

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

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Editor: Bob Hawley

Part II: Redistricting 2001 as a Political Process - Are You Ready?

Editorial Introduction: This is the second part of a three-part series on the redistricting issues we face in 2001 that are critical not only to the redistricting process, but also to the electoral and civic health of our communities. The series was put together by the Redistricting Monitor Committee of the LWV Alameda County Council.

Part One, in LWVBAE's December-January *Voter*, outlined the "formal" (legal) criteria to be observed in the redistricting process. Part Two discusses the "informal" criteria that are more difficult to quantify and are not required per se. Historically, political party influence and protection of incumbents have been used. More recently, for a more equitable approach there has been interest in using communities of interest and making seats competitive. The League of Women Voters of California has a redistricting position that states that protection of the political prospects of an incumbent or preferential treatment for a political party should not apply as criteria.

Part Three will propose action to improve the process after the 2000 census at the Alameda County level regarding the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Education. The series updates and enlarges upon "Reapportionment in California After the 1990 Census," a 1987 study guide of the League of Women Voters of California.

Part II: Redistricting As A Political Process

Political Party Influence

Redistricting must be acknowledged as a political process, regardless of who draws the lines or how. Subsequent elections will usually have partisan results that will be partially attributed to where district lines have been drawn.

The major political parties have an enormous stake in the outcome of any redistricting process. Comfortable majorities in state legislatures and in Congress help them carry out their policies and programs. It should not be surprising that parties struggle to be in a position to influence the process.

To a lesser degree, this is true at the county level also. The focus of this article and the first is on two countywide boards - the County Board of Supervisors and the County Board of Education. However, all entities -(Continued on Page 6)

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President's Column

**A Time for League Review,
Restructure, and Planning for a
Bright, Effective, and Meaningful
Future for Our League and
Members - -**

And a Special League Elixir for Success

Well-run nonprofit organizations take stock regularly and make changes aimed to improve the performance, effectiveness, and satisfaction of their members. Taking the state League's cue on restructuring, the LWVBAE Board decided to take a look at our own structure and operation to find ways to improve both our internal workings and also our community service.

As president, I asked three experienced, knowledgeable, and committed Leaguers to form the team that would undertake this task. Without hesitation, they agreed and we owe them sincere thanks for a job well done. The team is *Jane Bergen*, Chair; *Nancy Bickel*; and *Jane Coulter*. In early February the ad hoc LWVBAE Restructuring Committee was charged with reviewing the structure and operation of our League and making recommendations aimed at involving more members. The Committee wasted no time in getting under way, interviewed key people, and presented its report to the Board on March 7.

Their report provides a helpful and insightful springboard for Board discussion and action. As we go to press, the Board has scheduled a special meeting to fully consider the Committee's observations and recommendations. We expect to adopt a plan that will: make some changes in structure, not involving Bylaw changes; make recommendations to the incoming Board; and propose a timetable for ongoing review.

Now, LWVBAE looks forward to the report from the LWVC Restructuring Committee that has been advised by the Stanford Business School Alumni Consulting Team (ACT). We anticipate there will be recommendations that may also be useful for us at the local level.

**State League Convention in Los Angeles
-- an Elixir for Success?**

Every two years League members from all over California come to the LWVC Convention to conduct organizational business, adopt a program for the next two years, and meet face-to-face for networking. For the Leaguers asked to represent their local League, it is usually an inspiring, if tiring, experience. Too often we, in our own League, aren't sufficiently aware of all the good work happening in each League around the state. To have the opportunity to "meet and greet" other Leaguers who face similar, as well as different, challenges and opportunities creates a wonderful bubble of synergy for three days in which all other concerns pale and the League and its needs receive priority.

Delegates return to their home Leagues with new enthusiasm and energy to tackle whatever the immediate problem(s) may be and to plan their League activities for the coming year. They're primed for success. If we could bottle that "can do" feeling to share with each League's entire board and membership, local Leagues would have a secret weapon for success that could be brought out at appropriate moments. What does that mean? Perhaps that in the end, after creating a reasoned and reasonable League plan for the year, it all comes down to the positive attitude, high expectations, and the desire to succeed of everyone involved.

