



League of Women Voters Eden Area

# VOTER

Vol. 52 No. 10 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Nov. 2009

SAVE THE DATE

## LEAGUE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY



Friday, December 4, 2009

5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Barba Home at 5787 Highwood Road, Castro Valley

There will be good food and good fun and terrific auction items to bid on.

PLUS Something New - Bring a wrapped White Elephant gift with a value of \$10 or less for a fun gift exchange. Details to follow

*Auction items include:*

- *Oakland Warrior Box Tickets,*
- *Congressional Holiday Ornaments*
- *Lunch with local elected officials*
- *and lots more*

Once again we will be collecting gifts and donations for two local organizations—

FESCO (Family Emergency Shelter Coalition)

and ESP (Emergency Shelter Program)—

both who do a wonderful job of helping families, children and battered women with basic services and needs. Bring unwrapped new clothing for infants to adults or gift cards for these organizations. They will wrap the gifts and give them and the gift cards to deserving families for the holidays.



The cost of the Holiday Party is \$10.

Please RSVP using the form on page 7 of this newsletter or call Suzanne Barba to RSVP at 538-9678 or email at [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net) with any questions.

## President's Report

Like you, I have been listening to the radio, watching television and going to meetings to try and find out more about what is being proposed to solve the health care system problem.

What is making it so difficult, is that it changes day to day. The House of Representatives has passed legislation stipulating one type of plan and the Senate has three or four plans coming from various committees.

People are turning out to town hall meetings and shouting down their legislator making it impossible to get good information "from the horse's mouth" so to speak.

Many Leaguers from throughout the country have asked the national League to come out more forcefully for the public option. Some Leaguers don't think we should be advocating one way or the other "lest we lose our way."

But advocating is something the League has done since it was founded 90 years ago. It was born of the suffragist movement and has advocated on important issues on which it has a position since then.

The LWVUS has a position on Health Care and the summary of it says "Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U. S. residents and controls health care costs."

As I write this column, the news is that things are shifting in the Senate and the pundits are saying that we will get "some kind" of legislation before the end of the year. I hope so, and so do the millions of uninsured and soon-to-be uninsured in our country.

The League has always supported civil discourse and transparent governance and will continue to educate on issues and advocate based on our positions which were developed through careful study and input from the grass-root membership.

*Suzanne Barba*

## Board Briefs October 21, 2009 Meeting

- **Sullivan & Gilbert Fundraiser** - Gail Lundholm reported that we made \$435 from the event.
- **New Member Welcome Reception** – Suzanne Barba reported that 12 people attended and several have volunteered to do a number of League tasks.
- **Fixing the Budget Process Luncheon Forum** - Board agreed to allow a representative from League of Cities to give a short presentation on their proposal at the Forum.
- **Holiday Party** - The Board agreed that the Palmeri house would be a wonderful place to have the party, but it would not be accessible for handicapped people because of the many stairs.
- **SmartVoter** – Suzanne reported that SmartVoter which is the state league's website that allows candidates to place their information on the site for free and has current and archived information about elections—is having a fundraiser. The Board agreed to donate \$500 of funds that were raised by the Sullivan and Gilbert fundraiser. It also agreed to give another \$500 at the time of the fundraising reception which will be held by the LWV Fremont, Newark Union City in April.
- **Instant Runoff Voting – Ranked Choice Voting** – There will be several meetings at the San Leandro City Hall where council members will discuss whether San Leandro will implement IRV/RCV for the upcoming election. Interested Board members were encouraged to attend.

*The Board meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. SLVHA Community Conference Room.*

# REMINDER

## FIXING THE STATE BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Luncheon Forum

Friday, November 6, 2009

11:45 a.m. to 2 p.m.

San Lorenzo Village Community Hall  
377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo

State Treasurer Bill Lockyer is the featured speaker and also will moderate a panel discussion on “how to” fix the state budget and legislative process.

The panelists will be a speaker from [Repair California](#), a group supporting a limited California Constitutional Convention. [Repair California](#) is sponsored by the Bay Area Council, a public policy organization of 275 of the largest Bay Area employers.

