



THE

V O T E R

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF BERKELEY, ALBANY, AND EMERYVILLE

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President: Jo Ann B. Price

December, 1999 — January, 2000

Editor: Bob Hawley

**Alameda County Children and Families
Commission Update
(Tobacco Tax Distributions)**

Under the provisions of Proposition 10, passed by California voters in 1998 and imposing a tobacco tax of 50 cents per cigarette pack, each county is mandated to establish a commission and a program in addition to the state commission appointed by Governor Gray Davis and chaired by Rob Reiner, who conceived and backed the proposition. The Alameda County Children and Families Commission is chaired by Supervisor Wilma Chan, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, and has eight other members chosen for their expertise in child care, family, and health services.

The purpose of the commission, as stated in Prop 10 is "... to create and implement a comprehensive, collaborative and integrated system of information and services to promote, support, and optimize early childhood development from the prenatal stage to five years of age." Program areas are to include child care, parenting, tobacco and substance abuse prevention, social services, and health care. The intent is to have new programs dovetail with existing pre-school programs to avoid duplication of services.

The County Commission has hired Mark Friedman as Executive Director, has established a schedule of monthly meetings through December 2000, has shaped a draft Strategic Plan, and held a public hearing on it on Monday, November 15, 1999, at 4:30 pm, at the Alameda County Administration Building's Board of Supervisors

Chambers. This was in addition to the regular commission meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 1999, from 1 to 4 pm in the same location; check the Commission's website <www.ackids.org> for the adopted Strategic Plan.

Of the \$20 million projected as Alameda County's share of the state revenue, approximately \$14 million has already been allocated. The commission has prepared a budget along with the Strategic Plan to implement their motto of "Every Child Counts" and their intent to constantly put the needs of children and families first. Approximately \$3.4 million of the total will cover administration and infrastructure support, \$4.8 million will go to family support (including parenting), \$6.6 million is to pay for child care improvement programs, and \$5 million will be offered in community grants. Details of the Strategic Plan and the budget are available in the League office. Please call me (phone number below) to join our League's committee. The Commission may be reached at 567-3960.

The state Children and Families Commission will meet on December 15S16 at Mills College, Carnegie Hall, from 10 am to 4 pm. The agenda will include consideration for approval of the Alameda County Commission's Strategic Plan. The state commission is mounting a media effort to counteract the recent Prop 10 recall petition that may be on the March 2000 ballot.

—Virginia Laurence, Health & Welfare Director

President's Column

So Much to Do ... So Little Time ... So Many Unexpected Events !

How often have you thought or expressed those sentiments? Our League and its Board have an important list of tasks to perform each month, some traditional to the time of year, others that simply "erupt". In the best spirit of the League of Women Voters and of volunteerism, we deal with each situation as it presents itself, having established a list of priorities that sometimes requires rearranging. Always foremost in our mind is the human factor.

This fall, members have experienced a number of serious accidents, illness, and death. The moments of introspection and compassion we experience as a result of personal loss help to make us more thoughtful and caring persons. They are part of the rhythm of life and add to the emotional storehouse that should make us better individuals.

As we look down the road to the year 2000, our League is in a wonderful position. Thanks to the dedicated and effective work of the Boards that preceded us, we are poised to take some important steps that will, hopefully, add to our effectiveness and usefulness in our three cities. Here are some of those steps.

We are working to significantly grow our membership, with more members coming from Albany and Emeryville. We're planning Saturday excursions to get to know and enjoy the assets these two towns offer. Outreach to voters will include more effort to reach underserved communities for the March and November 2000 elections. We are beginning a campaign to request financial support from the business communities in Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville to help us better serve the citizens and make democracy work for everyone. Beginning in February, our *Voter* will have a slightly new look and organization aimed at making the information easier to access and read. We hope to forge closer ties with students on local campuses who are eligible for League membership, by offering a \$15 student membership in partnership with the State and National Leagues and promoting special student programs in all our areas of activity. In addition, we have a work-for-membership scholarship plan. Our special program meetings are planned for new and interesting community locations, at varying times in order to

–(Continued at right)

Board Briefs

The Board met in the Emery Bay Clubhouse on Wednesday, November 3. The meeting was opened with announcements, which included the deaths of *Meda Rechen* and of David Schickele.

