



VOTER

POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH INFORMED AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

November 2007

Holiday party set for Dec. 9

Our Holiday Party, complete with good food, drink and lots of gab will be Sunday, Dec. 9 at 5 p.m. at Anne Spanier's home, 166 Basinside Way.

Come and bring your favorite dish, appetizer, or dessert. Wine and soft drinks are welcome, too. We never assign dishes, but somehow we all come through with a delicious dinner, pot-luck style.

There will be prizes and a special prize for the new member recruitment drive.

2nd Consensus meeting Nov. 29

The League of Women Voters of Alameda has planned two meetings to discuss six consensus questions on immigration. We have divided questions into two logical groups.

The first consensus meeting was Oct. 25. We discussed three questions and will report our conclusion to our state LWV.

We will discuss the remaining three questions Nov. 29 at 7 p.m. at Alameda Hospital, Room A. I hope to see a big representation of our members then.

This is your chance to get involved in an important issue like Immigration.

If you have any questions, call Shuba Fanse at 865 0548 or email at shubhsf@aol.com.

Alameda Point development survey

Here's a chance to give your input on the development for Alameda Point by taking a quick survey sponsored by Alameda Community Vision.

This survey is completely voluntary and your answers will be individually taken. It is to broaden the input of people in the community with respect to development at Alameda Point. You may wish to read our League positions on Housing and Transportation at our web site <http://www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org> before you do the survey, just as a refresher on what our consensus was following our studies, however, you are free to respond as you see fit and are in no way obligated to follow the League positions.

The Alameda Point process is starting to move forward, and as time goes on, it's going to move faster and faster. The new developer, SunCal, is required to have a plan finished by March so that it can go through the city's boards and commissions, before being presented as a final application for conveyance to the Navy.

There will be monthly meetings from now through May, but here's another way to add your voice that doesn't involve finding two hours to go to a meeting on a weekday night.

The survey (link below) will take three or four minutes. By completing it, you will add your input to the community's vision; there's no time commitment, meetings to commit to, just a few quick questions.

Here is the link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7n9_2bbhTXA2YD4Qedhu2JZg_3d_3d

In remembrance of Pat Caito

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of our Treasurer, Patricia Caito. Pat served the community and the League with grace, gentility and good humor. We never had an occasion that she did not offer to assist with, or a good party that she did not enjoy attending.

A teacher for many years, Pat had many friends and was, as teachers usually are, very resourceful. She was passionate about education, politics, and Alameda. She served our League with great distinction as its able Treasurer for many years. She also served as our observer for the Alameda School Board.

We are going to miss our friend, Pat, a lot. Our condolences to her family, who saw her through her last two difficult months, and her many friends.

The family has asked that memorial donations be sent to the Alameda Family Literacy Program, care of the Alameda Library.

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Making friends and making a difference

Recently the Fremont/Newark/Union City League had its 50th anniversary party. I went, and was very glad I did. It is so gratifying to hear the same stories; the same growth pains; the same triumphs that we have had as a League (and as individuals).

Hearing the reminisces, it was also a real reminder of how many lifelong friendships happen as a result of people pulling together around issues and community service activities. Some of my most treasured friends are those who I met in League. Some of my best mentors were League people. So League is more than an opportunity to make democracy happen in our community; it is also an opportunity for us to build a community of do-er's and builders and, yes, to be totally League about it, people who "make a difference."

■ If you have been hesitating to respond to the multiple calls for a Voter Service and an Action Chair, because you don't feel that you are "up to" the responsibility, reflect on the fact that what I heard last night was story after story of people who had been asked to do something they felt was way over their head and who then learned, grew,

and used the skills and knowledge they gained to good purpose in other areas of their lives. We all have had the experience of taking on a responsibility and being afraid that we were either going to be overwhelmed or do a poor job because we thought we were not the most knowledgeable or talented. To which I say, Balderdash! Just about 100 percent of the people I know that have taken on a League task did it well and then went on to develop others to do the same.

■ Our State President, Janis Hirohama, gave a great speech last night. I was so encouraged by her I decided to keep asking and I am sure that one or more of you will come up to the plate. The keynote speaker, Delaine Eastin, the former Superintendent of Public Instruction for California, is a League member who started out with the Fremont League and went on to the Legislature, then the State Superintendent, and is now giving her wisdom to students at Mills College in Oakland. She made a rather good case for excellence in education and for universal preschool.

