



# Alameda Voter

Volume 37 Number 3

March 2004

## Election resource: Smartvoter

Don't forget about SmartVoter ([www.SmartVoter.org](http://www.SmartVoter.org)), the award-winning Web site is one of the best resources for unbiased election information.

SmartVoter contains election information from candidates and government elections departments. It provides information from League of Women Voters organizations and links to news media and other election sites. And there are archives of past elections.

**Find your ballot with polling place:** Enter your address, get just your choices anytime you want them.

**Information on races:** Read statements directly from candidates.

**Find links to other sources:** All information is conveniently organized by contest.

**Local election resources:**  
For *your* county  
QUESTION: How do I get all of this data?

ANSWER: Fill in your address and zip code into "My Ballot" or browse contests geographically.

Q: Which type of page gives access to the most information on the Smart Voter site?

A: The page for a single contest or ballot measure. That page lists an overview of candidates or a ballot measure and may contain additional information from known governmental or nonpartisan sources outside SmartVoter.

## April Meet Your Public Officials event marks LWVA's 25th year

In April we will be holding our "Meet Your Public Officials" party, which was a great success last year. In addition to providing a wonderful spread of good food, wine and soft drinks, we will be celebrating our 25th anniversary as a League. Our first President, Donna Vaughn, ran across some papers dating back 25 years congratulating us on achieving full League status, following our leaving the Oakland League to

form our own Alameda LWV.

For those of you who were with us since that time, and who have many memories, photos, or documents showing us over the years, please share them with the chair of our event, Audrey Lord-Hausman at 522-4651.

It will be a really fun party this year, don't miss it!

Watch for information about date, time and place in the next *Voter*, and for a mailing around the second week in March.

### Clip and take this to the polls March 2

League does not support or oppose candidates for public office or political parties.

✂ League takes stands on issues. VOTE YES on the following:

#### STATE MEASURES:

YES! to Proposition 55 (School Facilities Bond)

YES! to Proposition 56 (State Budget Accountability Act)

#### REGIONAL & LOCAL MEASURES:

YES! to Measure 2 (Regional Traffic Relief Plan)

YES! to Measure A (County Essential Health Care Tax)

YES! to Measure C (School Bonds for Alameda)

For a review of all the ballot measures go to: [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)

For more on League's positions go to [www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org)

### Housing is the subject of March meeting

The future of housing in Alameda has received much attention in the last year. An important part of planning for the housing that will be built in our city is the Housing Element.

Alameda's element was not accepted by the state Housing and Community Development Department as submitted, but HCD has given conditional certification, conditioned on certain changes in city ordinances.

To help us sort out this process, Linda Gardner will speak at our March meeting. As the Alameda County Housing director, she has extensive experience with housing planning and programs.

The meeting will take place March 18, 7:30 p.m., in Room 360 in Alameda City Hall.

# March 2 election, 'Iron-Jawed Angels' and 25th year

By KATE QUICK  
President

January always brings new beginnings and February always means the work begins in earnest.

Sally Faulhaber and I attended Bay Area League Day (more on that on page 3), preparations were made for the upcoming March election in the form of completing pros and cons for our local ballot measures, setting up our two nights of meetings, and going to speaking engagements to share the knowledge of the ballot measures with the public.

In addition, Juelle Ann Boyer's "worker bees" have been distributing the pros and cons throughout the town, and we mailed them all to you in our February Voter. Thanks

to Luann DeWitt for the use of her house for our "stuffing party."

Last weekend, HBO showed a new movie called "Iron Jawed Angels," which was the story of some of our founding mothers who sacrificed much and worked tirelessly to get votes for women.

As we did our voter service activities, I was reminded of how true the League has been to the vision of our founders, particularly Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt.

They truly believed that informed women voting would create dramatic improvements in the United States. At one point in the film,

Alice Paul is trying to recruit an immigrant factory worker who thought that the movement for women's enfranchisement was "for the rich." She reminded her of the horrors of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, in which hundreds of women and young girls perished, and said: "A vote is a fire escape."

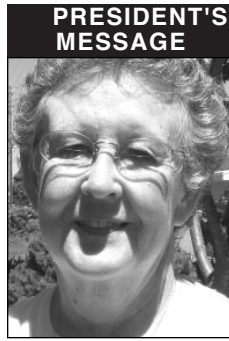
The young woman thought about it and made the connection. A vote is not only industrial safety, but clean air, clean water, health care, fair politics, world leadership, social justice, child protection, and all those things the members of the League of Women Voters hold dear.

If you haven't seen "Iron Jawed Angels," I

have taped it and am willing to lend the tape.

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Alameda League of Women Voters. We will be celebrating this fact at our "Meet Your Public Officials" party in April. I hope it will be a time to reflect on how our work today so closely carries out the vision of our founders. An educated electorate is a powerful force for good, and the League must continue to work to make a difference!

We will be having an interesting speaker "from the outside" at our March meeting. Please come to hear about housing issues. An article about the meeting will be found on the cover page of this *Voter*.



