doing online blogs about important League positions?

Is it encouraging other like-minded individuals to join the League?

Is it attending League events, participating in the discussions, then staying to help cleanup?

Whichever way you, personally, can help, your League needs and appreciates the support.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you over this next year. Be sure to introduce yourself to me so I can get to know each and every one of you better. It's my first full year being your President and I want it to be a good year for the League of Women Voters of the Eden Area. Together, all things are possible.

Linda J Slater

BOARD BRIEFS

June 15, 2011

- Membership & Recruitment – The Membership Committee will be meeting on June 29 to discuss how we can recruit more members and encourage present members to renew.
- Audit – Nancy Van Huffel was approved to conduct the LWVEA Audit for 2010-11 as called for by the bylaws.
- Affidavit Service – Doris Marciel reported we have 71 sites where voter registration forms are available and 13 volunteers to service them.
- 100 Years of Women’s Right to Vote – Board agreed to have a table to register voters at the celebration of the Women’s Right to Vote in CA on September 24 at 4 p.m. in the San Leandro Library.
- Board Vacancies – Due to unexpected resignations, the Board has two vacancies to fill— Secretary and Director. The Nominating Committee will resume a search.
- City of Hayward Volunteer of the Year 2011 – The Board nominated Nancy Van Huffel to represent LWVEA as its Volunteer of the Year.
- Fundraiser Drawing – The Board approved not including information and tickets for a fundraiser drawing with membership renewal invoices this year, but that the fundraiser be done separately and the funds raised be used for a specific project.
- New Board Meeting Place - Future Board meetings will be held at the Eden Area Multi-Service Agency in the County Bldg., 24100 Amador Street, 3rd Floor, and Hayward.

**The Honorable Jerry Brown,
Governor of California
State Capitol Building, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Dear Governor Brown:

The League of Women Voters of California requests that you convert the sentences of all prisoners who are awaiting execution in California from death to life without the possibility of parole. Eliminating the death penalty is ethically sound and will help save money for the vital programs that serve people’s basic needs.

California’s death row costs \$126 million a year beyond the cost of imprisoning convicts for life. Cutting costs by eliminating the death penalty and mandating permanent imprisonment for the inmates on death row makes sense at a time when there is an urgent need to cut unnecessary spending from all parts of the state budget.

All Californians are concerned about our state’s growing budget gap and the need to reduce costs and raise revenue. As more and more necessary government services face cuts, the state must re-evaluate its budget priorities. “Cutting” the death penalty will save California \$1 billion over five years without releasing a single prisoner. Permanent imprisonment provides swift and certain justice for victims’ families, avoiding the agonizing delays caused by decades-long appeals and the illusory promise of execution.

In the past, the state has prioritized funding for the death penalty above crime prevention and victims’ services. Los Angeles is denying overtime funding for homicide investigators, Oakland is laying off police officers, and 45 percent of all homicides statewide go unsolved. Last year, \$50 million was cut from the Victims Compensation Fund. Yet despite these cuts to law enforcement and victims’ services, the state continues to pay \$126 million annually for its death penalty system. Let’s find a better use for this money.

Sincerely,

Janis R. Hirohama, LWVC President

FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION – LOCAL STUDY FOR LWVUS

At the Annual Meeting on June 11, eleven members signed up to participate in the LWVUS Study to determine *What is the Role of the Federal Government in Education*. Those who signed up so far are: Rene Besold, Jennifer Ong, Helene Carr, Evelyn Cormier, Ruth Kuffin, Sonya Howes, Cossette Sun, Janice Friesen, Connie Rusk, Doris Marciel and Suzanne Barba.

The group will be meeting this summer to come to consensus on questions supplied by the LWVUS. There is also reading material available to assist study participants which should be read before the study meeting. An email will be sent to those who sign up in order to schedule a date and time for the study meeting.

If you have not signed up yet but would like to do so, please email suzbarba@comcast.net.