A representative from [California Forward](#) is also on the panel. [California Forward](#) is a bipartisan Leadership Council that supports public policy and meaningful civic engagement and is funded by five major foundations. They propose to use an initiative approach to fix the problem.

There will be a short presentation from the League of California Cities and a Q & A session after the presentations.

The luncheon cost is \$10, but if you just want to come and hear the program, that is free.

However, your RSVP would be appreciated. Contact Suzanne Barba, 538-9678 or [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net).

## PROPOSED LWVUS STUDY ON ROLE OF FED IN PUBLIC ED

Several Bay Area Leagues are circulating a proposal for the LWVUS to study the role of the federal government in public education. This proposal will be forwarded to Leagues all over the country and be brought up during Program Planning in January 2010.

The purpose is to establish a national League position that would enable LWV to:

- review, consider, evaluate and advocate for or against federal education legislation;
- advocate on issues related to what the federal role in public education should be; and
- join in coalition with other national organizations that speak out on issues of public education.

Currently, the LWVUS addresses education issues only as they apply to equal opportunity for women, minorities and for classes of students requiring special protection or resources—poor children, special needs children, English learners, and others currently denied equal educational opportunity.

As education has historically been the responsibility of the individual states and school districts, studying and acting on education issues has been left to Leagues within these jurisdictions.

The League’s basic, long-standing commitment to social policy issues such as children and families, equality of opportunity and good government underscores the need to involve us with how these far-reaching changes in education will be shaped at the national level. We are uniquely positioned to advocate with a national public education position that will not be biased toward one stakeholder or another.

## HEAD START FILLS IN NEED IN SAN LORENZO

By Jason Sweeney - Oakland Tribune  
10-14-09

SAN LORENZO — Long waiting lists attest to the high demand for public preschool in the San Lorenzo Unified School District.

Until last week, the only public preschool in the district was at Royal Sunset School in unincorporated Hayward, which, as of last year, had 90 children on its waiting list, said Barbara DeBarger, director of elementary education for San Lorenzo Unified.

During the summer, DeBarger looked into alleviating some of the demand, but no more state funding was available. She contacted Child Family and Community Services Inc., a nonprofit Head Start provider in Union City with access to federal stimulus money, and began a three-month licensing process to set up a federally funded Head Start program in the district.

On Oct. 5, the first Head Start program in San Lorenzo Unified kicked off at Hillside Elementary School in unincorporated San Leandro. Forty children ages 4 and 5, from low-income households, are enrolled in the program. Three instructors supervise 20 children in the morning session, and another 20 in the afternoon, four days a week.

On Fridays, parents meet with instructors.

"We really wanted this program at Hillside," DeBarger said, explaining that Hillside Elementary is the lowest performing school in the district in a high-poverty area where there is little access to affordable preschool.

"We believe that this is a wonderful early education opportunity that will provide long-term benefits for children," district Superintendent Dennis Byas said.

"Research has shown that high quality, developmentally appropriate early-childhood programs produce many long-term positive effects."

Hillside Elementary is in its fifth year of "program improvement" status, meaning it is on a state watch list for not meeting state and federal targets for student proficiency. Hillside Principal Pam VandeKamp said her school is challenged by poverty, a high transiency rate, and the fact that 52 percent of its students are English-language learners.

"Head Start meets a need in our community that's linked to student achievement," VandeKamp said. "To have these resources available is huge."

VandeKamp said the waiting list for Head Start at Hillside is already at 80 children. DeBarger said that after an evaluation of the program in January, Head Start could be expanded to more schools in the district.

## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW LWVEA MEMBER RENE BESOLD

Rene Besold looked around for volunteer opportunities after retiring from the California School Employees Association, most recently as Director of Human Resources and Training. It's the League's good fortune that she looked our way. "The League was always my first trusted resource for information on both sides of issues," she said.

She wants to work on the League Smart Voter website, and to use her communication skills to get folks out for meetings and events. She has staffed phone banks for political candidates and issues advocacy for years.

