



Plan on coming to the League's Holiday Party Dec. 8

Be there with bells on! Mark your calendar for the Alameda League's annual holiday party Friday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m., held this year at Li Volin's home, 1506 East Shore Drive.

Not only is this always a fun way to kick off the holiday sea-

son, it's a great opportunity to see members, introduce prospective members, and sample the favorite recipes of League members.

Bring your favorite dish to share with others.

Please RSVP to Liz Rogers at

865-1786 or edr1940@aol.com by Dec. 4. Let her know what you will be bringing to share – meat or casserole, side dish, appetizer, salad, dessert, rolls/butter, wine, or soft drinks.

Don't miss our festive holiday get-together!

Will our November votes count?

The short answer is yes

By **NANCY BIKEL**
Alameda County LWV

L league members in Alameda County have been observing and working closely with the Registrar of Voters Office for more than a year and a half to make sure that our election system is working well.

Guiding our work has been the LWVUS standard —SARA — "voting systems should be Secure, Accurate, Recountable and Accessible," as well as the basic League tenet that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.

Four League members serve on the ROV's Citizen's Advisory Committee; two League members serve on the ROV's Logic and Accuracy Board, including our own webmaster, Bill Chapman.

Overall, League observers found the Alameda County ROV

conscientious and meticulous in carrying out its work. Election equipment and software are only part of an election system.

Well-trained staff and systematic procedures are key elements; they are essential to carry out a secure and accurate election.

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Dave Macdonald, new acting ROV, who also heads the County's Information Technology Department, has expanded and improved tracking and testing of equipment and systems, upgraded training of the existing staff and brought computer expertise.

An independent firm was hired to do a vulnerability assessment and identified only a few weak points. The report is posted on the web at http://accurate-voting.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/10/alameda_sequoia_vuln.pdf.

A full report of League observations of the November 2005 election, "How Our Votes Are Counted," is posted on the Web at

http://www.lwvbae.org/acc_rov.htm. Although some details of the system described in this report will change from this election, the overall descriptions will still be relevant.

This election will provide a strenuous test for the ACROV since the County has brand new voting machines and a new voting system, from a new vendor, Sequoia Voting Systems. The Board of Supervisors made their purchase decision only just in time for the fall election; equipment began to arrive at the end

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September and October board briefs

At its September 21 meeting, the Board:

- adopted a Non-Partisan Policy, adding Action Chair to the list of officers who may not take a public role in elections;

- readopted our Diversity Policy;

- planned for a number of our members to attend a homeowners Association Election Training session;

- heard our membership was up to 98;

- heard a progress report on plans for forums for the November election and distribution of voter information;

- heard that Karen Butter had presented our advocacy on climate protection to the City Council and on a vote re an exception from Mea-

sure A to the Planning Board;

- received a report on Women in the City Workforce; and

- heard that two of the speakers planned for our September meeting on transportation /development had backed off due to political pressure.

At its October 19 meeting, the Board:

- recognized the resignation of Linda Hudson as Program Chair and director, and discussed future general meetings;

- heard that arrangements for the elections forums were set; and

- discussed doing further research or having a program based on the information from the Women in the City Workforce letter.

Don't forget to renew your membership

We are nearing of the end of the year and it is time to send in your membership renewal dues for 2007. The national LWV organization has passed a slight increase in the PMP, the annual per member payment local leagues are assessed to pay the ILO (Inter-League Organization), the State LWV, and the LWVUS.

We therefore have adjusted the individual dues rate to \$55 and the household rate to \$75. The student rate of \$25 remains the same. This increase is very small to help ensure sound financial shape amid increasing operation costs.

In the past two years, our chapter experienced a drop in membership from 112 in 2004 to 83 in 2005. We currently are re-building and now have 98 members. The Membership Committee would appreciate your continuing assistance in spreading the word of the League's mission and programs in the community. Talking to friends, neighbors, and family will help us to network more effectively in promoting our non-partisan, grassroots organization.

As a reminder, the student rate applies to those 18 years of age or older and enrolled at an academic institution, either full- or part-time. Also, our local chapter offers a limited number of partial and full scholarships for prospective members. Requests should be submitted with the application form for review by the Board. They are based on financial need and are granted on a case-by-case basis.

Please take a minute to fill out and mail the form on page 6. We look forward to receiving your renewals and new member referrals. Your financial support is greatly appreciated and helps us to maintain our ability to educate and advocate in the public interest on local, state, and national levels.

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?

Send any new contact in-

formation 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.

Future of housing at Bay Area Day

The topic at the 2007 Bay Area Day will be Successful Smart Growth Design for the Bay Area. The event will be Jan. 27, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., San Jose (address to be announced).

The keynote will be John King, Urban Design writer for the San Francisco Chronicle,

Panels include: "Bay Area Focusing Our Vision project" - Refining regional smart growth criteria, identifying Priority Development Areas and Priority Conservation Areas.

"New Round of Regional Housing Needs Allocations and Housing Element Updates": information on legislative changes, criteria for local or sub-regional allocations of affordable housing.

The final program will be available in December on our website www.lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org. Cost will be \$10 per person, rsvp to Tam Hege, Treasurer at treasurer@lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org.

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
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Lord-Hausman honored for service

Alameda League member Audrey Lord-Hausman was the recent recipient of the "Community Service Person" award, bestowed by the Alameda Chamber of Commerce, at its Business Awards Dinner.

Audrey has led the League to put on our Annual Meet Your Public Officials event and has done an outstanding job each year.

She is also active with the Alameda Point Collaborative for Children and Youth, and Pedestrian Safe Alameda. She is in the lead each year for the annual "Walk and Roll to School Day" to make kids think of getting to school on their own power as a "good thing."

Audrey continues to inspire and advance youth efforts as well as the work of other non-profit organizations. For example, check out her work with youth and their 'zine "Out Loud" (Thoughts of a Teenage Mind). It is published as a collaboration of ACCYF, Girls Inc., Alternatives in Action, local advertisers support and diversified efforts by students from Alameda High, Bay Area School of Enterprise, Chipman Middle School, Encinal High and Oakland School of the Arts. It's free and distributed periodically in Alameda.

You can view past issues online at <http://www.alamedayouth.org/index.php?section=about&page=teen>, as well as all ACCYF collaborators at

www.alamedayouth.org.

Take time to congratulate Audrey next time you see her!

What the heck are they talking about?

By KATE QUICK
League Boardmember

Have you been to a League meeting, or a League Board meeting and heard a lot of "mystery terms" and felt pretty left out? This article is to share with new and newly active "Leaguers" some of those terms, in the hopes of "demystifying" League.

Program – This is used two ways, either to refer to a presentation, or the set of presentations for the year at general membership meetings; or to refer to the set of concerns National, State, or Local Leagues are taking up for study or action.

Study – The decision to look into a particular issue of concern is adopted by the membership at the National, State, or Local level, usually at the Convention or Annual Meeting. A proposal, or Scope for the study is made, resources identified to conduct the study (money and member time), and the proposal is voted upon by the membership. A study may be proposed by either the Board or an individual. If the National or State Leagues adopt a study, materials are prepared, usually in the form of set study questions to be investigated and answered, and sent to the Local Leagues. While the local league does not have to do the study, it is encouraged to do so, as a broad participation of many Leagues always results in a better study.

A study committee is usually formed, and meetings held. There may be need for interviews of local officials or others to gain full comprehension of the issues. There may also be field trips, or written materials to be reviewed by the study committee members.

Some studies are narrow in scope and take very little time; others may go on for many

months.

Consensus – The Study Committee usually brings its study results to a general meeting of the membership for discussion. The final step is finding consensus among the membership for the position to be taken on the issue being studied. Consensus is different than voting – it is always to find the "sense of the group". Strongly held minority opinions may be submitted along with the findings which resulted from the consensus process.

Position – After study and consensus, a formal Position is adopted by the League. No League may speak publicly on an issue unless a position has been adopted through this process. This protects the good name of the League, because we always speak from an informed point of view.

Vertical Position – When the National or State, or Bay Area League has done a study and adopted a position, these become part of League Program, and the positions may be utilized by local leagues to comment on issues on which the position is clear. While the local league may have participated in the study, it is not a locally adopted, but a higher level position which is being utilized. Thus it is called "Using a Vertical Position".

Action – Any act on the part of a League to let the public or public officials know if its position. This may be a letter to the editor or to a governmental body, public speaking, forums, or preparation of publications. Action is advocacy, and therefore is not solely educational.

I will try to offer more definitions in future VOTERS. If you have heard a term and don't know what it means, e-mail me at kate-quick@comcast.net, and we will try to get it defined for you, and put into the next training article.

Ideas sought for 'College Access for Everyone'

Supplies of "College Access for Everyone," a publication by the LWVC Community College System Committee, were shipped to local Leagues recently.

"College Access for Everyone" has two parts: 1) a report on why so many youngsters leave California's K-12 public school system ill-prepared for higher education, and, 2) a Guide for Parents that outlines how parents can help their children develop rewarding careers through post-secondary education.

A separate Spanish-language version of the parent's guide will make it easier for Latino parents to understand higher education opportunities in California.

Each local League has re-

|| The Alameda League is working with board members of the Alameda Unified School District on a distribution scheme for the schools. The League needs your thoughts about other good outlets in Alameda, including contact names and numbers. Send them to Kate Quick at katequick@comcast.net

ceived a box of folders containing both parts of the publication along with an additional set of Spanish-language parent's guides to distribute among youth agencies in their own communities.

The parent's guides can also be copied and distributed as handouts at PTA meetings, Open School nights and other school-based events.

For more information about "College Access for Everyone," contact the chair of the Community College System Committee, Helene Lecar, at hlecar1@ix.netcom.com.

"College Access for Everyone" was made possible through a grant from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Youth vote targeted with YouTube site

The League of Women Voters of California debuts our newest voter outreach tool – an appeal to young people to vote, made by young people, posted where young people gather – on YouTube.

Here's the link; just click and go to YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWchKsYGlclI>

Watch the spot. Then send it to everybody you know. Forward this message to everyone in your address book. Ask them to watch it and pass it on – especially to young people. Send it to your political blogs and e-lists. We need to spread the word.

Voting is easy and young people have the most to gain by voting – or lose by not voting.

Take the League's Election 2006 surveys

As part of the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection project, we have compiled two surveys to capture voters' experiences and League members' observations on Election Day.

The first survey is designed to allow members of the public to share their voting experiences.

The other survey allows League members to document and share any Election Day observation work they undertook. Please encourage your members to fill out the surveys--and we encourage Leagues to link (http://www.lwv.org/AM/CustomSource/surveys/2006_Election_PersonalExperienceSurvey.html) to this survey on their Web site and encourage voters in their communities to tell us about their voting experience.

It is these personal stories, along with the statistics we compile, that will provide the basis for Election Day 2006 follow-up.

VOTE411.org and election success

Thank you to Leagues across the country for providing voters with excellent voter service during the 2006 Elections.

Because of your hard work, more than 200 Voters' Guides and more than a thousand local and state League voter service events across the country (many of which were televised) were promoted through LWV.org and VOTE411.org.

On Election Day alone, more than three-quarters of a million people visited VOTE411.org and viewed more than three million pages of election information

that helped them be prepared to vote.

The LWV.org Web site also saw a great deal of traffic, having almost 65,000 visitors on Election Day alone and more than 230,000 in the week leading up to the election.

Thanks to Leagues across the country for supporting and promoting VOTE411.org and for making this incredible visibility opportunity possible. We congratulate and thank all of you who worked so hard on providing voter service.

Positive changes in Juvenile Justice/Dependency System

Since the LWVC Juvenile Justice/Dependency Study was completed in 1999, several positive changes have occurred. From 2001 to 2004 there was a 6.4 percent reduction in the number of children entering foster care for the first time. During the same time span recurrence also decreased; the percentage of children who experienced a second incident of abuse or neglect within six months declined by 12.4 percent. Children who enter foster care also exit more quickly. The number of children who return home within 12 months has increased by 14.4 percent and, for those unable to return home, the number adopted within two years has increased by 56.7 percent.

Earlier this year California successfully negotiated a foster care Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project. Title IV-E is the primary federal funding source for foster

care. This is an uncapped entitlement that can currently be used only for children in out-of-home care. The approval of the waiver project will provide funds for services that will prevent child abuse, protect children within their homes, strengthen families, and divert families from the foster care system. Implementation may occur in up to 20 counties. Los Angeles County, as the lead county on the application, has pre-qualified. Other counties may self-select, subject to state approval of their plans.

This is significant, as it is the first ever waiver granted, and successful implementation in California could offer the same flexibility to other states. The goals of the waiver are in keeping with our positions of prevention and early intervention, a safe and supportive environment for children and flexible use of funds.

Simple way to gain members

You most likely encounter individuals every day in your community and think, "He/she would make a great League member!"

Why not carry a membership brochure with you so you can easily pass along your League's membership information? It is an effortless way to invite your friends, neighbors and other community leaders into the League. You can purchase membership brochures for \$.05 each (minimum order of 50) from LWVUS by emailing pubsales@lwv.org. Or you can download them for free.

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

VOTES continued from COVER

of August. The Registrar of Voters staff had to work very quickly to learn the new system, to adapt existing training for poll workers and temporary staff, train them and to study and test the new systems. Because of concerns raised by citizens about the security of electronic systems, the Board of Supervisors required the ROV to add extraordinary safeguards for this election—including independent testing and a full hand-recount of all votes cast on touch

screen machines.

Most votes will be cast on paper ballots—the sturdy card-stock weight ballots. Immediately after filling out their ballots at the polling place, voters will insert their ballot in a scanner. If they have voted for two candidates for the same job, “over-voting”, the scanner will reject the ballot and give the voter a chance to vote correctly. When ballots are fed into the scanner, the votes are also recorded electronically.

Disabled voters or voters who wish to do so will vote on a new touch screen machine which will also print their vote on a paper roll; the voter may review the printed record and may change or correct their vote before casting their ballot.

Blind or visually impaired voters may vote by listening to a recorded ballot and pressing buttons on a pad to record their vote; their votes can be replayed so they can check that they voted as they wished.

The public has the right to observe many election procedures.

In the future, if you would like to observe the preparation and counting of absentee ballots, the Canvass, or the hand count of the one-percent sample with more experienced League observers, please send me an e-mail. You may also contact the ROV office directly for times and places.

Calendar of events

All members and the public invited

□ **Friday, Dec. 8, 6 p.m.** - Holiday Party, 1506 East Shore Drive, Alameda. Everyone welcome. Free. Bring a dish. RSVP by Dec. 4 to 865-1786. See story on cover.

□ **Saturday, Jan. 27, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.** - Bay Area Day. Location to be announced. See story page 2.

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.

Last year we had no donations, so we are trying to increase awareness this year.

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; \$25 for an additional membership at the same address. 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:

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The League of Women Voters of Alameda
P.O. Box 1645
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