

The Voter



League of Women Voters of Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville

MID-WINTER
2009-2010

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Fundraising Goal: Keep LWVBAE in "The Black" Environmental Concerns
- 3 Instant Runoff Voting LWVBAE Office Hours
- 4 "Big Steps, Little Steps" program
- 5 Reduce Your Carbon Footprint Bay Area League Day (continued)
- 6 ABAG Forecast: Smart Growth
- 7 ABAG Forecast: Smart Growth (continued)
Lose 5000 Pounds In 30 Days
October Donations
- 8 Reinventing California's Government
- 9 Board Briefs
New Members
Fall General Membership Meeting
- 10 Calendar

WHEN: Saturday, January 30, 2010, 9 am - 2 pm

WHERE: MetroCenter, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland
(Across the street from the Lake Merritt BART station)

PROGRAM: "Big Steps, Little Steps to Addressing Climate Change"
(see page 4 in this Voter for the meeting's Agenda)

Global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation, as stated by the League of Women Voters of the United States in a letter urging Congress to adopt appropriate legislation. Recent scientific studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts (see chart below).

The League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change. We can reduce global warming pollution by using existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars go farther on a gallon of gasoline, and make technologies cleaner. Cities, states and individuals are already adopting many of these solutions, which

(continued on p. 5)

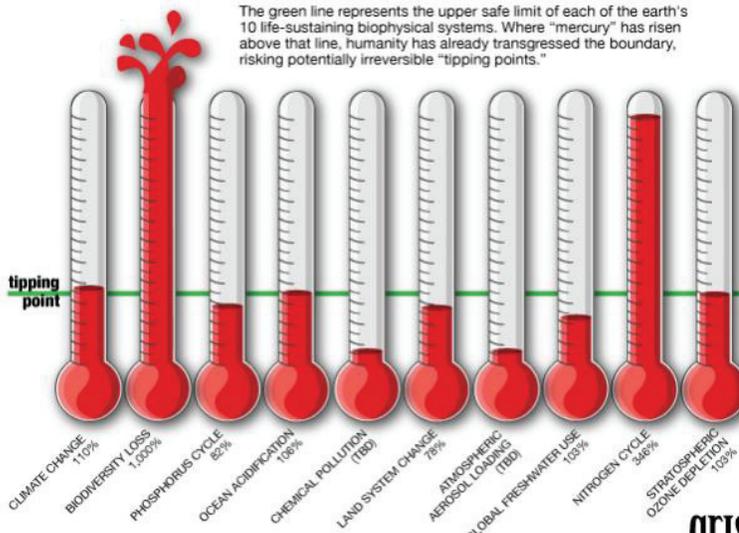
USE YOUR SCRIP!!

The League is again using the eScrip program. If you are using a red Safeway card or any other recipient of eScrip, such as Macy's, the League will get 3% of your purchase price. Just give me a call at 527.0673 and I'll get you registered. Many thanks!

Ruthann Taylor
Scrip Coordinator

The planet has a fever

The green line represents the upper safe limit of each of the earth's 10 life-sustaining biophysical systems. Where "mercury" has risen above that line, humanity has already transgressed the boundary, risking potentially irreversible "tipping points."



Source: Nature, "Planetary Boundaries: A Safe Operating Space for Humanity," 24 Sept. 2009

grist

FUNDRAISING LETTER GOAL: TO KEEP LWVBAE IN "THE BLACK"

Shortly after you receive this issue of the *Voter*, you will find in your mailbox the League's annual fundraising appeal. We literally cannot run the League without proceeds from this appeal.

Here are some facts about our finances:

- Despite the best efforts of the Board, the LWVBAE budget performance for 2008-2009 showed an expenditure of some \$17,000 over income. Once again we had to dip into reserves to pay our bills, and of course with the investment markets doing so poorly, our reserve funds were less "vigorous" than they once were. For several years, we had not raised our dues because there was the perception that the League "had enough money" and so we didn't need to worry too much about income/expense balances. **Now we do. Worry.**
- We budgeted last year for an anticipated (hoped-for) \$8,300 in contributions, but received just over \$6,000. Fortunately, the Annual Community Luncheon helped make up some of the shortfall by coming in with a net that exceeded what was budgeted for it (thank you, Luncheon Committee!). But we were still budgeting with an eye on cashing out some of our reserves.
- The Foundation, our tax-exempt educational arm, was in a similar bind, with its investment income (and investment values) falling shy of budget.
- The donor world of today is a very different place from the one of just two or three years ago, and so all not-for-profits and other worthy organizations have seen their contributions dip dramatically. That situation will not turn on a dime, so the next year or two are certainly going to be more like last year than like two or three years ago.

