

The League of Women Voters of Alameda

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The VOTER is published nine times a year. Current and past VOTER issues are posted on our web site.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.
-LWV Mission Statement

The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate.



Volume 45
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VOTER

Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation

President's Message

Finally the election is (mostly) over and we can all breathe again!

The last of our candidate forums was October 25. All of our Easy Voter Guides have been distributed and our Pros and Cons presentations are finished. My telephone, which receives the calls forwarded from our public number, was ringing off the hook with election questions until November 7. Some were important; some were because people are not reading their information. But all of the callers were happy that they talked to someone who had an answer about voting, registration, and election information. And all of them praised the League for being there when they needed us.

Along with all of our election work, we have enjoyed First Friday social dinners, ably arranged by Connie Slattery-Hanna, as well as our successful Friday Night wine Flights and a Mojito Monday at Angela's Bistro, all organized by Jeff Cambra. These were fun and well-attended events. Our past president, Councilmember Lena Tam, helped raise \$195 as our Mojito Monday celebrity bartender: it was fun to join her behind the bar.

Some of you may have seen Debra Saunders' column about the League in the Chronicle last month ("*League of One-Sided Women Voters*," updated 10/24/12, available on SFGate: <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/saunders/article/League-of-One-Sided-Women-Voters-3979206.php>). It was followed by a letter to the editor from someone who was disappointed that the League was advocating for and against ballot positions in addition to providing neutral voter information. There are those who seem to think that the League is not supposed to have opinions, no matter how well informed they are or how carefully we separate our advocacy from our voter education efforts.

The state League asked to respond but was told their response would not be printed. After Juelle-Ann Boyer placed a timely "bug" in my ear, LWV Alameda contacted Alameda resident and friend of the League John Diaz, who is an editor at the Chronicle. Because of this contact a balancing piece written by the state League appeared in print. We make a difference, and isn't that a great thing?

--Kate Quick, LWVA President

*** REMINDERS ***

**** The League Holiday Party Potluck is Sunday, December 16. ****
(See you at Li Volin's home from 5:00 – 7:30 pm.)

**** Please renew your membership in the League of Women Voters. ****
(Your 2013 membership dues are fully tax-deductible in the year in which they are paid.)

CA's Initiative & Referendum Process—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly with UC Hastings Law Professor Michael Salerno at College of Alameda November 29, 7 PM

UC Hastings College of Law Professor Michael Salerno will speak on “California’s Initiative and Referendum Process: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly” at the College of Alameda campus on Thursday, November 29, at 7:00 pm.

Professor Salerno’s free public presentation on reforming California’s 102-year-old initiative and referendum process is cosponsored by the [League of Women Voters of Alameda](#) (LWVA) and the [College of Alameda](#). The event, which will include a discussion session, will occur in [Building F on the College of Alameda campus at 555 Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway](#) (at Webster Street) in Alameda.

Salerno sees a number of problems with California’s current initiative and referendum process.

"I'm not against direct democracy—it is California's version of direct democracy that I do not support," Salerno said. "The initiative process in California does not yield good results the way it is presently structured. I am a strong believer in direct democracy—just under conditions that do not currently exist in California," he added.

Voters often complain that California’s initiative and referendum process no longer works as it was intended to in 1910. Costly initiative petition efforts and ballot measure campaigns put the initiative process out of reach for most citizens. Ballot measures are often flawed and too complex. And with 90 percent of state spending predetermined by the conflicting revenue and spending requirements of numerous voter-approved initiatives, the legislature only controls 10 percent of California’s annual general fund budget.

[Professor Salerno](#) teaches at the [University of California Hastings College of the Law](#) in San Francisco. He serves as Associate Director of the UC Hastings [Center for State and Local Government Law](#) and supervises the school’s [Legislation Clinic](#) in Sacramento. Salerno previously served as Executive Director of the California Fair Political Practices Commission and worked for the California Legislative Counsel. He received his J.D. degree from UC Davis and his B.A. from UC Santa Barbara.

Professor Salerno’s appearance is part of a statewide [League of Women Voters of California Initiative and Referendum Process Update Study](#) and the LWVA’s local examination of the effectiveness of the current process, including the ways initiative petitions are currently written, circulated, and funded. [The League’s statewide study resources](#) are available at no charge.

