



VOTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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The June election is upon us, and we have already had a great forum for the candidates and to give the pros and cons on the ballot measures. Dorothy Fullerton and her assistants are distributing the Easy Voter Guides and Pros and Cons on the ballot measures, Props 41 and 42 and Measure AA. Planning has already begun for the November election, where there will be many more measures on the ballot, as well as candidates for local and state offices.

Voter Service is a core activity of the League. When we were founded nearly 100 years ago, the suffragists who were coming off a great win quickly decided that their work was not done unless those who had newly been given the franchise to vote were educated in “things political.” And here we are, still educating the whole community in the importance of voting and what each

person's vote means. The large number of issues and candidates on the November ballot will mean a call to "all hands on deck" from September through October to assist our League to carry forward the core activity of voter service, so be prepared when you are asked to help.

We are gratified that so many have signed up to attend the Annual Meeting this year. It is an important time for the members to discuss and vote on what our budget and program should be and who our leaders will be for the next year. Our State Senator, Loni Hancock, has agreed to be our speaker, and will be addressing the topic of money in politics.

Did you know that if you are a 50 year member of the League you no longer have to pay dues? We have a few of these, we think, and we are asking that any member who has 50 years let us know so we can send their names to National and have them recognized and their dues requirement stopped.

After the Annual Meeting, things generally go pretty quiet over the summer, except for the Board Annual Retreat and planning session in early August. If you have great ideas for programs or speakers, please let one of the board members know, because we will be setting the calendar at the retreat.

In preparing the "State of the League" for Annual Meeting, Felice and I have been doing some reflecting on our successes in 2013-14. We are very proud to have a League with so many engaged members which has increased membership, visibility in the community, and partnerships with other community groups. Elsewhere in this issue please read our short article on "The State of the Alameda League" for more details. None of this would of course have been possible without the hard work of our board and our members, so we take pride in you, as well and extend our thanks to each of you who made an effort, or many efforts over the past year.

Kate Quick, Co-President

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE



Saturday, May 31 – Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Cardinal Point Retirement Community, 2400 Mariner Square Drive on the estuary,
11:30 am–2:00 pm.

Monday June 2 – Book Club "Reign of Error"

Tuesday, June 3 – California Primary Elections. VOTE!

Friday, June 6 – First Friday Social Dinner China Villa

Thursday, June 26 – Public Forum "Money in Politic\$"

Save these dates in July–August

**Friday July 11 – First Friday Social –
5:30 pm Tomatina 1338 Park Street**

**Monday August 25 – Book Club –
3 pm – 4:30 pm Applebees 2263 South Shore
"A Fighting Chance" by Elizabeth Warren**

ACTION COMMITTEE

Karen Butter – Chairperson

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A second LWVA forum on **Money and Politics** is scheduled for June 26. The first, held on October 24th, 2013, featured Robert Stern (co-author of the California Political Reform Act of 1974) and panelists Robert Gammon (Editor, East Bay Express) and Whitney Barazoto (Executive Director, Oakland Public Ethics Commission). The forums are intended to provide members with a broad understanding of the influence of money in politics at the federal and state levels as well as what might be feasibly done at the local level to make the election process more transparent. They also provide information for the LWVA's Action Committee in developing recommendations for the City of Alameda.

The June forum will have three presenters: Harry Berezin, attorney with Remcho, Johansen and Purcell specializing in political, election, ethics, constitutional, and public policy law; Jay Costa, Maplight, an organization that tracks campaign spending, and Alameda Assistant City Clerk Irma Glidden.

The speakers will discuss the impact of the McCutcheon decision on financing and disclosure for federal, state and local elections; California and Federal regulations and how they affect state and local races; what local municipalities can do (and have done) to promote greater transparency in disclosure; how to track campaign financing for federal, state and county/municipal races; what can be done to improve disclosure in smaller cities such as Alameda; and current regulations and practices relating to the collection and reporting of contributions and expenditures in the City of Alameda.

