



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 54 No. 3 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* March, 2011

REMINDER

FORUM ON STATE BUDGET AND LOCAL IMPACT

Friday, March 11

Registration and Luncheon – 11:45 a.m.

Speaker – 12:30, Q & A Session – 1:00 p.m.

San Lorenzo Village Homes Association Community Hall
377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo

Featured Speaker is Betty Yee, chair of the State Board of Equalization with more than 25 years of experience in public service, specializing in state and local finance.

Please RSVP to suzbarba@comcast.net or call 538-9678. Cost of the luncheon is \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Checks should be payable to LWVEA and mailed to Treasurer, LWVEA, P. O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546. There is no cost for those coming just to hear the speaker, but an RSVP would be appreciated.

JUNE ANNUAL MEETING WILL FEATURE SENATOR MARK LENO

Healthcare—How Will the Federal Legislation Impact California?

Senator Leno took over leadership on the Healthcare Reform legislation previously carried by Senator Sheila Kuehl. His legislation is SB810, the California Universal Health Care Act. He states, "This landmark legislation establishes a modern universal health care system to cover every resident with comprehensive benefits for life. SB 810 provides universal care without increasing overall health care spending in California."

More on this important upcoming forum will be in future VOTERs.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As some of you know, my knee has caused me problems for the past few months. The good news I have a date of March 21 for knee replacement surgery. Things will be very busy for me between now and then, particularly since I have many things to do in order to be off work for at least a month.

Our Association's annual budget needs to be done by March 17th, plus we are going through a very emotional recall election which has taken an enormous amount of my time. In thinking about how to adequately prepare for all the things I need to have in place for work, I have decided to resign as League President. Needless to say, this is not an easy decision; however, I need to do what is best for me as well as the League. I had no plans to run for the position next year, so I thought it would be an excellent opportunity for someone else to see how much fun it is being President.

Linda Slater, our Treasurer, indicated she would be willing to step up to the plate and assume the role of President not only for the next few months, but will continue to serve my term through June, 2012. I am very confident that Linda will make an excellent President and I am very grateful that she is willing to accept this responsibility.

I promised Linda I would assist her in any way I could. I don't want anyone to think I am deserting the League, but rather shifting my leadership responsibilities to someone quite capable. I will continue on with whatever assigned responsibilities come my way after recovering from my knee surgery.

In my opinion we have a wonderful Board to work with this year and I know everyone will continue to support Linda and each other just as they have me in my role of President. A sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of you who have supported me in my role as your president and throughout the years. I look forward to our continued work together.

Nancy Van Huffel

BOARD BRIEFS, January 19, 2011

Membership Report – Jennifer Ong indicated that she is working with a state League member to straighten out the disparities on the National League membership roster and our local input. Apparently some of the additional new members we have inputted are not reflected in the National roster.

Palomares HOA Election - We are receiving ballots in the mail and ballot counters for March 15 have signed up. This service brings in enough revenue for our League to be able to subsidize memberships when the cost would otherwise be a barrier to joining.

Annual Meeting Speaker – Senator Mark Leno was confirmed as the speaker for our June Annual Meeting.

LWVBA Forum on Re-use, Recycle, & Rot – Connie Rusk submitted a written report and said that the forum was excellent with lots of new information. (Her report is in this VOTER.)

Affidavit Servicing – Doris Marciel is still looking for new recruits to find new sites to place the voter registration forms for the public. She has eight people covering 50 sites in the Eden Area, but needs several more people and 20 more sites.

Betty Yee Luncheon Forum – Helene Carr reviewed the plans for the forum and recruited several board members to “work the event.”

Accept resignation of Nancy Van Huffel as President and nominate and elect Linda Slater to serve the remainder of her term.

Reports - There were reports on the Family Court Reform Project headed by former Supervisor Gail Steele, Good Government Project, and the San Leandro Library's project on Women's Suffrage 100th anniversary to be celebrated in September.

Board meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:45 p.m. at the San Lorenzo Village Conference Room.

WELCOME NEW LEAGUE MEMBERS

Annette Walker

I am an Educator and lifelong learner building upon 18 years of progressive service in all three-segments of Public Education (K-12, Community College, and the University setting). I am utilizing my Doctorate in Organization and Leadership and Masters degree in Educational Psychology to steer as many individuals as I can into higher education and giving back to the community. I passionately value public education and hold the belief that if we improve our schools, we can save our community.

My commitment and advocacy for public education reform and creating equitable learning environments in urban settings launched my candidacy to run for Hayward School Board in 2010. I strongly believe that voters should be well informed and pay attention to the citizens they entrust their vote. For this reason, I've decided to join the league and assist in their efforts to reach out to community.

Lillian Kline

I was born and raised in Alameda. My family moved to San Bernardino in my high school years. After graduation, I worked for the San Bernardino Water Company.

