

The League of Women Voters of Alameda

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The League of Women Voters; a non-partisan political organization – encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influence public policy through education. The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and come to a consensus on. In an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy in the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.



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VOTER

**Political Responsibility through Informed and Active
Participation**

Meet Your Public Officials

April 14th, 5:30- 7:30pm - Harbor Bay Community Center
3195 Mecartney Road

This year's MYPO is going to be lots of fun and filled with terrific Live Auction and Raffle items. You won't want to miss it! We ask each member to please reach out to others and invite a guest (or more if you'd like). Remember that this event is the League's only fundraiser and it is an opportunity to introduce our League to others and to generate new members.

Mayor Gilmore will say a few words at 6:30 pm and then we'll move right into the Live Auction, led by Co-President, Jeff Cambra. The auction items are unique and highlight some different businesses in Alameda. Here are some examples:

Jeff's Ultimate Dining Experience, a four-course progressive dinner for two at four of Alameda's best restaurants. This year's Experience, donated by LWVA Co-President Jeff Cambra, features the opportunity to dine with Mayor Marie Gilmore. Other notable items include a private ice cream cake-making session for two at Tucker's Ice Cream with pastry chef Henry Awayan (followed by a cake-eating party for eight); a private tour of the Alameda Point workshop where Callahan Piano Service renews and restores classic Steinway grand pianos that includes a DVD of the documentary, "Miracle in a Box", a David Goines poster, and a gift certificate to Chef's Wok on Webster Street and other exciting packages!

The Raffle is focusing on restaurants, wine and wine tastings; however, there are also U.S.S. Potomac tickets, Oakland A's tickets, and many more. If you have raffle questions or donations, please contact Dorothy Fullerton at 769-9159. Dorothy needs all raffle items by April 1st.

We need your involvement to continue the League's energetic and informative community outreach programs allowing us to connect with the broader Alameda community. This is a way to tell the League's story on a personal level to potential new members and to meet and speak personally with those public officials who represent us on a daily basis.

League members – please sell or purchase your tickets recently received in the mail. We have more if you need them! Also remember to bring a finger food dish to the event as we want to serve our guests with a hearty selection.

We are also looking for volunteers for set-up, bring finger food, provide flowers in vases and clean-up. Questions? Contact: Audrey, 522-4651; Liz, 865-1786; Li, 522-3242



CO-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Anne Spanier and Jeff Cambra
Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters of
Alameda



The coming of spring signals a busy time for the Alameda League. In April we host our Annual *Meet Your Public Officials*. This event gives our League an opportunity to bring the citizens of Alameda and their elected officials together for a fun evening which also happens to be our yearly fundraising party. Meetings are being held now to bring together great prizes, food and officers of our fair city (see page 1). Our committee, under the direction of Audrey Lord-Hausman, is working hard to make this an festive evening. The highlight of the event will be greeting our new Mayor, Marie Gilmore who will mingle and meet Alameda citizens. So buy your ticket, prepare some finger food to share, put on some good clothes and come on over.

The convention of the League of Women Voters of California is fast approaching. Mark you calendars for May 12-15. This is an opportunity for members of our League to meet people from different parts of the state and learn about how the State League works to further the goals of the local Leagues. Information about the workshops and keynote speakers is available on a link at the LWVC homepage. Not to mention that the event is held at a hotel on a beach named Ventura and mighty pretty. I have always come home with a briefcase full of names and ideas. Contact Anne or Jeff if you have any interest in attending as our delegate.

A really exciting local program will be the Workshop on the NEXT 10, on May 26. We will be co-sponsoring this with the Alameda Chamber of Commerce. We are still in the planning stages of an event that will allow the public to participate in an interactive game of "How to Fix the California Budget." The Presenter displays the California budget on a screen and then provides each participant with a device for interactively changing parts of the budget according to his/her own values. I understand it is a very interesting and informative program. Next month's Voter will have location and other particulars of the program. Mark you calendars for this one.

Many thanks to the members of our board of directors and other League members that give of their time and self to help keep our League in the forefront of good government in our city.

Anne

March 17, 2011 Board Briefs

- Passed a recommendation that the By-Laws be changed to increase the number of board voting members to a maximum of 20 (from 16). This action will be added to the Annual Meeting kit for a membership vote
- A Proclamation honoring the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote will be presented to the City Council April 5. (see page 3)
- Jeff Cambra is chairing the committee to participate in the *National Study on the Federal Role in Education*. He is recruiting interested members.
- We now have 105 members in the LWV Alameda.

