



THE V O T E R

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF BERKELEY, ALBANY, AND EMERYVILLE**
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President: Doris Fine

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Editor: Bob Hawley

Diversity and the League

The LWVBAE embraces the values of diversity in our membership.

- Diversity is the inclusion of differences in our lives and communities.
- Diversity is caring about and respecting others as human beings.
- Diversity is regarding and celebrating our differences as sources of strength.

We welcome persons of color, of all ethnic groups and creeds, those with disabilities, gays and lesbians, men and women of all ages, incomes, and political views to join with us.

Above is the diversity policy for the LWVBAE, adopted at the December board meeting. To arrive at this statement, the Board debated and discussed at length the thorny issues raised by the concept of diversity. We reviewed the LWVUS' diversity policy, but felt the need to have our own in order to make it a priority. Living in the Bay Area, we wanted to put in our own words what diversity means to us. Our statement gently invites us to form an image of diversity. The image I have is this: we can imagine diversity as including different people we encounter in our lives and in our communities. The obvious differences we see are people of color and/or a particular ethnicity. We also notice people with disabilities in seeing, hearing, or mobility. However, there are also differences that we can not readily see - those who are gay and lesbian; those who have no voice, the homeless, the poor; those who have a different ideology from our own. While we can not normally see these differences, we can imagine them, and we can feel those differences in our communities, and we do so without much effort. But we can not be content with this imaginary or intellectual inclusion of differences in our lives and communities. This is why our statement says more. Diversity, we say, also means caring about and respecting others as human

beings. "Others" are those who are different from us. Keep in mind that we are also the "other" in someone else's eyes. We see and know that we are different from one another. That recognition calls us to respect one another for who we are, even for who we might become. With this recognition comes a deep felt need that keeps us human, the need to care. And when we care for those who are different from us, she or he becomes a friend, and we together become more human or whole. Imagine what it would be like if each of us found/became a new friend with a person who was different, and we then invited that person to a League meeting. What a difference that would make! Then we could celebrate our diversity with real gusto, because we would better know how effective diversity is in strengthening our work in the League. That work as we know is to ensure that the right to vote and to participate in a meaningful way in the democratic process be kept open for everyone. We believe our diversity policy will help us fulfill this mission, and that you, our members, will join with us in affirming it at every opportunity.

At this time, the Board especially wants those who have a mobility disability to know that there is an elevator in the building where the League office is located. Please call the office if you need information regarding accessibility for any of our meetings.

-Carol Voisin, Voters Service

New Office Hours

Starting in January, staffing of the League office will be reduced to three hours each day, Monday through Friday (one volunteer per shift). Hours will vary. Mail will be picked up and phone messages answered. Members who do not have office keys - please phone ahead to be sure a volunteer will be there to let you in when you arrive.

-Marjorie Rubinow, Volunteer Coordinator

President's Message

Events of the past months have given all Americans important civics lessons: We are now quite familiar with Article I of the Constitution and with excerpts from the Federalist Papers. We've seen how committees of the House of Representatives, such as the Judiciary Committee, can set their own rules of procedure, and what being in the majority means in terms of leadership as well as membership. We have also learned something about the way politics works in this country, at least at the national level. Political parties (which did not exist when the Constitution and Federalist Papers were written) matter. Loyalty to the party, on certain issues at least, is decisive for how a representative votes, regardless of constituent opinion.

How wise our founders were to declare that the League of Women Voters would be NON-PARTISAN. We are political in that we actively support or oppose particular issues, based on our principles and our positions, but we have no loyalty whatsoever to any political party. Our members are free to vote for candidates of their choice; we take no stand on individual candidates. We allow all candidates the opportunity to present their case to the voters, provided they follow a format which guarantees fair and equal treatment to all. We advocate diversity in representative government -- and urge women and members of ethnic minorities to run for office-- but we do not support any individual woman or minority candidate.

This policy of non-partisanship is wise for the League because it leaves us free from political commitments to fulfill our mission of educating voters on the issues, and advocating for those policies we believe in. Most major social programs enacted have eventually been supported by both parties: Social Security, Civil Rights, Motor Voter. We have been able to lobby on both sides of the aisle for these and other policies of good government. Non-partisanship also gives us the opportunity to speak on behalf of the benefits of voting in general. We can urge all citizens, regardless of party affiliation, to participate in government because we are not beholden to particular politicians. We can honestly claim, "Voting matters; whom you elect makes an important difference in what policies are enacted. Be informed, vote, and let your representative know what you think."

