

Oakland Rocks the State League Convention



Eight delegates represented LWVO at the LWVC Convention in San Diego last month.
Back row from left: Mary Bergan, Ernestine Nettles, LWVUS President Elizabeth MacNamara,
LWVC President Helen Hutchison, Louise Rothman-Riemer, Katherine Gavzy
Front row from left: Judy Merrill, Amy Lyons, Deborah Shefler, Bonnie Hamlin

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President's Message

May was a phenomenal month for LWVO. We seemed to go from triumph to triumph. The photos and articles about our annual All-City Luncheon and the State League Convention featured in these pages should give you an idea of what the excitement is all about.

First the May 13 luncheon: having outgrown Scott's Seafood, we moved to the Scottish Rite Center on Lake Merritt. We were a little nervous that the change in venue would keep people away, but it looks like this will turn out to be one of our best-attended events ever. The charisma of our speaker Dr. Sylvia Earle was an attraction, and as one of our loyal table sponsors and supporters told me, "People will always want to go to a League event, because you are a brand. Everyone trusts and respects you." This year, with added features like the book signing and photo opportunities, I think our guests also had fun. This success would not have been possible without our hard-working LWVO volunteers, recognized by name on page five.

Then just a few days later, Oakland rocked the



Katherine Gavzy

State League convention. That was the heading of a photo of our eight delegates in their Oaklandish tee shirts that went viral on Facebook and Twitter, and is on the cover of this newsletter. As the largest League in California, we were a major presence at Convention. I was proud that both the LWVC President Helen Hutchison and the convention parliamentarian Mary Bergan are LWVO members. I was even prouder when we received an award for innovative Voter Service projects; the story on the next page tells you more about the exciting Voter Service events at Convention. Other local League presidents at convention kept asking me for the "secret of your success" (yes, they really did!). The answer was easy: it's our members. We will focus in the coming year on building membership and leadership. You are all potential League leaders – just find your passion among the many activities and involvement opportunities that were presented at Annual Meeting on June 3, and jump right in.

- Katherine Gavzy

League of Women Voters of Oakland 2014-15 Board of Directors

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Convention Report: Voter Service

LWVO members Ernestine Nettles, Deborah Shefler, Bonnie Hamlin, and Judy Merrill attended a very productive Voter Service Workshop at the Convention. We were encouraged to build partnership relationships with other organizations in the community – to come into the relationship as an equal, discover what we can offer to them toward their goals and projects, and stay with them even after an election is over. We were reminded that relationships are more motivating than information.

We heard some ideas for working with diverse communities: first and foremost, to understand the issues affecting that community by asking! And a great line to remember: If voting isn't important, why is so much time and money being spent nationally to take it away?

During the last part of the workshop each table

brainstormed where Voter Service could have an impact that mattered. Some of us took on the problem of how to get students reregistered with their updated addresses each time they moved, so they'd be ready for the next election. We think we have workable ideas which won't demand too much volunteer time, one of which is to work with Peralta Community College District to get this info and link to the Registrar of Voters when students register for classes online. Next step: check in with PCCD about their goals for students in our democracy.

- Judy Merrill and Deborah Shefler



From left:
Mony Flores-Bauer,
Deborah Shefler,
and Kathy Souza

Convention Report: Democracy in Dialogue

Four LWVO members attended the very rewarding four-part Democracy in Dialogue Workshop. In each section we heard from a different LWV League.

LWV San Diego took Pros and Cons into a (free!) wine and beer “party” for 20-30 year olds, sitting around large tables with a LWV leader at each. Attendees left feeling they could make more informed voting decisions, and that they had increased appreciation and respect for the League's neutrality and professionalism. They requested future gatherings, possibly a series about politics.

LWV San Luis Obispo County described the many steps they took to “Create Common Ground for Civility,” including trainings for public officials and citizens and an informative and lively glossy handout. Their next step is to summarize the most significant information from that handout on a bookmark to save money and for broader distribution. They encouraged attendees to “make promoting civil discourse in your community a priority for your League.”

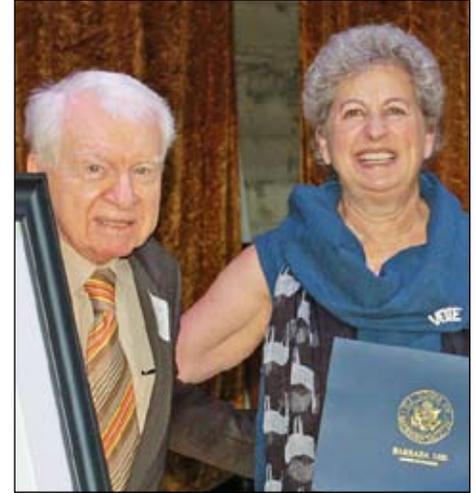
North County San Diego LWV encouraged us to “Create Democracy Hubs with Academic Institutions,” which they described as a “win/win – an accreditation component for them and outreach to a younger demographic for LWV.”

The Washington state LWV walked us through their “Training Communities for Civility,” a professionally produced series of skills-building workshops to support civil discussions between and among community members and public officials. They are currently in discussion with UC Davis to bring their program to California communities.

Each of these sections gave us ideas and resources to build on here in Oakland, as well as actual people to call for further advice. Our big problem now: which of the rich possibilities to incorporate first? If in reading this summary you are inspired by the concept of promoting civility in public life, please contact voterservice@lwvoakland.org. With your participation, we could take action.

- Judy Merrill and Deborah Shefler

LWVO Holds All-City Luncheon May 13



More than a luncheon, more than a fundraiser, this year's annual All-City Luncheon really felt like a celebration.

Held for the first time at the Scottish Rite Center, a beautiful art deco building on the western shore of Lake Merritt, the luncheon drew participants from all over the city to meet and mingle in the spacious ballroom that included, in addition to the dining area, a photo backdrop, a no-host bar, and a table where Diesel Books displayed books by keynote speaker Dr. Sylvia Earle and other books about the oceans. Also new this year were large screens showing slides about the League, the program, and slides and film clips to accompany Dr. Earle's inspiring talk about the importance of our oceans, and a more professional sound system than we've had in the past.

The League's Making Democracy Work awards were given to Sandy Threlfall, Executive Director of

WaterfrontAction, and the Oakland Museum Women's Board, which for 50 years has provided funding for our wonderful Oakland Museum of California, primarily by working nearly year-round on the annual spring White Elephant Sale. Congresswoman Barbara Lee also honored our MDW awardees with Certificates of Special Congressional Recognition, which LWVO president Katherine Gavzy presented to Sandy and to Rose Jellison, president of the Women's Board.

We are grateful to our donors and the volunteers (listed on the next page) who worked to make this year's luncheon such a success.

- Bonnie Hamlin and Sandy Venning.

Top photos from left: Rose Jellison, Katherine Gavzy, Lori Fogarty; Sylvia Earle; John Sutter, Sandy Threlfall; bottom photos from right: Aeshah Clottey, Sylvia Earle; Ernestine Nettles, Katherine Gavzy, Cheryl Perry League, Marisel Brown



Luncheon a Fundraising Success

LWVO's Annual All-City Luncheon is our major fundraiser each year. As a result of the generosity of our table supporters and others who buy individual tickets, we are able to take on important projects like Oakland's Easy Voter Guide, printed in English, Spanish, and Chinese and distributed free to Oakland voters, and Pros & Cons videos of local and county ballot measures.

This year we maintained our record number of table supporters from last year. We are especially grateful to the following for raising the level of their support: BART, Bell Investment Advisors, and Oakland Housing Authority, and to the following new table supporters: Charles Schwab, Oakland Museum women's board, Carol Booth, CliffordMoss LLC, Make Oakland Better Now!, Grand Lake Gardens/Piedmont Gardens, and Waste Management of Alameda County.

Hearty Thanks to Luncheon Volunteers

Thanks to the following for helping to make May 13, 2015 go so smoothly: Carole Agnello, Nancy Auker, Peter and Judi Bank, Mary Bergan, Meg and Larry Bowerman, Nan Butterworth, Peter Crigger and Joey Hansell, Carolyn DeVol, Lorraine Force, Jim Graham, Annemarie Hallin, Shelly Hamalian, Bonnie Hamlin, Gretchen Hayes, Ann Killebrew, Ron Landskroner, Amy Lyons, Alec MacDonald, Ernestine Nettles, Cynthia O'Malley, Janet Rodriguez, Louise Rothman-Riemer, Rosalee Schubert, Alice Schultz, Pat Schwinn, Deborah Shefler, Mary Stemmler, Sue Veit, Sandy Venning, Allene Warren, Mary Weinstein, and Dawna Williams.

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The League About Town

Some say that the political arena is still a good old boys' network. Well, in my travels about the town I met a group of women – five generations in fact – at an Ignite Fems with Fervor event that emphatically contradicts all the stereotypes.

The California Ignite Fems with Fervor event celebrated emerging and seasoned leaders who are out making the world move – like Tomiquia Moss, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf's Chief of Staff, and Olga Talamante, political activist and the current executive director of the California-based Chicana/Latina Foundation, as well as Ignite's youngest awardee of the evening, Jennifer Cortez. Jennifer is currently a junior at Oakland's Lionel Wilson College Prep, where she serves as the first non-senior Student Body President. The League's own Casey Farmer, a staffer for District 3's Lynette Gibson McElhaney, had a



Olga Talamante

chance to engage with many of the recipients and I'm sure will be taking pointers back to assist in her council duties. I invite you to check out this organization (www.ignitenational.org) because one of these days our next Commander in Chief could emerge from it.

