

Calendar of Events

December '99

- 1** Gambling HCALG Meeting
9 a.m. Harris Methodist Church (Nuuanu Ave.)
- 2** Honolulu Board Meeting
noon League Office
- 7** Violence Prevention Committee Meeting
noon League Office
- 8** Gambling HCALG Meeting
9 a.m. Harris Methodist Church (Nuuanu Ave.)
- 11** MEMBERSHIP PLANNING MEETING
9:30 a.m. Plaza Club

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF HONOLULU**

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Mahalo to this month's Aloha Voter contributors:

Grace Furukawa, Carol Whitesell, Arlene Ellis, Michelle Matson, Annelle Amaral



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HONOLULU
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ALOHA VOTER

League of Women Voters of Honolulu

A Non-Profit Organization to Encourage Informed Citizen Participation in Government and Politics **December 1999**

Annual General Membership Meeting

Featuring
Earl I. Anzai, Attorney General
Speaking On "An Insiders View Of Government"

★
Saturday, December 11, 1999

Plaza Club, 900 Fort Street Mall, 21st Floor

★
 Business Meeting - Program Planning - 9:30 am to 11:30 am
 Luncheon and Speaker - 11:30 am to 2 pm

Parking: enter Merchant Street from Nu'uuanu or Nimitz.

Don't Miss It!

Be the first to clip and mail this form to the League office *on or before December 6.*

Luncheon Menu is vegetable stir-fry with chow fun noodles and bay shrimp.

Name _____

Phone _____

Reservations @ \$18.00 _____

Mail to: LWW Honolulu, 49 S. Hotel St. #314,
 Honolulu, HI 96813 *(Remember to include your payment.)*

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President's Message

Our Planning Meeting

Grace Furukawa

Along with hosting a very interesting speaker, the December 11th membership meeting is a time for Program Planning. We ask our members to consider possible studies or specific emphasis on our existing programs, particularly for the local level - Honolulu. Some important questions or studies on the state or national level are also considered. These last, if requested, are considered by the Honolulu Board and, if it agrees, are referred to the State Convention.

We have received requests from other states to urge the National League to adopt various studies or programs at their convention in June 2000. All these proposals may be discussed at our planning meeting.

The League's credibility in the community is based on our pro and con studies of issues. When completed we then decide whether to support, reject, or take no stand on certain issues. When we do adopt a position, we follow up with lobbying and public education. Every step of the way involves hard work on the part of the committee - and later the membership. New study items often mean a need for extra funding.

Our program - education and advocacy - focuses on public policy issues and is directed toward

government action. That action could include passage of laws; promulgation of regulations and policies; provision of adequate budgets and staffing; enforcement of laws and regulations; planning and citizen involvement.

When considering selection of an issue we need to review the following questions:

- Which issues are of vital concern to our members and significant portions of our community that also demand attention?
- Which issues will benefit from the Leagues special expertise or perspective?
- Is there a real possibility that working on this issue can bring about positive change?
- Will working on this issue give the League opportunities to collaborate with other groups and individuals?

Please come to the December 11th meeting with ideas and suggestions. The League is a grassroots organization whose concerns start at the local level.

Welcome New Members

Jo Ashmore
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Change of Address

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Nancy & Pierre Kleiber
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Marsha Kitagawa
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1010 Valkenburgh Street
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Shiela Waller
NOW
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Monterey CA 93940-6910

Carol Cossman
1519 Nuuanu Ave #46
Honolulu, HI 96817-3739

Rebecca Weisser
2542 SW Terwilliger Blvd #611
Portland, OR 97201-6307

Mahalo for your Contributions!

