



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 52 No. 11 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Dec. 2009

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, January 23, 2010

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

New Castro Valley Library

3600 Strobridge Road • Chabot Conference Room

Setting the League's Education and Advocacy Goals for 2010-2012

WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?

We will be reviewing the National League's positions and letting them know which one we want to have updated. And, we will discuss whether the National League should undertake a study regarding a new position on "the federal government's role in public education."

WHY IS YOUR PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

We need grassroots participation to ensure we have diverse opinions on which positions we want to emphasize for education and/or advocacy in 2010-2012.

HOW DOES THAT WORK?

We will discuss important current issues and try to find a position that we can use to support or oppose what is proposed.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IF I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE POSITIONS?

Information on the LWVUS and our local positions will be published in the next VOTER. However, this information is also available now on our website – www.LWVEA.org. We don't plan to go over all the positions in depth and will just focus on those that are of importance to our members.

WILL IT BE INTERESTING OR WILL I FALL ASLEEP?

It will be interesting and you will not fall asleep. Setting the League's Education and Advocacy Goals for the future is one of the most important tasks that our local League members can do.

The League will provide brunch, too!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hopefully this reaches you before Friday, Dec. 4. If you haven't RSVP'd about coming to the League's holiday party yet—there's still time. Give me a call, 538-9678.

While you have your calendar out, please save the date—Sat., Jan. 23, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.—to join us in “Setting the League's Education and Advocacy Goals ” Some Leaguer's think this is the most important workshop we hold—I tend to agree.

The work of the League at every level—local, Bay Area, State and National—are based on issue studies that become positions. These positions are what the League uses to educate its members and the public and are the basis for issue advocacy and influencing decision-makers.

These positions are based on the issues that impact our lives such as—Citizen Rights, Election Process, Environmental Protection and Pollution Control, Child Care, Health Care, Meeting Basic Human Needs, Trade and Arms Control.

For example, although each is important, some issues/positions become priorities because of the time and place we live. Health Care seems to be at the top of the agenda these days, neck and neck with Environmental Protection and Meeting Basic Human Needs.

We plan to make the workshop as inter-active and interesting as possible. We are one of 800 Leagues in the nation who will be holding similar workshops. This is truly grassroots at work.

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC) – The California State Auditor's office has established a website where those interested in applying for a seat on the CRC may apply online. For more information and to review the lengthy application, go to WeDrawTheLines.ca.gov/. You may apply online from December 15 2009 to February 12, 2010. This CRC will draw district boundaries for the State Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization.

Wishing you and those you love, good health and much happiness.

Suzanne Barba

BOARD BRIEFS November 18, 2009

- **Membership** – We have 136 members, with six new members, four of whom are new Nationally recruited members. There are still ten members who have not renewed who will be contacted personally by phone.

- **Auditor** - Board members will be recruiting for a new Auditor and thanked Stephanie Cartwright for her many years of service as the LWVEA Auditor.

- **Holiday Party** – A budget was submitted and accepted. It was agreed that the funds raised from the live auction would go into the general operations budget according to past practice.

- **LWVEA Policies** – It was agreed that our League policies need to be updated and a committee was established—Linda Slater, Pat Piras, Suzanne Barba and Jennifer Ong who agreed when contacted previously to be on the committee if one was established.

- **Workshop on Conflict of Interest and Fiduciary Responsibility** - It was agreed that our League should hold such a workshop and open it to other groups that may have an interest. Program Chair Nancy Van Huffel, agreed to put this workshop together.

- **New Board Member Elected** - Rene Besold was nominated and elected as a new Director of the LWVEA Board. Rene has been a League member for two years and has participated in a number of projects. She is replacing Helen Oertle who moved out of state.

- **Palomares Home Owner Elections** - The Board approved the proposal to Palomares to conduct their home owner elections in March.

All Board meetings are open to the public. The Board meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. See calendar for details.

