

The League of Women Voters of Alameda

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The VOTER is published 9 times per year. Current and past issues of the VOTER are posted on our website

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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.



Volume 44

Number 4

May 2011

VOTER

**Political Responsibility through Informed and Active
Participation**

The California Budget Challenge

May 26, 2011
Otaez Mexican Restaurant
1619 Webster Street, Alameda

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Appetizers and No Host Bar
7:00 p.m. Next 10 Budget Challenge

How would you solve the \$19.6 Billion state budget deficit? Join the League of Women Voters of Alameda and the Alameda Chamber of Commerce for a special program where you roll up your sleeves and create a state budget. You call the shots on how much to spend on schools, the environment, healthcare, prisons, and other state programs – and how to pay for them. Should we levy a carbon tax? Restructure Prop 13? Cut income taxes? **YOU DECIDE!**

Please join us for this interactive and informative presentation where **YOU** try to solve California's budget woes

The Next 10 is a nonpartisan organization that educates and engages Californians

April 21, 2011 Board Briefs

- Voted to present to the membership an increase in dues to \$70 (\$90 family) to be reviewed April 2012.
- Encouraged members to be aware of SB810, Single Payer Bill.
- IRS Application for non-Profit Status has been accepted and will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.
- Member will be encouraged to follow up the effect on Alameda of three issues: Alameda Sunshine Ordinance, State Redistricting and the Fiscal Sustainability report.
- Public strongly encouraged to attend the Alameda Chamber Business Expo, May 11, 4-7 pm at Alameda Hotel.



CO-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Anne Spanier and Jeff Cambra
Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters of
Alameda



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY OURS & THEIRS

Over the last several weeks, headlines about our City's budget, structural deficits, and fiscal responsibility have dominated both print and electronic media. Letters to the Editor urge the Council to take "immediate action" and target specific groups or areas for spending reductions. While we all might agree that something needs to be done to address the immediate current budget and start in earnest on long term fiscal sustainability, the suggested solutions fail to take into account the complexity of the problem, the time it took to get to this point, and the myriad of possible solutions.

The League is facing its own budget challenges. At the last League board meeting, the Budget Committee headed by Ted Frey recommended a dues increase to cover the increasing fees our League pays to both the California and National Leagues. The greater majority of your dues go to these two organizations and not to the Alameda League. While we all recognized the hardship some League members will endure from any dues increase, the Board has the responsibility of maintaining the fiscal sustainability of the organization by adopting a balanced budget. At the same time, the hardship of this increase can be mitigated to those truly in need through a dues increase subsidy.

After a lengthy discussion, the board voted to split the requested dues increase amount in half and implement the total proposed increase over two years. It is important to note that this decision did not create a balanced budget for 2011-2012, which means that we would not be able to fund our reserve account and could be required to withdraw more money from the "rainy day" fund unless other changes are made.

In order to create a balanced budget, one can increase income (raise dues and fundraise) and/or decrease expenses. While I supported the two step dues increase as part of the solution, I also called on the board to join me in reviewing each line item in the budget and determine if we needed to incur that expense, and if so, were we performing that service in the most economical manner. For example, do we need a printed newsletter that costs over \$1000 per year to produce? On the income side, should our League consider charging a nominal fee (or requesting a donation) for our pros and cons forums?

I am asking each member of our League to assist the board in reaching the balanced budget objective. You can contact me with your ideas and concerns anytime.

As board members, we have the responsibility of delivering the best quality package of services as efficiently as possible within our means. This requires the board to constantly evaluate the stability of income sources, project income streams conservatively, and take action as quickly as possible to balance the income/expense equation so the result is positive. Anne and I have recognized this responsibility over the past year, and this will be my number one priority in the coming year.

As for the financial challenges for Alameda, we look to leadership from the City Council and our newly hired city manager, John Russo. In the coming months, you can look to the League board to monitor the issue, encourage the Council to make this a top priority, and support the Council's efforts to find both short and long term solutions. In fact, the agenda for the upcoming annual League meeting on June 18th includes a fiscal sustainability action item.

It is my hope that the City will clearly identify the key services residents desire and provide a fair wage and benefit package for the staff delivering those services. For lower priority services, the City could either find ways to lower costs, increase fees, or eliminate these services. The League recognizes that this is a difficult task that will require the participation of the entire community. The League stands ready to assist and proposes to present programs to educate our members and the community on the complexities of the budget process. See the article in this issue on the Next 10 presentation coming on May 26th co-sponsored by our League and the Alameda Chamber of Commerce.

Like most California cities, Alameda is facing severe budget challenges caused by years of inaction by the state legislature to balance the state's budget. It is my hope that Alameda, through bold action taken by the city council and city manager, will become one of the most financially stable cities in the state while delivering resident identified essential services through a staff that is fairly compensated for their work. Our League will be actively participating in that objective.