Martha Black
Yvonne Kearns
Joyce Loo
JoAnn Maruoka
David Shideler
Elizabeth Ahn Toupin, in
Memory of Marion
Saunders

Planning Committee Report

Representatives of the LWVs Planning Committee and Honolulu area neighborhood boards met with representatives of the City's Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) on October 25 to discuss community concerns pertaining to the City's proposed Primary Urban Center Development Plan (PUC DP). Key concerns include the following:

- the plans questionable projection of a population increase of 70,000 people in Honolulu as carried forward from population figures of 1990, which were higher than today's;
- the policy question of acceptable, sustainable growth and the limitations of Oahu's finite water resources;
- the introduction of liberalized mixed use, flexible development standards, and higher densities throughout Honolulu's communities;
- the absence of a current housing analysis;
- the socio-economic costs of redevelopment to small businesses and residents;
- the proposal to reduce parking space requirements in building so that development will be less costly for the developer;

- the lack of justification for a proposed Redevelopment Authority that exercises powers of eminent domain for the taking of private properties to consolidate them for redevelopment into larger projects, such as urban villages;
- the proposal to expand high-capacity transit corridors, LRT (light rail transit), and hotels of up to 50 rooms throughout Honolulu's communities;
- and the proposal to construct 500-room hotels within a quarter-mile radius around the Convention Center, along the Ala Moana-Downtown corridor, and along the waterfront.

Following this meeting, the DPP scheduled two public workshops on the proposed PUC DP. They were on November 24 (Thanksgiving Eve) at Washington Intermediate School in central Honolulu, and on November 30 at Liholiho Elementary School in Kaimuki.

In view of these dates, the LWVs Planning Committee recommends additional community meetings with ample notice following the holidays. The LWV's Honolulu Board voted unanimously to sponsor a meeting, and the Committee is working with neighborhood boards and community groups to encourage full public participation.

Transportation - Here We Are Again!

Arlene Ellis

A public meeting on transportation was held on 10/29/99 at Washington Intermediate School at which time the same song and dance we were subjected to 10 years ago was presented ad nauseam. For an hour before the public was allowed to speak exhibits were displayed across the auditorium. Questionnaires were available to the public, each presuming the In-Town Transit system would be a reality.

When finally allowed to speak, League commented as follows:

1-Speed - The few minutes saved by the In-Town Transit can now be accomplished by utilizing the in-house capability of traffic signal preemption at intersections by buses and emergency vehicles; skipping bus stops which is being proven by city express busses; and by providing an exclusive bus lane. This can be done without spending hundreds of millions of dollars constructing rails, placing electricity underground, and buying new tram cars.

2-Capacity - We've waited over 10 years for articulated buses that can carry twice the current capacity in the long-line express buses as well as city buses. They would not only carry more riders each trip but afford the

Continued on page 4.

Energy For The Millennium Conference

Grace Furukawa

At least six League members attended the Energy for the Millennium Conference sponsored by Life of Land on November 5 and 6th, and received an education they didn't know they needed. It would be impossible to cover all the areas, technical and political, that were discussed. The featured speaker, Dr. Donald Aitkin, explained how use of solar panels is rapidly developing and how it is now possible to fill all the energy needs in offices and homes if they are designed to make use of all of nature's available energy. What was the most astounding about this technology is the fact that it is economically feasible, even cheaper than our current dependence on fossil fuels, and Aitkin had the facts to prove it.

Not only is this technology possible but it is in use in various cities in California and elsewhere because far-sighted political activity encouraged its implementation. If we continue to build more power plants, lay lines and build towers we will be dependent on the current, outdated technology into 2020s. The building and maintenance of these lines will use the available funding necessary to implement the newer technology, which in the long run could save enormous amounts of that available funding.

The conference speakers also stressed how Hawaii is blessed with, not only an abundance of sunlight, but also with other natural forms of energy - geothermal, wind, biomass or garbage (and who doesn't have plenty of that) and seawater conversion possibilities. These other forms of alternate energy may or may not be feasible or palatable to the community.

