



VOTER

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 6
November 2011**

Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALAMEDA FRIDAY NIGHT FLIGHTS at Angela’s Bistro September 23, 2011



The new 4’ by 6’ League banner is a prominent feature in our League’s new awareness campaign. Angela’s Bistro is located on one of the busiest corners in the City of Alameda. Passersby could not help but notice there was a party goin’ on! Shawna Rosenblum, winemaker for Rockwall Wine Company pours her latest Cab while Kari Barnes serves a Zin to Betty Brown of the Alameda Journal. The event attracted many non-League members who learned about the League in this casual atmosphere.





PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Jeff Cambra
President, League of Women Voters of Alameda

First Quarter Check In

Successful organizations recognize the need to define objectives and create initiatives to achieve its goals and objectives. These entities also understand the need to set milestones and monitor the progress and success of individual events and activities designed to further the organization's objectives. Finally, organizations that flourish do so by understanding the need to budget and work within financial constraints.

The League's missions of citizen education, voter registration, and advocacy are well defined. At the beginning of my term, I added the goals of increasing our local League's visibility to the goal's list and to provide more opportunities for members to connect socially.

Since most of the goals and objectives were defined in July at the board retreat, August through October represents the first quarter of the implementation year and is a good time to look back to see what we have accomplished.

Citizen Education

In September, over 40 League members and Alameda residents heard City Manager John Russo speak about the City budget, the golf course land swap, the structural deficit. The October program featured Jordan Battani, President of the City of Alameda Health Care District speaking about the challenges and opportunities Alameda Hospital will deal with in the coming year. Our League created a rare opportunity for the health care district to address the public outside the confines of the boardroom. League VP Tracy Jensen did a great job of putting both programs together. Videos of these two presentations will be posted on the League website in mid-November. Look for the State of the Alameda Unified School District with the new board president in February, State of the City in March, and an Environmental Symposium in April.

Voter Registration

AB 30 created a whole new category of potential voters by allowing 17 year olds to register to vote and Anne Spanier and Marilyn Ashcraft were on top of this opportunity. They began outreach to the schools in September, and the program is having good success having registered over 50 students to date. Voter Services will be taking advantage of other opportunities to get residents signed up to vote. Oh! and don't forget that we have an election in June for state assembly, and there will be a city council race in November.

Advocacy

After almost two years of monitoring and participating in the Sunshine Task Force, the Sunshine Ordinance was finally presented to the City Council in October. Once again, the League sent a letter of support to each council member and spoke in support of adopting the ordinance. This ordinance represents a huge step forward in creating better transparency and a more open government here in Alameda. In 2012, the City Council will again deal with funding cuts from the State. The League's Budget and Fiscal Sustainability Group will be ready to evaluate all budget proposals.

League Visibility

Three major articles, which included direct quotes from our press releases, appeared in the Alameda Sun along with pictures. We purchased a 5' x 6' banner that was erected in front of Angela's during both Friday Night Flights and will be displayed at our forums. November 14th will be League night at Angela's for Mojito Monday. Look for us at the next Chamber of Commerce mixer on Wednesday, November 9th at Rhythmix Cultural Center.

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Social Opportunities

Our two Friday night flights provided the perfect setting for League members to come out and enjoy the ambiance and food of Angela's Bistro and support the League. Look for another mixer in November and the holiday party in December.

So that is the program so far. As always, I welcome your comments and input. Let us know how we are doing, and please come out and enjoy the benefits of League membership.

Enjoy!

Jeff Cambra, President
League of Women Voters of Alameda.

Membership Committee

Do you know of a few people who would like to join the League? Do you have some thoughts on how to make membership outreach more interesting? Call Anne Spanier @522-3426 and join the committee. We meet about 3-4 times a year for some low key dialogue



*League Holiday Party
Sunday, December 4th, 6 pm
At the home Li Volin
1506 Eastshore Drive
Alameda – 522-3242*

Once again, Li Volin has generously offered to host the Alameda League's Holiday Party. This is a casual, fun and festive chance to socialize with fellow league members and bring potential League members to get acquainted. Please bring a dish to share; either appetizer, salad, main dish or dessert, it always works out. The League will provide paper goods and beverages, although extra bottles of wine and soft drinks are always welcome.

The Alameda LWV Book Club

The November book is titled "The Chocolate Wars" by Deborah Cadbury. The book tells the story of the ethical rise of a chocolate empire in Victorian England and its transition into the world of modern capitalism. The review will be on Monday, November 28th at 3 pm. The location TBA. Read this interesting book and come to discuss its meanings. Bring your thoughts of a book on social or political relevance that you would like to suggest for the group.