These motions were passed: *Carol Voisin's* appointment to the Nominating Committee; agreement on four consensus questions for the Housing Study; selection of a new front page design for the *Voter*, to be tried out for five months; and publication of the new "Know Your Town: Berkeley" in 2000.

We cleared \$4506 on the Community luncheon and our 1999–2000 budget is on track.

UNITs are scheduled for both national and local program planning. National will be sending all members a questionnaire asking for their ideas on program.

Our Membership Committee is contacting those whose membership has lapsed to find out if they wish to continue as members. We currently have 416 members.

We are waiting to learn if we qualify for Safeway's new plan that replaces Scrip. Andronico's plan hasn't changed.

–*Violet Feinauer*, Board Secretary

President's Column (continued from column 1) accommodate the needs of the different schedules of our members, as well as to include new community groups on topics of mutual concern. We are developing a League Placement Form that will elicit written information from each member about his/her present and future interest in League volunteer placement, based on a one-on-one explanation session. We have developed a League Biographical and Experience Form for use by the Nominating Committee. So far it has been filled out by Board members and committee chairs. We expect to get it to all committee members and all new members, and eventually to all members.

Since LWVBAE has always prided itself in working smoothly and appropriately with the Bay Area, State, and National Leagues, we rededicate ourselves to doing this.

**Peace on Earth, Good Will
to Women and Men!**

–Jo Ann

Vista Community College Study News

Community College Alerts

Events Are Catching Up With Us

Dr. Ron Temple, the new Chancellor of the Peralta Community College District, doesn't waste any time. In the same week as his welcoming reception, he presented the Peralta District Board a \$150 million bond measure to go before the voters in November 2000. The Board approved unanimously and the measure will appear on the ballots of all six cities in the Peralta District: Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont.

The bond money will pay for: a host of essential repairs to existing facilities at the College of Alameda, Laney College and Merritt College; much of the cost of building and equipping the new permanent home of Vista Community College in downtown Berkeley (slated to open in 2002); the upgrade of science and computer labs; and the building of modern educational technology centers.

Any action by the League on the bond measure campaign will require the completion of our study and the development of positions by next September.

Our next meeting on December 8 will be a tour of both Vista's existing rented "campus" and its new building site. Everyone is welcome, but please call ahead to allow planning for everyone's comfort.

—*Helene Lecar*
Chair, Vista Community College Study

Wish List (for LWVBAE Office)

- ❖ TV set and compatible VCR
(for sharing special videos/programs)
- ❖ Light (beige or cream) file cabinets (5)
- ❖ Simple drip coffee maker (12 cup)
- ❖ Small refrigerator

Call the office at 843-8824 if you have equipment you'd like to donate to LWVBAE.

Speaker Series Announcements

The Family Violence Law Center

December 16 - Thursday, noon to 1:30 pm

**Location: Albany Public Library,
Edith Stone Room, Marin at Masonic Avenues**

Cherri Allison, Esq., Legal Director, and **Susana Palma-Aguilar**, Volunteer Coordinator, will tell us about the services provided by the Family Violence Law Center, located in Berkeley. These services include getting restraining orders for abused women, offering anti-violence education in the community and sponsoring support groups for battered women, in both English and Spanish languages.

Bring a bag lunch, if you'd like, and lots of questions. Light refreshments will be served.

* * * * *

Columbus Community School

January 27 - Thursday, 10 to 11:30 am

Location: 920 Allston Way, School Office

Columbus School reopened in September '97 in a brand new building, the design of which incorporates goals for the program and planning input from parents, teachers, staff and neighbors. Community (including business) involvement has made it possible to provide an in-depth science curriculum with state-of-the-art equipment and labs.

The cluster design of the buildings fosters a home-like atmosphere, and parents are welcome participants. The school is open from early morning through evening, offering needed child care and enrichment activities before and after school.

Join us at 10 am for a brief tour of the school, with time afterward for a talk by Principal Rebecca Wheat. Meet at the school office. The school is two blocks south of University Avenue and one block east of 6th Street. Street parking is good and so is bus service.