I was amazed to know that geothermal energy supplies 27% of the Big Islands energy, but that technology certainly has its drawbacks. Windmill turbines take up a great deal of land (expensive in Hawaii) and are a visual blight. Solar energy seems to be Hawaii's best choice, if we can hold off the expansion of power companies. HECO can't tell us if the proposed 138kv lines are really necessary when we have two lines already and anything that is old can be repaired less expensively than the proposed project. At the same time new forms of energy sources are explored and implemented.

The Conference stressed the role of the various organizations dedicated to energy conservation and the future, the importance of networking, and the role government must play in encouraging new technology.

Transportation
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comfort of seats with fewer standees and fewer people left at stops. After neglecting this concept for years, now this is being touted as the means for increasing capacity - articulated trams. Was there method behind this madness? Since pro-railers of yesteryears are now in charge - well?

3 - Conclusion - Rather than subjecting current travelers to traffic disruptions (for years) by digging up our major streets to construct rail and underground electric city transit and end up losing two lanes on streets for an auto-oriented society, why not enhance the current highly successful mass transit system - THEBUS - with the suggestions listed above at far less money and far less disruption and headaches for our citizens?

Attention 'Olelo Viewers!

Campaign Financing Reform Conference

on Channel 54

Dec 3 • 10 am
Dec 4 • 4:30 pm
Dec 7 • 5:30 pm
Dec 11 • 3 pm

plan to view for 2 hours

The Waahila Powerline Issue is Due To Thinking Small - This Is All Of Oahu We Are Talking About

Reprint of the editorial in the Honolulu Advertiser 10/26/99

Grace Furukawa

Opponents to Hawaiian Electric Company's (HECO) plans to route a portion of a new high-voltage power line along Waahila Ridge above Manoa Valley can't be faulted for suspecting the electric company has a one-track mind on the subject. The environment in which this issue is unfolding is only partly of HECO's making. The fact is that Oahu - ALL OF IT - suffers from decades of decisions in which a few bucks were saved at the expense of ever more visual blight.

Most of us who have lived here for a while have learned to mentally edit out the tangle of wires that mar our most beautiful viewplanes. But in so doing, we only fool ourselves as to what visitors see when they train their innocent eyes on our spoiled vistas. We're in this fix because we've been thinking small each time HECO seeks permission to improve the reliability of our electrical supply. We're presented with a choice: cheap and - well - ugly, or aesthetically pleasing with a substantial cost to ratepayers.

That choice is offered to all Oahu ratepayers, not just those in the neighborhood directly affected. So the choice almost

always is cheap. Why should Pearl City residents, for instance, pay more for Manoa's visual comfort? After all, where were Manoa residents when HECO marched similarly huge steel poles through Pearl City back yards a few years ago?

The truth is that, as a community, we've been irresponsible in allowing our beautiful island to be incrementally developed in this way. Particularly considering our dependence on the visitor industry, we should have assumed many years ago that undergrounding electrical transmission lines - and other utility wires - was simply a necessary cost of living here.

State lawmakers have begun to recognize this reality in requiring the Public Utilities Commission to evaluate and make specific findings on nine factors - including community sentiment and aesthetics - when determining whether high power lines go overhead or underground.

But that's a long way from a public policy that mandates the presumption that all wires should go underground, unless it can be shown they won't cause visual blight.

Most important, such a policy must recognize that public funds, not just ratepayers must make up the cost difference. If

there is a general benefit to a more expensive process, then there should be a way to ensure that general funds help support that benefit.

We happen to be confronting this issue now because of a proposal to put overhead lines along Waahila Ridge. But the truth is, we should have begun undergrounding our utilities many years ago. We must make up for lost time.

The editorial above points out the island-wide nature of this problem. The article about the Conference on Energy for the Millennium broadens the issue to consider the use of alternate energy systems now available and other technologies being developed - ready for use in 5-10 years. The use of alternate energy technology would significantly reduce the need for wires - either overhead or underground. Recognition of this fact requires bold political thinking now.

*Happy Holidays
to you and
yours from
the LWW!*