Professor Salerno teaches courses on Legislative Process, Statutory Interpretation and Bill Drafting, Advanced Legislative Process, and Issues in State and Local Government Law. More information on his expertise in legislative and governmental processes is available [on the UC Hastings College of Law web site](#).

[Building F and the College of Alameda campus](#) are wheelchair accessible, The college is served by [AC Transit District](#) local bus lines 20, 31, and 51A, plus Transbay lines O, OX, and W. Free parking will be available in the student lots. (To reach the parking lots, take Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway west from Webster Street and turn right onto Campus Drive: follow Campus Drive to the parking lots behind the buildings.)

The [College of Alameda](#), a cosponsor of Professor Salerno’s presentation, is a part of the [Peralta Community College District](#). It offers students of all ages a range of educational programs and life-long learning opportunities. Event cosponsors also include the [League of Women Voters of Oakland](#) and the [League of Women Voters of the Eden Area](#).

For more information on Professor Salerno’s presentation November 29 at the College of Alameda please contact LWVA President Kate Quick (510-610-4042; katequick@comcast.net). Information is also available at the LWVA public events web page: http://alameda.ca.lwvnet.org/Public_Events.html.

--Kate Quick, President

League Holiday Party Potluck is Sunday, December 16

The Alameda League's holiday party potluck will be held from 5:00 – 7:30 pm on Sunday, December 16, at Li Volin's home (1506 Eastshore Drive, off Fernside).

Our holiday party is always fun for members, guests, and prospective members: please invite your friends and neighbors who should be "in League" with us. Kate Quick will provide a ham. Please bring your favorite appetizer, side dish, salad, rolls, a beverage, or a holiday dessert to share. (We do not make food assignments and it always seems to work out.)

Please notify Kate Quick (katequick@comcast.net; 510-523-3612) by December 10 to tell her how many are coming and what you will be bringing to the party December 16.

--President Kate Quick

Treasurer's Report – November 1, 2012

Cash Flow Statement (November 1, 2012) for LWVA November Board meeting:

Beginning cash balance	\$10,624.70	Total Assets (October 31, 2012)	
Receipts	\$0.00	Cash	\$10,092.30
Expenditures	\$532.50	CD	\$10,000.00
Ending cash balance	<u>\$10,092.30</u>	<u>Total Assets</u>	<u>\$21,092.30</u>

--Ted Frey, Treasurer

More Than Just a Membership

In mid-October several members of the League of Women Voters of Alameda (LWVA) helped the girls of Girls, Incorporated of the Island City (Girls Inc.) learn about the electoral process, presidential candidates, and ballot propositions.

We attended their "election day" as "voting experts," helping the girls vote for their national presidential choice—and to add a new cooking class to their program. Our newest LWVA member, Jessi Bushey, also attended. We were introduced by our names and professions: Marie Gilmore (Mayor), Dorie Guess Behrstock (International Relations), Gayle Thomas (Fire Captain), and we all received strong applause. But when Jessi was introduced as a professional makeup artist, the room just erupted with noise.

In that moment, I had a sudden "light bulb" of insight.

The LWVA, like many organizations, draws its collective strength from our unique and varied individual skills, backgrounds, and life experiences. Some of our members come to the League with strong political knowledge. Many bring others talents to the table. What I came to realize that day at Girls Inc., was that many young women would remember that Jessi, their new friend and role model, was also an advocate of their education as voters.

Please contribute your membership dues for next year. And contribute what you can to our continuing shared effort to "make democracy work." The diversity and backgrounds of many wonderful men and women is what makes our league so effective throughout our community.

--Gayle Thomas, Membership Chair

Final Issue of the VOTER for 2012

The holiday season is almost upon us: this November-December edition will be your last VOTER for 2012. Look for another VOTER in January when we will consider League positions and a host of other issues for 2013. – ed.

Voter Service: Links to Candidate Forum, Pros and Cons Videos

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Voter Service activities and events during this very busy fall election campaign. The ballots are (mostly) counted nationwide and we can finally catch our breath.

If you did not already get enough of the campaigns and the election, the videos of our four 2012 General Election League candidate forums at Mastick Senior Center are available on YouTube.

