

# The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS  
of BERKELEY, ALBANY  
and EMERYVILLE



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President: Nancy Bickel

March, 2002

Editor: Jean Safir

## ASUC STUDENT ELECTION — April 9, 10 and 11

The League has again contracted to oversee the student election on the University of California Berkeley campus, April 9 through 11. On-line election by computer has not replaced us yet!

This will be a great opportunity for us to work with the students, to get reacquainted with life on campus and to encourage student interest in the political process and the complexities of fair elections. This activity also provides a large percentage of the League budget, and we need every member who can possibly sign up to help.

The League will oversee ten polling places for three days. There are three shifts

each day, from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm, from 12:00 noon to 4:30 pm; and from 4:15 pm to 8:15 pm. The ballots are reconciled in the presence of a League volunteer each evening after the polls close.

Help is also needed to oversee the counting of ballots on April 19, 20 and 21 from 9:00 am until midnight. A League member keeps watch on the ballots as the students enter the data into the computers. Each shift is four hours long.

*Bill Chapman* has set up the League website with a portal button to the ASUC election ([home.pacbell.net/lwvbae](http://home.pacbell.net/lwvbae)) and an email link to make it convenient for you to view the schedule and to email your preference for a slot in the schedule. You may also call or email the office or contact me to volunteer.

Please sign up to secure your place in the sun (or the rain or the fog) as soon as possible.

- *Jane Coulter*, ASUC Elections Chair  
510-524-0525 — [tcoulter2@attbi.com](mailto:tcoulter2@attbi.com)

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## President's Column

# THE LEAGUE WEARS TWO HATS

In the run-up to the March 5 election, we keep having to wear — and to explain — the League's two hats. Why the League has two hats and why we can't wear both at the same time baffles many of the elected officials we talk to and probably most of our members as well.

Our first hat is our non-partisan, balanced election information. It's the hat we wear when we insist that "the League does not support or oppose candidates or parties." We wear the same one when we prepare pros and cons on ballot measures and when we try to be absolutely even-handed in representing the arguments for and against each measure.

This is also the hat we wear when we explain the ballot measures to community groups. And when someone in the audience says "but I just want to know how the League thinks we should vote," we are supposed to say "speak to me after the meeting." Some League authorities now say it's okay to respond briefly that the League supports, opposes, or has no position on this measure, but not to explain why the League has that position.

But that same citizen to whom we furtively confide the League positions at a noon meeting might listen to a talk show driving home and hear a state board member vigorously arguing that she should vote with the League: "vote YES ON PROPOSITION 45 which will allow some exceptions to legislative term limits."

Why the difference? What we always explain so carefully when we go out to talk to groups is that we take positions only on issues that we have studied beforehand and on which we have "reached consensus." Without the League jargon, this means that the members have met, debated the facts and

issues, and agreed on a shared position. We then measure each new piece of proposed legislation or each new ballot measure against this position - the set of statements that we have adopted.

Leaguers have always believed that it is essential to keep both hats and to keep them separate. The argument is that, if we do, people who do not agree with our positions on particular measures will still trust our pro and con analyses of the ballot measures. Is this really true? We believe it is. I would love to know whether any actual research supports this belief and I'll try to do a little research to find out.

At our annual community luncheon last fall, State Senator Jackie Speier urged the League to "take off the white gloves." In particular, she recommended that the League do a report card, rating legislators according to how often they had voted with the League on particular bills. Some of you may recall that the State League actually did do a report card some years ago, but abandoned it very quickly. State League found that legislators who got low League ratings were unwilling to listen to our arguments on future issues. These legislators said the League was actually supporting and opposing candidates; if the League was against them, why should they listen to the League? Assembly Member Dion Aroner, in our recent legislative interview, supported Senator Speier's view that the League would have more clout if we did do a report card.

Do you think we should keep our two hats? An insert in this issue contains *Lois Brubeck's* report on how to vote with the League on the March 5 ballot measures. The Pros and Cons should have reached you in the mail.

For more information go to [www.SmartVoter.org](http://www.SmartVoter.org).

- Nancy Bickel, President

## SPECIAL EVENT FOR NEW AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Saturday — March 23 — 10 am to noon

LWVBAE Office, 1414 University Avenue,  
Berkeley

The Membership Committee invites new and prospective members to meet a few League leaders and discuss LWVBAE activities at the League office on March 23, 10 am to noon.

Access to our upstairs office, Suite D, is from the parking lot entrance to Andronico's store, between University Ave and Addison Street, a few doors west of Sacramento Street. One door enters at the staircase; the other door is at the elevator. Ring the bell for LWV and we will buzz the door open.

Bring your questions! Invite a few friends who may be interested in joining the League to come with you. Please let us know that you will attend by phoning or leaving a message at the League office (843-8824) before March 20.

- *Ginette Polak*, Membership Director

## BOARD ACTION SUMMARY

The Annual Meeting date has been set for Saturday, May 18, 2002 at the Northbrae Community Church. *Karen Nelson* will be the chairperson.

