

The League of Women Voters of Alameda

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The VOTER is published 8 times per year. Current and past issues of the VOTER are posted on our website

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SMART VOTER

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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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Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation

VOTER

The League Seeks Consensus on The National Popular Vote

Grassroots agreement on positions is one of the League's greatest strengths. Preparing for and taking consensus is hard work, but worthwhile. The resulting position will allow the organization to educate the public and affect national policy for years to come, just as we have been doing in other areas for 88 years – it is part of the organization's history.

At the 2008 Convention, the delegates voted to adopt a new study, "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President." This year each local League is asked to come to a consensus on this issue.

In February, we will be holding some meetings to consider the questions. Our deadline for submitting our consensus is early March. Those wishing to participate in the formulation of that consensus are asked to call or e-mail Anne Spanier, VP Program, at annespanier@mindspring.com or 522-3426.

Background for the National Popular Vote Compact

The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result. The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College (EC), and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president.

The NPV Compact proposal uses the mechanism of the EC. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State elections officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's EC votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues and recounts.

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Kate Quick, President, League of Women Voters of Alameda

Our Inauguration Event at the library was a resounding success, thanks to all those who helped us get it together. Jane Chisaki, our City Librarian, had the great idea, and asked us to partner with her and the Friends of the Alameda Free Library in putting on the event. Shubha Fanse and Joanne McKray helped to decorate the room the afternoon of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the Friends, under the leadership of Dorothy Fullerton, provided the excellent light refreshments. Li Volin and Peggie Dorrance put together our Presidential Trivia Activity. We had over 200 in attendance (in a room that had a maximum of 150, so we had people sitting on the floor and standing) and our concept of making the inauguration a community experience really came to be fulfilled. People were lined up far before our 7:30 a.m. opening time. Our League puts on a great party! Thanks to all who participated in making our event a success.

We have heard that the State League will be giving out Action Awards at Convention this spring and one of the categories is work on passage of Proposition 11. I am certainly going to recommend to our Board that we submit an application for the award based on the success of the work we did to get our City Council to endorse the Proposition.

In February we will be doing the National League consensus on the National Popular Vote Compact – a continuation of the program meeting we had last Fall. I hope that some of the members will be willing to participate in this abbreviated study, which should only take a couple of meetings, since we already have had an informational meeting on the subject. The information and questions are posted on the LWV web site at <http://www.lwv.org>.

Our League is still in desperate need of a Secretary – someone to take the minutes at Board meetings and get them out. If you are interested in helping your League, call and volunteer to do this important job.

Speaking of volunteering, our new President, Barack Obama has asked all of us to contribute to our communities. Starbucks is asking people to sign up to do five hours of work. How about those of you who are members volunteering to do something in the way of Voter Education with the League as your five hour commitment? Sounds good to me.

The Governor is making noises that we may have a special election on the State budget mess this spring. We will let you know if we have to gear up and I hope everyone will step up to help if we do.

-Kate

National Popular Vote (Continued from page 1)

Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact.

There are pros and cons to this plan, which are discussed in full in papers found on the LWVUS Web site. Summaries of these papers are also available. League members can learn more about the plan from these sources and consider its ramifications at consensus meetings across the country. Be sure to participate! Who better than the League to be ready to speak to this good-government issue?

To prepare for the consensus meeting, please read the complete version of this paper (available at www.lwv.org) by the LWVUS National Popular Voter Compact Study Committee.

IT'S TIME TO CONSIDER A LEADERSHIP POSITION

The Nominating Committee will be forming up in February to look for members willing to take leadership positions for the coming year. On July 12th, 2008, at our Annual Meeting, we elected Betty Hatch, Cindy Silva and Shubha Fanse to be on the Committee for 2009, and the Board appointed Doris Gee and Marion Kapellas. The committee will be contacting people to see if they are willing to serve.