CITY COUNCIL TO ISSUE A SPECIAL PROCLAMATION ON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE ON APRIL 5TH

On April 5th, our Mayor Gilmore will read out the proclamation below and the month of April will be designated as "Civic Engagement Month" in the City of Alameda:

- Whereas, on October 10, 1911, California became the sixth state to vote to grant suffrage to women, and
- Whereas, this year of 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of that significant election, and
- Whereas, the League of Women Voters has taken up the task of working to insure that women and men have full access to information necessary to vote in an informed manner, and
- Whereas, the issue forums, candidate's nights, the SmartVoter.org website and printed materials are made available by the League to all voters without charge, and
- Whereas, the granting of voting rights to women represents the qualities of equity, inclusiveness and full participation in civic affairs that the City of Alameda values,
- Therefore, be it resolved:
- That the City of Alameda joins the League of Women Voters of Alameda and all our voters in celebrating the 100th anniversary of Women's Suffrage in California, and
- That the City of Alameda recognizes the work of the League in promoting civic engagement, good government practices, and voter education, and declares the month of April to be "Civic Engagement Month" in the City of Alameda.



CONVENTION IS COMING – MAY 12-15 WANT TO BE A DELEGATE?

This is the logo for this year's LWVC Convention in Ventura. Convention is like our Annual Meeting, but on steroids! Every other year, all the local Leagues gather with the State Board to adopt our State League budget, elect new State League Board officers and directors, attend workshops, hear speakers, join in caucuses on a myriad of topics, eat, drink and have a good deal of fun.

This year, the Convention activities will begin on Thursday May 12, beginning with SmartVoter workshops, dinner and other workshops. Friday the 13th, the Convention will be called to order and when delegates are not in their plenary sessions on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, they will be attending caucuses, workshops and other organizational meetings. The luncheons and dinners will all feature great speakers and the workshops usually have top drawer, experts in their field, presenters. To help the delegates, there are parliamentary and budget workshops. Needless to say, after three or four days of all this activity you will emerge well informed, re-energized and renewed in your commitment to the work of the League. Interested in being a delegate? Contact Anne Spanier at anneleague@comcast.net or Jeff Cambra at jeffcambra@earthlink.net

My Opinion

The battle to achieve the super-majority needed to pass the parcel tax revolved around the issue of credibility. Alameda voters, the veterans of several recent parcel tax campaigns, and witness to numerous outrageous acts of incivility in some of the most contentious general elections in recent memory, were wary of any and all claims from proponents or opponents. The amount of data proffered pro or con was voluminous and in this debate often contradictory. Voters had the challenge to distill truth from the liberal exercise of free speech.

Fortunately, many organizations whose representatives had participated in the dialogue with the Board of Education on the development of Measure A, stepped up to endorse the ballot measure, effectively backing the statements of the campaign. But for many in our community, the endorsements of independent third parties were more crucial. The opinions/endorsements based on accessible, objective, data-driven analysis routinely applied by the League of Women Voters carries respect and weight among voters.

Especially in light of the drama surrounding the League forum, I thank the League Board for having the fortitude, determination and patience to calmly and ethically render a dispassionate and objective opinion, an unflinching endorsement that clearly swayed some voters.

Michael Robles-Wong
Campaign Chair, YES on Measure A

The Next 10 California Budget Challenge May 26, 2011

How would you solve the \$19.6 billion state budget deficit? Join us for a special program where you roll up your sleeves and create a state budget. You call the shots on how much to spend on schools, the environment, healthcare, prisons, and other state programs — and how to pay for them. Should we levy a carbon tax? Restructure Prop 13? Cut income taxes? **YOU DECIDE!**

The Next 10, a nonpartisan organization that educates and engages Californians, is coming to Alameda with an interactive and informative presentation — The California Budget Challenge. Mark your calendar and watch for further information about this interactive program where you try to solve California's budget woes.

Alameda League's Book Club

The book club continues meeting once a month on a Wednesday afternoon. The February book "California Crack-Up" told the story of how the state found itself in the current financial crisis. There were several reasons, but citizen initiatives headed the list of causation. The authors list specific remedies for the situation and they are election reform.

The March book titled "A Year Without Made in China" tells the story of a young mother who tries to avoid purchasing any thing with a Made in China label. A funny read, but quite sobering.

Want to join us? Want to meet at night? Call 522-3426.