The Nominating Committee will include *Vi Feinauer, Doris Fine, Ruth Ganong, Ginette Polak* and *Sherry Smith*.

*Eva Brecher* and *Winnie McLaughlin* were appointed to the Budget Committee

It was agreed that the LWVB Foundation will be asked to pay printing costs for the Housing Report.

- *Jane Barrett*, Secretary

## MEMBERSHIP

### Welcome New Members

*Cynthia Blumgart*    *Lucy Scott*

*Marci Jordan*    *Toni Tullys*

- *Ginette Polak*, Membership Director

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League members were saddened to hear of the death on January 15 of **Virginia Lee Laurence**, after a stroke, in Las Vegas where she had a condominium near family members.

Virginia joined the League in September, 1991, on moving back to Berkeley after a career in Social Welfare. She served as Administrative Vice President under *Phyllis Clement*. Virginia continued as a consultant to the Board, attending regular meetings and advising on social welfare matters. At the time of her death, she chaired the Speaker Series Committee.

Interested in fund raising, she was a moving force behind the Alta Bates/Herrick Hospital volunteer program, where League members volunteered time and earned money for the League. Virginia was also a regular volunteer office staffer, worked in ASUC elections (including late night, counting ballots), always helped out at membership meetings, helped mail the *VOTER*, and more.

Virginia avoided policy positions on the Board because of her political activity. She was a charter member of Emily's List and worked hard for women candidates, including Kathleen Brown, among others. At the time of her death, she was serving on the State Board of Behavioral Sciences Examiners, an appointment by Governor Davis.

Virginia had a Ph.D. in social welfare from Columbia University in New York and taught at Chico State, where she built up the social welfare program. She is survived by a sister, a niece and a cousin. Call the League office after March 1 to find out if and when a memorial service will be held for Virginia.

- *Janet Strothman*

## JANUARY DONATIONS

### to General Fund

*Polly Armstrong  
Jane Bergen  
Leland Brown  
Linda Burden  
Gordon & Suzanne Chun  
Peggy Anne & Bill Davis  
Nancy Galloway  
Bruce Harris  
Irene Hegarty  
Sylvia McLaughlin  
Allie Norton  
Patricia Pope  
Marjorie & Hugh Rubinow  
Ruthann & Clyde Taylor  
Lenora Young*

### to Foundation

*Virginia Blackledge  
Aida L. Brenneis  
Peggy Anne & Bill Davis  
Pamela B. Drew  
Louetta Erlin  
Doris R. Fine  
Mim Hawley  
Irene Hegarty  
Barbara Oliver  
Jeanine & Guy Saperstein  
Barbara Stern  
Alba Witkin  
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## Letter from NATIONAL LEAGUE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Recently, I had the opportunity to share my League experience with a non-League member. She listened intently as I recounted the League's 82-year history, the battles we have waged, the victories we have won, the tremendous work that our grassroots network does, and my own personal commitment to serve. She asked for further clarification on the role of League members. She was surprised to learn that we are all volunteers, juggling the responsibilities of family, career, and community activism. I indicated that the League's mission and vision fuels our dedication and commitment.

After I completed my passionate League

colloquy, she said. "You do all of this for the love of the League. Are you crazy?"

I took a moment to reflect. Am I crazy? Are we crazy? Why do we soldier on in the face of adversity to carry out the democratic principles of the League and of the country? In contemplating a response, once again I looked to our past.

I found the remarks of Anna Lord Strauss to Convention delegates in 1948 most appropriate. "Today too many people are confused and discouraged. In their discouragement some are seeking an easy answer to our perplexities, a panacea, appealing because of its simplicity. Others are returning to the patterns of the past, which is the cynicism that is the currency of the unmoral.

They illustrate two groups, those who run in too headlong a manner, and those who consider and do not run at all. We will always have in our society those who race ahead regardless of what may befall and the conservatives who hang back waiting to be shown the safe smooth path. What is needed most of all today, however, is citizens willing to build the road as they move toward their goal..."

Visionaries, who would right injustice, and make a difference in the world, are often thought to be crazy. Not because of any mental defect, but because they are dreamers. They have a vision of how the world can be.

So, my answer to the question - are you crazy? - is **yes**. Yes, I am. Vision and values drive my continued belief in the League of Women Voters and of these United States. Yes, I am crazy. But I am proud to be in good company with the suffragists, the abolitionists, the Freedom Riders, the ERA advocates, and the list goes on. They were all thought to be crazy, but look at the legacy they have left.

Mrs. Strauss challenged Convention delegates "The demand of the hour is not only for a few inspired leaders..." but for us ALL. Does heeding that spirited call make us crazy, or just ahead of our time?

The League is facing many challenges, we must make hard choices, and we will change.

Happy Birthday, League! Believe!

By the way, she joined the League.

*Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins*  
LWVUS President

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Monday, March 11, 7:15 pm  
1340 Arch Street

Join us as geologist and river specialist Shawn Chartrand addresses watershed restoration and enhancement plans for the purposes of endangered salmonids and their habitat requirements. Mr. Chartrand's current focus has been in central coastal California (San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties). His approach to projects is from a geologic and systems-based science and he works with other scientists, agencies and politicians to develop realistic plans based on cutting-edge science.

Mr. Chartrand holds BS and MS degrees in geology, has been a consultant to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and was part of the largest adjudication hearing on water rights in the northwest's recent past.

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Author and geographer Gray Brechin addressed urban growth and its corresponding environmental degradation in a presentation to the LWVBAE Environmental Concerns meeting on January 14.

Land development began to change in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century due to coal, metals and later the railroad." This led to a drastic change in human history and earth history," Brechin said. Development spread around transportation lines, which increased adjacent land values. Families that owned lines and surrounding land benefitted and amassed fortunes. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the burden of transportation costs shifted to the taxpayer. Many were lured to California by ads that catered to "His Majesty the driver" and promised "Life's best mixture - sun and air and gasoline." Oil, mining and timber were California's gold.

In 1945 the federal highway system was built to decentralize cities. Not until a report by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1959 was there a Bay Area development plan, which favored filling in the Bay, which led to Save The Bay and the creation of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Mr. Brechin

also addressed the devastating effect the high-speed bullet train proposed between the Bay Area and Southern California cities would have upon the San Joaquin Valley.

Mr. Brechin is author of the collaborative photo-essay with photographer Robert Dawson Farewell, Promised Land: Waking from the California Dream (UC Press) as well as his best-selling dissertation Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin. For more information, see the LWVBAE website at [www.home.pacbell.net/lwvbae](http://www.home.pacbell.net/lwvbae).

-Gail Schickele

## SPEAKER SERIES

Thursday, March 14, 12 noon  
Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room  
1247 Marin Avenue, Albany

The noon speaker on March 14 will be our own *Anne Henderson*, former president and a member of LWVBAE for 30 years. She is currently Legislative Director on the State League board, a position she has held for more than three years.

Anne will speak to us about the March 5 election, helping us understand the significance of the outcome of that election. She will also share with us her insights concerning prospects for the upcoming November election — what ballot measures are likely to be before the voters and what changes we might expect in Sacramento.

The Albany Public Library is located on Marin Avenue at Masonic, has wheel chair access and plenty of parking. Bus service on Solano Avenue is just a block away. To find the Edith Stone Room, enter the library from the lobby, turn right toward the children's librarian; the room is on your right. Bring lunch if you'd like; the League will provide fruit juice.

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

## March

5	Tue.	7a-7p	— STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION —		<i>Watts, 525-6614</i>
6	Wed.	4-6p	Board Meeting	LWVBAE Office	<i>Bickel, 526-4055</i>
8	Fri.	4pm	Deadline for April VOTER	LWVBAE Office	<i>Safir, 524-9088</i>
11	Mon.	7:15p	Environmental Concerns	1340 Arch Street	<i>Bansner, 849-2154</i>
14	Thurs.	Noon	Speaker Series: Election Results and Prospects		<i>Mendell, 843-8824</i>
				Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany	
14	Thurs.	7:30p	Housing Action	Check with <i>Safir</i>	<i>Safir, 524-9088</i>
21	Thurs.	7:30p	Action Committee	1419 Grant St.	<i>Brubeck, 526-5139</i>
23	Sat.	10a-noon	New Member Event	LWVBAE Office	<i>Polak, 841-4546</i>

## April

3	Wed.	4-6p	Board Meeting	LWVBAE Office	<i>Bickel, 526-4055</i>
5	Fri.	4pm	Deadline for April VOTER	LWVBAE Office	<i>Safir, 524-9088</i>
8	Mon.	7:15p	Environmental Concerns	1340 Arch Street	<i>Bansner, 849-2154</i>
9 - 10 - 11	8:30a-8:30p	ASUC ELECTION	UC Berkeley Campus		<i>Coulter, 524-0525</i>
11	Thurs.	Noon	Speaker Series	Albany Public Library	<i>Mendell, 843-8824</i>
				Edith Stone Room, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany	
11	Thurs.	7:30p	Housing Action	Check with <i>Safir</i>	<i>Safir, 524-9088</i>
18	Thurs.	7:30p	Action Committee	1419 Grant St.	<i>Brubeck, 526-5139</i>

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### **FLASH! Eastshore State Park Plan Meeting**

There is an important meeting for Eastshore State Park planning on **March 21, 2002** at H's Lordships restaurant in the evening. (Park Planning Department has not confirmed meeting room or time yet.) The preferred Park concept will be issued on **Friday, March 8** and the opportunity for the public to respond will be at that meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

More information from the park planning project office 1-888-988-7275.

