



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 58 No 12 *Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation* December 2015

LWVEA HOLIDAY PARTY

Friday, Dec. 11, 5:30 p.m.

San Lorenzo Village Homes Assoc.
Community Hall
377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo



**Good Food
Good Camaraderie**

Opportunity to bid on great live auction items: Warrior Basketball Tickets in Box Suite, lunch with many locally elected officials. Also holiday tree ornaments from Congress, golf and much more.

Plus

The Mystery Gift Exchange. This event has proved to be fun for all. Everyone is asked to bring a wrapped gift (minimum value \$10) for the exchange.

If you haven't rsvp'd yet, it's not too late.
Call Suzanne at 538-9678 or email to suzbarba@comcast.net

SAVE THE DATE

JAN. 23, 2016 (Saturday)

10:30 am to 1:00 pm

San Lorenzo Library
395 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo

ANNUAL "Grassroots" PLANNING MEETING

This is when we set Education and/or Advocacy Priorities for the National and Local Leagues

"Grassroots" means YOU! As a valued member of this League, you have the opportunity and the responsibility to indicate on which important issues you believe the National and Local Leagues should focus their time, talent and money.

Which two issues will it be?

Voting Rights

Individual Liberties

Energy

Tax Policies

Gun Control

....or 40 other LWVUS Issue Positions

Save the date and read more about the importance of League Program Planning in this VOTER. Or, check our website: LWVEA.org

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



This month I want to share some brief observations about my recent trip to Cuba. Picture is me with our Cuban tour leader. We were on a tobacco farm seeing how cigars are made.

I just returned from an educational trip to learn about Cuba – its history, current conditions, and future evolution. After ten days there, I concluded Cuba has many layers, and the more you know, the more you come to recognize that you may likely really not know or understand much at all. The layers are many and the interweaving of the layers with one another and their impact on the Cuban society, culture, government, and most of all, the politics is yet beyond my understanding.

Cubans are proud of their system of government and of their socialist approach to community and services; and they quietly and firmly resist being “converted” to democracy as defined and practiced in the United States. It is a country that respects its professional, yet pays them less than services workers in hotels and restaurants. They view the 90-mile expanse of ocean between Cuba and Florida, not as a barrier, but as something joining our two countries. They worry that what happens in the waters off Florida and the Gulf states affects Cuba, both positively and negatively, yet we are prevented from working together by politics and historical perceptions.

As I talked with our fellow travelers from the U.S., it is clear that most of us shared the same perspective on Cuba and the US embargo – prior to this trip, we didn't think about it much. And, if we did, it was a passing issue with no apparent impact on us or our lives. After all, Cuba is a communist country led by a Dictator who gained power through a violent overthrow of the existing government. Communism, dictatorship, political violence and revolution: all things in apparent contradiction to the American way. If it were only that simple! We forget that our own country and system of government was born out of a similar violent revolution and take-over of the then-existing governing structure.

If you are curious about other personal observations I have of the Cuban way of life and would like more info and pictures of my trip just send me an email lwvea@aol.com

BOARD BRIEFS NOVEMBER 23, 2015

- **Constitutional Amendment Study** – The board reviewed the study report and approved it commending those involved with the successful program.
- **Program Planning Meeting** – The date is set for January 23 (Saturday) at a venue to be determined. Agreed that a survey should be sent to all members for their input on which positions should be focused on for 2016-18.
- **New Member Orientation and Wine Social** – Having one on a Sunday in late February was suggested and will be confirmed.
- **Voter Registration** – Another voter registration drive will take place on Thursday, Dec. 10 at local BART stations with ten volunteers. The last one at BART was very successful.
- **High School Voter Registration** – We will be partnering again with the Registrar of Voters Office to talk about the importance of voting and to register eligible high school students at local districts. A resolution is being developed to send to district boards to ensure a successful program.
- **San Lorenzo Board Candidate Forum** – The LWVEA was asked to facilitate the forum on Dec. 17 from 6-7 p.m. at the SLVHA, and accepted.
- **Holiday Party** – The checklist for the Holiday Party was reviewed and finalized.

LWVEA Board Meetings are open to the public and are held on the 4th Monday at 5:45 p.m. Contact lwvea@aol.com for agenda.

DECEMBER VOTER REGISTRATION AT BART – BUILDING ON PREVIOUS SUCCESSES!

