



VOTER

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Voter service forums set for May 23 and 24

Candidates for State Assembly and County Supervisor, and discussions of Props 81 and 82, and Peralta's Measure A

By **JUELLE-ANN BOYER**
LWVA Director

The League of Women Voters of Alameda will sponsor two candidates' forums May 23 and 24.

Boardmember Kate Quick of the League says all citizens are urged to participate in one or more of the forums.

"See and hear first-hand those neighbors who are running for the offices which will represent the voters at the State Assembly and the County Board of Supervisors," she said.

State Assembly District no. 16 candidates will be at the Tuesday, May 23 forum, held at Harbor Bay Community Center, 3195 Mecartney Road.

Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. for socializing and the program will begin at 7 p.m. and conclude

at 9 p.m.

The second of the series will feature the candidates for the County Board of Supervisors District no. 3 Wednesday, May 24. The forum will be at Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Ave. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., program begins at 7 p.m. and will conclude at 9 p.m.

Propositions 81 and 82 and Peralta Community College District's Measure A will also be discussed at both forums.

The forums are co-sponsored by the American Association of University Women and Isle City Business and Professional Women.

The League reminds voters that the League of Women Voters Smart Voter election site is state-of-the-art citizenship at its best, offering user-friendly, non-partisan election material for the voting public.

Smart Voter has rapid-fire election results, too. Go to www.smartvoter.org.

See page 2 and 'Pros and Cons' insert for more information

Help us out

Thanks to members who have committed to help at the League's Voter Service forums May 23 and May 24.

We still have a few key jobs which need filling:.

May 23: Harbor Bay Community Center: Need a **timer**. Also, a **pro & con presenter** for Measure A (Peralta College Bonds).

May 24: Mastick Senior Center: Need **two question sorters**. Also **pro & con presenter(s)** for Props 81 & 82 and Measure A

If you would like to volunteer for one of the unfilled positions, please contact me at jab@borupp.org.

League's Annual Meeting set for June 24

The Alameda League will gather for a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 24 at the new Pier 29 – Ballena Bay restaurant to discuss the prior year's work and elect new officers.

The Annual Meeting is an important feature of all local Leagues. It's where the annual budget is adopted, as well as program for the coming year. Members, prospective mem-

bers, and guests are invited to attend.

The cost of the lunch is \$25, and entree choices are salmon, chicken marsala, or crab or shrimp louie, all with beverage, soup or salad and dessert. Cost covers tax and tip. There will be a no-host bar.

Reservations are due by June 15. Send in your meal choice with a check for \$25 to LWV Alameda to P.O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501.

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State League supports Prop 81 – literacy and libraries

By KATE QUICK

LWVC Communications Director

At its January 2006 meeting the LWVC board of directors voted to support the California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2006, which will appear as Proposition 81 on the June 6 ballot.

On behalf of the LWVC, President Jackie Jacobberger has signed the ballot argument endorsing the proposition. The support for this measure is based on our Public Libraries position, which is, in brief:

"Support a public library system as a basic community service with a long term, assured, stable and adequate funding source. Support access by all per-

sons to public library services as a major source of knowledge and information necessary for informed, active participation in a democratic society."

This measure will, if passed, authorize the state to borrow \$600 million through the sale of general obligation bonds to provide 65 percent of the cost of projects for building and renovating local public libraries. In 2000, voters passed a similar bond for \$350 million, which funded 45 projects, many of which are currently underway. Eligible applications for an additional 60 projects, seeking \$506 million in bond funds, were not funded.

A 2003 assessment found more than 500 projects were needed. Prop. 81 is a critical step toward addressing those needs.

State League neutral on Prop 82 - preschool initiative

By KATE QUICK

LWVC

Communications Director

Once again, the LWVC finds that its analysis of a ballot measure in a major area of concern reveals a conflict of positions.

The Preschool for All Act initiative, Proposition 82 on the June 2006 ballot, has particular interest for League members since it touches two of our most important policy positions—State and Local Finances and

Education. The LWVC board, after long research and discussion, decided to take a neutral position on the measure.

The initiative, if passed, would place a tax on high incomes (over \$800,000 for couples) to fund voluntary universal preschool for all California children. Our State and Local Finances position states that in order to achieve flexibility of revenue we advocate minimum use of direct voting by citizens on tax sources and rates, that

each fund or tax "earmarked" for a specific purpose should contain an automatic sunset date, and that adoption of designated "earmarked" funds and taxes should be done only in a situation where social benefit significantly outweighs the loss of flexibility.

On the other hand, our recently updated Pre K-12 Education position supports a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade public education system which meets the needs of each individual student. It states that all children should enter school ready to learn to their fullest potential and that measures to ensure this include school readiness programs, including universal access to preschools that are high quality, developmentally appropriate, and voluntary.

Clearly the board needed to carefully consider the conflict between these two positions. The process began in early January with the

development of extensive background material by the State and Local Finances and Education off-board program directors and legislative consultants. After discussion at the January board meeting, the program committee decided that further research was necessary. In March, committee members and off-board representatives developed a list of questions which were asked during teleconferences with representatives of both supporters and opponents of the measure. After further discussion the program committee decided that the two positions were both so strong that they could not recommend either a support or oppose position. The LWVC board was asked to adopt a neutral position, and it concurred.

League members are, of course, free to advocate for or against this measure as individuals. But the League at all levels will remain neutral.

The League of Women Voters of Alameda

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Clean Money Bill advances to California Senate

By **DONNA CHIPPS**
LWVC Executive
Vice President

Advocates of Clean Money—public funding of campaigns for state office in California—were rewarded for their efforts when the Assembly passed AB 583 (Hancock) on a 47-31 vote on January 30.

The bill has been referred to the Senate Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments Committee for a hearing this week. If successful there, its pathway to passage includes the Senate Appropriations Committee, full Senate, back to the Assembly for concurrence in amendments, and ultimately to the Governor's desk. If AB 583 passes all these hurdles, it will eventually end up as a proposition in a statewide election with a final vote of the people.

The League of Women Voters of California has been participating since 2003 in the Campaign Finance Reform Summit, a coalition made up of the Cali-

fornia Clean Money Campaign, California Common Cause, the Greenlining Institute, and various other organizations interested in campaign finance reforms in the state. Our goal is to see California follow the lead of Maine Clean Money Bill Advances and Arizona, which

League members, spearheaded by Judy Cox and Anne Spanier of Oakland, have contacted other Leagues to ask them to hold constituent meetings with senators, adapt and use an op-ed article, and send messages to their members by phone and e-mail.

We ask all voters to contact their state senator and stress their support for full public financing of state elections!

More campaign finance news: A California Nurses Association (CNA) initiative is being circulated for signatures. It includes a strict restriction on corporate donations to campaigns as well as a proposal for full public financing of state campaigns.

Please note that the LWVC has not taken a position on the CNA initiative and League members may not collect signatures in the name of the League or in connection with a League event. Local Clean Money proposals are also hot topics in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, and Santa Barbara.

How does Clean Money work?

After collecting a prescribed number of \$5.00 contributions to demonstrate broad public support, a candidate would be eligible for public funds to adequately finance a viable campaign with no private donations. Additional funding, up to a limit, would be given to a publicly financed candidate if a non-participating opponent outspent him or her.

What does the public gain from this expenditure?

We have the opportunity to vote for a candidate who has spent the election period engaging voters in discussion of public policy rather than asking for money to fund a campaign.

Additionally, states that have implemented Clean Money elections have more participation in elections from a diverse pool of office seekers and of people giving the \$5.00 contributions. Candidates from all political parties are running publicly financed campaigns in those states. It is believed that increased voter turnout in Clean Money elections may be related to increased voter confidence.

have adopted Clean Money as a voluntary alternative to financing legislative and statewide campaigns.

League members throughout the state have participated in the effort to encourage AB 583's progress through the legislature.

Most notably, Bay Area

taken a position on the CNA initiative and League members may not collect signatures in the name of the League or in connection with a League event. Local Clean Money proposals are also hot topics in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, and Santa Barbara.

Election Day is Tuesday, June 6.
Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
May 22 is the last day to register to vote.

Absentee Ballot

The last day that your county elections official can accept an application by mail for an absentee ballot is May 30, but you may apply in person at the office of the county elections official through election day. Absentee ballots must be in the hands of the county elections official by 8 p.m. on Election Day, June 6.

New citizen?

If you became a citizen in California after the close

of registration on May 22, 2006, you may still register to vote by visiting your county elections office on or between the dates of May 23 and May 30. Bring proof of citizenship with you, and be prepared to declare to the county elections official that you have established residency in California.

Election Information

If you are a registered voter, you will receive a notice of the election that includes the address of your polling place. The notice will also include a sample ballot, an application for an absentee ballot and information about the ballot measures.

Bay Area League votes to support Measure A

A \$390-million bond for Peralta Community College District

LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS, BAY AREA LEAGUE

Didn't we just pass a \$153 million Peralta bond in 2000? Whatever happened to all that money?

Much of the Measure E money, about \$65 million, has been used to build our new vertical campus for Vista (now Berkeley City College), scheduled to open for classes in September, 2006.

Most of the remaining money went to fund construction on Peralta's other campuses—Laney, Merritt, and College of Alameda. And some \$22 million remains uncommitted.

Because the bond was passed under the restrictions of Prop 13, however, those funds may be used only for capital construction.

Prop 39, passed in 2000, al-

lows school and community college districts to use bond money for a wide range of purposes—buying land, leasing buildings, repairs, purchasing equipment, furniture, books for libraries—all kinds of things that are not nailed down. Measure A covers expenditures that Measure E, under the restrictions of Prop 13, could not address.

What do the colleges need the money for?

The new Berkeley City College will need to be furnished from the walls in. Although the state's community college budget sets aside special funds for equipping new buildings, the budget shortfall has meant that the state can only provide about \$2 million of the projected \$2.5 - \$3 million the new campus will need. Measure A money would fund chairs, lab tables and hoods, desks, books, audio-visual equipment, computers, signs and all the other necessary parts of a working col-

lege facility.

The other Peralta buildings are between 30 and 40 years old. They have been limping along unable to replace outmoded computers, restock libraries or repair aging heating and cooling equipment. Other improvements listed in Measure A will correct dangerous existing safety hazards in ventilation and drainage.

By enabling the district to modernize, Measure A should provide major savings on future lighting, heating and water bills. Since money for essential repairs to the existing equipment must come out of the district's annual operating budget, the upgrades Measure A buys will free up maintenance dollars to provide greater services to students.

A portion of the bond moneys will not be spent at once but will create a reserve that should enable the district to meet its maintenance needs for the next 10 years.

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 new contact information to Jean Fong, membership director. Write her at 734 Palmera Court, Alameda, CA 94501. Call her at (510) 522-7797. Or email her at jsfong1@comcast.net

Helen Dodt passes

Long-time league member and life-long Alamedan, Helen Dodt, died at age 90 in January.

Helen was a librarian at the Alameda Free Library and hosted the Children's Story Hour at the West End Branch for many years.

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Public officials fund-raiser brought out the best in all

By **AUDREY LORD-HAUSMAN**
Action Committee

To Alameda League Members:

The April 28 Meet Your Public Officials event was a great success, raising \$1,353 for our organization - a nine-percent increase over last year!

As the coordinator, I want to thank all the volunteers who helped to make the evening so enjoyable and successful.

Since there were so many, and I don't want to embarrass myself by inadvertently leaving someone out, I am not going to list all the names. But you know who you are and whether it was bringing a vase of flowers, a yummy dish, picking up coffee, checking people in, printing labels, stuffing en-

velopes, making follow-up calls, making signs, collecting raffle prizes, selling and/or purchasing raffle tickets, encouraging friends to attend, donating and/or tending the wine bar, setting up and cleaning up - it wouldn't have happened without you.

Everyone pitched in and it was a League team effort and I thank you.

We had some wonderful raffle-prize donors and I encourage you to utilize those businesses that donated when you can:

- Cindy's Nails at Kenz!, 1250 Park St.
- Circus for Arts in the Schools (event is Oct. 1 at Kofman Auditorium - watch for publicity)
- Daisy's, 1347 Park St.
- J. Sahadi Jewelers, 4206 Piedmont Ave, Oakland

- Pasta Pelican Restaurant
- The Parlor, 1500 Encinal (Massage)
- Peet's Coffee, Central Avenue and Park Street
- The Sandwich Board, 2412 Webb
- Urban Forest, 1532 Webster St.
- Vines Cafe & Gallery, 1113 Lincoln Ave.

And to all the other donors, a big thank you:

- Art for Lunch
- Assemblymember Wilma Chan
- Dick Austin
- Dorie Behrstock
- County Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker
- Pat Gannon
- Golda Mason
- Oakland East Bay Symphony



Leaguemember Gretchen Lipow wraps herself in her raffle prize of a Golda Mason scarf.



Golda Mason, who donated several of her unique handmade scarves to the raffle, with Alameda's FDA District Director Barbara Cassens.



Leaguemembers Juelle-Ann Boyer and Honora Murphy check in guests at the entrance.



Barbara Cassens, Marilyn Ashcraft talk with school boardmembers Mike McMahon and Janet Gibson.



Alameda City Manager Debbie Kurita.



Alameda County Superior Court Judge Delbert Gee and his wife Doris.



At left, Alameda Mayor Beverly Johnson and Recreation Commissioner Jay Ingram.



Dorie Behrstock asks Stan Schiffman just how he won so many of the raffle prizes.



Marilyn Ashcraft rushes off with her gift basket raffle prize.

Calendar of events

All members and the public invited

- **Thursday, May 18, 7:30 p.m.** - Board Meeting, Conference Room C, Alameda Hospital, 2070 Clinton Ave.
- **Monday, May 22** - Last day to register to vote in June 6 election. (See story page 3)
- **Tuesday, May 23, 6:30 to 9 p.m.** - Voter Service Forum. Hear candidates for State Assembly, and information on Props 81 and 82, and Peralta Measure A. Harbor Bay Community Center, 3195 Mecartney Ave. (See story on cover).
- **Wednesday, May 24, 6:30 to 9 p.m.** - Voter Service Forum. Hear candidates for County Supervisor, and information on Props 81 and 82, and Peralta Measure A. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Ave. (See cover story).
- **Tuesday, June 6** - Vote! Absentee ballots due by 8 p.m. (See story page 3).
- **Saturday, June 24, 11:30 a.m.** - Annual Meeting and luncheon for Alameda League of Women Voters, Pier 29 - Balena Bay. Open to all. **The kit will be mailed to members separately. Bring it to the meeting!** (See story on cover).

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.

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: \$53 for a single membership; \$20 for an additional membership at the same address. Students pay \$25, and dues assistance is available. Questions? Contact Jean Fong at jsfong1@comcast.net or 522-7797. 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:

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