



Alameda Voter

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June 2004

Lots of news at May's Leadership Council

Annual Meeting is Saturday, June 19 at 11:30 a.m. at Angela's Restaurant – see last two paragraphs for details.

By KATE QUICK
President

The Leadership (President's) Council held in May in Sacramento proved to be both interesting and instructional. State League did raise our dues by \$2, but the reason for doing so was more positive than we had thought.

DUES INCREASE EXPLAINED

They have done their audit and corrected the deficiencies in their bookkeeping system (moved from cash to accrual basis of accounting was one step they took which was very important) and are putting into place procedures which will insure proper segregation of duties in financial transactions.

They have also hired a professional auditing company which will regularly review their books. They plan to hire an executive director who will be responsible for both administration and development (fund raising), and have reduced and reorganized the current office staff.

We were given lots of very practical advice in written form regarding our own local League procedures, as well as other organizational and programmatic "how-tos." I'll be sharing these at our upcoming Board Annual Retreat in August.

ELECTRONIC VOTING

We heard a very thought-pro-

voicing talk by our Secretary of State, Kevin Shelly, regarding the issues around the electronic voting machines. The main point of his coming down so hard on the Counties which have had problems with particularly the Diebold machines is that he feels that the public is not very confident in the whole voting process (still reeling from the last Presidential election?) and if we want people to vote, we must build back that confidence, or they won't come to the polls.

He announced that he has quite a bit of HAVA (Help Americans to Vote Act) money, and is eager to fund proposals to get people out to the polls.

The State League has followed up on his offer, and asked local Leagues to submit proposals. We have done so. Our proposal is to work with the High Schools and College of Alameda to get the 18-25-year-olds registered, voting, and working with us on voter service issues.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

I am asking for anyone who wants to work on this project, which will get planned in August, and carried out in September through April (to pick up the November and March elections) to contact me, or speak up at Annual Meeting. This project will do much to not only build the vote in Alameda, but also put the League in the forefront with the younger folks, who we want to succeed us. I think we will need three or four core people and a few additional during elections to pull it off.

Another way you can get

involved: Boardmember Pat Sahadi will be retiring from the Board this year. And as you know, Emma Lue Kopp passed away. We will need some new appointed Boardmembers. Pat kept up our voter registration boxes, did the post office runs, and took and directed messages from our voicemail. Emma Lue acted as our historian. Please consider taking an active part on our Board in one of these capacities (or others if some Boardmembers want to trade portfolios).

SAVE THE DATE!

Our Annual Meeting is on June 19th starting at 11:30 at Angela's Restaurant in the Marina Village Shopping Center. Please do come! We have guaranteed the Restaurant 30 people, so we want to be sure we make good on that, but more importantly, this is your opportunity to vote on our new Board of Directors, budget and program for next year, and give us direction on what you want us to do.

The lunch choices and who to send your check to are on the cover of the blue Annual Meeting Kit sent to you last month. Send it in right away!! Please remember to bring your kit to the Annual Meeting.

Inside this issue

- Member accomplishments
- Board Briefs
- Upcoming events

Boardmembers note accomplishments, goals

Sally Faulhaber: Secretary, Bay Area League Representative, Housing Study Chair

As secretary, I have endeavored to keep a record of the business of Board meetings.

As our representative on the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area's Interleague Network Committee, I have attended meetings of the northern section of the committee, bringing our League's regional concerns and learning of the issues important to other Bay Area Leagues.

Much of the discussion this year has been about transportation, especially the importance of regional planning, creating hubs to link the various elements of mass transport. In the sphere of regional government, there has been an effort to get ABAG and MTC to work together; the League favors a merger, but the agencies do not. Another hot issue has been parks, the East Shore State Park, in particular.

Our Housing Committee has consisted of a few very good people, some of who dropped out during the year. We have accumulated some useful data, but not enough for consensus. We plan a report. Thanks to Cara Watkins, Vivian Patterson, and especially to Kris Matarrese and Evelyn Kennedy for their good work. If the Annual Meeting decides to continue the study, we will need more members to fulfill the scope of the study.

Housing Study: Proposed, second year

A study of housing in Alameda, especially the relationship between affordability and housing types and related matter of design.

The study may consider:

1) Relative costs, environmental effects, use of open space, and transportation/parking issues for different types of housing.

2) The effects of governmental laws and policies at all levels of government on affordability.

Miriam Schiffman: Action Chair

This past year our league has been active publicly on a number of fronts. Early in the year we were involved locally in suggesting and supporting 1) an open selection process for selecting a replacement for Councilmember Al DeWitt, 2) a return by the Board of Education to following the spirit of the Brown Act by allowing public comment on Agenda items at the time they are discussed by the Board, and 3) supporting the maintenance and enlargement of a bike path near a Mariner Square property in order to encourage alternative transportation in Alameda.

We have sent letters to the editor supporting League positions on various state and local ballot issues including our more recent support of School Bonds for Alameda Schools and the Alameda County Health Care Tax.

Nationally we have responded to Calls for Action by sending letters and e-mails from the league to our representatives in Congress on a variety of issues including our opposition to the extension of Alaska oil drilling and the "Partial Birth Abortion" bills, and most recently requesting that the Federal Elections Commission block the use of a soft money loop hole in campaign financing.