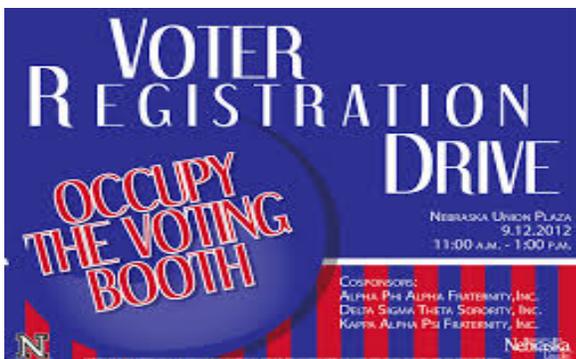
By Joanne Young, Chair
Voter Service Team

Voter registration at two BART stations was very successful last September on National Voter Registration Day. So – we are expanding the number to five stations!

On Thursday, 12/10/15, volunteers from LWVEA, AAUW, and other supporters will register voters from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at five BART stations: Castro Valley, Bayfair, San Leandro, San Leandro Downtown, Hayward and Dublin.

MANY, MANY THANKS to the following Volunteers who will participate on 12/10/15:

Veronica Alder
Elisabeth Bathgate
Helene Carr
Carolyn Darcey
Cimberly Eng-Tamura
Marian Handa
Judy Harrison
Ronald Moore
Allison Murdach
JoAnn Murdach
Ravi Pal
Linda Slater
Winnie Thompson
Nancy Van Huffel
Joanne Young



SAN LORENZO VILLAGE HOMES ASSOC. BOARD ELECTIONS

On December 17 (Thursday) three candidates will participate in a candidate forum to fill two seats on the San Lorenzo Village Homes Association Board.

They are: Erica Grant, Kathie Ready and Diane Wydler. The two incumbents—Wes Auten and Cheryl Hoffmann are not running.

The forum will take place at the San Lorenzo Village Community Hall, 377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo—6 to 7 p.m.

PLAN FOR ABAG-MTC MERGER MOVES FORWARD

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) agreed on October 28, 2015 to proceed with a plan to merge the two agencies, rather than to simply transfer the ABAG planning staff to MTC. In the meantime, MTC will continue funding ABAG through the FY 2015-16 year.

They jointly will hire a mutually acceptable consultant to conduct a mutually funded merger study and develop a merger implementation plan (MIP) for the two agencies by June 1, 2016. The process will be jointly overseen by the MTC Planning Committee and the ABAG Administrative Committee, who are already working together on Plan Bay Area 2040 (the second round of the SB 375 process).

The LWVBayArea sent several letters to both agencies (posted on our website <http://www.lwvbayarea.org/advocacy.html#letters>) expressing concern about MTC's original proposal. We urged the continuation of funding for ABAG, and a thoughtful study of a merger that would include all ABAG programs, with full ability for public input. For 50 years, we have wanted a consolidated regional agency.

Stay tuned, we expect there will be a point that Leagues will need to attend meetings and speak out.

Linda Craig | President, LWVBA

WHAT IS PROGRAM PLANNING?

In League, Program describes the issues that we choose for concerted study, education and action at local, state and national levels.

The Program Planning process is part of what makes the League a grassroots organization; each League member has the opportunity to influence the selection of issues where the local, state, and national Leagues will focus time, talent and money.

It takes the enthusiasm and interest of our members to keep our program vital. You'd never skip voting in an election; you shouldn't skip the League's equivalent. The program planning process is your voice!



The process starts now with a local League Program Planning

meeting on **January 23rd** when we review positions and propose the areas on which we would like to focus our local energy, the energy of other local Leagues throughout the country, and the resources of the LWVUS over the next two years.

The LWVUS Program Committee reviews all the responses from local Leagues across the nation. Then they send leagues their Recommended Program for 2016-18 for review:

- retaining, dropping or updating each of the positions
- recommended studies and update studies
- recommended issues for education and advocacy emphasis

The program planning process culminates in the delegates' adoption of the nationwide program at the next LWVUS convention June 16-19 in Washington, D.C.

ANNUAL "GRASSROOTS" PROGRAM PLANNING

What issues do you want prioritized in the country? You need to come to the League's program planning meeting on **Sat., Jan. 23rd from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm**. Attendees will take part in making our League's recommendations for policy and positions at the national and local level, including where the LWVUS should focus its energy over the next two years.

