

President's Message: Celebrating a Great Year

We'll be wrapping up the League year with a bang at our Annual Meeting on June 4. So much to celebrate! To name just a few things: this was one of our most successful All-City Luncheons ever – see coverage and photos starting on page three. The League is earning continuing visibility and recognition as we pursue coalition-building and community partnerships in our Advocacy work to improve the quality of government and civic life in Oakland – see the story on the citizens redistricting commission campaign on page six. Our membership is not only growing, but also reaching out to more and varied parts of the city's population. Don't get left out – see page seven for more information on renewing your membership.

At the same time, our Annual Meeting speakers (see announcement at right) will describe to us the grave danger that
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LWVO President Katherine Gavzy (left) with Judy Merrill at the All-City Luncheon

A Reminder

LWVO holds its 2014 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 4 at 5:45 p.m. in FAZ Restaurant at 1111 Broadway. Dinner and meeting will be followed by a conversation about money in politics with Helen Grieco of Common Cause and John Diaz of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Call (510) 834-7640 for more info.

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uncontrolled and “dark” money presents for the future of our democracy. California has seen some recent victories in the ongoing fight for transparency and disclosure of political expenditures. The State League supported Senate Bill 27, the bill to force dark money non-profits to reveal their secret funders when they try to influence California elections, and we were greatly encouraged when it passed and was signed into law by the governor. But much remains to be done. Please keep watching for the Action Alerts sent out to LWVO members and supporters via e-mail blasts, and respond to them. It only takes

a minute to call or e-mail your representatives, and we know it is effective. That is one small but important way that you can do your part to Make Democracy Work. You can also lend a hand with our Candidate Forums and ballot measure Pros and Cons presentations, as interest in the November general election begins to heat up and people look to the League for nonpartisan, thoughtful, and comprehensive election information.

At the recent LWV California Leadership Council gathering, I was delighted to discover that LWV Oakland has a reputation in the state for being a vibrant, energetic, and successful League. This is totally due to our members, which means you. Now is the time to sustain that by renewing your membership, and by completing the Interest Survey, now available online. The Interest Survey tells us where your passions lie and how best to fit your interests and skills into the work of the League. Let us hear from you, and together we will indeed make democracy work.

- Katherine Gavzy



Terry Kulka
~~7~~ **8** LWV members have entrusted me with the sale of their homes – let's make yours ~~7~~ **8** ~~9~~
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All-City Luncheon an All-Round Success

The All-City Luncheon, LWVO's main annual fundraiser, is a popular event where people from many segments of the city — government, businesses, non-profits, and residents — gather to talk about shared concerns, celebrate those who contribute to the civic welfare, and hear a speaker on a topic of interest. Everything fell into place this year as we had the largest number of participants ever.

We were honored to have Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court Tani Cantil-Sakauye in conversation with esteemed broadcaster Belva Davis. The Chief Justice chose to focus on civics education and the importance of participation in civic engagement by our youth, which was particularly apt because the winners of the League's Making Democracy Work awards this year also had



The All-City Luncheon was held at Scott's Seafood Restaurant on April 29.

that focus. The individual winner, Oakland Tech teacher Maryann Wolfe, leads a group of students to Washington D.C. every other year as part of their civics education. The organizational winner, The Bay Area Urban Debate League (BAUDL), helps local high school students develop critical thinking and presentation skills. We were delighted that 15 students involved in these programs were able to attend the luncheon and submit questions to the Chief Justice.

- Sandy Venning



Tani Cantil-Sakauye and Belva Davis



BAUDL's Dmitri Seals



Maryann Wolfe

Lessons from California's Chief Justice

At the League of Women Voters' luncheon this past April, I had the opportunity to listen to Tani Cantil-Sakauye speak eloquently about how she became California's first Asian American Chief Justice despite a childhood where she had struggled to overcome shyness and find her voice.

She attributed her decision to pursue a law career to a transformative experience taking a debate class in community college. When she was reluctant to take risks, her teacher would say, "How do you know that you can't do something when you have

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Lessons (from page 3)

not lived that long?” Soon, she was beating the boys in debate, and it dawned on her that maybe law school was for her.

