

**The League of  
Women Voters of  
Alameda**

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**The League of Women Voters;** a non-partisan political organization – encourages informed and active participation 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.



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# VOTER

**Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation**

## May Program Features CASA – Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, the LWV Alameda will sponsor a program meeting, open to the public, with a speaker from CASA – Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda. In April, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we celebrated Earth Day. CASA is a newly formed City Committee which hopes to make every day Earth Day in Alameda. This group will provide a lot of education to our community on how it can become more sustainable - from what we can do in our own homes to what the City can do to become “greener” and more in tune with our environmental goals.

The League has strong positions on air, water, and solid waste at the State and National levels. This program will help us to take action, as individuals and as a community to insure that the principles in these positions are carried out. Please join us for this interesting and informative program on the evening of May 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm in Conference Room A, Alameda Hospital, 2070 Clinton Ave, Alameda.



Alameda's Interim City Manager Anne Marie Gallant, Jeff Cambra and Kate Quick celebrate Anne Marie's winning bid for the Ultimate Dining Experience organized by Jeff at the Alameda League's Meet Your Public Officials on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Our annual fund raiser was a great success.

*See page 4 for more details*



**Save  
the  
Date**

### Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 27, 2009

Keynote speaker : Kirsten Vital, Superintendent, AUSD

Time: 11:30-3pm

Location: Otaez restaurant ,  
2nd floor banquet room 1619  
Webster Street. Free parking  
in the rear of the building.

Members: Look for your  
Annual Meeting Kit in the  
Mail next month.



# PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Kate Quick, President, League of Women Voters of Alameda

I have, from the day I first joined the League, believed that it was a singularly solid organization. The events of the past month have convinced me that this is true. In short order, we have put together our Pros and Cons speakers, held our public meeting with great attendance, and received and distributed our Easy Voter Guides, SmartVoter.org bookmarks and Vote With the League flyers to all our many venues around town. We have also planned and filmed a video of the pros and cons, which we will link to our web site and to various blogs. Many thanks to Joanne McKray, Felice Zensius, Dorothy Fullerton, Karen Butter, and Elisabeth Shilfer for their work as presenters, and to Jeff Cambra, our editor and videographer.

And, at the same time, the MYPO worker-bees have issued invitations, sent out the tickets, and pulled together arrangements, including over thirty raffle prizes for our upcoming Meet Your Public Official annual fundraiser. They have even organized a fabulous live auction item “The Ultimate Alameda Dining Experience”, hosted by member and food and wine connoisseur, Jeff Cambra. Thanks to Audrey Lord Hausman, Liz Rogers, Juelle Ann Boyer, Connie Hanna, Doris Gee, Dorothy Fullerton, Li Volin, and Anne Spanier for their work on the MYPO. It is going to be a great success!

Petitions are being circulated to put the plan for development of Alameda Point on the ballot next November. Anticipating that our League will be asked to “weigh in” on this very important, measure, a speaker for both the “pro” and the “con” sides was invited to our April board meeting. They were asked to review our positions on housing and transportation, and tell us why they believed that the League should support/oppose/stay neutral on the measure being proposed. Each was given five minutes plus some time for the board members to ask questions, and we saw them serially, so there was no debate. They were also encouraged to bring printed materials to share with us.

After they had made their presentations and left, a small committee was formed to consider what they said, and the material they shared and asked to make a recommendation to the board on two things: whether we support the measure going to the voters at this time, and whether we should support/oppose or stay neutral on the ballot initiative itself. The board will be taking a recommendation to the membership at Annual Meeting to be voted on by the general membership. Look for more information on this in your Annual Meeting Kit, which should come to you by the second week in May. Annual Meeting will be held on June 27<sup>th</sup> – a luncheon meeting, as usual.

Our speaker for Annual Meeting will be our new Superintendent of Schools, Kristen Vital. I’ve met her, and I think she has a lot to share regarding how she sees the AUSD being managed in light of shrinking resources. Please come. Have your questions ready.

On May 14-17<sup>th</sup>, Anne Spanier and I will be off to Long Beach for State Convention. I’m looking forward to it. Convention is always a real energizer and opportunity to both network and to learn from other Leagues. I’m up for election as the State Nominating Committee Chair, so that will add a new learning experience, too.

To go back to where I started this message – saying that I have always believed the League to be a solid organization, I reflect on the many solid accomplishments we have attained just in the last month, through the work of our members – dedicated volunteers who really make the League rock!

Kate Quick

|                          |   |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Dates to Remember</b> | <b>May 21<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm</b><br><b>Board Meeting</b><br><b>Alameda Hospital Room C</b> | <b>May 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm</b><br><b>Program Meeting,</b><br><b>Alameda Hospital Room A</b> | <b>June 27<sup>th</sup>, 11:30-3:00</b><br><b>Annual Meeting</b><br><b>Otaez Restaurant</b> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|

## *At-Risk Americans: The Uninsured and Underinsured*

*By Janis McMillen*

Data from multiple sources agree that in 2007, 47 million Americans (15.6 percent of the total U.S. population) lacked any kind of health insurance coverage. When these numbers are adjusted for age (excluding those 65 years and older), the uninsured percentage of the population rises to 17.9 percent. Moreover, it is estimated that 25 million adults under age 65 were underinsured during 2007, despite having insurance all year. In total, 42 percent of *all* adults (86.7 million) were either uninsured or underinsured during 2007.

### **Putting a face on persons who were uninsured or underinsured during 2007 and 2008<sup>1</sup>**

- **Age:** One of three people under age 65 were uninsured for some or all of 2007 and 2008; of the total uninsured population, 60.1 million were adults (between 19 and 64 years of age)
- **Duration:** Among the underinsured/uninsured, 74.5 percent were uninsured for nine or more months and one-quarter were uninsured the entire 24 months
- **Employment status:** 80 percent of individuals who were uninsured were in working families and only 16 percent were not in the labor force (due to disabilities, chronic illness, or serving as family caregivers)
- **Income:** Nearly 60 percent were in families with incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL: \$21,200/year for a family of four); 52 percent with incomes between 100 to 200 percent of FPL went without health insurance in 2007/2008
- **Racial and Ethnic origin:** 55 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, 40.3 percent of African Americans and 34 percent of other racial or ethnic minorities had no health insurance in 2007/2008, compared to 25.8 percent of whites. While racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be uninsured, whites accounted for 49.8 percent of the uninsured
- **Age breakdown:** The likelihood of being uninsured declines with age; 49.5 percent of those 19 – 24 years old, 36.3 percent of those 25 – 44 years old, 32.5 percent of those 45 – 54 years old and 21.2 percent of those 55 – 64 years old were uninsured over this two-year time period. The 55- to 64-year-old age group consumes more health care on average than younger adults.

For all ethnic and racial groups, lower-income families and individuals were more likely to be uninsured than lower-income whites. This disparity continues even as incomes rise in all groups.

There is a marked increase in the number of adults having difficulty paying medical bills – the most visible consequence of the weakening in insurance coverage. In 2007, 41 percent of adults (72 million people) reported problems paying medical bills, faced bill collectors or were in debt for medical care, up from 34 percent or 58 million in 2005. The majority had insurance at the time these bills were incurred<sup>2</sup> – well in advance of the economic downturn.

<sup>1</sup> All statistics above and below are from <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/americans-at-risk-findings.html>

<sup>2</sup>The statistics in this paragraph are from <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/Publications/Testimonies/2009/Feb/Testimony-Insurance-Design-Matters-Underinsured-Trends-Health-and-Financial-Risks.aspx>

*Janis McMillen (LWVUS Board member and LWVKS) is chair of the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force.*

## **Quick Facts On Health Care Costs**

- Total health spending in the U.S. reached \$2.1 trillion in 2007 – or \$7,026 per capita.
- By 2016, total health spending is projected to rise to \$4.2 trillion.
- Between 2005 – 2006, total health spending increased 6.7 percent, more than double the rate of the 2.9 percent increase in overall economic growth.
- Total health spending remained relatively constant at about 16 percent of gross domestic product from 2003 – 2006, but is projected to increase to 19.5 percent by 2017.
- Spending for home health care increased at a faster pace from 2005 – 2006 (9.9 percent) than any other category of health spending; however, its impact is limited because it accounts overall for only 2.5 percent of total health spending.
- Yearly prescription drug spending growth accelerated in 2006 to 8.5 percent from a low of 5.8 percent in 2005, in part because of full implementation of Medicare Part D.
- Between 2006 and 2007, premiums for health coverage offered by employers increased 6.1 percent, the fourth straight year of declines in the rate of premium growth, from a peak of 13.9 percent in 2003. Even so, this was more than twice the rate of growth in the Consumer Price Index.
- Of every dollar spent on health services in the U.S. in 2006, 46 cents came directly from government sources.
- Costs for program administration and the net cost of private health insurance were about 7 percent of total health spending in the U.S. in 2006 and grew 8.8 percent, a marked increase over the 3.6 percent rise in 2005.

This list (without the original endnotes) is from “A Reporter's Toolkit: Health Care Costs” (an Alliance for Health Reform Toolkit produced with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) and is reproduced here courtesy of the Alliance for Health Care. The entire toolkit can be found at

[http://www.allhealth.org/Publications/Cost\\_of\\_health\\_care/health\\_care\\_costs\\_toolkit.asp#keyfacts](http://www.allhealth.org/Publications/Cost_of_health_care/health_care_costs_toolkit.asp#keyfacts).

**Resource provided by the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force, 2009.**

## **MYPO – What a Party!**

Our annual Meet Your Public Official event on April 23 was a resounding success, due to the work of many of our members. Thanks go to the committee: Audrey Lord Hausman, Karen Scanlon, Ellen Paisal, Liz Rogers, Li Volin, Juelle Ann Boyer, Anne Spanier, Connie Hanna, Joanne McKray, Dorothy Fullerton, and Doris Gee.

We had well over forty elected and appointed officials there to meet the public, including the full City Council, Mayor and Vice-Mayor, several School Board Trustees, our Superior Court Judge, the Fire and Police Chiefs, the City Attorney and the Interim City Manager. From the County we had our Supervisor, the Auditor-Controller/Clerk Recorder and his Chief Deputy Auditor, Medical Center Trustee, and a member of the County Board of Education.

From regional bodies, we had representatives from East Bay Regional Parks Board, AC Transit Board, and East Bay Municipal Utilities Board. Our State Assembly member sent his aide, whom we had met when we did our legislative interview.

From City Boards and commissions, we were glad to meet and talk with representatives of the Social Service Human Relations, Hospital, Library, Economic Development Commission, Housing and Building Codes Hearing and Appeals, Youth, Library, Planning, Public Utilities, Housing, and CASA Boards.

Our Treasurer, Earleen Hamlin, reports we raised just short of \$2,000. This was the first time we have tried a live auction. Member Jeff Cambra donned a great tuxedo with a maroon velvet jacket and inspired a lively auction of his “Ultimate Alameda Dining Experience”, which went for \$500 to Interim City Manager Anne Marie Gallant.

The food, drink and flowers were all perfect; the room décor a great “ambiance”, and the committee lined up an outstanding group of people to take money, sell raffle tickets, check in the officials, put out and maintain the lovely food plates, run the raffle and do the set up and clean up. A great party! A great League!

## **LWV California Moves Forward on Energy Issues**

Our May program will be on sustainability. Here are some things happening at the State level which should forward our positions on the protection of natural resources.

### **LWV California Off-Board Energy Appointments**

Suzanne Phinney, LWV Sacramento County, has been appointed Chair of the off-board Energy Committee. Suzanne has been a member of the energy committee since its inception. In addition, Suzanne agreed to serve as the off-board Program Director for Energy. She is currently employed as the Senior Associate for Energy and Infrastructure at Aspen Environmental Group. We welcome Suzanne and appreciate her volunteer service in these important roles.

### **AB 32 and SB 375—Six Public Workshops Announced**

AB 32 and SB 375 create a framework to help California meet the challenges of climate change. Local governments play a crucial role in helping the state implement these new laws and helping preserve the high quality of life that our residents value. A series of workshops offered throughout California, co-hosted by the Local Government Commission, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and Senate President Pro tem Darrell Steinberg, will be offered in the following locations:

- April 16 – Riverside
- May 7 – Fresno
- June 4 – San Diego
- June 25 – Los Angeles
- July 15 - Oakland
- July 30 - Sacramento

Regional and local experts will showcase some of the best and most innovative steps that local governments throughout the state are taking, providing specific examples as models for others to follow. Workshop registration fee is \$75 per person. Agendas, exact locations, and other information [is online](#) or contact [Noelle Nichols](#), 916-448-1198 x327.

### **LWVUS Global Climate Change Project**

During February, the LWVC was one of six state Leagues approached by the LWVUS to participate in a new global climate change project. "The State of Climate Change: Outreach and Action" project is being done in partnership with OxFam America. Participation requires conducting public educational and outreach activities as well as advocacy in specific congressional districts. After careful consideration, the LWVC waived the invitation and allowed LWVUS to extend the offer directly to the local Leagues located within the identified congressional districts.

As of this writing, three Leagues in California have applied and are awaiting word on whether their applications have been accepted: LWV Claremont Area, LWV Eden Area, and LWV Piedmont.

### **Comparison of Water Bond Proposals**

The Planning and Conservation League has provided us with a summary of the contents of the five water bond proposals that have been introduced this session. They range from \$9.8 billion to \$15 billion depending on factors such as Water System Operational Improvements and Conservation and Watershed Protection, and other aspects such as continuing appropriations, Delta water and ecosystem projects, etc. If you are interested, the bills are AB 1197 (Huffman), SB 735 (Steinberg), SB 456 (Wolk), SB 371 (Cogdill), and SB 301 (Florez). The LWVC legislation committee has not yet considered these bills for potential action.

For more information, contact: Charolette Fox, *Natural Resources Director* [natural\\_resources@lwvc.org](mailto:natural_resources@lwvc.org)

# Join or Renew your membership in the Alameda League Today!



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Other Names \_\_\_\_\_

(if a family membership)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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\$65 Single Membership  \$85 Family Membership  \$25 Student Membership Dues year is Jan 1 – Dec 31.  
Dues assistance is available for those on limited income – Contact us at 869-4969. Make Check payable to LWV Alameda and mail to: League of Women Voters of Alameda, P. O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501

## Education Fund donations are Tax Deductible

Donations to the League of Women Voters Educations Fund are tax deductible. Consider sending a check for \$5 or more made out to LWV Ed Fund with your renewal, or at any time to LWV Alameda, P. O. Box 1645. Alameda, CA 94501

## Turn your Trash into Cash for the Ed 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.

# Vote with The League on May 19th!

The League of Women Voters  
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P. O. Box 1645  
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