



Alameda Voter

Volume 37 Number 11

December 2004

COMING SOON: Watch for a supplemental issue of *The Voter* on the State Education Update

Grand Sports Raffle at holiday party Dec. 9

The annual holiday party is Thursday, Dec. 9 starting at 5:30 p.m. Not only is this always a fun way to kick off the holiday season, it's a great opportunity to see members, introduce prospective members and, most exciting of all, win luxury box tickets to Raiders, Warriors and A's games.

The party will be held at Boardmember Lena Tam's home, 2816 Waterton St., Alameda. The League asks that you bring a main dish, side dish, salad, dessert or drinks to share. Also, a \$5 donation is requested.

The Grand Sports Raffle is one of the League's main fund-raisers. It helps keep the coffers full enough to take advantage of voter education opportunities for an ongoing basis. The League has done this raffle for the past two years, and each time it's been a big success

The raffle prizes include: First Prize: Three luxury box tickets to the Raiders vs. Jacksonville Jaguars game Jan. 2. This also includes VIP parking.

Second Prize: Four luxury box tickets to Warriors vs.

Phoenix Suns Feb. 13. Third Prize: Two luxury box tickets to an A's game in Spring 2005. Fourth Prize: Tea and Coffee Basket. Fifth Prize: "Democracy" t-shirt.

Tickets are only \$2 each and you can buy as many as you want. All members should have received a book of 10 in the mail by now. If you want extra tickets, call President Kate Quick at 523-3612. Please return tickets to Pat Caito, P.O. Box 1645, Alameda CA 94501. Please mark "raffle" on the envelope so returns can be easily identified. Or you can bring them with you to the party

First Prize: Three luxury box tickets to the Raiders vs. Jacksonville Jaguars game Jan. 2. This also includes VIP parking.

Second Prize: Four luxury box tickets to Warriors vs. Phoenix Suns Feb. 13.

Third Prize: Two luxury box tickets to an A's game in Spring 2005.

Fourth Prize: Tea and Coffee Basket.

Fifth Prize: "Democracy" t-shirt.

The drawing will be held by 9 p.m. at the party and returns of tickets and money will be allowed up to half an hour prior to the drawing.

It's due to the on-going generosity of County Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker that the League is able to offer these sports tickets.

Holiday Party, Thursday Dec. 9, 5:30 pm. 2816 Waterton Street, Alameda. Donation of \$5 is requested.

Time to renew your membership dues

It's time to renew your membership dues for 2005.

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!

Open House & Tea Jan. 15

It's time to encourage your friends to check out the League of Women Voters. Come to the Open House for New and Prospective Members, Sat., Jan 15, 10 to 11:30 a.m. The tea and continental breakfast will be at 734 Palmera Court.

This is a great chance to find out more about the League, meet the Board, and learn how you can get involved in League activities. Please RSVP by calling 869-4969.

The League of Women Voters of Alameda, P.O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501. Voice mail: (510) 869-4969. Web Site: www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org. The public is invited to all meetings.

Still so much to be thankful for in the United States

I am writing this early in the morning on Thanksgiving Day. I'm thinking about not only what we have to be thankful for, but what is to come in the way of freedom, plenty and grace in the next few months. This message is going to be a bit less about League, and a bit more about the context in which we do our work.

While there is much to despair and complain about in our recent electoral process, I am thankful that we live in a country that has an open (if not perfectly so) election system. We can support or oppose any candidate without fear of going to prison or losing other liberties. We can get out information in open forums and invite anyone we choose, because we have freedom of assembly.

Contrast this with what is going on this week in the Ukraine, where the election has been deemed to "not meet international standards of fairness," and the public is in an uproar over the tainted outcome.

Also, today's news is that in Burma some political prisoners are being released because of international attention and the desire of the country's leaders to hold an international event there in the near future.

While there are still problems

with access to the polls, and improper purges of "felons" in some states which seem to be race-related, I am thankful that we live in a country that has as its basic rule of law that eligibility to vote is not



Kate Quick

Lewis and Clark Expedition some 200 years ago. The expedition was voting as to where they would settle in for the winter. This democratic vote had as its participants an African-American (the slave, York), and a Native American female Sacajawea. What was wonderful about this story was not only that everyone in the group got to vote, but that someone was thoughtful enough to teach about the expedition and use the vote that happened as instructional material.

While there continue to be improprieties in fairness and trans-

based on race/ethnicity or gender. This morning I heard a wonderful little story on National Public Radio about a group of Washington State school children who were re-enacting a vote taken by the members of the

parency of the political process, I am thankful that we live in a country where these issues are brought to light and openly questioned. It is getting harder to maneuver by blatant gerrymandering or rule changing without someone blowing the whistle or taking the matter to either the press or to the courts. Oh, our elected officials are still "trying it on" whenever possible, but it comes to light quickly, and frequently there is a fast backing off.

There would be no League of Women Voters if we did not have these freedoms, and the rule of law underpinning them. Which brings me to why I am truly thankful on this day and every day – we are able to use these wonderful gifts to act on issues of concern to us: good government, the environment, international law, social justice, and education.

Let us not take this work lightly, and let us re-dedicate ourselves in the coming year to participate in making sure these freedoms are leveraged to the greatest degree.

I shall now come down off my soapbox and get to the feast! Happy Holidays to each of you and your families.

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

Board Briefs from November meeting

At its Nov. 3 meeting, the Board:

■ reviewed our voter service activities in the recent election;

■ appointed Cara Watkins and Liz Rogers to the Nominating Committee;

■ discussed amendments to our bylaws: one to allow some deci-

sions by email, the other to base the quorum on the number of directors on the Board rather than the full number authorized under the bylaws;

■ heard a report on the Measure A issue; and

■ planned for our annual Holiday Party.

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.

New members

The League would like to welcome four new members and thank them for their interest.

They are:

●Valerie Fong
2000 Grand Street
748-3908
fong@alamedapt.com

●Karen Scanlon
1259 Hawthorne St
523-6456
yakitt@aol.com

●Sheila Turner
107 Parfait Lane
864-1892

●Felice Zensius
48 Sand Harbor Road
865-4329

Water Privatization checklist OKed

In May of 2003 the LWVC Convention passed a resolution calling on the LWVC Board to look at state League water positions in light of the current trend toward the privatization of water utility functions.

Jack Sullivan coordinated efforts by Polly Smith, Roberta Boronovo (LWVC water consultants), and Diane Park (San Joaquin County League) to develop an approach to respond to original resolution.

This group developed a "Water Privatization Checklist" for use by local Leagues in evaluating local water privatization proposals. The checklist draws on existing state and national League positions and provides a mechanism by which local Leagues can decide to take a position for or against a water privatization proposal.

After considerable discussion by

the state Board, and input from a number of Board members, the LWVC Board approved the checklist at its meeting Sept. 12, 2004. The check-list appeared in the October UPDATE, a copy of which is sent to every League, and local League boards are free to begin using it immediately.

League members who want to see the checklist should ask their local League president for a copy or for instructions on how to view the October UPDATE on the member side of the League Web site. League boards or individual members who have questions about the checklist should direct them to me.

Jack Sullivan
Natural Resources Director
natural_resources@lwvc.org

Voting problems should be investigated and resolved

Statement by Kay J. Maxwell, President of the U.S. League of Women Voters

WASHINGTON, DC – "The League of Women Voters is deeply concerned about voting irregularities in the 2004 election. The appropriate officials must fully investigate these concerns through open and public processes. Election officials should look into problems quickly and thoroughly and fix what proves to be wrong. Transparency and a willingness to look into potential problems will strengthen voter confidence and ultimately improve our electoral system.

"It is important to ensure that every properly cast ballot is counted and to make improvements for future elections. Attention must be given to inadequate polling place procedures, problematic voting machines, voter registration system failures, casting and counting of

provisional ballots, and absentee voting issues.

"This was far from a perfect election. Although voter turnout reached record levels, the election system showed signs of stress and voters faced real problems. Two key areas deserve special inquiry. First, voter registration problems plague the system. These problems – from failures to fully process registration applications in time to bureaucratic requirements that blocked voter registration – must still be resolved by election officials. Second, the reasons for the very long lines that voters faced in too many states and localities must be thoroughly examined. Having to wait several hours to vote is an unacceptable barrier to citizen participation. What were the reasons? Were there not enough voting machines? Were these polling places poorly organized? Were long lines a greater

problem in minority or student precincts than in rural or suburban precincts? Changes clearly need to be made in polling place operations to address these concerns.

"Finally, the League calls on every voter who cast a provisional ballot to find out whether their ballot was counted. The provisional ballot counting process is still ongoing and must be monitored. But every voter who cast a provisional ballot has the right, under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), to know whether it is counted, and, if it is not counted, why it is not counted. States are required to have a toll-free hotline or Internet system so voters can get this information about their ballot.

"The League's nationwide network of state and local Leagues will continue to work closely with election officials to identify and correct all voting problems."

Calendar of events

Wednesday, Dec. 1, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Board Meeting, Li Volin's home, 1506 East Shore Drive.

Thursday, Dec. 9, 5:30 p.m. Holiday Party and Raffle (see story on cover page). 2816 Waterton Street. Open to all.

Saturday, Jan. 15, 10 to 11:30 a.m. Open House and Tea for New and Prospective Members, 734 Palmera Court. (See story on cover page).

Wednesday, Jan. 5, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Board Meeting, LuAnn DeWitt's home, 2917 Central Ave.

Keep in touch with your 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 jsfong1@comcast.net

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.

Name:

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