



Alameda Voter

Volume 37 Number 10

November 2004

It's time to renew your membership

It's time to renew your membership dues for 2005. It's been a good year for the League culminating in nine Pros and Cons and candidate forums last month.

We continue to maintain the respect of the community for our objectivity and advocacy for good government and other issues the community cares about. The League is in good financial shape as well, thanks to the ongoing fundraising efforts and generous donations of our members.

Please send your membership dues by Dec. 15. It's \$53 for a single membership; \$20 more for an additional member at the same address.

We also ask you for your help with a NEW MEMBER DRIVE. Our membership has held steady at 112 members, but, to maintain the vitality of our League, we need expand our membership base. The Board encourages you to "spread the word" at holiday parties and other community events. Let's try to reach a new high of 120 members this year!

League in action: School Board asked to explain all of Measure F

Measure F, which passed overwhelmingly Nov. 2, was put on the ballot as "house-cleaning" measure, removing the Alameda Unified School District Board from the purview of the city charter.

However, an unpublicized and more political consequence was to occur if the measure passed. There would no longer be term limits for school board members. Why this wasn't explained in the ballot literature is unknown: one school board member said they DID know about that; another said they had no idea about it.

League was made aware of this more serious effect of Measure F and the fact that it had not been presented to the public, when Leaguemember Jon Spangler was preparing a presentation and Pros and Cons on Measure F for our Pros and Cons forums. Those who attended those forums were made aware of the problem.

Action Chair Miriam Schiffman read a statement at the Oct. 27 AUSD meeting congratulating them for putting this issue on the night's agenda for discussion.

The letter read:

*Members of the Board of
Alameda Unified School District:
Bob Reeves, President
Mike McMahon, Vice President
Barbara Geunther
Janet Gibson
Tracy-Lynn Jensen*

Dear President Reeves and Members of the Board,

The League of Women Voters of Alameda wants to commend you on your effort to make public before the November 2nd election the inadvertent consequence of City Measure F, namely that

term limits for AUSD Board members will be eliminated by removing mention of the Board from the City of Alameda Charter.

The League of Women Voters of Alameda has taken no position on City Measure F or on term limits for members of the Board of Education. As you are aware, however, League firmly believes in governance conducted in the most open way possible. This includes full disclosure to the public of actions by governing bodies and their consequences. We have been told that the issue surrounding term limits in Measure F had not been discussed publicly when the matter was before either the Board of Education or the City Council. We assume that this was simply an oversight. We want to commend the Board for clarifying the term limits issue in a public forum tonight. We would like to encourage you to also inform the citizens of Alameda through our local newspapers before the election. You may even want to indicate that if Measure F passes and term limits are deemed desirable, the matter can be placed on the next ballot by either the Board of Education or a public initiative.

Again, thank you for trying to bring to the public's attention the full impact of Measure F so that people will be fully informed when they vote on November 2nd.

Sincerely,

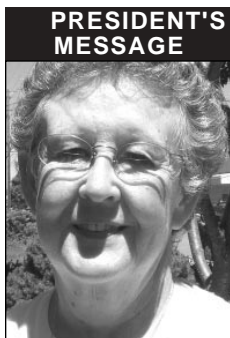
Kate Quick, President
Miriam Schiffman, Action Chair
League of Women Voters of Alameda

So much work went into Nov. 2, but there's no time to rest

By the time you get the November *Voter*, you will know who won the Presidential, as well as all the other, elections. So since I am writing this a week before the election, you know a lot more than I do! What I do know is that this has been a long, long campaign – full of high emotions and bitter attacks. Lawyers have been lining up for months already to challenge the outcome, as well as to insure that the voting is fair. Problems abound. The electronic voting machines are causing great controversy. Voter rolls are being purged; some say unnecessarily or with partisan motives. There are many issues with recent redistricting in some states.

And our League went on quietly about its business of educating voters in this maelstrom. Even though some of our public forums were not well attended, we did get them filmed and shown on our two local cable channels. I know they were shown because I can't get through the grocery store without several people saying "I saw you on T.V.!"

We distributed hundreds of Pros and Cons and Easy Voter Guides. We did many pros and cons presentations to local organizations, which were well received. Our candidates forums stimulated good questions from the public.



Kate Quick

These were also televised. In all, I believe it was a very credible effort, and I extend my thanks to all of you who participated – the moderators, question sorters, pages, greeters, publications "sitters", arrangers of venues, timers, and those who took care of publicity.

For all our angst, we tend to step up to the plate and get things done, and do them with the best "League-like" methods. I am just bursting with pride in all of you!

