



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Summer 2009

SAN FRANCISCO



Letter from President Karen Clopton

2010 marks the 90th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters. We resurrected our trademark gala fundraiser "Women Who Could Be President" in 2008 to coincide with the birthday celebrations of the League each February. Throughout the history of this fundraising event, the awardees have been extraordinary women community leaders who have generated much support as well as controversy. The League has strived for diversity and excellence in order to attract greater community support for our important voter education and advocacy programs.

We will again canvass our membership, past presidents, past honorees, and sponsors for nominations for the award. The nomination form will be available on our website beginning in June. There appeared to be some confusion about our honoring an elected official in 2009 and whether that was inconsistent with the League's policy about not endorsing candidates for office. Our honoree was neither a candidate for office at the time of the nomination nor when the award was given. This was also true in the past with Judge Lillian Sing and the Honorable Sunne McPeak. Honoring individual achievement and achievers is important, but supporting the greater good of the organization is the overarching goal.

When I attended elementary school in south central Los Angeles, we celebrated "Negro History Week." During that designated week we learned about black history, mainly through the accomplishments of individual leaders, such as Marian Anderson, Langston Hughes, Jackie Robinson, George Washington Carver, and others. The week has since become Black History Month in February and has been joined by Women's History month in March, Hispanic Heritage month in September, and more such designated celebrations.

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SAVE THE DATE ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, June 6

9:30 am to 12 noon

Hobart Building

582 Market Street, First Floor

San Francisco

(near Montgomery BART/MUNI station)

RSVP: lwvsf@lwvsf.org

or 415-989-8683

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(President's Letter Continued)

The teaching of the impact of various disparate groups on American culture remains largely the same, focusing on individual accomplishments instead of incorporating the contributions into the curriculum. This is unfortunate because it continues a divide instead of bringing us all together in the creation and continuation of the nation. By focusing on the individual, we are able to mask the contributions of groups to the American success story and to perpetuate stereotypes about the groups while celebrating the unique attributes of particular individuals.

Many women cringe to hear that ubiquitous grouping of "blacks, Hispanics, native Americans, and other minorities, including women." Women are not a minority in this country yet historically there are similarities between white women and black people, both were considered property of white men, both were disenfranchised and denied the vote, both were told "to stay in their place" and that "place" was a subservient one. The fight for women's suffrage was particularly grueling and served as an emblem of the oppression of American women and their subjugation. I commend the film "Iron Jawed Angels" for its gritty retelling of the final years of the movement that finally brought the vote in 1920. We have shown this film over the years at membership events and plan to do so again.

While there have been similarities, there are also major differences between women and minorities. Again, women are not a minority in the American population. Also, some have argued that white women have benefited the most from Title VII and FEHA. Others point to the glass ceiling in the workplace and the corporate board room. Equal pay for equal work is a particularly American concept, but has not been put in practice in an effective or universally accepted manner.

Women are in the workplace and women will remain in the workplace. Despite continued debate about "stay at home moms" and working mothers, the reality is that it is a necessity for the majority of women in our country to work. With unemployment at an incredible high of over 10 per cent in California, many labor and employment law experts are predicting an equivalent increase in discrimination claims. Historically, women and minorities have filled jobs when white men were unavailable. A good example was during World War II, when "Rosie the Riveter" and women baseball teams were "manning" the front at home. After the war, the women were expected to return to their former "place" to make room for the returning veterans.

It is still very difficult in the workplace for women who are mothers and have children. Healthcare, child care, medical leave, reproductive concerns, lactation needs, and sick leave are everyone's issues, but they have a greater impact on parents in the workplace. Women associates in law firms face a great dilemma when making the choice between work life balance and making partner.

On the other end of the work spectrum, William Tamayo, Regional Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, reports that sexual assault of women in the workplace was on the rise instead of the decline. He reported that complaints were especially high amongst young women in the service industry, in supermarkets, fast food restaurants, and stores. Given the degrading images of young women in the media and the internet, the debasing lyrics of popular music, and the sexualized fashions of popular culture, it is not surprising that promoting equality, safety and respect in the workplace is a daunting task.

Reproductive issues concern working women, especially professional women who defer childbearing to later in their lives. Medical advancement in fertility treatments have made it possible to defer as well as to conceive later. Those with fertility difficulties also have the ability to conceive with medical intervention. Some health insurance covers the treatment, while others must pay for expensive treatments. The debate arises about who should have access to such treatments. This is particularly troubling of late during the controversy about the woman who had 14 children through medical intervention. The debate has raised many issues, including whether only the wealthy should have multiple children, whether only the wealthy should have access to fertility treatments, and what criteria should physicians apply when providing these services.