The commitment is for one year (Presidents usually agree to serve two terms), beginning in July of this year. We are looking for a President, Vice President for Program, Vice President for Administration, Treasurer, Secretary, and six elected directors. An additional five directors will be appointed by the Board in accordance with our By-Laws. We will be posting the job descriptions on our League web site at <http://alameda.ca.lwvnet.org> so before you step forward to volunteer, you will know what you are getting into.

But this we can assure any who decide to work in a leadership capacity:

- Our League is solvent, and has money in the bank for emergencies
- Our League leaders get along and help each other to get the work done
- When we have called on the membership to do work on special projects or elections, people have come forward to help
- Our League enjoys a good reputation in our community and our leaders are held in high regard
- Our League has produced people who have gone on to effective leadership positions on City Council, School Board, and State League Board

We want and need new people to step up and try taking the lead. That is how League grows in strength and numbers. Please consider saying yes to a call from the Nominating Committee. Yes We Can, With Your Help!!

HOW THE LEAGUE TAKES POSITIONS

Ever wonder what happens to the results of all those League studies? After we study an issue we draw up a position statement based on our consensus. Over the years we have accumulated positions on many issues, positions which are the basis for lobbying, and sometimes other action.

At our February meeting we will review our state positions, also known as League Program. This will be our way of informing the upcoming state convention what our priorities are. We will decide which issues should be dropped as no longer relevant, which need to be updated, and which we want to focus action on.

This is a good opportunity for members to learn about the League's role as an advocate for things we have studied. The League is a grassroots organization. Come February 26, 7:30 p.m., Alameda Hospital Conference Room A, and help to set state League program for the next two years.

Single Payer Health Care

The Alameda League's Health Care Committee has been hard at work preparing for our March 26th. Program Meeting on Single Payer Health Care.

All Alameda League members are invited to participate in the February 18th, 7:30pm meeting of the committee at Alameda Hospital, Conference Room A, to submit questions about this issue to be addressed by the expert panel at the program meeting.

Please contact Health Care Committee Chair Shubha Fanse at shubhaf@aol.com for further information.



Next Board Meeting is
Thursday, February 19,
7:30pm,
Conference Room C,
Alameda Hospital
2070 Clinton Avenue
Alameda

News on Prop 11!

The passage of Proposition 11, the California Voters First initiative, last November marked a turning point regarding state legislative elections. No longer will legislators design the voting districts following each census with the goal of incumbent protection; instead an Independent Citizens Commission will draw the boundaries with the goal of seeing that cities, counties, and communities of interest within them have a voice in Sacramento. The League, believing in representative democracy, was a major supporter of the measure.

Court challenges follow the passage of many controversial propositions, as opponents seek to undo voters' decisions. None has been forthcoming regarding Prop 11 in spite of the fact the Democratic Party officially opposed it. The reason would seem to be that the leader of the opposition, former Senate President pro-tem Don Perata, has other matters on his mind. As the San Francisco Chronicle reports, he has taken the majority of the money contributed at his behest by the Prison Guards Union to the Prop 11 opposition campaign and transferred it to his legal defense fund. Thus far no anti-Prop 11 litigation has been initiated.

Instead implementation of the redistricting reform measure is underway.

The State Auditor, in charge of selecting the individuals who will serve on the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, has expressed her commitment to making the selection-recruitment process as open and broad as possible. A series of five meetings has been scheduled up and down the state in January and February to "solicit comments about the processes that should be established for individuals to apply to become members of the Commission and for the selection of an Applicant Review Panel to assess the applicants and create an applicant pool of 60 qualified members."

The San Francisco meeting will be held on Friday, February 27 at 455 Golden Gate Avenue.

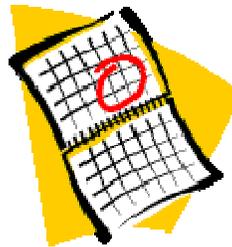
Joanne McKray

Prop 11 Hearing Scheduled for San Francisco

The State Auditor's office has released details on hearings - starting 1/26/09 - to begin soliciting comments on how best to organize the new redistricting commission selection process.

