

The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS
of BERKELEY, ALBANY
and EMERYVILLE



1414 University Avenue, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94702-1509 Tel. 510/843-8824

President: Jo Ann B. Price

February, 2001

Editor: Bob Hawley

LWVC Election Systems Study 2001 UNITs For Members

Phase I - Thur., Feb. 8, 7-9 pm, League Office or Saturday, Feb. 10, 10 am- noon, League Office

Phase II - Thur., Mar. 1, 7-9 pm, League Office or Sat., Mar. 3, 10 am-noon, League Office

Plan to come to both a Phase I and a Phase II meeting in February and March!

(NOTE: Be sure to read the following material before you attend a UNIT and bring it with you.)

What topic could be more timely in 2001 for a League of Women Voters study than "Election Systems"? The League was ahead of its time in 1970 when the LWVUS studied the Electoral College and adopted the national position calling for the Electoral College's abolition. The League has supported the direct election of the President by popular vote since then as essential to representative government. But in the event that total elimination of the Electoral College couldn't be achieved, the League also called for reforming it by allocating electoral voters proportionally within each state and Washington, DC - or binding electors to vote as directed by the electorate.

-(Continued on Page 6)

February Is "Honor League Volunteers Month"

LWVBAE is privileged to have many wonderful, committed women and men

as members who contribute so much to the reputation, spirit, and collective effectiveness of our League in our three communities. We thank all of you for the many hours given to the League over many years that have translated into the various aspects of community and voter service that the citizens and elected officials in our communities have come to rely on. When a difficult task requires bringing different points of view together to solve local problems, the League is there to organize co-sponsorships for educational forums and moderate potentially contentious group discussions. When an issue needs thorough, dependable, and balanced study, the League is asked to undertake it. At election time we are depended upon to provide non-partisan analysis of the issues and voter education. Because of the caliber of the work of our peerless volunteers, our League holds a special spot in the life of our three communities. Thank you all for helping the League to maintain a high level of civility and enlightenment in our civic affairs. We're proud of you and honored to represent you as the LWVBAE Board!

-Jo Ann B. Price, President

p. 2 President's Column
Board Briefs
p. 3 ASUC Volunteers Needed
Speaker Series
Nominating Committee
p. 4 New Members / In Memoriam
Donors / Personals
Adelia Lines Memoriam
p. 5 Outstanding League Volunteers
p. 6 UNITs (from Page 1)
p. 7 Better Voting For Calif.?
State Program Planning
p. 8 Urban Growth Alternatives
Smart Voter News
p. 9 LWVC On Electrical Rates
Kids Need A Reading Friend
p. 10 Action - Community Forums
League Volunteer Training
p. 11 Can You Help The League?
p. 12 Calendar
Inserts (3)

Fax: 510/843-8828 E-mail: lwvbae@pacbell.net WebSite: home.pacbell.net/lwvbae

President's Column

February 14, 2001 - - The League of Women Voters' 81st Birthday! and February Program Planning

I begin with some introspective thoughts on the meaning of the 19th Amendment passed in 1920 and the founding of the LWV in the same year. For those of us in the U.S. who take our constitutional right to vote as a given, it is sobering to think how recently women got that right, how long it took to achieve it in this "cradle of democracy", and what life was like for women in our country prior to 1920. It is also important to ponder what we have and haven't accomplished with our vote in terms of good government, social justice, education for all, environmental responsibility, equal rights, and political efficacy and uplift. Would our far-sighted forebears from colonial times to the '20s who devoted themselves to achieving the right to vote for women, with all that implies, be satisfied with what has been accomplished so far? What goals and programs would these visionary women and men set for themselves if they were here and able to act with all the rights and modern tools available to us?

Spending some time reading about the history of the women's vote in the U.S. and getting to know the heroic characters - both women and men - who labored to make it happen, can only enrich our appreciation for them and for the importance of this right that many take for granted. Of the 300 women and a few men who gathered in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, only one woman lived to vote in 1920 at the age of 96 .

But nostalgia and knowledge and appreciation of history are not sufficient to pay the debt we owe these pioneers and continue their passion for democracy. To be worthy of their legacy we must be fully aware of our duty as citizens and become involved with making democracy work better for all Americans. Those of us in the LWV have the perfect vehicle and support system to help us achieve a better democracy at the local, regional, state, and national levels. And by spreading this message in both word and deed, we can attract more people to join in this necessary and rewarding effort.