This controversy also raises the ugly head of eugenics, de-selection, and abortion. Pro-choice adherents and pro-life crusaders alike have had a difficult time with these recent developments. All of which have a significant impact on the workplace when a working mother has multiple births and needs extended leave, medical care, child care, and reasonable accommodation.

Women continue to make strides in the workplace, in the electorate, and in political life. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, the American equivalent to Britain's Prime Minister in many respects, is an excellent example of a woman shattering the glass ceiling. President Barack Obama is also a shining example of an African American man reaching the highest office in our land. However, they both remain individual achievers. Until we have reached true equality for all of us, individual leaders give us only hope for change, while we must work as a nation to make true change. Please check out our inspiring video about Women Who Could Be President on our website.

Annual Meeting—Saturday, June 6

- 9:30 am Breakfast
- 10:15 am Keynote Speaker on a Constitutional Convention in California
- 11 am Business Meeting

Business Meeting Agenda

- Call to Order
- Adoption of Rules of the Day (see below)
- Introduction of Timekeeper
- Approval of 2008 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Appointment of Reading Committee for 2009 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Discussion and Adoption of FY 09-10 Budget
- Discussion of Program for 2009-2010
- Proposed Action on Studies
- Committee Reports
- Report of Nominating Committee and Election of Officers
- Directions from the Membership to the Board

PROPOSED RULES OF THE DAY

Debate and comments are to be limited to two minutes per speaker. No person may speak twice until all who wish to speak have had the opportunity to do so. Simplified parliamentary procedures are based on Roberts Rules of Order.



Annual Meeting Speaker

Robert Cruickshank is the Public Policy Director for the Courage Campaign, where he has worked since late 2007 building one of California's fastest-growing progressive organizations. He is also a contributing editor at the website Calitics, which focuses on state politics. A historian by training, he is completing a Ph.D. dissertation on California political history in the 1960s and 1970s. Robert is a native Californian, raised in Orange County and educated at UC Berkeley. He currently lives in Monterey.

**PROPOSED SLATE FOR
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
SAN FRANCISCO BOARD FY 09-10**

Executive Committee

Karen Valentia Clopton, President

Patricia McGovern, First Vice-President

Lilia Tamm, Vice President - Voters Service Chair

Chandra Friese, Vice President - Programs

Stina Skewes-Cox, Vice President - Development Chair

Cynthia Foster, Treasurer (see bio, page 8)

Jolinda Sim, Secretary

Officers

Maxine Anderson

Stephanie Green Crump

Julia Fasick (see bio, page 9)

Fran Finney

Suzanne Gautier

Susan Gordon (see bio, page 8)

Kimberly Gupta

Sacha Ielmorini

Carolyn Lee (see bio, page 8)

Catherine M. Stefani (see bio, page 9)

Brittany Syz (see bio, page 8)

Christine Van Aken (see bio, page 9)

Alexander Cooke Volberding (see bio, page 8)

Thanks to the Nominating Committee Members!

Marjorie Bailey, Gail Morthole, (co-chairs)

LWVSF proposed Budget for 2009-10
LWVSF 501(c)(3) Education Fund

<i>Estimated 501c3 Reserves on 7/1/2009</i>	<i>120,000</i>
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Initial Reserves	120,000
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Additional taken from reserves for SSF	
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Potential Grants	
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San Francisco Foundation	20,000
Unspecified - application needed	<u>75,000</u>
	95,000

Fundraising

<i>Year End Appeal</i>	2,500
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<i>Women Who Could Be President</i>	65,000
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<u><i>Major Donor or Sponsor</i></u>	<u>0</u>
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Fundraising	67,500
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Interest and Dividend	0
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Total Revenue	162,500
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Bank Service Charges	0
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Transfers to LWVSF 501c4	162,500
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Total Expense	162,500
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Ending Reserves	120,000
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2009-10 Draft Budget 501c4

Candidate
ForumsPro/Con
Guide

LWVSF General Fund

Development

General
and Admin

Advocacy

Membership

Voter Services

Revenue

4010 — Ed Fund Transfers	0	0	0	0	0	0
4030 — Fundraising	19,000	0	0	0	0	0
4050 — Interest and Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>5181 — Speaker's Bureau</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>5182 — Election Monitor</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
5000 (Total) — Earned Revenue	0	0	0	0	0	0
5200 — Membership Dues	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Revenue (excluding In-kind)	19,000	0	0	0	0	0