The lesson in her journey from shy young woman to Chief Justice was not the typical message, “work hard and you can make it in America.” Rather, her journey spoke to the importance of dedicated teachers who saw the potential inside their students and called forth the best in them. Her journey spoke to the need for young people to have experiences where they can see themselves as smart and capable and where they can find their voices.

Now, in her role as Chief Justice, she has become one of our state’s foremost advocates for civic engagement. At this luncheon, she made two important points about the place of civics in school. The first point is that waiting until the senior year of high school to ask students to learn about and care about civics is too late. Her second point is that civics should encompass both teaching the structures of government and providing young people with chances to engage directly in making changes in their community.

As part of the Educating for Democracy in the Digital Age initiative, there are over 40 teachers in Oakland who are responding to her message in a variety of powerful ways. For instance, we have four high schools in Oakland that are developing plans for civic engagement that don’t wait until senior

year Government but instead start in 9th grade and scaffold skills and experiences for all four years of high school. It is essential that we make civic engagement part of the fabric of the high schools and to make these opportunities available to all students. In addition, since so much civic activity now occurs online, civic media literacy has become a priority at all grade levels.

The Chief Justice also made clear that civic education must engage students in action, which is a part of all four of the Oakland high schools’ civic engagement plans. Those actions will start small in 9th grade and build in scope over four years. One promising arena for youth

action is when young people circulate informed and persuasive ideas on social and political issues through blogs and social media.

The Chief Justice’s life journey holds a powerful message about helping young people find a voice. Our work in Oakland public schools reiterates this message. Just as the Chief Justice once was a shy student, our high school students are often most terrified when asked to speak publicly. To support them we need to start early in high school, developing and cultivating their voices so they can speak in informed and persuasive ways about issues that impact their communities and the larger world.

- Young Whan Choi

OUSD Civic Engagement Coordinator



Cantil-Sakauye and OUSD students

It Takes a Team!

We have received such nice feedback about our 23rd Annual All-City Luncheon – thanks to all of you who supported us and attended the luncheon.

Gratitude is extended to the many, many people who helped make the event the success that it was:

The Mailing Party Team of Polly Amrein,

Louise Anderson, Jane Arnault, Judi Bank, Meg Bowerman, Lorraine Force, Katherine Gavzy, Bonnie Hamlin, Eleni Hub, Helen Hutchison, Karen Ivy, Suzanne Loosen, Anna Mathai, Judy Merrill, Carmen Murray, Barbara Newcombe, Bea Rudney, Rosalee Schubert, Ruth Vaughn, Mary

Weinstein, and Phyllis White-Ayanruoh;

The Table-Setting Team of Judi Bank, Momy Flores-Bauer, Katherine Gavzy, Rosalee Schubert, and Sandy Venning;

The Membership/Publications Table Team of Meg and Larry Bowerman;

The Guide/Crowd Control Team of Karen Ivy, Ann Killebrew, Suzanne Loosen, Louise Rothman-Riemer, and Mary Stevens;

The Registration Team of Louise Anderson, Nan Butterworth, Sandra and Michael Coleman, Joey Hansell and Peter Crigger, Annmarie Hallin,

Bonnie Hamlin, Gretchen Hayes, Sari Kulberg, Judy Merrill, Rosalee Schubert, Deborah Shefler, and Emily Wilson;

The Logistics Team of John Chancellor, Jim Graham, Shinal Lakshman, Alec MacDonald, and Dawna Williams; and

The Clean-up Team of Judi Bank, Meg and Larry Bowerman, Momy Flores-Bauer, Katherine Gavzy, Terry Kulka, Leslie Smith, and Sandy Venning.

Apologies to anyone whose names have been omitted.

- The LWVO Development Committee

All-City Luncheon a Fundraising Success

The All-City Luncheon is our major fundraiser each year. Due to the generosity of our table supporters and others who buy tickets, we can take on important projects like Oakland's Easy Voter Guide, printed in English, Spanish, and Chinese, and distributed free to Oakland voters.