Now, as the League approaches State program planning time in February to determine our priorities and actions to undertake in the new League year beginning in July, we should come to the task with our passion for democracy. Let's be realistic about

Board Briefs

At its October Meeting, the Board:

- Heard that *Jim Lindsay, Jean Safir, and Beth Springston* were appointed to review the Minutes of the Fall General Meeting, at which 2 new positions were adopted and 1 was updated.
- Thanked *Lois Brubeck* for providing refreshments.
- Received the 1999-2000 Year-End Final Report from Treasurer *Beth Springston*, who had been on a leave from mid-June to the beginning of September.
- Voted to emphasize donations to the LWVB Foundation in the Fall Finance Drive.
- Heard the Voter Service report of *Phoebe Watts*, who distributed our extensive list of Election Activities and noted the letter we sent to community groups in the 3 cities offering our election services.
- Heard *Lois Brubeck* review LWV Action on local and state recommendations on the November ballot measures.
- Heard plans from *Helene Lecar* for Mock Elections at the schools.
- Heard *Mary Wainwright's* full report on Development, including merchandise sales.
- Heard *Karen Nelson's* final report on the Community Luncheon, with next year's recommendations.
- Learned that *John Reynolds* will chair the State Election Systems Study.
- Heard *Lecar's* plan to invite the other Leagues in the Peralta Community College District to participate in our study.

-*Ginette Polak* for the ill *Marcelle Baxter*

what we can accomplish, but let's explore what we truly are capable of as individuals and as an organization in both the short and long term. If that requires making more than a 2-year plan, then let's commit to that and do what is necessary to convey our recommendations effectively to the state and national levels of the League. No matter what good things are happening in our organization, we can always strive to be better and use different methods to have a greater impact on making democracy work. Please plan to come to the Program Planning UNIT on February 15 with lots of ideas about substance and strategy and how we can be more effective. Your voice needs to be heard! Look for the time and dates for March UNITs in the next *Voter*.

-Jo Ann

Volunteers Needed for ASUC Election April 10- 12

For many years, the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany & Emeryville has been overseeing the proceedings for the annual election held by the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) to elect their officers. Nearly 100 League members and friends are needed to act as poll watchers and to oversee the ballot counting process. For the last two years, the Piedmont League has assisted us in providing volunteers, and for both Leagues the event is a major fund-raiser (our League earned over \$7,000 last year).

This year, the election will be held over the three-day period of Tuesday through Thursday, April 10 through 12, and the ballot counting will take place from Friday through Sunday, April 20 through 22 (NOT Easter weekend, we are happy to report!).

The entire membership of our League will be called by members of the Board sometime during the month of February, if not before. When you are called, please tell the Board member if you will be available to work a 4-hour shift; if you are, you will then be asked to call Sherry Smith at 548-1769, who will be coordinating the master calendar of volunteers for the event. If you can work more than one shift, that of course would be most welcome. If you would like to "jump the gun" and call Sherry right away, you'll have the advantage of being guaranteed your first choice(s) of time slot(s) and can even pick your polling place if you wish.

The Board member who calls you will also ask whether you would like to be put on a list of volunteers for upcoming election periods in November 2001 and in March and November of 2002. The League produces forums that feature candidates and discussions of ballot measures, and we also write and publish the local "Pros and Cons" newspapers that are distributed (and appreciated) so widely. Those tasks, along with registering voters and establishing and training a Speakers Bureau require many volunteers over a broad spectrum of time during these state and local election periods. We will be assembling a list of volunteers we can turn to during those times, to recruit folks for all kinds of interesting tasks.

Please say "yes" when you get your call.

-Sherry Smith, Community Services VP

Speakers Series Thursday February 8, 2001 Albany Library, Noon to 2 pm "Berkeley's New Integrative Budget Process"

Our speaker for the February meeting will be Paul Navazio, Budget Manager for the City of Berkeley, and his subject will be the City's new "Integrative Budget Process."

This new approach to municipal budgets makes city functions more understandable to the general public, by showing how allocations in one department are related to allocations in another. It gives a more accurate picture than traditional budgeting of the total expense and staffing needs of complex projects and programs that cross departmental lines.

Obviously, Mr. Navazio will be much better at explaining it, and he will have handouts to distribute at the meeting that will aid in our understanding. He will also give us some suggestions as to ways the League might have some useful input into the process.

The meeting will take place from noon to 2 pm on the second Thursday in February — our regular time for Speaker Series — in the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Public Library, 1247 Marin Avenue, at the corner of Masonic Avenue. To find the room, enter the library and turn right, go past the video and CD shelves and look for the Edith Stone Room on your right.

Bring lunch, if you wish; the Speaker Series committee will provide fruit juice. Lots of parking is available, and a bus line is a block away on Solano Avenue. Or call me if you need help in finding someone to give you a ride.

For next month, save **Thursday, March 8** - same time and place - to hear from **Alan Maris**, Albany's Mayor and a member of LWVBAE, about the City's unique approach to **Youth Services**. Several years ago, Albany adopted a "Youth Master Plan" to set goals and objectives, and to coordinate its wide array of programs and activities serving the needs and interests of young people. Since then, the City Council has been monitoring the success of these programs and the effectiveness of the plan itself.

-Jean Safir, Speaker Series Coordinator

LWVBAE Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is beginning its work in order to recommend new officers and board members at the Annual Meeting. We welcome your suggestions and ideas. Committee members and their phone numbers are: *Eleanor Cox* *Ginette Polak* *Evelyn Light* *Jean Safir* *Eloise Bodine*, Chair

Welcome New Members

<i>Moshe Alafi</i>	<i>Russ Ellis</i>
<i>Gordon Chun</i>	<i>S. H. Kadish</i>
<i>Suzanne Chun</i>	<i>Ellen Matthews</i>
<i>Katherine deRaadt</i>	<i>Julie Shearer</i>
<i>Janice Dost</i>	<i>Iris Starr</i>
<i>William Dost</i>	

In Memoriam

We are saddened by the recent loss of the following members of our League:

<i>Lisa Alfert</i>	<i>Lillian Marquis</i>
<i>Janet Alvarez</i>	<i>Henry J. Vaux</i>
<i>Adelia Lines</i>	

Donors Through December 14, 2000

General Fund

<i>Schuyler Bailey</i>	<i>Wilma Jordan</i>
<i>Thomas Brougham</i>	<i>Joan Kasten</i>
<i>Helen Canin</i>	<i>Patricia Kuhi</i>
<i>Arrietta Chakos¹</i>	<i>Henry J. Vaux</i>
<i>Violet Feinauer</i>	<i>Andrea S. Washburn</i>
<i>Ora Huth</i>	

Foundation

<i>Jane Bergen</i>	<i>Evelyn Light</i>
<i>Nancy Bickel</i>	<i>Theodore Lobman</i>
<i>Diana Bilovsky</i>	<i>Linda McKinney</i>
<i>Patricia Rose Byrnes</i>	<i>Jean Moses</i>
<i>Bill & Peggy Anne Davis</i>	<i>Allie Norton</i>
<i>Doris Fine</i>	<i>Therese Pipe</i>
<i>Ruth Ganong</i>	<i>Roselyn Rosenfeld</i>
<i>Miriam Hawley</i>	<i>Ruth Scheer</i>
<i>Janet Johnston</i>	<i>Jean Siri</i>
<i>Richard Kassis</i>	<i>Ruthann Taylor</i>
<i>Jane Ann Lamph</i>	<i>Peter & Gail Todd</i>
<i>Virginia Laurence</i>	<i>Arthur Waugh</i>
<i>Elizabeth Lichtenberg</i>	<i>Doris L. White</i>

1- In Memory of Jean Griest Leiby

Personals

Barbara Nelson has been named by the Berkeley Police Organization a member of the public whose extraordinary work has made Berkeley a safer place to live. *Barbara* has also given many hours of service to LWVBAE by hosting study groups and by doing volunteer work in the League office.

-(Continued in next column)

Adelia ("Dede") Lines

The League extends heartfelt condolence to the family and friends of *Dede Lines*, a truly warm and caring human being. The Director of the Berkeley Public Library and League member since 1994, *Dede* died on December 7 of brain cancer at her home in Richmond. She was a gentle and fierce advocate for the "love of her life", the Berkeley Public Library. It was amazing to watch as she planned every step in the strategy to make the upgrade of the Central Library a reality, from acquiescing to \$30 million for just the main building instead of the \$50 million needed to include the branches, to choosing the architects, to gathering support for the Bond Measure S, to bird-dogging the involved departments at City Hall, to charming support from the needed community groups and forming the Library Foundation, to working beautifully with her staff and the Library Board, to testifying before the City Council. *Dede* was exactly the right person to be at the helm of the Library at this time.

Her demanding job precluded her being active with the League, but she came to the annual meetings, gave generously to the Education Foundation, and always kept in touch to offer support on our issues or find out how our studies were going. She was not only a member, but also a true friend of the League. We shall miss her.

-*Jo Ann B. Price*

LWVBAE President *Jo Ann B. Price*, Virginia Laurence, and Albany League members *Joan Strasser*, *Allan T. Maris* (Albany Mayor), *Haruko Nagaishi*, *Ruth Ganong*, *Doris Mendell*, *Marsha Skinner*, and *Eleanor Cox* met at the home of *Karen Carlson-Olson* in December for a Getting To Know You, What's Happening In Albany Koffee Klatch. Discussion subjects ranged from Florida ballot counting (home of the Butterfly Ballot and the Chad) to local issues, particularly education. *Karen* reported on the very successful Mock Election at the Albany high school and the roles of California Secretary of State, the local high school PTA, and LWVBAE. Ten of the 26 Albany LWVBAE members hold appointed positions in LWVBAE.

-*Eleanor Cox*, Corresponding Secretary

Outstanding League Volunteers

This feature will continue in future issues. Please propose members you admire and give us some background information. Send to *Eleanor Cox*, c/o the League office. We can include pictures if you have them.

Phoebe Watts

Phoebe was born and brought up in Chicago. She and her husband decided to come to California in 1957 and stopped when they got to Berkeley. With four daughters and now four grandsons, she keeps busy with family affairs. A League member since 1982, *Phoebe* first got hooked on the efforts to save the Berkeley waterfront from development. She worked on this issue for several years with her good friend and Leaguer *Meda Rechen*. This led to her being appointed to the Waterfront Commission as a League representative. She has worked on a number of League studies and served as Action Vice President for one term. Last year she was Co-Chair of the Instant Runoff Voting Study. This League year, as Voter Service Chair, *Phoebe* kept extremely busy running our full-service election effort. In addition to the League, she volunteers with the Berkeley Marina Education Program as a docent for elementary kids, with the East Bay Regional Park District Botanic Garden, and is an active member of the California Native Plant Society. *Phoebe* says she was drawn to the League because of its stature and dependability on important issues and because of its judicious attitude when it decided to take action. "And that hasn't changed since it began in 1920." *Phoebe* can always be relied upon to take on odd jobs from the important to the mundane. What a great person to have on our team!

Jim Lindsay

Jim was born and brought up in San Jose. He came to Cal in 1975, but decided to drop out the next year and never looked back. *Jim's* a single parent with three kids: a 21-year-old son at U.C. Davis, a 14-year-old daughter at Albany High, and a 12-year-old son at Albany Middle School. He's a self-taught computer whiz who has a "passion for democracy and doing something about it". Having admired the League for a long time, *Jim* finally joined in 1994. He decided to become active when *John Reynolds* proposed the Instant Runoff Voting Study in 1999, and now he's a member of the Election Systems Study. He founded Californians for Proportional Representation in 1993 and often speaks to groups on that topic. Since 1997 he has served on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Center for Voting and Democracy. *Jim* embodies so many of the fine qualities

we hope to see in active Leaguers: attention to detail, follow through, original thinking, enthusiasm, and a great sense of humor. Everyone loves working with *Jim*! We are just delighted to have him as a member.

Lessly Wikle

Not only a native Californian, but a native of Berkeley who was born at Alta Bates, *Lessly* joined our League in 1995 the same year she married. She grew up in northern Los Angeles County and graduated from San Jose State. A Project Manager in Hydro Assets for PG&E, she served on the Board of the Committee for Green Foothills in Palo Alto. *Lessly's* mentor at work was a San Francisco Leaguer who took her to events like the S. F. League's "Women Who Could be President" annual luncheon. She was so impressed with the Leaguers who were honored at that event and the community work they did, that she felt the League would have to be part of her life. As soon as she joined LWVBAE, she became active with "spot" jobs that she could fit into her busy schedule, such as training for the election issues Speakers Bureau and taking community speaking assignments and working with the ASUC Election Committee. Her League mentor when she was a new member was *Meda Rechen*, who recruited her to be Voter Services Chair in 1996. Three years ago she got involved with *Jill Martinucci's* tv/video project, City Conversations, and after being one of several moderators, became THE moderator. During the past election season, *Lessly* was the moderator for our League's several candidates nights that first appeared live on the local cable station and then were replayed. *Lessly* is a very capable and committed Leaguer who gets thoroughly involved with discrete volunteer jobs. She knows her time limitations and doesn't promise more than she can deliver. *Lessly* brings a sense of fun and a truly upbeat attitude to her League work that makes other committee members look forward to working with her. We're really glad that *Lessly* finds the time to contribute to the life of our League.

-Jo Ann B. Price, President, for the Board

Election Systems UNITS

-(Continued from Page 1)

Now, California Leagues are involved with assessing whether our state election system needs improvement and, if so, how that can be achieved. Elections are one of the basic foundations of a free and democratic society. They are the primary way that the public exerts control over government, influences public policy decisions, and holds officials accountable. California elections, as well as those of the entire country, have given increasing signs over the last several years that all is not well. One symptom has been the low turnout at the polls. Another is the disillusionment of voters with the choices of candidates offered to them. Yet another is the disgust with overly negative campaigning and mudslinging, along with excessive money spent on campaigns.

There are two distinct considerations in improving elections: the mechanics of vote casting and counting methods, and the election system itself. Following the recent U.S. presidential election and the serious problems exposed in many locations with the mechanics of voting and counting, there is overwhelming evidence that the voters insist that serious efforts be made to remedy those problems nationwide. The League of Women Voters has state and national positions that allow us to take action in helping the mechanical improvements to become reality. However, we haven't yet done a study that would allow us to take a position on whether we would favor a new form of election system different from the one we have. This latter interest is the focus of the current state study.

How the Study Is Organized. The information will familiarize you with the three basic types of election systems: plurality-majority, proportional representation, and semi-proportional. At the UNITS, the advantages and disadvantages will be discussed and analyzed to help you organize the information and make an intelligent assessment of the systems, and then come to consensus. This will be done in four steps.

- You will establish and prioritize some criteria for judging election systems. These will be used to evaluate the systems. What do we want to achieve and avoid with our election system?
- You will compile a broad range of alternative election systems to consider. You won't be able to find the best election system if you aren't considering all the options.
- You will examine the alternatives and predict their political consequences. What are the political advantages and disadvantages of a particular election

system?

- You will determine which voting system best meets your criteria. Once you know the political effects of the various options, you need to compare them in a systematic way to determine which one best fulfills the criteria.

Because of the need to digest the information and have enough time for discussion, the first two steps will be handled in the February UNITS, and the last two in the March UNITS. To fully participate, it is essential that you attend the February UNIT most convenient for you (both are identical) and the March UNIT most convenient for you (both are identical).

The **Consensus Questions** we will address after education and discussion follow. **Included with this Voter are two inserts: a Glossary and Criteria Definitions.** It will be very helpful for you to read through these items before coming to the UNIT to check whether your understanding of a word or phrase is the same as it's used in this context.

1. How important is each of the following criteria as a feature of a good election system?

- Ensure Majority Rule
- Encourage Minority Representation
- Ensure Geographical Representation
- Increase Voter Participation
- Provide a Reasonable Range of Voter Choice
- Prevent Fraud and Political Manipulation
- Produce Fair and Accurate Party Representation
- Promote Stable and Effective Government
- Maximize Effective Votes/Minimize Wasted Votes
- Establish Close Links between Constituents and Representatives
- Encourage Sincere Voting
- Promote a Healthy Party System
- Raise the Level of Political Campaigns
- Discourage Extremism
- Encourage Competitive Elections
- Easy to Use and Administer
- Encourage Fair Gender Representation
- Help Manage Conflict
- Reduce Campaign Spending
- Proven Track Record

-(Continued on next page)

Election Systems UNITs

-(Continued from Page 6)

2. Now rank the five most important criteria, in order, from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important, and so on.
3. Which system best achieves your objectives as reflected in your preferred criteria for electing multiple members to a representative body in a single election?
 - a. at the state level (for example, Assembly)
 - b. at the local level (for example, city council or school board)
4. When electing someone to a single office, should the election system require the winner to obtain a majority of votes?
 - a. at the state level (for example, governor)
 - b. at the local level (for example, mayor)
5. Should California law be changed to allow voters in a local jurisdiction to choose their own election system for local elections?

The study committee was saddened at the death of its Chair, *John Reynolds*, late in October just as they were getting under way. They all determined to pull together and carry on in *John's* memory. Now they look forward to seeing you at the UNITs.

(Much of this information was excerpted from LWVC Election Systems Study materials.)

-*Jo Ann B. Price*, President

Better Voting Technology
For California?

In the wake of the protracted, contentious presidential vote count in Florida, California Secretary of State Bill Jones and Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg have already weighed in with ideas for what is a very hot topic. As part of a 10-point election reform plan, Jones has proposed a \$230 million Democracy Fund, a capital outlay fund for counties to purchase updated voting technologies that could include precinct voting systems, vote counting software, and absentee ballot processing equipment. He plans to demonstrate technological innovations in voter registration, public outreach, education, vote counting systems, and Internet voting at a Voting Technology Exposition early in 2001. Jones also proposed codifying into law the uniform recount guidelines that were developed and implemented by the California Secretary of State and county election officials over the past 10 years.

Speaker Hertzberg has asked Governor Davis to include \$300 million for updated voting equipment in his 2001-2002 budget proposal to replace the punch card voting systems, like those that received notoriety in Florida, that over 70% of California voters use. Hertzberg proposes the funds be used as a \$3 to \$1 state match for county investments in touch-screen or optical scanning systems.

-Adapted from "In Capitol Corridors",
December 18, 2000, LWVC

State Program Planning - February 15, 2001
Noon - 2 pm - LWVBAE Office

What do we want to accomplish in 2001-2003? Come help LWVBAE decide!

Every two years members are invited to set the agenda for the state League for the upcoming biennium. Each League member has the opportunity to influence the selection of the issues where the League will focus its time, talent, and money. Bring your ideas and your enthusiasm to this important meeting. Read the summary of state League positions inserted in this *Voter* ahead of time to see whether areas of interest to you need to be studied or existing positions need updating or action.

Agenda:

1. Review current LWVC positions.
2. Consider Issues for Emphasis (new study/update/action).
3. Assess realistically our local League activity versus the time, volunteer commitment, and money needed to work on a state League program.
4. Choose our recommendations to LWVC.

We need you here!

-*Jo Ann B. Price*, President

Alternatives For Urban Growth On Farmland

1/4/2001
Visitors To smartvoter.org
Say It Best

Erik Vink, Assistant Director of Calif. Dept. of Conservation, spoke to the LWVBAE Environmental Concerns group at its December 11 meeting. Previously with the American Farmland Trust for ten years, he was appointed by Gov. Davis to the state agency charged with protecting farmland last summer.

His exciting news was the successful effort by the American Farmland Trust (AFT) to alert local public officials, farmers, developers, business leaders, conservationists, taxpayers and civic groups in California's Central Valley about their choices as they face the valley's projected population growth. The Calif. Dept. of Finance estimates that California's population will more than double, from 35 to 60 million. However the Central Valley, one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world, is projected to be the fastest growing region in the state. Its population is expected to triple, from 4 to 12 million people, converting 20% of prime farm land to urban use.

AFT brought all parties together, kept them focused on the impact of the projected tripled population over the next 40 years, and published the Alternatives for Future Urban Growth in California's Central Valley: The Bottom Line for Agriculture and Taxpayers. A copy is in the LWVBAE Office.

The AFT report had impact: Fresno has updated its General Plan to accommodate 20 years of growth with no urban land expansion. Fresno County, now our most productive agricultural county, as Los Angeles used to be, does not want to succumb to low-density urban sprawl and loss of one million acres of prime farmland of statewide importance. The estimated population growth to 2.5 million in Fresno County, more than in Sacramento County, is based on demographic trends, not immigration. Choosing a more compact, efficient growth pattern of 6 to 7 housing units per acre cuts loss of agricultural land in half, allows single family homes on smaller lots and more multifamily homes, results in more efficient public services, and is achievable.

-Ginette Polak



"This is very cool." -Sonoma County

"Your work made my job of citizenship possible and attractive." -San Diego

"Thanks for this site, which I've been relying on for years. . . . an immensely useful resource for citizens who want to be informed on the issues before voting. The customized ballot info based on street/zip code, the polling place, the information about the candidates - all of these features are things that I actively use. Thanks!"
-San Mateo County

Over 800,000 pages were viewed on Smart Voter for the November 2000 elections. More than 4,500 candidates and nearly 400 local measures were listed. Most importantly, all Californians and Ohioans had access to Smart Voter's information on federal and state contests and state-wide ballot issues. We at Smart Voter are justifiably proud of these great figures and wish to thank our sponsors, state and county elections officials, and volunteers for their invaluable contributions.

It was also a successful year in education. Smart Voter not only informed current voters but future voters as well. Teachers credited Smart Voter for the success of students as they compared issues and priorities of candidates, researched who can vote, uncovered past voting restrictions, and compared federal, state and local campaign finance laws.

Smart Voter helped students, and a professor helped Smart Voter. Michael Cornfield, Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University, wrote, "Smart Voter sat at the head of the class of Web sites I checked."

There's more on the way in 2001. Check Smart Voter pages for local elections including those coming up in March in Los Angeles County.

-From Smart Voter News Release

LWVC Letter On Electrical Rates

The following open letter was authored by the LWVC and was issued as a News Release.

Dear Governor Davis and CPUC President Lynch:

The League of Women Voters of California urges you not to permit the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to pass on recent losses by investor-owned utilities (IOUs) to the public by increasing electricity rates. Taking such a drastic step now would represent an arbitrary decision, given both the lack of information about the true condition of IOU finances and the other alternatives that have been proposed for dealing with the current situation. In addition, rate increases would unfairly place the bulk of the economic burden on the poorest Californians.

The League supports comprehensive, long-range planning of energy resources and believes that wise decision-making requires adequate data and a framework within which alternatives may be weighed and intelligent decisions made. Given the unanswered questions that have been raised about the terms of AB 1890 of 1996, IOU revenues and finances, and the role of the CPUC, it is premature to seek a “quick fix” by raising rates for consumers. Specifically, these questions need to be addressed:

- Are the losses actually the responsibility of IOUs under the terms of AB 1890, particularly since the IOUs have been collecting “competitive transition charges” since 1998?
- Have these charges, and the profits IOUs have collected from their own power generation, been applied to offset their losses in purchasing energy? If not, should the consequence be borne by the IOUs or the ratepayers?
- What would be the real short- and long-term impact of IOUs filing for bankruptcy on the California ratepayer? Is there a possibility that the oversight which accompanies bankruptcy would permit better protection of the ratepayer?
- Is the CPUC acting in the best interests of the ratepayer, rather than the IOUs, in focusing on rate increases as its first solution?

More attention must also be given to the alternative solutions that have been proposed for addressing the problem. For example, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has recommended the use of long-term or “forward” contracts to stabilize the cost to IOUs of

purchasing power. The Utility Reform Network (TURN) has proposed a “5 cent plan” with profits from IOU-owned generating facilities dedicated to keeping cost-based rates for residential and small business customers low. These and other proposals should be considered as thoroughly as a rate increase plan.

The League believes that wise decision-making also requires consideration of the social and economic impact of proposed plans and activities. Clearly, the higher rate increases being discussed will have a substantial negative impact on residential customers, especially those on fixed incomes, and on small businesses. It is hardly in the best interest of any Californian to shift the social and economic costs of deregulation from private corporations onto the California public.

In summary, the League joins other public advocacy groups in urging you and the CPUC not to impose the losses of IOUs on California ratepayers. Instead, a balanced and deliberate overhaul of the restructuring plan must be crafted through legislation. The League would welcome the opportunity to work with a broad-based consortium of consumer and public interest groups and all interested parties in an open process to craft a balanced plan that would be in the best interest of the California public, especially the residential and small business ratepayer. Voters will hold their elected officials accountable for the responsible and responsive management of our electricity system. We urge you, as Governor and president of the CPUC, to act in the best interest of the California voter.

Sincerely, Gail D. Dryden, LWVC President

Kids Needing A Reading Friend

Do you have an hour a week to spare this spring? Three hours? City of Franklin Elementary School is looking for reading tutor/mentors to serve either in the classroom helping kids who need an extra bit of attention or after school, working one-on-one with readers having difficulty. Call Lourdes Lejano at the Franklin school, 644-4818.

If you can block out 6 hours a week, you can become a reading tutor at Berkeley High. The school has identified 60 students who are in trouble because they can't read well. [Cal Reads](#) has agreed to train tutors and provide them with materials to use in conjunction with the teacher. Students and their families will be very grateful for your help.

-*Helene Lecar*, Education Director

Early Alert on 2001 Community Forums

LWVBAE is planning five community forums to provide education and initiate action on our three new local positions adopted in September and to encourage action in two areas of mutual concern to us and the state League. These are being planned as this issue goes to press and will be held in February through May 2001. Even though full details are not yet available, we wanted you to be aware and to let colleagues and friends know. Please suggest community organizations you think would be interested in co-sponsoring.

1. Instant Runoff Voting

The first forum will be IRV and will be held on Thursday, February 22, from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm, at the Northbrae Community Church. There will be a panel of three speakers and a moderator: one pro, one con, and one neutral. We studied IRV last year and the League position in favor was adopted in September. Now the Berkeley City Council has referred a study of the topic to the City Manager, with a report due in the near future. It is timely and appropriate to provide this opportunity for the community.

2. Housing

LWVBAE will sponsor a housing forum each in Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville. Because housing needs are unique to each city, we will give the residents in each city an opportunity to get facts about their city, how it fits into the regional picture, and how their particular housing needs might be met. Each city has a forum planning committee composed of mostly resident Leaguers. The date will likely be towards the end of March.

3. Vista College/Peralta Community College District

After study of Vista College, LWVBAE adopted a position in September. Now we are studying Vista's parent body, the Peralta Community College District. The educational/action forum will likely be held in late April.

4. California Schools, Are They Making The Grade?

The materials for this forum were prepared by the National Issues Forum and are being promulgated by the state League. Our committee will plan and put it on, likely in early April.

-(Continued in next column)

League Volunteer Training Opportunities!

Would you like to learn new ways to be sure to get down the important points of a discussion? Do you need a refresher on how to listen and write at the same time? Do you shy away from leadership roles you'd like to take on because you feel you don't know how to run a meeting effectively? Would you like to learn more about League administration and office methods? Yes, there's more to being an office volunteer than answering the phone! LWVBAE is pleased to offer you two opportunities to freshen up your skills in order to learn more about the League and become more administratively effective in any situation.

1. Training Workshop For League Recorders And Moderators

Trainer: Karin Mai, State League Management
Trainer

Saturday, February 3, 2001, 10 am - noon, refreshments. At the League office (please call *Mary Wainwright*, 848-1598 or the office to reserve a spot for the Recorder/Moderator Workshop by Friday, February 2).

2. LWVBAE Office Volunteer Training Refresher

Trainers: *Evelyn Light* and *Ruthann Taylor*,
Coordinators, Office Volunteers

Saturday, February 17, 2001, 10 am - noon, refreshments. At the League office (please call *Evelyn Light*, 849-3834 or the office to reserve a spot for the Office Volunteer Training Refresher by Friday, February 16).

-*Mary Wainwright*, Development VP

5. A Nice Place to Live, Fighting Sprawl

Again, the materials for this forum were prepared by the National Issues Forum and are being promulgated by the state League. Our committee will plan and put it on, likely in May.

Hope this preview whets your appetite. The series of forums will be advertised to community groups and featured in the local papers. Look for more information soon.

-*Jo Ann B. Price*, President

CAN YOU HELP THE LEAGUE?

The League **needs your energy, goodwill, creativity**, and **passion for democracy** not only in 2001, but also down the line. The LWVBAE Board would like to develop new leadership, as well as **encourage all members to participate** in some League activity at some time appropriate for you during the year.

If you have three hours or more of free time per month, like to work alone or with other people who share your democratic values, and want to make democracy work better in your city, our county, our Bay Area, our State, and our nation, then you can find a rewarding volunteer job with the League. There are both spot projects and ongoing commitments of different durations.

Please review the following information, choose one or more opportunities, and return this data sheet to:

LWVBAE League Opportunities, 1414 University Avenue - Suite D,
Berkeley, CA 94702-1509 or **Fax** to (510) 843-8828.

• A MENU OF LEAGUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS •

Please check your interest and you will be called to follow up on your specific interests and availability. **Thanks.**

A. The following can be done without attending meetings; and you will have a training session to inform you about “the League’s way to do it”, as well as a mentor.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office Volunteer for 3-hour shifts, 10 to 1 or 1 to 4, once a month or more often | <input type="checkbox"/> Merchandise League gifts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research for studies, publications, League history | <input type="checkbox"/> Office Work preparing mailings, organizing files |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Alert to call members when necessary | <input type="checkbox"/> Speak to community groups on League topics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Record consensus meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for League meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate or Chair League or community meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail or Fax state or national representatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tutor elementary school reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Project training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write Pros & Cons material for local ballot measures | |

B. The following require more commitment, as well as attending meetings, and can lead to League leadership.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> League Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Voter Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events - regional meetings, forums, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Action | <input type="checkbox"/> Speak on ballot measures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising | <input type="checkbox"/> Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mock Election school projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Speaker Series |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observe/Report city/county/regional commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Edit/Layout/Proofread/Artwork for the VOTER |

C. I’m not sure what I would like to do in the League, but I’d like to talk over the possibilities.

- Here’s my suggestion for a job I’d like to do for the League. _____

The LWVBAE Board wants to be effective, involved, and caring. We believe each member of our League counts. Can we count on you? Please respond today. Thanks!

FROM: name _____

address _____

phone _____ fax _____ e-mail _____

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

January

27 Sat.	9 am-12:30	Bay Area League Day	EBMUD Bldg., Oakland	(Bansner)
27 Sat.	8:30 am-2:30	National Issues Forum Moderator Training,	Sacramento	(Price)
29 Mon.	1-3 pm	Special Events Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Nelson)
31 Wed.	4-6 pm	Executive Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Price)
31 Wed.	7-9 pm	Election Systems Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Strasser)

February

3 Sat.	10 am-noon	Training Workshop: Recording/Moderating	LWVBAE Office	
		LWVC Management Trainer: Karin Mai		(Wainwright)
7 Wed.	4-6:30 pm	LWVBAE Board Meeting	LWVBAE Office	(Price)
8 Thur.	Noon-2 pm	Speaker Series: Berkeley's Integrative Budget -		
		Paul Navazio, Budget Manager, Albany Library, Edith Stone Room		(Safir)
8 Thur.	7-9 pm	UNIT: Election Systems Study #1	LWVBAE Office	(Strasser)
9 Fri.	Noon	Deadline for March Voter		(Hawley)
10 Sat.	10 am-noon	UNIT: Election Systems Study #1	LWVBAE Office	(Strasser)
11 Sun.	3-5 pm	LWV's 81st Birthday Tea Honoring the League Volunteers of 2000		
		Location: t.b.a.		(Nelson)
12 Mon.	7:15 pm	Environmental Concerns		(Bansner)
14 Wed.		LWV 81st Birthday - founded in 1920 -		
14 Wed.	7-9 pm	Election Systems Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Strasser)
15 Thur.	Noon-2 pm	State Program Planning 2001-2003	LWVBAE Office	(Price)
17 Sat.	10 am-noon	Office Volunteer Training	LWVBAE Office	(Light)
19 Mon.		LWVBAE Office Closed For Presidents' Day		(Light)
21 Wed.	9 am-noon	Action Committee		(Brubeck)
21 Wed.	1 pm	Peralta Comm. College Dist. Study		(Lecar)
22 Thur.	7:30-9:30 pm	Instant Runoff Voting Forum	Northbrae Community Church	(Lindsay)
28 Wed.	4-6:30 pm	Executive Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Price)

March

1 Thur.	7-9 pm	UNIT: Election Study #2	LWVBAE Office	(Strasser)
3 Sat.	10 am-noon	UNIT: Election Study #2	LWVBAE Office	(Strasser)
7 Wed.	4-6:30 pm	LWVBAE Board Meeting	LWVBAE Office	(Price)
8 Thur.	Noon-2 pm	Speaker Series: Albany Youth Services -		
		Alan Maris, Mayor, Albany Library, Edith Stone Room		(Safir)