Rene also tutors adults as a volunteer for Literacy Plus, a project of the Hayward Public Library. She was soon asked to serve on the board. She is also involved

with a group called Organizing for America which is working on health insurance reform at this time.

After high school, she went to Heald Business College. Both parents fell ill, "so I went right to work. Somebody had to bring in a pay check. Caring for them was a joy and never a burden," she said.

Currently a Castro Valley resident, she has lived in Hayward and Castro Valley most of her life.

She loves to walk the trail at the San Leandro Marina, read, work crossword puzzles and spend precious time with family and friends.. She also does both paid and volunteer work helping to put graphics into training programs with Power Point.

*By Connie Rusk*

## **Redistricting: Counting Heads, Drawing Lines**

After the Census completes its work of counting heads in 2010, the Redistricting Commission will begin its work of drawing lines.

How do you become a Redistricting Commissioner? You have to apply to the State Auditor's Office. Applications will be available on that site from mid-December until February 2010. The website with all the information is [www.bsa.ca.gov/redistricting](http://www.bsa.ca.gov/redistricting)

The State Auditor receives applications from potential candidates and creates a pool of 60. State Legislative leaders may strike up to 24 candidates from the pool.

The State Auditor conducts a random drawing from the reduced pool to select the initial eight (8) commissioners. The initial eight (8) commissioners select the final six (6) from the remaining members of the pool.

The Commission will conduct meetings around the state to receive public comment on the proposed district maps and make revisions based on public comment. To approve the final redistricting map, the Commission will need the votes of three (3) Democrats, three (Republicans) and three (3) from the other qualified parties out of the 14 total members.

## **Wood Burning Regulation**

In addition to prohibiting Bay Area residents from burning wood fires during Winter Spare the Air Alerts, the Air District's regulation also: requires cleaner burning



EPA-certified stoves and inserts in new construction and remodels; limits excessively thick (more than 20 percent opacity) smoke from residential and commercial sources; prohibits the burning of garbage, plastic, and other harmful materials; requires that firewood sold in the Bay Area be labeled with disclosures about its moisture content; and requires manufactured logs or pellet fuel be labeled with announcements about the regulation.

Residents found in violation of the regulation will receive a warning letter, and with a second violation may face a \$400 fine. There are exemptions for buildings or homes whose sole source of heat is wood, as well as for outdoor grills, pizza ovens, and barbecues.

Individuals can sign up to receive Winter Spare the Air Alerts via phone by calling (800) 430-1515 or e-mailing <http://baaqmdsparetheair.enviroflash.info>.

The Air District also encourages people to call (877) 4-NO-BURN before using their fireplaces to check if an alert is on; this hotline may also be used to report violations.

*LWV Bay Area Monitor*

## On Alert: Seasonal Hazard Looms

By Alec MacDonald

LWV Bay Area Monitor – Oct. 09

If you have ever been curious about how exactly your fireplace is connected to air pollution, here's an illuminating exercise to try next time you're online.

Log on to

[www.epa.gov/oar/particlepollution](http://www.epa.gov/oar/particlepollution), the page of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Web site that deals with particulate matter. You probably already have a basic understanding of what particulate matter is, but you can read an exact definition, along with information about its detrimental health effects, through this page.

Scroll down to the "Air Emission Sources" link, which will offer you a window into the EPA's national database of air emissions; specifically, you'll be able to find out how much particulate matter came from different sources according to the agency's most recent inventory in 2002.

You can sort the inventory results by location, and if you live in the Bay Area, you'll want to take note of just how much residential wood combustion (the use of fireplaces, woodstoves, and outdoor fire pits) surpasses other sources in the production of fine particulate matter (particles of 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller).

Residents of Santa Clara County, for instance, will observe that wood burning there gave rise to more than twice as much fine particulate matter as did on-road vehicles. Those in San Mateo and Alameda counties will see the same ratio, while residents of Marin, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and Solano counties will notice a ratio of three to one.