We want to express our deep appreciation to all of you who paid the increased dues amount with understanding, and to those of you who continued to contribute to both the League and to the Foundation, knowing that our need for people to help us "stay the course" was being acutely felt.

When our solicitation letter arrives, we hope you will, as you have in the past, give it special consideration and include a gift not only to the Foundation, but also to LWVBAE in support of our advocacy work.

And we would be very grateful if you also considered naming the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville, and/or the League of Women Voters of Berkeley Foundation, in your estate plans. We have had some legacies come our way from members who wanted their support to

THE VOTER

Published monthly except January, June & August by

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE

1414 University Avenue, Suite D
Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

Telephone: 510.843.8824

Facsimile: 510.843.8828

Email: office@lwvbae.org

Editor: Alice Kisch

Editorial Board: Jane Brandes, Bill Chapman,

Mim Hawley, Jean Safir, Sherry Smith

Proofreader: Evelyn Light

Technical Consultant: Bill Chapman

The *VOTER* is free to members, \$20/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 active and informed participation in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

last beyond their lifetimes, and we have been good stewards of those gifts.

The League and the Foundation boards appreciate the contributions of those who help sustain our ability to underwrite our important and well-regarded public services. We could not do it without you.

With gratitude,

Sherry Smith, Foundation President
LWVBAE Vice President for Action

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The December 14, 2009 Environmental Concerns meeting will feature a pot-luck supper, starting at 7:00 pm (instead of our usual 7:30 pm), and a slide show by author **JAMES G. WORKMAN**, an award-winning journalist, foreign correspondent and writer who has prepared speeches for statesmen on four continents.

As a "Drought Doctor," James Workman has advised businesses, aid agencies, civic associations, environmentalists and government departments on water scarcity and climate-change adaptation. His book, *The Heart of Dryness: How the Last Bushmen Can Help Us Endure the Coming Age of Permanent Drought*, was published in August 2009.

Mr. Workman, who is based in San Francisco, will speak to us about his book and will relate it to the water impacts of global warming in the Bay Area. This meeting will take place at the home of *Wendy Markel*, 2811 Claremont **Boulevard (NOT Avenue)** in Berkeley. For further information contact *Carol Stone* at 510.549.0959 or *Gail Schickele* at 415.922.5826.

Carol Stone, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns

**STAY TUNED!
INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING – NOW KNOWN
AS RANKED CHOICE VOTING – MAY BE
REALITY FOR 2010 BERKELEY ELECTION
(AND MAYBE NOT)**

In 2004 (that’s five years ago...) the voters of Berkeley approved, by an 80% margin, the adoption of “Instant Runoff Voting” (IRV) for municipal elections. In 2006, the voters of Oakland similarly approved IRV with a substantial 69% of the vote.

In the last several years, San Francisco has used, with the approval of the Secretary of State, voting equipment and software that accommodate IRV voting. They have conducted no fewer than six (6) elections this way; hardly anyone has complained and no one has proposed that IRV be repealed. The San Francisco voters are quite satisfied with how their municipal elections now entail the expense of only one election (no run-off election) with the winner established within a few days at most – and how candidates don’t have to go more than once to their supporters to underwrite campaign expenses. A winning concept, it would appear.

So why are the voters of Berkeley and Oakland still waiting to vote under this concept (now called “Ranked Choice Voting,” but exactly the same as IRV)? What an excellent question! The ducks are all in a row: The voters have spoken; the equipment to effectuate the voting exists and has stood the test of actual voting conditions; the Registrar of Voters for Alameda County is ready to roll. An implementation group consisting of City Clerks, other city personnel and Registrar of Voters staff has been meeting for about two years, talking about what needs to be done for voter education and the key role the League might play in these efforts.

But as of this writing, the Secretary of State, Debra Bowen, has yet to give her approval for Alameda County to proceed with using the exact equipment that San Francisco has the “go ahead” for. So what’s up with this? For a couple of months now, members of the Secretary of State’s staff most involved with this question have been saying “any time now” about the approval coming from Sacramento. They have said this to the implementation committee and to the Registrar, Dave Macdonald, himself. When directly asked whether Alameda County needs to provide any more information or assurances, the answer has been “No, nothing further is needed.”

