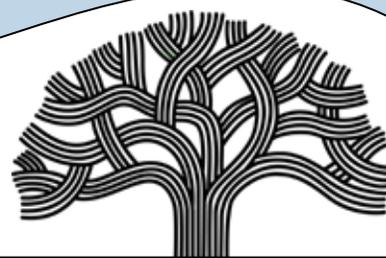


VOTER



Making Oakland a Successful Urban Place

The Call to Annual Meeting is enclosed in this issue of the *Voter*. Please save it and bring it with you as we gather to vote on a program and a budget for the coming year, elect a new Board for 2015-17, enjoy sharing a delicious dinner with old and new friends, and hear about the future of urbanism in our city from the Oakland director of renowned civic planning organization SPUR.



Robert Ogilvie

Who:

Our speaker Robert Ogilvie is the director of SPUR's newly-opened Oakland office. Over the past 20 years he has worked extensively in community development and planning to help improve low- and middle-income neighborhoods. He has served as a faculty member in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and as director of volunteers at the Partnership for the Homeless in New York City.

Where:

The Bistro on Laney College's campus, 900 Fallon Street between 9th and 10th Streets. Street parking is available, and the Lake Merritt BART parking lot is across from the campus with free spaces after 3 p.m. Some spaces are available in the Laney College lot.

When:

Wednesday, June 3, with registration at 5:45, and dinner and program from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Tickets:

Still only \$15 for dinner and meeting. Reserve your place before May 28 by contacting the League office at 834-7640 or info@lwwoakland.org. To help us keep registration fast and efficient, please mail your check before May 28 to League of Women Voters of Oakland, 436 14th Street Suite 1213, Oakland, CA 94612.

- Yolanda Schonbrun

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President's Message

At the State League Convention in May, each local League will be asked to present “three brags” – sharing three accomplishments of the past year that they are especially proud of. I have been pondering what to say and would like to share it with our own members too. This has been such an exciting year for LWVO, there is much to crow about. So here goes.



Katherine Gavzy

distributed throughout the city as a free insert in the *East Bay Express*, our professionally-produced videos with pros and cons of local ballot measures, and use of social media to promote candidate forums.

Brag #3: Membership

By now you all know that we have become the largest League in the state, meeting and surpassing our growth targets

Brag #1: Action

During the November '14 election we were asked to support and sign arguments for three local ballot measures – Public Safety Measure Z, Public Ethics Commission Measure CC, and Citizens Redistricting Measure DD. All four won by wide margins and their proponents cited League support as instrumental to their success.

Brag #2: Voter Service

Oakland will receive an award at the Convention for creative and innovative use of communications for voter service, particularly the Oakland Easy Voter Guide

through targeted outreach and personal contact. Our membership committee volunteers focus on connecting with new members to learn their interests, and on retaining members by keeping them involved. Membership and this committee are the lifeblood of the League. They welcome anyone who would like to help out – come hear more about it at Annual Meeting.

Which brings us to Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 3 starting at 5:45 p.m. This is always a wonderful opportunity to participate in the decisions that will drive the League forward into another successful year, and also to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. If you know someone who has recently joined

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Join our social network!
twitter.com/LWV_Oakland
facebook.com/lwvoak



LWVO, please bring her or him with you.

And consider bringing a friend to the Luncheon on May 13 (see below). This popular event sells out every year, so hurry to get your ticket by responding to the

invitation you received in the mail at the end of March or online at www.lwvoakland.org/luncheon2015.html. See you there!

- Katherine Gavzy

Last Call for Annual Luncheon

It's not too late! Last minute reservations are still being accepted for LWVO's 24th Annual All-City Luncheon on Wednesday, May 13 from 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mail your check to LWVO, 436 14th Street, Suite 1213, Oakland, CA 94612, or visit www.lwvoakland.org to buy your tickets using a credit card. The deadline is Friday, May 8.