■ Please do not forget this is dues season: get those checks into the envelopes you received with your October VOTER right away. And, put those cards in your purse or wallet and hand them to people you want to be with us in our League. Better yet, get them to fill them out and write a check and put them in the mail with your member-

October board briefs

At its Oct. 16 meeting, the Board:

- heard a report on the October 11 Immigration forum; more than 100 attended;
- heard we had sent a letter to the Planning Board and City Council requesting a fair and balanced open forum on Measure A;
- appointed Earleen Hamlin as Treasurer;
- reviewed plans for consensus meetings on US immigration policy;
- in the absence of a Voter Service Chair, discussed splitting the portfolio, and planned for handling pros and Cons for the February election; and
- set a tentative date of Sunday, Dec. 9 for our Holiday Party.

ship check and save another envelope! There will be prizes for the first referral and for the member who brings in the most new members by the end of December. So be sure to write your name on the line on the cards that says "referred by" so we know to whom to give the prize!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kate Quick

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| <p>THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALAMEDA Current and past issues of the <i>Voter</i> are posted on our website: www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org The <i>Voter</i> is published 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Alameda The <i>Voter</i> Editor is Cara Watkins</p> <p>OFFICERS: President Kate Quick: Katequick@comcast.net Program VP: Anne Spanier: annespanier@mindspring.com Administrative VP: Golda Mason: Imabaglady@aol.com Secretary: Sally Faulhaber: ssyhf@alamedanet.net Membership/Webmaster: Karen Scanlon: yakitt@aol.com Treasurer: Earleen Hamlin: erhamlin@earthlink.net Budget Committee Chair: Li Volin: n/a</p> | <p>Smart Voter Chair: Andrea Pook: apook@hotmail.com</p> <p>ELECTED DIRECTORS Earleen Hamlin: erhamlin@earthlink.net Marilyn Ng: mjklm@yahoo.com Liz Rogers: edr1940@aol.com CaraWatkins: geekspeak@compuserve.com</p> <p>APPOINTED DIRECTORS Communications: Luann DeWitt: ldewitt@alamedanet.net Immigration Study: Shuba Fanse: shubaf@aol.com Dorothy Fullerton: dkerwinfullerton@alamedanet.net Electronic Communications: Donna Vaughn: dbvaughn@comcast.net</p> |
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Help us keep info up-to-date

The League is very internet savvy on both the National and State Levels. They do a wonderful job of supporting local League websites. As a webmaster newbie, I would be at a loss to maintain the Alameda Website without the League Easy Web.

What Easy Web cannot do is provide local content that is useful, accurate and current for the Alameda League. I need your input and feedback about the Alameda League website.

Log on at alameda.ca.lwvnet.org and check it out. Is there something you are looking for and don't find? Find inaccurate or outdated information? Have a suggestion? Let me know at yakitt@aol.com, or give me a call at 523-6456. Don't forget to check out the LWV California website at ca.lwv.org and the National website at lwv.org.

'Bay Area on the Move' saw huge turnout

An historic joint meeting of the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, "Forum: Bay Area on the Move," attended by 800 people, was held Oct. 26 in Oakland.

Major themes of the future

needs of the region dealt with the cost of housing, cost of transportation improvements, addressing goals for climate change, and how to have the most impact and reduce CO2 emissions (but not be burdensome on lower income people

who depend on transit or use of their cars for work). An audio-cast of the meeting, and the meeting presentations can be found on www.mtc.ca.gov <<http://www.mtc.ca.gov>>

Forum links healthcare reform, clean money

What are the chances that Californians will have Health Care Reform in this congressional year? Not very likely if you look at the history of health care politics and how campaign contributions have influenced the votes of our congressional representatives according to panelists at a forum titled "Blood Money" held Oct. 13 at the First Congregational Church in Oakland.

In a panel discussion held by the Clean Money of Northern California organization, Byron Williams of the Oakland Tribune introduced the panelists; Kay McVay former president of the California Nurses Association, Dr. Dorie Apollonio, a research scientist at U.C.S.F., Dan Newman of MAPLight.org and Emily Rusch of CALPRG. Susan Lerner, founder of the Clean Money Organization, made the concluding remarks.