LWV BAY AREA UPDATE

- **New State Water Plan**

While the LWVC was not actively involved in lobbying on the latest round of water legislation, members of the LWVC legislation team continued to monitor the major package of bills that passed the state legislature late last month. The Governor signed the four policy bills and an \$11 billion bond act in press conferences around the state.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has published summary at www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/. The LWVC will analyze the bond measure and consider action on it as it goes before the voters in 2010. If you want updates you can subscribe to a weekly newsletter at http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/enews/2009/cwp_e-news111809.pdf
Linda Craig, Reg Gov't, Land Use Chair

- **Affordable Housing**

As a result of the economic downturn, for-profit developers have mostly withdrawn from new projects in the Bay Area. However, non-profit developers and redevelopment projects continue to be active. Recent examples are projects in Fremont, San Leandro, San Bruno and recently approved in Palo Alto to mention a few.

Many cities have turned to foreclosure prevention programs and housing rehabilitation projects in an effort to maintain affordable housing for their residents.

Most of the cities have submitted their Housing Element Proposals to the State for certification. Those cities missing the June deadline have applied for extensions. Presently cities are revising their General Plans to match their Housing Elements.

This is an opportunity for the League to support smart growth (SB375) before City Councils as they review their General Plans. In the meantime over 100 cities have joined the Association of Bay Area Government's FOCUS program in establishing Priority Development Areas for transit-oriented development. There is

increased support for jobs/housing/transportation projects.

One possible obstacle for affordable rental units is the Supreme Court decision to refuse protection for local inclusionary housing ordinances.

Patty Boyle, LWVBA Housing Chair

Membership Starts with ME and Grows with MGIK

The League of Women Voters of Eden Area is a recent participant of the Membership Growth is Key (MGIK) project. Besides our focus on encouraging LWVEA members to bring along their membership application/brochures for potential new members at any of their meetings, we are actively utilizing the resources that the National organization has found useful in recruiting new members.

MGIK aims to welcome new members, retain current members and increase the net growth of the total number of members. Ideas to increase our visibility at events and meetings help improve our relationships with media and community organizations.

A monthly strategic plan is devised by the local league and its regional liaison. We were fortunate enough to have the most knowledgeable liaison, Bonnie Hamlin.

Currently, our program has seen new ideas that have helped enhance our retention and renewals. We welcome any ideas that you may have with regards to membership.

Don't forget to take your League brochure applications with you to encourage new members while you mention a shared memory of why you value your membership in LWVEA.

Jennifer Ong, V.P. Membership

LEAGUE LETTER TO CA SECRETARY OF STATE RE RANKED CHOICE VOTING

The Honorable Debra Bowen
Secretary of State
State of California
1500 11th Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

October 30, 2009

Dear Secretary Bowen:

The Leagues of Women Voters of Berkeley/Albany/Emeryville, Oakland, and Eden Area are deeply concerned over the unexplained slow progress of your approval of the Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) hardware and software system. This system is already in use (in San Francisco) to effectuate RCV.

As you know, the voters of Berkeley approved in 2004 by an 80% majority what was then called Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). Two years later, in 2006, the voters of Oakland similarly approved IRV by a 69% margin. *Three and five years later*, those voters have yet to vote under this system---even though the voters of San Francisco have enjoyed its successful use for six (6) election rounds.

Please explain to us why Alameda County is not being allowed to “piggy-back” on the approval that has been granted to San Francisco, to use the identical election systems. We have heard no adequate explanation for this, and our cities are running out of time in order to call, or not to call, elections for 2010. San Leandro is awaiting word of your approval before formally considering adoption of RCV.

In the meantime, a group of League of Women Voters members and other citizens involved with RCV implementation has been meeting regularly with the Registrar of Voters and his staff to work on a comprehensive education/outreach plan to familiarize voters and poll workers with RCV. We are ready to go and the Registrar is moving forward on the presumption that it is going to happen, and that your approval will be timely.

We understand that efforts are afoot to try to delay the process so that the coming 2010 elections in Oakland and Berkeley will once again not be RCV elections. This would be unconscionable, given the clear will of the voters, the ready availability of tested voting systems, and the all-hands-on-deck preparation by all concerned to make this happen for 2010.