—*Jean Safir*, Program VP

Donors Through October

General Fund

<i>Suzanne Adams</i>	<i>Ora and Kurt Huth</i>
<i>Joyce Baldwin</i>	<i>Marion Luten</i>
<i>Jane Bergen</i>	<i>Babette Maccoby</i>
<i>Eva Brecher</i>	<i>Penelope B. Nellis</i>
<i>Lucie Buchbinder</i>	<i>Fran Packard</i>
<i>John Denton</i>	<i>Elizabeth Schaaf</i>
<i>Violet Feinauer</i>	<i>Todd Smith</i>
<i>Mari O. Fertig</i>	<i>Lassie Ulman</i>
<i>Edith Gladstone</i>	

Foundation

Lisa Alfert
Mary Friedman
June Kadish
Erika Kunkel

Dirk Neyhart (in memory of *Debby Neyhart*)

Personals

Here is good news about the health and well-being of:

Jane Bergen, at home and appearing fully recovered following knee surgery; *Karen Nelson*, at home recovering from the effects of a fall and subsequent hip replacement surgery; *Barbara Stern*, continuing treatment at home for injuries incurred in a fall, and hoping to return to her League position as Office Volunteer Coordinator after the first of the year; *Marion* and *Dan Luten*, each recovering well from surgery and in attendance at the November Speaker Series on Redistricting.

Sally Severance is well and happy to be volunteering again at the MLK reading program. *Lois Brubeck* and *Fran Packard* have recently returned from a month in Tuscany. Upcoming visits with family and friends for *Ruthann Taylor* in Chile and *Jo Ann Price* in London and Rome.

Jeanine Saperstein, three-year chair of LWVBAE's last Health Study and active campaigner for Prop 186, is Executive Director of Health in Common, an organization working to foster integration of holistic health care with mainstream medicine. She now resides in Piedmont and is an active member of the Piedmont League.

Wishing each of you joy and laughter as you celebrate the December Holidays and good health, hope, and happiness in 2000.

—*Eleanor Cox*, Corresponding Secretary

In Memory of Meda Rechen

We are sorry to report the death of *Meda Rechen* on October 31. *Meda* was one of the most devoted and active members of the League over the past 30 years. She participated with enthusiasm and energy in a wide variety of League studies and activities, serving as chair of many of those studies. In later years, *Meda* enjoyed being a mentor to younger members who volunteered for her committees. She was a willing listener and a patient trainer.

Her greatest interest was in environmental preservation, and she was proud to have worked with the Bay Area League and Citizens for the Eastshore State Park (CESP) in a long and hard-fought battle to establish that park.

At the time of her death, *Meda* was LWVBAE's Consultant on the Eastshore State Park, and Speakers Bureau Chair. Over the years she had also been involved in action on many ballot issues.

All who knew *Meda* will remember her as a model League worker as well as a good friend, and a warm and caring human being. We extend our sympathy to her daughters and their families, and to her brother.

Tribute Fund

Donations in Memory of *Meda Rechen*

Evelyn Light
Marion Luten
Jo Ann Price
Marjorie and Hugh Rubinow
Lessly Wikle

In Memoriam

We offer our condolences to *Gail Schickele* and her extended family and friends upon the death of her husband, David. Mr. Schickele, a violist, composer, editor and film maker, died in their San Francisco home on October 31.

Environmental Concerns: Open Space

John Woodbury, Program Director of the Bay Area Open Space Council, lent his regional view to the League in October. The Open Space Council was created after the disappointing narrow defeat of Bay Vision 2020 regional planning legislation. Larry Orman of People for Open Space/Greenbelt Alliance convened ten open-space advocates who structured a cooperative organization, including regional park districts, state parks, land trusts, and trails advocates, which now has about 40 members.

The Council has tallied the patchwork of protected open space around the Bay (a million acres). It also has tallied the land shown on local plans as open space which is not protected (also about a million acres). They are pursuing funding for the acquisition or protection of the land designated as open space. The estimated cost of \$3.5-to-4 billion to secure regional open space is intimidating. To put it in perspective, John Woodbury reminded us that the regional transportation budget for 20 years is \$88 billion (extending BART to San Jose would be \$4 billion more).