I married and settled in Castro Valley where my husband Emil taught in the Castro Valley Schools. We had three children and when our youngest was in junior high school, I also worked for the Castro Valley School District. I have devoted myself to improving education for learning disabled students.

I'm active at Holy Cross Episcopal Church and in the St. Giles Guild, which is associated with Renaissance Faires. With my daughter Kathy, I attend in costume and we serve as "kitchen wenches," making sure the performers have food and drink available at all times.

For years I have been interested in the League of Women Voters but never joined. This last election pushed me into joining the League. My main reason is to be more informed in the process of politics.

MORE ON THE PROPOSED STATE BUDGET FROM LWVC

League of Women Voters of California Praises Honest Approach to Budget Woes

Sacramento—The League of Women Voters of California applauds the balanced approach taken in the Governor's proposed budget. Recent years have shown that California's dire fiscal situation can't be adequately addressed without looking at both the revenue and the expenditure sides of the balance sheet. As the legislature responds and proposals are refined, we encourage everyone involved to approach these difficult discussions thoughtfully and with an open mind.

The proposed cuts are beyond painful—they are excruciating. While we know that expenditures need to be examined, the League is concerned that these cuts will further deteriorate essential safety-net programs as well as other programs throughout the budget.

"It's about time that we have a budget that works towards long-term solutions, rather than relying on one-time fixes and accounting gimmicks," said Janis R. Hirohama, LWVC President. "This budget faces up to the reality of California's structural deficit. California taxpayers want to be dealt with honestly and forthrightly."

The proposed extension of the current taxes is appropriate. It's impossible to deal with this size of a deficit without increased revenue. California voters have indicated they want services; voters should have a clear choice and a better opportunity to see what the consequences of not passing these taxes will be. We hope that the legislature agrees that the voters should have a chance for an up or down vote on this proposal.

The governor's budget includes major restructuring of some government programs to shift responsibility and control for many locally delivered services to local government. We will be closely following the discussion on realignment. One question that needs to be considered is how much money now provided by the state or passed through from the federal government will follow the responsibility.

Local governments differ in their ability or willingness to approve local taxes for services, which could mean distinct and perhaps inequitable differences in how well local funding would match local needs in the long run.

“There will be difficult debates to come, over the governor's proposals, but at least we are finally facing up to hard reality,” said Hirohama. “The picture painted by the governor's budget isn't pretty, but it is an honest one.”

Janis Hirohama, President
LWVC

Recycle, Re-use, Rot!! Bay Area League Day Featured Top Experts

by Connie Rusk

The Bay Area League Day, held just steps from Lake Merritt BART, was a winner for Suzanne Barba and me. The status of the speakers was beyond high. I thought I was aware and “green” but I learned a lot. Turn your calendar now to the December 2011 page and mark “League Day” as a reminder.



Some highlights:

- Before you put up solar panels, replace aging refrigerators and washing machines. Utility efficiency **costs** less than 1% of electric bills but **saves** billions.
- We've reduced actual energy costs 15%, saving \$1.2 trillion per year, since the OPEC energy embargo in 1973.
- White roofs last twice as long and reflect heat away from earth. Ordinances are in the works to mandate white roofs in new construction. (Think hot climates – buildings have been whitewashed since ancient times). Worldwide, a campaign is under way for white roofs in the tropics and temperate zones.

- In California, our electric consumption per capita is 6,500 kwh compared to 12,000 in the U.S. as a whole. About a third of the difference is due to weather; also, we use no coal and are strong on renewables; a third is due to high standards for appliances and homes. Our electricity is more expensive but we use half as much. Gas furnaces are 30% better than central air.
- Worldwide, prices have not gone up for 10 appliances. More efficient appliances mean more delay in global warming.

These are just a few facts from Arthur Rosenfeld, former Asst. Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy 1994-99, and winner of the Enrico Fermi award for contributions to energy efficiency.

In our own backyard, at the Port of Oakland, “no-waste reuse” due to recycling concrete and soil from damaged airplane “parking” areas has saved \$12.4 million in disposal costs and \$1.9 million in reuse savings. This speaker was Douglas Herman, environmental scientist at the Port.

Three new hydrogen fuel cell buses get 60% better fuel economy than diesel; the only emission is steam. This is a small pilot program. Twelve new buses in 5 transit agencies are 5,000 pounds lighter, have a lower profile, and have better acceleration. Plans also call for hybrid buses, which would mean 30% reduction in diesel use – from Jaimie Levin of AC Transit.

- In schools, students are growing and selling produce. When teens are unable to find jobs, this helps. – from Nate Ivy, Alameda County Office of Education coordinator of environmental service learning.

Sites to access: www.StopWaste.org and www.EnergyUpdateCA.org. This barely scratches the surface of this excellent program.