These past months we have responded to innumerable requests for information on how to contact our representatives and senators. These requests demonstrate that you, our members, and citizens throughout the community care what happens in our government, and that you are making your voices heard. Thanks to our non-partisan policy, we can help you exercise your rights under our system. We're doing our job, but it takes all of us together to make democracy work. It's a never-ending struggle, and no one ever said it would be easy!

Happy New Year!

-Doris

Board Briefs

The regular monthly meeting of the Board was held at the South Berkeley Branch Library on December 2, 1998. The meeting started with announcements of upcoming League activities in our League and in the Bay Area League.

A committee has been working to establish a policy on diversity in our membership and the Board has discussed versions of it at recent meetings. The final version was presented, discussed and adopted at the December meeting. This policy statement is the result of increased efforts to involve more of our community in our League.

The Board will not meet in January. Instead, there will be a League social gathering Sunday, January 10.

As of the time the Board met in December, the League's fund drive had resulted in \$2350 for the General Fund and \$950 for the Foundation.

Our League video producers are preparing an interesting series that will attempt to explain Berkeley's budget process. More volunteers are needed. A meeting will be held on January 11 to plan future productions.

-Violet Feinauer, Secretary

Scrip

Help is needed to deliver Safeway and Andronico scrip to members. This is an important fund-raiser for LWVBAE. If you'd like to subscribe or help deliver scrip coupons, please call me. It will help make the work of dedicated volunteers much easier.

-Eva Brecher

Donors Through December**General Fund**

<i>Suzanne Adams</i>	<i>Herbert & Babbette Maccoby</i>
<i>Polly Armstrong</i>	<i>Ruth Maguire</i>
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<i>Lynn Glaser</i>	<i>Meredith Sheehan</i>
<i>Nanine Greene</i>	<i>Sherry Smith</i>
<i>Helen Grossman</i>	<i>Peter Todd</i>
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<i>Ora Huth</i>	<i>Dorothy Walker</i>
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<i>Patricia Kuhi</i>	<i>Lessly Ann Wikle</i>
<i>Erika Kunkel</i>	<i>Alba Witkin</i>
<i>Louise Larson</i>	<i>Carla Woodworth</i>
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<i>Elizabeth Little</i>	<i>Lenora Young</i>
<i>Marion Luten</i>	

Foundation

<i>Nancy & Peter Bickel</i>	<i>Madeline Mixer</i>
<i>Joy Carlin</i>	<i>Sarah Miyazaki</i>
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<i>Joanne Kowalski</i>	<i>Ruthann Taylor</i>
<i>Erika Kunkel</i>	<i>Frances Tittmann</i>
<i>Evelyn Light</i>	<i>Frances Townes</i>

Theodore Lobman *Alba Witkin*
Dan Luten *Cheryl Woodard*
Marion Luten

Our sincere thanks to all our donors.

Membership

We welcome the Class of '99 new members to our local League, and hope to meet and greet them soon at a League activity (see Calendar on page 10):

<i>Polly Amrein</i>	<i>Herbert Maccoby</i>
<i>James C. Brimhall</i>	<i>Carey Rasco</i>
<i>Dr. Elizabeth Cannon Hall</i>	<i>Alice S. Thompson</i>
<i>Eileen Holt</i>	<i>Elsa Trexler</i>
<i>Kurt Huth</i>	<i>Zach Wald</i>
<i>Ruth Schoner Loran</i>	

We thank and salute the 36 members who have given their loyalty and support to the League for 30 or more years. Your names are posted in the League Office.

Valentine hearts and flowers to all on February 14.

Reminder - please remember to save the morning of March 20 for the "Getting to Know the League and You Gathering."

News: *Dan Luten* is recuperating at home from hip joint surgery. Keep up the good work, *Dan*.

Mari Fertig is in San Francisco recovering from a slight stroke. She hopes to be back in the East Bay soon.