Thanks to our videographer, Hal Keenan, you can watch them at any time and revisit some of our contributions to the 2012 local elections. Each forum is edited into short video segments with the total duration (in hours: minutes: seconds) shown below. (The link for the October 18 AUSD Board of Trustees forum is to the first video segment.)

City Council Candidate Forum — October 4, 2012

(9 video segments, 1:23:39 duration)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVyLpNJJqkfgdgqRev0ak75wmP14TeWY>

Pros and Cons of State Ballot Measures — October 11, 2012

(13 video segments, 1:36:05 duration)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVyLpNJJqkfjMjFoh1kZGjYbbUoLpFg-H>

AUSD Board of Trustees Candidate Forum — October 18, 2012

(6 video segments, 1:33:34)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTx1QPFsKu0&list=PLVyLpNJJqkfeXFY3N1Vdx3_wDICUkJ_W&feature=plcp

Alameda Healthcare District Candidate Forum — October 25, 2012

(8 segments, 0:36:14)

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVyLpNJJqkfhnaZhVcHjPGJCTzUbYPR2l>

Assembly District 18 Candidate Forum — October 25, 2012

(9 video segments, 0:37:52 duration)

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVyLpNJJqkfiFPpWDqHr-p0dH8GhdnFR>

--Dorothy Kerwin Fullerton, Voter Service

Book Club Considers Liberian Peacemakers at Applebee's November 26 at 3:30 PM

Mighty Be Our Powers, by Leymah Gbowee, is next up at 3:30 pm on Monday, November 26, at Applebee's Restaurant at South Shore Center. In *Mighty Be Our Powers* (Beast Books, ISBN-13: 9780984295197), Gbowee chronicles her journey from poverty and hopelessness to self-empowerment and leadership in bringing peace to her ravaged homeland after years of civil war. She tells the story of the Liberian women who started a peace movement: they even withheld sex from men. Leynah Gbowee recently carried the torch at the Olympics.

There will be no December Book Club meeting due to the holidays, so members will also be selecting books for their 2013 reading list at the November 26 meeting. (*Mighty Be Our Powers* was originally scheduled for the October meeting but was rescheduled due to vacations.)

So far this year about 8 members have read *King Leopold's Ghost*, *A Singular Woman*, *Incognito*, *The Defining Moment: Roosevelt's first 100 days*, *The Tipping Point*, *A Team of Rivals*, and *Galileo's Daughter*. Many of these books have been New York Times Bestsellers.

If you would like to contribute book suggestions or to try out our discussion format, join the LWVA Book Club on November 26: be a part of the "critical mass" needed to sustain thought-provoking and animated discussions. Please contact Anne Spanier at annespanierleague@att.net if you have any questions.

-- Anne Spanier, Book Club

City Elects Council, School, and Hospital Board Members: Congratulations and Thanks to All

Congratulations to our new civic leaders! And thanks to all who took their time, talent and treasure to run for public office.

Marilyn Ezzy-Ashcraft and Tony Daysog are Alameda's newly elected City Council members. Stewart Chen, D.C., as the third-place finisher, will be appointed to fill the vacancy left after Vice-mayor Rob Bonta's win over Abel Guillen in the Assembly District 18 race. (This is according to the Alameda City Charter.)

New to the Alameda Unified School District Board is our own Barbara Kahn, a former "brown bagger," who wants to implement our proposal for an AUSD Sunshine Ordinance. Incumbents Trish Spencer and Neil Tam return to the AUSD board.

Mike McCormick and Jordan Battani have been reelected to the City of Alameda Healthcare District (hospital) Board, which will have a vacancy to fill when hospital board member Stewart Chen resigns to take Rob Bonta's former seat on the City Council.

We hope that Jeff Cambra and Tracy Jensen, who left the League board to run for office, will resume their active participation in our League.

The LWV of Alameda is pleased that so many of its members have participated in civic elections and looks forward to seeing the League principles of open and transparent governance implemented from the dais.

President's Point of Personal Privilege: Election Acknowledgments

I want to thank all those who worked so hard on the League's election efforts this cycle. (I am sure glad that presidential elections are held only once every four years!) Many League members contributed mightily to our successful fall events but a few deserve special recognition.

Kudos to Dorothy Fullerton, who deftly arranged and produced and moderated the LWVA's four candidate forums. She also handled the procurement, printing, and distribution of educational material; and the maintenance of the voter registration form boxes during their peak use period.