Observing Public Agency Meetings

The Alameda League of Women Voters is active in and concerned about our community. Among our many activities has been an Observer Corps. What is that, you ask? The Corps are members who are exercising their right to know in a structured way. This activity helps to ensure that citizens are aware of the decisions being made which impact their lives. Observation (or sunshine!) will promote transparency and accountability.

The LWV US in the preface to “Observing Your Government in Action” Protecting Your Right to Know, A Resource Guide (available at LWV US website or request from JAB) states: “The League has been a champion of government transparency since our founding in 1920. It is one of our core principles and a vital part of our mission. Our efforts in this area reinforce our reputation of fairness, nonpartisanship and trust. League members attend governmental meetings to learn what their government is doing and to monitor whether those meetings are conducted in an open and transparent way. Experience has shown the importance of the League being present to watch—and to take action when necessary.”

There are several benefits to the local League such as: member retention through engagement; increased ties to community; visibility in the community; and, member attraction. An observer program with specific goals and a structure for training, mentoring and reporting will attract and retain members. Observers are typically good listeners, able to summarize proceedings in a fair way; interested in local government and the issues being discussed; good ambassadors for the League; discrete, courteous and without a personal or partisan agenda while representing the League. The entire membership benefits from the reports and recommendations for further actions by the Corps members. Observers should be trained and know and understand the Brown Act and the Public Records Act as well as the local Sunshine ordinance. Especially important is to know which issues/items are exempt from public disclosure by these acts.

Observer programs also benefit the community. Through the Observer Corps, a civically engaged and empowered cadre of watchdogs is created. Individuals are connected with government through shared observations. Open, transparent and accountable government is promoted when Observer Corps are in place. Elected/appointed officials are connected with their constituents. The public becomes educated about issues impacting their communities and their lives. Last, but not least, areas are identified where action or improvement is needed.

“The organization does not have “professional” or paid observers. These efforts are truly grassroots and open to all members of the public.” (page13) League members are all volunteers in pursuit of transparent and accountable government. Let’s step up and put some “muscle” behind the Sunshine Ordinance our organization supported.

By Juelle Ann Bover

Happy Birthday, Affordable Care Act! You’re 1 today, and wow what a year it has been. Since last year:

- Children are no longer denied coverage due to pre-existing conditions
- Insurance companies can no longer impose lifetime limits on coverage
- Young adults can stay on their parents’ health plans until age 26

Together, we’ve made a lot of progress in the last year to ensure that more Americans have access to better, more affordable health care. **But if some members of Congress have their way, our progress will be lost.** No more coverage for children with pre-existing conditions. No more unlimited coverage. No more insurance for young adults getting on their feet.

The cost of repeal will be vast. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that **repeal of the Affordable Care Act would add \$230 billion to the national deficit over the next ten years and leave about 54 million Americans without insurance.** And that’s why we must spring into action once again. In the coming year, we have a lot to look forward to: new innovations to bring down health care costs, increased access to home and community care for the disabled and expanded access to high-quality care for more American residents. **We have too much to lose to go back to where we started.** We will not back down now. We will continue our work with local Leagues and volunteers to ensure true health care reform and coverage for all. So Happy Birthday, Affordable Care Act. You’ve come a long way, and you still have so much to achieve. We’re here to make sure that happens.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth MacNamara
President, LWVUS

Join or Renew your membership in the Alameda League Today!



Name _____

Other Names _____

(if a family membership)

Address _____ City _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

\$68 Single Membership \$85 Family Membership \$25 Student Membership Dues year is Jan 1 – Dec 31.
Dues assistance is available for those on limited income – Contact us at 869-4969. Make Check payable to LWV
Alameda and mail to: League of Women Voters of Alameda, P. O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 9450

Education Fund donations are Tax Deductible

Donations to the League of Women Voters Education Fund are tax deductible. Consider sending a check for \$5 or more made out to LWV Ed Fund with your renewal, or at any time to
LWV Alameda, P. O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501

Turn your Trash into Cash for the Ed Fund

Lynn and Jim Groh collect aluminum cans, sell them and give the proceeds to the Ed Fund. Drop your aluminum cans on their front porch at 1546 Eastshore Drive, Alameda, and help the League educate voters.



SAVE THE DATE

- 4/14/11 – Meet Your Public Officials, p1
- 4/21/11 – Board Meeting – Alameda Hospital
- 5/12/11-5/15/11 – State Convention in Ventura p. 3
- 5/26/11 Next 10 – California Budget Challenge – p. 4
- 6/18/11 – Annual Meeting featuring John Diaz as speaker.

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