Expense

7020 — Contributions to Other LWV	0	0	0	7,000	0	0
7200 — Salaries and Related...	0	3,369	562	3,369	2,808	11,231
Estimates for Prgm. Mgr time	0.00%	6.00%	1.00%	6.00%	5.00%	20.00%
<i>7510 — Fundraising Fees</i>	<i>7,500</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>7515 — Accounting</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4,000</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>7525 — Internships</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>7540 — Website Contractor</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>7545 - Expert / Speaker Fees</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>7555 — Graphic Design</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>7565 - Technology Consulting</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>7500 — Professional Fees - Other</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
7500 (Total) — Professional Fees	7,500	4,000	0	0	0	0
8110 — Supplies	250	500	350	350	150	600
8130 — Communications	156	203	31	156	0	0
8140 — Postage and Delivery	150	130	70	250	70	850
8160 — Translation & Graphic Design	0	0	0	0	0	8,000
8170 — Newspaper Publications	0	0	0	556	0	37,245
8180 — Books & Subscriptions	0	100	0	0	0	0
8190 — Paid Advertising	0	0	0	0	0	8,000
8200 — Facility & Equipment	1,808	2,550	362	2,108	1,500	0
8300 — Travel, Meetings & C...	0	0	0	0	0	0
8520 — Insurance (not worker's comp)	0	2,400	0	0	0	0
8530 — Dues and Membership w/ Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
8999 — Gala Expense	7,500	0	0	0	0	0
5001 — Paid Ballot Arguments, Etc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
9000 — Advocacy	0	0	730	0	0	0
Total Expense (excluding In-kind)	17,364	13,252	2,104	13,789	4,528	65,926
% of the overall budget	9%	7%	1%	7%	2%	35%

Televised Programming	Smart Voter	Speaker's Bureau	Election Monitoring (Jolinda)	Education (non-Voter Services)	SPLIT 80% 501c3		Unclassified	TOTAL
					Web (20%)	Voter (80%)		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	162,500	162,500
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19,000
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	250	0	0	0	0	0	250
0	0	0	250	0	0	0	0	250
0	0	250	250	0	0	0	0	500
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12,000	12,000
0	0	250	250	0	0	0	174,500	194,000
0	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,000
11,231	5,616	2,808	562	8,423	786	3,145	0	56,155
20.00%	10.00%	5.00%	1.00%	15.00%	7.00%		0.00%	100.00%
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,500
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,000
0	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000
0	0	0	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000
0	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,500	2,500
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	1,000	0	0	1,000	6,000	0	0	19,500
0	0	600	350	700	0	0	2,500	6,350
0	0	0	16	250	2,516	62	0	3,390
150	30	20	10	160	10	840	0	2,740
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,000
0	0	0	0	2,000	0	800	0	40,601
0	0	0	0	200	0	0	0	300
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,000
0	0	0	181	4,893	181	723	0	14,304
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,900	2,900
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,400
0	0	0	0	300	0	0	0	300
0	0	0	0	7,500	0	0	0	15,000
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	730
11,381	8,646	3,428	1,118	25,426	9,493	5,570	5,400	189,669
6%	5%	2%	1%	11%	5%	3%	3%	

PROPOSED NEW BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



Cynthia Foster

Cynthia is a fourth generation Californian and is a graduate of the University of California at Davis where she double majored in Political Science/Public Service and Psychology. She worked in retail for over 25 years where she developed strong organizational and analytical skills. Cynthia is a Past President of the Junior League of San Francisco and is currently serving on the Association of Junior Leagues International Nominating Committee. As a member of the Junior League of California State Public Affairs Committee (SPAC), Cynthia helped promote the passage of bills to fund critical services for low income breast cancer patients and domestic violence victims. Her placement as statewide co-chair for SPAC has led to her commitment to make a difference and influence public policy through advocacy and education. Cynthia served as Treasurer on the Board of Directors for A Safe Place Domestic Violence Shelter for over three years. She is currently the Visitor Services Manager at Filoli House and Garden.



