



VOTER

Volume 40 Number 4

April 2007

Meet and greet public officials April 26

What happens every spring, is a lot of fun and leads to new friendships? It's our annual Meet Your Public Officials fundraiser and the date is set for April 26 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Harbor Bay Community Center, 3195 Mecartney Road.

This is a fun time and our opportunity to raise funds for voter service and community outreach work as well as mingle with our public officials.

There are a few ways that members of the League can help make this event successful:

1. When you receive your invitation and four tickets, purchase them yourself and invite friends, or sell them to friends and encourage them to attend.

2. Attend and purchase raffle tickets while there.

3. Bring yummy food, wine, soft drinks, etc.

4. Help us create an awesome raffle item list with any of the following:

☞ Do you have a craft or skill?

☞ Do you have access to entertainment tickets that you would like to donate?

☞ Do you know of somebody or a business that would like to donate a gift?

Call Liz Rogers, 865-1786, once you have a donation. Deliver the prize to Karen Scanlon, 1259 Hawthorne St., or call her at 523-6456.

Tickets are \$10 and count for one raffle ticket. RSVP by April 19 to Earlene Hamlin at erhamlin@earthlink.net or 523-5833.

Raffle Prizes

- ☞ Three tickets Oakland East Bay Symphony "Porgy & Bess"
- ☞ History Cruise - two tickets - The Potomac
- ☞ Oakland A's tickets
- ☞ Jewelry from Sahadi Jewelers
- ☞ One-hour massage
- ☞ Art for Lunch: One-hour, hands-on art workshop for six people at your office or home
- ☞ One-hour garden design consultation
- ☞ Wine basket
- ☞ Patricia's Pantry Gift Certificate
- ☞ Jazzercise gift basket: includes one month gift certificate
- ☞ Handmade afghan
- ☞ Silk scarf
- ☞ Mary Kay products gift basket
- ☞ Mariner Square Athletic Club gift certificate
- ☞ And many more!

Help LWVA with immigration study

The League of Women Voters of the United States has begun its national study on Immigration.

Our Alameda League needs to form a study committee to read the materials, gather local information, and plan some programs for the next program year (September through April).

You can read more about the study and review the reading list on the LWVUS web site at <http://www.lwv.org> On the home page, scroll down toward the bottom and it is on the right hand side, clearly labeled.

If you want to see the materials on the member site, click on the link and enter your e-mail address to get access.

Please call Kate Quick at 523-3612 or cell, 610-4042, if you want to be on the study committee. This promises to be a timely and exciting study – immigration will be a core issue in the upcoming presidential campaign, and its impacts are being widely discussed in all the media. If you are new to League, this is a great opportunity to jump in!

Inside

■ Ranked choice voting event	2
■ Board briefs	2
■ SB 840 update	3
■ Measure A update	3
■ May convention	4
■ Share your story	5
■ Events calendar	6

Board Briefs for March

At its March 15 meeting, the Board:

■ Heard that our letter supporting availability of condoms at high school health centers was well received by the Board of Education, and they voted in favor;

■ Heard that the Planning Board has been unresponsive to our requests for a public meeting on Measure A;

■ Considered a request for ideas for the OneCareNow (single payer health care) event we have been told to hold on May 13;

■ Heard a report on preparations for Meet Your Public Officials;

■ Heard that our orientation event for new members went well, that five new members attended, and that one has already offered to take an active part, working on a program to encourage younger students to start planning for college;

■ Agreed to hold a forum on proposed state health care legislation in May; and

■ Voted to reimburse delegates the state convention.

Ranked Choice Voting topic at Commonwealth Club April 19

Now that some evidence suggests that ranked choice voting increases voter turnout and controls costs at the local level, is it time to consider applying it to statewide elections?

In 2004, San Francisco voters started using Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in city and county elections. In addition to assuring that winning candidates are elected with over 50 percent of the vote, the new voting technique has increased voter turnout and eliminated the need for - and expense of - run-off elections. Now, Alameda and Santa Clara counties are developing RCV systems for their 2008 elections.

As these Bay Area counties lead the way in changing how their citizens vote, what are the implications for adoption of this voting method statewide? Additionally, what steps would ease the process of implementing RCV for other jurisdictions?

The Commonwealth Club of California's Voices of Reform Project presents "Ranked Choice Voting: As the Bay Area leads, will the rest of California follow?" This free event is Thursday, April 19 from noon to 1

p.m. at the Commonwealth Club of California, 595 Market St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco.

Moderator will be Holly Quan, Reporter/Anchor, KCBS 740 AM, with panelists John Arntz, Director, San Francisco Department of Elections; Richard DeLeon, Ph.D., Prof. of Political Science, San Francisco State University; Rosalind Gold, Sr. Director of Policy, Research and Advocacy, NALEO Educational Fund; Evan Goldberg, Chief of Staff, California Secretary of State (invited); Conny McCormack, County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar, Los Angeles County.