## February Board briefs

At its Feb. 4 meeting, the Board:

- voted to investigate putting some money in an interest-bearing account;

- heard a report on plans for public information meetings on issues and candidates in the upcoming election;

- discussed letters to editors re: ballot measures in the March election;

- discussed the reluctance of Alameda city staff to speak at our meetings;

- heard a report on

Bay Area League Day;

- voted to include a celebration of our 25th anniversary in Meet Your Public Officials;

- voted to send two delegates to the upcoming LWVUS convention and to pay their registration fees;

- voted to hold our Annual Meeting on Sat., June 19, at Angela's and

- heard a plea for a candidate for president from Nominating Committee Chair Lynn Groh and discussed ways to make the position less burdensome.

## Nominations sought: Let's get some new blood on the Board

The nominating committee has begun its work for the coming 2004-2005 year. We are interested in having new people on the board. We also need someone who can volunteer as a program chair. The chair finds speakers, and/or meeting venues for discussion groups.

Please call in suggested names ASAP – or volunteer yourself! – to Lynn Groh, chair, 522-2473.

We welcome a chance to get to know you better and find out your interests. Come to the board meetings or to the monthly general meetings and introduce yourself.

# Grim information on the state of the state budget

By **KATE QUICK**  
president

**B**ay Area League Day this year was an informative set of two panels on the subject of our state finances. Sally Faulhaber and Kate Quick attended. The room was packed with representatives from the many Bay Area Leagues of Women Voters, who were paying rapt attention to the presenters.

As a recent retiree from County Government, I thought I was pretty savvy about how the state budget and finances worked, but the experts certainly amplified my knowledge. I had heard the words "structural deficit" many times. I assumed that it meant more about the problems with revenue and taxation meeting spending decisions than what was explained at

the meeting. Indeed, we were told that each year many of the legislators exchange their agreement to vote on the final budget (it takes a 2/3 vote at present) for tax credits for industries in their districts.

These tax credits mean that the recipient is excused from paying taxes on some aspect of their business (say, forest product producers get a tax credit for purchases of logging trucks, for example).

The credits, once given, may not ever be reviewed and are not a part of the budget process, so they don't show up in the public documents on the budget.

They are in fact continuing expenditures. There are literally thousands of them on the books right now.

Another part of the structural problem is the shift of decision-making regarding expenditures from the local to the state level. This occurred as a result of Jarvis-Gann (Prop. 13), and has created all sorts of issues for those who have the responsibility for provision of services (cities and counties and special districts) but who no longer have the power to decide either the tax rate or the spending priorities and levels. The state shifts the money

away from the point of provision of services, creating huge gaps. Some of this shifting has to do with Prop. 98, which mandates that a certain portion of the state budget be apportioned to the schools - which has created a huge structural problem in times of short revenues. The state feels it must shift money from the local areas back to itself to fulfill the Prop. 98 mandate. Who wins? Unfortunately, no one.

League is backing Proposition 56 on the current ballot, which will, among other things, lower the percentage needed to pass budget and financial items from 67% to 55%. It also has a lot of accountability requirements. I hope this measure passes and that we can move off some of our current "structural deficit" problems.

**Each year many of the legislators exchange their agreement to vote on the final budget (it takes a 2/3 vote at present) for tax credits for industries in their districts.**

## *Date, place set for annual meeting*

We have already reserved a restaurant for the League's annual meeting. This year we have a restaurant all to ourselves! That means no competition with other rowdy meetings (those of you who attended last year's meeting understand...)

The meeting is scheduled for lunch, Sat. June 19 at Angela's Restaurant in Marina Village. Many of us have eaten there and we think the food is excellent.

So save the date, and look for future *Voters* for more information!

## **Websites to keep on hand**

- Oakland League: [www.lwvoakland.org](http://www.lwvoakland.org)
- Bay Area League: [www.lwvba-ca.org](http://www.lwvba-ca.org)
- State League: [www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org)
- National League: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)
- LWV Smart Voter: [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)
- LWVBA Monitor: [www.bayareamonitor.org](http://www.bayareamonitor.org)
- Sen. Barbara Boxer: [senator@boxer.senate.gov](mailto:senator@boxer.senate.gov)
- Sen. Diane Feinstein: [senator@feinstein.senate.gov](mailto:senator@feinstein.senate.gov)
- The White House: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

## **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? Don't let the League lose contact with you.

Send any new contact information to Jean Fong, membership director. Write her at 734 Palmeta Court, Alameda, CA 94501. Call her at (510) 522-7797. Or email her at [jsfong1@comcast.net](mailto:jsfong1@comcast.net)

# Letters to local editors on Measures A and C

## To the Editor

The seven Leagues of Women Voters of Alameda County support Alameda County's Essential Health Care Initiative Measure A in the upcoming election on March 2nd.

Measure A would relieve the fiscal crisis in Alameda County's Health Services by adding 1/2 cent to the tax rate for retail transactions and use. The monies would go primarily to the Alameda County Medical Center's (ACMC) facilities, which include inpatient care and out-patient clinics. A Citizen Oversight Committee would oversee the allocation of the money raised by this measure. The tax ends in 15 years.