Searching for even more brilliant women-about-town, I attended the 127th commencement at Mills College where League member Libby Schaaf, Mayor of Oakland, was the commencement speaker. She spoke about kindness and curiosity – no doubt the recipe that earned her the keys to the city. Her advice was invaluable and we all couldn't be more proud to see the myriad of women graduating with Public Policy degrees and Political, Legal, Economic Analysis (PLEA) degrees, all with great futures in the political and civic arena.

- Dawna Williams

Time to Renew Your Membership

Most LWVO memberships expire on June 30, 2015. Please renew NOW! Dues for the first member at an address are \$70, with \$35 for each additional member at the same address, as adopted at the June 3 Annual Meeting. Your renewal form, Interest Survey, and an envelope addressed to the League office are in this newsletter.

Our membership year runs from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. We ask EVERYONE to renew before July 1, even if you have joined in the months since last July 1. (If you joined recently, i.e., since April 1, you do not owe further dues at this time, but, if you did not fill out an Interest Survey when you joined, please do so now.)

To calculate your pro-rated dues if you joined mid-year, see the table available on the League's website (www.lwvoakland.org). Please note that the date when your membership expires is at the top of the mailing label on your Voter newsletter.

Everyone who fills out the Interest Survey and returns it to us when renewing will be entered in a drawing that will be held next December at our Holiday Party. The grand prize is a free ticket to our 2016 All-City Luncheon.

- Bonnie Hamlin

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A Loss in the League Family

We mourn the loss and celebrate the life of 25-year League member Beverly Solo who died May 23, 2015. Bev joined the League in 1990, becoming involved immediately in helping to create the original database for our All-City Luncheon. She first came on the board of directors in 1998 when she succeeded long-time treasurer Gertrude Young. Continuing as Treasurer until 2006, she also became the

League's first webmaster in 2005, a job she held up to the present. In addition to her service with the League, Bev was a devoted volunteer with the Chabot Space and Science Center.

Bev lived at Saint Paul's Towers where she was Past President of the Resident Council and active on many committees. At Saint Paul's, as with the League and at Chabot, Bev was always a willing and stalwart volunteer. She will be missed by all.

Phyllis White-Ayanruoh to Chair Membership

As of this writing our League is the largest in the State. Our recent All-City Luncheon brought in more new members, which is gratifying and adds to our strength in the community and the impact of our work.

It is time to pass on the baton to a new Membership Chair and we are delighted that Phyllis White-Ayanruoh has agreed to serve. Phyllis is a docent in the Oakland Museum's Natural Sciences Section and already has brought the League to the attention of her colleagues at the Museum.

The coming year will be an important one for membership as we work to increase active participation in the voting process as we prepare for the elections of 2016.

To make democracy work we must engage people in the process, especially voting. Our last election cycle produced a low voter turnout, which with a greater numbers of members we can help to correct, especially here in Oakland.

Membership will continue its outreach to all parts of our diverse community and will continue with small dinners and small salon-type gatherings in the evening to educate and energize our members and prospective members.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Membership Chair and I will continue to work with Phyllis and

Membership News

Welcome to the following new members:

Amy Bess

Teresa Johns

Elena Krause

Madeleine Nelson

Kathleen Price

Deborah Calahan Smith

Lynne Spickard

Sarah Ting

Rose Works

Welcome back:

Marisel Brown

Diane Lewis

Bryan Parker

the committee as I move on to other duties. We look forward to keeping the momentum going to build our League and make good on our mission to make democracy work.

- Louise Rothman-Riemer



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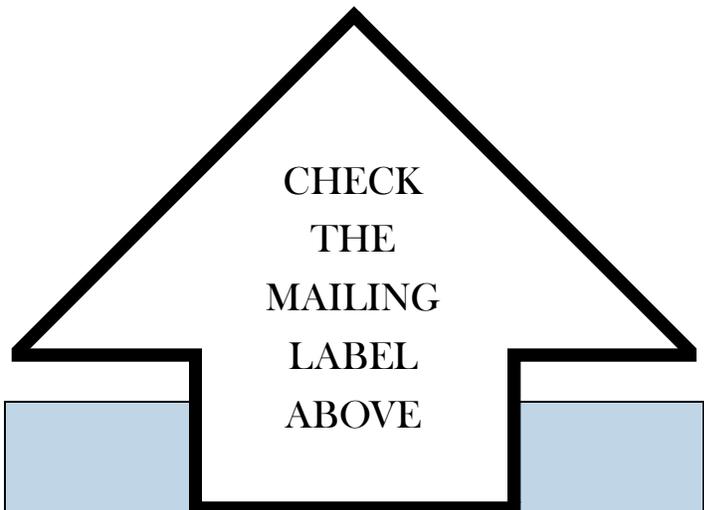
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LWVO hosted its Annual Meeting on the evening of June 3 at the Laney Bistro. Robert Ogilvie (right), SPUR's Oakland director, delivered the keynote.



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; see how to do so at www.lwvoakland.org.

If there is a date, it shows when your membership expires. Renew by using the renewal form and Interest Survey in this edition.