But no resting on our laurels for us! We will be reviewing our efforts and "fine-tuning" what worked

and did not work so well. This month, we will be having an exciting speaker for our general meeting Nov. 18 (see events calendar and story below): General Manager of Alameda Point Community Partners Aidan Barry, who will give us information on the development plans for Alameda Point. I believe that the development of this large piece of real estate will give our League more than enough to do for many years to come. Following our Holiday party in December, we will be launching into the program review and planning effort in January.

So, there is no time to sit back and twiddle our thumbs. "The League Never Sleeps!" I'm looking forward to election day, not only because it marks the end of this current flurry of activity, but because we can see if all the efforts to register new voters and get them out to vote worked. Predictions are that this election will have a large participation (Oh! Rapture and Joy to a Leaguer's Heart!!). Be sure you are one of the ones who gets counted every election day!

Don't miss Nov. 18 meeting on Alameda Point development

Aidan Barry, General Manager of Alameda Point Community Partners, will be the speaker at the League's Nov.18 meeting. We have asked him to address the economics of development, as well as to update us on developments at Alameda Point. Market conditions and government decisions have changed in the 10 years since the recommendations of the BRAG (Base Reuse Advisory Group).

The developer is asking for citizen input on the revisions. This is an excellent opportunity to gain an understanding of the process of planning for this large part of the future Alameda.

The meeting is Thursday, Nov. 18, 7:30 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church Parish Hall, corner of Santa Clara and Grand Street.

Check your Membership Directory for errors

Included in September's *Voter* was a "Membership Directory" containing contact information for all members. There were several mistakes, so we are including a new one in the February *Voter*. Please check your directory

for incorrect information about you, and contact Donna Vaughn at 523-8308, dbvaughn@comcast.net, or 400 Harbor Light Drive, to make the correction.

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

League addresses council on use of city facilities

The League addressed the Alameda City Council on a policy for public group's use of city facilities. Recently, the council denied HOMES, a local group involved in Alameda Point development, an opportunity to use a room in City Hall, indicating that partisan, political use was not proper.

League President Kate Quick appeared before a recent council meeting and gave a very brief statement as to the

fact that the forum sponsors for the next night had "played by the rules" and gotten a permit, and while the Council had every right to review and amend its policy, it was unfair for them to revoke the permit based on any new rule.

The matter was on the agenda just for discussion, so the Council couldn't take any real policy action anyway, but they did wind up asking City staff to get all the sponsors to sign on to the permit (and show proof of insurance, etc.)

and did agree to work on amending the current policy.

Quick offered them League assistance with formulating a new policy.

There was some concern about the issues of City expense for use of the facilities for non-City functions without charging, which had some validity, but much talk by councilmembers Barbara Kerr and Tony Daysog about how the HOMES group may not put on a "balanced" forum.

The "League" stand was only that a group who had proceeded with obtaining permission in accordance with current rules should not have the permit revoked the day before the event because the current rules have been found wanting.

Mayor Beverly Johnson seemed to like the idea that we might help them with formulating a new policy.

Alameda League in action

'Courage in Women is Often Mistaken for Insanity': *Remember how women got the vote*

(The author of this piece is unknown).

The women were innocent and defenseless. And by the end of the night, they were barely alive. Forty prison guards wielding clubs and their warden's blessing went on a rampage against the 33 helpless women wrongly convicted of "obstructing sidewalk traffic."

They beat Lucy Burn, chained her hands to the cell bars above her head and left her hanging for the night, bleeding and gasping for air. They hurled Dora Lewis into a dark cell, smashed her head against an iron bed and knocked her out cold. Her cellmate, Alice Cosu, thought Lewis was dead and suffered a heart attack. Additional affidavits describe the guards grabbing, dragging, beating, choking, slamming, pinching, twisting and kicking the women.

Thus unfolded the "Night of Terror" Nov. 15, 1917, when the warden at the Occoquan Workhouse in Virginia ordered his guards to teach a lesson to the suffragists imprisoned there because they dared to picket Woodrow Wilson's White House for the right to vote.

For weeks, the women's only water came from an open pail. Their food--all of it colorless slop--was infested with worms. When one of the leaders, Alice Paul, embarked on a hunger

strike, they tied her to a chair, forced a tube down her throat and poured liquid into her until she vomited. She was tortured like this for weeks until word was smuggled out to the press.

So, refresh my memory. Some women won't vote this year because--why, exactly? We have carpool duties? We have to get to work? Our vote doesn't matter? It's raining?

Last week, I went to a sparsely attended screening of HBO's new movie "Iron Jawed Angels." It is a graphic depiction of the battle these women waged so that I could pull the curtain at the polling booth and have my say. I am ashamed to say I needed the reminder.

There was a time when I knew these women well. I met them in college--not in my required American history courses, which barely mentioned them, but in women's history class. That's where I found the irrepressibly brave Alice Paul. Her large, brooding eyes seemed fixed on my own as she stared out from the page. Remember, she silently beckoned. Remember.

I thought I always would. I registered voters throughout college and law school, worked on congressional and presidential campaigns until I started writing for newspapers.

All these years later, voter regis-

tration is still my passion. But the actual act of voting had become less personal for me, more rote. Frankly, voting often felt more like an obligation than a privilege.

My friend Wendy, who is my age and studied women's history, saw the HBO movie, too. It made her angry.

"One thought kept coming back to me as I watched that movie," she said. "What would those women think of the way I use--or don't use--my right to vote? All of us take it for granted now, not just younger women, but those of us who did seek to learn."

HBO will run the movie periodically before releasing it on video and DVD. I wish all history, social studies and government teachers would include the movie in their curriculum. We are not voting in the numbers that we should be, and I think a little shock therapy is in order. It is jarring to watch Woodrow Wilson and his cronies try to persuade a psychiatrist to declare Alice Paul insane so that she could be permanently institutionalized. And it is inspiring to watch the doctor refuse.

Alice Paul was strong, he said, and brave. That didn't make her crazy. The doctor admonished the men: "Courage in women is often mistaken for insanity."

U.S. League works on advocacy and education of civil liberties

At its July 25th meeting, the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Board of Directors addressed in depth the issue of past, present and future activity in the area of civil liberties, both from an advocacy and education perspective. This is a year-long effort.

LWVUS Activities on Civil Liberties as of July 16, 2004.

1. Advocacy

Letters from LWVUS to Congress:

- July 2003 – Raising concerns about the Patriot Act
- September 2003 – Raising concerns about the Patriot Act
- February 2004 – In support of the Security and Freedom Ensured (SAFE) Act
- June 2004 – In support of the SAFE Act
- Posted action alerts:
 - September 2003 – In support of the Freedom to Read Protection Act
 - March 2004 – In support of the SAFE Act
- Lobbied on Capitol Hill:
 - September 2003 – Lobby Corps visited Capitol Hill raising concerns about the Patriot Act
 - February 2004 – Lobby Corps visited Capitol Hill in support of the SAFE Act
 - June 2004 – LWVUS Convention delegates visited Capitol Hill in support of the SAFE Act
- Have met with the ACLU, American Library Association, and The Constitution Project
- Answering questions from Leagues about the types of action they may take at the local level
- Issued a press release on September 11, 2003 in opposition to the expansion of the Patriot Act
- Sent out sample letter-to-the-editor for Leagues to distribute on the second anniversary of the passage of the Patriot Act (October 2003)
- Created talking points for Leagues in cities where Attorney General Ashcroft visited during his “tour” in support of the Patriot Act

(fall 2003)

2. Information sharing

Created special section on the LWVUS website, which includes:

- Liberty Circles materials
- Examples of what individual leagues are doing on this issue (including upcoming events in the “Events” section)
- Background information on the issue and League’s position

U.S. League in action

- Created a “Links & Resources” section

The new section of the web site was highlighted in the September 2003 & June 2004 LeaguE-voice, the November 2003 Presidents’ Mailing, and the January/February 2004 & June 2004 National Voter

Included a “next steps” toolkit on Convention CD, which includes:

- A press release on the convention panel
- Questions for candidates (federal and local)
- Ideas for marking the anniversary of the Patriot Act
- How to hold a community forum on the issue

3. Utilization of existing resources (since no new funding was available)

- Created ad hoc staff task force of four interested staff, plus Executive Director, which meets regularly to explore next steps and possible programs
- Recruited/utilized pro bono law student to research key features of Patriot Act and cases of abuses cited in press
- Staff attendance at various free conferences/events in Washington, DC to enhance knowledge on issue (e.g. Council for Excellence in Government, Brookings Institution and Open Society Institute (OSI))
- Organized a panel for Convention 2004 (including outreach to other organizations and potential funders to attend the panel)

● Including piece (in Sounding Off section) of the upcoming (October 2004) National Voter

● Included piece about connecting this issue to developing the organization and recruiting members in the winter 2003-04 issue of Member News & Views