BOOK CLUB

Anne Spanier – Chairperson

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The League's book club selects and discusses books on a wide variety of subjects. Any interested individual who has read the book and is interested in the League's discussion format is welcome to join us. Call *Anne Spanier* at 510-522-3426.

Book Club will review "Reign of Error" by Diane Ravitch. on Monday, June 2, 3-4:30 at Applebee's 2263 South Shore, Alameda. Although the group ordinarily meets on the 4th Monday, in June the meeting is June 2, due to scheduling concerns.

No book meeting is scheduled for July. Book club returns Monday August 25 with a review of "A Fighting Chance" by Elizabeth Warren U.S.Senator from Massachusetts. This is the story of a woman who began in a poor family and rose to prominence taking on the large financial institutions speaking out for banking reform.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Connie Slattery-Hanna – Chairperson

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Watch for email blasts about First Friday Socials!

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ted Frey – Chairperson

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TREASURER'S REPORT FOR MAY, 2014

The League remains in a strong cash position. We have a cash balance of \$17,151 and a CD containing \$10,040. We have no outstanding obligations at this time.

April was another a very strong month financially. During April, we received \$3,962 and spent \$2,426. Our receipts were entirely related to the very strong performance of this year's MYPO event. Our primary expense was a \$1,000 donation to Smart Voter.

THE STATE OF THE LEAGUE 2013-14

We are pleased to tell you that our League is healthy, vibrant and strong. We have met our goals of community visibility, stabilizing and growing our membership, and effective advocacy.

We started a Facebook Page, which has been growing in people accessing it and clicking through to find more information from links we post on it. We have updated our web page and soon will be adding a PayPal feature so people can donate or pay dues on line with ease. We have issued over 50 email “blasts” to let members know about upcoming events or volunteer opportunities. Our VOTER newsletter has gone electronic, using MailChimp to create content, with slightly over 90% of our members choosing to receive it via email. This saves paper and postage costs. We left in an option for paper for a slight annual charge for those members who do not utilize computers or who prefer a paper edition. Our publicity effort has grown exponentially and the results have been a big jump in attendance at many of our forums. We have partnered with some new organizations, including the local Chamber of Commerce, the Alameda Police Department, and the Library. All of these raise our visibility and demonstrate that our goal of voter education is being met. Our thanks to Jon Spangler, Jeff Cambra, Donna Vaughn, Mike Williams, and Jessi Bushey for leading our successful improvement in communications.

Careful selection of topics for our monthly public meetings, as well as the improved publicity and handling of the many details including lining up speakers, arranging for meeting space, sound and video taping have resulted in our being able to produce great information on timely and important topics to the people of Alameda. Ruth Dixon Mueller deserves high praise and many thanks for taking care of the many details of making our public meetings so successful.

Our voter service group has done a sterling job in making sure voter registration affidavits are available to the public at many locations around town, getting out pros and cons and Easy Voter Guides, arranging forums for candidates and to discuss the ballot measures. We also have made great efforts to insure that our SmartVoter local information gets posted so the public is aware of the background of the candidates and the issues. Many thanks to Dorothy Fullerton and her team who do voter service, and to Juelle

Ann Boyer for the SmartVoter effort.

We have held three new member orientation coffees, and maintained a healthy number of members. We have a new and much more interesting membership brochure and invite new people to join us at each of our functions. Many of our new members have become engaged and are participating in committee work, board positions, or organization of voter education forums. Our thanks to Gayle Thomas and to Anne Spanier for their tireless efforts on behalf of membership.

Our Action Committee has done great work in arranging forums on campaign finance reform and disclosure. They have been working with the City staff and elected officials to explore areas in Alameda where we could help to make a difference. In addition, they have worked with the AUSD to bring some needed reforms to its transparency in agenda publication, notice of meetings, and conduct of business. Plans are to continue these efforts, and the plotting is underway! Thanks to Karen Butter, Joe Van Winkle and the advocacy group for working so hard to help our League make a difference this past year.

Our finances are strong. Our Meet Your Public Officials event exceeded expectations for revenue and was well received, even though we made our elected and appointed officials “speed date” the public. We thank the budget and finance committee, led by Ted Frey and assisted by Juelle Ann Boyer, Marian Breitbart and Li Volin for keeping us on a good fiscal track. And of course, we thank Alice Wilson–Fried and her able assistants, Ruth Dixon Mueller and Connie Slattery Hanna for the fabulous work on the Meet Your Public Officials Event.

Lastly, this is a League that knows how to have fun! The annual holiday party was great, as were the First Friday dinners, which drew as many as thirty members and their spouses on occasion. Our trip to the Bay Model for Bay Area League Convention was a fun outing, as well as a good learning experience. Several members regularly attend the monthly book club, where they read and discuss some pretty interesting and challenging books. Much kudos to Connie Slattery Hanna for organizing the first Friday dinners, to Ruth Dixon Mueller for always being there to help out and to Anne Spanier for her leadership of the book club. Thanks go to Li Volin for opening her home to the large and raucous crowd who come to the holiday party.

Special mention and great thanks go to Donna Vaughn, Earleen Hamlin and Jeff Cambra for their extraordinary efforts to support our League by always

being there when help is needed and in the case of Donna, for sticking with us from the time she was our first President back in 1978.

In summary, the state of our League is pretty darned good; we are proud of it and we give kudos to all who make it as great as it is through their hard work and dedication.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA **LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

On Saturday May 17 and Sunday May 18 the LWVC Leadership Council held its bi-annual meeting in San Jose. It was a jammed packed agenda so Kate and I got there at 8AM. The meetings were well planned and relevant. They were also educational and fun.

There was much camaraderie and inter-personal discussion about how the Leagues were operating on a day to day basis and some good ideas that we will bring forward at Retreat. There were however two concepts that were introduced that were both interesting and I believe useful for us.

Our first group session was on storytelling which is one of the oldest forms of communication dating back to pictures on a cave wall. We each had 2 minutes at our tables to tell a time in our lives that we really wanted something and describe it. I described my great desire to work for Senator Nicholas C. Petris. In that short time I guess I was able to capture the tables attention because they voted my story the most compelling and I went on to describe it to the full group. There was no winner or loser but a few things about storytelling. There are no bad stories. Each one is like a personal gift, but they can also be very useful in describing situations and convincing folks to change their minds about issues. Numbers numb and jargon jars...facts won't change people's mind. So how do you advocate for something you believe in? How do you convince someone to think otherwise? Never an easy task, but stories focused on why someone should care about an issue or how the issue might affect their lives can be a way to get through and alter past held beliefs.

Another exercise was called conversation mapping. The leaders set up three tables (could do any number based on the participants) each covered with white paper and lots of colorful felt tip pens. Written in the center of this

paper is a trigger or hot issue that you want everyone to comment on. It is a totally anonymous exercise – you can pick up any color pen and even change colors if you wish. An example would be a trigger question like ‘ League of Women Voters 2020’. The respondents would write in short comments on how they see the League in 2020. Then each participant responds to what the other said or writes something new. The table quickly fills up with comments in bubbles. You can set up a table for every theme your League needs to work on...let’s say continuity planning and leadership development. Then these ideas are combined and synthesized resulting in workable ideas for the future. We got excellent results.

In addition we heard from Management Trainee Advisors (MTA) on what programs Leagues have developed that have made a difference. Everyone loved our speed dating idea. We heard from excellent speakers. Jay Costa (Project Manager) spoke about MapLight and combining with SmartVoter . Maplight has the numbers and SmartVoter has the narrative. Go to the VotersEdge.com site if you have a chance – it is easy and informative. Jay will be speaking at our June 26th forum on campaign disclosure.

Finally and sadly Jennifer Waggoner is stepping down as President of the State League. She is not ill nor angry at the League, but felt it was time. Happily for us Helen Hutchison from the Oakland League was appointed our new leader. She is well known and well respected and we all wish her much success.

Felice Zensius Co-President League of Women Voters Alameda