ACMC, which would be the primary beneficiary, is the designated provider of essential health care services for the uninsured. Alameda's County system (like all public systems in the state) is in deficit and has had to close some services.

## MEASURE A

At a time when Federal and State funding for medical care is being cut and the numbers of uninsured continues to grow, further cutbacks in services are probable without more funds.

Cutbacks in services would directly affect all citizens of Alameda County. Highland Hospital's Trauma and Emergency Center takes care of sixty (60) percent of all trauma cases in the County. If it closes an added burden would be placed not only on the County's other Trauma Center at Eden Medical Center, but also on the emergency rooms of all of the other hospitals in the county. Emergency room waiting times would rise due to an influx of added patrons since other hospitals would have to absorb the increase in patient load.

ACMC's specialty clinics, psychiatric and mental health services also serve individuals and families from all over the

county. They will have to face further reductions of services without the added funding. Primary and preventive services, which are cost effective, should be expanded, not cut.

The ACMC, which would receive 75% of the funds from this measure is instituting measures to improve its management and reduce its losses. While its fiscal situation has a long way to go, ACMC has already improved its cash flow so that it can pay its bills from month-to-month, and it is no longer borrowing money from the County.

Measure A is a frugal, time limited, plan with citizen oversight, which addresses essential health care needs throughout the County. It deserves our vote.

*Sincerely,  
Kate Quick, President  
Miriam Schiffman,  
Action Chair,  
League of Women  
Voters of Alameda*

## To the Editor:

The League of Women Voters of Alameda supports Measure C which will appear on the March 2nd ballot.

Our children need schools that provide adequate heating, air conditioning and lighting. Our children need schools that are safe and earthquake proof. Our children need the most modern technology available. They need these NOW.

Measure C would raise \$63 Million for the Alameda Unified School District's use to

## MEASURE C

upgrade deteriorating buildings and expand our school system's facilities. It will also qualify Alameda for matching state funds of an addition \$17 Million for the same purpose. No increase in taxes is required. Every school will benefit. A Citizen Oversight Committee will ensure that the funds are spent correctly.

League believes our educational system should help all

children reach their highest potential.

They need a safe, comfortable environment in which to learn. We support bond issues such as Measure C because we feel they are the best way to finance needed capital improvements.

*Sincerely,  
Kate Quick, President  
Miriam Schiffman,  
Action Chair, League  
of Women Voters  
of Alameda*

# All League members: Vote on Presidential selection

The LWVUS asks each League member for concurrence on its position on the selection of the President.

Delegates to Convention 2002 approved a review and update of the League's position on the Selection of the President initially adopted in 1970 and updated in 1982. A task force of representatives from all three levels of the League has examined the changes that have taken place over the last 30 years and drafted a new position statement to address these changes. The LWVUS Board is now seeking member agreement with this proposed new position (printed below), which would replace the current position in its entirety.

Please study the position statement, answer the questions

at the end, and send your response to the LWVUS office – register your view on the LWVUS website at [www.lwv.org/concurrence/](http://www.lwv.org/concurrence/), or mail your response to League of Women Voters, Selection of the President Concurrence, 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036. Background information is available on the LWVUS website or from your League president.

**Postmark deadline: March 1, 2004. Online deadline: March 4, 2004.**

## Proposed position on selection of the President

The League of Women Voters believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is

essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished.

The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system - from the candidate selection process to the general election - to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.

**Do you concur with the proposed LWVUS position on selection of the President? (check one answer)**

- Strongly support
- Agree
- Do not accept

**What were your means of learning about this issue? (Check all that apply)**

- Read National Voter article(s)
- Attended a League meeting
- Joined LWV update discussion list
- Read outside material
- Read material provided on our website
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**The League should use this method of member agreement for future updates:** Yes No

Name \_\_\_\_\_

League \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Name, League and address required - some things the Board will take into consideration when determining whether or not concurrence has been achieved are the number of Leagues participating and the diversity of participation, including geographic diversity, size of League, and so on.)

Mail to: League of Women Voters, Selection of the President Concurrence, 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036; or Log on to: [www.lwv.org/concurrence/](http://www.lwv.org/concurrence/)

# Calendar of events

*All members and the public invited*

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**March 3, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.** - Board Meeting, home of Luann DeWitt, 2917 Central Ave.

**March 18, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.** – General meeting to discuss Alameda Housing and the Housing Element. Linda Gardner, Alameda County Housing Director, will speak. Third Floor, Alameda City Hall. (See cover story)

**April (day not yet set)** – Meet Your Public Officials and Alameda League's 25th Anniversary Party. (see cover story)

**June 19, Saturday** – Annual Meeting Lunch, Angela's Restaurant, Marina Village. (See story page 4)

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influence public policy through education.

## Join the League of Women Voters

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:** \$50 for a single membership; \$20 for an additional membership at the same address. 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

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