Heartfelt thanks to Karen Butter for managing the advocacy work and researching local ballot measures, and to our new board member, Joe VanWinkle, for his careful analysis of Measure D. And super, über-thanks to Juelle-Ann Boyer for managing our SmartVoter.org web site, including running interference with at least one candidate who was reluctant to play by our rules for posting information. Juelle-Ann was even on the job while travelling out of the country. Now, that's dedication!

I also don't want to forget the dynamic duo of Linda Hudson and Jon Spangler for their work on the publicity, press releases, and web site postings. Our good attendance at several events was a result of their hard work. (*We could never do it without lots of help from our valued board members, contributors, and a priceless team of editors and proofreaders—ed.*)

All of these folks had help from many other League members who made key contributions.

If I have left someone out—and I am sure that I have—please let me know so we can properly recognize everyone. I am so proud of our League and of everything we do with such good humor and cooperation: I cannot thank you all enough for making us shine.

--Kate Quick, President

Initiative and Referendum Reform Study News and Resources

The next I & RR Study Group meeting is Monday, December 10, at 7:00 pm, at Felice Zensius's home.

The study group will discuss proposed reforms in December and January, working through the state League's (LWVC's) initiative and referendum reform guide. At the January meeting (date TBD), the group will prepare its recommendations for the February consensus meeting (TBD).

The League of Women Voters of Alameda (LWVA) has invited Professor Michael Salerno of the UC Hastings School of Law to speak on "California's Initiative and Referendum Process—the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." His presentation is in Building F at the College of Alameda on Thursday, November 29, at 7:00 pm. (*See story on p. 2. ed.*)

Recommended reading on these reforms includes George Skelton's recent *Capitol Journal* column in the *Los Angeles Times*, "It's Time to Reform our Initiative System," available here:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-cap-initiatives-20121115,0,7510253.column>.

Another good read is "The Subversion of Direct Democracy," by Roy Ulrich, posted in the *California Progress Report*, an online journal, October 23, 2012:

<http://www.californiaprogessreport.com/site/subversion-direct-democracy>

For more statewide information on the I & RR process visit the LWVC I & RR page here:

<http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/studies/2011-initiative-and-referendum/index.html>. A statewide members-only listserv is also available: <http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvc/listserve.html>.

For more information on the LWVA's I & R Reform study group please contact Study Chair Felice Zensius (felicez@ymail.com; 510-865-4329).

--Felice Zensius, I & RR Study Chair

First Friday Dinner December 7 at Pier 29 on Ballena Bay

First Friday Social Dinners: A Different Local Restaurant Each Month at 6 P.M.

The last LWVA First Friday LWVA Social Dinner of 2012 will be on December 7 at Pier 29, located at 1148 Ballena Boulevard in Alameda.

Socializing begins over drinks at 6:00 pm. and dinner lasts until 7:30 or 8:00 pm.

"At these informal dinners, League members, spouses, and guests can...just have a good time together," according to organizer Connie Slattery-Hanna. "There are no agendas, no rules...(It's just) a nice way to get together on a purely social basis."

Pier 29 relocated to 1148 Ballena Boulevard (off of Central Avenue) several years ago. The restaurant can be reached by phone at 510-865-5088 or on the web: <http://www.pier29restaurant.com/>.

About a dozen League members and their families usually attend these dinners, which move to a different Alameda restaurant every month. The November First Friday dinner was at La Penca Azul on Bay Farm Island and the October dinner was at Spiesekammer. Connie is always interested in restaurant suggestions for future dinners.

Please call Connie Slattery-Hanna (510-995-8672) in advance for details and to let her know how many people you are bringing. (Connie needs to provide an updated count to the restaurant even though reservations are made in advance.)

--Connie Slattery-Hanna

***** Thank you for paying your dues before December 31, 2012! *****

More About This ‘League’ Thing

In the August-September issue, I explained some common words that the League uses in a specialized way. In this issue, I’ll try to explain more League basics.

Remember the five Ws and an H from English Comp? The League of Women Voters’ five W’s and an H are **when**—history; **who**—membership; **what**—program/positions; and **where**—structure. **Why** underlies everything and it crops up everywhere. **How** includes study and action.