Acquisition of open space has not kept up with population growth in the nineties and the land will not wait 20 years to be protected. Servicing a sprawling development pattern is just part of the immense cost of not protecting open space around our cities.

As it is so difficult to pass special taxes for open space because of the 2/3 requirement, the Council has worked on getting state funds. It was successful in getting Coastal Conservancy funds extended to the nine county Bay Area. If a statewide park bond passes in the spring, more funds will be available. There hasn't been a park bond since 1988.

The counties and park districts around the Bay have varied success in acquiring open space. The Sonoma Land Trust is actively preserving open space with a ¼ cent sales tax and has many easements donated for tax advantages. Marin Agricultural Land Trust has done well with Proposition 70 seed money. However, conservation easements can be void if not documented and monitored; half are not being monitored. The Council is paying retired planners to recall conservation easements so they can be mapped and monitored.

—(Continued at right)

Berkeley School News From the Education Committee

Democracy in Action: League members assisted with student government elections at Willard Junior High and Franklin Elementary on November 2. Everyone had fun. We look forward to further student government activities to prepare students for the state presidential primary coming up in March and the national presidential election in November 2000.

Real World 101: At Berkeley High School, the Freshman Focus Project began in mid-October. It brought Leaguers, graduate students at Cal, and other interested community members to the High School for training and proposed one-on-one interviews with all 830 9th graders and their parents. The goal was to help students and parents understand the importance of planning early for each student's future by learning about and choosing the required courses, physical training, and extracurricular activities that would lead towards the desired path of higher education or skills training that would eventually lead to the adult world of work.

Each student received a Student Guide, prepared for this project, with much valuable basic and reference information to ensure his/her ability to follow through with questions to the appropriate counselor, teacher, or administrator in the High School or resources on the Internet. Each student and his/her parents were scheduled for an interview with a trained volunteer. A great deal of effort went into putting this program of opportunity together. Many thanks to all members who gave up afternoons and evenings to make this happen!

—*Helene Lecar*, Education Director

Open Space (continued from column 1)

While big developments like Cowell Ranch in Alameda County claim attention, rural estates and small subdivisions are gobbling the most acreage. Contra Costa County, for instance, has rural zoning for small ranchettes; minimum lot sizes of over 100 acres are needed to protect land for agriculture.

The work of the Bay Area Open Space Council is in accord with positions of the League on preserving open space and promoting compact development. John Woodbury gently reminded us of the time sensitiveness of acting on our positions.

—*Eva Bansner*, Environmental Concerns

The Juvenile Crime Initiative on the March 2000 Ballot

The League of Women Voters **OPPOSES** the Juvenile Crime Initiative on the March 2000 California ballot.

The Juvenile Crime Initiative would:

- ✿ Give prosecutors (instead of judges) the power to send many juvenile cases to adult court;
- ✿ Push more 16-17-year-old persons into state prisons;
- ✿ Expand the definition of gang membership and require gang “offenders” to register with police like sex offenders;
- ✿ Make it much easier to incarcerate children for non-criminal probation violations;
- ✿ Impose mandatory secure lockup for many juvenile offenders regardless of treatment need;
- ✿ Impose mandatory 180sday jail time for misdemeanor gang offenses;
- ✿ Dilute confidentiality rights in juvenile proceedings;
- ✿ Extend adult “three strikes” laws, adding longer sentences and life terms for new offenses;
- ✿ Create a death penalty for certain gang offenses.

Initiative Cost

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) and the state Department of Finance have estimated that the initiative will impose state annual costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars and one-time costs of at least several hundreds of millions of dollars. Costs to local governments will be in the tens of millions annually, with one-time costs of tens of millions to hundreds of millions of dollars. Among the most costly provisions, according to the fiscal analysis, are those adding life terms for new “three strikes” offenses. The initiative provides no resources to pay for the jury trials, prison terms and other mandates that it creates. (See the full analysis of this initiative by the LAO at the League of Women Voters of California Website, <www.ca.lwv.org>.)

Youth Violence Is Down

This initiative is ill-timed in that juvenile violence has been decreasing for more than eight years in California. Arrest rates of juveniles for crimes of violence dropped nine percent between 1990 and 1998; arrests of juveniles for murder declined by nearly 50 percent in the same period.

—(Continued in next column)

Voters Want the Focus to Be on Crime Prevention

(continued from column 1)

Statewide polls over the last several years have clearly shown that California voters want the public policy emphasis to be on prevention, not on building more youth prisons. This initiative, sponsored by former Governor Pete Wilson, would pour available resources into more incarceration at a time when most voters want resources focused on effective, community-level crime prevention programs. Over the past few years, the Legislature has demonstrated its support for several such approaches, including county Juvenile Crime Challenge Grants and new after-school programs to deter youth crime violence. This initiative, by spending available funds on more prosecution and prisons for youth, could derail these programs.

California Needs a Balanced Approach to Gangs and Youth Crime

A balanced approach to youth crime means adequate resources for incarceration and for crime prevention. California has already built the nation's largest youth incarceration system. Today's challenge is not to expand this already huge incarceration capacity, but rather to find ways to discourage new generations of children and youth from participating in gangs and crime.

SLWVC Release 11/99

—Lois Brubeck, Action VP

—Pat Kuhi, LWVC Juvenile Justice Prog. Dir

Bay Area League Day

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area celebrates 35 eventful years at Bay Area League Day - 2000. With the theme “The State of the Region”, speakers will present state, regional and local perspectives on how the Bay Area can and must join the momentum toward smarter, sustainable growth. The date is Friday, January 28, 2000 – from 9 am to 2 pm – at the First Unitarian Church at 14th and Castro in Oakland. Box lunches will be available and advance registrations are required. Flyers and a signup sheet will be in the LWVBAE office the first week in January. Please call with questions.

—Yvonne San Jule, LWVBA Representative

Citizens in Government: How Many is Too Many?

Democracy can be painfully slow, especially here in Berkeley where the process includes over forty boards and commissions and the almost four hundred citizen volunteers who serve on them. Should we streamline the process at the risk of limiting citizen input?

Our LWVBAE video program, '>City Conversations', opened its second season with a series of programs focusing on Berkeley's boards and commissions. Sherry Kelly, Berkeley City Clerk, laid the groundwork for us in our first program by outlining the commission structure, describing the appointment process, and differentiating between those commissions which set policy & statutory commissions – and those which are strictly advisory. *Mary Ann McCamant*, co-chair of the Planning Commission, complemented the discussion with her personal expectations and experiences. The following program featured Don Jelinek and Kriss Worthington debating the pros and cons of consolidating and limiting the number of commissions.

Subsequent programs have focused on the commissioners themselves and how they view their role in city government. Chairs of the Police Review Commission and Zoning Adjustments Board discussed '>Statutory Commissions', and chairs of the Civic Arts Commission, Peace and Justice Commission, and Task Force on Homelessness were featured in '>Advisory Commissions'. Our latest program, cablecast in mid-November, looked at one downtown development – the Allston Oak project – and how plan-review by three different commissions influenced the final project.

Though our local league has a long-standing position about reducing and consolidating the number of commissions for reasons including efficiency and economy, these commissioners feel strongly that they provide essential resources for the City Council and a voice for issues about which the community feels strongly.

In future programs, we plan to talk to the mayor about her views on the commission process, invite representatives from BUSD to discuss the school assignment process, and, in the new year, look at election-related issues.

Copies of these programs are available at the League office. Or, watch them on BSTV cable

—(Continued at right)

National Program Planning

Tuesday, January 11, 12 noon to 2:00 pm
Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room
Marin Avenue at Masonic

The LWVUS Board has set out a new way to encourage grass-roots input to national program planning. A "Member Survey" will be included in the next issue of the *National VOTER*, and all members are asked to send in their ideas as to what issues League should be working on in the coming two years. In addition, they will be sending out a "League Survey" for state and local Leagues and Inter-League Organizations (ILO's) to complete.