The Center for Psychological Services in Albany has celebrated its 20th anniversary. Dr. *Margaret (Ginger) Alafi*, center president, has been honored by the establishment of two scholarships in her name. Dr. *Alafi* is well known for her development of the center, and for her support of local arts and service groups.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of *Cleora Knapp*, president of LWVBAE in 1959-1960, whose death occurred in November, 1998.

-*Eleanor Cox*, Membership Chairman

Bay Area League Day

“Housing in the Bay Area - What? Where? How?” is the theme of this year’s Bay Area League Day on January 30, 1999, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The program, at Metro Center, 8th and Oak Streets, Oakland, is co-sponsored by the Association of Bay Area Governments and will be hosted by LWV Piedmont.

Keynote Speaker John Landis of UC Berkeley’s Institute for Urban and Regional Development will set the stage for a panel of experts led by Moderator Assemblyman Tom Torlaksen, Contra Costa County. Approaches to relieving the critical shortage of affordable workforce housing from many perspectives will be presented by John Flores, City Manager of Emeryville; Lydia Tan, Divisional Vice President of BRIDGE Housing Corporation; Carl Guardino, President and CEO of the Silicon Valley Manufacturers Group; and James Chappell, President of San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR). Senior Regional Planner Alex Amoroso will describe how ABAG is going about determining Housing Needs Allocations for every Bay Area city and county.

Bring your friends and come by BART to the Lake Merritt station. Pay at the door-registration fee is \$3.00. Consider having lunch with fellow League members and guests in Oakland’s Chinatown with its wonderful ethnic restaurants. It’s within walking distance of Metro Center.

-*Yvonne San Jule*, LWVBA Representative

LWVBAE Housing Study

The January meeting of the Housing Study group will be on Monday, January 25 at 7:30 pm at 118 Parkside, Berkeley. Members will report on interviews with neighborhood and community groups. The interviews cover such questions as “In what areas of the city should there be higher density?” and “What kinds of housing would you like to see added to your neighborhood?”

-*Suzanne Adams*, Study
Chair

Environmental Concerns Meeting On

Environmental Justice
Monday, February 8, 1999, 7:15 p.m.
1340 Arch Street, Berkeley
Speaker: Ms. Anne Simon

Anne Simon is Senior Attorney at Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), a non-profit environmental health and justice organization active in California for 20 years, with offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Huntington Park.

CBE has an impressive record working directly with communities in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles Basin to address the root causes of pollution, recognizing that industrial pollution most often threatens the health of residents who have the least ability to protect themselves from toxic hazards. It combines scientific and legal resources with organizing strategies that can educate and transform both local residents and industry. CBE has over 10,000 members statewide.

CBE’s long-term goals are to develop an environmentally-sustainable manufacturing base, minimize the use of toxics and expand pollution prevention strategies, and involve those people most affected by industrial pollution in the decisions that impact their lives and their communities. CBE promotes policies that create sustainable communities, enabling all of us to live better, to work more effectively and to allow for a more just and healthful environment.

Prior to her work at CBE, Anne served as director of the Environmental Law Community Clinic in Berkeley, as Chief Administrative Law Judge in the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and as a staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights and the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, both in New York City. She began her legal career at the New Haven Law Collective.

-*Jean Safir*, Program VP

In The Capitol Corridors

The November 1998 issue of "In The Capitol Corridors" includes the following information:

- The impact of term limits on the November election and the composition of the legislature: more Latino and women candidates were elected.
- Discussion of the special legislative session that Governor-elect Davis intends to call in January to focus on education issues.
- The fate of bond issues that were working their way through the legislative process last summer: school bonds made it; water bonds failed.
- A listing of League-supported legislative actions that were signed or vetoed by Governor Wilson: issues affecting children, juvenile justice, and environmental quality were defeated.
- There is hope for the Legislative Disclosure Project: voluntary disclosure is a beginning.
- LWVC is an affiliate of the California Futures Network, a coalition to achieve land use policies that are fiscally, socially and environmentally sound. A "Smart Growth Summit" is to be held in Sacramento on January 28.

A copy of this issue of In The Capitol Corridors is on file in the LWVBAE office.

-Charlotte Bernardin,
State/National Action Consultant

Emeryville Update

Work continues on major projects scheduled for construction in Emeryville. Construction has been delayed on the 296-room Hilton Hotel, but is progressing rapidly on the Emery Station office building, the Woodfin Hotel, the Pixar Animation Studio, and the new City Hall.