Jeff Cambra, Co-President

IN PROCESS NOW: REDISTRICTING OUR COUNTY SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Every ten years, the Federal Government conducts a census to determine the number of individuals living in the United States. Following each decennial census, State law, Section 21500, requires that the Board of Supervisors adjust the boundaries of any or all of the supervisorial districts of the county so that “the districts shall be as nearly equal in population as may be”. In addition, proposed redistricting plans must comply with requirements of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution and with the mandate of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, 42 USC § 1973, et seq., to assure fair and effective representation for racial and language-minority groups.

In establishing boundaries for the districts, State law and the Alameda County Charter and Administrative Code state that the Board may give consideration to the following factors: (a) topography, (b) geography, (c) cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity, and compactness of territory, and (d) community of interests of the districts. The Administrative Code requires that at least one public meeting be held in each of the current five districts and that cities within a proposed district shall be maintained intact, insofar as possible.

The target population for each of the Alameda County five districts is 302,054 based upon a total population of 1,500,000 people. Because of significant shifts in population over the past 10 years the boundary lines for three out of the 5 districts must be re-drawn. The population is below the target for the district encompassing Alameda - District 3, which includes Alameda, San Leandro, San Lorenzo and part of Oakland. The County maps show the population shifts that must occur for the new districts. <http://www.acgov.org/redistricting/districts.htm>

The County plans to hold public hearings in May and June about the redistricting proposals. There is a tentative date of June 8th for the public hearing in Oakland. The Alameda County website will list the confirmed date. The County plans to complete the process by mid-summer.

Our League will be closely watching and commenting on the County redistricting process. We encourage all League members to join us in monitoring the web site above and giving us feedback on the proposals and the process.

Remember the Sustainable Communities Strategy?

Making communities “sustainable” has many facets, but a really big one relates to transportation: about 50% of greenhouse gases are due to cars and light trucks. Therefore, the regional strategy involves housing and transportation, and ways communities can be planned to decrease automobile miles traveled.

Standing at 7,350,000 today, this region’s population is predicted to rise to 9,430,000 by 2035. This increase will have an enormous impact on the demand for housing and transportation; consequently, some serious planning must happen right now. And for the planning to be successful, local governments and Bay Area residents will have to get involved.

They are being asked to do so by attending upcoming meetings held throughout the region on behalf of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments. The two agencies have recently released a proposal for accommodating regional growth entitled the *Initial Vision Scenario* that they hope will help advance dialogue at the meetings. These meetings will serve as a critical step toward the eventual adoption in 2013 of *Plan Bay Area* — a serious plan if there ever was one.

There will be an opportunity to participate in interactive computer modeling with various scenarios. Space at these workshops is limited; register early.

The Alameda County workshop will be held Thursday, May 19, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the David Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley

Go to <http://www.onebayarea.org> for more information and to register.

Thanks for Making 2001 MYPO Best Ever

The Alameda League of Women Voters just concluded its yearly fundraiser, "Meet Your Public Officials". This event, open to the public, was a great success and we would like to thank the following for supporting the League's efforts.

Thanks to: Tucker's Ice Cream, Callahan Piano, La Cucina di Vera Cooking School, Pineapple Sails, Cairdea Design & Marketing, Gold Coast Grill, East Ocean restaurant, Chef's Wok, Dashe Cellars, Rockwall Wines, Urban Legends Cellars, Raley's Nob Hill, JC Cellars, Irish Monkey, R&B Cellars, Super Cuts, Base Natural Products, Burma Superstar, C'ere Una Volta, Taste of India, La Penca Azul.

Special thanks to all the public officials, elected and appointed, who attended. Fundraisers are successful because of the hard work of volunteers and to all the League volunteers who pitched in, a warm thank you.

The League is an all volunteer organization that relies on the support of the community to fund its publications, videos, mailings, telephone and other informational sources. Without this support the Alameda League would not be able to present the educational programs and publications our volunteers work hard on all year for the benefit of all Alameda residents.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO ATTEND THE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS REPRESENTING LWV ALAMEDA

The seven Leagues in Alameda County meet every other month to discuss county-wide issues of mutual interest and concern, such as hospital, education, juvenile justice and other county provided services. They also discuss what each local League is doing and how to coordinate or share activities and information. These meetings typically take place in the Castro Valley offices of Supervisor Nate Miley on Saturday and go from 9 am to about noon.

Our incoming president has let us know that he often has commitments on the weekends that will prevent him from attending these valuable meetings, and we are looking for volunteers to go to them in his stead when he is unavailable, particularly in the late spring and summer months.