We have seen the letter of October 23 written to you by the Registrar of Voters, following up on a conversation he had with Lowell Finley in which Mr. Macdonald had been assured that “no further information was needed from Alameda County regarding voter outreach and education”, and in which Mr. Finley acknowledged the Registrar’s need for a quick decision. Representatives of our Leagues would be happy to meet with Mr. Finley at a time and place of his choosing (we understand that he lives in Berkeley).

With all systems “go” on our end, please assure us that you are doing your part and that your approval will be quickly forthcoming, in adequate time for the cities and county to proceed with these elections as the voters intended.

Very truly yours,

Sherry H. Smith

For the Leagues of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany & Emeryville; Eden Area (San Leandro, Castro Valley, Hayward, San Lorenzo) and Oakland

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new members who joined through the National League:
Eugene Steve, Clementina Vaz
Estelle Raderman, James Sebring

Also welcome to Doris Marciel who joined at our recent Forum.

FAIR ELECTIONS NOW ACT

The League of Women Voters of Boulder County and the League of Women Voters of Colorado are requesting other Leagues throughout the country to contact LWVUS Board Members to ask them to support the Fair Elections Now (FEN) Act as a top advocacy priority in 2010 at the January LWVUS Board Meeting.

The Fair Elections Now Act was introduced in the House and Senate on March 31, 2009 and has the potential to fundamentally change congressional campaigns and the way Washington works. However, most Americans have not even heard of the FEN Act. Campaign finance reform has been a core League issue and one in which LWV has tremendous credibility. We have the opportunity, and the responsibility, to inform and educate the American public about the Fair Elections Now Act.

The Fair Elections Now Act (H.R.1826, S.752) will enable qualified candidates for the House and Senate to have the option of running campaigns using a combination of public funding and small donations from supporters. If the Act passes, qualified candidates who are not independently wealthy and who do not want to accept money from special interests will be able to run competitive campaigns. The FEN Act is different from previous campaign finance legislation in that its goal is not to restrict campaign spending, but to allow public money to be used to pay for candidates' campaigns.

Information about publicly financed campaigns and the Fair Elections Now Act may be found at:

<http://www.campaignmoney.org/campaigns/main/fair-elections>

BUDGET "FIX" WORKSHOP UPDATE

If you were one of the forty people who attended the League's luncheon Forum on "Fixing the State Budget," then hopefully you

have a better understanding of what is being proposed by the various groups campaigning for their method of solving the problem.

State Treasurer Bill Lockyer was the keynote speaker and moderator, explaining how California got into this fiscal dilemma. He indicated that there is a lack of political will, experience or knowledge on the part of the legislators to solve the state's problems.

John Grubb from the Bay Area Council discussed *Repair California's* two initiatives for a California Constitutional Convention (CCC). The CCC would focus on making state government more efficient, reform the election and initiative process, revamp the budget system and improve the relationship between state and local governments. Repair California supports citizen delegates rather than legislators to meet and confer as the CCC.

Fred Silva representing *California Forward* which is funded by a group of major foundations, also plans to put initiatives on the ballot. Their initiatives include measures to develop responsible budgets on time, government that's closer to the people, and constituent access and accountability—term limit reform.

Eric Figueroa represented the League of California Cities, Counties and School Districts and their campaign is called *Rebuilding California*. The main thrust of this group is to "Prohibit the State from taking, borrowing, or redirecting local taxpayer funds dedicated public safety, emergency response and other vital local government services, including redevelopment funds."

All three groups plan to have initiatives on the November 2010 ballot and the consensus, among the speakers, was that voters should vote for all of them.

*The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Presents
Bay Area League Day 2010*

“Big Steps, Little Steps - Addressing Climate Change”

A program about reducing greenhouse gas emissions and confronting climate change

Saturday, January 30, 2010

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

MetroCenter, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland, California

Featuring keynote speaker Mary D. Nichols, Chair, California Air Resources Board

With additional experts in the morning session addressing:

Regional Transportation Requirements of Senate Bill 375
(Steve Heminger, Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission)

State Land Use and Smart Growth Policies
(Julia Lave Johnston, Deputy Director for Planning Policy, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research)

Environmental Visions for the Bay Area in 2035
(Jeremy Madsen, Executive Director, Greenbelt Alliance)

Regional Air Quality Requirements of Senate Bill 375
(Speaker from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District)