The following is a sampling of consensus questions which the study group will discuss. There are 12 questions to be answered. These General Questions apply to the overall focus of the study. While they may seem simple, they are important to developing strong positions. Join the study and make a difference.

- The current role of the federal government in public education is
 - Much too small
 - too small
 - about right
 - too large
 - much too large
- What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)
 - _To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.
 - _To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - _To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - _To monitor state efforts for funding
 - _To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.
- A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable Democracy
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - No consensus
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)
 - Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
 - A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
 - Competitive grants only
 - No federal funding
 - No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.
- Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)
 - high quality teaching/learning
 - adequate and current learning materials
 - clean and well maintained physical facilities
 - food and health care
 - safe and secure neighborhoods
 - secure housing
- The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to five for all children?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - No consensus
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

The above is just a sampling of the questions. There is lots of reading material provided by the LWVUS to help you make these important decisions.

LWVEA ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY

- **BUDGET** - Reviewed the proposed budget for 2011-2012, noting there was approximately \$38,000 in the treasury because of successful fundraising. Therefore, we are able to keep our dues low. The League's two main fundraisers are from providing election services to local homeowner groups, and the payment we get from the Registrar of Voters to service 71 sites with voter registration forms. Proposed budget approved.



(left) Helene Carr, VP Program and Dr. Jennifer Ong, VP Membership address the members

- **ELECTION OF LWVEA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS** – The following officers and directors were nominated and elected for the 2011-2012 term:
Officers: President Linda Slater, 1st V.P. Program Helene Carr, 2nd VP Membership Stephanie Raney, Treasurer Christine Wise. Directors: Suzanne Barba, Rene Besold, Gail Lundholm, Doris Marciel, Jo Murdach, Connie Rusk, and Jewell Spalding. Nancy Van Huffel serves on the Board as Past President. The new board was sworn in by Gail Steele, former Alameda County Board Supervisor.



- **PROGRAM PLANNING** – At annual Program Planning meeting, January 22, 2011, the group reviewed the LWVC positions and did not delete any.

Recommended LWVC educate and advocate in 2011-2012 on: (1) Education Pre-K to 12, (2) State and Local Finance, and (3) Campaign Finance Reform. After a review of local League positions, the group suggested that the Boards and Commissions position and the Mental Health position be updated. The Annual Meeting members approved LWVEA educating and advocating on (1) education, (2) healthcare, and (3) state and local finance.

- **DIRECTIONS TO THE BOARD** – At the conclusion of the meeting, members were asked to give Directions to the Board. The following suggestions were offered:

- > A committee should look at the state's Natural Resources positions and make the membership aware of these positions so that they can be used as necessary when adverse land use proposals are made. (Audrey LePell)

- > LWVEA should pay attention to wetlands and climate change and oppose proposals that would be harmful to wetlands and cause negative climate change. (Evelyn Cormier)

- > LWVEA should publish vacancies on local boards and commissions and urge League members to apply. (Eleanor Parker)

ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKERS

An Update on the Juvenile Justice System in Alameda County was the topic for the two speakers at the Annual Meeting on June 11. Members were impressed by the commitment and vision of David Muhammad, newly appointed Alameda County Chief Probation Officer and Paula Barber, who has served for 16 years as Executive Director, Center for Family Counseling.

Chief Muhammad indicated that Probation handles approximately 2,000 juveniles a year and 15,000 adults. He said that because of the \$137 million deficit in Alameda County's proposed budget, the Probation Department will be cut \$9.7 million. On June 30, the \$7.8 million generated by the Vehicle License Fee and designated for public safety "will go away."



He said that many juvenile offenders are diverted to group homes in the community. It costs Probation \$5,000 a month for each youth. By comparison, it costs the state \$200,000 a year per youth to imprison that population. The state is now reducing the number of juvenile offenders they detain and are sending them back to their home counties. Alameda County will get less than 50 because the county has not been sending as many

offenders to the state recently. In the state's realignment, funding is supposed to be provided by the state to follow the youth being returned to the county.