The Bay Area Meeting will be in **San Francisco – Friday, February 27, 2009** Location: Office of the Courts Milton Marks Auditorium 455 Golden Gate Ave. San Francisco, CA 94102 Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. *

For more information, including what topics the Auditor's office hopes to cover in these meetings, please go to www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/other/prop_11_notice_20090112.pdf



Mark Your Calendar

for MEET YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS April 23rd.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great regret that we announce that long time League Member, former member of the Alameda School Board, and active member of the AAUW Alameda Chapter, Marge Rose, passed away on January 21st. Marge was active in Alameda politics for decades. She was a woman of strong opinions and never feared to make her thoughts known. We are sure that Marge will be greatly missed by all those who knew her and loved her.

It is with great sadness we note the passing of Bill Faulhaber, husband of long time League member Sally Faulhaber. Out condolences to Sally and her family.

Just What Is MYPO and How YOU Can Help Make It a Success

It is an Alameda League-sponsored opportunity to bring community members together to Meet Your Public Officials!

This annual fundraiser is a unique event where Alamedans, in a relaxed, social atmosphere, can mingle and speak directly with various elected and appointed public officials who have influence on issues affecting our community.

We are gearing up for this year's event which will take place on April 23rd. We need creative, energetic members to come together to ensure that the chapter's fundraising goals are met, that all attendees leave feeling it was time well spent, that new potential League members have a broad understanding of the organization, its members, and its accomplishments, and that everyone enjoys good food and drink.

This is a rewarding way to contribute to our League's work. We need people to solicit silent auction items, help with decorations, staff the reception table, and provide food and drink. The money raised at this event provides funds to underwrite numerous League activities throughout the year.

Want to sign up? Have questions? Please contact League member Liz Rogers, 865-1786.

LEAGUE, WITH THE LIBRARY AND THE FRIENDS, CELEBRATES THE INAUGURATION OF OUR 44TH PRESIDENT.

What if we gave a party and nobody came? That's what we were all thinking as we decorated the Library's Stafford Room on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. We had no idea that over 200 people would show up to see the historic event of the inauguration of our 44th President as a community. But that is what happened.

The event exceeded our wildest expectations. People were happy to have a place where they could see this historic happening together. Emotions ran high. Li Volin passed out the Kleenex, and everyone who came appeared to appreciate the gravity of what we were observing.

As we looked over the crowd we saw a lot of people we did not know – old, young, all races and creeds. We of course came prepared with our membership materials and managed to sign up one new member (actually two; a family membership) on the spot. Someone who drifted off to the Peet's Coffee down the street came back and said that the shop was all "abuzz" about the great event at the library that morning. Even some of the Council members, the Chief of Police and the City Manager came.

The sponsorship of the event was shared with the City Library and the Friends of the Alameda Free Library. It was the City Librarian, Jane Chisaki, who came up with the idea and asked us to sponsor it, and

we were very glad that she did!

Our thanks to the hardworking Library staff who helped us set up and did the technology for the big televisions, the members of the Friends Café Committee who did the catering, and to our members, Li Volin, Peggie Dorrance, Joanne McKray, and Shubha Fpanse who decorated, ran the entry table, made up the questions for the trivia activity, and yes, passed out the Kleenex.

Many of those who came thanked us for giving them a venue where they could feel the connection to others during this momentous moment in our Nation's history. It was a solid, well executed event, and we are surely proud that we did it!



Photo by Michele Ellson

<http://theislandofalameda.blogspot.com/>

Community members watch the inauguration of our 44th President, Barack Obama, with rapt attention at the Alameda Free Library at an even sponsored by the Alameda League, Friends of the Library, and the Library

Join or Renew your membership in the Alameda League Today!



Name _____
 Other Names _____
 (if a family membership)
 Address _____ City _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____ e-mail _____

\$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.

Upcoming Events

February 18 7:30 PM	Health Care Committee Alameda Hospital
February 19th 7:30PM	Board Meeting Alameda Hospital
February 26th	Program Planning Meeting
February 27 th	Prop 11 Hearing
March 26 th 7:30pm	Single Payer Health Care Alameda Hospital
April 23 rd	Meet Your Public Officials

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