And yet here we sit, waiting, while the clock is running out on Oakland’s need to have an answer by the end of the year in order to know whether they must go ahead and plan for their usual June municipal primary. (The time clock is less a consideration for Berkeley because it holds its municipal election in November.) And

the San Leandro City Council has before them a proposal to also go with Ranked Choice, and are awaiting the Secretary of State’s approval before they act. Another factor in play is the fact that the start-up costs of some \$350,000 will be divided proportionately among the cities which will conduct an RCV election for the first time. It will be better for all concerned if all three cities were holding their initial RCV elections in the same year, 2010.

So again, what seems to be the holdup? Could it have anything to do with behind-the-scenes machinations by Oakland politicians who have apparently decided that “the old-fashioned way” of election-plus-runoff suits their needs just fine because they have done so well under this expensive system in past elections?

Consider the fact that Ignacio De La Fuente, Vice Mayor of the Oakland City Council, has written to Secretary of State Bowen asking her to delay approval of the equipment until she sees a complete education plan, “vetted by our community,” allegedly to assure there will be no voter confusion. And consider the fact that former Senate Pro Tem President Don Perata, widely considered to be running for Oakland Mayor this coming year, has written to County Administrator Susan Muranishi bringing up similar “concerns.”

Our League has joined with the Leagues of Oakland and Eden Area (San Leandro is one of their cities) in a letter to Secretary Bowen asking point-blank when we can expect to have her administrative approval so the cities can proceed to do the voters’ bidding. As of early November, there was no response. We hope against hope that by the time you read this story the unexplained delay is over and we are proceeding as we should be.

Sherry Smith
Vice President for Action

LWVBAE OFFICE HOURS

Cheryl Nichols, LWVBAE Office Manager, is in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. At other times, however, volunteers may be staffing the office. But if no one is there to take your call, it is important that you leave a telephone message or use email to let us know the reason for your call. We will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible.



*The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Presents
Bay Area League Day 2010*



“Big Steps, Little Steps to Addressing Climate Change”

A program about reducing greenhouse gas emissions and confronting climate change

Saturday, January 30, 2010

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

MetroCenter, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland, California

Featuring keynote speaker Mary D. Nichols, Chair, California Air Resources Board

With additional experts in the morning session addressing:

Regional Transportation Requirements of Senate Bill 375
(Speaker from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission)

State Land Use and Smart Growth Policies
(Julia Lave Johnston, Deputy Director for Planning Policy, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research)

Environmental Visions for the Bay Area in 2035
(Jeremy Madsen, Executive Director, Greenbelt Alliance)

Regional Air Quality Requirements of Senate Bill 375
(Speaker from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District)

State Housing Requirements of Senate Bill 375
(Cathy Creswell, Deputy Director of Housing Policy Development, California HCD)

And an afternoon session showcasing success stories of confronting climate change around the region:

City of Berkeley (Tom Bates, Mayor)

County of Sonoma (Rod Dole, Tax Auditor and Controller)

City of San Jose (Laurel Prevetti, Planner, and Ashwini Kantak, Assistant to the City Manager)

City of San Francisco (Calla Ostrander, Climate Change Coordinator)

REGISTRATION FORM

The price of this year’s Bay Area League Day is \$25 (\$15 without lunch) before January 21, or \$30 (\$20 without lunch) after that. A light breakfast will be served to all who attend. To register, please write check payable to “LWVBA” and mail with this form to 1611 Telegraph Ave., Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612.

Name: _____ Local League: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Registration is also available online through January 21 via PayPal at www.lwvbayarea.org.

For more details, call (510) 839-1608 or send an e-mail to editor@bayareamonitor.org.

REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

There are short- and long-term goals to be considered when reducing your carbon footprint. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Think about packaging before you buy things;
- Keep reusable bags handy for your lunch and groceries;
- Avoid plastic containers and try to purchase items in glass;
- Unplug electronics not in use;
- Buy 100% post-consumer paper;
- Use your green bin or compost pile for uneaten/non-edible foods;
- Try to allow time to walk as you complete errands and try to take public transit whenever possible;
- Choose foods that are produced near your home;
- Try to replace a few meat meals with vegetarian meals during the week; and

Calculate your carbon footprint at one of these sites to see where you're using the most energy: www.becoolberkeley.org, www.myfootprint.org or www.coolcalifornia.org/calculator.html.