This year we had the greatest number of table supporters in the 23 years we have put on the Luncheon. We are especially grateful to the following for their support:

Sponsors (\$2,000)

- California Capital and Investment Group
- Kaiser Permanente

Benefactors (\$1,500)

- Clark Construction Group - California LP
- DHR Investment Counsel
- East Bay Municipal Utility District
- Torrey Pines Bank

Patrons (\$1,000)

- Bay Area Rapid Transit
- Bell Investment Advisors, Inc.
- California HealthCare Foundation, Oakland
- The Clorox Company
- Donahue Gallagher Woods LLP
- Earl and Bonnie Hamlin
- East Bay Regional Park District
- Horizon Beverage Company
- Leaders of the City of Oakland
- Leaders of the Oakland Unified School District (who supported two tables to enable students participating in OUSD's Civic Engagement program to attend the Luncheon)
- Louise Anderson
- Oakland Housing Authority
- Peralta Community College District

- Rotary Club of Oakland
- Terry Kulka, Coldwell Banker Residential Sales

Donors (\$500)

- ABC Security Service, Inc.
- Alameda County Public Defender Association
- Clear Channel Outdoor
- East Bay Community Foundation
- Holy Names University
- The Law Office of Joanne Casey
- Madison Park Financial Corporation
- Matson Navigation Company, Inc.
- The McConnell Group
- Pacific Gas & Electric Company
- Saint Paul's Towers
- Samuel Merritt University
- Schnitzer Steel Industries
- Wendel, Rosen, Black and Dean LLC

Ranked Choice Voting in Oakland

Your choice is your power! That was the message emphasized at a May 14 discussion of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) sponsored by Oakland Rising, LWV Oakland, and Fair Vote, a national organization focused on how best to remove the structural barriers to a democracy that respects every voice and every vote in every election. Among the 30 participants were several League members, elections officials, City Council aides, and RCV advocates.

Helen Hutchison of the Oakland League described how in 2006, 69 percent of Oakland supported adopting RCV for the city. Elizabeth Glidden, a member of the Minneapolis City Council, described how RCV worked well in their 2013 election where many city races were highly contested.

Some oppose RCV because they are unhappy about the candidate who won. We were reminded that the issue is the candidate, not the voting system. These voters could equally be unhappy with the winner in a two-candidate runoff.

The positive features of RCV will need to be emphasized in our voter education activities for the November 2014 election. They include:

- More people vote in November than in a June primary so decisions are made by a larger proportion of citizens. RCV provides instant runoff.
- More people of color, those who are less-

well off, those who are younger, and those with lower-level jobs vote in November; in June the majority of voters are white, older, well-off, and well-educated.

- Less negative campaigning. If a candidate wants those supporting a different candidate to give *them* their second or third vote, they will not attack that other candidate but rather emphasize what they can do for the whole city.
- New candidates, new ideas and dissenting opinion. Candidates outside the mainstream have a chance — third party candidates in partisan elections; members of diverse groups not often successful in two-candidate races.
- Money is saved with elimination of the \$800,000 cost of a June primary; also, candidates need only raise money for one campaign, not two.
- Voters can vote for the candidate they really like best. Near election time it becomes clear who are the front-runners. But voters can give their first vote to the candidate they really like. Then they can decide whether to give their second and third votes to one or another of the front runners. Each choice empowers the voter.

- Marion Taylor

Redistricting: Contact Your Councilmember

LWVO has been working with Oakland Rising and the Urban Strategies Council on a proposal to the City Council for a November ballot measure creating an independent citizens redistricting commission for Oakland. Five votes are needed to place the measure on the ballot. An April 30 community meeting provided input to the final draft proposal, and now is the time to urge your councilmembers to vote “yes” on a redistricting ballot measure. Contact your councilmember and tell him/her that

an independent redistricting commission would take the process out of the hands of elected officials and put it into the hands of Oakland residents, creating a new redistricting process for Oakland that will include the voices of all residents in a way that ensures the Voting Rights Act’s promise of fair representation for all. For councilmember contact information, click the “Who Represents Oakland” link at www.lwvoakland.org.