The event represents a three-for-one:

- A tasty lunch with friends
- A chance to honor Sandra Threlfall and the Oakland Museum Women's Board, winners of our 2015 Making Democracy Work Awards

- An inspiring talk by Dr. Sylvia Earle, *Time Magazine's* first "Hero for the Planet"

All of this will happen in the lovely ballroom of Oakland's Scottish Rite Center at 1547 Lakeside Drive.

If you have any questions, call (510) 834-7640 or send an email to info@lwvoakland.org.



Dr. Sylvia Earle

- Bonnie Hamlin

March Program Considers Public Pensions

At our monthly "Wednesdays with the League" March Program, the LWVO had a unique opportunity to hear about this year's city budget process as it relates to city employee public pensions.

Dan Borenstein (pictured), an award-winning columnist and editorial writer for the Bay Area News Group (including the *Contra Costa Times*, the *Oakland Tribune*, and the *San Jose Mercury News*) informed the LWVO about public finance issues, government employee pensions, and how these costs have shaped public policy at the local and state levels.

By the end of his well-documented presentation (with plenty of graphics), LWVO members were better able to comprehend the complicated formulas involved in public pensions. One of our members commented on the manner in which Dan presented the topic: "The Pension program was enlightening and audience well-informed with great questions and discussion. I certainly learned a lot particularly about Oakland pension history and the way things worked pre-Prop 13."

- Yolanda Schonbrun



The League Looks at the City Budget



On April 22, our Hot Topics meeting became Mayor (and LWVO member) Libby Schaaf’s virtual town hall meeting. The mayor gave a primer on the budget, outlined her priorities, and asked for feedback on whether they are the right ones and how they can be achieved fairly and responsibly. She and budget director Kiran Bawa fielded questions on the deficit and long-term liabilities (the budget will be balanced), police overtime (contributes to officer burnout, is less costly than new officers), violence prevention programs (will be continued because of Measure Z), affordable housing (seeking outside funds), the use of one-time funds (not for ongoing operations, possibly for capital outlays, including technology).

The April 22 event followed up on our March 25 meeting with Councilmember Abel Guillen, who discussed “building a budget for the common good.” He

described councilmembers’ attempts to seek a balance between the needs of their districts with those of the city as a whole. Participants asked a variety of questions, such as: How can we deal with the \$19 million deficit the city faces? Can we pay down some of the city’s debt to keep it from growing? How can we increase the number of well-paying jobs for Oaklanders?

Going forward, residents have additional opportunities to become more informed and involved on this topic. Much information on the budget is available on the city website, www.oaklandnet.com. You will also find times and locations for community budget forums on May 7, 11, 13, 18, 27, and 30. And watch your e-mail and social media for a League discussion on the particulars of the budget sometime in May.

*- Mary Bergan, photos by Leslie Smith
All photos come from the April 22 meeting*



The League About Town

There are many networks out there with a large membership. Figure there's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, and the growing Google+, to name just a few. Nowadays it is becoming rarer to find people not connected to at least one major network, but we thought it's time to ditch the social media for a spell and get out there and do it the old fashioned way: shake some hands and offer a friendly League-like smile.

Although social media has done wonders for spreading the Oakland Leagues message of late, there is nothing like breaking bread and having a real down-home conversation with some amazing people who are making the world more! We've attended some great events during our travels about town, and here are two notables.

President Katherine Gavzy and board member Dawna Williams attended the 17th Annual Madam C. J. Walker Business and Community Awards Luncheon hosted by the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Inc., Oakland Bay Area Chapter, a local non-profit organization that offers a variety of programs and services that enrich the lives of women, young girls, and families. We were lucky to have been invited by LWVO member Cheryl Perry League, President of the Bay Area Chapter 100 Black Women Inc. The keynote speaker Rosalind Hudnell of Intel gave a personal and heartfelt speech about courage and vulnerability that was unforgettable and inspiring, and certainly reached the hearts and minds of every woman in attendance.

The women of POWER (Progressive Oakland Women Empowering Reform) have done it again with another truly memorable women's history month event held on the beautiful Mills College campus. What a fitting tribute to have such notable women like Oakland City Attorney (and LWVO member) Barbara Parker, former Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner, Oakland Fire Chief, Teresa Deloach-Reed, Lynette Jung Lee, a strong community activist, Gerri Lange, former media personality, and Betty Soskin, a real Rosie the Riveter and the oldest working member of the National Park Service. The speaker reflected on the historic civil rights and women's movements, as well as where we stand now. Many local Leaguers were among the event organizers and in the audience.

LWVO has joined the Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, our partner in successful candidate forums and voter education projects. We are now one of the many major nonprofit organizations in the Chamber. This move has opened up excellent opportunities to connect with active and influential Oaklanders at Chamber events, and to get our message of making democracy work out to the wider community. Look for mentions of upcoming Chamber events and accounts of activities involving LWVO in future *Voter* articles.

If you've got an event you think League members might be interested in, drop us a line or share it on Facebook ([facebook.com/lwvoak](https://www.facebook.com/lwvoak)) or Twitter (twitter.com/LWV_Oakland).

- *Dawna Williams*

State and Bay Area Leagues Targeting Climate Change

Two bills now in the California Legislature are critical to the continued efforts to mitigate climate change. SB 32 and SB 350 will extend current greenhouse gas emission reductions and petroleum reduction targets to 2050 and 2030 respectively. LWV California supports SB 32 and supports in concept SB 350 (see www.lwvc.org

Bill Status Report for information).

LWV Bay Area is sponsoring a caucus at the LWVC Convention in San Diego, Saturday morning, May 16, 7:30 to 8:30 am. Join us to learn more about how to advocate for these important bills, or visit lwvbayarea.org for more details.

- *Linda Craig*

LWVO Dues Increase Proposed

After many years and much debate, the Board of the LWVO will recommend an annual dues increase of \$5.00 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015. This would mean that regular single member dues would be \$70, not \$65, and additional household member dues would go up to \$35. The proposed budget for 2015-2016 that will be presented for approval to the members at Annual Meeting on June 3 will reflect this change. Why was this recommendation made?

Your dues to the LWVO are divided three ways, to national, state, and local. It may be a surprise to you to learn that almost all of your dues go not to the local League but to the national and state Leagues in the form of Per Member Payments (PMP). That is because this is how the state and national arms of the League of Women Voters pay for a significant portion of their support staff and program. Out of each person's dues the Oakland League presently keeps only 15 percent. Both the national and the state Leagues are requesting increases from the local Leagues to fund their increasing expenses. If we do not raise our dues, the portion we keep to fund our own programs will go down to only 10 percent. Our proposed budget for the coming fiscal year also includes plans for more innovative and active fund raising, but that will not be enough to fully cover the cost of the PMP increases, and fundraising uses up volunteer time and energy that could be devoted to voter service and advocacy.

What are the state and national Leagues doing with our Per Member Payments? National is engaged

in essential work to combat the corrupting influence of money in politics, to defend voting rights around the country, and to support ongoing studies like the one on amending the Constitution. These are issues fundamental to the purpose and mission of the League, especially now. State League is our primary source of information on ballot measures so we can continue our widely-respected voter information in the Voter Guides and ballot measure Pros and Cons. State also uses our funds to lobby the legislature in support of our positions.

As the League across the country girds itself for a major election in 2016, we need all our resources to keep doing this work. This is true in Oakland as well: the Oakland Easy Voter Guide costs up to \$25,000 to produce, to cite one outstanding example. We cannot practically increase our efficiency and effectiveness in meeting those needs if we have even less money to spend.

We understand that for some this may make it more difficult to pay your full annual dues. But LWVO has a dues assistance fund for that purpose. If the \$5 increase is a real financial stretch for you, when renewing membership you can simply request money from the dues assistance fund to cover that increase with no questions asked. The fund is not large but it is there to help. This will be voted on at our Annual Meeting on June 3. We hope you understand and will support the dues increase.

- Katherine Gavzy and Louise Rothman-Riemer

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Membership News

Welcome New Members:

Ruth Balter

Barbara Goldenberg

Mary Stemmler

Ruth Stroup

Roseann Torres

Bay Area Monitor Launches New Reporting Strategy

In the summer of 2014, the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Education Fund established its Water Education Initiative — a new project that was specially funded by water agencies, individual League members, and one local League.

This allowed us to recruit journalist Robin Meadows as a reporting fellow for the *Bay Area Monitor*. In this role, Robin has been writing a series of six in-depth water articles that we have been publishing in Volume 40 of the *Monitor*. Robin's series has drawn significant reader praise, and we have submitted it for an environmental reporting award.

This summer, we are applying the fellowship

structure to all of our coverage as a way to bolster our content and pay our writers a fairer wage. We have assembled a team of four talented journalists (Robin Meadows, Cecily O'Connor, Leslie Stewart, and Liz Devitt) to each cover a designated topic (water, transportation, air/energy, and open space) in Volume 41.

We ask that you join us in supporting their important work with a financial contribution.

Our formal fundraising campaign will begin soon, but if you would like to learn more now, please e-mail editor@bayareamonitor.org or call (510) 839-1608. You can also check our website (www.bayareamonitor.org) for updates, or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/bayareamonitor).

SHARE THIS WITH FRIENDS — INVITE THEM TO JOIN US!

Membership in the League of Women Voters of Oakland is a bargain and a statement. It's a bargain because you will have access to valuable information and insights via *The Voter* newsletters and LWV websites, through membership not only in LWVO but also in LWV Bay Area, LWV California and LWVUS, and via a variety of events and dialogues with key leaders throughout the year.

Your statement as a League member will be that you are committed to providing non-biased, well-researched information to voters, and that the issues your League follows are those that affect every area in Oakland: schools, public safety, local government, parks, our economy, and more.

Join the League, one of the nation's most trusted, nonpartisan grassroots organizations where "hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement."

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership (\$65) | <input type="checkbox"/> Each additional member at an address (\$32.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student membership (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Income (\$10 minimum) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Susan B. Anthony Membership (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership (\$250) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrie Chapman Catt Membership (\$500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Name/Names: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ ZIP: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening: _____ E-mail: _____

Make checks payable to LWVO, and mail to 436 14th Street, Suite 1213, Oakland CA 94612.

Dues are not tax deductible.



The League of Women Voters of Oakland
 436 14th Street, Suite 1213
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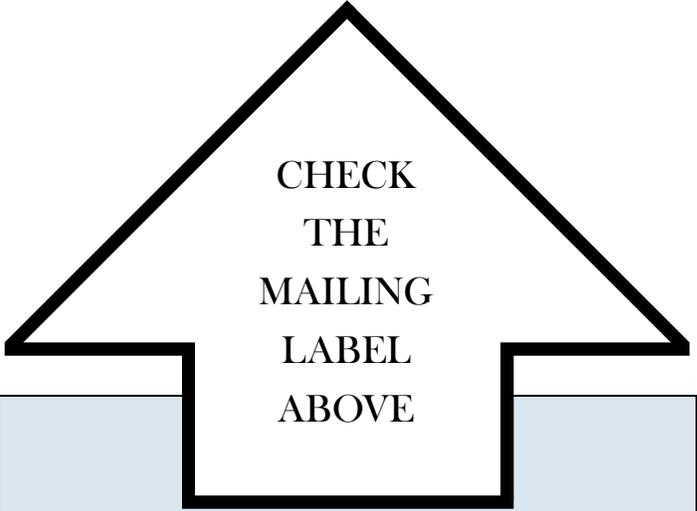
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CALENDAR
 (Visit lwvoakland.org for more event listings)

Monday, May 11 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	LWVO Board Meeting	Central Building 2nd Floor ConferenceRoom 436 14th Street
Wednesday, May 13 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.	All-City Luncheon	Scottish Rite Center 1547 Lakeside Drive
Wednesday, June 3 5:45 to 8:30 p.m.	Annual Meeting	The Bistro Laney College 900 Fallon Street
Monday, June 8 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	LWVO Board Meeting	Central Building 2nd Floor ConferenceRoom 436 14th Street



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 coming soon.