Susan Gordon

Susan Gordon is the Senior Nonprofit Coordinator for Causes on Facebook, an application that allows individuals to use Facebook for activism and nonprofit fundraising. Susan grew up in Minnesota and received her B.A. in History from Dartmouth, where she focused on issues of race, ethnicity, and immigration. She has worked as a political organizer, communications specialist for a women's nonprofit in Cambodia, and leader of an organization providing outdoor activities and mentors for rural youth in New Hampshire.



Alex Volberding

Alex Volberding was born and raised in San Francisco. Before returning to San Francisco to serve as Chief Legislative Aide to Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, Alex served as legislative assistant in the Washington DC office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. In the Speaker's office, he worked on San Francisco-related legislation, federal grants and appropriations projects. He brings to the League a number of years campaign experience as well, having played roles on local, state and federal campaigns. Alex holds a bachelors of arts in public policy and politics from Pomona College. He is actively involved in a number of civic and community organizations, including the Richmond District Neighborhood Center.



Carolyn Lee

A native of the Midwest, Carolyn made a career as a financial services marketer, letting job opportunities lure her from the Lee family home in Lincoln, Nebraska, through Chicago and Philadelphia to New York City. Wells Fargo brought Carolyn to San Francisco six years ago, though not to work anywhere near any type of lending. While working at Wells, Carolyn began studying for a law degree through an evening JD program, with the objective of being a more effective business person. The appeal of a law practice overtook her drive to be a better banker. In particular, Carolyn is interested in free and fair elections, human rights, and an individual's right to privacy. The League is a natural outlet for those interests and others, and puts Carolyn's experience in marketing and communications to good use. Carolyn is an associate with San Francisco-based Benjamin, Weill & Mazer APC, practicing all areas of the law related to businesses and business executives, including tax law. Carolyn has Bachelors and Masters degrees from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln; her JD and LL.M.-Tax from GGU Law School. Carolyn's previous community work involved HIV-AIDS, needle exchange and other forms of harm reduction, and literacy tutoring.



Brittany Syz

Brittany moved to San Francisco in 1997 after writing for Let's Go Europe. She worked in the dot.com industry for three years. In the spring of 2001, she left San Francisco to backpack through Nepal and Southeast Asia. After completing a masters at the London School of Economics in 2002 in Environmental and Developmental Economics, she returned to pursue a JD at Hastings College of the Law. She has since worked at two law firms in San Francisco focusing her practice on land use and real estate. Her passion is her pro bono work and is currently involved in the development of a senior citizen affordable housing project in the Bayview for the Bayview Hunters Point Multipurpose Senior Services, Inc.. She has also worked for Rebuilding Together to organize a construction project for a preschool, the Nature Conservancy to assist in the purchase of a conservation area in Kenya, the Diablo Valley AIDS Clinic to assist in the transfer of assets to the Contra Costa Food Bank, and several other nonprofits in the role of pro bono real estate counsel. Brittany graduated from Harvard University in 1997.

PROPOSED NEW BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES (continued)**Catherine Stefani**

Catherine Stefani is a legislative aide to Supervisor Alioto-Pier in San Francisco where she works on various public policy issues. Catherine is an attorney who began her legal career as a

prosecutor in Contra Costa County. She received her B.A. in Political Science from St. Mary's College of California and continued on to receive her Juris Doctor and LL.M in Government and Public Policy from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

**Christine Van Aken**

Christine Van Aken is a Deputy City Attorney in the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, where she primarily litigates consumer protection matters. Before coming to the City Attorney's Office, she was a law clerk to Su-

preme Court Justice David Souter. Her prior volunteer experience includes working as a crisis hotline counselor and serving on the advisory board to a local Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliate. Christine lives in the Mission District of San Francisco with her husband and infant son.

**Julia Fasick**

Julia Fasick has lived in San Francisco since 1985 and has a lifelong interest in politics at both the local and national level. Over the years, she has been involved in a number of local and state issues, including work on local and presiden-

tial election campaigns and local and state propositions.

She is currently the Director of Software Engineering at Clickability, a leading provider of Content Management Systems for media and corporate websites. Her professional focus is managing engineering teams at software startup companies with a particular interest in web technologies.

In addition to the political volunteer work described above, she has worked as a volunteer at the League of Women Voters primarily on the Speakers Bureau. She has also worked in the past at the The Shanti Project, Woman Inc (a resource for battered women) and a health clinic focusing on HIV.