- Louise Anderson

Hutchison Moves Up

LWVC President Jenny Waggoner announced at the Leadership Council on May 18 that she will resign on June 30. Helen Hutchison, LWVO member and LWVC Second Vice President for Program and Advocacy, will be the new State League President. We are proud of Helen, and we wish her success in her important new job.



Helen Hutchison

Renew Your Membership Now!

Most memberships in LWVO expire on June 30, and the new membership year starts July 1. The date on the mailing label of your Voter tells you when your membership expires. Please renew your membership now. When renewals come in late, it causes unnecessary work for office volunteers, and, honestly, your dues money will be put to good use.

Enclosed in this Voter is a membership renewal form and an interest survey, along with an envelope. The Interest Survey helps us know to contact you when there are projects or events that you might want to participate in. Please complete these forms and mail them with your dues to the League office. Or, if you prefer, you can find both the Renewal Form and the Interest Survey online. You can renew your membership online using PayPal, and you can fill out the Interest Survey online too.

If you joined mid-year, you can pay pro-rated dues; see the chart on LWVO's website.

When you renew your membership AND add information to your Interest Survey, your name will be entered in a drawing. First prize is a free ticket to next year's All-City Luncheon.

This is an election year, and the League will have a lot to do in the fall. Please help by renewing your membership now.

- Sandy Venning

Immigration Reform

At the May 14 program, Assemblymember Rob Bonta (18th District), Kiran Savage-Sangwan of the Northern California ACLU, and Isabel Cortes, District Representative for State Senator Loni Hancock, gave informative and thought-provoking presentations on current legislation and issues in immigration. We learned that in 2013 California actually made significant progress towards humane and sensible immigration reform. The Trust Act orders state and local officials to NOT cooperate with federal government requests to hold people for possible immigration violations if there is no other reason, such as criminal charges, to hold them. Undocumented youth brought to the United States as children may now attend California public colleges at in-state tuition rates. Work proceeds on making health insurance available to undocumented immigrants (ineligible under the Affordable Care Act). But speakers pointed out that there is still a major human rights problem, with deportations separating families. The League of Women Voters has a robust position on immigration supporting family reunification, equal treatment under law, and a passage to citizenship for undocumented people currently living in the U.S.

- Katherine Gavzy

Membership Updates

Welcome New Members:

Maya Collins

Carolyn Vallerga

Dianne Martinez

Bettye Lou Wright

Welcome Back:

Lora Thielbar



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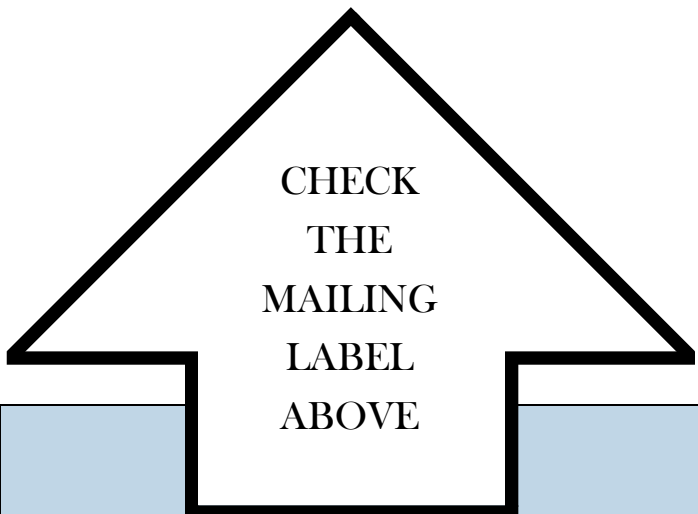
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CALENDAR

Tuesday, June 3 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	California Primary Election	For the location of your personal polling place, visit www.smartvoter.org
Wednesday, June 4 5:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.	Annual Meeting	FAZ Restaurant 1111 Broadway Oakland, CA 94607
Friday, June 6 to Wednesday, June 11	LWVUS National Convention	Omni Dallas Downtown Hotel Dallas, Texas



Is there a date at the top of it?
 If there's no date at the top of it, you're not a member. Please join; see how at www.lwvoakland.org.
 If there is a date, it shows when your membership expires. Renew using the form in this Voter or online.