State Housing Requirements of Senate Bill 375
(Cathy Creswell, Deputy Director of Housing Policy Development, California HCD)

And an afternoon session showcasing success stories of confronting climate change around the region:

City of Berkeley (Tom Bates, Mayor)

County of Sonoma (Rod Dole, Tax Auditor and Controller)

City of San Jose (Laurel Prevetti, Planner, and Ashwini Kantak, Assistant to the City Manager)

City of San Francisco (Calla Ostrander, Climate Change Coordinator)

----- **REGISTRATION FORM** -----

The price of this year’s Bay Area League Day is \$25 (\$15 without lunch) before January 21, or \$30 (\$20 without lunch) after that. A light breakfast will be served to all who attend. To register, please write check payable to “LWVBA” and mail with this form to 1611 Telegraph Ave., Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612.

Name: _____ Local League: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Registration is also available online through January 21 via PayPal at www.lwvbayarea.org.
For more details, call (510) 839-1608 or send an e-mail to editor@bayareamonitor.org.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TO CELEBRATE 90TH ANNIVERSARY

The League of Women Voters (LWV) will be celebrating its 90th anniversary on February 14, 2010. Not coincidentally, the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution that gave women the right to vote celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2010, as well.

“The women who started the movement to give women the right to vote really didn’t know where it would end, how it would end, or when it would end,” said League of Women Voters president, Mary G. Wilson. “And yet they persevered. They persevered in a time when it wasn’t fashionable for women to speak out on any issue – let alone try to get some rights for themselves. They worked against all odds – and succeeded.”

In 1920, after a 72 year struggle, passage of the 19th amendment appeared to be imminent, and members of the National American Woman Suffrage Association met to form the League of Women Voters, the organization to educate the newly franchised women to effectively use the vote.

In 1920, LWV founder Carrie Chapman Catt urged the new organization to “finish the fight” and to work to end all discrimination against women. Initially, the LWV was primarily concerned with the status and rights of women and women’s issues, but interests were gradually expanded to include issues affecting men as well as women. Today, the LWV works to effect change on a wide variety of issues in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy.

Many men supported the suffragists in the early days of the fight to pass the 19th Amendment, and men continued to be supportive of the LWV over the years. In 1973, the LWV invited men to join the organization, and their numbers continue to increase.

The non-partisan LWV never supports or opposes candidates or parties, but the LWV is political and takes stands on issues. These stands are based on positions which are the result of intensive study, discussion of the pros and cons, and, eventually, member consensus, all at the grassroots level. These positions are the basis for advocacy of the government at the national, state, and local levels.

As the organization celebrates its 90th anniversary, it has much to look back upon, but the work is not yet complete and there is much to look forward to. The LWV continues to work towards meaningful citizen participation in the government processes. “For nine decades, the League has worked to ensure our democracy is transparent, effective, and truly representative,” said Ms. Wilson. “Those challenges are as real today as they were for our suffragist foremothers who struggled for their right to vote so many years ago.”

All are welcome to join the LWV and become part of our respected and effective organization. As the League is where hands on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

SAVE THE DATE
Friday, February 5, 2010
6 to 8 p.m.
We plan to celebrate the League’s 90th
Anniversary during our honoring our
elected officials reception.

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:
 League of Women Voters of Eden Area
 Treasurer, P.O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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.

CALENDER OF EVENTS

DATE & TIME	EVENT	PLACE
Dec. 4, 5:30 to 7:30	LWVEA Holiday Party	5787 Highwood Rd, CV
Dec. 16, 6 to 8 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting	San Lorenzo Village Conf. Rm
Jan. 20, 6 to 8 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting	San Lorenzo Village Conf. Rm.
Jan 23, 10 to 1 p.m.	Setting Goals for League	Castro Valley New Library Chabot Rm.(See page 1)
Jan. 30, 9 to 2 p.m.	Bay Area League Day	MetroCenter, Oakland (See pg 7)
Feb. 5	LWVEA Honoring Elected Officials & LWV 90 th Anniversary	TBA
Feb. 14, 2010	LWV 90 th Anniversary	

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