The End of the Year and Time to Renew Membership

Are you aware of how important the nineteenth amendment has been in establishing women's full participation in American life through the right to vote? Are you aware of how that right to vote influences the way we live? Do you realize that the women who fought for that amendment went on to form the League of Women Voters? Do you know that the League of Women Voters is actively engaged every day assuring the rights not only of women but men as well? The members of this volunteer non-governmental organization work diligently to keep our elected officials accountable, to keep government processes transparent and to assure citizens the continued right to vote. Renewing your membership and asking some of your friends to join us as well will keep those dreams alive.

The alternative of not having some measure of control over ones life is unthinkable. Every day we see pictures of women in the most unimaginable situations struggling to care for themselves and their children. And what we know is that when women have a say in their societies, the lives of their children and the overall society is better. The right to vote is key to the betterment of the societies they form. Our national League of Women Voters (LWVUS) is actively engaged with women in many countries. The LWVUS brings the message of empowerment through the right to vote by sponsoring foreign visitors and by meeting with women's groups in foreign countries. Recently we heard that Saudi Arabia will give their women the right to vote in 2015. We are making progress!

So when we join and support our local League we not only do the important work of building our own community and improving the lives and well being of our citizens we also are laying the foundations for stronger societies worldwide. Visitors will continue to come seeking information on how we conduct our studies, speak out for our positions and provide information for voters. Visitors will also see that the League is a leader in the movement to reform our political system protect and defend voting rights in this country. In fact, the League of Women Voters has just recently taken legal action on behalf of voters in Wisconsin and Ohio. These two states are two of almost a dozen states that are and have been enacting laws to make voting more difficult especially for seniors and the poor. In every case the League has taken stands against making voting more difficult. So stand with us as we do the important work of defending democracy.

JOIN TODAY

ENVELOPE ENCLOSED FOR YOUR CONVINENCE

Please renew today by sending a check in the enclosed envelope. If any of your information has changed, please use the form on the cover page. Annual dues are \$70 for and single membership, and \$97 for a household.

Your dues are tax deductible as we are now a 501 (c) (3) organization. As 2012 is a general election year the Alameda League will have a lot of Voter Service events to organize and voter information to publish and distribute. Please consider adding an additional amount to your check to help fund this effort.

League Forms Budget and Fiscal Sustainability Group

It seems like all the headlines in the local papers and the subject of many blogs relate to the City's budget. Topics range from service reductions to revenue enhancements and everyone has an opinion on how to "fix" the problem.

The City is facing a structural short fall consisting of:

1. an imbalance of salaries and benefits as compared to revenue growth rate,
2. a liability for retiree medical benefits
3. cash reserves below desired levels, and
4. insufficient funding to maintain City streets, sidewalks, parks, and buildings.

The City Manager's goal is to solve one half of the short fall in the 2012 – 2013 budget cycle and complete the process in 2013 – 2014. He has already formed a task force on pensions and benefits to propose solutions for this part of the structural short fall. The City also presented a workshop on Labor Negotiations.

In fulfilling our obligation to both understand the public policy issues around budget reform and to possibly advocate for specific objectives, the LWVA has formed a group to provide a factual review of the City of Alameda's fiscal sustainability proposal. This group's first official activity took place in September when it sponsored a Budget Basics forum featuring City Manager John Russo.

The fiscal sustainability group will take a five year look at Alameda Point, Pension and Benefits, the Golf Course, and other areas that have a significant on the City's general fund. This group will work in conjunction with the Privatization Study group in evaluating privatization proposals.

The group is presently seeking members and non-members interested in the City's budget to assist in the study. A number of forums are planned to obtain public opinion on what services residents will want to maintain and volunteers are needed. We will need assistance in organizing these forums and in developing agendas. We can also use note takers and transcribers to attend the City sponsored budget meetings.

If you are interested in participating in this group, please contact Juelle Ann Boyer at jab@borupp.org or Jeff Cambra at jeffcambra@earthlink.net.

MARK YOUR SOCIAL CALENDARS

Our League has two social functions planned for November. On Wednesday, November 9th, the Alameda Chamber of Commerce will have its monthly mixer at Rhythmix Cultural Works, 2513 Blanding Avenue in Alameda. Rhythmix is a great cultural resource. Come by and see the art exhibit in the K Gallery, and check out the great performance space upstairs.

Our League is a member of the Chamber, and all of our members are invited to attend these mixers. This is a great opportunity to connect with other League members and spread the word about League to the greater business community. The fun begins at 5:30 p.m. and usually ends by 7:00 p.m. Chamber mixers are free to attend. Appetizers are provided, and there is a no host bar.

