

Alameda Voter

Volume 37 Number 8

September 2004

Come to Candidates' and Pros & Cons Forums

Don't underestimate your power: one person, one vote always makes a difference

This November's election gives you more than 16 propositions to vote on, and more than 21 candidates to get to know.

Don't feel overwhelmed

The League of Women Voters of Alameda is here to help. Their goal is for you go to the polls armed with confidence in the choices you'll make.

They will sponsor two educational forums on the pros and cons of each ballot measure. Members will also attempt to answer any questions from the audience regarding these propositions.

And, there will be six question and answer forums for all of the candidates running for Alameda offices.

The candidates are:

ALAMEDA CITY COUNCIL (Two Open Seats)

Marilyn Ashcraft, Pat Bail, Vernice Boone, Doug deHaan, Betsey Elgar, appointed incumbent Marie Gilmore and Ruben Tilos.

Running unopposed: City Treasurer: Kevin Kennedy; City Auditor Kevin Kearney.

ALAMEDA UNIFIED SCHOOL BOARD (Three Open Seats)

Vernice Boone, David Forbes, incumbent Janet C. Gibson, Karin Lucas, incumbent Bob Reeves and William Schaff.

ALAMEDA HOSPITAL BOARD (Two Open Seats)

Jeptha Boone, Vernice Boone, incumbent Elliot Gorelick, Tom Pavletic and incumbent Lena Tam.

TRUSTEE, PERALTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD, AREA ONE (One Seat)

Harry Hartman and Bill Withrow.

DATES AND TIMES

There will be two chances to see any forum: one will be on Bay Farm and one on the Main Island.

At all events, doors open at 6:30 p.m., program begins at 7 p.m. and ends around 9 p.m.

PROS AND CONS FOR BALLOT MEASURES

For a **complete list** of Ballot Measures and an **in-depth analysis** on the Web, go to www.smartvoter.org. Go to Find Your Ballot, Enter your Zip Code, choose State Propositions. On that page, to the right you see Non-Partisan Information, click on In Depth. You may also choose Local Propositions for information, but no in-depth analysis as yet.

● **Thursday, Sept. 30**, 7 to 9 p.m. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara.

● **Wednesday, Oct. 13**, 7 to 9 p.m. Temple Israel, 3138 Mecartney Road.

CANDIDATES' FORUMS

● **Wednesday, Sept. 22**, 7 to 9 p.m. Temple Israel, 3183 Mecartney Road. **Alameda Unified School Board and Peralta Community College District Board**

● **Tuesday, Sept. 28**, 7 to 9 pm. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara. **City Council candidates, treasurer and auditor.**

● **Wednesday, Sept. 29**, 7 to 9 p.m. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara. **Alameda Hospital Board.**

● **Wednesday, Oct. 6**, 7 to 9 p.m. Temple Israel, 3183 Mecartney Road. **Alameda Hospital Board.**

● **Thursday, Oct. 14**, 7 to 9 p.m. Harbor Bay Community Center, Community Room, 3225 Mecartney Road. **City Council, treasurer and auditor**

● **Wednesday, Oct. 20**, 7 to 9 p.m. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara. **Alameda Unified School Board and Peralta Community College District.**

Also, the League reminds voters that the League of Women Voters' Smart Voter web site has a lot of information on candidates and elections in your area. And don't forget Smart Voter has rapid-fire election results, too. Check it out at www.smartvoter.org.

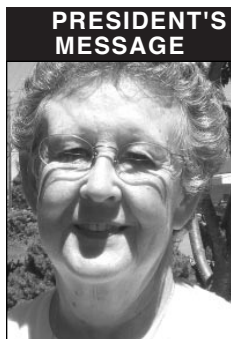
It's an incredibly busy election season: Lend a hand

Well, here we are again at the start of our program year. The Board had a good retreat in August, and I think we have done quite a bit in the way of planning for a successful year. We reviewed our last year's goals, and determined we had done a pretty good job in raising the League's visibility and assuring our economic well-being. But of course, there is a lot more we want to do.

In September and October we have a lot to do in the way of preparing for the upcoming election Nov. 2. In this (see page 3) and the last VOTER we gave you lots of options for volunteering. Thanks to those who have called or e-mailed, but we still need more volunteers.

