



# Alameda Voter

Volume 38 Number 2

March 2005

## Auctions and global issues at April 22 Democracy Dinner

League supporters will meet some of California's movers and shakers, learn about the global issues facing the U.S., and bid on auction items from around California at the Democracy Dinner on April 22 at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose.

A VIP reception and the silent auction begin at 6:30 p.m. Dinner begins at 7:30 p.m..

The movers and shakers are the Co-Chairs and Honorary Committee for the dinner. They include Sen. Diane Feinstein; members of Congress Zoe Lofgren, Anna Eshoo, and Mike Honda; former Congressman Pete McCloskey; and elected and former elected officials from southern San Mateo, Santa Clara, and southern Alameda counties.

There will be an auction of items or activities, one from each League in California. We are asking each League to donate at least one auction item that will highlight the unique features of your area.

Contact auction co-chairs Ann Crosbie (crosbieclan@comcast.net) or Lucile Spurlock

## Take a tour of Island housing March 7

Have lunch with the League and tour the island in a study of housing development in Alameda, March 7.

At 11:30 a.m., meet the League for lunch at the East Ocean Restaurant, on Webster Street at Pacific Avenue, and then at 12:30 p.m. get into vans to tour areas which have been developed in the recent past in Alameda. We are trying to get an

(caspurlock@aol.com) with your donation information.

The banquet speaker is Ambassador Nancy E. Soderberg, Vice President for Multilateral Affairs for International Crisis Group, formerly Alternate Representative of the U.S. to the United Nations, and author of the soon to be released book, *The Superpower Myth*. Her topic will be "Global Challenges, Global Realities."

Proceeds from the dinner will benefit The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund and the education funds of the local Leagues planning and coordinating the event: Fremont/Newark/Union City, Los Altos/Mountain View Area, Palo Alto, Santa Clara Valley, San Jose/Santa Clara, and South San Mateo.

Tickets for non-members will be \$150, for League members \$100. Non-members can reserve a table for \$1,500, and members for \$1000.

More information is available on our web site at [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org).

idea of what is possible, and what has been done, as part of the Alameda League's housing study.

If you're not interested in having lunch, you can meet us in the restaurant parking lot at 12:30 p.m.

Please RSVP by March 5 to Kate Quick at 523-3612; [katequick@comcast.net](mailto:katequick@comcast.net).

## Help needed for 2005 'Meet Your Public Officials'

By Audrey Lord-Hausman  
Leaguemember

I am looking for an energetic, creative, fun group of people to help me put on this year's Meet Your Public Officials event for the League. We are looking at dates at the end of April or first part of May.

To start, we need a planning group just to brainstorm ideas, not only for the event itself, but also in the fund-raising area.

There are many areas that need to be covered and volunteer sign-ups are welcomed any time.

Here are a few key ones:

- Invitations
- RSVP List maintenance
- Raffle Prizes - this is so important and the sooner we can get moving on this the better.
- Head up the raffle ticket sales
- Donated food coordinator (remember, all our members bring a dish)
- Décor
- Clean-up Crew
- Welcome Table Greeters
- And many others

Please either call me (522-4651) or email me at [alord@ix.netcom.com](mailto:alord@ix.netcom.com) and let me know how you would like to help; be sure and leave your phone number. We want to expand the invitation list and broaden the League's visibility in town and make it a memorable evening.

### Inside this issue

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# If you're interested in government, we need you!

I can't say from the standpoint of being the President of the League that this has been such a great month for me, personally. I am deeply disappointed that the Nominating Committee has not been able to find enough willing workers to carry on our program into next year. We are not sure what the resolution will be of the problem, but I have a deep faith in the League and in our League in particular, and believe that we will find a way out of our current dilemma – one faced by many Leagues, I hear.

And here is the worst part of it all: we have met our goals of increased visibility in the Community. During the last election, our telephone was ringing off the hook, and we were asked to present Pros and Cons to many organizations. We distributed more election material in more languages than ever before. We held a large number of candidate's forums, and had them run on our local Cable channels. We also more than met our fund-raising



**Kate Quick**

goals, and have full coffers to not only run our program, but put some away for the future.

We are a strong League; doing meaningful work, and able to sustain ourselves economically. Yet we lack people who want to take responsibility for leadership roles. Clearly, one part of the solution is to find “new blood” – younger, enthusiastic women and men who can develop the same dedication to the informed electorate that your current and past leaders have, or had.

If you have ideas, or solutions to propose, or can help in any way, please contact one of the members of the nominating committee:

Joanne McKray  
joannemck@earthlink.net,  
522-6760;

Liz Rogers  
edr1940@aol.com, 865-1786;  
Cara Watkins  
geekspeak@compuserve.com,  
522-2543;

Nancy King  
nancyjeanking@aol.com, 521-8189  
or

Bill Smith–wjasmith@aol.com,  
522-0930.

## Transportation meeting update

Last week, Feb. 17, we put together a panel to discuss the regional

implications of the development at Alameda Point. Over 30 attended, on a “dark and stormy night”. The feedback was pretty good – mostly that people liked the fact that we were presenting a forum where ideas and problems could be freely discussed, with no hidden agendas or attempts to “sell” a particular concept.

We will be following up with a tour of Alameda development projects, and you can read more about the tour elsewhere in this issue of the VOTER (see Island Tour on cover).

## State Convention time

State Convention is coming up again in May. This time it will be in Southern California – Anaheim. We are eligible to have three delegates. There is more information elsewhere in this VOTER (see page 7) – look it over and if you would like to go as a delegate, let me know by e-mail at [katequick@comcast.net](mailto:katequick@comcast.net) or telephone at 523-3612. Conventions are both enlightening and fun. I am going, as I am being nominated by the State Board to serve on it as the Communications Director for the next two years. I hope we will have our full compliment of delegates, as I will need a support group!

### The League of Women Voters of Alameda

President: Kate Quick

Vice President Administration:

Luann DeWitt

Vice President Program:

Linda Hudson

Secretary: Sally Faulhaber

Treasurer: Pat Caito

Voter Editor: Cara Watkins

The current and past issues of the  
*Voter* are posted on our  
website:

[www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org)

The *Voter* is published 10 times a  
year by the League of Women Voters  
of Alameda

## Library groundbreaking March 1, 1 p.m.

A free event to celebrate the Ground Breaking for the New Alameda Main Library is open to the public Tuesday, March 1 at 1 p.m. at 1550 Oak Street.

There is a reception immediately following at the Alameda City Hall Lobby, 2263 Santa Clara Ave.

The event sponsors are the

Alameda Free Library Foundation and the Friends of the Alameda Free Library.

This project is funded by Citizens of Alameda, Measure O Bond California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2000 City of Alameda.

# Here's how we formulate a program or policy statement

By **Miriam Schiffman**  
Boardmember

Our Consensus Report on the State Education Update Study has been submitted to the State Study Committee and will be melded with reports from the other participating Leagues in the state. After a few more steps it will be presented at State Convention for final approval to become part of our position on Education. (For a clearer picture on the life cycle of our policy positions see the article below.)

Here is a brief overview of some of the consensus reached at a recent meeting.

**Regarding Equitable Access to Quality Education:** We felt that while mandated skills and knowledge are a reality, the goals of education should be broader. We want to con-

tinue to help each student reach their highest potential, since not all students will be able to reach the mandated goals. This goal is currently part of League's program statement.

We agreed that education throughout the state is not equitable for a variety of reasons, including unevenly distributed resources, special needs demands which are greater in some schools than others, and funding mechanisms which lead to inequalities.

To make schools more equitable all mandates for basic education should be funded, and existing mandates should be evaluated to see if they meet intended goals.