*(Because of space limitations, **What**—the final installment of Li Volin’s “This League Thing,” will appear in the next VOTER. ed.)*

When

Several women involved in passing the 19th Amendment were concerned that new voters would face discrimination and be easy prey because they had no education about either voting or the issues. They and other women came together to support not just women but anyone in need.

Why

The basics are to ensure the right to vote, to provide education and information needed to vote responsibly, and to promote good government. Over the years, **why** has been expanded to include the study of germane issues from the local to national levels: after formulating positions, the League uses them as a basis from which to take action.

Since a basic League tenet is that citizens should be informed enough to vote their choice, all of our voter education and studying presents all sides of an issue—the pros and the cons. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or party at any level. To assure our nonpartisan position, our board members are prohibited from holding public or party offices. However, we are political. If we have previously adopted a position that pertains to an issue, we may and do act, but we act as a whole, by consensus, and only insofar as we have a position to back it up.

Only three of our LWVA board chairs may speak for our local League: President or Vice President, Membership, and Action. *While in office, they are prohibited from publicly commenting on partisan issues on their own behalf.* (Italics mine.) Just for clarity, many board and other members routinely mention that they speak only for themselves if they are speaking in public.

Who

Anyone can join who will follow League policy and pay the dues. **Anyone**. When we expanded our membership, we kept the name in honor of the founders. The League is a grass roots organization. (Sometimes it doesn’t seem that way. After almost one hundred years, there is a lot going on at national and other levels.) Still, the basic process is that the local level passes up an issue of interest (issue) to greater area leagues. In our area, we have several league levels, any of which might be involved, depending on the issue.

Where

The League of Women Voters (LWV) is active at the local, regional, state, and national levels. The League of Women Voters of Alameda (LWVA) covers the City of Alameda. The LWV Alameda County Council includes all seven local Leagues in Alameda County. *(The seven local Leagues in the LWV Alameda County Council studied countywide Measures A1 and B1 together prior to the General Election but could not reach a consensus based on all of the relevant adopted and applicable positions. As a result all seven Leagues remained neutral. –ed.)*

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area (LWVBA) deals with the nine Bay Area counties. The statewide League of Women Voters of California (LWVC or LWVCA) encompasses statewide issues and sustains the Smart Voter and local League web site infrastructures. The national League of Women Voters, (LWVUS) has nationwide scope.

In the next VOTER I will address League positions, advocacy, and our calendar. As you can see, “it’s complicated.”

--Li Volin

Join or Renew Your Membership in the Alameda League Today!



Name _____

Other Names _____

(if a family membership)

Address _____ City _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

\$70 Single Membership \$97 Family Membership \$25 Student Membership. Dues year is Jan. 1 – Dec. 31. Dues assistance is available for those on limited incomes – Contact us at 869-4969. Make checks payable to **LWV Alameda** and mail to: League of Women Voters of Alameda, PO Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501

All Donations are Tax Deductible

Donations to the League of Women Voters of Alameda, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, are tax deductible. Consider sending a check for \$5 or more made out to LWV Alameda with your renewal, or at any time to:
League of Women Voters of Alameda, PO Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501

Turn Trash into Cash for the LWVA Education Fund

Lynn and Jim Groh collect aluminum cans, sell them, and give the proceeds to the Ed Fund. Drop your aluminum cans on their front porch at 1546 Eastshore Drive, Alameda, and help the League educate voters.

SAVE THE DATES

- 11/26 – Book Club – 3:30 pm
@ Applebee's, South Shore Center
- 11/29 – CA Initiative and Referendum Reform—the Good, the Bad, the Ugly with UC Hastings Law Prof. Salerno
@ Bldg F, College of Alameda,
7:00 – 9:15 pm.
- 12/07 – First Friday Social – 6:00 pm
@ Pier 29, 1148 Ballena Blvd
- 12/10 – I & RR Study Group – 7:00 pm
Call Felice Zensius @ 865-4329.
- 12/16 – Holiday Party – 5:00 - 7:30 pm
@ Li Volin's RSVP to Kate Quick at
523-3612
- NO DECEMBER BOARD MEETING
- 01/17/13– LWVA Board Mtg. – 7:30 pm
@ Alameda Hospital (Conf. Room)

We wish you and yours the best of holidays and a Happy New Year!

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

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