We are a grassroots organization. Annual Program Planning is one of the ways for all of us to participate in a meaningful way. We all have the opportunity and the responsibility to participate in program planning – to make our voices heard.

Was there an issue on the ballot this year on which you wished the League had been able to take a stand? Come discuss whether we should have a new study or update one or more positions.

To get you started, we will be sending out a survey on the LWVUS positions. It will ask you to pick your priority issue positions. The Program Team will review your input and allow time at the meeting to review those high priority issues mentioned most often by those responding.

After those presentations and discussion from attendees, the group will vote on which two positions to send back to the LWVUS for emphasis on voter education or for advocacy during 2016-2018.

League member interested to today's important issues, may want to go to our website at lwvea.org and click on LWVUS and local positions.

LWVEA Program Planning Team



LWVEA TO REVIEW AND UPDATE LOCAL POSITIONS

Some time in January we will bring together a committee to review and update local positions. As you know, our positions are the “life blood” of the League.

Based on these positions, which were developed after years of study, we may advocate for or against certain issues that come up that have an effect on our local communities.

We may also take action on positions developed by the National League, State League or Bay Area League. That’s the beauty of having up-to-date and relevant positions with which to work.

The following is a brief summary of our local positions. The full text is on our website www.LWVEA.org.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The LWVEA supports a responsive, visible system of county and city boards and commissions as a means of ensuring effective resident involvement in the government decision-making process.

UNINCORPORATED AREAS POLICY

The League of Women Voters of the Eden Area supports the policy that residents in all urbanized unincorporated areas within Eden Township are best served by having their own locally elected representatives, and that the preferred form of governance is as an incorporated municipality. The LWVEA believes that incorporation as a city improves citizen access to local government. It also enables communities to have self-determination and local control related to the taxes they pay and the land-use decisions they make.

Recognizing that incorporation may not be always possible, then residents in urbanized unincorporated areas of Eden Area should be enabled to choose the type of governance best suited for their particular area. In addition to incorporation, those choices

could be municipal annexation, special district formation and informal government organization.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

The LWVEA supports positive planning policies to achieve a livable and harmonious physical environment for a diverse population with a healthy balance of residential, commercial, industrial, public uses and open space; a variety of densities and housing types; and the necessary services and amenities for all residents.

The LWVEA supports measures which ensure protection for parks, open space, agricultural land, and bay-lands with emphasis on comprehensive regional land use planning, control of urban sprawl, transportation and increased inclusive public participation and review in land use decisions.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The LWVEA supports measures that ensure that adequate parks and recreational facilities are provided for all the communities served by the various recreation and park districts in the Eden Area. Protection should be provided for natural resources, open space and environmentally sensitive areas. Adequate funding should be available to provide a variety of recreational opportunities.

MENTAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

The LWVEA supports the availability of comprehensive mental health care for all residents of Alameda County, regardless of their ability to pay for these services.

If you are interested in participating on a committee to review and update one or more of these positions, please contact Jewell Spalding at jewellspalding@mac.com. We will also have a sign up sheet at the Holiday Party on Dec. 11. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY

Reinventing Bay Area Transportation for the 21st Century

**Saturday, February 6, 2016
9:30 AM - 2:30 PM**

Registration and Refreshments 9:00 – 9:30 AM
Maple Hall, 13837 San Pablo Ave
Located at Alvarado Square inside the City Hall Complex
13831 San Pablo Avenue
San Pablo, CA 94806

**Keynote Address – Senator Jim Beall,
Chair, California Senate Transportation Committee**

Panel 1: - Allowance? Passing the hat for funding

Funding: Are self-help taxes helpful or enough?

Infrastructure: How do you prioritize upkeep vs. expansion?

Social Equity: Is social equity overlooked in funding proposals?

Panel 2: - Innovation & Technology - Back to the Future

Last Mile Problem: What are some of the ideas for solving this problem?

Social Equity: How do we make tech serve the underserved?

Technology: What will the highway of the future look like?

Panel 3: - Who Moved My Cheese? How and Where Do We Change the Culture?

Crystal Ball: Can agencies be agents of change or not?

Social Equity: How do we make access affordable for all?

Drones vs. Semi's: How do we change the way we deliver the goods?