The State League is supporting two measures on the November ballot and opposing one. They have elected to stay neutral on the rest, and have deferred a decision on Prop. 65 – Local Government Funds and Revenues. The League has signed the ballot argument for Prop. 59, a constitutional amend-

ment which would make public access to meetings and public records a constitutional right. It puts the principles behind the Brown Act and other open meeting laws into the State Constitution. We will be getting more information from the State League and will be passing it on.



Kate Quick

In the meantime, we have ordered videos of the LWVC-produced Pros and Cons to be played on our local Cable Channels, lots of EasyVoter Guides in various languages, lots of the Pros and Cons newsprints, and materials oriented toward the 18 to 30 year old voters for our Youth Engagement Project.

All are due early this month.

The Voter Service and Action board members have been busy scheduling venues and dates for Pros and Cons Forums, and Candidate's Nights. Look for a schedule and a separate article on these on the cover of this VOTER.

We hope that each member who is able to do so will choose at least one thing to do for the League this year. Also, we hope that you will all think of a friend, relative or neighbor you would like to ask to join League, and give their name and contact information to our Membership Chair, Jean Fong, so that they may be included in our October membership get-together.

In the meantime, we will all be listening to what our candidates say and watching all the political ads with a critical eye. As good "Leaguers", we will be engaged in informing ourselves and others about the candidates and the issues, hoping for a good election turnout of informed voters in November.

● See times and dates for forums on Cover
● See volunteer opportunities on Page 3

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

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

SmartVoter, a one-stop shop for election info

www.SmartVoter.org contains election information from candidates and government elections departments. It provides information from League of Women Voters organizations and links to news media and other election sites. Archives of past elections are kept.

To get the information you need for your area:

Your ballot with polling place:

Enter your address, get just your choices anytime you want them.

Information on races: Read statements directly from candidates.

Links to other sources: Conveniently organized by contest.

Local election resources: For your county.

How do I get all of this data: Fill in your address and zip code into "My Ballot" or browse contests geographically.

www.smartvoter.org

Please volunteer to help in voter education

The Alameda League needs you! In the months of September and October, we have a lot to do to get ready for the November election. If you have been looking for an opportunity to do "just one thing for League" this year, here is a list to choose from:

Voter Service/ Education

1. There will be a minimum of 14 ballot initiatives. We need to do voter education.

- Study and prepare to review and answer questions on one or two of the measures (using the Pros and Cons prepared by the State League) either at community meetings, on a cable TV program, or to a community organization.

2. Participate in candidate's nights.

- Help with publicity.

- Help with screening questions.

- Help with set up.

- Be a page – collect questions.

- Be a moderator.

Voter Registration/ Poll Working

- Help with our youth voting project by speaking with high schoolers and/or Community College students.

- Help to identify good events or locations for voter registration.

- Help to organize voter registration activities (getting volunteers to do it.)

- Teach others how to register voters.

- Be a poll worker

- Follow up on the high schoolers or community college

students we get to register to get them out to vote.

Participation in Program

- Make calls and encourage others to come to the September program on Civil Liberties.

- Come yourself to see what the ongoing concerns are about the Patriot Act and other issues surrounding threats to our civil liberties.

Does any of this pique your interest? Are you ready to become a fully contributing member of your local League as it does its "bread and butter" work for this upcoming election?

Yes? Great! Contact Kate Quick, President, at 523-3612 or at katequick@comcast.net, or LuAnn DeWitt, Administrative VP at 522-4411 or lewitt@alamedanet.net

Last day to register to vote for Nov. 2 election is Oct. 18

In last month's Voter, we mistakenly wrote that the last day to register to vote was Oct. 22. It is in fact Oct. 18. We regret the error.

Oct. 18 is the deadline for submitting a voter registration form in order to vote in the Nov. 2 election.

If you know someone who has just moved into town or has changed locations and needs to reregister, they can pick up an easy mail-in form at any of the Alameda locations listed below.

Our League stocks the forms at these places. There are English, Chinese/English, and Spanish/English language forms. Of course, people can go directly to the County office building or online to register also. The site is: www.ss.ca.gov/elections/votereg1.html.