Also, try to attend the upcoming Conversations with the League at 12 noon on Tuesday, December 1, at the Edith Stone Room in the Albany Public Library, and see how you can lose 5000 pounds of carbon in 30 days (see p. 7).

More detailed tips to reduce your carbon footprint are available from the Climate Change Action Project of the Ecology Center, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley.

Our households offer great opportunities for reducing our energy use. For long-term goals, consider some of these improvements to add to your list:

- Installing low-flow toilets;
- Installing low-flow showerheads;
- Replacing your next wash machine with a front-loading style;
- Weather-stripping exterior doors;
- Insulating hot-water piping; and
- Sealing and insulating furnace ducts.

There are some nice Federal Energy Tax credits for many of these residential improvements. Berkeley's Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance (RECO) has detailed information on incentives and energy savings for various improvement measures. At their September meeting, the Energy Commission held a public hearing on the revised draft proposal of RECO, detailing the current and proposed measures.

The goal is to reduce natural gas usage and increase residential energy efficiency. Home owners would obtain a HERS II rating (Whole House Home Energy Diagnostic Report). At the point of sale of a home, owners would need to implement the energy-saving recommendations. For a copy of the RECO draft proposal, contact *Regina Beatus* at beatusr@sprintmail.com.

Regina Beatus, Co-Chair
Climate Change Team

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY

(continued from p. 1)

also reduce our dependence on oil, reduce air pollution and protect pristine places from oil drilling and mining. State and local initiatives are proving that answers can be found and put in place.

The morning session of Bay Area League Day will start with an address by Mary D. Nichols, Chair of the California Air Resources Board and our keynote speaker for the day. Nichols will discuss California Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg) which will require reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. (*See also ABAG article on p. 7.*)

During the remainder of the morning session, a panel of regional and state agency officials will speak about new programs designed to address climate change in relation to air quality, transportation, housing and land use. In the afternoon, we will hear from a number of Bay Area city and county leaders on their communities' current programs. Included among the speakers is Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates. Visit www.lwvbayarea.org or call 510.839.1608 to learn more.

Each of us is asked to register individually for this event. Please cut out the Registration Form at the bottom of the meeting agenda on page 4, fill it out and send it, along with your check, to LWVBA, 1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612 **before January 21**; if your registration materials arrive after January 21, an additional \$5 will be added to the cost. Please call our League office at 510.843.8824 if you need a ride to a local BART station or a ride to the conference; we'll do whatever we can to help you get there.

Jean Safir
Director at Large

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENT REGIONAL GROWTH FORECAST CALLS FOR SMART GROWTH PLANNING

A 25-year forecast for Bay Area changes in population and jobs was presented at the Environmental Concerns October 12 meeting by Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) Deputy Executive Director Ezra Rapport. ABAG's biennial publication, entitled *Priorities and Projections 2009: Building Momentum*, forecasts specific demographic and economic data for the region's nine counties and 101 cities in five-year increments from 2000 to 2035.

By 2035 the Bay Area's population is forecasted to grow by nearly 25 percent, or 1.7 million people. Nearly 75 percent of the growth is expected to occur in Santa Clara, Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Santa Clara alone will account for 35 percent of the region's projected population increase.

The number of jobs in the region is expected to increase by about 1.6 million – almost 50 percent. Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma counties are expected to see the most change. However, the region's job centers – Santa Clara, Alameda and San Francisco counties – will be home to most of the new jobs, with Santa Clara accounting for nearly one-third of the region's total job increase.

In the East Bay, Alameda County is expected to grow by 416,000 people, for a total of nearly two million people by 2035. It's forecasted that 327,000 jobs will be added during this period. All jurisdictions will see significant changes, with the most growth in communities closest to San Francisco Bay. The biggest population changes are expected in Union City, Oakland, Emeryville and Dublin, the latter two cities leading the way with anticipated population increases of 70 percent. Jobs in Dublin and Union City will double. Oakland, Fremont and Hayward will remain the cities with the highest populations in Alameda County, with Oakland forecasted to continue having over 25 percent of the county's residents and jobs. Berkeley's population is projected to grow by 14,000 people. New development is projected to occur downtown and along the city's major transportation corridors, such as Adeline Street, and Telegraph, University, Shattuck and San Pablo avenues. Nearly 70 percent of the population growth in western Alameda County is projected to occur in Priority Development Areas (PDAs) or infill neighborhoods, where there is access to public transit.

