

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville



DECEMBER 2007-
JANUARY 2008

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PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING 2008: MAKE-OR-BREAK YEAR

By *Mary G. Wilson*, LWVUS President

Big money is corrupting our political process. President Carter, President Reagan, President Clinton and both Presidents Bush each participated in the public financing system during their general election campaigns, and used it to win the presidency. Why will only two of our current crop of future Presidents pledge to do the same? Do the others want our system to remain beholden to special interests?

If I could stand face to face with these Presidential candidates I'd say, "Voters' concerns should be at the center of political campaigns, not your quarterly fundraising figures. Tell us that you are a reformer, not a business-as-usual kind of candidate."

2008 is a critical year. Congress has failed to update the presidential public financing system. After 30 years, the changes brought by inflation and the advent of the grotesquely long campaign season have undermined the system. But that's no excuse for candidates to refuse to participate.

The choice is simple. Presidential candidates can help save the system by agreeing now to use public funds for the 2008 General Election OR they can turn their backs on democracy and allow the private money to flow into their campaign bank accounts.

Legislation currently before both chambers of Congress would update the public financing system and cut the reins that special interests hold over our democracy. But the system, amended or not, will only work if all the candidates for president agree to participate.



MARY G. WILSON, LWVUS PRESIDENT

(continued on p. 5)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I'll bet you think the 2007 holiday season is beginning, and it is. But, for the League of Women Voters, the 2008 election year is also beginning! Because the presidential primary has been moved to February 5, 2008, we have to start our election preparations now.

By early January, we must be ready to send speakers out to the many groups who depend on us to give them even-handed, reliable and understandable information on all the ballot measures. So, in December, squeezed in with everything else, we need to train our speakers and write the Pros & Cons which the speakers will need for their presentations and for distribution to their audiences.

All of you with the willingness to speak in public, or the writing skills to explain things clearly, please call or email *Helene Lecar*, Election Services VP, at (510) 549-9719 or hlecar1@ix.netcom.com before she calls you.

Old hands who have done this before, skip to the last paragraph. New or newly active members who want to get involved, here's what these two important jobs entail:

Writing Pros & Cons takes a few hours of your time to research, then write, a short text that clearly explains one ballot measure. We usually have one prep session where all the writers get together to edit each other for clarity.

Speaker training requires only one session to learn about all the ballot measures: State, regional and local – our speakers cover the whole ballot. Then expect to sign up for one, two or more speaking engagements in January, as fits in your calendar. We send speakers out in pairs, so if you are a new speaker you'll have the support of a fellow Leaguer with more experience.

To everyone, remember: no burnout is allowed! June 3, 2008 is a second primary!!

Jinky Gardner, President

NEW MEMBERS

Our Warmest Welcome
To Our Newest Members:

Lillie Anderson
Roia Ferrazares
Brooke Ray Smith

THE VOTER

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OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE

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The VOTER is free to members, \$10/year for non-members. Current and past issues of the VOTER are posted on our website at lwvbae.org.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the active and informed participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

BAY AREA ON THE MOVE

An historic joint meeting of the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission was held on Friday, October 26, 2007, in Oakland. The meeting was designated: "Forum: Bay Area on the Move"; 800 people were in attendance. Under discussion were the future needs of the Bay Area, such as, the cost of housing, the cost of transportation improvements, addressing goals for climate change and how to reduce CO₂ emissions without imposing a financial burden on lower-income people who depend on public transit or on the use of their cars. An audiocast of the meeting and the meeting presentations can be found at www.mtc.ca.gov.

The Transportation and Land Use Coalition, of which the LWVBA is a member, celebrated its 10th Anniversary in October. Their Platform for the Transportation 2035 Plan can be seen at their website www.transcoalition.org. The LWVBA participated in the development of the Platform but, due to timing of the required decision, has not yet provided endorsement.

Our Bay Area League Day will take place on Friday, February 22, 2008, at the Niles Hall in Preservation Park, Oakland. The focus will be on various aspects of transportation: how public transit and highways are funded; how to curtail greenhouse gas emissions, 50% of which are caused by transportation sources in the Bay Area; and possible sub-regional solutions, among other topics.

from *Linda Craig's* President's Message
LWVBA Voter, November 2007

LWVUS IMMIGRATION STUDY CONSENSUS MEETINGS

The Immigration Study will consist of two consensus series, the first of which will be held on Tuesday, January 8, 2008, 12-2 pm, at the Albany Public Library (1247 Marin Avenue, Albany), and repeated on Thursday, January 10, 2008, 7-9 pm, at the Northbrae Community Church (941 The Alameda, Berkeley). The second series will take place a week after the first series, and will be held on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, 12-2 pm, at the Albany Public Library, repeated on Thursday, January 24, 2008, 7-9 pm, at the Northbrae Community Church.

Do come and join League members across the country in determining the answers to the following important consensus questions:

- What criteria should Federal immigration law take into consideration? Prioritize the top three among the following: ethnic and cultural diversity; environmental impact/sustainability; and economic, business and service employment needs.
- How should we treat unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S.? Choices range from deportation to earning legal status by such actions as: paying taxes; learning English or studying Civics.
- Should Federal immigration law provide an efficient, expeditious system (with minimum or no backlogs) for legal entry into the U.S. for immigrants who are entering as: immediate family members of legal permanent residents, workers to meet labor needs: students; and/or victims of persecution in home country?
- In order to deal more effectively with unauthorized immigrants, should immigration law require a Social Security Card or other national identification card with secure identifiers for all persons residing in the U.S.?
- How should Federal immigration law be enforced in dealing with unauthorized immigrants? Choose among 8 options.
- Should Federal immigration law address and balance the long-term federal financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations?
- Should Federal immigration law be coordinated with U.S. foreign policy to pro-actively help improve

economics, education and opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations?

These questions are not necessarily listed in the order in which they will be discussed at the units.

For background information, see the last 2 issues of the LWVUS Voter for four Immigration Study Briefs or go on-line to <http://www.lwv.org> and search "Immigration".

Pat Kuhi, Member
LWVBAE Immigration Study Committee

OCTOBER DONATIONS

TO THE LWVBAE GENERAL FUND
Helen Canin
Tom and Jane Coulter,
 in memory of *Marj Rubinow*
Edith Gladstone
Weldon and Jeanie Rucker
Todd Smith

TO THE LWVB FOUNDATION
Martha Chase
Mary Friedman
 Melvin C.H. Wright and Mary E. MacCready,
 for the *Eva Alexis Baner* Foundation
 Fund for Sustainable Communities

Many thanks for remembering your League.

Louetta Erlin
Donations Secretary

BOOK DONATIONS FOR BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE "ON HOLD"

Because the Berkeley City College library has been without a library technician for some time, book donations have been suspended until further notice. New donations need to be processed and entered into a database; this process cannot take place until the necessary library personnel are in place. The librarian has made a budget proposal, which we hope the administration will regard favorably; perhaps staff can be added in the coming semester.

Our LWVBAE members have provided many very nice books, and the librarian is extremely appreciative of our help in building their collection.

Marsha Skinner

RUTH BANCROFT GARDEN

The October 8, 2007 LWVBAE Environmental Concerns meeting featured a slide show by Brian Kemble, Assistant Director of the internationally-acclaimed Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek. Considered a model xeriscape garden and an outstanding example of xerophytes (dry-growing plants), the Bancroft is a teaching garden, an example of the beauty possible in a water-conserving landscape.

Xeriscaping, drought-tolerant landscaping, zeroscaping, and smart scaping are terms that refer to landscaping in ways that do not require supplemental irrigation. Plants whose natural requirements are appropriate to the local climate are emphasized, and care is taken to avoid losing water to evaporation and run-off. By employing such a landscape design, one may lower water bills and conserve water, increase habitat for native bees, butterflies, and other fauna, and enjoy more simple, stress-free gardening, less maintenance, and little or no lawn mowing, which may also save gasoline.