IKEA, the Swedish furniture and home furnishings retail store, has received final approval to build on their Emeryville/Oakland parcel on Shellmound Street (near 40th Street). The projected opening date is Fall 1999. The adjoining 35-acre parcel, to be developed into a commercial, retail and entertainment complex by Madison Marquette, is in the process of EIR review. Approval of IKEA was delayed due to a last minute appeal by citizens concerned over traffic and other negative effects on the quality of life in Emeryville. Public hearings were held in November and December and the Traffic Engineer gave a detailed presentation on the planned mitigations. The City Council denied the appeal and gave the go-ahead

to IKEA.

As a result of this traffic study, Emeryville expects to spend about \$12 million for traffic improvements to many intersections and several major thoroughfares. Work will commence in the summer of 1999. The City is also working the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency to upgrade the traffic signals on San Pablo Avenue so that traffic will flow more smoothly. The traffic study expects these improvements to maintain an acceptable level of traffic flow despite the influx of cars to these new projects.

-Beth Springston, Emeryville Representative
"City Conversations..."

Who is working for you at City Hall? What is their vision for Berkeley and their plan for realizing it? LWVBAE, with the cooperation of the Berkeley manager, is producing a series of "City Conversations" to be cablecast on B-TV channel 25. With LWVBAE members asking the questions, and individual city staffers explaining what they do and why, "City Conversations" is both a look at the internal structure of the city and a timely analysis of the issues it faces.

Arrietta Chakos, Berkeley's Chief of Staff, will lead off the year on January 26 with an explanation of city offices and relocation during the retrofit of City Hall. On February 9 we will begin our discussion of the city's budget with Paul Navazio, Berkeley's Budget Manager. Subsequent programs will focus on key city departments and the city's ongoing budget process.

Tune into B-TV on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm, before every City Council meeting. The program will be replayed on Sunday mornings at 8:30 am before the Council meeting's replay.

Here's our tentative schedule:

- January 26 - "City Offices...on the move"
- February 9 - "The Budget Process Gets Under Way"
- February 16 - "What's Different in This Year's Process"
- February 23 - "Public Safety and Public Services"

Volunteers are welcome! Please call if you are interested in organizing guests, developing questions or working behind the camera.

-Jill A. Martinucci, Video Director

Planning For 1999-2001 State and 1999-2000 Local Programs

At our State program planning meeting on December 8, the consensus was to support a restudy of the State's position on **education**, as the major "issue for emphasis." The scope of such a study would include early childhood education, community colleges, curriculum requirements at all levels, teacher training and compensation, charter schools and bilingual education.

Our second priority for next year's state-wide program was a community service program on **sustainability** (see related articles on this page and on page 4). Our third priority was an action program on **juvenile justice** based upon positions expected to be adopted at the upcoming LWVC convention.

These and a number of other subjects were considered, including new studies on the criminal justice system and disaster preparedness, a study to update the state position on land use, and an action program on campaign finance reform. The consensus reached, after a brief review of all state positions and extensive discussion, will be submitted for approval by our board before it is sent on to LWVC. There it will be considered, along with recommendations from all other local Leagues statewide, at the state convention in May as the LWVBAE recommendation for the 1999-2001 program.

A similar planning process will begin on Thursday, February 18, to develop a recommendation for LWVBAE's program for next year. At that meeting we will first review our current positions to identify any we want to update or delete, note any gaps that should be filled, and then move on to set priorities for study, action and community service. The consensus reached will be submitted to the Board for approval in March and then placed on the agenda for action at our Annual Meeting on June 5.

This is a good chance for all our members - old and new - to learn more about what the League stands for, how we develop our program and positions, and how we plan to carry them out. Please join us!

Place: 1116 Walnut Street, Berkeley

Time: 2-4 pm, February 18

-Jean Safir, Program VP

Environmental Concerns Looks At Sustainable Communities

A review of the LWVC Sustainable Communities Draft Action Policy at the December 7 meeting of Environmental Concerns prompted much discussion and debate on how the concept of Sustainability is expressed in League positions. The draft policy was prepared by a statewide task force, based on review of existing LWV positions in the context of recommendations of the U.S. President's Council on Sustainable Development.

Although the term, "sustainability", technically refers to sustenance of planet Earth, the definition has grown to include economic and social goals. In 1995, the President's Council identified goals necessary for achieving sustainability and organized them into ten categories:

- Health and the Environment
- Economic Prosperity
- Equity
- Conservation of Nature
- Stewardship
- Sustainable Communities
- Civic Engagement
- Population
- International Responsibility
- Education

While there is general agreement that the concept of sustainability embodies the overall goals of League program and ties together the separate topical areas addressed by League positions, it also is agreed that several relevant issues fail to be adequately addressed. These "gaps" include:

- education as a building block of sustainability;
- the impact of population on sustainability;
- housing positions fail to address infill, density, or carrying capacity;
- economic development position is weak on global dependency and domestic impacts of layoffs, minimum wage issues, etc.;
- limits to consumption levels; carrying capacity;
- restoration/regeneration of natural resources;
- broader impacts of local decisions; and impacts of current decisions on future generations.

The final Action Policy will be presented for adoption by delegates to the 1999 state Convention in May, after local Leagues have had a chance for comment. For more information, contact *Jane Bergen* or *Gail Schickele*.

-Jean Safir, Program VP

East Bay Hills Wildfires

In November, LWVBAE held two meetings dealing with issues related to preparing for the possibility of wildfires. Given the recent dry spell, this is a constant concern and calls for vigilance and preparedness.

1. At the November 9 meeting of the Environmental Concerns Committee, Jerry Kent, assistant general manager of operations for the East Bay Regional Park District, emphasized that the East Bay Hills are among the most severe fire risk areas in the U.S. Between 1923 and 1998, eleven Diablo wind-driven wildfires burned 9,840 acres, destroyed 3,542 homes, and took 26 lives, with over \$2 billion in financial loss. During the same period, three other fires burned 1,230 acres of grass, brush, trees, and four homes. An 8-page summary of the history of these fires, factors which increase fire risks, and the 1995 Fire Hazard Mitigation Program & Fuel Management Plan is available in the LWVBAE office.

What is the East Bay Regional Park District doing about this critical situation? Their vegetation management policies include:

- Encouraging more native plant communities;
- Preserving and re-establishing grassland areas, especially on ridge tops and south/west slopes, with ongoing grazing or other strategies to control brush invasion;
- Aiming towards long-term conversion of eucalyptus (2000 acres), pines (70% dying from age or canker disease) and other exotics (which compound the fire hazard) to native species;
- Designating fuel breaks along ridge tops and adjacent residential areas;
- Allowing northeast facing slopes to progress naturally from grassland to brush to oak/bay woodland (up to 60 years);
- Minimally managing oak/bay woodlands, riparian, and redwood plant communities, which are natural and relatively fire safe.

Progress in firefighting preparedness and prevention has been achieved since the October 1991 firestorm, but a consensus about the actions required to implement fire hazard reduction projects has yet to develop. Long-term commitments of resources by the 28,000 landowners and 6 Hills Emergency Forum

agencies who own property and provide firefighting services are essential if we are to reduce the significant residential and wild land wildfire risks that exist today in the East Bay Hills. Kent urged the LWVBAE to keep public agencies working on implementing fire hazard mitigation plans.

2. At the November 12 Speaker Series, Professor Emeritus Robert Stebbins, UCB Zoology Department, shared his slides of Tilden Park and his concerns over the East Bay Regional Park District's fire management plans. His key points were:

- We need a comprehensive ecosystem approach, not just focus on fire;
- Vegetation management is fraught with uncertain outcomes and past failures;
- We must sustain any programs undertaken, else the "management" will cause worse harm by losing control to weeds, broom, poison hemlock, thistle and Himalayan blackberry (which attracts rats and which goats avoid).

As a herpetologist, Dr. Stebbins is concerned about animal life as well as plant communities, and fears that the 15-mile long, 500-foot wide fuel break study zone along the crest of the hills may be erroneously cleared. In addition to risking increased fire damage if brush and exotic vegetation are allowed to take over, cleared areas are very bad for small animals; bird and other nests are exposed to predators and human intrusion.

His slides depicted seven biotic (plant and animal) communities within the Park. The oak/bay woodlands which are the richest habitat for vertebrates; the wet north coastal scrub which grows on, and holds, slide areas; the dry north coastal scrub containing bobcat and fox dens are all native habitat and not severe fire risks. The non-native areas of planted redwood and Monterey pine groves are mostly devoid of animal life. Some animals have adapted to the eucalyptus groves and the 80% of grassland now overrun with exotics. These last four areas are very flammable and need wise, sustained management.

A copy of Professor Stebbins' talk is also available in the LWVBAE office.

-Ginette Polak, Recorder Pro Tem

Assembly District 14 Leagues Meet With Dion Aroner

Every year, LWVC sends to local Leagues questions regarding issues of particular interest to the state League's legislative program. Each local League, either alone or together with other Leagues in its Assembly and Senate districts, arranges interviews with its state Senator and Assembly representative to explore their views on these matters.

LWVBAE's state senator, Don Perata, demurred from a live interview with the Leagues in his district. He pleaded the heavy time commitment involved with moving from his former assembly office to his new senate office. However, he did agree to answer written questions and we intend to conduct a live interview in late January or February.

On December 15, LWVBAE, in coordination with the Oakland and Richmond Leagues, held an interview with Assemblywoman Dion Aroner. On hand were Karen Anderson from LWV Oakland, Louise Vogelsberg from LWV Richmond, and *Pat Kuhi* and *Jo Ann Price* from LWVBAE. An hour was barely enough time to cover Aroner's answers to the four questions prepared by LWVC and to engage in the Q and A flowing from the main topics. Aroner was knowledgeable, eloquent, and thoughtful. A précis of the questions and her answers follow (for more information, check the report in the LWVBAE office).

Question 1: Juvenile Delinquency and Justice in California

Aroner shared much information on this subject. Some of the highlights were:

- A blue ribbon commission on juvenile justice will report recommendations in January with respect to juvenile offenders who are wards of the court and have been sent out of state to military-style "boot camps." The commission will look at the possibility of a similar type of facility in California.
- There is a need for: (1) "wrap-around-services" for day treatment facilities for delinquents, and (2) secure facilities for acting-out delinquents, not as severe as the California Youth Authority.
- The next legislative session will deal with emancipation of minors and placement of 0-3-year-olds.

Question 2: The State's Role in Financing Local

Government Services

Aroner said we can't go backward on this. We must look to the future and find new solutions. Polls indicate that citizens are content with Proposition 13. She believes the legislature reflects the public on this issue and that neither group is fully aware of the huge disconnect between expected services and limited sources of revenue. Part of this is due to the fact that three points of view exist: the voter, the taxpayer, and the citizen. An individual doesn't usually reconcile the needs and responsibilities of each group as issues emerge. The revenue streams of the state, how they are used, and how some revenue streams are returned to local government aren't fully understood. Aroner suggested that LWVC should mount a restudy of State Revenue and Taxation.

Question 3: Legislature's Role in Implementing the Cal Fed Program to Develop Solution(s) to Environment and Water Use Conflicts with respect to the S.F. Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

All the stakeholders on this issue seem serious and comfortable with each other, as well as ready to deal on the issues in 1999. Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, would like to make this his legacy. The big question is where Governor Davis stands on this issue; he didn't mention it prior to the election. Water bonds are expected to be on the 2000 ballot. Meanwhile, \$280 million of state general fund money have been allocated to southern California for water/environment problems with no specifics as yet. Aroner has asked to be on the Assembly Water Committee because she wants to be involved.

Question 4: Major Issues the Legislature Must Deal With in 1999 and Aroner's Personal Priorities

- Governor Davis has called a special session of the legislature on Education that will run concurrently with the regular session. The focus will be on standards, reading by 3rd grade, and rebuilding teaching as a profession.
- On health care and HMO reform, the group of bills passed by the last legislature and vetoed by Governor Wilson will be reintroduced for passage and enactment.
- A parks bond measure will be worked on for the year 2000 ballot.
- State employee pay raises and an 8-hour work day will be proposed.

-(Continued on Page 9)

Aroner (Continued from Page 8)

Aroner's personal priorities are education, juvenile justice, welfare reform, child welfare and water. She expects to serve on up to four assembly committees and has requested them in the following order: (1) Human Services, (2) Budget, (3) Water, (4) Health, (5) Judicial, and (6) Public Safety.

Now that the new session of the legislature is under way, LWVBAE will be watching how these positions play out as well as lobbying on behalf of League interests.

-Jo Ann B. Price, Action VP

Hear Dion Aroner on "The 1999 Legislative Agenda"

League members are invited to hear Assemblywoman Dion Aroner at the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce's monthly breakfast on Tuesday, February 9. Aroner was the subject of a recent interview by members of our League as part of the LWVC's annual interviews with members of the Assembly and State Senate. These interviews, held statewide, provide useful information for our legislative advocate in Sacramento. They also serve to educate new members of the Assembly about the League and about our positions. Under term limits, the turnover among state representatives is always substantial, so our input is important.

The meeting with Dion Aroner was cordial, and provided insight into how she views such issues as juvenile justice, and water conservation policies. She indicated that education was high on the list of important issues to be addressed in the upcoming legislative session. She hopes the League will support the reforms she believes are necessary to improve the quality of public education statewide. (An update of our state position on education was recommended as our first priority at the LWVBAE's recent program planning meeting.) Assemblywoman Aroner's comment that she has "the best constituency in the state" suggests that her remarks to the Chamber will be interesting and provocative. No doubt she will welcome League questions!

Call the office by February 4 if you are interested in attending and we will make reservations for you. Cost for the breakfast, which begins at 7:00 am, is \$20 and is held at the Berkeley City Club.

-Doris Fine and Pat Kuhi

February Education Committee Meeting

The good news is that our new governor is calling education his first priority and our local district has a new early literacy program with some state funding. But can we be sure that these efforts are adequate to the growing need to bring children up to grade level in reading? All the best will does not assure that the job will be done.

The League has many early literacy volunteers, and we invite and urge you and others to join us at our February meeting to discuss several important issues: how can we monitor district performance, can we help increase the number of reading volunteers, can we even perhaps help plan a community-wide reading drive? We need, as well, to monitor steps toward reform at Berkeley High to assure that students, too long left behind and entering high school with very low reading and writing levels, can find the help and programs necessary for progress.

These and other issues will be discussed at our meeting on Thursday, February 11, at 3 pm at 2310 Ward Street, Berkeley. Please join us.

-Lois Brubeck, Education Director

Reports, Agendas and Videos

Copies of the agendas and reports of Berkeley's School Board, Rent Board and City Council are available in our LWVBAE office. Members are welcome to review them.

Video cassettes of our TV programs are also available and can be checked out for viewing in your homes.

Remember to call the office before you drop in, to be sure someone is there!

-Lenora Young, Publication Chair

CALENDAR

January

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

- 25 Mon. 7:30-9:30 pm Housing Study (Adams)
 27 Wed. 9 am-noon Executive Committee (Fine)
 30 Sat. 9 am-12:30 pm **BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY: "Housing in the Bay Area"**
 MetroCenter, Oak & 8th Sts., Lake Merritt BART Station, Oakland (San Jule)

February

- 3 Wed. 9 am-noon Board Meeting So. Berkeley Library (Fine)
 5 Fri. 4 pm Deadline for March Voter LWVBAE office (Hawley)
 8 Mon. 7:15-9 pm Environmental Concerns: "Environmental Justice"
 (Bansner)
 11 Thurs. 3 pm Education Committee (Brubeck)
 17 Wed. 9 am-noon Action Committee (Price)
 18 Thurs. 2-4 pm Program Planning, Local & County
 (Safir)
 20 Sat. 9:30 am-noon **LWV of ALAMEDA COUNTY FORUM: "The Future of Medicare"**
 Oakland City Hall (Fine)
 22 Mon. 9 am-noon Executive Committee (Fine)
 22 Mon. 7:30-9:30 pm Housing Study (Adams)
 25 Thurs. 7:30-9:30 pm Local Actions/Regional Impacts
 (Safir)

March

- 3 Wed. 9 am-noon Board Meeting So. Berkeley Library (Fine)
 5 Fri. 4 pm Deadline for April Voter LWVBAE office (Hawley)
 8 Mon. 7:15-9 pm Environmental Concerns:
 "Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development" (Bansner)
 20 Sat. 10 am "Getting to Know the League & You Gathering" (Cox)

June

- 5 Sat. 9:30 am-1 pm **LWVBAE ANNUAL MEETING**
 Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (Safir)



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