No special knowledge is required. All the Leagues in Alameda County attend, so we do not want to not have a representative who can take back to our Board items of interest and concern. If you can volunteer to be the backup for our president, please contact him at jeffcambra@earthlink.com.

The Alameda LWV Book Club

In the coming month the Alameda LWV Book Club will be reading the following books:

- 1) The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls, on Wednesday May 25, 2011 @ 3pm. Hostess Marilyn Ng
Location to be announced.
- 2) Long Way Gone by Ishamael Beah Wednesday June 22, 2011 @3pm. Hostess Anne Spanier,
Location: Home of Anne Spanier..
- 3) No book in July
- 4) The Alphabet vs the Goddess by Leonard Shlain, Wednesday August 24, 2011 @ 3pm. Location TBA

The book club welcomes new members. We meet the 4th Wednesday of the month at 3 pm at a variety of locations. The books are chosen by the members and an interesting critique follows. The books are non-fiction and focus on a political or social event of considerable consequence. If you are interested in an evening book club or want more information Please call Anne Spanier at 522-3426

SF Chronicle's John Diaz to Speak to Alameda League at Annual Meeting

John Diaz, has been in charge of the editorial page at The San Francisco Chronicle for the last 15 years. Diaz, who grew up in the Bay Area, is known as a consummate writer and thinker. A 1977 graduate of **Humboldt State University**, he is a frequently public speaker and a regular guest on both regional and national news and public affairs programs. Diaz joined the Chronicle in 1990, working as an assistant city editor. Earlier in his career, Diaz worked as a reporter and editor with **The Denver Post**, and in the Philadelphia bureau of **The Associated Press**, among other jobs.

In 2001 and 2002, Diaz was a juror for the *Pulitzer Prizes*. In 2007, along with colleagues **Pati Poblete** and **Caille Millner**, Diaz won a \$10,000 *Scripps Howard Foundation National Journalism Award* for a series of editorials exposing a failed foster care system. Diaz has won numerous other state and regional journalism honors.

Diaz and his wife, Katherine Ann Corcoran, own a home in Alameda. They have a daughter, Lisa, a graduate of Encinal High School.

Plan on attending and bring a colleague to what will be an exciting event. The annual meeting will be Saturday, June 18th, 11:30am at the Pasta Pelican. Watch for the Annual Meeting Kit in your mail in mid May. Remember to bring your kit with you to the meeting.

SB 810

The California Universal Health Care Act

Alameda League member Gretchen Lipow urges members to be aware of Senate Bill 810, introduced by State Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco). A similar version of this Single Payer Health Care Bill was passed by the California Legislature before but vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

This bill would provide coverage for every California resident, with funding coming from employees, (based on income) employers, (based on pay-roll) and existing Medicare, Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Funds. Covered services include doctor visits, inpatient and outpatient hospital services, prescription drugs, emergency care, dental care, mental health care, vision care, medical equipment, alternative treatments such as acupuncture, substance abuse recovery, diagnostic testing, ambulance, skilled nursing after hospitalization, hospice, and translation.

This coverage will be possible without increasing the amount of money Californians currently spend on health care because:

- It controls costs by getting rid of insurance companies and eliminates waste from thousands of insurance plans, creating tons of unnecessary paperwork, millions spent on advertising and bureaucrats focused on avoiding claims, enormous management salaries and profits
- It Holds down prices of drugs and services through bulk purchasing, allows better health system planning to avoid unnecessary expenses and researches the most effective and cost-effective treatments

Federal Health Reform: Section 1332 of the Affordable Care Act includes a specific provision enabling states to enact a single payer system if it is demonstrated that the plan would cover more people with comparable coverage at a lower cost.

Among the Organizations supporting SB810 are the California Nurses Association and the California Teachers Association. More information is available at the following web sites

:
californiaonecare.org ♦ singlepayernow.org ♦ healthcareforall.org ♦ wellstoneclub.org

Join or Renew your membership in the Alameda League Today!



Name _____

Other Names _____

(if a family membership)

Address _____ City _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

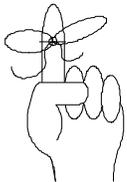
\$68 Single Membership \$85 Family Membership \$25 Student Membership Dues year is Jan 1 – Dec 31.
Dues assistance is available for those on limited income – Contact us at 869-4969. Make Check payable to LWV Alameda and mail to: League of Women Voters of Alameda, P. O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 9450

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.



SAVE THE DATE

- 5/11/11 Alameda Chamber Business Expo
- 5/19/11-Sustainable Communities Workshop, p.3
- 5/19/11 – Board Meeting – Alameda Hospital
- 5/12/11-5/15/11 – State Convention in Ventura
- 5/26/11 Next 10 – California Budget Challenge – p.1
- 6/18/11 – Annual Meeting – p.5

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