Preserving an exceptional example of American garden design, the Bancroft Garden is internationally recognized as one of the finest private gardens in North America, and was the first private garden in the United States to be sponsored by The Garden Conservancy. Today, the three-acre garden features many mature specimens, and houses important collections of aloes, agaves, yuccas and echeverias, which offer brilliant colors that light up the garden each at different times of the year.

The Ruth Bancroft Garden is open to the public for self-guided tours on weekdays from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon (best to call ahead), and is open for scheduled tours and special events. For information call (925) 210-9663 or go to www.ruthbancroftgarden.org.

Gail Schickele, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns

OBSERVERS ARE WANTED!

Look at the full list of Boards and Commissions in Albany, Berkeley and Emeryville on the LWVBAE website, lwvbae.org! Pick a group that you're interested in or one that you want to know more about. Call the LWVBAE office at (510) 843-8824 or call me, *Phoebe Watts*, at (510) 525-6614 to discuss your choice or to get more information. Your input is very important!

Phoebe Watts
Director of Observer Corps

IN MEMORIAM: FREDERICK BALDERSTON

Frederick E. Balderston, Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business, died in his Berkeley home on October 18, 2007 at the age of 84. Professor *Balderston* was a lover of the outdoors; he and his wife, *Elizabeth*, both LWVBAE members, owned ranch property in the Sierra community of Loyalton, north of Truckee.

Frederick Balderston was known for his devotion to building community and peace around the world. He served on the board of directors of the California Nature Conservancy, the Bernard Osher Foundation and the Golden West Financial Corporation. *Balderston* also was a life trustee of Deep Springs College and the American Field Service international student exchange program. He was a Quaker and a conscientious objector.

Professor *Balderston* is survived by his wife, *Elizabeth*, four children, five grandchildren and a brother. A memorial service was held at the UC Berkeley Faculty Club on November 11. The family requested that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made in Frederick *Balderston's* name to the Feather River Land Trust, P.O. Box 1826, Quincy CA 95971, or to American Field Service Intercultural Programs, 71 W. 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010.

Karen Nelson
Membership

DESK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

In our attempt to have the LWVBAE office open and available to Leaguers and the general public as much as possible, we are asking our membership to volunteer for Desk Duty! Desk Duty can be once or twice a month, in shifts of 2-4 hours, and is a wonderful way to become acquainted with the daily workings of our League and of our office.

Desk duty includes answering the office phone, fetching and processing the mail, and doing whatever else needs doing. Now that we have three new, up-to-date computers in the office, there will certainly be other tasks that Desk Volunteers can do. Please respond to this call and sign up for a shift or two by contacting me, *Jane Barrett*, at (510) 845-8055 or janebarrett@onebox.com. Desk Volunteer training is available!

Jane Barrett
Co-VP Administration

BOARD BRIEFS

At its September meeting, the LWVBAE Board voted to create a Global Warming Action Committee. Encouraged by member enthusiasm and increasing public interest and awareness of the dangers of global warming, LWVBAE President *Jinky Gardner* thought that the formation of a Global Warming Action Committee was very appropriate at this time. The Committee will begin its activities with brainstorming sessions and by identifying League positions which will lead to the creation of action items.

The Board approved donating our supply of League of Women Voters brand tea to the Berkeley Food and Housing Project.

At its October meeting, the Board utilized, for the first time, *Jinky Gardner's* idea of having Board members email their written reports to the Board membership ahead of each Board meeting. *Jinky* was applauded for implementing this idea, which will not only save time at the Board meetings, but will make it easier to refer to individual member's reports. Board members lauded the reports, and called them "wonderful" and "easy to read".

Phoebe Watts and *Karen Nelson* were cheered for volunteering for this year's Nominating Committee.

Kristina Lim
Secretary

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ANNUAL POT LUCK APPETIZER AND DESSERT

The LWVBAE Environmental Concerns Committee will hold its annual Pot Luck Appetizer and Dessert on Monday, December 10, 2007, from 7:30-9:00 pm, 1340 Arch Street, Berkeley. The evening will include a PowerPoint presentation by Timothy Burroughs, who holds an MA degree in Global Environmental Policy from American University.