Free for Members and Non-members. Complimentary lunch included (must reserve ahead at www.voicesofreform.org). For more information, call Riki Rafner, Public Relations Director, Commonwealth Club 415-597-6712 or Steven Flores, Program and Policy Manager, Voices of Reform 415-597-6717.

The Commonwealth Club is dedicated to promoting state governance that is responsive, representative, and fiscally sound.

The League of Women Voters of Alameda

Current and past issues of the *Voter* are posted on our

website: www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org

The *Voter* is published 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Alameda
The *Voter* Editor is Cara Watkins

Officers:

Secretary Sally Faulhaber:

ssyhf@alamedanet.net

Treasurer Pat Caito:

patricia.caito@gte.net

Elected Directors

Juelle-Ann Boyer: jab@borupp.org

Marilyn Ng: mjklm@yahoo.com

Donna Vaughn: dbvaughn@comcast.net

Cara Watkins:

geekspeak@compuserve.com

Appointed Directors

Board Co-Convenors- Dorothy Fullerton:

pandata1@earthlink.net

Karen Scanlon: yakitt@aol.com

Administrative Committee

Kate Quick: katequick@comcast.net

Pat Sahadi: pmsrps@aol.com

Lena Tam: ltam@ebmud.com

Liz Rogers: redr1940@aol.com

Action Committee

Karen Butter: kab@library.ucsf.edu

Audrey Lord-Hausman: alord@ix.net-com.com

Felice Zenzius: n/a

Communications Committee

Luann DeWitt: ldewitt@alamedanet.net

Lucille Harrison: n/a

Andrea Pook: apook@ebmud.com

Li Volin: n/a

CaraWatkin

Membership Committee

Marilyn Ng: mjklm@yahoo.com

Program Committee

Diane Lichtenstein: dlooo@juno.com

Helen Sause:

Shiela Turner: sturner@sbglobal.net

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

Single Payer Health Care Insurance Plan (SB 840) – Update

With its re-introduction to the California legislature Feb. 23, by Sen. Sheila Kuehl, following its veto by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger last September, the process of bringing single payer health care insurance to every California resident begins once again.

The new SB 840 has been designated as the "California Universal Healthcare Act." (The previous bill was designated as the "California Health Insurance Reliability Act.") A review of the bill thus far has revealed no other significant

changes.

In addition to the re-introduction of SB 840, Gov. Schwarzenegger has proposed a health care insurance plan which has not yet moved into the legislative process as a bill; and both Sen. Don Perata and Assembly Member Fabian Nunez have introduced their own bills: SB 48 and AB 8, respectively.

Under Sen. Kuehl's proposal, Californians would choose their own doctors and other health care providers. A California Health Insurance Agency would take the

place of the current myriad of health insurance companies.

The increased efficiency would save enough of the monies now spent on health care to provide affordable and secure comprehensive health care for all residents. Since health coverage would no longer be linked to employment, conflicts between workers and employers over this issue would no longer exist, nor would gaps due to changing jobs.

Passing this legislation is a priority of LWV California.

Linking land use and water in the Bay Area April 23

Join local officials and water and land use professionals April 23 for a daylong workshop about integrating water and land use: "A Workshop of the Local Government Commission and the Bay Area Water Forum."

How and where we grow has a direct impact on the quality and reliability of water in California. Growing communities face major challenges with stormwater runoff, flood liability, and concerns about if there will be reliable water for current residents and for new development.

■ Who should attend:

Local elected officials and staff, Land use planners, Public

works engineers, Watershed coordinators and members, Water management professionals, Developers and designers, State government officials and agency staff, Interested community members.

Sessions will discuss strategies, explore case studies, and engage participants in dialogue about ways to coordinate land use and water management.

Topics will include:

- Water and Land Use - What's the Connection?
- Weighing Costs, Benefits, Carrots, and Sticks
- Planning for Water-Wise Growth

■ Sustainable Site Design Strategies (LID)

■ Policy Solutions - The Water Element

The workshop will be in Oakland (a confirmation letter and directions to the finalized location will be faxed or e-mailed a week prior to the event).

The deadline for registering is April 16. The cost is \$15, including lunch, refreshments, and a copy of the LGC's resource guide, "The Ahwahnee Water Principles: A Blueprint for Regional Sustainability."

For more details, contact Valia Dahdouh at vdahdouh@lgc.org or (916) 448-1198 ext. 327.

An update on the LWVA and Measure A

This letter ran in The Alameda Journal and The Alameda Sun during the week of April 2.