Chief Muhammad envisions changing and improving the program at both the Juvenile Justice Center and Camp Sweeney. Probation has \$35 million from the state to rebuild Camp Sweeney where adjudicated offenders are held. However, the county needs to provide a match of \$9 million in order for the building process to begin. In these bad economic times, the county is struggling to close a deficit and hopefully reduce the percent of the matching funds needed.

Paula Barber talked about the type of youth that she sees being helped at her Center for Family Counseling and other community based organizations. These at-risk youth are generally runaways, truants and delinquents. She works closely with the Probation Department and is Chair of the Delinquency Prevention Network.

Her agency provides no cost counseling services for families of youth at-risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system. The services include mental health assessment, counseling and case management when needed. The Center provides outpatient mental health services for youth on probation or chronically truant. The Center was founded in 1976, in response to the need for an alternative to incarceration for youth who are incorrigible, truant and who run away from home.



100th ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE IN CALIFORNIA

On Saturday, September 24, we will be joining with the San Leandro Library to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in California. In the meantime, a local columnist named Nilda Rego wrote a column about "Women who fought for their right to vote," and she let me know that she joined the LWV 55 years ago in Oregon.

"It wasn't easy for California women to secure the right to vote even though they got it nine years before most of the rest of the country. California was the sixth state to give women the vote, but men had to go to the polls twice before a majority of them were convinced that women should have the right.

"Susan B. Anthony came to California to campaign in 1896. The ballot measure gained the support of *The Call* newspaper in San Francisco, but not the *Chronicle*. The women's right to vote was endorsed by the Republicans, the churches, educational institutions and some substantial business interests. But it wasn't enough. The amendment lost by 10,000 votes statewide. San Francisco men came out 3 to 1 against the women's vote.

"Anthony went on to Kansas City to work on the suffrage movement in Missouri after the California defeat. She gave an interview to the United Associated Press reporter November 14, 1896. '*The liquor association of the state massed their forces and announced bitter hostility to the movement. They fought us tooth and nail.... The liquor men did it,*' she said.

"In 1911, the women tried again, but not all women were supporters, as the Oakland Tribune pointed out. '*Mrs. W. S. Wattles, prominent Berkeley anti-suffragist, sai, 'Women by reason of their physical disabilities and feminine abuse of liberty are in mighty danger of*

becoming irresponsible voters....The great thing is to keep women out of politics, do not add to politics the one corruption it lacks, sex corruption.'

"The day after the election, it appeared that suffrage was again going down to defeat. San Francisco men had turned down the measure 2 to 1. The amendment lost in Alameda County by fewer than 1800 votes. In Contra Costa County, it won by a mere 21 votes.

"But when the vote started coming in from the rural counties, the tide was turned. It was the farmers of the state who had made the difference. The measure passed by 3,587 votes out of 240,000 votes cast."

Nilda Rego



Leading a march of 300 women of the California Equal Suffrage Association in Oakland August 27 1908 were (l to r) Lillian Harris Coffin, Mrs. Theodore Pinther, Jr & Mrs. Theodore Pinther, Sr.
Photo: California Historical Society, San Francisco, CA

League of Women Voters of Eden Area
P. O. Box 2234 – Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510/538-9678
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and unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley,
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*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

July 23 (Saturday) 1:30 p.m. – Meet the Author, Janet Fletcher who wrote, “In Defense of Food” and local CSA Farmers at the Hayward Library. For information call Barbara Jones, AAUW, at 538-0516

July 30 (Saturday) 9:30 to 1:30—LWVEA Board Retreat to plan for 2011-2012 Programs and Projects. Place: Suzanne Barba’s home, 5787 Highwood Rd, Castro Valley

July 1- 16 – Story of Suffrage, the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 205 Railroad Avenue, Danville. Tuesday through Friday from 1 to 4 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, 925-837-3750.

July-August, date and time TBA – Study Group on LWVUS position on Federal Role in Education--Pre-K through 12.

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