COURT SLAPS LAWMAKERS FOR ONE-SIDED MEASURE

*Bob Egelko, Chronicle Staff Writer
Friday, January 28, 2011*

California lawmakers must stop putting their own one-sided titles on ballot measures they sponsor and instead must allow the state attorney general to write impartial descriptions, an appeals court said Thursday in a case that could affect future votes on taxes and water.

Ruling on the ballot labeling of a high-speed rail bond that the voters approved in November 2008, the state's Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento said the Legislature has violated the law since 1990 by writing summaries of its measures on the ballot and in the voter pamphlet.

A 1974 political reform initiative assigned those duties to the attorney general to "promote impartiality and eliminate conflicts of interest," the court said in a 3-0 ruling. The 2008 measure, Proposition 1A, authorized \$9.75 billion in bonds for a high-speed rail system.

The Legislature gave it the title of the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act. The ballot label and voter pamphlet summary, also written by legislators, said the bond offered a "safe, convenient, affordable and reliable alternative to driving and high gas prices."

The ruling does not invalidate Proposition 1A. But it does apply to any proposal the Legislature places on a future ballot, including Gov. Jerry Brown's plan to ask voters in June to extend state income, sales and vehicle tax rates that are due to expire this year.

The ruling would also allow Attorney General Kamala Harris to rewrite the title of an \$11 billion water bond that is scheduled to go before the voters in November 2012. Its current title, supplied by the Legislature, is the Safe, Clean and Reliable Water Supply Act.

The ruling prohibits lawmakers from "hijacking the ballot label, title and summary and turning them into another argument instead of an impartial voter guide," said attorney Timothy Bittle of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, which sued challenging the title of Prop. 1A. He said many voters assume that the ballot label is an authoritative description of a measure.

Legislative leaders argued that the 1974 initiative merely described the Attorney General's duties under long-standing state laws and did not prohibit lawmakers from assigning the task to themselves. Their lawyer, Diane Boyer-Vine, a deputy legislative counsel, declined to comment on the ruling.

The case applies only to bonds and other measures that are placed on the ballot by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. The attorney general already provides the titles and summaries of initiatives that qualify with signatures on petitions.

A LETTER TO STATE SENATOR MARK LENO CONCERNING PENDING BUDGET CUTS

By Rene' Besold, LWVEA Board member

Dear Senator Leno,

As a Literacy Tutor and the President of the Literacy Plus Council of Hayward, I know firsthand the devastating effect budget cuts to literacy and library funding will cause.

My learner, Kerry B., is a 34-year-old father of two who has kept a terrible secret his entire life: he can't read or write above the fifth-grade level. His family doesn't know and his employer doesn't know because he has become astute at masking these deficits, but his shame lingers on.

A year ago, Kerry took a courageous step, he contacted Literacy Plus in Hayward. Within days, he was tested, counseled and paired with a tutor...me. Over the next eight months, he made incredible progress, improving steadily. Then Kerry shared with me a story that all tutors hope to hear, he said, "The other night when everyone else was sound asleep, I got up, went to the kitchen and



began reading the book you gave me! I've never done that in my life." Kerry had turned the corner from being afraid of reading to wanting to read.

Without adequate funding, progress for Kerry and thousands of others will come to an end. I implore you...don't let that happen. In Hayward, the Literacy Plus Program is dependent upon this funding to help provide literacy tutoring services for over 100 English-speaking, illiterate and low-literate adults each year. Since its inception, the program has provided services for over 2,000, enabling them to secure driver's licenses, vote, read to their own children and in some cases even to start their own businesses.

The Legislature unashamedly funds prisons, generously putting money into those who have **taken** from our society, but it won't adequately fund literacy and library services that **give back** to our society. This is irrational and totally without justification. Funding fine literacy and library programming now, backfilling the education not received earlier, will lessen the need for funding for the prison system in the future because educated, productive members of society don't turn to lives of crime. Put our money where it can best be used, into literacy and library services...not prisons!

Don't let Kerry down. Stand up for improving the reading and writing of our citizenry. I urge the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee to reject Governor Brown's recommendation to cut State support for Literacy and Library Services. Please send a clear message back to the Governor, that his proposed savings of \$30 million is something we just can't afford. Improve the skills and knowledge of thousands like Kerry and the entire society benefits now and into the future.

OPENING FOR SMART VOTER COUNTY COORDINATOR JOB

Work with seven local Smart Voter Coordinator to make Smart Voter a rich source of

information about candidates, ballot measures, and election events before every election.

