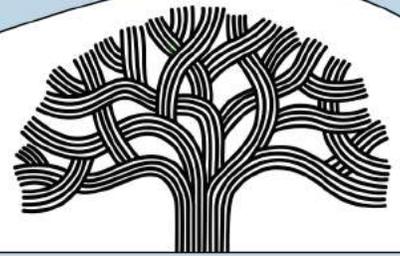


# VOTER



Making Democracy Work

May 2016

## Come to the Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 9, 5:45-8:45 p.m.

Z Café, 2735 Broadway

Enjoy dinner and carry out League business as described in the enclosed Call to Annual Meeting.

Help decide LWVO's program, budget, and leadership for 2016-2017.

Then hear from

**Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director,  
Oakland Public Ethics Commission\***

**“Oakland’s Public Ethics Commission:  
Enabled, Empowered and Getting Ready to  
Act”**



Cost for dinner: \$25

RSVP by Friday, June 3, either online at [lwvoakland.org](http://lwvoakland.org) or by calling the League office at (510)834-7640 and then sending a check to the League of Women Voters of Oakland at:

436 14th Street, Suite 1213, Oakland 94612-2723.

\* For more information about the PEC, see page 3.

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\*Executive Committee member

## President's Message

### The Time Has Come.....

The time has come," the Walrus said,  
"To talk of many things:  
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--  
Of cabbages--and kings--  
And why the sea is boiling hot--  
And whether pigs have wings."  
*Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll,*



Well, the time has actually come for us to talk of many things; especially "Election" things. The California Primary is next month! Sometimes it seems as though some of our candidates are indeed talking about the sea and whether ideas they believe in can take wing, but whether their ideas take wing or not, we must begin the serious work of election issues education.

Locally we will be voting for candidates for Superior Court Judge, Alameda County Board of Supervisors, and Alameda County Board of Education. Check out votersedge.org for information about these elections.

Please remember that to vote in the June 7<sup>th</sup> Presidential Primary you must have registered or re-registered to vote by May 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you went to our All-City Luncheon, you had the opportunity to hear CA Secretary Padilla speak about expanding the CA voting population. Come to our Annual Meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup> at Z Café and hear more about our Oakland Votes Informed Campaign and get an update on the ongoing success of the Public Ethics Commission by PEC Executive Director Whitney Barazoto.

Our League has been working to expand voter registration, especially among under represented populations such as the formerly incarcerated. An individual is eligible to vote as long as he/she a US citizen, at least 18 years old, a resident of CA, and not currently imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony. A person who is in jail for a misdemeanor can vote, even while in jail on election day. To repeat, an individual who has been convicted of a felony, but has served his/her time and is not currently on parole can vote. We are lucky in CA that we do not have the kind of active voter suppression that is occurring in some other states.

With the June Primary the LWVO is launching our neighbor to neighbor Oakland Votes Informed Campaign. We are starting with our Board and we are giving them a brush up voting rights session as well as a League overview of the Primary candidates and ballot measures. And then we are asking them to hold neighborhood house parties to enlighten, inform and empower. We will then ask those who attend a house party to have ones of their own. That way they too will be helping friends and neighbors to learn about the issues and to vote informed. By the way, when I went to Google and put in "CA informed voting" the League comes up right away.

*(Continued on page 3)*

I would like **you** to have a house party for your friends and neighbors so that Oakland has as many informed voters as possible. If you would like a League representative to come to your house party, let us know. We'll do our best to accommodate. If you have questions, please go to [www.LWVOakland.org](http://www.LWVOakland.org) where you will be able to find information about voter registration and a link to [www.VotersEdge.org](http://www.VotersEdge.org). This voter information website is brought to you by LWVC's Education Fund and its partner MapLight. Enter your address on the site to see all the contests on your ballot.

So while you may not be too sure about talking up cabbages, kings, or sealing wax, when you follow the League you will learn about the Bay Area Wetlands Measure AA, State Proposition 50, and who is running for various Alameda County positions. And of course you'll want to discuss those running for national and state office too.

—Louise R-R

## Why Choose a Political Party?

When you register to vote you have the opportunity to choose a political party. What are the consequences of declaring a party? Perhaps not all you think!

First of all, your party preference has no impact on how you can vote in a General Election. It only has bearing in Primary Elections, and then only for the choices you have available for the President, and for certain party officials. All other offices in California are chosen across parties on the basis of total votes cast.

Some political parties even allow voters who have not selected a party preference to vote in their presidential primary. The parties that allow voters who have selected "no party preference" or "decline to state" to vote in their Primaries are American Independent, Democratic, and Libertarian. No parties allow you to vote in their Primary if you have selected a different political party.

If you want to change your party preference, you must re-register to vote. For the June 7 primary, the deadline to register or change your registration is May 23.

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## The Oakland Public Ethics Commission and the League

LWVO played a major role in the creation of the Public Ethics Commission (PEC) by a City Charter amendment in 1996. There are seven volunteer Commissioners, supported in their work by an Executive Director and a small administrative/analyst staff. The PEC is charged with ensuring "fairness, openness, honesty and integrity" in City government. We have been one of their strongest champions in that role from the beginning. The PEC is specifically responsible for overseeing compliance and educating citizens and City staff about the laws and policies governing:

- Conflict of interest and other government ethics violations
- Fair and honest campaign financing, including Oakland's limited public financing of candidates
- Transparent and open government, under the Sunshine Ordinance
- Lobbyist registration and reporting

The Commission also sets the salaries of City Council members and adjusts them annually based on the Consumer Price index.

In November 2014, Oakland voters overwhelmingly approved a charter amendment, actively supported by the League, that enhanced and expanded the PEC's enforcement authority and added necessary staffing and resources to do their job. The Commission can conduct investigations, audits and public hearings, issue subpoenas, and impose fines and penalties to assist with its compliance responsibilities.

In October 2015 the PEC and LWVO co-sponsored a public forum on Money in Politics.

The Public Ethics Commission meets on the first Monday of every month at 6:30 PM in Hearing Room One at City Hall. Meetings are open to the public, and we urge all members to attend; the PEC and the League share a common goal of ensuring that city government is honest, open and fair, so let's show them that we are paying attention.

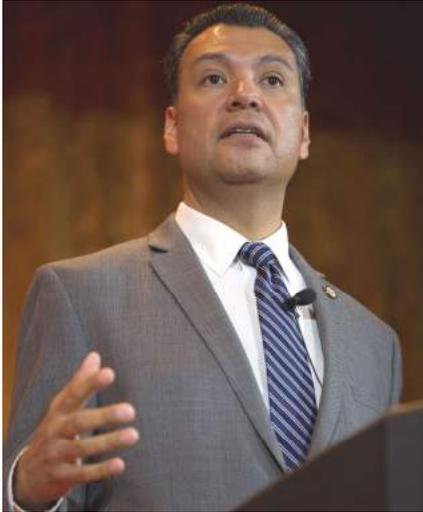
—Katherine Gavzy

It was the biggest ever!

It was one of the best!

# LWV Oakland 25th Annual All City Luncheon

## Our Keynote Speaker



## Making Democracy Work Award winners



**Dale Marie Golden**



**GO Public Schools**  
accepted by Carmelita Reyes

Alex Padilla, CA Secretary of State, spoke eloquently about the need to protect and expand the right to vote.



**We enjoyed coming together to celebrate Oakland and the League.**

# 2016 All-City Luncheon Table Hosts

The League of Women Voters of Oakland is deeply grateful to the following Table Hosts. Their donations make possible the Leagues production of important voter education material like our Oakland Easy Voter Guides (published in English, Chinese, and Spanish), videos of Pros & Cons of local and regional ballot measures, and Who Represents Oakland, names and

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Theresa Nelson Associates  
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Wendel Rosen Black & Dean LLC

**See more scenes from the All-City Luncheon and recognition of our many volunteers in the next Voter!**

## Judicial Forum

On Wednesday, May 11, attend a forum to hear directly from the candidates for Superior Court of Alameda County. There are three seats open this June, six candidates in the mix, and a record turnout predicted for the June primary!

The event will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 in Hearing Room 1 of Oakland City Hall.

The forum is sponsored by the Alameda County Bar Association and many co-sponsors, including the League of Women Voters of Oakland. Don't miss this opportunity to meet the candidates and ask questions.

Can't make the forum? It will be broadcast on Oakland's Public Access TV station, KTOP, after the event.

## Welcome, New Members

Emmy Fearn, Vicki Jacobs, Karen McLennan  
Shonda Scott, Frazier Scurry-Scott

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*As you know, the League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization; we do not speak out for or against any political party or any political candidates. However, the League does sometimes take a position about a Proposition or Measure that it has studied. In June the League supports Measure AA and Proposition 50.*

## Bay Area League Supports Measure AA

The LWV of the Bay Area has endorsed Measure AA, the \$12 parcel tax that will be on the June 2016 ballot in all nine Bay Area counties. This measure needs 2/3 voter approval within the region to pass.

This measure will generate funding for restoration of San Francisco Bay wetlands, benefitting people, wildlife, and the Bay Area economy. More wetlands will improve the bay by filtering out pollution for cleaner water, increasing habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife. The measure will expand Bay trails and shoreline access, and protect low-lying communities and infrastructure from floods.

Our Bay Area positions support conservation and development of the SF Bay and enhancement and preservation of the Bay and its shorelines. LWVUS policies on climate change also support adaptation activities related to climate change, such as sea level rise.

League members are encouraged to go to the campaign website: <http://www.yesonaaforthebay.com> for more information about how to support Measure AA.