REGISTRATION:

Send check payable to LWVBA by **Friday, January 29th to LWVBA Attn: BALD**

NAME: _____ LOCAL LEAGUE: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

REGISTRATION will be available online using PayPal after Dec. 1, 2015. The cost is \$35 prepaid (\$20 without lunch) and \$40 (\$25 without lunch) at the door. **The deadline for prepaid registration will be Friday, January 29, 2016.** Make check payable to LWVBA, attn.: BALD. Mail check to LWVBA, 436 14th St, suite 1213, Oakland, CA 94612. For more information call Alec MacDonald (510) 839-1608 or www.lwvbayarea.org.

LWV BAY AREA MONITOR NEWS DECEMBER 2015

Launched in 1975, the Bay Area Monitor is published six times a year by the LWV Bay Area Education Fund. It covers regional transportation, air quality, water, open space and land use issues in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

The following is a “taste” of what is in this issue. The full articles can be read at www.bayareamonitor.org. We urge you to do so.

THE CONGESTION CONUNDRUM

These are impressions transportation officials, advocates, and executives have of traffic in the nine-county region, based on recent interviews. About half of congestion is due to bottlenecks, according to Metropolitan Transportation Commission data. Traffic incidents, work zones, and bad weather account for the remainder. **Read more at** www.bayareamonitor.org.

KEEPING MICROPLASTIC OUT OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Looking at the San Francisco Bay, you'd never know it's dotted with tiny pieces of plastic. But new research shows that, like other waters across the United States, the Bay is contaminated with billions of plastic beads, particles, and fibers, all five millimeters or smaller. This microplastic threatens fish and may also threaten people who eat them.

People are focused on plastic bags but the small stuff is more dangerous. We need to broaden the dialog.

Recent focus has been microbeads, the teeny abrasive spheres in toothpaste, facial scrubs, and other personal care products. When we rinse our mouths and faces, microbeads go down the drain and into waterways, where fish mistake them for food.

“They look like fish eggs, which are a staple of fish.” Microbeads also end up in the plankton that fish and other aquatic animals eat, as well as in corals and

shellfish, which filter water for microscopic foods. **Read more** -www.bayareamonitor.org

REDEFINING REFINERY REGULATIONS

When my husband and I bought our house in Concord 40-plus years ago, we were warned by the previous owners, “Don't hang clothes out to dry because they'll smell like gasoline from the refineries.”

Refinery emissions, including the noxious odors, are no longer so obvious, but they still contribute to regional air pollution and global climate change.

Refineries produce approximately 17 percent of the greenhouse gases in the Bay Area. They are the largest individual stationary source of reactive organic gases, which react with nitrogen oxides to form smog, and they are also the predominant source of sulfur dioxide emissions in the region. Both sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides contribute to the formation of fine particulate matter, a significant health hazard. **Read more at** www.bayareamonitor.org

THE WORKING GRASS: FOUR-LEGGED LAND MANAGEMENT

In the hills of San Mateo County, a special band of horses became part of a pilot project in grassland management for the Peninsula Open Space Trust. With 20 acres of overgrown property near Pescadero to manage, POST needed the four-legged “experts” to do what they do best: eat like horses.

“These animals eat 18 hours a day,” said Sam Harpur, founder of Rediscovering Horses, a nonprofit organization near Santa Cruz that gives unwanted horses another chance. “Instead of using tractors or burns to manage the land, we thought: Why not bring the horses to the land, for the benefit of each?” The herd was a mixed lot — former racehorses, breeding horses, and show horses — all acquired after each somehow “failed” to serve their previous owner. **Read more at** www.bayareamonitor.org

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, and San Lorenzo

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.*

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CALENDAR

DATE	TIME	EVENT
12-11-15	4:30-6:30 pm	Voter Registration at BART Stations
12-11-15	5:30 pm	LWVEA Holiday Party, SLVHA
12-17-15	6-7 pm	SLVHA Candidate Forum for 2 Board Seats
12-25-15		
12-28-15	5:45 – 7:30 pm	LWVEA Board Meeting
1-23-16	10:30am –1:00 pm	Program Planning Meeting, San Lorenzo Library
1-25-16	5:45-7:30 pm	LWVEA Board Meeting
2-6-16	9:30am-2:30 pm	LWVBA Reinventing Bay Area Transportation, San Pablo

**For up-to-date info and specific details on events,
 email: lwvea@aol.com or check out www.LWVEA.org**