We agreed there wasn't enough data yet to measure how well charter schools served their students. Members felt that charter

schools are harmful because they reduce the number of students, funding and diversity in public schools. We agreed that our state's education system should strive to match the top best state school systems in the nation and not the worst. (Depending on which report you read, California is near the bottom at 41st or 47th place.)

We endorsed the concept of universal preschool education

**Regarding School Finance:** We recommended the following changes: simplify rules for funding; make funding less volatile by adjusting the structure to avoid boom and bust cycles; fund mandates adequately; evaluate, and perhaps eliminate Prop 13; reduce the 2/3 vote requirement for the Parcel Tax; and increase Education's share of the state lottery

while making those funds supplemental to (not instead of) regular state funding.

**Regarding Accountability and Assessment:** We agreed that on the plus side student assessment provides good feedback to teachers. On the negative side we felt that it's effectiveness is reduced when used as a sanction on the school, teacher, and/or student. The high mobility of students and delayed feedback of results also reduce the effectiveness of assessment testing.

Because of the lack of time we were unable to discuss and come to consensus on everything in the study packet.

If you want to study the material in this study report, go to <http://ca.lwv.org/index.html> and click on Education Study Update.

## ... And this is how we arrive at a League position

By **Miriam Schiffman**  
Boardmember

A League position is the stand of the league on a public issue and serves as the basis for advocacy/action. It is established after members have studied an issue and achieved consensus on policies and practices that best serve the public interest.

The process is the same no matter what level – national, state, regional or local. All League members participate in consensus through their local league meetings, or sometimes through a mail-in vote. If it is a national issue, such as the Electoral College or the UN, delegates to the national convention vote for the study and the final position.

We are in the midst of a consensus process in the Alameda League and will discuss a consensus question dealing with housing in the coming month.

What is this process like? Let's use

February's update on State Education study as an example.

The California League has a position on Education last updated in 1995. At the 2003 State Convention, members of the State Education Committee and delegates from several local Leagues proposed an update of the position in light of changes going on in education.

The Education Committee presented to the State Board for approval the parameters and issues of the update study.

Next came a call to members to participate in the study which was conducted by the State Education Committee and various local Leagues' interviews and research. The results were compiled into a cohesive package for the local Leagues to use in their own meetings and committees.

In addition they formulated a series of consensus questions, which were presented to the state board for approval. Each League decides how it is to pro-

vide the information to its members.

During the meeting to reach consensus, members focus on responding to the questions asked of us and are mindful that this is consensus. We do not vote. We report the overall sense of the group. Only members' views may be included in the consensus, even though non-members may attend and participate in discussion.

The consensus of the group is written up and presented to the Local Board for review and approval.

Then the report is sent on to the State Education Study Committee which compiles the answers from all the Local Leagues into a report.

This goes to the State Board for review and approval. Once approved, it becomes part of our position and allows the State League to have a better tool to lobby their respective levels of governance on a particular issue, in this case education.

# Take an extensive look at Alameda housing March 17

For nearly two years our League has worked on a local housing study, and the time has come for all members to discuss the issue. Please attend our March 17 public meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Alameda Hospital, Room C (right around the corner from the Lyons Room) 2070 Clinton Ave., Alameda.

To remind you, the scope of this study is:

A study of housing in Alameda, especially the relationship between affordability and housing types and related matters of design.

Go to 'Green Pages' 5 and 6 for background material and a synopsis of what our committee has gathered. Please read it, and if you want more detail, contact Sally Faulhaber at [ssyhf@alamedanet.net](mailto:ssyhf@alamedanet.net).

The study may consider:

1) Relative costs, environmental effects, use of open space, and transportation/parking issues for different types of housing.

2) The effects of governmental laws and policies at all levels of government on affordability.

This is clearly not all there is to housing, but it is an aspect particularly relevant to our community at this particular time.

A good introduction to the subject is to look at some of the housing developments in our city.

Drive, walk, or cycle past the sites listed below in the box.

Thanks to Kris Matarrese, Vivian Patterson, Evelyn Kennedy, Cara Watkins, and Joan Robinson, who have contributed to this study. And to all of you: Come to the meeting, talk, and listen to each other.

## Densities of Some Planned Developments in Alameda

	Units	Area (acres)	Density (units/acre)
<b>California Heritage Bay</b> (AKA Drive-in Movie site) Includes tiny park	<b>106</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.6</b>
<b>Casitas</b> On BFI "Highlands" Includes clubhouse, pool, ball field, storage for RVs, etc.	<b>375</b>	<b>~22</b>	<b>17.0</b>
<b>The Gardens</b> On Buena Vista W of Webster	<b>83</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>10.4</b>
<b>Islandia</b> On BFI "Highlands" Includes clubhouse, pool, green space	<b>438</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>8.0</b>
<b>Garden Isle</b> On BFI "Highlands" Includes clubhouse, pool	<b>346</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>8.2</b>
<b>Marina Cove</b> On Buena Vista E of Del Monte bldg. Includes park	<b>152</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>7.4</b>
<b>Ravens Cove</b> north of BFI Bridge Includes pool, community building, green space	<b>68</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>9.7</b>
<b>Housing Authority Sites</b>			
<b>Parrot Village</b> Northside btw Wood and St.Charles	<b>50</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>22.7</b>
<b>Eagle Village</b> on Eagle east of Webster	<b>42</b>	<b>~21</b>	<b>20</b>

Since planned developments include internal streets and alleys in their area and traditional single-lot neighborhoods do not, lot sizes for two of these developments allow a comparison. For Marina Cove, with lot area of 12.5 acres, the density is 12.2 units/acre. For California Heritage Bay with lot sizes between 1,600 and 1,800 square feet, the density is about 25.

The 5,000 square foot lot which is the standard for R1 zones yields 8.7 units/acre. The 2,000 square foot minimum in Article XXVI of the City charter gives a density of 21.7.

The north side of Fair Oaks Avenue, on the fringe of the Gold Coast, has 20 units in an area of 1.3 acres, a density of 15.4 units/acre.

# Details and findings of our housing study

**Scope:** A study of housing in Alameda, especially the relationship between affordability and housing types and related matter of design.

## **The study may consider:**

1) Relative costs, environmental effects, use of open space, and transportation and parking issues for different types of housing.

2) The effects of governmental laws and policies at all levels of government on affordability.

As you can see, this does not cover a lot of general questions regarding housing and transportation. We already have State positions which call for programs to increase the supply of affordable housing for all Californians, for equal opportunity in housing, and for increased use of public transportation. We can use these positions in addressing our City government.

**The question we will discuss at our March 17 meeting is:** For new development in Alameda, how much weight should be given to issues of:

- 1) open space,
- 2) affordability
- 3) public transportation , parking
- 4) environmental effects
- 5) in considering different types of housing (i. e, single-family detached, duplex, single family attached, apartments)

What follows is some information our committee has gathered as background for discussion.

## **State and Regional Role**

The California State Department of Housing and Development requires the City to produce a Housing Element of the General Plan. To ensure an adequate supply of decent affordable housing as the population grows, the state requires each local government to incorporate its share of the state's housing need into the Housing Element. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) makes this Regional Housing Need Determination (RHND) for our region, using a formula focused on achieving a jobs/ housing balance.

Our current RHND is 2,162 dwellings, of which 443 are very low income units, 265 low income units, and 611 moderate income units. There are 1,503 new units planned for Alameda Point.

**Can Alameda ignore the RHND?** Yes, but this leaves the City vulnerable to legal challenges from individuals or groups advocating for affordable housing, and puts us in a poor position to compete for state funds.

## **Measure A Litigation**

Several suits have been filed involving Measure A and its enabling ordinance, which defines multiple dwelling as buildings containing three or more units.

In one suit, the plaintiff wanted to build a triplex, prohibited under Article 26 of the City charter (measures A) and the enabling ordinance. The City would only allow him to build two duplexes. He won a settlement from the City

for a large amount of money.

In another case, tenants in what was then the Harbor Isle Apartments won a settlement requiring the City to build 325 apartments to replace low income units expected to be lost from that complex.

In both cases, the court ruled that Evidence Code 669.5 applied. That law requires a city to show that a growth control measure is necessary "for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the population of the city."

Since both cases were settled satisfying other related claims, the validity of the measure has not been tested.

## **Affordability**

Although we will be dealing in this meeting with affordability as it relates to housing type, some of the more general questions are always asked.

The City's Inclusionary Ordinance commits the City to 25% affordable housing in redevelopment areas and 15% in the rest of the City. There are mechanisms in the Inclusionary Ordinance to ensure that these units remain affordable for at least 59 years. The Alameda Point developer has agreed to somewhat more than 25%.

According to Year 2000 census data, ~5.9% of Alameda's households fall into the very low income category, ~8.8% in low income, and ~10.2 in moderate.

The Housing Element does not seem to say how many units in

Turn to page 6

Alameda are affordable, but it does give 1990 figures for overpayment: It says 30% of renters were paying more than 35% of their income for housing; of those with incomes less than \$35,000/year, 49% overpaid. 20% of owners were paying more than 35% of income, and of those with incomes less than \$35,000, 29% overpaid.

**Who pays for new affordable housing?** Some housing for moderate incomes can be built without subsidy. The lower income units cannot. Inclusionary provisions require that affordable units be built by the developer, although for developers that exceed the 15% requirement, assistance may be provided. Other sources are set-aside funds and Prop 46 funding through the State Housing and Community Development Department.

**Construction Costs**

This has been the most difficult question to answer. A 1987 study (in Massachusetts) compared costs for a townhouse development with a single family development on the same 10 acre site.

	No. Units	Density	Cost/Unit	Cost/ sq ft
<b>Townhouses</b>	120	16	\$82,879	\$75.5
<b>Single-family</b>	50	8.3	\$90,100	\$77.7

**This excludes land costs, as do all the following.**

According to a phone interview with a San Francisco architect about a year ago, single-family costs were about \$250/ sq ft., duplex about \$150/sq ft. Two other sources said costs are about the same for the several housing types. Since kitchens and bathrooms cost more than other rooms, for comparable quality, costs per square foot are higher for smaller units. But the overall cost of the smaller unit is, of course, less. It is hard to get a clear answer on the difference between attached and detached units of the same size and quality.

**A Brief Glossary of Housing Terms**

**affordable housing** - housing which consumes no more than 35% of a family's income.

Income levels are categorized as:

- Very low income: up to 50% of Bay Area median income
- Low income: 50% up to 80% " " " " "
- Moderate inc.:80% up to 120% " " " " "

**inclusionary** - including affordable housing (see above)

**set-aside** - money set aside from the tax increment in a redevelopment zone. California redevelopment law requires that 20% of the tax increment be set aside for affordable housing. The tax increment is the increase in tax revenue resulting from the increase in property value in the redevelopment area.

Since planned developments include internal streets and alleys in their area and traditional single-lot neighborhoods do not, lot sizes for two of these developments allow a comparison. For Marina Cove, with lot a lot area of 12.5 acres, the density is 12.2 units/acre. For California Heritage Bay, with lot sizes between 1,600 and 1,800 square feet, the density is about 25.

The 5,000 square foot lot which is the standard for R1 zones yields 8.7 units/acre. The 2,000 square foot minimum in Article XXVI of the City charter gives a density of 21.7.

The north side of Fair Oaks Avenue, on the fringe of the Gold Coast, has 20 units in an area of 1.3 acres, a density of 15.4 units/acre.