Mr. Burroughs is Berkeley City coordinator for Measure G, which is intended to reduce city-wide greenhouse-gas emissions, including emissions from residential, commercial and city buildings. For further information contact *Carol Stone* at (510) 549-0959.

Carol Stone, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE BOARD 2007-2008

President:	JINKY GARDNER
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PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING 2008

(continued from p. 1)

Public financing thwarts the influence of special interest "bundlers" and other corrupting contributions. It places the contenders on equal footing. It fosters an election based on fair, issues-based competition for votes instead of who is able to buy the best sound bite.

Right here, right now, the League of Women Voters calls upon every declared presidential candidate to pledge to keep the corrupting influence of big money out of campaigns for President of the United States.

Show us that the issues mean more than money. Stand with us in this fight. Pledge that you will accept public financing for the general election if your opponent does the same. And pledge that you will work to update the public financing system.

The integrity of our election system is at stake.

[Reprinted from the October 2007 issue of The National Voter]

LWVBAE Office Manager Cheryl Nichols' Office Hours:

Monday:	1:15 pm – 5:15 pm
Tuesday:	1:15 pm – 4:15 pm
Wednesday:	1:15 pm – 4:15 pm
Friday:	1:15 pm – 4:00 pm



League of Women Voters

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Joining at the local level makes you
a member at all levels: LWVBAE, Bay
Area, State and National. Dues and
contributions to the League are not
tax deductible. Contributions to the
LWV Foundation are deductible to
the extent allowed by law.

calendar

NOVEMBER

- 22 THURS. - 23 FRI.
- 29 THURS. 7-9 PM

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY - LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED

BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. GARDNER, 548-5292*

DECEMBER

- 3 MON. 1:30-3:00 PM
- 4 TUES. 12-2 PM

No VOTER DEADLINE IN DECEMBER

HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE *U. ROLFE, 841-2239*
BROWN BAG LUNCHEON SERIES *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*

"GLOBAL WARMING", EVAN MILLS, PH.D.
ALBANY LIBRARY'S EDITH STONE ROOM;
1247 MARIN AVENUE, ALBANY

- 10 MON. 7:30-9 PM
- 11 TUES. 7:30 -9:30 PM

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, 1340 ARCH ST. *C. STONE, 549-0959*
CIVICS EDUCATION ACTION COMMITTEE *B. CHAPMAN, 527-0827*
HOME OF DORIS NASSIRY, 2746 WEBSTER ST.

22 SAT. - 31 MON.

LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY SEASON

- 27 THURS. 12 NOON
- 27 THURS. 7-9 PM

IMMIGRATION STUDY CTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. GARDNER, 548-5292*

JANUARY

- 1 MON.
- 4 FRI. 5 PM
- 8 TUES. 12-2 PM
- 10 THURS. 7-9 PM
- 14 MON. 7:30-9 PM
- 15 TUES. 12-2 PM
- 17 THURS. 7 PM

NEW YEAR'S DAY - LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED

DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY VOTER

IMMIGRATION UNIT 1 - ALBANY LIBRARY *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
IMMIGRATION UNIT 1 - NORTHBRAE CHURCH *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, 1340 ARCH ST. *C. STONE, 549-0959*
IMMIGRATION UNIT 2 - ALBANY LIBRARY *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
WHY VOTE? CONTEST AWARDS PRESENTATION *B. CHAPMAN, 527-0827*
BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE

- 21 MON.
- 22 TUES. 5 PM
- 24 THURS. 7-9 PM
- 31 THURS. 7-9 PM

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY - LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED

LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN FEBRUARY PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY
IMMIGRATION UNIT 2 - NORTHBRAE CHURCH *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. GARDNER, 548-5292*

FEBRUARY

- 5 TUES.
- 8 FRI. 5 PM
- 22 FRI. 9:30 AM-3 PM

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PRIMARIES

DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY VOTER *A. KISCH, 985-0651*

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY, NILES HALL,
PRESERVATION PARK, OAKLAND

BERKELEY ADDRESSES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED