

# The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS  
of BERKELEY, ALBANY  
and EMERYVILLE



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## REUNION OF COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON RACISM

Over 40 highly energized people spent two hours together on Saturday, March 2, at the reunion of the Community Conversation on Confronting Racism, which was held last November.

After a few welcoming words, we broke into two circles, so people could briefly report on the effect of that original meeting on their lives. Then we joined as one and shared ideas for further involvement: join meetings of the NAACP, West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corp., South Berkeley Community Action Team (which addresses health issues); attend meetings of city commissions (specifically the Commission on Human Welfare) and promote diversity on city commissions; volunteer with community-based organizations, in the schools; attend the Unitarian Church to learn about their workshops; develop or participate in youth leadership training; bring this diversity conversation to the schools; become a mentor to youths at the Young Adult Project.

League members made their own pitches: *Helene Lecar* called on people to volunteer with the high school Writing Room project and collected names of those wanting to work on school issues. *Jean Safir* found many who wanted to work on overcoming neighborhood objections to low- and moderate-income housing. Others signed up to join the League in its visit of Juvenile Hall. Some joined with a small group meeting, led by *Pat Kuhl*, to continue the conversation started in November.

We were informed that the Berkeley Alliance (between city, schools, and the university) is involved in a large project to develop a Website that would connect all the available resources for youth with those who need them. There were invitations to view "The Color of Fear", a film on racism, an announcement of an Albany film series on diversity, and advice to use Berkeley Community Media.

Participants called for the minutes to go out to all those who couldn't be present, and for another reunion to be held in six months. The Berkeley Alliance and the Berkeley Dispute Resolution Service said they would like to work with the League to keep this effort going.

It appears that others share our desire to "confront racism and build a stronger community."

- *Lois Brubeck*, Action V.P.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

**Carol D. Barrett**, the new Director of Planning and Development for Berkeley, brings a strong commitment to serving the public interest to her new job. *Jean Safir*, our Housing Action chair, *Lois Brubeck*, Action VP, and I interviewed Ms. Barrett in early March.

We were particularly interested to learn how Barrett would address the lack of consistency in Berkeley decision making on planning and development issues. Almost every new construction proposal faces determined opposition by a small group of opponents. This opposition often trumps General Plan policies or other stated City priorities, as well as considerations of the larger good of the whole community.

Before the end of March, Barrett hopes that Berkeley will have adopted the complete new General Plan. She plans to encourage the Council and Planning Commission to set priorities among the many different policies contained within the Plan and to establish a 5-year or long-term program for carrying out the City's most urgent goals and policies. Future staff reports on new proposals would include an evaluation of how well it complies with General Plan principles and top City priorities.

Barrett sees her responsibility as a professional planner as working for the interests of the entire community. She considers broad citizen participation in decision making and a respectful hearing for the views of all citizens at all public meetings as essential to effective government. She observed that coalitions among citizen groups with common interests can be an effective way for a broad range of citizens to have a positive impact on government decisions. She drew our attention to organizations in Oregon and Florida known as "committees of a thousand friends," as good examples of such coalitions.

expand the housing choices available to its citizens, so that they will have suitable housing available in each stage of life and in a range of economic circumstances. These options should include modestly priced apartments for young people and housing suitable for frail or aging seniors and others, as well as single family homes.

Although the City and the University have different missions, they also have interests in common. Barrett pointed to improving transit access and increasing University-supplied housing as areas where the two organizations can work together effectively. She observes that UCB already has a lower rate of car usage than other UC campuses.

When asked about the Planning Department itself, Barrett briefly described the wide range of functions it performs and mentioned that the department is now operating with a staff vacancy rate of about 20%. The difficulty in attracting and retaining staff is linked to the size of the work load, the relatively low salaries compared with other Bay Area communities and the heavy demand for services by the public. Development permits have to be processed within a limited time period, according to State law, and residents often demand immediate attention to their service needs. These conflicting pressures on staff can undermine their commitment to stay with the City.

The arrival of an able and energetic new Planning and Development Director gives citizens who care about the good of the whole community a fresh opportunity to have a positive impact on the City's future. With the League's recently adopted and strong housing policies and our extensive array of good planning policies, we are primed to put new energy into these issues. If you would like to work on planning and housing issues, please call *Jean Safir*, via the office at 843-8824, or send an email to her at [jeansafir@att.net](mailto:jeansafir@att.net) and let her know your particular interests and concerns.

- Nancy Bickel

## SPEAKER SERIES

**Thursday, April 11, Noon to 2 pm**  
**Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room**  
**1247 Marin Avenue, Albany**

The speaker for the April 11 meeting will be **Toni Tullys**, Executive Director of **The Berkeley Alliance**, a unique nonprofit organization created by the City of Berkeley, the University of California at Berkeley, and the Berkeley Unified School District. Its mission is to strengthen collaboration among the institutional partners and develop solutions to address critical community issues. The Alliance provides a neutral meeting place, focused on collaboration, problem solving and learning.

Ms. Tullys began her career as a registered nurse and then shifted into community and government relations, where she has focused on community partnerships and public policy. She has an extensive background in communications, service-based marketing and public affairs, and more than 20 years of leadership experience.

The Albany library is located on Marin Avenue at Masonic, has wheelchair access and plenty of parking, in the lot and on the surrounding streets. 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.

**For the May 9 meeting** — same time and place — our speaker will be **Tom Vacar**, KTVU/ Fox 2's Consumer Editor. He will speak to us about consumer safety and advertising. There will be opportunity for discussion and for questions.

- *Janet Strothman*, Speaker Series Committee

## Primary Election Activities

The March 5 Primary Election was unique in the annals of the LWVBAE Speakers Bureau: veteran Leaguers had never seen such a short ballot!

During the month leading up to March 5, eight League speakers informed 10 community groups about the election. The groups they spoke to were: Northbrae Community and First Unitarian churches; Emeryville, South Berkeley and West Berkeley senior centers; Berkeley Townhouse and Strawberry Creek Lodge (both senior housing co-ops); Berkeley City Commons Club, and the Gray Panthers.

*Wilma Jordan* and *Barbara Lippard* explained why voting is important to the After School Learning Academy (4th & 5th graders) of the South Berkeley YMCA. In addition, a presentation of the Pros & Cons was done for League members. Other speakers were *Nancy Bickel*, *Eloise Bodine*, *Jane Coulter*, *Helene Lecar*, *Doris Nassiry*, and *Fran Packard*.

- *Eloise Bodine*, Speakers Bureau Chair

In addition, we distributed many *Pros and Cons* on state ballot measures in English and Spanish, and *Easy Reading Voter Guides* in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese and Russian. We co-sponsored regional candidates' meetings in Oakland and had videos of them, and also a videotape of a program about Measure K, shown on Berkeley Community Media.

*Mary Lou Breiman* kept our section of the Smartvoter Website ([www.smartvoter.com](http://www.smartvoter.com)) up-to-date. For distribution of literature and other help, thanks to *Polly Amrein*, *Karen Carlson-Olson*, *Jane Coulter*, *Minnie Favre*, *Wilma Jordan*, *Helene Lecar*, *Charlotte Lichterman*, *Ardath Miller*, *Doris Nassiry*, *Karen Nelson*, *Allie Norton*, *Ginette Polak*, *Marj Rubinow*, *Jean Safir* and *Janet Strothman*.

- *Phoebe Watts*, Election Services V.P.

## ALBANY FORUM ON SCHOOL FUNDING AND CANDIDATES DEBATE

On February 23, approximately 150 people came together at Albany's Ocean View Elementary School to hear Kevin Gordon, Executive Director of the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), paint a bold picture of a very complicated subject — how our public K-12 schools are funded.

Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, local districts have become critically dependent on direct State funding. Districts not only have to struggle with the level of funding — California per pupil spending is well below the national average — but they must also deal with the uncertainty of that funding.

Even those districts without management problems flounder. School districts must pass their budgets in June for their September programs and staff needs, without knowing what monies they will receive from State budgets which may not be set until July.

A debate among the three Assembly District candidates followed the forum. Not surprisingly, most of the questions from the floor were on education. Obviously, the organizers were off to a good start in raising awareness and putting education on the front burner, which was exactly their intent.

Co-sponsoring with all Albany site PTAs, the Albany Teachers Association, the Albany Education Foundation and SchoolCARE, the League was well represented. *Karen Carlson-Olson* was instrumental in organizing the event; *Jane Coulter* moderated the candidates forum, *Ruth Ganong* and *Joyce Jackson* sorted questions and *Jean Safir* was timekeeper.

The organizers folded the community into the event: Albany Boy Scouts helped with

parking, the Albany High School baseball team sold refreshments, the Albany Middle School leadership class gathered questions from the audience for the candidates and an Albany High School student taped the entire event.

- *Lois Brubeck*, Action V.P.

## BOARD ACTION SUMMARY

Past President *Jo Ann Price* presented plans for the State League's 2003 Convention, May 15 to 18, to be held in Oakland at the Downtown Marriott.

The Board approved a \$61,000 budget for recommendation to the members at the Annual Meeting.

The Board will recommend dropping the LWVBAE position on local income tax to the members at the Annual Meeting.

The Board directed *Helene Lecar* to object in writing to the EIR process for the new Vista College building, to the effect that public notice is inadequate and the review period is too short for meaningful public response.

- *Jane Coulter*, for *Jane Barrett*, Secretary

## BAY AREA LEAGUE NEWS

The LWVBA Convention this year will be in Oakland at 230 Frank Ogawa Plaza (new Nonprofit Center next to City Hall.) The meeting will be from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm on Saturday, May 4, 2002. Registration will be \$10 FOR EACH LEAGUE. The agenda isn't available yet, but please call *Nancy Bickel* if you might be interested in attending: 526-4055; she will have the agenda packet by the tenth of April.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

### Coming April 8:

Longtime League member *Susan Schwartz* will speak and show slides on the challenges of creek restoration and urban runoff pollution at the LWVBAE Environmental Concerns meeting Monday, April 8, 2002, 1340 Arch St. (at Rose), Berkeley. As head of Friends of Five Creeks, a hands-on citizens group that seeks to protect and restore the watersheds of North Berkeley, Albany, Kensington, and south El Cerrito and Richmond, Susan's work ranges from writing grants to wielding a pick and shovel to hopping, dressed as a frog, in the "How Berkeley Can You Be?" parade.

### The Ongoing Fight for Eastshore State Park:

The history and status of the EASTSHORE STATE PARK was presented by civic leader Norman LaForce to LWVBAE Environmental Concerns group February 11. LaForce's longtime efforts to save and restore the East Bay waterfront followed the leads of League member *Sylvia McLaughlin* and others who first campaigned to stop Bay fill (Save the Bay, since 1961) and provide public access to the shoreline — efforts that resulted in the Eastshore State Park.

Forty years of dedicated work by individuals and organizations focused on four key goals: 1) Halt further fill of the San Francisco Bay; 2) Stop commercial development of privately owned but undeveloped filled lands along the shoreline; 3) Public acquisition of privately held lands and creation of the Eastshore State Park; 4) Provision of public access to the Bay and recreation, and preservation of sensitive upland wildlife that land-filling had undermined and of some of the last remaining wetlands in the Bay.

Public hearings on planners' preferred future plans address issues that include attempts to bring back seasonal wetlands and tidelands, and to restore valuable wildlife habitat for rare and endangered species and as vital feeding grounds for birds, raptors and other wildlife. For more information, contact Mr. LaForce, Chair of the Sierra Club East Bay Public Lands Committee.

La Force has documented the efforts to date with the help of a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy in a manuscript entitled, Creating the Eastshore State Park - An Activist History. The volume is available for \$20 cost from Norman LaForce via e-mail: [nlaforce@ix.netcom.com](mailto:nlaforce@ix.netcom.com), or by phone: (510) 526-4362. Information about the Park may be obtained at [www.eastshorestatepark.org](http://www.eastshorestatepark.org)

For those who missed the March 21 workshop on the "preferred park concept," there will be several other meetings you can still catch: April 8, 7 pm, at the Berkeley Waterfront and Parks/Recreation Commission, H's Lordships Restaurant, and April 22, 8 pm, at the Albany City Council, to hear the park planning team report on progress in developing a final plan.

- *Gail Schickele*

## DONATIONS

### to the General Fund

Anon (for having Pros & Cons)

*Peggy Casey*

*Elizabeth De Velbiss*

*Louise Larson*

*Doris Maslach*

*Allie Norton*

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are pleased to welcome *Sara Armstrong* as a new member.

We are saddened to report the death of *Joan Kasten*, who was a member of our League for close to 30 years and served as our auditor until recently.

- *Ginette Polak*, Membership Director

### Virginia Laurence Memorial

A memorial will be held for *Virginia Lee Laurence* on Tuesday, May 14, at the Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room, from noon to 2 pm. All who knew *Virginia* are welcome to come and share memories of her.

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

## 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: <i>Susan Schwartz</i> on<br>Creek Restoration | 1340 Arch Street | <i>Bansner, 849-2154</i>    |
| 9 - 10 - 11 | 8:30a-8:30p | <b>ASUC ELECTION</b> | UC Berkeley Campus  |                  | <i>J. Coulter, 524-0525</i> |
| 11          | Thurs.      | Noon                 | Speaker Series: The Berkeley Alliance                                 |                  | <i>Strothman, 841-2837</i>  |
|             |             |                      | Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany      |                  |                             |
| 18          | Thurs.      | 7:30p                | Action Committee  | 1419 Grant St.   | <i>Brubeck, 526-5139</i>    |

## May

- |    |        |             |  |                        |                            |
|----|--------|-------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1  | Wed.   | 4-6p        | Board Meeting  | LWVBAE Office          | <i>Bickel, 526-4055</i>    |
| 3  | Fri.   | 4pm         | Deadline for May-June VOTER                                      | LWVBAE Office          | <i>Safir, 524-9088</i>     |
| 4  | Sat.   | 9:30-12:30  | LWV-Bay Area Convention  |                        | <i>Bickel, 526-4055</i>    |
|    |        |             | 230 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland                                   |                        |                            |
| 9  | Thurs. | Noon        | Speaker Series: Tom Vacar, Consumer Safety                       |                        | <i>Light, 849-3834</i>     |
|    |        |             | Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany |                        |                            |
| 13 | Mon    | 7:15p       | Environmental Concerns: Planning Programs for next year          |                        |                            |
|    |        |             |  | 1340 Arch Street       | <i>Bansner, 849-2154</i>   |
| 14 | Tue.   | Noon        | <i>Virginia Laurence</i> Memorial                                | Albany Public Library, | <i>Strothman, 841-2837</i> |
|    |        |             | Edith Stone Room, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany                        |                        |                            |
| 16 | Thurs. | 7:30p       | Action Committee   | 1419 Grant St.         | <i>Brubeck, 526-5139</i>   |
| 18 | Sat.   | 9:30a-1:30p | <b>LWVBAE ANNUAL MEETING</b>                                     |                        | <i>K. Nelson, 525-1673</i> |
|    |        |             | Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda                      |                        |                            |

## June

- |       |           |  |                |                         |
|-------|-----------|--|----------------|-------------------------|
| 15-18 | Sat.-Tue. | National LWV Convention  | Miami, Florida | <i>Bickel, 526-4055</i> |
|       |           | (If you are interested in attending as a delegate, call Nancy Bickel.) |                |                         |

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### FEEDBACK WANTED

If you have comments on anything, or everything, you read (or don't read) in the *VOTER*, please send them to me, the editor, or to *Nancy Bickel*, the president. You can mail them to either of us in care of the League office, or you can send them email to either of us:

*jeansafir@att.net* or *nkickel@locrian.com*. We really want to know how we're doing. Thanks.