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## State League Position on Proposition 50

The LWVC board has voted to support Proposition 50 on the June ballot.

**Suspension of Legislators**--Proposition 50 would give the Legislature clear authority to discipline Senators or Assembly Members by suspending them without pay. Lawmakers should be able to hold their own colleagues accountable if they breach the public's trust. This commonsense measure was placed on the ballot with strong bipartisan support.

It is currently possible to suspend legislators, but not to suspend their salary or benefits. This measure would allow, but not require, the Legislature to suspend a member *and* deem the salary and benefits forfeited.

Such actions are highly unusual. Over the years, five senators have been expelled, and several senators accused of corruption resigned in 1985. The Assembly has never suspended or expelled a member.

**League position on Representative Government:** The League of Women Voters supports measures that promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive.

**Proposition 50 would amend the state Constitution** to give the California Legislature clear authority to suspend members of the Senate or Assembly without pay. This issue came to light in 2014 when three state senators – all charged with criminal offenses – were suspended by a resolution of the Senate. But those members continued to receive their salaries – more than \$95,000 a year – because it was not clear that the Senate had the authority to suspend their pay, as well. The incident frustrated lawmakers and angered the public, which saw it as another example of how lawmakers are shielded from the consequences of their own actions and play by a different set of rules than everyone else.

The constitutional amendment would require the Assembly or the Senate to pass a resolution declaring why the member is being suspended. And to guard against political misuse, the resolution would require the higher threshold of a two-thirds vote for approval.

The National Conference of State Legislatures believes the power to discipline and expel members is inherent to a legislative body. That power has long been a staple of American democracy. It is common practice in most states.

# Formerly Incarcerated Voters

Many Californians mistakenly believe a criminal conviction keeps them from voting. But in fact citizens 18 years and older on probation or community supervision, convicted of a misdemeanor, or off parole have the right to vote. There is no need to apply for reinstatement of rights, as is the case in some other states. All that is needed is to register to vote.

LWVO aims to help dispel these misconceptions. On April 13 Deborah Shefler, Louise Rothman-Riemer and Judy Merrill attended the monthly meeting of county Probation Department providers to explain qualifications for voting and to encourage the represented organizations to include voting rights education among the services they provide to their reentry clients as part of community reintegration. We went over several hand-outs, which Probation included with the meeting minutes distributed to all providers. We have been in touch with several other agencies and organizations that provide services to the reentry community and plan to distribute information and make presentations more broadly. We have begun to staff a table at Prop. 47 clinics, where certain individuals convicted of felonies can apply to have their charges reduced to misdemeanors, triggering the right to vote.

We also attended the county Women, Infants and Children Program staff meeting in late April where we encouraged outreach workers to raise voting rights with their clients. The county Health Department is developing a voter turnout initiative aimed at its many clients and their families, based on the conviction that voting is a public health issue. They will include League presentations in the plan.

If you would like to participate in these or other important Voter Service activities in the fall before the election, including speakers bureau, candidate forums, voter registration, pro/con development for local ballot measures, and/or material distribution, please let us know at [voterservice@lwvoakland.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvoakland.org). With your help we can make a difference in the political future of our country.

—Deborah Shefler

## Membership: Join Us or Renew!

Check the date on your Voter's mailing label; it is the date your membership expires.

No date? You're not a member; please JOIN!

\_\_\_\_\_ \$70 Individual Membership. New \_\_\_ or Renewal \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35 Additional Member at the same address. New \_\_\_\_\_ or Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Student Membership. New \_\_\_ or Renewal \_\_\_

OR \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 10 - \$70 Sliding scale New \_\_\_ or Renewal \_\_\_

(LWVO is a 501(c)4 organization. Dues and donations to LWVO are not tax-deductible)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with your check to: LWVO, 436 14<sup>th</sup> St., Ste .1213, Oakland CA 94612-2723

OR go to our Website to pay by credit card [www.lwvoakland.org](http://www.lwvoakland.org)



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**Calendar**

Visit [lwvoakland.org](http://lwvoakland.org) for more event listings

**CHECK THE MAILING LABEL ABOVE**



Mon., May 9 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Board Meeting	Conference room 710 at 436 14th St.
Wed., May 11 6:00-9:00	Superior Court Candidates Judicial Forum	Hearing Room 1 Oakland City Hall
Mon., May 23	Last day to register to vote in the June 7 election	
Tues., June 7	Primary Election	
Thurs., June 9 5:45-8:45	Annual Meeting	Z Café 2735 Broadway

**Is there a date at the top of it?**

If there's no date at the top of it, you are not a member. Please join; use the membership form on page 7 or go to our website: [www.lwvoakland.org](http://www.lwvoakland.org)

If there is a date, it shows when your membership expires. If it's earlier than 6/30/16, please contact [membership@lwvoakland.org](mailto:membership@lwvoakland.org)