Priority Development Areas

PDAs are locally-identified, infill development opportunity areas, near transit, that are generally at least 100 acres in size and where there's a local commitment to developing more housing along with amenities and services to meet the day-to-day needs

of residents in a pedestrian-friendly environment. Nearly 60 local government entities have nominated over 120 PDAs in the region that are served by or have plans for transit. PDAs include significant portions of San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland; most Caltrain, BART, and VTA stations; the El Camino Real, San Pablo Avenue, and International Blvd/East 14th Street corridors; former military bases; many stations along the future SMART and eBART lines; and the downtown or commercial centers of many Bay Area communities. Together the PDAs comprise about 115,000 acres of urban and suburban land – about three percent of the Bay Area's total land area. Based upon regional projections, the PDAs could accommodate over half of the Bay Area's projected housing growth to the year 2035, mostly at relatively moderate densities.

The FOCUS Initiative

The Bay Area's regional agencies have joined together with local governments, congestion management agencies and transit to promote more compact land development and land conservation. The initiative, called FOCUS, is a commitment to reducing housing costs and traffic congestion and a commitment to the protection of natural resources. The primary mechanism for change via FOCUS is financial incentives directed to local governments for use in planning and building complete, sustainable communities and land conservation.

The concept of "complete communities" – a return to development patterns found in older cities worldwide – offers diverse housing choices surrounded by a mix of uses such as shops, offices, restaurants and parks. This enables people to walk, bike or take transit to their destinations rather than having to rely exclusively on their cars.

Priority Conservation Areas

To preserve and protect the Bay Area's natural features and systems, the FOCUS partners are working with land trusts, open space districts, parks and recreation departments, local jurisdictions, and others involved in open space conservation to ensure that Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) are permanently protected. PCAs are open-space areas of regional significance that have broad community support and an urgent need for protection. The region's 98 identified PCAs provide important agricultural, natural resource, historical, scenic, cultural, recreational, and/or ecological values and ecosystem functions.

MTC and Transportation 2035

As a partner in FOCUS, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is committed to more focused, higher-density growth to reduce driving and to making transit investments more effective,

(continued on p. 7)

ABAG REGIONAL GROWTH FORECAST

(continued from p. 6)

as demonstrated by having doubled funding for its Transportation for Livable Communities program to \$2.2 billion over the next 25 years. Key elements of MTCs \$218 billion spending plan adopted April 2009 include a new Climate Action Campaign to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, pricing excess highway capacity, major public transit expansions and a Freeway Performance initiative to maximize traffic flow on existing highways.

As a professional planner, ABAG Director Ezra Rapport considers that his industry has failed because of the lack of coordination between land-use planning and transportation. "The roadways are saturated," he said. "There's nowhere to put the cars." The problem will be ameliorated by California's SB375, which mandates each region to come up with its own solution to problems of how to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), he said (*See also Bay Area League Day, p. 5*).

"What we'd like to see is compact urban growth and improved amenities of neighborhoods," Rapport said. "It takes planning or you get very haphazard development." Land use planning requires long-term strategy of 20-30 years, and good planning can lead to a higher quality of life, he said. "If we don't grow successfully we'll see more growth in the Central Valley," he cautioned, adding, "In the Bay Area we have a rim but it's not true in the Central Valley; if we don't get some degree of control it's going to grow over there and that would be a disaster." Uncontrolled growth in the Central Valley could lead to unsustainable sprawl and natural resource consumption and loss of vital agricultural land. Rapport emphasized the great need for funding, and for continued collaboration among communities, governments and as many groups as possible in order to achieve the necessary smart growth for a more secure future. Ezra Rapport may be reached at ezraR@ABAG.ca.gov.

*Gail Schickele, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns*

LOSE 5000 POUNDS IN 30 DAYS

Participate in the Conversation with League friends at noon on Tuesday, December 1, as we discuss how we, personally, and the community, as a whole, can reduce our carbon footprint! Our local League Climate Change Action Committee, led by *Jan Blumenkrantz* and *Regina Beatus*, will explain what individuals and communities can do to lose 5000 pounds in 30 days with a Low Carbon Diet. *Jan* and *Regina's* training at the Berkeley Ecology Center is based on the book, *Low Carbon Diet, A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds*, by David Gershon. Bring your questions and share your comments about any aspects of Climate Change.

