

The Voter



League of Women Voters of Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville

MARCH 2010

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HOW WELL ARE SCHOOLS PREPARING KIDS FOR THEIR ROLES AS CITIZENS?

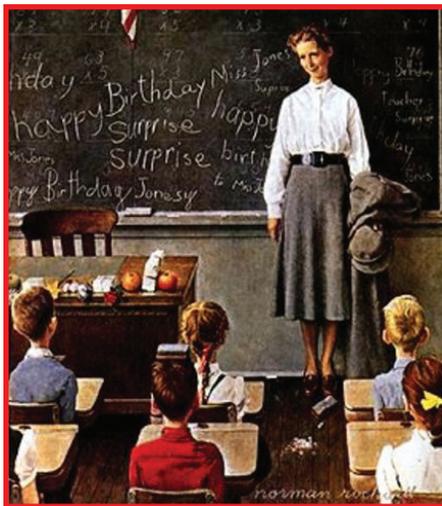
On Tuesday, March 2, from 12 – 2 pm, in the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Library, you'll have the opportunity to discuss this question, and closely related others, with your fellow Leaguers and any non-members who choose to attend our monthly League Conversation.

Bill Chapman and other members of our Civics Education Action committee will moderate a discussion about how Civics, Government and other social studies are taught; what is found in textbooks and on standardized tests; how the textbook and testing industries go about creating these ever more important items; what relevant knowledge and skills students have when they leave high school; and, perhaps most importantly, what can be done better and what we as a League can do to improve instruction.

If our topic intrigues you enough to undertake a little homework before March 2, look at one or more of the following: (To help you avoid typing mistakes, the list is available on our League web site at <http://lwvbae.org/March2Readings.htm> From there you may click to browse.)

1. Edsource's 12-page report, *The Civic Purposes of Public Schools*, is available at http://www.edsource.org/pub_abs_cived.html
2. A brief summary of what Harvard researchers found about how teens use news media: http://www.knightfoundation.org/news/press_room/knight_press_releases/detail.dot?id=130362
3. What research shows about teen knowledge of the first amendment, and how that amendment can be used to teach critical thinking: <http://www.ncte.org/magazine/archives/125745>
4. An insider's view of the problems in scoring standardized tests: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/28/opinion/28farley.html?page-wanted=print>
5. An insider's view of how textbooks are written: <http://www.edutopia.org/print/1195>

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE BAY AREA

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY REPORT

The LWV of the Bay Area was delighted that we again had a successful Bay Area League Day, *Big Steps, Little Steps to Addressing Climate Change*, on Saturday, January 30, 2010, with approximately 150 people attending. The speakers were informative and inspiring. A full report on the meeting will appear in the next issue of the *Bay Area Monitor*.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF SB 375 (2008)

1. It creates a Sustainable Communities Strategy that links climate policy with an integrated regional land-use-and-transportation-planning approach to reduce greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions from automobiles and light trucks. Within the Bay Area, automobiles and light trucks account for about 64 percent of emissions from the transportation sector. A Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) is based on a regional target for greenhouse-gas reduction, and the bill identifies areas for housing and development for all of the region's population. SB 375 also identifies significant resource areas and farmland. It sets forth an integrated development pattern and transportation network that will achieve the greenhouse reduction targets for the region, if there is a feasible way to do it. The plan needs to comply with the Federal clean air and transportation laws. If it is not possible to achieve the targets within an SCS, an alternative planning strategy is permitted.

2. It aligns the program for the regional distribution of housing to be consistent with the SCS. The bill expands regional and local responsibilities relative to state housing objectives. It requires that the region identify residential areas sufficient to accommodate all of the Bay Area's population, including all economic groups, for 25 years; and it requires that, within three years of amending their housing elements, local governments enact zoning to implement those elements.

3. It adds new provisions to the California Environmental Quality Act to encourage land-use decisions that implement the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

4. It adds new modeling provisions to accurately account for the transportation impacts of land-use decisions.

THE VOTER

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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The *VOTER* is free to members, \$20/year for non-members. Current and past issues of the *VOTER* are posted on our website at lwvbae.org.

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

SB 375 explicitly assigns responsibilities to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to implement the bill's provisions for the Bay Area. Both agencies are members of the Joint Policy Committee (JPC). Policies were approved by the JPC, and these policies provide guidance to the two lead regional agencies in fulfilling their responsibilities in collaboration with their JPC partners, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

The first step will be the establishment of regional greenhouse gas reduction targets by the California Air Resources Board by September 2010. After that, each region, in cooperation with counties and cities, will work on a Sustainable Communities Strategy for their region.

If you'd like more information, go to www.abag.ca.gov/jointpolicy/jpcsb375-implementation.htm or contact me at craighughes@earthlink.net.

Linda Craig
Regional Government Director, LWVBA

HOW WELL ARE SCHOOLS PREPARING KIDS FOR THEIR ROLES AS CITIZENS?

(continued from p. 1)

6. Opposing viewpoints on bias in a High School Government text: <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/27/opinion/op-laclair>, and <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/27/opinion/op-wilson27>

7. How Texas conservatives shape what California students see in their textbooks: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/29/arts/29TEXT.html?hpib=&pagewanted=print&position=top>; and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jul/22/christianity-religion-texas-history-education/print>

8. How standardized tests are created: <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/040900edlife-exam-edu.html>

You may bring your lunch with you to this event, but water is the only beverage allowed by the Albany Public Library, which is located at 1247 Marin Avenue (at Masonic). We hope to see you there.

Bill Chapman
Civics Education Action Committee

BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE TO RESUME ACCEPTING BOOK DONATIONS!

Berkeley City College has a beautiful new building, and the College needs books that are in good condition that can fill the shelves of their new library. Hardcover books are preferred, but the library will gladly take paperbacks.

Particularly needed are books on the subjects of:

- Anthropology
- Primates
- California and World History
- Politics and Political Science
- Philosophy
- English as a Second Language
- Art
- Food (*The Omnivore's Dilemma*, for example, or similar books on the subject of food)
- Current and/or "hot" topics, such as gun control, abortion, water, oil, etc.

Also needed is fiction, especially by authors who are persons of color.

If you have books that you would like to donate, please contact me, *Marsha Skinner*, at 510.526.1154 or marshaskinner@yahoo.com. I will be happy to pick up your donation and get it to the College librarian. Many thanks in advance for your contributions.

Marsha Skinner

JANUARY DONATIONS

TO THE LWVBAE GENERAL FUND

- Aida Brenneis*
- Gretchen and C.W. Carlson*
- Suzanne Chun*
- Tom and Jane Coulter*
- Jerome Fishman*
- Marjorie Harmon*
- Angharad Jones*
- Helene Lecar*
- Doris Maslach*
- Jewel Okawachi*
- Therese Pipe*
- Lenora Young*
- Jo Ann Price*

IN MEMORY OF

- Peggy Davis*
- Meda Rechen*
- Luanne Rogers*
- Marj Rubinow*
- Carrie Sprague*

IN HONOR OF

- Jane and Tom Coulter*
- Violet Feinauer*
- Ora Huth*
- Pat Kuhi*
- Evelyn Light*
- Phoebe Watts*

TO THE LWVB FOUNDATION

- Gretchen and C.W. Carlson*
- Marjorie and Leah Harmon*
- Jill and Piero Martinucci*
- Grace and Carl Smith*
- Alba Witkin*

Many thanks for remembering your League.

Louetta Erlin
Donations Secretary

NEW MEMBERS

Our Warmest Welcome
To Our Newest Members:

- O'Neil Dillon*
- Patricia Lyon*
- Shari Rifas*
- Louise Snitz*
- Elizabeth Taylor*

WHO'S KILLING FINANCIAL REFORM?

By Robert Reich

Senator Chris Dodd, the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, scolded Wall Street representatives at a hearing Thursday for sending "an army of lobbyists whose only mission is to kill the common-sense financial reforms" needed by the public. "The fact is," Dodd said, "I am frustrated, and so are the American people."

He charged that Wall Street's intransigence was the reason for Congress's failure to pass any bill to regulate the Street. "The refusal of large financial firms to work constructively with Congress on this effort borders on insulting to the American people who have lost so much in this crisis."

In other words, it isn't Congress's fault. It isn't the Senate Banking Committee's fault. It certainly isn't Dodd's fault. The reason more than a year has passed since the biggest bailout in the history of the world and nothing has been done to prevent a repeat performance – even as the biggest banks are doling out more than \$30 billion of bonuses, even as Goldman Sachs is awarding its big traders \$16 billion in bonuses (more than the \$13 billion Goldman collected from taxpayers via the bailout of AIG), even as AIG itself is handing out bonuses – the reason is ... what, exactly, Senator? Because the Street has sent an army of lobbyists to Capitol Hill?

Call me old fashioned, but I thought Congress was in charge of passing legislation, not Wall Street. Dodd left out the most telling detail, of course. Wall Street is where the campaign money is. Dodd of all people knows that. He's been on the receiving end of lots of it over the years. Wall Street firms and their executives have been uniquely generous to both political parties, emerging recently as one of the largest benefactors of the Democratic Party.

Between November 2008 and November 2009, Wall Street firms and executives handed out \$42 million to lawmakers, mostly to members of the House and Senate banking committees and House and Senate leaders. During the 2008 elections, Wall Street showered Democratic candidates with well over \$88 million and Republicans with over \$67 million, putting the Street right up there with the insurance industry as among the nation's largest equal-opportunity donors.

Some Democrats are quietly grumbling that all the tough talk emanating from the White House in recent weeks – the President calling the Street's denizens "fat cats" and threatening them with limits on their size and the risks they can take, even [waving] a watered-down version of Glass-Steagall in their faces – is making it harder to collect money from the Street this mid-term election year. And the Street is quietly threatening that it may well

give Republicans more, if the saber-rattling doesn't stop.

Congress isn't doing a thing about Wall Street because it's in the pocket of Wall Street. Dodd's outburst at the Street is like the alcoholic who screams at a bartender "how dare you give me another drink when all I've done is pleaded with you for one!" Dodd is right about one thing. The American people are frustrated, and the failure of Congress to pass real financial reform is insulting. But in trying to place responsibility for this appalling failure on Wall Street, Dodd insults us even more.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article appeared in Robert Reich's blog on February 4, 2010 at <http://robertreich.org/post/371113369/whos-killing-financial-reform>. Robert Reich is Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley. He has served in three national administrations, most recently as Secretary of Labor under President Bill Clinton. He has written twelve books, including *The Work of Nations*, *Locked in the Cabinet* and his most recent book, *Supercapitalism*. His "Marketplace" commentaries can be found on publicradio.com and iTunes. Professor Reich was the keynote speaker at LWVBAE's fifth annual community luncheon in 2004.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

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

Desk Duty includes answering the office phone, fetching and processing the mail, and doing whatever else needs doing. Now that we have three new, up-to-date computers in the office, there will certainly be other tasks that desk volunteers can perform. Please respond to this call and sign up for a shift or two by contacting me, *Jane Barrett*, at 510.845.8055 or janebarrett@onebox.com. Training for desk volunteers is available!

Jane Barrett
Office Volunteer Coordinator

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

An Environmental Concerns meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 8, 7:30-9 pm, at the home of *Wendy Markel*, 2811 Claremont **Boulevard** (**NOT** Avenue) in Berkeley. At press time, the evening's guest speaker had not been announced, but information will be available from the LWVBAE office in advance of the event. For further information contact *Carol Stone* at 510.549.0959 or *Gail Schickele* at 415.922.5826.

Carol Stone, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns

BOARD BRIEFS

NOVEMBER 2009

Annual Fundraising Letter: *Tom Coulter* generously volunteered to match donations made by LWVBAE Board members through December 31, 2009, up to a total of \$1,000.

Healthcare Reform: It was reported that California OneCare (www.californiaonecare.com) has produced a very informative DVD on this topic.

Emeryville and Albany Elections: Emeryville defeated a proposed measure to impose a tax on card rooms. There were three current members re-elected to the School Board; two new members were elected to the 5-member City Council. Albany passed measures I and J; Measure I was a new Parcel Tax to benefit the school district, and Measure J combined existing parcel taxes that benefit the school district.

DECEMBER 2009

The Executive Committee's recommendation to reduce paid office staff hours from 15 to 9 hours per week for a six-month trial period starting January 1, 2010 was accepted.

Conversations At The League (formerly Brown Bag Lunch) February 2 program at the Albany Public Library will be LWVBAE and LWVUS program planning. Membership should be urged to attend.

LWV-Oakland is celebrating LWV Founding (90 years ago) in late February. **Moved/Seconded/Passed (M/S/P):** That we work with the Oakland League on this project.

JANUARY 2010

M/S/P: That a Board committee be formed to study the Berkeley Downtown Area Plan.

M/S/P: That we send a letter supporting the Berkeley Bag Reduction Ordinance, as drafted by *Regina Beatus*.

M/S/P: That we join Berkeley Community Media.

M/S/P: That we adopt changes to Board Policies as amended at the Board Meeting of January 27, 2010.

M/S/P: That *Sherry Smith* and *Helene Lecar* be delegates to the LWVUS Convention to be held in Atlanta in June 2010.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE

BOARD 2009-2010

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Environmental Concerns: (CO-DIRECTORS, ONE VOTE)	CAROL STONE/ GAIL SCHICKELE
Healthcare Director:	URSULA ROLFE
Directors at Large:	MIM HAWLEY JEAN SAFIR

M/S/P: That LWVBAE send a letter to the Peralta Community College District Board expressing our concern about the loose accounting and record-keeping used in tracking the District's fiscal transactions. *Helene Lecar* will draft the letter and circulate it for Board comment via email. *Sherry Smith* will then send the final draft to the Alameda County LWV Council to inform them of our proposed action and to elicit their opinions.

Angharad Jones
Secretary

LWVBAE OFFICE HOURS

Cheryl Nichols, LWVBAE Office Manager, is in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, and volunteers may be staffing the office at other times. But if no one is there to take your call, it is important that you leave a telephone message or use email to let us know the reason for your call. We will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible.



League of Women Voters
 Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



how to join

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. Day: _____

Tel. Eve. _____

Email: _____

Joining at the local level makes you a member at all levels: LWVBAE, Bay Area, State and National. Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to the LWVB Foundation are deductible to the extent allowed by law. Non-member subscriptions cost \$20/year.

calendar

MARCH

- 2 TUES. 12-2 PM CONVERSATION ON CIVICS EDUCATION, EDITH STONE ROOM, ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1247 MARIN AVENUE, ALBANY (SEE PP. 1, 3) G. POLAK, 841.4546
- 5 FRI. 5:00 PM **DEADLINE FOR APRIL VOTER** A. KISCH, 985.0651
- 8 MON. 7:30-9 PM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, 2811 CLAREMONT BOULEVARD (NOT AVENUE) (SEE P. 4) G. SCHICKELE, 415.922.5826 C. STONE, 549.0959
- 11 THURS. 10:30 AM-12 NOON MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE J. COULTER, 524.0525
- 14 SUN. **START OF DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME**
- 16 TUES. 3-5 PM ACTION COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE S. SMITH, 548.1769
- 17 WED. 1-3 PM CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM, LWVBAE OFFICE R. BEATUS, 524.6904
- 22 MON. 1:30-3:30 PM HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE C. LYNCH, 527.2173
- 24 WED. 3-5 PM BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE D. AKERS, 527.1288

APRIL

- 2 FRI. 5:00 PM **DEADLINE FOR MAY-JUNE VOTER** A. KISCH, 985.0651
- 6 TUES. 12-2 PM CONVERSATION ON A PUBLIC POLICY ISSUE, EDITH STONE ROOM, ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1247 MARIN AVENUE, ALBANY G. POLAK, 841.4546
- 8 THURS. 10:30 AM-12 NOON MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE J. COULTER, 524.0525
- 12 MON. 7:30-9 PM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, 2811 CLAREMONT BOULEVARD (NOT AVENUE) G. SCHICKELE, 415.922.5826
- 20 TUES. 3-5 PM ACTION COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE S. SMITH, 548.1769
- 21 WED. 1-3 PM CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM, LWVBAE OFFICE R. BEATUS, 524.6904
- 22 THURS. **EARTH DAY**
- 26 MON. 1:30-3:30 PM HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE C. LYNCH, 527.2173
- 28 WED. 3-5 PM BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE D. AKERS, 527.1288

BERKELEY ADDRESSES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED