



VOTER

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Join the parade! League ready to march July 4

By Miriam Schiffman
Leaguemember

Do you love a parade? Join Leaguers as we march into Alameda's July 4th Parade. Why? Because League embodies this year's Parade theme which is "Celebrating Alameda's Volunteer Spirit."

We will decorate a Prius and carry signs that spell out some of League's activities and concerns. We will color-coordinate what we wear. We will pass out SmartVoter book marks as well as a bookmark with the election dates for the coming year.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

- ☞ Sign makers and decorators
- ☞ Participants - riders, walkers, bicyclists, skaters, drivers of environmentally correct cars (with car)
- ☞ We would love to have spouses, significant-others, children and grandchildren join you.
- ☞ I would love to have some help washing the car inside and out and decorating it at 8 AM before the parade - or even the night before.

We would like to arrange it so that some only have to participate in half of the course and so walkers will be able to switch with some of the riders.

Catch the spirit. Help League take part in this grand Alameda tradition!

Call or e-mail Karen Butter now to let her know you can join: kab@library.ucsf.edu or 769-9634.

Convention was fun, educational

By Kate Quick
Boardmember

It didn't seem like two years ago that Lena Tam and I went to Orange County to attend the last State Convention, where I was elected to the State Board as the Communications Director, but here I was again, this time in Bakersfield, ending my two-year term.

It was a great convention. All the usual convention hoop-la was there - the great speakers, special banquets and events, late night and early morning caucuses, and plenary sessions with their points of order and formal motions. We had a night-before night out at the Buck Owens museum and restaurant, called the Crystal Palace where the Leaguers hoo-hawed and danced to live music.

As I was still "on the Board", I was trying to be both a Board member and your delegate, which was a little hard at times. But there was no challenge to the nominated slate or to the proposed budget so things went smoothly.

The speakers included Noel Perry of NextTen, a group that is trying to educate Californians about the very tough budget choices we must make to insure the sources and uses of Californian's money are in keeping with our values and priorities.

We also heard from Debra

Bowen, our new Secretary of State, who said that she looks forward to working with us in the voter education and secure voting arenas. She promised continued funding assistance with our educational products, too.

Our banquet speaker was Dolores Huerta, a revered leader of the farm worker's labor movement. She told us that she has 11 children and was a very "bad mother." However, she said, she counted every unmade bed as a blow for social justice, and knew that her kids valued her work with Cesar Chavez and the farm workers.

Trudy Schafer, our LWVC legislative consultant, brought us up to date on legislation of interest. It always amazes me the facts that Trudy keeps in her head! She is a great resource for the League of Women Voters of California.

Five resolutions were adopted by the Convention:

- Appreciation for the work of John Mott Smith, retiring from the Secretary of State's Office.
- District of Columbia Voting Rights
- Action on Climate Change
- Nuclear Power Plants
- State Budget Structural Deficit

Details of these and other convention materials may be found on the member's only side of the LWVC web site at

<http://www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly>

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The other Measure A: half-cent tax for health services

(League supported the measure. This is a reprint of a May 18 Alameda Times-Star article)

In 2004, the direction seemed clear when Alameda County voters approved an annual bailout topping \$90 million for the county's beleaguered medical system.

Seventy-five percent of the money, raised from a half-cent sales tax increase, would subsidize operations at county hospitals and clinics.

The remaining 25 percent — now estimated at \$28 million for 2007-08 — would fund a laundry list of health services provided by the county and community-based organizations.

On Tuesday, political interests tangled with prudent budgeting as the five county supervisors began defining how the \$28 million will be spent.

Some issues:

■ Should individual supervisors get \$200,000 a year out of Measure A funds, instead of the current \$100,000, to spend on medical needs in their districts?

"I get a lot of requests for health care and related uses,"

said Supervisor Nate Miley of Oakland.

Miley later said his other job as executive director of an Oakland-based senior citizens' organization didn't conflict with his advocacy of more county money for older-adult injury-prevention programs.

■ Should \$2 million be allocated for capital improvements in buildings or facilities operated by community-based organizations?

"What good is it if you provide facilities under an overpass," asked Supervisor Scott Haggerty of Dublin. "Somebody's got to pay for it, and it's got to be us."

Spending money on capital needs wasn't defined in the Measure A ballot, Supervisor Gail Steele of Hayward insisted. She argued that other medical needs, instead of "capital dollars (approved) under the radar," should get priority.

■ Will the money for various expenditures come from sources such as Measure A reserves, one-time-spending accounts, or cost-of-living increases to community organizations?

Dave Kears, director of the county's Health Care Services Agency, questioned supervisors — tactfully — on these questions.

Miley wanted to take the extra \$500,000 for the supervisors' district discretionary funds out of the county's Measure A reserve budget.

This would leave the fund at \$5.5 million, instead of the \$6 million Kears recommended as a hedge against years in which sales-tax dollars could decrease.

Kears asked supervisors to defer some decisions until September, when the county's financial picture may be clearer.

And, county Administrator Susan Muranishi voiced caution about subsidizing programs without a guarantee of future income.

"Measure A is not a forever thing," she said, noting voter authorization extends only to 2019.

Measure A money now goes to such programs as indigent care, health care for people in county jails, and juvenile hall clinics.

The League of Women Voters of Alameda

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Board Briefs from May

At its May 17 meeting, the Board:

■ Heard that Kate read our letter at the May 15 City Council meeting, urging their support for the Planning Board's plan to hold a public forum on Measure A;

■ learned that Karen Scanlon has agreed to take over the job of web mistress; and

■ heard in a report on Meet Your Public Officials that we took in about \$1,400 and that 30 public officials attended, and discussed ways to improve the silent auction and raffle.

Global interdependence and migration

This brief is based on the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee background paper, "Effects of Global Interdependence on Migration" by Dorrit Marks. The paper (including full citations of sources) is available at www.lwv.org.

According to a National Intelligence estimate, globalization is stimulating immigration with significant implications for the U.S. Expanding international trade, finance, investment and information flows are accentuating economic insecurity and migration pressures.

Migration pressures on the U.S. and within the Americas region are expected to continue to rise in the next decade. Despite strong economic prospects in Mexico, the disparities in living standards, increased demand for labor in the U.S. and immigration reunification laws will sustain Mexico as the single largest source of authorized and unauthorized immigration to the U.S.

Remittances

The flow of remittances (the transfer of money by foreign workers to their families and communities in their home countries) from the U.S. has reached record amounts and represents a major source of income for millions of individuals and communities. According to an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) study, Latin American households receive \$60 billion annually from remittances worldwide, more than these countries receive in aid from the U.S. and from institutions such as the World Bank.

Remitted funds have a positive impact on the development and welfare of countries receiving the funds. The money foreign-born workers send home is mainly used to cover basic necessities. For example, about 8 percent of remitted funds in Oaxaca, Mexico, is spent on business startups or investments, while 92 percent goes to meet daily needs. Remittances improve access to education and

IMMIGRATION STUDY: Article #1

health care for families in immigrants' home countries and help banks finance imports from the U.S., offsetting country trade deficits (where imports exceed exports).

U.S. Policies

U.S. agricultural policies, e.g., farm subsidies, have resulted in unexpected consequences, including an increase in unauthorized immigration. Subsidies have allowed U.S. farmers to sell corn at prices below cost. Corn is the centerpiece of the Mexican diet, and, according to a 2003 Oxfam briefing paper, the Mexican corn sector was being displaced by subsidized low-cost corn imports from the U.S. Thus, millions of Mexicans, unable to make a living in Mexico, emigrated to escape rural poverty.

Current heightened interest in alternative fuel for automobiles means things are changing; corn-based ethanol production in the U.S. has increased, driving up corn prices as well as exports. Consequently, feedstock and tortilla prices have risen, hurting the pocketbook of many Mexicans. On the other hand, rising corn prices benefit Mexican corn growers.

Employment Issues

Pressure to emigrate will continue if many new working-age people entering the job market in developing countries fail to find work. According to a National Intelligence Estimate, Mexico's new job creation rate is 700,000, while the number of new workers entering the Mexican market is nearly one million annually. Mexico also has a brain drain - nearly a third of all Mexicans with advanced degrees leave Mexico for the U.S.

Global competition to attract foreign graduate students to universities is growing. In 1989, American universities awarded twice the number of PhDs granted by Asian countries. According to a

July 2006 Migration Policy Institute study, by 2001, the gap had closed putting the U.S. in more competition for the highly skilled workers needed to fill U.S. jobs.

Immigration policy affecting highly skilled workers becomes increasingly important as the competition for highly skilled labor increases around the world. Ease of employment-linked permanent residency is a factor that can facilitate or deter immigration to the U.S.

Solutions

Robert Pastor, Director of the Center for North American Studies at American University, concludes that narrowing the income gap between Mexico, the U.S. and Canada is the only way to stop the flow of migrants. He supports the proposed North American Investment Fund, funded by Mexico, the U.S. and Canada, which would be used to build highways, roads and broadband internet lines in southern Mexico to connect it to North America. The effort would not stop illegal immigration, but is projected to double Mexico's growth rate and reduce the income gap with the U.S. by 20 percent in a decade.

Tamar Jacoby (Foreign Affairs, Nov./Dec. 2006) points out that immigrant influx is the product of changing U.S. demographics, global development and increasingly easy international communications. Pressures to emigrate from developing countries will remain intense, fueled by poverty, lack of jobs, population growth and political instability. At the same time, globalization increases access to information about lifestyles and opportunities in industrialized countries. The global integration of the labor market for both highly skilled and unskilled workers is also a continuing trend. Immigration laws and policies need to take into account these realities, along with the effect of other laws and policies such as farm subsidies and NAFTA.

Clean Money bill passes full Assembly

By a vote of 45-34, our amended Clean Money pilot bill (AB 583) recently passed the full Assembly! This is giant step forward for a bill that will provide California and the nation with a model for reform towards fair elections and accountable government.

Thanks to the literally thousands of you who signed the petition, wrote letters, faxed, called, and packed all the hearings. It was another outpouring of support for fair elections they couldn't ignore!

Support from coalition partners who believe in Clean Money was also key, with Public Campaign, California Sierra Club, the Greenlining Institute, the William C. Velasquez Institute, and MALDEF especially coming through in the final days this week on the bill that was also helped along by our allies at California Common Cause and the League of Women Voters of California. You can see the entire impressive list of Clean Money supporters on our website.

(If your group isn't on it and would like to be, let us know!)

No less important was the leadership of Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, who once again helped propel Clean Money through the Assembly along with Appropriations Chair and AB 583 co-author Assemblymember Mark Leno. The tenacious efforts of AB 583 author and Clean Money champion Assemblymember Loni Hancock was also recognized by the other Assemblymembers who rose to speak in favor of AB 583 on the Assembly floor.

The version of AB 583 that passed is a pilot project that will provide full Clean Money public financing for the office of Governor and one open Assembly and State Senate seat in 2010.

Modeled after successful systems in Arizona and Maine, AB 583 will allow Californians the opportunity to vote for a gubernatorial candidate in 2010 who hasn't accepted any money from special interests, as well as serving as a pilot program that will allow California voters and can-

didates to see how a Clean Money system would actually work in California. After which, they'll almost certainly demand it for all state offices.

As Assemblymember Jared Huffman said describing why we need Clean Money while rising to speak in support of the bill:

"Anyone who thinks that taxpayers are not already paying the price for this broken political system, this money dominated political system, is kidding themselves... The taxpayers are paying a hidden tax because of this money dominated system."

Now that AB 583 has passed out of the full Assembly, it moves on to the State Senate where it will begin in the Senate Elections Committee. The timing of when it will go to that committee has not been set yet, but we'll keep you informed.

Between now and then, we must continue to build support for the bill and add more Senate co-authors. Stay tuned for future updates and alerts on how you can help.

Discriminatory voter ID amendment defeated

League President Mary G. Wilson made the following statement following the defeat of an amendment, introduced by Senator Mitch McConnell (R KY), that would have required all voters to obtain and show a government issued photo ID before exercising their constitutional right to vote at the polls.

"Fair and equitable access to voting is our most precious democratic right, and using political tricks to manipulate those rights has no place in the 21st century. We applaud the Senate's rejection of the

McConnell amendment, which would have created unfair barriers to voting nationwide.

"The League will continue to work against any Congressional actions that threaten the voting rights of all Americans, and particularly those of minorities, the elderly, and the poor."

The League has long worked against photo ID requirements, which disproportionately stifle the voices of certain groups. This week, the League publicly urged Senators to oppose the McConnell amendment.

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

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

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/>

Kate Quick: An unexamined life gets examined

Local League Name:

LWV Of Alameda

Leadership Positions Held:

- Communications Chair
- Development Chair
- Local League President
- Other: State Board

Communications Director

Joined the League in 1977:

- While raising a family
- While in the workforce

At the time, I was working, had a 10-year-old and my husband and I were building our careers, I felt that there was something missing.

I had done all the right things; college, a stint as a VISTA (domestic Peace Corps) Volunteer, work in both the non-profit and

business world, marriage, and a kid.

Having been raised in a very political family, I was tracking what was going on, but I was not involved in any way in making a difference. I was leading "the unexamined life."

So I examined my life and decided that what I was doing, although perfectly fine, was not, as we say in League, "making a difference."

Through friends who were already League members and working on community issues, I joined. Yes, I was asked!

Those very same friends from 30 years ago are still my friends.

We are still working together on community issues (some of the issues are the same ones as 30 years ago!) We have, together, made that all-important difference many, many times.

Now retired, I have just finished a term on the State LWV Board and am returning to be President again of my local League.

League has fulfilled my desire to contribute; has added life-long friendships; and has kept me more than busy for 30 years. I am making a difference, and when I examine my life, I am not just satisfied, but very proud to be a League member!

Calendar of events

All members and the public invited

□ **Wednesday, July 4** – League takes part in the city of Alameda's July 4 parade. Watch or join the parade. For more information, see story Page 1.

□ **Thursday, Aug. 16, 7:30 p.m.** – Board Meeting. Conference Room C, Alameda Hospital, 2070 Clinton Ave.

Keep in touch with your League

Have you moved? Have you changed your phone number or email address? Don't let the League lose contact with you.

Send any new contact information to Golda Mason, 406 Central Ave. Apt. B, Alameda, CA 94501. Call her at (510) 812-2873 between 9 AM and 9 PM. Or email her at Imabaglady@aol.com



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
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