McVay described the changes in the health care field over the

last 30 years and how the health care delivery system has deteriorated from the perspective of nurses in the field. She talked about the California Nursing Association's activism in health care reform. She emphasized that nurses want to see quality care returned to the patient.

Dr. Dorie Apollonio is trained as a Political Scientist, specializing in health policy, tobacco control, and policy making. Her widely published research has considered the role of interest groups, particularly industries, in affecting political decision making on public health. Apollonio reported on the role of money in the political decision-making, particularly in the recent investigations about the tobacco industry.

Dan Newman and his grassroots group examined seven health related bills in the legislative period of 2005-06 and 2006-07 using campaign contribution records from the National Insti-

tute on Money in State Politics. They examined patterns of contributions both supporting and opposing each bill. They were able to point to correlations of a vote with the presence of a campaign contribution, in five out of seven bills. Bills labeled AB 977, AB 2281, SB 1804, SB 1591, and AB 1554, all health care related bills, were defeated. Contribution records pointed to the presence of sizeable contributions to those legislators who voted no on these reform measures. Visit www.MAPLight.org for a detailed look at the study and its methodology and findings.

Susan Lerner concluded the presentation by describing the work of Clean Money and its work to pass public funding of campaigns in California. She cited the success of public funding of campaigns in Arizona and Maine and the recent passage of public funding in Connecticut.

Great books that mention the League

Several recent books highlight the contributions of League members around the country!

If you're looking for a special holiday gift—or just a good read—be sure to ask about these titles at your local bookstore or library: "Soul of a Citizen" by Paul Rogat Loeb; "Getting a Grip" by Frances Moore Lappe; "The Next Form of Democracy" by Matt Leighninger.

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

Nonpartisan citizens' network makes democracy work

League of Women Voters offers training for women politicians

By JANE MORSE
USINFO Staff Write

Washington – The League of Women Voters does not view training women to be politicians as a specific part of its mission, but it often whets their appetite for politics, says Mary Wilson, currently the president of the organization.

“We basically serve as a training ground for women who are interested in things political,” Wilson told USINFO in a recent interview. Members get to know their elected officials, she said, and learn how the public’s business is performed.

“They [league members] gain a lot of insight, and they really sharpen their interest in the subject,” she said. “Many of them, as a result of that, say, ‘I could do that, too. I could make an impact as an elected official.’”

The league does not keep statistics on how many of its members go on to run for public office, but Wilson noted that Senator Dianne Feinstein of California publicly has acknowledged that she first got interested in politics via the league.

Founded in 1920, shortly after U.S. women won a 70-year battle for the right to vote, the league remains a strictly nonpartisan organization. Its basic purpose is “to make democracy work for all citizens” via voter education and to influence policy through advocacy.

The strength of the league, Wilson said, always has been its “grassroots” decentralized structure. There are some 900 leagues located across all 50 states, the

District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and even Hong Kong. The League of Women Voters of the United States, of which Wilson is the president, and the League of Women Voters Education Fund operate at the national level with support from local leagues.

To stay relevant into the 21st century, the league is making better use of the Internet, Wilson said. For example, local and state

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“But I’m happy to say that the League of Women Voters in the last year or so has been holding its own in terms of membership ... and that is the league’s role as an important training ground for people who want to participate in the civic lives of their communities and state and the nation.”

Mary Wilson,
president, LWVUS

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voter guides are being made available on the Internet.

“A year ago,” Wilson said, “right before the November 2006 election, we launched Vote411.org, which is a kind of full-service Web site where people from all across the country can find out basic things about where they can go to vote in their home locations.”

“We’re hoping to get some additional foundation funding to bring it to even more people for the November 2008 presidential election,” she said.

At the national level, Vote411.org will pose questions to the presidential candidates both during the primary season

as well as during the general election, Wilson said. Their answers will be posted for the entire country to see.

Although the league has some paid staff members, it relies mostly on volunteers -- a resource that is becoming scarcer now that more women have entered the work force and have more opportunities to volunteer than ever before.

“But I’m happy to say,” Wilson told USINFO, “that the League of Women Voters in the last year or so has been holding its own in terms of membership, and we have been undertaking a very special membership recruitment initiative ... and that is the league’s role as an important training ground for people who want to participate in the civic lives of their communities and state and the nation.”

Recruiting from a broader age, racial and ethnic demographic, the league is soliciting members among energetic retirees, students and, yes, even men.