These are the Alameda locations:

- Bay Farm Library, Alameda Main Library (ground floor check out & reference area), West End Library

- Multi-Cultural Center, Mastick Senior Center,

Alameda Chamber of Commerce, Xanthos, INC. Lobby, Alameda Power and Telecom Lobby

- College of Alameda Library (office, bldg. "F" & library)

- Independence Plaza & Waters Edge Inn

- U. S. Post Office Southshore (sales window area & Passport office)

- U.S. Post Office Redwood Square, Government Island Post Office

- Alameda Adult School, Island High School Office, Alameda High School Office, Encinal High School Office.

If you know of other busy sites in Alameda where we should try to place the forms, please call me. If you have some spare time each month and would like to help stock and maintain the boxes. Please let me know. Miriam Schiffman, mrs@alamedanet.net or 749-9687.

State League neutral on local government funding measures

For a complete list of Ballot Measures and an in-depth analysis on the Web, go to www.smartvoter.org. Go to Find Your Ballot, Enter your Zip Code, choose State Propositions. On that page, to the right you see Non-Partisan Information, click on In Depth. You may also choose Local Propositions for information, but no in-depth analysis as yet.

The League of Women Voters of California has decided to take a neutral position on the two ballot measures relating to local government funding, Propositions 1A and 65.

This means that the LWVC has positions on three of the 16 statewide measures on the Nov. 2004 ballot: support Propositions 59 (Open Government) and 72 (retain Health Care Coverage law); oppose Proposition 69 (DNA Samples Collection. Database).

Remember that local Leagues may not take action on state measures on which the LWVC has not taken a stand, nor may they act contrary to any LWVC stand.

The League has long been concerned about the stability of local government budgets. Since 1992 the state has balanced its budget in part by shifting property tax money on an ongoing basis from cities, counties, and special districts to schools in order to reduce the state contribution to schools and community colleges mandated by Prop. 98.

This property tax shift and other state actions have left local government short of funds for ongoing programs and uncertain about how much funding would be available the next year.

In July the LWVC Board studied Proposition 65 (Local Government Funds and Revenues) which was sponsored by the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and the California Special Districts Association. The Board deferred action because it was likely that an additional ballot measure on the issue would be approved by the legislature. Proposition 1A (Local Government Finance) has been added to the November ballot. Local government officials endorse it and now recommend a no vote on Prop. 65.

Board members were closely divided between supporting a measure which would help local governments in the short run and opposition to placing so many specific provisions, including tax rates, into the constitution.

In August the state League studied Prop. 1A thoroughly. Anne Henderson, Program Director for State and Local Finances, and Trudy Schafer, Program Director/Advocate, analyzed and discussed its provisions and likely impacts; Housing Consultant Sally Probst provided her analysis and I (Marion Taylor), as Legislation Director, helped produce an analysis for the LWVC Board to consider.

The Board had a conference call discussion in order to decide what to do. Arguments for supporting

Prop. 1A are that it addresses the adequacy of funds for local government and will put pressure on the state government to address real reform of the state budget.

Prop. 1A will restrict the state's ability to take more from local government and tighten the requirements for funding of mandates. Reform will only happen when the issues are brought into focus on the state level and the crisis is bad enough to create a real push for change. Local government does not have the power to make the needed changes and their situations are so different in each jurisdiction that the public cannot get an overall picture of either the problems or possible solutions.

Arguments against supporting Prop. 1A are that it freezes elements of the current dysfunctional system into the state constitution. It freezes the current distribution of property and sales taxes among cities and counties, which is the system called "fiscalization of land use," working against an adequate housing supply. While it would help local governments, it would make it more difficult for the state to provide important services and address its structural budget deficit.

League principles cannot allow us to support a measure with so many flaws. Board members were closely divided between supporting a measure which would help local governments in the short run and opposition to placing so many specific provisions, including tax rates, into the constitution. Their final decision was that the LWVC should be neutral on both 1A and 65 and we must focus our energies on educating voters about the issues raised by these measures.

Know Your Bay Area Day Oct. 2

The economic, political and environmental issues of desalination plants in the Bay Area will be the topic of a panel discussion of experts Saturday, Oct. 2.