Editor:

The League of Women Voters of Alameda would like to thank President Patrick Lynch and members of the Planning Board for their action in forming a sub-committee to plan educational meetings on Measure A. Measure A is an issue that is vital to every person in Alameda — decisions we make today will impact our future quality of life. Public meetings are part of community engagement and offer an opportunity to understand the citywide impacts of Measure A on land-use planning, housing types, social equity, and transportation. In these meetings, citizens will have an opportunity to learn and comment on

their vision for Alameda in ways that preserve the characteristics of Alameda we all value. In following the Measure A discussions we have heard repeated comments regarding the limitations it imposes on planning excellence. It is sensible to weigh these impacts in open forums. Despite statements to the contrary, the League does not support or oppose possible exemptions to Measure A and does not believe that discussing Measure A is taking a position to retain, amend or discard it. Open, civil discussions of matters affecting civic policy are part of good government, and we thank the Planning Board for their actions.

Karen Butter, League of Women Voters of Alameda

Convention 'Rally in the Valley' set for May 18 to 20

The League of Women Voters of California biennial Convention 2007, "Rally in the Valley," to be held May 18 -20 at the Doubletree Hotel in Bakersfield.

The LWV Bakersfield is eagerly preparing for this event and promises to make it one of the best conventions ever.

Dolores Huerta, activist and co-founder with César Chávez of the United Farm Workers, will be the speaker at the Saturday banquet.

Convention Business

Convention delegates meet to determine the direction of the League of Women Voters of California for the next two years. Adoption of program for the next two years is an important item of business.

Workshops

Workshops Friday and Saturday provide educational opportunities for all who register, even non-voting delegates. A two-part track will focus on the California state budget: Part I will be a presentation by Next Ten on the budget and how we fund infrastructure; Part II--Follow the Money--will provide information on how to track spending in your own community.

Other Activities

Thursday afternoon, May 17, we have special activities. The LWVC will hold a Homeowner As-

sociation Election Training to discuss the origins and details of the law requiring homeowners to hold elections in a prescribed manner. There will be an opportunity to explore pitfalls to watch out for. Hopefully, we will also have some testimonials from local Leagues that have already acted in this capacity.

Also, a visit to the Kern County Water Agency and the Smart Voter team invites everyone to a pre-convention dinner.

Registration

There will be an inclusive registration fee (\$300) that will

include attendance at plenary sessions, workshops and all meals (except Friday dinner). Registration that does not include meals is also available. Register online at www.lwvc.org/lwvonly/conv_council/2007/.

Room rates begin at \$89 per night. Reserve by April 17 to receive a special rate. Contact your neighboring Leagues if you need a roommate.

Pre-convention list-serve

The LWVC has activated its Web-based program called GetActive. The list-serve part of GetActive makes it possible for us to create a pre-convention list to give local Leagues a way to exchange information with each other when they are preparing for convention.

This list serve will be for those local Leagues who want to:

- find out which other local Leagues share their "burning issues" and share information
- get out information about caucuses and informal sharing meetings at convention
- share ideas for delegate lobbying efforts
- arrange for roommates and carpooling
- find out what activities are available in the Bakersfield areas for attendees (shopping, museums, restaurants, etc.)

Go to the LWVC member's only Web page at <http://www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly/> and to the convention page. Join the list serve for Convention 2007 by clicking on the listserve link and logging in to GetActive. Your e-mail address may already be in the database. As the moderator of the list serve, I will get your request and add you to the list. You do not have to be a delegate to join the list.

LWVC Education Fund receives \$400,000

We had great news March 13. The Irvine Foundation informed us that they have awarded the LWVCEF a \$400,000 grant.

The money will help underwrite capacity building activities for the Education Fund and partially underwrite Easy Voter Guide expenses for two statewide elections in 2008. Fundraising activities are continuing due to the fact that there will now be an additional presidential primary Feb. 5, 2008.

In the past the Secretary of State's office has provided extensive support

(both financial and logistical) for the Easy Voter Guide. Meetings with them to discuss plans to meet the new challenge of a third election in the 2008 cycle have already begun.

Also, as soon as possible, we hope to hire a communications staff person as part of our capacity building activities. That person will assist us in getting our messages out to voters across the state. We are grateful to the Irvine Foundation for their confidence in our work to involve more Californians in the democratic process.

Keep in touch

Have you moved? Have you changed your phone number or email address? Send any new contact information to Golda Mason, 406 Central Ave. Apt. B, Alameda, 94501. Call her at (510)812-2873 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.; e-mails to ImaBagLady@aol.com.

Share your story with other members

National League's 'Storybank' houses personal experiences

How has being a member of the League of Women Voters shaped your life? There is no better way to explain the benefits of membership than to share stories from current LWV members. As a component to the new LWV membership recruitment initiative, a collection of League stories will be compiled and showcased in the LWV Storybank.

The Storybank houses wonderful stories of success and triumph from League members across the country. We are seeking submissions from members just like you; exceptional women who have exceptional stories. Stories should highlight the value of membership in the League, particularly personal stories of achievement and leadership.

LWVUS will be collecting and posting them on the national Web site, sharing them with members of the media, and encouraging other League members to submit stories and promote the Storybank as well.

The League of Women Voters is a place where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement - your work has demonstrated this and sharing your story can inspire others to join in. We hope that you will help us collect stories about your League's victories, the achievements of your fellow members, and your own personal experiences as a League member.

To submit your story, please go to the link: <http://www.lwv.org/Storybank/>

Story from Karen Mitchell, LWV Spartanburg County, SC

Women who know about voting and what is going on in the world, that's neat, I thought. I was a child of 11 when I read about it in the local paper. Twenty years later I found myself in a new section of our country and in a small town. And there it was, a small piece in the newspaper saying that a League of Women Voters chapter was being formed. That's me, I thought, and it was me. The small town grew and the League helped me to grow in knowledge and leadership. And then there it was looming right over us--a huge problem no one would admit was a problem. Twenty-five-percent of the people of the town lived in housing projects and the residents were getting no action to help them create better lives. It was not good for the residents and not good for the town.

The League of Women Voters took action. I tried to attend public meetings, but they were held in the office of the Executive Director. There was little or no notice. I found my way into the office to sit in a corner chair and listen. We researched other towns and their housing communities. We had a public meeting. We got facts to the newspaper. They pursued the story. Shortly thereafter everything changed - new director, new Board, and new ideas that helped the residents. Now they began to be housing communities, not housing projects.

Today this town has been the recipient of two federal multi-million dollar HOPE Grants that have changed the way residents of housing communities live their lives. We think the League of Women Voters had a significant part in creating better lives for 25% of our community and therefore all of us too.

Tips on writing your story

- Keep writing style simple and as easy to read as possible
- Use short words and sentences (not more than 25 words)
- Write short paragraphs (not more than 60 words)
- Use the active voice and a conversational style
- Avoid slang and colloquialisms
- Sequence main points in a logical manner
- Make your sub-points clearly respond to the main point

A manual on water privatization

When the city of Stockton failed to conduct an environmental impact report prior to approving a contract to privatize the municipal water utility's operations and management, the LWV of San Joaquin County became a coplaintiff in a lawsuit challenging the city and OMI Thames, a water conglomerate. Portions of the lawsuit have been upheld, though it's still an ongoing pro-

cess and portions may be appealed.

A manual, *Beyond Privatization: Restructuring Water Systems to Improve Performance*, is available from the Pacific Institute's Web site at www.pacinst.org/reports/beyond_privatization/Beyond_Privatization.pdf.

Calendar of events

All members and the public invited

- **Thursday, April 19, 7:30 p.m.** – Board Meeting. Conference Room C, Alameda Hospital, 2070 Clinton Ave.
- **Thursday, April 19, noon to 1 p.m.** – Ranked Choice Voting discussion. Free. The Commonwealth Club of California, 595 Market St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco. See story page 2.
- **Thursday, April 23, all day** – Water and Land Use Workshop, Oakland. See story page 3.
- **Thursday, April 26, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** – Meet Your Public Officials Fund-raiser, Harbor Bay Community Center, 3195 Mecartney Road. See story page one.
- **May 18 -20** – The League of Women Voters of California biennial Convention 2007, "Rally in the Valley," Doubletree Hotel in Bakersfield. See story page 4.

Please consider making a donation of \$5 or more to our Education Fund, the lifeblood of our public outreach activities.
No amount is too small.
Your donations are tax deductible.

Mail your check to:
League of Women Voters of Alameda,
P.O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501
Include your name, address, phone, and email and the amount you've enclosed.

Thank you!

The League of Women Voters – a non-partisan political organization – encourages informed and active participation of citizens 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.

With membership comes the opportunity to work with well-informed, grassroots activists on a broad range of public policy concerns. Learn valuable, transferable skills, including how to organize and run productive meetings, write more effectively, speak in public, organize and run effective campaigns, conduct research studies, and coordinate general civic leadership training. The League invites your comments, letters and articles. They may be sent, faxed or e-mailed to the LWVA.

Join or Renew

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: \$55 for a single membership; \$75 for a family membership. Students pay \$25, and dues assistance is available. Questions? Contact Golda Mason at imabaglady@aol.com or call (510) 812-2873.

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.

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

The League of Women Voters of Alameda
P.O. Box 1645
Alameda, CA 94501

Return Services Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ALAMEDA, CA
PERMIT NO. 112