OCTOBER DONATIONS

TO THE LWVBAE GENERAL FUND

- Diane Akers and Steven Schwartzberg
in memory of Luanne Rogers*
- Regina Beatus*
- Nancy and Peter Bickel*
- Ora Huth*
- Madeline Mixer*
- Therese Pipe*
- Roxane Soucy*

TO THE LWVB FOUNDATION

- Regina Beatus*
- Jane Bergen*
- Nancy and Peter Bickel*
- Suzanne and Gordon Chun*
- Stanley and Mary Friedman*
- Ora Huth*
- Erika Kunkel*
- Jane Ann Lamph*

Many thanks for remembering your League.

*Louetta Erlin
Donations Secretary*

On Tuesday, January 5, the Conversation At The League will continue our focus on proposals to reform California's governance and finance (the article on page 8 explains the state of affairs as of November 1). As this topic is a moving target, *Helene Lecar*, our Education Director, will update us on developments through the New Year and lead a discussion about the various proposals. Which of the ideas in circulation appeal to you? Which ones seem politically feasible – or likely to do much good? Come share your views on needed reforms and on strategies needed to accomplish them.

You may bring your own lunch, but water is the only beverage allowed in the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Public Library, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany (next to BART overhead tracks by Masonic Avenue).

PLAN AHEAD: On Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010, we'll offer another Conversation on an issue of League interest.

FEEDBACK FROM AN ATTENDEE: "Tuesday's Conversation [on Berkeley's proposed Sunshine Ordinance] was the perfect example of what the League does best: civilized discourse."

*Ginette Polak, Chair
Conversations At The League*

REINVENTING CALIFORNIA'S GOVERNMENT: AN UPDATE

It's hard to find anyone who approves of California's current state of affairs. The State legislature and the Governor have come under heavy fire from the left and the right for their inability to break the legislative gridlock or pass a balanced budget. Advocates for the services and programs that have been cut are suing the State in court to restore essential funding. Last February the Governor appointed a blue-ribbon commission, known variously as the Commission on the 21st Century Economy, the Tax Reform Commission, or the Parsky Commission (after its chairman, Gerald Parsky), to look at the State's tax structure and recommend ways to reduce spending or increase revenues. But when the Commission issued its report in late September, it fell flat.

MOBILIZING THE WILL TO CHANGE

In the meantime, business people, policy wonks, academics, private citizens and foundations interested in good government have banded together in various non-governmental groups to look at the sources of our troubles and to propose solutions.

California Forward, led by former State Senate leader Robert Herzberg, was formed with funding from major foundations to develop a bipartisan approach for advancing governance and fiscal reforms. Together, the foundations provided grants totaling \$15.9 million over three years, and members of the group have been at work since, holding Town Hall meetings across the state, speaking to local groups and to legislators of both parties and at every level of government to find out what people's priorities are and what recommendations have some political support.

Reform California, originating from the San Francisco-based Bay Area Council and the New America Foundation, has used a business-management model to look at our State government, and has opted for more direct political action: They are calling for a Constitutional Convention to streamline our much-amended constitution, addressing structure, financing and the initiative process to create a roadmap for a 21st century California. Under existing provisions of the constitution, only the legislature may call for a convention, so Reform California is currently circulating petitions for two initiatives: the first changes the law to permit citizens to call for such a convention without going through the legislature. The second initiative follows up with a call to convene just such a constitution-changing deliberation, run by citizen delegates chosen by a semi-random process.

In October of this year UC Berkeley's Institute for Governmental Studies (IGS) helped put together two public workshops – one in Sacramento and the other on the UC Berkeley campus – designed to explore proposals for action. (Webcasts and papers from the Sacramento conference are available through links at the IGS website: <http://igs.berkeley.edu>.) The local

event drew many Leaguers from the East Bay. To date, the state League has not supported or opposed any of the existing reform proposals.

EXASPERATION WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE 2010 BALLOT BOX

Efforts at big-picture reform are only part of the public's response. California's problems with legislative gridlock and financial dysfunction have prompted a spate of new ballot questions focused on pieces of the puzzle. These questions take pot shots at various smaller issues: changing the budget process, generating new revenue from unexpected sources, limiting the legislature, or changing the character of who gets elected. As of November 3, 2009, three measures, all sponsored by legislators, are already slated for the June 8, 2010 primary (official proposition numbers have not yet been assigned to them):

SCA4, Ashburn, is a constitutional amendment that redefines how real estate taxes shall be assessed and levied on "new," that is, post-Prop 13, construction, with an extensive set of exemptions for special circumstances such as seismic retrofitting. Even the legislative digest of the measure runs to 40 pages.

AB583 (Chapter 735, 2008), a statutory proposition introduced by Loni Hancock in the last legislative session, calls for public financing of election campaigns.

SC4 (Resolution Chapter 2, 2009, Maldonado): The price of Sen. Maldonado's agreement to the September budget compromise was this proposition, which allows open primaries, with the general election limited to the top two vote getters, even if they are of the same political party.

In addition to the three foregoing measures, 24 other measures are out there, circulating, as we go to press with another 39 in the Attorney General's office, prior to circulation. One initiative proposes a part-time legislature, another seeks to reduce the length of the legislative session and also to cut the salary of serving legislators by 50%. Two separate initiatives propose legalizing and taxing marijuana. Yet another opts for mandatory drug and alcohol testing for members of the legislature, and, my personal favorite, a constitutional amendment proposing a "Requirement for Legislators to Certify that They Understand Legislation and Have Not Accepted a Bribe or Engaged in Illegal Vote Swapping." Most of these will never see the inside of a ballot pamphlet.

The stymied efforts to pass a budget or create new taxes with the present two-thirds requirement for legislative approval have also elicited a proposal changing the vote requirement from two-thirds to three-fifths. By the time you read this, there will undoubtedly be more measures. For current information, see the Secretary of State's website: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/>.

Helene Lecar
Education Director

BOARD BRIEFS

At the October 2009 LWVBAE Board meeting the following matters were discussed/decided upon:

A letter will be sent to the California Secretary of State, expressing our frustration at the lack of action on the issue of Ranked Choice Voting. Six areas of the Board Handbook need updating: Master Calendar, By-Laws Time Requirements, By-Laws, Board Policies, Job Descriptions and Local Support Positions. If there are any members who are interested in helping with this effort, we would be delighted to hear from you. Board members have volunteered so you would be working alongside them, not alone! All interested persons should please contact the LWVBAE office at 510.843.8824.

Angharad Jones
Secretary

NEW MEMBERS

Our Warmest Welcome
To Our Newest Members:

David Madson David Stoloff
Nancy Turak

FALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SPOTLIGHTS OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

League members gathered on October 1, 2009 to start off our League year learning about the current state of our Community Colleges, especially our own Berkeley City College (BCC). BCC President Betty Inclan and our Community College Trustees were invited to speak about enhancing connections from the Colleges to the wider community, particularly to those who would most benefit from community college programs.

It was the first time that all Peralta District officials had been invited to speak to our League. Unfortunately, because she was downed by the flu, Trustee Nicky Gonzalez-Yuen had to bow out at the last minute. Trustee Cy Gulassa was able to provide us with a rich appreciation of what trustees do, under which constraints they operate, and the deep responsibility they feel, entrusted with Measure A bond money, to plan well for the students of the future.

President Inclan, who came to BCC only two years ago, gave us a delightful overview of her responsibilities, along with her impressions of learning about a new institution in a new community. In their own talks and in answer to questions afterward, both speakers agreed that connections to the community at large need to grow, but that the state budget cuts, which are on everyone's mind, have left few resources for adequate outreach to our underserved communities.

Helene Lecar
Director of Education

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE

BOARD 2009-2010

Recording Secretary:	ANGHARAD JONES
Treasurer:	BILL CHAPMAN
Vice President-Action:	SHERRY SMITH
Vice President-Administration:	DIANE AKERS
Vice President-Election Services:	PHOEBE WATTS
Vice President-Membership:	JANE COULTER
VOTER Editor:	ALICE KISCH
Conversations At The League:	GINETTE POLAK
Education Director:	HELENE LECAR
Environmental Concerns: (CO-DIRECTORS, ONE VOTE)	CAROL STONE/ GAIL SCHICKELE
Healthcare Director:	URSULA ROLFE
Directors at Large:	MIM HAWLEY JEAN SAFIR

LWVBAE 2009-2010 OFF-BOARD PORTFOLIOS

ALBANY ACTION CO-CHAIRS	JEAN SAFIR ALAN MARIS
CIVICS EDUCATION CHAIR	JINKY GARDNER
CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION CO-CHAIRS	JAN BLUMENKRANTZ REGINA BEATUS
COMMUNITY LUNCHEON CO-CHAIRS	SUZANNE CHUN SHERRY SMITH
DATABASE COORDINATOR	JANE COULTER
DONATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	LOUETTA ERLIN
DUES COORDINATOR	MINA JENNER
ELECTION SERVICES CO-CHAIR	LOIS BRUBECK
CANDIDATE FORUMS (B-TV)	JILL MARTINUCCI
PROS & CONS	LESSLY WIKLE FIELD
SMART VOTER	SHERRY SMITH
VOTER AFFIDAVIT COORDINATOR	PHOEBE WATTS
HOUSING	ELOISE BODINE
JUVENILE JUSTICE CO-CHAIRS	LOIS BRUBECK PAT KUHI
LWV BAY AREA LIAISON	JEAN SAFIR
LWV ALAMEDA COUNTY LIAISONS	NANCY BICKEL SHERRY SMITH
MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	JINKY GARDNER
OFFICE MANAGER/VOLUNTEER TRAINING	CHERYL NICHOLS
OFFICE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR	JANE BARRETT
WEB MANAGER/COMPUTER CONSULTANT	BILL CHAPMAN
WOMEN'S ISSUES	CHARLOTTE LICHTERMAN



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

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
 Paid
 Berkeley, CA
 Permit No. 29

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



how to join

fill in coupon below and mail with your check in the amount of \$75 (\$40 for each additional household member; \$40 for a student membership) to the order of LWVBAE,

1414 University Avenue, Suite D
 Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. Day: _____

Tel. Eve. _____

Email: _____

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 LWVB Foundation are deductible to the extent allowed by law. Non-member subscriptions cost \$20/year.

calendar

DECEMBER

- 1 TUES. 12-2 PM
- 14 MON. **7-9 PM**
- 15 TUES. 3-5 PM
- 16 WED. 1-3 PM
- 19 SAT. THRU JAN. 3

No VOTER DEADLINE IN DECEMBER

- CONVERSATION ON REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT, EDITH STONE ROOM OF ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1247 MARIN AVENUE, ALBANY (SEE P. 7) *G. POLAK, 841.4546*
- ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, **POT-LUCK & SLIDE SHOW**, HOME OF *WENDY MARKEL*, 2811 CLAREMONT BLVD (NOT AVENUE) (SEE P. 2) *G. SCHICKELE, 415.922.5826*
- ACTION COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE *S. SMITH, 548.1769*
- CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. BLUMENKRANTZ, 548.3845*
- BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *D. AKERS, 527.1288*
- LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY SEASON**

JANUARY

- 4 MON.
- 5 TUES. 12-2 PM
- 8 FRI. 5:00 PM
- 11 MON. 7:30-9 PM
- 18 MON.
- 19 TUES. 3-5 PM
- 20 WED. 1-3 PM
- 27 WED. 3-5 PM
- 30 SAT. 9 AM-2 PM

LWVBAE OFFICE RE-OPENS AFTER HOLIDAY SEASON

- CONVERSATION ON CALIFORNIA GOVERNANCE & FISCAL REFORMS, EDITH STONE ROOM OF ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1247 MARIN AVENUE, ALBANY (SEE P. 7) *G. POLAK, 841.4546*
- DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY 2010 VOTER** *A. KISCH, 985.0651*
- ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, LOCATION TBA *C. STONE, 549.0959*
- G. SCHICKELE, 415.922.5826*
- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY – LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED**
- ACTION COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE *S. SMITH, 548.1769*
- CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. BLUMENKRANTZ, 548.3845*
- BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *D. AKERS, 527.1288*
- BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY** (SEE PP. 1, 4, 5) *LWVBA, 839.1608*

FEBRUARY

- 2 TUES. 12-2 PM
- 5 FRI. 5:00 PM
- 8 MON. 7:30-9 PM
- 16 TUES. 3-5 PM
- 17 WED. 1-3 PM
- 24 WED. 3-5 PM

- CONVERSATION ON SUBJECT OF LEAGUE INTEREST, EDITH STONE ROOM OF ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1247 MARIN AVENUE, ALBANY *G. POLAK, 841.4546*
- DEADLINE FOR MARCH 2010 VOTER** *A. KISCH, 985.0651*
- ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, LOCATION TBA *C. STONE, 549.0959*
- G. SCHICKELE, 415.922.5826*
- ACTION COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE *S. SMITH, 548.1769*
- CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. BLUMENKRANTZ, 548.3845*
- BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *D. AKERS, 527.1288*

BERKELEY ADDRESSES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED