

You're Invited to the League's Holiday Party

Friday, December 12 is the League Holiday Party. The party will be held at the home of Louise Rothman-Riemer and Davis Riemer (check your member directory for the address and phone number) in Upper Rockridge. We will begin at 6:30 p.m. and go until we stop or drop. Please join us!



you to act with the League to make democracy work, we will have a raffle for all those who have completed an interest survey and turned it in prior to December 12. To qualify for gift certificates to local merchants, a guest ticket to the annual League luncheon, and other exciting prizes, please complete an interest

This is a pot luck affair, but don't let it stop you if you don't have time to bring something to share – we would rather have you there. Meet your fellow League members and find out how they are responding to the recent elections. We had some great results in Oakland, so come raise a glass and make a toast to what Oakland is becoming.

Because we want to engage you and encourage

survey; you can do it online at www.lwvoakland.org/interest_survey_link.html in four minutes.

We look forward to sharing another great League year with you. Join or renew now and help us meet our goal of 330 members by January 31.

Happy Holidays, and see you on the twelfth.

- Louise Rothman-Riemer

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President's Message

The year 2014 is coming to a close, and what a year it was! Looking through older issues of *The Voter*, I was struck by the way that issues we discussed early in the year remained important throughout and continue to absorb our energies. To borrow the language of enterprise marketing, this demonstrates consistency in theme and message, helping to give the League a clear identity/brand in the public's mind. Or, in plain language, we are doing the right thing. For example, we launched these efforts:

1. Our Action Committee announced that LWVO was partnering with other local civic groups to draft a citizens independent redistricting measure for the November ballot. As you know by now, this became the successful Measure DD. We played a major role in drafting and advocating for it. Now we urge our members to understand the impact and to consider applying for the commission (see next page, bottom).

2. We held a Hot Topics meeting on the effectiveness of Measure Y on violence prevention, and how a successor measure could do better. This became Measure Z in November. Again, LWVO was important to the passage of Measure Z. We expect that the City will call on us to help ensure transparency and citizen oversight when it is implemented.

3. At our annual Program Planning meeting in January, members achieved consensus on the Education Committee's proposed update to our local Education position. Meanwhile, Oakland Unified School District acquired a new superintendent and began close analysis of strategic and financial plans. The Education Committee is following developments and will ensure that OUSD is aware of our priorities. See the Committee's report on page six.

4. LWVO was active on the Ethics and Good Government working group, and very active in supporting the successful November ballot measure to empower the Public Ethics Commission.

5. We devoted both the June Annual Meeting and the September kick-off program to what may be the most timely and crucial topic of all: money in politics.

LWVO is truly ending 2014 with a bang: growth in membership, growth in involved members, (see the long list of Voter Service volunteers recognized in the last issue, many of them new or recently joined), increased visibility and respect in the Oakland community. Come celebrate a great year at the Holiday Party on Friday, December 12.

- Katherine Gavzy

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Election Proves to Be a Really Hot Topic

Everyone had something to contribute to the post-election Hot Topics discussion on November 19. League members were joined by friends and others who had been active in one campaign or another. Here are some take-aways:

Mayor-elect Libby Schaaf seems determined to show that she will be mayor for the entire city.

No one had any ideas about whom she'll tap for city administrator or vice-mayor. She is very committed to using tech to make city government more accessible and responsive.

Two new Council members will likely bring a change in council dynamics. We all hope that the move towards civil discussion and transparency will continue. Rebecca Kaplan seems to be the most logical choice to become council president.

Is there now an opportunity to reform Council meetings to make them more frequent and/or less lengthy?

The quality of the school board candidates was impressive. Should board members be paid as councilmembers are? Few people appreciate the time and study of the issues they have to devote to their positions.

Yes, Oakland has a history of gerrymandering. The last redistricting went well, but the commission created by Measure DD will make it fairer.



The League hosted a discussion about the election at its November 19 Hot Topics meeting.

Council member Lynette McElhaney came in to express her thanks to the League for our work on Measure Z and give us credit for the new commission's having a

greater role in reviewing and evaluating the use of funds and recommending changes.

Now, can we make Measure BB (transportation) oversight mean something?

Not everyone voted for Measure FF (minimum wage), wishing it were being phased in over a period of time. Will restaurants expand the use of service charges to replace tips?

Some still don't understand or like ranked choice voting. But more are becoming comfortable with it and appreciate that there was little negative campaigning. The one negative piece was put out by an independent expenditure and was largely ignored.

People were pleased and excited about their campaign activities. And they learned more about Oakland.

- Mary Bergan, photo by Sandy Venning

Measure DD: A New Approach to Redistricting

Among the measures passed in November, Oakland voters approved a significant change in how the boundaries of Oakland City Council and School Board districts are drawn – Measure DD.

The way political lines are drawn can have a profound impact on the significance of your vote. Redistricting happens every 10 years, after each federal census. It ensures that each of our elected representatives – at all levels – represents approximately the same number of people. In the past, the district lines for

the Oakland City Council and the School Board were decided on by the City Council. This meant there was always a temptation to draw those lines in a way that helped or hurt current or potential future city council and school board members.

Measure DD was modeled on the highly successful California Independent Redistricting Commission, instituted by voters with the passage of Prop 11 in 2008 and Prop 20 in 2010. California took state
(continued on page 4)

DD (*from page 3*)

redistricting out of the hands of elected officials, and put it into the hands of an independent commission. Measure DD does the same thing for Oakland.

The commission will be required to do all of their work in public, and to engage Oaklanders in the process of defining our district lines. They will be required to use a set of criteria that ensures that:

- communities of interest are kept together, and
- neighborhoods and natural geographic boundaries are respected.

This process will begin in 2019, when we start by recruiting and choosing a commission. Just as California's process is serving as a model for other states, we expect that Oakland's process will be a model for other cities all over the country.

Redistricting should ensure that people choose their representatives, not protect current officeholders. A new independent commission will help achieve this goal.

- Helen Hutchison

Ethics Act Approved

Following on the recent overwhelming voter approval of the charter amendment to strengthen the authority, structure, and staffing of the Public Ethics Commission (PEC), the City Council approved, 7-0, the Government Ethics Act, championed by the LWVO, at its regular meeting November 18. The ordinance will become law following a second reading at a forthcoming City Council meeting.

Currently, there is no comprehensive local ethics ordinance in Oakland. The new law will fill that gap by providing a clear and comprehensive framework of ethics rules for City staff and officials. It will codify and consolidate all existing ethics laws currently in place at the state and local level, and address needs that are unique to Oakland. Finally, it will authorize the PEC to enforce the provisions in the ordinance.

The LWVO worked closely with the Ethics subcommittee of the City Council, chaired by Councilmember Dan Kalb, incorporating public input, best practices, and PEC guidance into the successful Charter Amendment, which calls for this ordinance.

- Deborah Shefler

Serve on Oakland Oversight Commissions

Two parcel tax measures, Measures N and Z, easily passed on November 4. Both provide opportunities for LWV Oakland members to participate in the planning, accountability, and evaluation of the programs mandated by these measures.

Measure N, the "College and Career Readiness For All Fund," establishes a commission of five members to advise, monitor, and report to the Board of Education on the applicable use of funds. The commission will review and recommend for Board approval the plans which high schools must submit annually in order to receive Measure N funding. Members must meet criteria related to education policy and/or finance. If you meet the criteria, or know a talented person who does, contact the Board at 510-879-8199 for guidance on submitting

an application. You can find the text of Measure N at <http://www.acgov.org/rov/elections/20141104/documents/MeasureN-v3.pdf>.

Measure Z, the "Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act," establishes a Commission of nine members, with each councilmember recommending one member and the ninth member appointed by the Mayor. Contact your councilmember directly if you are interested in serving. See Section 4 of Measure Z for specific qualifications (<http://www.acgov.org/rov/elections/20141104/documents/MeasureZ-V3.pdf>).

We're not forgetting the independent redistricting commission. Activity will begin in 2019; you can be sure you'll be hearing from us then.

- Louise Anderson

Democracy Starts Early

How much can a single high school student improve the somewhat disillusioned political environment of society? I found myself asking this very question roughly three months ago while watching our nation's polarized political system go nowhere fast. As a politically and socially aware citizen, I knew something needed to be done. I have always been relatively knowledgeable about city, state, and federal politics and have had a persisting urge to do something worthwhile in my community. However, as an incoming junior at Oakland Technical High, I had no idea where to begin. I decided to sit down and do some research. I wanted to find a major problem with a plausible situation. I stumbled across this statistic: In the 2008 presidential election (which had the highest voter turnout rate in 30 years) less than 60% of eligible voters made it to the polls (US Census 2012). I was shocked at how few eligible voters were even registered to vote for the last presidential election. It then started making sense. The source of our country's problems stemmed from the simple fact that not enough people vote. The democratic rights that give structure to our nation's Republic have been neglected to the point of disintegration. Nothing is going to be decided in the best interest of the people without the people expressing their best interests. The beginning of the solution to this problem involves a simple, five-minute process that enables every U. S. citizens over 18 years of age to exercise their legislative rights: voter registration.

Further research revealed that voter participation was particularly lacking in disadvantaged urban communities, the same ones that make up much of the Bay Area. In addition, all Oakland Unified Schools were beginning the school year with the customary "back to school night" where parents are invited to meet their child's teacher and become involved with the school community. I saw this as a perfect opportunity to register young, hopeful, urban citizens in an attempt to make an impact on the disillusioned political environment. The logistics

surrounding such a plan required additional, more experienced assistance, so I connected with the organization with which I am now honored to call myself a member - the League of Women Voters. The LWV, along with the Alameda County Registrar of Voters, provided me with the resources and knowledge to successfully conduct voter drives despite being unable to vote myself. I assembled a small group of my politically-minded friends to form a team of voter registration volunteers to attempt to change the startling statistic.

We commenced registrations at Lafayette Elementary among others, and enjoyed a reasonable amount of registrations. Unfortunately due to the lack of communication infrastructure within Oakland Public Schools (my next mission), we were unable to get in touch with many principals, leaving us unsatisfied in our attempt to register voters. This was when LWV head of voter registration Sandy Venning reached out to me with multiple registration opportunities. Thanks to her, I was able to help with various registration drives including Fremont High School's candidate forum, the Rockridge street festival, and the martyr tradition of Midnight (voter registration) Madness. Throughout these registration drives, I was able to meet and talk to people I probably would've never encountered otherwise, all with the noble goal of making our society more justified and fair. I thoroughly enjoyed helping fellow citizens through their registration, along with educating them on the actual voting process. As an added bonus, I became a member of the League of Women voters and am looking forward to volunteering with political and social projects regarding voter equality and beyond. In the final tally, I was able to either register or re-register nearly 70 voters (with a little help). All in all, I guess with a little determination and support, a high school student really can make an impact on the political environment. I can now say that we are one step closer to attaining the democratic structure intended for our country.

- *Drew Levitt*

Oakland Tech Students Hit the Campaign Trail

I prepared an assignment for my seniors, and shared it with fellow teachers Mr. Pasternak and Mr. Cruz, who also used it in their senior classes. The project involved students working for either (1) an Oakland mayoral candidate, (2) Jerry Brown or Neel Kashkari for Governor, or (3) a measure or proposition on the ballot.

Many of my students worked for the Schaaf campaign or for Measure FF (to increase the minimum wage in Oakland to \$12.25 per hour). They had to keep journals of the work they did and then they had to write a two-page reflection piece. I just finished reading their work and we also had an in-class discussion about the project.

I must say that the students really enjoyed going door-to-door and handing out flyers. They especially

liked the camaraderie of campaign work, with each other, with campaign staff, and even with some of the candidates. Of course, there were disappointments, too, especially when people slammed doors on them and when people hung up phones and shouted at them. But, many of the students felt they really made a difference – the minimum wage will increase and Libby Schaaf is the new mayor of Oakland. One student said she really “learned a lot about the process of campaigning” and another felt “Measure FF passed because of me.” Many students said they would “do this work again,” and I told them that they probably would, as studies show that engaging with the political process in high school means a life-long commitment will ensue.

- Maryann Wolfe (Oakland Tech Teacher)

Ed Com Meets New OUSD Superintendent

On October 20, six LWVO Education Committee members interviewed new (as of July 2014) OUSD Superintendent Antwan Wilson, who outlined his plans and priorities for OUSD, and how LWVO can help.

First, Wilson said he rearranged his cabinet of direct reports, as well as other positions in the OUSD administration, adding some, combining some, and deleting more positions with an overall financial savings to the district. Then he gave an overview of the new way California is funding school districts. Called the Local Control Funding Formula, it gives districts more flexibility in how state funds are distributed to schools, but creates requirements for districts serving

students who are low income, English language learners, and foster children. Every district is required to have a Local Control Accountability Plan, to be updated annually and then reviewed by the California Department of Education every three years.

Wilson sees a need to increase transparency in OUSD regarding administrative actions, budgeting, and plans. After a “first 100 days” of listening and a shorter period of planning, he is now beginning his Action Plan, details of which were presented to the Board of Education at their November 19 meeting and are available for review at www.OUSD.k12.ca.us.

The Education Committee will continue to observe bi-monthly Board of Education meetings and report on Superintendent Wilson’s Action Plan implementation and Board decisions in *The Voter*. Stay tuned.

P.S.: One way LWVO has already helped OUSD was by being in support of Measure N. The measure passed thereby adding \$12 million per year to expand proven college and career pathways to every OUSD high school student!

- Yolanda Schonbrun and Jane Klein



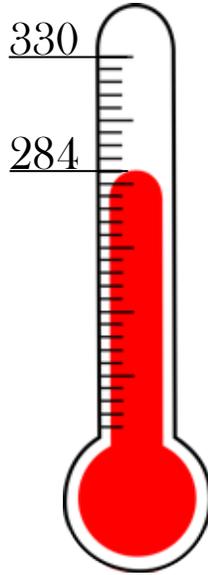
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Membership Drive: 330 Members by January

We are working hard to build the Oakland League. Our goal is to increase our membership by at least 5 percent this year over last year. Translate that into numbers and it says we need 330 members by the end of January 2015.

We are representing our goal with a thermometer graphic – help us raise the thermometer up by joining or renewing. Currently we have 284 new and renewing members. We’d love to persuade the 53 members who have not yet renewed to renew. We need you to renew! We’d love to persuade non-members to join!



To make the League grow and insure our future, we especially want to increase the number of beginning- and mid-career members. To make joining easier, the League has a dues support fund that we especially encourage young professionals and those on a limited income to use.

You can renew on line at www.lwvoakland.org with a credit card or you can print out and send back a renewal form (available on our website or the one we mailed you) along with your check.

We are very proud of our Oakland League and we want it to be stronger and to do an even better job of engaging our community to make Oakland better. So please join and be a part of the action and make a difference.

- Louise Rothman-Riemer

SHARE THIS WITH A FRIEND – 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) |
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Make checks payable to LWVO, and mail to 436 14th Street, Suite 1213, Oakland CA 94612.
Dues are not tax deductible.



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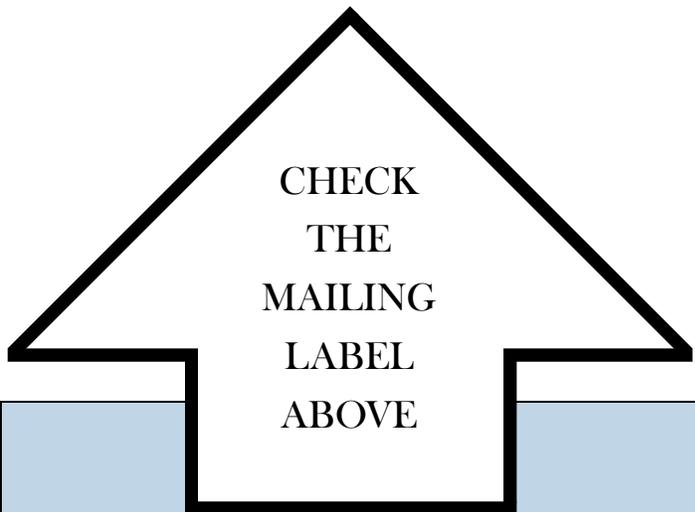


You Can Help Develop LWVO Leadership

The 2015-16 LWVO Nominating Committee is currently accepting suggestions of members to fill on- and off-Board leader positions, including standing committee members and chairpersons. Some positions will not become vacant until 2016-17, so suggestions offered for those jobs will be forwarded to the 2016-17 Nominating Committee.

Please check with any member you suggest for a position to ascertain that he/she is willing to serve during 2015-16 and/or 2016-17 if elected. Feel free to suggest **YOURSELF!**

Direct all suggestions, questions, and concerns to Jane Klein, current Nominating Committee chair, at kleinjane@msn.com or 510-393-8367.



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.