# Worries surface over energy: a crisis may be looming

*Public forums presented by the League of Women Voters of California shed harsh light on California's electrical energy system.*

*According to energy experts and industry officials at the forums, price spikes, uncertain supply and distribution difficulties still threaten our electrical energy system. The well attended forums in Los Angeles and San Francisco marked the beginning of the League's update to its 1980 position on energy. Clearly, the energy crisis is not necessarily a thing of the past. For a fuller description of the forums, read the following article by Rick Jurgens of the Contra Costa Times.*

A top state energy official warned Friday that Northern California could be hit by electricity shortages this summer, even as panelists at a forum on the state's power system said that no one has the clear responsibility to see that new power plants and transmission lines get built.

About 200 people, including many senior citizens, gathered for "Keeping the Lights on in California," a daylong series of presentations by experts, advocates and state officials sponsored by the League of Women Voters.

Public concern about energy has diminished since the state's ill-fated deregulation experiment collapsed in 2000 and the state was hit with rolling blackouts and soaring power bills. Still, key questions remain unanswered by the makeshift energy system that emerged in the aftermath of the yearlong crisis.

State energy officials and industry representatives acknowledged that there is still work to be done but assured attendees that many problems have been solved and that California's energy glass is now more than half full.

Joe Desmond, a top energy adviser to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, said the administration would be "proactive" on energy issues and

carry out a policy that combined economic growth with environmental stewardship.

But there were some dissonant voices. Assemblyman Joe Cenci-amilla, D-Pittsburg, painted a grim picture of energy policy-making in Sacramento.

Term limits, campaign contributions and political battles have shunted energy issues to the back burner, Cenciamilla warned. "Most likely, nothing will get done until we have the next crisis," he said.

Bill Ahern, former executive director of the state Public Utilities Commission, wrapped up the day with his assertion that the current energy system comprises a set of "damaged concepts and damaged institutions."

Ahern urged League of Women Voters members to lobby their legislators with this message: "Don't do anything unless you understand it."

## Get ready for State Convention in May

Mark your calendars now for Friday, May 20 through Sunday, May 22, 2005 when the state convention will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Garden Grove, CA.

Choose members, in addition to the president, who will represent your League as voting delegates, and let other members know that they may attend as visitors.

The theme of the LWVC Convention 2005 is "It's a New World."

The convention will give delegates an opportunity to debate and vote on state League program, budget, bylaws and other business as well as an opportunity to network and learn new skills. Workshops and speakers are planned to stimulate delegates so they return to their

local League as more effective leaders.

You may download forms from the LWVC members only Web site ([www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org))

Be sure to mail the completed forms to Joan Cohen, Convention Registration Chair before the April 12 deadline if you want to avoid paying the late fee.

The workshops will offer a variety of stimulating topics in two time frames, with skills training on Friday and issues workshops on Saturday.

The convention workshops will be of interest to members who attend as visitors as well as to those who are delegates.

## February board briefs

At its February 2 meeting, the Board:

- approved consensus reports for the State Education Study and Program Review;

- heard an update on work of an Alameda County Council committee studying the relation between the County Board of Education and the County Superintendent;

- approved a bylaw amendment to be presented to the membership at the annual meeting;

- heard that we sent a letter to our senators protesting changes that weaken the Clean Air Act;

- planned for our March consensus meeting on housing; and

- heard that we have 103 local members at last count.

# Calendar of events

**Wednesday, March 2**, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Board Meeting, home of Luann DeWitt, 2917 Central Ave., Alameda.

**Monday, March 7**, 11:30 a.m. Island tour of housing, along with lunch at East Ocean Seafood, Webster at Pacific, Alameda. See cover story.

**Thursday, March 17**, 7:30 p.m. Public meeting on Housing in Alameda: Density, Affordability and Design. Alameda Hospital, Room C, 2070 Clinton Ave., Alameda. See story page 4.

**Wednesday, April 6**, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Board Meeting, home of Luann DeWitt, 2917 Central Ave., Alameda.

**Friday, April 22**, 6:30 p.m. Democracy Dinner, Fairmont Hotel, San Jose. See cover story.

**Friday, May 20 - 22**, State Convention, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Garden Grove. See story page 7.

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:** \$53 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.

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