-Jo Ann

**Wanted ! You !
For an Essential League Job**

- Scheduler for Office Volunteers
(can be done from phone at home)
- Regular Office Volunteer
(3 hours [10-1 or 1-4] once or more per week or month)

Phone: *Ruthann Taylor*,
Administration VP

Vista Community College New Building Meeting

Vista Community College President Ione Illioff has announced a community meeting to discuss the issues surrounding the new campus building in downtown Berkeley. It will be held on Monday, April 16, at the North Berkeley Senior Center, northeast corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and Hearst Avenue in Berkeley, from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

It is very important that everyone who can attend. There are several issues to be resolved such as: zoning - involving the City of Berkeley; esthetics and usefulness of the building - involving the architect, the college and the Peralta Community College District planners, and the students and faculty; overall cost and timetable - involving everyone, especially local residents.

A Vista Community College building in Berkeley has been a longstanding issue for the Peralta Community College District. It is one that has heated up considerably at times. Now that the residents of the District overwhelmingly passed a bond measure that included building the Vista facility, it is not only the League's, but everyone's, concern that the main decisions about it be made with public input. This is the first opportunity for public input on the new Vista building. Put it on your calendar.

-*Helene Lecar*, Chair, Peralta Community
College District Study

"Energy of the Future - Without Global Warming"

April 9, 2001, 7:30 pm
1340 Arch Street

Professor Wulf Kunkel will meet with the League's Environmental Concerns committee to help us look beyond our immediate supply and price problems to the rising sea levels of the future if we keep producing power from current sources. He holds out the promise - or perhaps the imperative - of a new energy source that will not accelerate global warming. This is the third in a series of informal forums on energy responding to the need to rethink our energy future NOW. All welcome.

-*Eva Bansner*, Coordinator,
Environmental Concerns

++ Speaker Series ++ Thursday, April 12, 2001 Albany Library, Noon to 2 pm "Music in the Berkeley Schools"

On Thursday, April 12, League members will welcome Theresa Saunders, Director of Music for the Berkeley Unified School District and principal of Jefferson Elementary School, as speaker at our monthly Speaker Series. She will talk about "**Music in the Berkeley Schools**," and plans to bring with her a couple of young students who are participating in the programs. Members attending the meeting will learn about the history of these fine programs and their amazing variety, and will also hear some student performers.

The meeting will take place from noon to 2 pm on the second Thursday in April - 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 a ride.

* * * * *

Our final program this League year will be on **May 10**, when we will hear from Nora Davis, League member and Mayor of Emeryville. Find out how Emeryville citizens have done a great job, working with City officials, in planning for their community. We'll have lunch - bring your own - in Emeryville's newly refurbished old City Hall, and then see the new Emeryville on a **bus tour**, so save the date!! More details in next month's *Voter*.

Incidentally, the Speaker Series planning committee is looking for some new members. We have a lot of fun generating ideas - subjects and speakers - for the monthly series, and then making the contacts and final arrangements. We've been meeting evenings, but that is not set in stone; neither is the location of our meetings. If you have an interest, please call me and plan to join us as soon as you can.

-*Jean Safir*, Speaker Series Coordinator

Membership

We extend a warm welcome to new member *Zillah Bahar* and to returning member *Margaret Sparks*.

In Memoriam

Friends of *Madi Bacon* will be sad to learn she died in January at age 94. She had been an LWVBAE member for more than ten years.

-*Ginette Polak*, Membership Director

Donors Through February

General Fund

Georgia Babladelis
Eloise Bodine *
Peggy Casey
Elizabeth DeVelbiss
Penelope Hanan-Dahmen
Charlotte Lichterman
Rita Maran
Doris Maslach
Kitty and Hugh McLean

* In tribute to *Beth Schickele*

Foundation
Georgia Babladelis
Geraldine Scalzo
Roberta J. Silverstein
Arta Jane Wilbanks

Board Briefs

Highlights of the February 2001 meeting are as follows:

- * *Charlotte Lichterman* described "Women to Women" event being sponsored by NOW, NWPC, etc., in March and the Board voted to support the event.
- * Development - The Finance Drive had a profit of \$3,006, with 77% of it earmarked for the Foundation. *Karen Nelson* and *Ruth Ganong* are organizing a Dessert Party on February 13 honoring LWVBAE's active volunteers. Current membership is 420.
- * Action - *Eva Bansner* provided draft action letters to the Berkeley City Council on Conflict of Interest guidelines and the East Campus Playing Fields project. The Board voted to send these. *Lois Brubeck* reported that *Dion Aroner* has been interviewed and an appointment is set with *Don Perata*, as part of the annual Legislative Interviews.
- * Community Services - *Sherry Smith* reported on the plans for the ASUC election and reminded Board Members they will need to call members requesting volunteer help.
- * Program - Our State Program Planning meeting will be on February 15. *Lois Brubeck* reported on an NIF training session on forums attended by members in Sacramento. *Jo Ann Price* reported on plans for the February 22 IRV Forum.
- * *Beth Springston* was appointed Secretary for the remainder of the 2000/01 term.

**Beth Springston*, Secretary/Treasurer

3rd Annual LWVBAE Community Lunch

We Need You!

The committee to arrange our League's acclaimed Community Lunch is forming. The date will likely be late August or 1st week of Sept. Please call the League office if you can help with the main tasks: e.g., meeting with underwriters, arrangements, invitations; or smaller tasks: e.g. invitation mailing party, providing names of likely contributors or underwriters, helping out on the day of the event. This requires some of your time now through June, as well as periods during the summer months, but can be worked out to avoid your vacation plans. Thanks!

LWVBAE office phone: 510-843-8824.

Action Update

Berkeley's Draft General Plan is scheduled to go to the City Council on May 23. After reviewing the recent Draft Environmental Impact Report, the League wrote the Planning Commission. We noted a lack of analysis of the impacts of certain policies and called for more accurate maps and relevant data so that the community can better evaluate the Plan. The Planning Commission will be making final deliberations on each element of the Plan at its open meetings, held at the North Berkeley Senior Center at 7:00 p.m.: March 28 will deal with Economic Development, Preservation and Design, and Citizen Participation; April 11, with Land Use, Housing and Transportation; and April 25, with Implementation. Interested Leaguers can see the plan on the city website at <www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/planning> and those wishing to attend the meetings can confirm dates and times, by calling 705-8137.

On March 7, the City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk held a **training meeting for city commissioners**. In providing background on city government and the role of commissions, the speakers pointed out the problems of: staff/commission/council interaction; obeying the Brown Act; and conflict of interest laws. The League wrote a letter urging the City to clarify the rules governing conflict of interest and ex parte contacts for bodies with adjudicatory decision-making policy, and we will be watching developments.

The City Council held its first **Priority Setting Budget Workshop** that same day. Although there is a very limited amount of non-committed money, Council members were each given four turns to name a priority program, and on March 20 will receive staff feedback on these priorities. Council members will then vote on final priorities for the fiscal year 2002*2003 budget. This priority setting and two-year budget are part of the City Manager's effort to tighten and focus budgeting. Another aspect, which was described to the League at a Speakers Series meeting in February, is the City Manager's effort to move toward an integrated budget.

We will discuss the budget process, commissions, the General Plan and other issues when we hold our

annual interviews with Council Members and City Managers in all three of our cities.

This month's Action Committee meeting dealt largely with **housing**. Housing Study committee members actively engaged in sorting out possibilities for League action over the next year to help clarify issues and choices.

Virginia Laurence has been attending meetings of the **Community Action Team** which was formed to address the issues of low birth weight and racial disparities in Berkeley. The City Health Department has gotten a grant of \$300,000 to add to the City's \$200,000 allocation, and is launching a block*by*block interviewing/outreach program in south and west Berkeley, with a \$1000 stipend for the interviewers. *Virginia* was also headed for Sacramento to show League support for a bill sponsored by Sen. Ortiz to extend the Healthy Families Program to parents of uninsured children and she will be participating in Dion Aroner's efforts to tackle the shortage of social workers.

Campaign finance reform is high on the national agenda. We need to keep the pressure on to pass the McCain/Feingold bill, S.27, as introduced, without amendments. The bill will effectively ban soft money, ensure that funding for "sham issue" advocacy is covered by election rules, and strengthen enforcement and disclosure. It is important that you write your senators and particularly stress with Sen. Feinstein that the League opposes any amendments, on the grounds that they will sidetrack the reform effort and undermine the bipartisan coalition supporting the bill. We also oppose provisions to raise "hard money" (individual) contribution limits.

Please be sure that you give the LWVBAE office your e-mail address so that we can get information to you quickly. If you have not yet done so, sign up for LWVC's Action Network on e-mail by sending your name, e-mail address and any specific areas of interest to <DEVaughn@compuserve.com> to get alerts for state action. In order to be notified of alerts for national action, send an e-mail to <listserv@lwv.org>. In the message box, write: subscribe glc-list Firstname Lastname (using your own name).

*Lois Brubeck, Action VP

Redistricting (Continued from Page 1)

which have board members elected by trustee districts will face redistricting.

When one political party or group dominates or gains control of the process, it does not necessarily mean that the resulting plan will be inequitable. Any party or group usually considers its long-range goals, the desires of its own incumbents, the good opinion of the general public, and the practical need to gain a majority vote on any board.