Our League will be meeting on Tuesday, January 11, at noon at the Albany Library to discuss both. Bring your "Member Survey" with you and we can help each other fill them out at the meeting. Next, we will take up the "League Survey," answer the survey questions and then review all LWVUS positions. Copies of the *Positions in Brief* and *Impact on Issues* will be available at the meeting. By the time we leave, we will have a recommendation on each position, whether it should be retained as is, dropped or updated through a new study. The results of this meeting will be submitted to our board for approval in February, to meet the national deadline of March 1, 2000.

Last year, we had a good turnout and some interesting discussion when we covered the same ground for state program planning. Hopefully, it will be an even more lively meeting this year on national program, where the issues are broader but where action could have a greater impact.

Please join us: bring lunch, if you'd like; light refreshments will be served. The library is wheelchair accessible, AC Transit service is one block away, and parking is abundant

—*Jean Safir*, Program VP

channel 25 on Tuesday at 6:30 pm, before the City Council meeting, or Sundays at 8:30 am before the meeting replay. Please call with your suggestions.

—*Jill A. Martinucci*, TV/Video Project Chair

CALENDAR

November - Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

- 22 Mon. 9 am - noon Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)
- 24 Wed. 1 pm through 26 Fri. — Office Closed For Thanksgiving — (Polak)

December

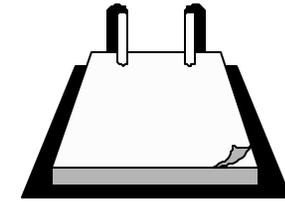
- 1 Wed. 9 am - noon Board Meeting Emery Bay Clubhouse (Price)
- 8 Wed. 10 am - noon Community College Tour Vista College, Milvia St. entrance
— Call to confirm — (Lecar)
- 9 Thurs. 11 am Education Committee (Lecar)
- 9 Thurs. 2 - 4 pm Housing Study (Adams)
- 15 Wed. 9 am - noon Action Committee (Brubeck)
- 15 Wed. 2 pm Berkeley General Plan Meeting LWVBAE Office (Bansner)
- 16 Thurs. Noon - 1:30 pm Speaker Series: "Family Violence" Albany Library, Albany
Marin & Masonic, Edith Stone Room (Safir)
- 20 Mon. through 31 Fri. — Office Closed for Winter Holiday Season — (Polak)
- 29 Wed. 9 am - noon Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)

January 2000

- 3 Mon. 10 am LWVBAE Office Reopens
- 5 Wed. 9 am - noon Board Meeting Emery Bay Clubhouse (Price)
- 7 Fri. Noon — Deadline for February *VOTER* — (Hawley)
- 10 Mon. 7:15 pm Environmental Concerns (Bansner)
- 11 Tue. Noon - 2 pm National Program Planning Albany Library, Marin & Masonic, Albany
Edith Stone Rm. (Safir)
- 13 Thurs. 11 am Education Committee (Lecar)
- 13 Thurs. 2 - 4 pm Housing Study (Adams)
- 17 Mon. — Office Closed in honor of Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. — (Polak)
- 19 Wed. 9 am - noon Action Committee (Brubeck)
- 19 Wed. 2 pm Berkeley General Plan Meeting LWVBAE Office (Bansner)
- 26 Wed. 9 am - noon Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)
- 27 Thurs. 10 - 11:30 am Speaker Series: "Go-See Tour" of Columbus "Community" School
- 28 Fri. 9 am - 2 pm Bay Area League Day First Unitarian Church, Oakland
(San Jule)

February

- 2 Wed. 9 am - noon Board Meeting Emery Bay Clubhouse (Price)
- 14 Mon. — National U. S. League of Women Voters Birthday, 1920 —



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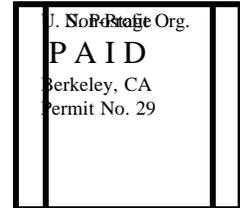
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Contributions to the LWVB Foundation are deductible
to the extent allowed by law.

League of Women Voters of
Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville
1414 University Ave., Suite D
Berkeley, CA 94702-1509



21 Mon.

— LWVBAE Office Closed for Presidents' Day —