4. Search for external funding and other approaches to doing Education Fund projects

● Staff task force wrote and submitted proposal to OSI in fall 2003 (no response to date)

● Extensive conversations with creator of Liberty Circles to try and develop a proposal for League-wide funding (later incorporated that into the proposal mentioned below)

● Staff task force wrote second concept paper, combining themes of civil liberties and homeland security (submitted to five foundations in May 2004; 2 have declined the proposal, other responses are pending)

● Exploring partnerships with other non-profit organizations to see if a joint approach or proposal can be developed on the civil liberties issue

5. On-going work of local Leagues

● Continuing to hold panels / forums of experts -- some of which have been videotaped and two of which have received recognition/awards

● Signing resolutions of various types

● Responding to action alerts

● Sending out letters-to-the-editor

● Exchanging information on LWV lists

To view Civil Liberties information on the LWVUS web site:

Off of the LWVUS homepage (www.lwv.org), go to the “Get Involved” section. Civil liberties is listed as the third Hot Issue. Clicking on this takes you to the “Civil Liberty” area, which includes Liberty Circles, resource links and LWVUS letters to Congress. It also includes a “What can I do?” option. This link takes members to a set of organizing materials, background information and an earlier list of what the League has done to support civil liberties.

How your representatives vote on environmental issues

Below is the summary of a recently completed analysis of congressional environmental voting records. The full report, including four color charts, may be found at <http://www.sci.sdsu.edu/salton/CEV R2004.html>.

Environmental Voting Records of the California Congressional Delegation and Presidential Candidates, 2004

By Stuart H. Hurlbert and Joan S. Dainer, Department of Biology and Center for Inland Waters, San Diego State University, San Diego, California 92182-4614.

SUMMARY

Environmental voting records of California congressmen, President Bush and Senator Kerry are scored on the basis of two criteria: support for legislation aimed at reducing U.S. per capita environmental impacts (data from League of Conservation Voters website) and support for legislation favoring lower U.S. population growth rates (data from Americans for Better Immigration website).

Most congressmen of both parties have poor to mediocre overall environmental voting records, with scores in the 30-60 point range on a 100-point scale.

Democrats tend to be stronger on reducing per capita environmental impacts, Republicans stronger on reducing the population growth

rate.

Highest environmental scores are obtained by Gallegly (R-24), Royce (R-40), Rohrabacher (R-46), and Hunter (R-52), and lowest scores by Dooley (D-20), Becerra (D-31), Baca (D-43), and Nunes (R-21). Senator Boxer had a higher score than any other Democrat in the congressional delegation.

Senator Kerry's score is better than those of most Democratic congressmen in California though not as good as those of Senators Boxer and Feinstein.

President Bush's environmental score is far worse than that of any California congressman, Republican or Democrat.

Assessments of environmental voting records that ignore whether congressmen are voting to increase or decrease the rate of U.S. population growth can be very misleading as to which congressmen are having the most positive impact on environmental quality.

Reflecting partisan bias and environmental short-sightedness, Sierra Club endorsements and high League of Conservation Voters scores are awarded predominantly to congressmen or candidates whose votes favor, or would favor, high rates of U.S. population growth.

Email: shurlbert@sunstroke.sdsu.edu

California Performance Review available online

The Report of the California Performance Review - Government for the People for a Change - contains four volumes of comprehensive recommendations to reform and revitalize California's state government.

More than 275 volunteers worked tirelessly for five months examining organizational structures, analyzing data, meeting with stakeholders and compiling the recommendations now presented to you, having been released to the public.

The entire report is available: <http://www.report.cpr.ca.gov>

Access the Voter on the Web

The *Voter* is now available for viewing on your computer. Past issues have been uploaded as .pdf files. All you need is Acrobat Reader to open them.

The League's web site is www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org.

Enjoy!

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
- County Supervisor Alice Lai-
Bitker:
www.acgov.org/board/district3/
- Sen. Barbara Boxer: senator@boxer.senate.gov
- Sen. Diane Feinstein:
senator@feinstein.senate.gov
- The White House:
www.whitehouse.gov.

Keep in touch with the 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

Calendar of events

Wednesday, Nov. 3, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Board Meeting, Lynn Groh's home, 1546 East Shore Drive.

Thursday, Nov. 18, 7:30 p.m. General Meeting. Open to the public. Topic is the development of Alameda Point (see story Page 2). Christ Episcopal Church, corner Grand and Santa Clara.

Wednesday, Dec. 15--Deadline to renew League of Women Voters of Alameda membership dues. (see story on Cover.)

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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