INTRODUCTORY ARTICLE ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Article 18 of the California Constitution explains the convention process. First, the legislature must vote to put a proposition on the ballot to call a convention, and a majority of voters must approve that proposition. If the convention call is approved by voters, within 6 months there will be a convention. Delegates to the convention will be chosen by the voters based on districts. The convention does not have the authority to actually change the Constitution itself - only the voters can actually ratify Constitutional changes. What the convention does is debate and refine proposals, and agree on what will be submitted to voters.

For example: If the Legislature puts a convention proposition to voters in March 2009 and it is approved by the voters, the convention must begin no later than September. Between March and September Californians would vote to send delegates to the convention. The convention would likely take several weeks to thoroughly deliberate proposals, and present a document to voters by the end of 2009. At an election in 2010 - perhaps the June 2010 primary - voters would be asked to approve the proposed changes.

DO THIS NOW - A Project of the LWVSF Advocacy Committee

Learn about the California Fair Elections Act. The League endorses this initiative to return elections and elected officials to the voters. Remove lobbyists' money from the decision process. Make it possible for more quality candidates to run. Get informed, and get comfortable advocating for Fair Elections. Check out www.caclean.org now

Get current with California's pending healthcare legislation. Go to bill sponsor Mark Leno's home page, and click on SB810 – California Universal Health Care Act in the left column. <http://dist03.casen.govoffice.com>. Tell someone you know about this resource.

Make a difference. You can. Get involved in one of the San Francisco League Chapter committees. Every voice is heard and respected. Action is by consensus. Have an interest in Election integrity, Healthcare reform, or League Communications and public relations? Check out the opportunities to do something powerful. Call or email Mary Anderton in the League office today. 415/989-8683 or lwwsf@lwwsf.org.



Story Bank is a project of LWV which is designed to collect stories from members who are active in the League. LWVSF hopes that these stories will encourage members to be active in their local leagues and their communities.

STORY BANK - HEATHER STERNER

As I look back on my years with the League of Women Voters I realize that there was a direct correlation between the hours I spent on projects and the friendships formed with the people I worked with. I got out of League what I put into it.

I first joined League in San Mateo County where I served on the board and worked on studies and action. In 1987 my husband and I moved from Burlingame to San Francisco and one of the first things I did was join the San Francisco League.

I was on the board when Charlene Smith was president, she of the purple hair which overnight changed people's image of the League of Women Voters.

It was Susan Sutherland who was president when we came up with the idea of a fundraising luncheon, named by Ann Walsh as Women Who Could be President. Out of the many hours spent on the luncheon from 1992 until 1999, fast friendships were formed.

I was honored to represent the League on the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force for four-plus years, a position taken over by Kristin Chu and now Allyson Washburn. Being "inside City Hall" was an eye-opening experience I recommend to all.

BondWatch article #1 by Kristin Chu

Doesn't it seem like there are new bonds on the ballot every election? Ever wonder what happens after the voters approve the bonds? I'm Kristin Chu, Treasurer of the LWVSF, and I'll be providing quarterly updates on all aspects of the City's general obligation bond program.

As a member of the Citizen's General Obligation Bond Oversight Committee (CGOBOC) I spend lots of time studying both bond issuances and the major construction projects funded by the bonds. The CGOBOC is tasked with "informing the public concerning the expenditure of general obligation (G.O.) bond proceeds through active review and the publishing of regular reports." We pour over multipage Gantt charts, discuss bond ratings, don hard hats to review worksites, worry over the price of steel and ask tough questions about complex projects.

G.O. Bonds are long term debt issued by the City and County of San Francisco and paid for by increases in property taxes. They are different from Revenue Bonds which are paid for by an identified revenue source, for example additional fees charged to the airlines for the use of new facilities.

The money raised by G.O. Bonds is used to finance large capital improvement projects. Currently the most active Bond projects are: S.F. General Hospital (\$887 million approved by voters in 2008), Branch libraries (\$105 million in 2000), Neighborhood Parks (\$185 million in 2008 and \$110 million in 2000) and Laguna Honda Hospital (\$299 million in 1999). Bonds are issued in a series, usually in 3 or 4 issuances, when the money is needed for a project. Just like a home loan, the City's cost to borrow money depends on the interest rate on the debt and number of years of the loan. Large debt can be issued anywhere from 10 to 35 years with interest rates that vary depending on the market and financial viability of the issuer. For example the city's latest general obligation bond sale was on March 4th, 2009 - \$131 million dollars worth of bonds were sold for the SF General Hospital project at an interest rate of 4.54%. This is the first issuance for SF General.