Monday, November 14th, our League will return to Angela's Bistro at the corner of Oak Street and Central Avenue starting at 5:30 p.m. for Monday Night Mojitos. League president Jeff Cambra will be behind the bar mixing up mojitos as a fundraiser. All TIPS will go to the League. One does not need to order a mojito or any other alcoholic beverage to support our League. Invite your friends to share an evening with League members. League members who stay for dinner will be able to order as a group from the early bird menu with early bird pricing. Reservations are for 7 p.m.

Sunshine Ordinance Adopted by City Council

The Alameda City Council adopted the Sunshine Ordinance at the November 1st Council meeting. Alameda League members have worked diligently to bring transparency to our City government. The League's last letter to the Council:

October 18th, 2011

Mayor Gilmore, Vice Mayor Bonta, and members of the City Council

The League congratulates the City Council on its leadership to improve transparency and promote the highest standards of ethical behavior in government. The Alameda City Council formed the Sunshine Task Force Task Force in February 2010 and charged it with "reviewing, identifying, and prioritizing key issues of concern related to improving the public's access to City information".

The process was inclusive with open public meetings to gather suggestions from the public. The League attended many of the Task Force meetings submitting comments and testimony. We watched the extensive discussions and thoughtful deliberations of Task Force members in carrying out their charge. We also participated in a review of early drafts to assist in resolving areas of disagreement. We endorse the document before you tonight. We do have a few comments.

Comment to Section 2-90.2 Findings

Subsection (g) appears to be redundant with Section 2-91.1 Definitions subsection (d) "Policy Body."

Comment to Section 2-91.9 Agendas and Related Materials: Public Records

Subsection (e) provides for a one cent per page charge for a copy of a public record prepared for consideration at a public meeting. The LWVA requests the City Council to consider changing the "a duplication fee of one cent per page" to "the direct cost of duplication" in order to remain consistent with the California Public Records Act and recoup actual costs to produce the document.

Question regarding Section 2-092.8 Non-Exempt Public Information

Should "individual employee salaries" be added to the list enumerated in subsection (c)?

Comment to Section 9-93.1 Primary Regulatory and Enforcement Body

The second sentence establishes a four year term for each member of the commission, but states that it is concurrent and linked with the service of the appointing City Council member. In the situation where a council member is serving some portion of a second term, it would be impossible for a new appointee to serve a four year term. The LWVA recommends the language be changed to remove the four year term and provide that commission members serve "concurrent with the appointing council member."

We encourage the City Council to adopt the ordinance. As a next step we encourage the City Council and City Manager to schedule educational workshops on the Brown Act for elected and appointed officials and Alameda Citizens.

League members work to nurture and encourage greater voter education and open and accountable government for the citizens of Alameda. Issues covered by the Sunshine and the forthcoming Campaign Reform Ordinance are major areas of interests for the Alameda League to ensure ethics and transparency in government.

Jeff Cambra, President Alameda League of Women Voters

The Alameda League of Women Voters begins voting outreach to Senior High students.

St. Joe's Notre Dame High School was the scene of the first pre-registration of 17 year old high school students on Wednesday afternoon September 28, 2011. League members supplied information about the League of Women Voters (LWV) and the use of the SMART VOTER website. The website is sponsored by the LWV California helps voters navigate a computer site for unbiased information about candidates and the issues on the ballot. Students learned that by putting in their zip code they could locate their polling place and their representatives in government. .

Also participating were two members of the Alameda County Registrar of voters, from the poll worker program, Jeff Normart, and Lauren Perez. They conducted a "Mock Election" showing students how the voting machine works. Students interested in becoming poll workers in 2012 were told to go to the Registrar of voter's web site rov_poll_worker@acgov.org. Students who are 16 years of age receive poll worker training and \$95 for the day with an excused absence from their schools.

League members plan to pre-register 17 year old students this year. Plans are underway to stage a registration day on each of the Alameda High school campuses including the Charter High Schools, and alternative high schools. When the "pre-registered" teenagers turn 18, they will be automatically added to the ranks of registered voters in California. In several other states where pre-registration is in effect, evidence appears to show an increase in voting behavior. In registering students who will become 18 by November 6, 2012, it is expected that they will actually vote in higher numbers.

Anyone interested in more information may call Anne Spanier, 510-522-3426.



League member Marilyn Ashcraft collects voter registration affidavits from St. Joe students

Join or renew your membership to the Alameda League today!



Name _____

Other Names _____

Address _____ (if a family membership)
City _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

\$70 Single Membership \$97 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 Membership dues are tax deductible

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

- 11/9/11, Chamber Mixer at Rhythmix
- 11/14/11 – League Mojito night at Angela's
- 11/17/11 – Board Meeting, Alameda Hospital
- 12/4/11 Holiday Party at the home of Li Volin, p. 3

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Of Alameda
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