Jean Fong: Choices Project Chair, Membership Chair

Alameda is generally thought of as an affluent community, and on average the City does have a high per capita income. What is not as well known is that over 6,500 city residents are uninsured

according a report recently released by to the League of Women Voters of Alameda. There are also significant health disparities and service gaps in our community. The report, Summary of Choices Forum Proceeding, highlights the issues identified and the potential solutions to improve health care access proposed by Forum participants from over 15 Alameda health and human services organizations.

The community forums were sponsored by a Choices Forum grant from the Hewlett-Packard Foundation to promote community education and participation in policy reform by examining an important issue and then informing the community's elected officials and policy makers of the results of the deliberations. With the closure of Alameda Clinic in 2002 and the threat to Alameda Hospital's continued survival, the League believed that Access to Health Care was just such an issue.

The report is timely, given community efforts to successfully save Alameda Hospital and, most recently, Alameda County's safety net for the uninsured and low-income seniors, children and families.

Forum participants talked about the impact of having only one psychiatrist in Alameda for children and youth; the lack of physicians who accept Medi-Cal payments; and the need for culturally competent service delivery.

The League is pleased that collaboration on issues is continuing. The state and county budget crises mean that local agencies and organizations will be challenged to serve more with less. The Choices Forum illustrates what can be achieved when communities begin to discuss common issues, coordinate services, and work together.

Instant Runoff Voting studied

By **JOANNE MCKRAY**
Leaguemember

I'm reporting on a meeting with -- among many others -- Kenny Mostern, the campaign consultant who will be running Berkeley's November public financing measure and who managed the successful IRV (instant runoff voting) Measure I.

The effort has been to get a meeting with all the County Supervisors or their administrative assistants in an effort to get them to write a letter to Brad Clarke, the Registrar of Voters, instructing him to "direct Diebold to make the necessary modifications of elections computer programs and equipment and then to seek certification for its equipment from the Voting Systems Panel of the Secretary of State." (I'm quoting from a preliminary letter sent to the supervisors.)

The idea is that the letter would acknowledge that Clarke had more immediate concerns, namely the current election and the whole issue of paper trail requirements, but that since Diebold will be having to modify the touch screen programs anyway prior to November, it would make sense to make the modifications in a way to accommodate adaptation for IRV.

Diebold has said in the past that such adaptation can "be easily done."

The added costs for adapting the touch screen equipment for IRV are presumed to be minimal, but Caleb Kleppner of the Center for Voting and Democracy is getting specifics.

Measure I allows Berkeley to adopt IRV when 1) technical and

legal barriers have been removed (there are no legal barriers for charter cities, although Brad Clarke's default position is to refer to legal problems), 2) City and County elections could still be consolidated, (Elaine Ginold, Assistant Registrar of Voters, says she doesn't see it ever happening in a consolidated election), 3) it is shown that IRV would cost no more than the current runoff system.

At this point Berkeley, Oakland, and San Leandro have provisions in their Charters that IRV be implemented "when feasible."

One of Clarke's objections has been that, if different cities adopt different specifications for carrying out IRV elections, his job would become impossible, and that therefore if cities want IRV they can hire someone else to handle their elections. An answer to

this particular objection is that cities adopting IRV might well want to coordinate their procedures, basing them on modifications of what San Francisco has adopted.

An important point is that the Board of Supervisors is not being asked to endorse IRV at this time. The members are being asked only to set the stage for implementation of the will of the voters (72 percent voted yes on Measure I in Berkeley, and a clear majority voted for IRV as one of a list of voting innovations they favored in Oakland a few years back).

The concern is that Diebold be ready to go to the Secretary of State for certification of its Alameda County system by 2005 to get ready for elections in 2006.

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Board Briefs

At its May 5 meeting, the Board:

- discussed additions to the list of officials and community leaders to invite to our next Meet Your Public Officials event;

- heard that we raised \$1,138 at MYPO;

- voted to recommend the proposed budget to the Annual Meeting; including an item that would have our treasury pay the proposed dues increase for the coming year;

- approved changes to Alameda County Council bylaws, to be voted on at our Annual Meeting; and

- heard a presentation by Jon Spangler about a plan for a bicycle path from Alameda Point to the Miller-Sweeney Bridge.

Handy Web sites

- Oakland League: www.lwvoakland.org
- Bay Area League: www.lwvba-ca.org
- State League: www.ca.lwv.org
- National League: www.lwv.org
- LWV Smart Voter: www.smartvoter.org
- LWVBA Monitor: www.bayareamonitor.org
- Sen. Barbara Boxer: senator@boxer.senate.gov
- Sen. Diane Feinstein: senator@feinstein.senate.gov
- The White House: www.whitehouse.gov

Calendar of future events

All members and the public are welcome

June 19, Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Annual Meeting Luncheon.
Angela's Restaurant, Marina Village. More information in cover story.

July 7, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. – Board Meeting, Home of Luann DeWitt,
2917 Central Ave., Alameda.

Keep in touch with your League

Have you moved? Have you changed your phone number or email address? Does your League have the best ways to get in touch with you? Don't let the League lose contact with you.

Send any new contact information to Jean Fong, membership director. Write her at 734 Palmeta Court, Alameda, CA 94501. Call her at (510) 522-7797. Or email her at jfong1@comcast.net

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influence public policy through education.

Join the League of Women Voters

Cut out, fill in and mail this coupon with your check to: League of Women Voters of Alameda, P.O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501.

Dues: \$50 for a single membership; \$20 for an additional membership at the same address.

Make checks payable to League of Women Voters of Alameda.

Joining at the local level makes you a member at all levels: Local, county, Bay Area, state and national.

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