The topic will be about desalination plant projects and water, with panels discussing economic, political and environmental issues of locating and operating plants of this type in the Bay Area. Two panels will include representatives from the bay area water agencies planning these projects, as well as the regulators charged with project approvals.

Program will include: Political: Overview of Legislation related to desalination; Public support; Permitting; Who gets the water?

Economic: The price of water; The price of projects; Funding mechanisms.

Environmental: Methods of water intake and environmental issues: Discharge plume toxicity, high saline brine; Dilution of discharge; Coastal cumulative affects; CEQA requirements.

The event will be held at the San Francisco Bay Model Visitor Center, Sausalito, 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito

The cost is \$10. Registration is at 9:30 a.m. RSVP to sandy@waterfrontaction.org by Monday, Sept. 27, with names of people by League attending. Checks may be sent in advance to: Tam Hege, Treasurer 80 Florada Ave. Piedmont CA 94610, or paid at the door.

More details of the event can be found on the LWVBA web site at www.lwvba-ca.org

Keep in touch with League

Have you moved? Have you changed your phone number or email address? Does your League have the best ways to get in touch with you? Don't let the League lose contact with you.

Send any new contact information to Jean Fong, membership director. Write her at 734 Palmera Court, Alameda, CA 94501. Call her at (510) 522-7797. Or email her at jfong1@comcast.net

Correction

We printed an incorrect email for League member Ruth Belicove last month. The correct email is Ruth@Belicove.com

Board Briefs for August meeting

At its Aug. 4 meeting, the Board:

- planned for the retreat scheduled for later in the month;

- suggested names for directors to be appointed to the Board, but delayed the vote since there was not a quorum present;

- heard a report from the action chair on a letter sent to the Public Utilities Board regarding the municipal waste gasification proposal;

- announced a hearing on the Alameda Point golf course Draft Environmental Impact Report, which Li Volin agreed to review;

- heard a report on our housing study;

- began planning for several public forums for the November elections, to cover local candidates and state and local ballot measures; and

- heard a report on voter registration plans.

'Resisting Government Secrecy in a Time of Terrorism' Conference

The California First Amendment Coalition (CFAC) annual conference for 2004 is titled "Resisting Government Secrecy in a Time of Terrorism." The League of Women Voters of California will co-sponsor the meeting which will take place Oct. 8 and 9 in Berkeley at the University of California Graduate School of Journalism.

The keynote speaker will be investigative journalist Seymour Hersh; the conference moderator will be Michael Krasny, host of KQED San Francisco's weekday radio "Forum."

For more information and to register for the conference, go to the CFAC web site www.cfac.org.

Natural Resources Water committee meets

The next Natural Resources/Water Committee meeting will be Sept. 24, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the office of East Bay Municipal Utility District.

Join Trish Cypher and Co-chair Eileen Whitty for a discussion of regional issues such as the Cal Fed Task Force, the Basin Plan Amendment and Emerging Contaminants.

Other topics may include sustainability and pesticides. A discussion on the use of the web, cyberseats and a possible web

site for NRW will also be part of the meeting.

Bring your lunch and opinions to the meeting. If there is time, we will make plans for next year.

Thanks to all of the loyal members who have been part of the committee. Our brilliant webmeister, Sandy Threfall has set up an e-mail for the committee at: natural_resources@lwvba-ca.org.

E-mail ideas, comments or issues you want to share.

Calendar of events

Wednesday, Sept. 22, 7 to 9 p.m. Temple Israel, 3183 Mecartney Road. **Candidates Forum Alameda Unified School Board and Peralta Community College District Board**

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Thursday, Sept. 30, 7 to 9 p.m. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara, **Pros and Cons Forum**

Saturday, Oct. 2, 9:30 a.m.- LWV Bay Area event. "Know Your Bay Area Day." Focus will be on water, with emphasis on desalination. It will be held at the San Francisco Bay model in Sausalito. Story Page 5.

Wednesday, Oct. 6, 7 to 9 p.m. Temple Israel, 3183 Mecartney Road. **Candidates Forum Alameda Hospital Board.**

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 7 to 9 p.m. Temple Israel, 3188 Mecartney Road, **Pros and Cons Forum**

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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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