The City Charter limits the amount of Bond Debt the city can carry at any one time to manage the burden on the taxpayer. The limit is 3% of assessed value of the property in the city which worked out to be \$2.8 billion in 2002-2003.

(continued on the next page)

(Bond Watch continued)

Although there are eleven open bond projects for the City and County of San Francisco, there are only a handful of projects under construction.

- The city's branch libraries are being either renovated, replaced or new buildings are being constructed under a \$105 million bond program approved by voters in 2000.
- Two bonds, approved in 2000 and 2008 provide \$295 million to upgrade our neighborhood parks.
- The Department of Public Health has two active projects, Laguna Honda Hospital (\$299 million in 1999) and San Francisco General Hospital (\$887 million in 2008).
- The New California Academy of Science was partially funded by \$87 million in bond funds approved in 2000.

A city hall committee, the Capital Planning Committee (CPC), is tasked with planning the city's capital needs. It is chaired by the City Administrator and includes all capital-intensive departments along with the President of the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Director, the Controller and the Mayor's Budget Director. Every year they create a 10 year capital plan that prioritizes the most pressing capital needs of the city and present them in a plan.

The Capital Plan details both the scope of the capital needs and what is the best strategy for successful financing. General Obligation Bonds, because they are long term debt at low interest rates, are a relatively inexpensive type of financing but they need 2/3 voter approval to pass. When the CPC analyzed the success of bonds on the ballot they came up with some interesting conclusions:

- Since 1958, The City has proposed 83 G.O. bonds , 44 of which have passed (53%),
- The bonds have a higher pass rate (67%) in municipal elections (the big November election),
- Approval trends downward over the last 30 years,
- Infrastructure (71%) and public safety(62%) bonds are most likely to be approved; office, admin and support bonds (11%)are least likely to be approved.

Based on these findings, the CPC is recommending four bond issuances between the November 2009 and November 2015 elections: Emergency Response (\$580M), Road Repair and Safety Improvements (\$309M), Park Systems Renovation and Improvement (\$150M) and a second Emergency Response Bond (\$210M) in late 2015. There are projects that are arguably more critical, like the replacement of jails at the Hall of Justice or the Veterans Building seismic improvements, but the CPC concluded they would not be attractive to voters. These projects are to be funded through alternative financing sources like General Fund debt.

The most significant constraint on G.O. bond planning is managing the burden on the taxpayer. In FY 2007-2008 property taxes were assessed at just over 0.11% to pay for existing bond debt. The current capital plan calls for that rate to steadily rise to 0.15% in 2012 and then descend to 0.10% over the following eight years. This means the plan asks property owners to increase their costs in the near term with the promise of decreases in the future. The taxpayers will be asked to take on that burden in the next few elections as new bond measures reach the ballot.

Each quarter I will report back on the activities and findings of the CGOBOC. I'll let you know what is working and where we have concerns. I'll give you the numbers and a feel for how the projects are coming along. And, most importantly, I'll give you ideas on how to get involved and become a Bond Watcher!

Come to the next CGOBOC meeting! We meet on the 4th Thursday of the first month of the quarter. The next meeting is April 23rd at 9:30am in Room 416 of City Hall. If you have any questions, you can contact me at lwvsf@lwvsf.org.

G.O. Bond Financing Basics Brochure by the Controller's Office: http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/controller/root/Bond_Brochure.pdf

G.O. Bond project summary: http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/controller/CGOBOC/GOB_Project_Summary_20081231.pdf

City and County of San Francisco 10-year Capital Plan: http://www.sfgov.org/site/cpp_index.asp?id=39210

CALENDAR

LWVCA Convention – Catch the Wave of the Future

Friday, May 15 through Sunday, May 17

Long Beach Marriot

4700 Airport Plaza Drive

Healthcare Forum

Wednesday, May 27, 6-8pm

582 Market Street, First Floor Theater, San Francisco

Annual Meeting

Topic: The Constitutional Convention

Speaker: Robert Cruickshank, Public Policy Director, Courage Campaign

Saturday, June 6, 9:30am to 12:00 pm

582 Market Street, First Floor Theater, San Francisco

NEW LEAGUE EVENT - A League book club

Thursday, June 18 at Bliss Bar (details to follow)

First book: "My Day: The Best of Eleanor Roosevelt's Acclaimed Columns, 1936-1962"

This collection brings together the most memorable of Roosevelt's columns, written with singular wit, elegance, compassion, and insight.



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582 MARKET STREET, SUITE 615
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104
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