The disparity was even greater in the counties of Napa (four times as much) and Sonoma (five times). Of all the nine Bay Area counties, in fact, residential wood combustion tops the list for each,

with the exception of Contra Costa, where it was eclipsed only by industrial processes.

The figures are rather surprising, but then again, the region is home to an estimated 1.4 million fireplaces and woodstoves. One would expect these to have a substantial collective impact, especially when temperatures drop.

As the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) reports, residential wood burning represents the region's largest primary source of fine particulate matter in winter, accounting for roughly one third of it on any given cold day.

In order to help alleviate this seasonal hazard, the Air District passed a wood burning regulation in July of 2008, and then rolled out a corresponding outreach program later that year. As part of the regulation, Bay Area residents were prohibited from burning wood on those days between November 1 and February 28 when the Air District issued Winter Spare the Air Alerts.

Based on forecasts of the agency's Air Quality Index pollution measurement scale, these alerts were broadcast via a multitude of communication channels, primarily television, radio, Internet, and newspapers. Individuals could also sign up to receive alerts directly via phone or e-mail, while a hotline was set up for people who preferred to call in and check for themselves.

All told, the Air District ended up issuing just 11 alerts; lower than average for a season that could easily yield 15 to 20, depending on weather. If the region experiences heavier rainfall than usual in the coming months, for example, then the number could again be low.

Whatever lies in store for the second winter of wood burning regulation, the Air District looks to be prepared. Starting in November, alerts will be announced the day before they go into effect, so that news outlets have greater lead-time to spread the word (last winter, alerts were publicized day of).

And now, awareness about the program has already taken hold, with 12,000 residents currently on the phone alert list and 100,000 more on the e-mail one. Education about this issue should continue to increase, leading more Bay Area residents to change the way they view their fireplaces, and thereby improve the air they breathe.



**BE SMART-- SUPPORT SMART VOTER**

The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) has produced Smart Voter online as a public service for each November and Primary election since 1997. It also covers local elections throughout the year as funds and volunteers become available.

Smart Voter is a 501©(3), nonprofit and its purpose is to:

- provide voters with comprehensive nonpartisan information about the contests on their ballot in an easy-to-use presentation; and
- provide a means for candidates to publish information about themselves and their candidacy directly to voters at no cost to them.

Smart Voter is designed to help voters understand their election choices better so they can make more informed decisions on candidates and ballot measures.

Although Smart Voter depends on volunteer efforts, it must pay for computer services, supplies and services, and some personnel. During this economic downturn, Smart Voter's funding sources have also been cut.

If you would like to support Smart Voter with a tax-deductible contribution, you can do so safely on line at [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org), or send a check made out to LWVCEF – Smart Voter and mail it to:

**League of Women Voters of California  
Education Fund  
1107 Ninth Street, Ste. 300  
Sacramento, CA 95814.**

There will also be a fundraising reception for Smart Voter in Fremont hosted by the local League in April 2010. If you would like to attend, please contact Suzanne Barba at 538-9678 or email to [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net).



**HOLIDAY PARTY  
RESERVATION  
Friday, December 4, 2009**

Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ email address or  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ phone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cost is \$10 per person.

Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: LWVEA Treasurer  
P.O. Box 2234  
Castro Valley, CA 94546

Don't forget to bring an unwrapped gift which will be given to FESCO and ESP to share with the many families and children they serve.



Also, don't forget to bring a wrapped White Elephant gift for the fun gift exchange.

Questions: Call Suzanne 538-9678 or email [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net)

## 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

Nov 6  
11:45a.m. to 2p.m.

### EVENT

Fixing our Broken State Budget Process-  
Speaker: Bill Lockyer & 2 panelists

### PLACE

San Lorenzo Village  
Homes Association Hall

Nov 18  
6 to 8p.m.

Board Meeting

San Lorenzo Village  
Conference Room

Dec 4  
5:30 to 8:00p.m.

LWVEA Holiday Party

Barba Home at  
5787 Highwood Road,  
Castro Valley

Please visit our website for up-to-date event information— [www.lwvea.org](http://www.lwvea.org)