- ❖ Act as Smart Voter Alameda County's contact person with the office of the Registrar of Voters, obtaining the certified candidates list and wording for measures as they will appear in the ballot booklets.
- ❖ Work with Smart Voter Central to make sure the basic candidate and measure info is uploaded to the Smart Voter system
- ❖ Assign the races and measures that will be on the ballot to each of the local coordinators.
- ❖ Monitor the work of the local coordinators as they
 - extend invitations and instructions to the candidates to participate in Smart Voter,
 - enter information about the ballot measures
 - review and approve the candidates' submission of information
 - add nonpartisan information about the races, ballot measures and election events,
 - work with their local League's Voter Service team to remind them to publicize Smart Voter at forums and Pros & Cons presentations and in their League's VOTER and on their League's Web site
- ❖ Working with Smart Voter Central and the Northern California Smart Voter liaison, support the local coordinators when they have questions about how to find information they need or instructions for working with Smart Voter.
- ❖ Relay messages from Smart Voter Central to the local Coordinators during the election season.
- ❖ Respond to Smart Voter email from users and candidates and/or forward these to the appropriate local coordinator
- ❖ Post election results when available after an election

Contact Bonnie Hamlin, bhamlin@igc.org if interested or have questions.

LEADING FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Leading for Quality Education is the topic of a dinner forum sponsored by the Alameda County School Board Association and Superintendent of Schools Sheila Jordan on **Thursday, March 3** from 4:30 to 8 p.m. at Hs Lordships Restaurant, 199 Seawall Drive, Berkeley.

Featured speakers are newly elected State Superintendent of Instruction Tom Torlakson and a legislative update by Senator Loni Hancock. Questions may be submitted ahead of time online. The cost is \$40, which includes a three-course dinner. To rsvp and/or if you have questions, contact Unique Holland at uholland@acoe.org. or call Jacqueline at 510-670-4144.

Alameda County Eyes Sales Tax Extension

The Alameda County Transportation Commission is proposing next year to ask county voters to renew early—or possibly increase temporarily—the half-cent sales tax for transportation, according to an article by Denis Cuff of the Bay Area News Group.

Renewing the measure in November 2012—a decade early—would enable the Commission to begin new road, freeway and public transit projects to relieve traffic congestion. The Commission will hold public workshops about the long-term spending plans and a proposed 2012 ballot measure to renew its half-cent sales tax for transportation on **Wednesday, March 9 at 6:30 p.m.** at the Hayward City Hall, 777 B Street.

Water—Let's Use This Precious Resource Wisely!

*By Eleanor Revelle
(LWVUS Climate Change Task Force Member)*

Water is an increasingly scarce resource. Population growth and the changing climate are putting additional stresses on water supplies. Using water efficiently also saves energy. For most municipalities, the biggest

use of electricity is associated with treating and distributing drinking water and then collecting, treating, and disposing of it after it has been used. Water conservation is clearly an important component of sustainability. How can we, as individual consumers, help?

Saving Water Indoors - Indoor water usage in a typical single family home in the United States is about 70 gallons per person per day. But fixing leaks, installing water-efficient plumbing fixtures, and changing some everyday habits can reduce water usage significantly to around 45 gallons/person/day.

Fix those Leaks - Leaks account for about 13 percent of the water used in a typical home. A slowly dripping faucet or a toilet that keeps "running" can waste thousands of gallons of water a year. To check for leaks, read the water meter before and after a two-hour period in which no water is being used. After the test period, if the meter has a higher reading, there is probably a leak.

Buy Water-Saving Fixtures, Appliances - Toilets are typically the greatest water user in the house, accounting for more than one-quarter of the total used in a home each day. Replacing an older 3.5-gallons-per-flush (gpf) toilet with a 1.6-gpf, low-flush model will save at least 10 gallons of water/per person/day. New lower-flow dual-flush toilets will cut usage even further. By reducing water bills, newer toilets pay for themselves in just a few years. *

Replacing older showerheads with low-flow fixtures and installing low-flow aerators in existing faucets are both low-cost ways to save water. And by cutting the demand for hot water, this step will result in energy savings as well. Water-efficient dishwashers and clothes washers also help save water—and energy.

Turn Off the Tap - A few small changes in everyday habits can result in significant water savings. Turn off the tap while brushing teeth and save well over 1000 gallons/person/year. Take a five-minute shower (12.5 gallons of water with a new showerhead) instead of a bath and save 20-30 gallons each time

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:
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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
March 3 4:30-8 p.m.	State Supt. Tom Torlakson Education Forum/Dinner	Hs Lordships Rest. Berkeley
March 4 10 a.m. to noon	Town Hall on Preventing Brain Injury in Young Athletes Info - 583-8818	CV Center for Arts 19501 Redwood Rd, CV
March 9 6:30 –p.m.	AC Transportation Commission Proposed Ballot Measure	Hayward City Hall
March 11 noon to 1:30	Forum on State/Local Finance Hon. Betty Yee – Speaker	San Lorenzo Village Conf. Rm
March 16 5:45 – 7 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting	TBD

Please visit our website for up-to-date event information—

www.lwvea.org