“We are striving through our membership recruitment initiative to indeed attract a broader base of members and thereby continue to be as relevant as we have been for the last 87 years,” Wilson said.

Get cool League stuff!

Order your Favorite Merchandise at the League's Online Store.

The LWV Online Store is now operational and fulfilling orders.

Visit the link at <http://www.lwv.org/store> to order your favorite League merchandise and publications.

Ethics and lobbying changes curb abuses and promote disclosure

By HARRY REID

USA Today, Oct. 31, 2007

When Democrats took control of Congress this year, our first priority was to deliver a government as good and honest as the people we represent. The ethics and lobbying reform bill we passed is a vital first step — and rightly referred to as the most significant reform in a generation. This bill is proof positive that when we cast aside our differences, we can achieve a common good.

Major public interest groups — the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Democracy 21, League of Women Voters, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG — have called the ethics and lobbying reform bill "landmark reform of the nation's lobbying disclosure laws and landmark reform of the Senate ethics rules." Most observers will agree that these six

groups are hardly easy to please. So, how did the ethics bill earn their unanimous praise?

* It sharply curtails the ability of lobbyists and their clients to trade gifts and travel for special access to members and staffers, and it enforces the rules more strictly.

* It ends the practice of members taking discounted flights on corporate jets. Senators must pay full market charter rates.

* It slows the revolving door for former senators and senior executive branch officials to jump to lobbying firms, requires greater scrutiny of negotiations for outside jobs and prohibits sitting senators from negotiating for a lobbying job at all.

* It dramatically improves public disclosure of lobbying. The new law doubles the frequency of disclosures, ends the practice of lobbying behind "shadow coalitions," and requires lobbyists to disclose

"bundling" of campaign contributions by others. All of this data will soon be available on the Internet.

* And for the first time ever, it establishes earmark transparency. Last year, not a single earmark or earmark sponsor was identified. This year, all earmarks were specifically identified, and each Senate sponsor has to take public responsibility for all of his or her earmarks. This information is available on the Internet now.

A government trusted by the people is the cornerstone of a thriving democracy. For years, Congress stood idly by as that trust eroded. Democrats made a commitment to end the status quo, and we have delivered. The ethics and lobbying reform bill is a crucial step toward restoring the public trust.

Harry Reid, D-Nev., is the Senate majority leader.

LWVC opposes two initiatives

At its September meeting, the LWVC board decided to OP-POSE the following initiatives on the Feb. 2008 ballot:

■ **Transportation Funding:** Prohibits retention of funds earmarked for the Transportation Investment Fund in the General Fund after 7/1/08, and requires repayment of prior borrowing for non-transportation purposes.

■ **Community Colleges:** Establishes independent public community college districts and Board of Governors; requires that minimum levels of Proposition 98 funding for school districts and community college districts be calculated and ap-

propriated separately; and other provisions.

The board deferred action on the term limits initiative until the final list of measures for the February 2008 ballot is known.

Still pending is a possible water bond, and possibly four referenda on Indian gaming compacts. Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the advisory measure on the Iraq War, so it will not appear on the ballot.

Information about initiatives is available on the Secretary of State's website at:

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_j.htm>.

Desperately seeking an Action and a Voter Service Chair

This is the third call for an Action and a Voter Service Chair. If you are interested in either of these important areas of League work, please call Kate Quick at 523-3612 and tell her you are willing to help.

There will be guidance and assistance, but with three elections coming up, as well as many "hot" issues needing Action, we must fill these important posts immediately.

Grass roots means everyone should be willing to help!

Calendar of events

All members and the public invited

- **Thursday, Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m.** – Board Meeting. Conference Room C, Alameda Hospital, 2070 Clinton Ave.
- **Thursday, Nov. 29, 7 p.m.** – Immigration Consensus Study, Part 2. Alameda Hospital, Conference Room A, 2070 Clinton Ave. (See story, Page 1).
- **Sunday, Dec. 9, 5 p.m.** – Holiday party. Food, prizes, fun! Anne Spanier's home, 166 Basinside Way. (See story, Page 1).

Keep in touch with your League

Have you moved? Changed your phone or email?

Send any new contact information to Golda Mason, 406 Central Ave. Apt. B, Alameda, CA 94501. Call her at (510) 812-2873 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.. 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: \$60 for a single membership; \$80 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:

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Phone:

Email:

The League of Women Voters of Alameda
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