However, if the majority party leadership has abused its power, the resulting plan may operate to that party's future advantage and destroy the opportunities of its opponents. By a process of concentration or dispersal of votes, a party can drastically reduce the number of seats the opposition can win. On the other hand, in some cases such advantages may be very short-lived.

Some feel that implementing redistricting is one of the legitimate perquisites of being the party or group in power at the right time—they won the election. This leaves very little room to maneuver.

In the last analysis, the political nature of redistricting is inescapable. All plans will inevitably be judged as at least tilting toward one party or another, regardless of who draws the lines or how.

Protection of Incumbents

Because they regard partisan plans as biased, some well-meaning people have called on the major parties to produce a plan cooperatively. They may overlook that a bipartisan plan is most likely to be an incumbent-centered one.

If party leaders agree to maintain the status quo, as they frequently do, the incumbents of the two major parties will exchange areas they do not want, within the constraints of the population limitation.

An incumbent-centered plan often results in non-compact districts. Such a plan may become so homogeneous in composition that political diversity may gradually disappear and the elected official's responsiveness diminish. Any candidate who dares to challenge the incumbent would find the experience highly discouraging.

Even without manipulating district lines, incumbents have natural advantages over challengers: name recognition, an established structure of support, known financial resources, an ever-deepening well of

gratitude for constituent service and all the perquisites of office to aid and impress followers.

Some political observers would like to see an incumbent-blind plan. Those who draw the lines of a district would not know even the address of the incumbent, much less his or her preferences.

Others would not agree. While abuses by incumbents occur, most elected officials take their responsibilities in representing their districts very seriously. If re-election is important to them, it is because their work is important. Some argue, no one knows the people and the problems of the district as well, and continuity is important in government. The smooth and effective functioning of any board operations depends in large measure on the experience and expertise of the career elected official. Such professionalism is seen as desirable by many, although the term limits concept continues to gain support.

Even when incumbents participate in drawing the lines of their own districts, there are restraints on their self-interest: formal criteria, consideration of party goals, and the opinions of their constituents. They also may ask themselves whether or not they have the support of the people.

A related factor is simple pride. Some able and popular elected officials win regardless of the political makeup of the district. They know that complacent incumbents who do not listen to the people will soon be challenged even though the statistics might show the seat to be "safe."

Some defenders of plans protective of incumbents suggest that redistricting is not the appropriate tool for attacking any entrenchment of incumbents. They feel that better ways are available such as term limits.

Competitive Seats

In any redistricting plan, there will be districts in which candidates of a certain party will likely win or the incumbent will likely be reelected. These are homogeneous districts in which there are few demographic changes, relative economic stability, and a decided preference among voters for the status quo. Such districts are considered "safe." Other districts can be made "safe" for a party or an incumbent by adding areas where adherents reside and subtracting areas where voters are likely to support opposition candidates.

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Redistricting (Continued from Page 6)

It is easier to support the *concept* of competitive seats than it is to determine whether or not a seat *is* competitive. Without a fairly accurate knowledge of voting patterns, a measure of a candidate's attractiveness to voters, and a good estimate of the effect in an election of all the other variables, it is almost impossible. A popular candidate with extraordinary name recognition can turn what was considered a competitive seat into a "safe" one overnight.

Even with equally matched candidates, there is no guarantee that a seat thought to be competitive in a plan will remain so for more than one election. With a mobile population and voters who reject loyalty to any one party, prediction is a difficult business.

Communities of Interest

Besides the specific communities of interest for racial or linguistic minorities subject to past discrimination, inhabitants of cities, and the geographical regions which were discussed in the first article, there are other communities of interest that people seek to keep intact.

Inhabitants of suburban areas have traditionally feared being "swamped" by urban interests that may be inimical to their own. Thus these voters resist being placed in the same district. For example, voters in the eastern and southern parts of Alameda County may be feeling dominated by the existence of three Supervisorial seats in northern Alameda County.

Some people who live in areas where a large university is located fear the effect of the student vote because students are transient residents who do not share the interests of the permanent residents. Neighborhoods in urban areas may be bound together by nothing more than a spirit of "belonging" as also evidenced by cultural and political clubs that work together beyond geographical boundaries. As any city or town might, they resist having their interests split.

Most observers are sympathetic to the notion of taking communities of interest into account in redistricting plans. Because of difficulties of application, many people look to the courts to determine whether or not these groups fall under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Conclusions

Voters are urged to take note of certain conclusions which must be recognized as basic facts in almost every redistricting situation:

1. Redistricting must be acknowledged as a political process, regardless of who draws the lines or how, because subsequent elections will usually have partisan results that will be partially attributed to where district lines have been drawn.
2. The use of computers does not in any way render a plan neutral. While computers may lull citizens into believing that the plan is somehow more "fair" because an "impartial" computer has been involved, computers, programmed by people, merely provide a sophisticated tool for developing plans that can meet any programmer's hidden or acknowledged agenda.
3. Criteria often conflict or compete when they are to be implemented concurrently. Priorities among criteria must be acknowledged and reconciled. The dilemmas thus created must be dealt with realistically and practically.
4. Most redistricting is done by elected officials, and most plans reflect the partisan bias of the party in power. Many plans drawn by supposedly "impartial" commissions are also challenged as partisan or otherwise flawed.

In summary, as Alameda County boards make their final redistricting decisions, it is important to recognize the "formal" and "informal" criteria involved in redistricting. While the political nature of redistricting has been stressed here and voters are cautioned to be alert for incumbent bias, League members agreed in their study of the last census and resulting redistricting actions that how the redistricting is done is even more important than who does it. Issues of process and criteria must be addressed, as they apply equally to redistricting whether done by the elected officials or by an appointed commission.

California Utility Deregulation February Environmental Concerns

Economist Catherine Wolfram addressed California utility deregulation at the LWVBAE Environmental Concerns meeting February 12, 2001.

Following the deregulation of telephone service, natural gas, and airlines, the Energy Policy Act (EPA) of 1992 led to the 1995 CPUC policy decision and AB1890 toward the unbundling of power generation, heretofore regulated for 70 years. Only the generation of power - the facilities where power is produced - was deregulated. Distribution - the service that moves the power to the actual customers - will continue to be a regulated monopoly.

Power generation technology accounts for 50-60% of the cost (electric, gas, coal, conversion plants); transmission, 10%; distribution, 20%; overhead, 10%, Wolfram said. "There's no reason to have regulation at the generation level," she said. "International competition is introduced in the generation side, not in transmission."

According to the CPUC, goals of a competitive electric industry are consumer choice in electric services and competition among utilities and other electricity generators to reduce electric rates. In California, rates are 30 to 50 percent higher than the national average. Wolfram said states with relatively high rates such as CA, MA, NH and RI became interested in deregulation. California rates have been historically high.

The January 1, 1998 deregulation was expected to cause PG&E and other utility companies to experience a drop in cost of utilities due to anticipated competition among marketers and eventual new technologies, according to the CPUC. Costs of equipment that would no longer be guaranteed revenue, or "stranded costs," were to be shared by residential consumers until 2002. The "headroom," or temporary increase in profit for PG&E and other utility companies, would help foot the bill for the transition. "Headroom" is the method that the California legislature arranged for utilities to collect their uneconomic or "stranded" costs. Industrial customers favored deregulation. Initially, Edison and PG&E were not in favor of deregulation because of the fear of stranded cost, but they strongly came aboard the transition.

"If regulation continues, plants could be covered by rates," Wolfram said. She cited Diablo Nuclear Power Plant which was 12¢ KW hour and is now 40¢ a kw hour; "Under regulation, costs are covered by rates. (But) new companies, if they make mistakes, eat the losses vs. pay in rates." She said, "costs have legitimately skyrocketed, with natural gas prices up by a factor of five." Reasons include the August explosion of the main pipeline that brings gas to Southern CA; and the soaring cost of pollution permits, required by the So. Coast Air Quality Management districts, where one permit per one thousand lbs. of pollution was \$4 and is now \$400. Electric demand also led to higher pollution permits. She said there's been little differential between companies generating power or electric and said the benefits of "green energy" are disputable.

Wolfram said that one of the biggest mistakes was in nuclear power generation. Diablo was supposed to be \$600 million but cost \$6 billion. "Nuclear power after the fact looks really expensive; an economic failure and research failure," she said.

California has at least 10% demand growth and, "what's driving that has to be the California economy," Wolfram said. With demand growth is the use of more generating plants which leads to higher profits for all generating plants. "These high prices are not necessarily ill-begotten," she said. "The higher bills? That's not electric - that's the gas side in the order of five times they were five months ago."

"The real problems might be down the line this summer," she said, when the demand is the highest - about 45 gigawatts vs 30-32 gigawatts on a December day.

Wolfram is an advocate of "Real Time" pricing where customers receive a flat rate, and higher prices when the demand is high. No power-no fee doesn't work because, for example, "elderly people will turn off the AC," she said. "But this incentive for industry will go a long way to averting blackouts." Wolfram also advocates imposing a maximum number of days that a utility plant can be down; a "sick day" policy. This may help untangle collusion or a real shortage, she said. "The issue of collusion is huge but it's hard to get at - it's hard to prove." She added that ENRON has been smart and aggressive.

-Gail Schickele, Coordinator,
Environmental Concerns

LWVBAE Completes the State Election Systems Study

Our League's study committee on the LWVC Election Systems Study recently completed its wrap up of the results of our two sets of UNITs on the study. Because the results from each League in California (70) must be received and considered by the state Election Systems Study Committee before a state result and proposed position can be written, we have been asked not to publicize what our local League's results are. The report is available in the office for any member who would like to read it.

Much lively discussion preceded all decisions on consensus both at the UNITs and at the committee's wrap up meeting. This was a challenging topic for many League members who had not previously been familiar with voting systems widely used in most other democracies around the globe. Members asked a wide variety of thought-provoking questions, brought up intriguing issues, and admirably influenced one another's thinking.

The task of our members who attended the UNITs was to choose five criteria out of a proposed fifteen that best reflected what we would look for in an "ideal" election system and to evaluate how well several pre-chosen democratic election systems met them. At the February UNITs, the five criteria that emerged via consensus were: ensure majority rule, encourage minority representation, increase voter participation, promote stable and effective government, and easy to use and administer. As other Leagues could likely choose a different set of five criteria to evaluate the "best" electoral system, it is apparent that the results are likely to vary considerably and will prove a challenge for the state committee to bring together.

During the second set of UNITs the first week of March, those present noted that when it came to evaluating each system according to the chosen criteria, the decisions were neither obvious nor straightforward. For instance, the system "easiest to use" was not necessarily the one "easiest to administer", and the system that "promoted the most stable government" might not also "promote the most effective government". The systems studied at the state level included: Single Member Plurality, Instant Runoff Voting, Mixed Member Proportional, Choice Voting, and Cumulative Voting. At the local level we

-(Continued in next column)

Local Program Planning UNIT The Future of LWVBAE

Monday, April 30, 7-9 pm, LWVBAE Office

Every year the members of LWVBAE plan for the coming local League year's program from July 1 to June 30. If we're involved with a two-year program, we review it at this planning time to make adjustments or continue it as is.

It's very important that YOU add your ideas to those of the Board and active members. We need to know what your priorities are for the League and what areas or topics you think our League should pursue for future study or action. At this UNIT meeting you can discuss your ideas with other League members and see how Leaguers come to consensus over the yearly program that is proposed to the Annual Meeting for discussion and adoption.

Please put Monday, April 30, from 7 to 9 pm on your calendar and come the Office to participate in a truly League experience. WE NEED YOUR INPUT. Hope to see you there!

2000- 2001 LWVBAE Board Fills Two Positions

The Board welcomes *Ruthann Taylor* as our Administrative VP to complete this League year through June. We also are pleased that our Treasurer, *Beth Springston*, agreed to serve in the dual role of Secretary/Treasurer for the same period.

State Study (continued)
included: Two-Round Runoff Voting and At Large Voting, while omitting: Mixed Member Proportional. As we familiarized ourselves with the systems, we did our best to judge them. The results of our local segment of the state study have been sent to the LWVC study committee. We now eagerly await the combined consensus result of all the Leagues in California.

-Joan Strasser, LWVBAE Coordinator, State Election Systems Study

CALIFORNIA VOTER

SPRING 2001

LWVC CONVENTION SPECIAL

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA

Convention News from LWVLA

New Voices, New Challenges!

LWV Los Angeles--along with sister Leagues throughout Los Angeles County--looks forward to welcoming you to the 59th Convention of the League of Women Voters of California.

Los Angeles may be a hard city to understand on short acquaintance, but for those who live here it is one of the most exciting cities in the world: it's a place of extraordinary diversity that is ever-changing. Conventions tend to eat up every minute in plans and strategies, so we have planned excursions to give you a taste if you come early or stay afterwards.

You'll meet a lot of volunteers from all over the county and certainly delegates from all over the state. It goes without saying that you will work hard. But we hope you'll have a good time, too!

Xandra Kayden, President, LWVLA

Come early

Welcome to everyone planning to come to convention! We are pulling out all the stops to make Los Angeles an enjoyable experience for delegates. There will be great tours the day before convention--Hollywood, a walking tour of downtown, an evening at the Getty Museum -- and performances at the LA Philharmonic Thursday night. *So come early!*

Susan F. Rice, Convention Chair

Our local involvement (and yours)

The first thing Xandra Kayden did when she got home from LWVC Convention 1999 was to call Susan Rice and ask her to chair the Steering Committee for Convention 2001. She breathed a great sigh of relief when Susan agreed to take on this monumental task. Susan, a professional fund-raiser and former LWVC President, hit the ground running and has never stopped.

Susan's committee numbers about 25 dedicated members. You'll meet them at convention, but we'd like to introduce two in advance. Yvonne Regan of LWV Los Angeles and Sandy Thorn of LWV Downey Area are cochairs in charge of volunteers. They have recruited an impressive total of about 130 volunteers from all over the county and are working on a training manual to keep last-minute confusion to a minimum. Yvonne (310-454-2757) or Sandy (jserrano@juno.com) would love to hear from *you* if you're interested in volunteering at Convention 2001.

Because inquiring minds want to know

We've set up an e-mail discussion list so League members can share information about convention. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to: LWVCConvention-subscribe@yahoo.com

As a *discussion list*, it reflects the interests and needs of subscribers. It'll be a good place to drum up support for your caucus or for the motion you plan to bring to the floor. It will also be a source of last-minute schedule changes, travel/entertainment advice, and the always-useful search for roommates.

An unofficial online newsletter at LWVCConvention@yahoo.com, will contain subscribers' first-hand impressions of convention activities. It will also be helpful to Leaguers who can't attend and a valuable resource for delegates to compile board reports or *VOTER* articles once back home from convention.

Perhaps the main benefit of an e-mail discussion list is the head start it gives delegates on meeting each other—it's always a thrill to read the nametag on someone we've never seen before and to have that sudden realization that this is an old friend from Cyberspace.

There are banquet speakers . . . and then there's Sheila Kuehl

We've all heard "inspirational" or "entertaining" banquet speakers short on intellectual content, or politicians or academics who pack in facts but put us to sleep. State Senator Sheila Kuehl is inspirational, entertaining and informative all at the same time; we're delighted she will keynote the Saturday banquet.

Visit www.vote-smart.org to see how Kuehl filled out the National Political Awareness Test. You may think you're reading a list of League positions! There will be nothing predictable about the content, approach and delivery this experienced speaker always tailors to the occasion and the crowd.

Don't plan to write notes for a caucus or workshop while listening to Sheila Kuehl with one ear. The Senator will win your full attention, and you'll find yourself quoting her for weeks afterward.

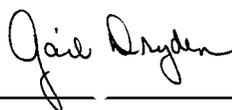
See you in L.A. in May!

From the President

I am so looking forward to meeting with League delegates at convention. *New Voices, New Challenges* is such an appropriate theme for our time together. And, there will be some energizing new "voices" at the first plenary session-- so be sure to arrive on time!

Thanks to all local Leagues for helping the LWVC be prudent with our scarce resources by including this convention preview in your local *VOTER*. The LWVC Board greatly appreciates your help.

At this convention-- the culmination of my term as your president-- I look forward to celebrating accomplishments and looking ahead to a restructured, vital League. My sincere thanks for the opportunity to serve you.



Convention 2001 Workshops

Training, Information, Exchange, Networking

A highlight of Convention 2001 is the number and variety of workshops being offered. Rather than the traditional 10, there will be 15 workshops this year. Delegates and visitors may attend three each. In response to requests from local Leagues throughout the state, there will be a mix of training sessions, panel discussions, and presentations for both newer members and not so new members.

Presidents

There will be a two-hour New Presidents workshop on Friday afternoon designed just for you. We have also scheduled a special Presidents Breakfast Sunday morning which includes a presentation by Susan Rice and Carol Abrams (LWVLA). They will bring their professional expertise and extensive League background to bear on questions swirling around that oft heard phrase: I'm a president, not the development director (fund-raiser, etc.).

Don't miss this opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills to make your presidency more manageable and bring in new revenues at the same time.

Training/Networking

Other workshops provide the training you have been seeking. Public speaking with no fear, fundraising strategies, how to organize a local study (and why), building a website for your League, and attracting diverse populations to your programs will be the theme of various sessions.

And, at League events there is always the chance to share your knowledge and learn from others. Successes will be featured. There will be panel presentations on how some local Leagues have influenced their local governments, how to engage youth in voter activities, and more.

Choosing three workshops to attend may be your hardest decision, for the content is rich. Come ready to learn a lot, gain new ideas, and attain practical skills.

Restructuring the LWVC Board

Few women today can volunteer the 40-60 hours a week required of the LWVC president, nor can many afford the time commitment to serve on the board.

Recognizing this, a LWVC board-appointed committee has examined other ways for the board to function. We have been aided by members of the Stanford Alumni Consulting Team (ACT), a volunteer project of Stanford School of Business graduates.

An e-mail survey of local League presidents, interviews with LWVC board members and online discussion led to a long list of findings and recommendations. Findings reaffirm what active members know: we value both the League's education and advocacy roles, and local Leagues are the major strength of LWVC. Briefly summarized, the recommendations are:

- Clarify differences between education and advocacy; clearly assign portfolios; elect a separate chair with specific responsibility for the LWVCEF by July 1, 2001
- Align priorities with resources; review financial management practices of the LWVC/EF by July 1, 2001
- Develop comprehensive plans to increase membership and provide training of local League boards by September 1, 2001
- Plan to fund and hire an executive director (ED) not funded by increased

per member payments, whose focus is to provide services to local Leagues; adopt a development plan by July 1, 2001 with hiring of ED by Convention 2003

- Obtain local League support for the plan; give opportunity for local input, including at Convention 2001 and Presidents Council 2002.

With these goals and timelines, it will be important for Leagues to further share interests, concerns and ideas. An updated report will be given at convention. Time to discuss it will be provided. Come to convention with the thoughts and ideas of your League members regarding these restructuring recommendations.

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926 J Street, Suite 515

Sacramento CA 95814

Telephone • 916-442-7215

Fax • 916-442-7362

Websites • <http://www.ca.lwv.org>

<http://www.smartvoter.org>

E-mail • lwvc@jps.net

President Gail Dryden

Choices for a Vital Community

Get your community talking about how to improve quality of life!

Would you like for people to find common ground to improve quality of life in your community? Do you wonder how to get people with disparate points of view to begin talking with each other?

LWVC has a tool to help you initiate that kind of engagement in a comfortable setting where people share values and perspectives on issues they care about. The forums are useful for League work as well as with other community groups.

Find out more at www.ca.lwv.org. Under *League Services*, click on the link to *Choices for a Vital Community: Which Way do We Go?* Also, look for Linda Phillips at convention and talk with her about holding a forum in your town.

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

March

28 Wed. 4-6 pm Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)

April

4 Wed. 4-6:30 pm LWVBAE Board Meeting LWVBAE Office (Price)

- All items needing Board approval for the Annual Meeting must be on the Agenda -

6 Fri. all day Ed Source Conference San Ramon (Office, 843-8824)

6 Fri. noon Deadline for May-June Voter (Hawley)

9 Mon. 4-6 pm Education Committee (Lecar)

9 Mon. 7:15 pm Environmental Concerns (Bansner)

10-12 Tue., Wed., Thu. **ASUC Election** (Smith)

11 Wed. 4-6 pm Peralta Com. Collge Dist. Study (call for location) (Lecar)

12 Thu. noon-2 pm Speaker Series: Music in the Berkeley Schools (Safir)

Albany Library, Edith Stone Room

16 Mon. 7-9:30 pm Vista Community College Forum (Lecar)

North Berkeley Senior Center at Hearst & MLK Jr.Way

18 Wed. 9 am-noon Action Committee (Brubeck)

20-22 Fri., Sat., Sun. **ASUC Ballot Count**

21 Sat. **Earth Day**

25 Wed. 4-6 pm Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)

28 Sat. 9:30 am- 1 pm LWVBA Council Sunnyvale (Koshland)

S. F. Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Alviso Environmental Education Center

30 Mon. 7-9 pm Local Program Planning **UNIT** LWVBAE Office (Price)

May

2 Wed. 4-6:30 pm LWVBAE Board Meeting LWVBAE Office (Price)

7 Mon. 4-6 pm Education Committee (Lecar)

10 Thu. noon-2 pm Speaker Series: Citizen Input in Emeryville (Safir)

Mayor Nora Davis, at the newly refurbished Emeryville City Hall

14 Mon. 7:15 pm Environmental Concerns: Energy of the Future (Bansner)

Without Global Warming? Professor Wulf Kunkel

16 Wed. 9 am-noon Action Committee (Brubeck)

18-20 Fri., Sat., Sun. **LWVC Biennial Convention**, Los Angeles (Price)

30 Wed. 4-6 pm Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)

31 Thu. 5:30-9:30 pm **LWVBAE Annual Meeting** (Price)

Northbrae Community Church

