



The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS
of BERKELEY, ALBANY and EMERYVILLE

PRESIDENT: Jinky Gardner

APRIL 2007

EDITORS: Alice Kisch and Jane Brandes

THE GREENING OF THE BAY

An LWVBAE Environmental Concerns Report

In December, AC Transit's Jamie Levin discussed HyRoad hydrogen fuel cell buses and education programs that include a curriculum for Bay Area schools. The agency's three state-of-the-art, zero-emission fuel cell buses in the testing phase reached speeds up to 75 miles per hour and handled 18% grades. In actual service, the buses are delivering greater than twice the energy efficiency of diesel.

"This is an extraordinary technology," Levin said. Using hydrogen instead of fossil fuels could make the air cleaner, decrease dependence on foreign oil and reduce global warming, he said.

Hydrogen isn't toxic and doesn't pollute. Fuel cell buses don't burn the fuel they use. Instead, they combine hydrogen with oxygen to produce water and electricity. The only tailpipe emission is water vapor.

Like diesel and gasoline, hydrogen is flammable and must be handled carefully, but Levin said a hydrogen tank leak poses less of a threat than a comparable leak in a gasoline tank because hydrogen is 14 times lighter than air and dissipates rapidly.

Hydrogen can be stored for long periods and used for longer distance travel – largely because hydrogen-powered vehicles can be refueled in a matter of minutes, rather than the many hours it takes to recharge the batteries in battery-powered electric vehicles.

Chevron Corporation's new energy station at AC Transit's Oakland Seminary Division produces enough hydrogen from natural gas to fuel the three fuel cell buses, along with a fleet of light-duty fuel cell cars. The Oakland facility has the potential to expand to match the demand of a growing fleet. As the technology develops, the Department of Energy believes a target price of \$3 per kilogram (roughly equivalent in energy to one gallon of gasoline) is achievable. Since fuel-cell vehicles are about twice as efficient as most internal-combustion-engine vehicles, at \$3/kilogram, the cost per mile would become competitive with gasoline priced at \$1.50/gallon.

AC Transit's program has attracted worldwide attention. Government and industry officials from four continents have toured the fueling and maintenance facilities with an eye toward replication at other sites. The HyRoad Learning Center offers visitors the chance to observe the station in real-time operation, and to learn how hydrogen is produced, stored and used to power fuel cells. In partnership with Lawrence Hall of Science at UC Berkeley and the Schatz Energy Research Center at Humboldt State University, AC Transit is developing a 10-week science education curriculum for high school classrooms around the country. This curriculum gives students hands-on experience building, testing and using fuel cells to generate electricity.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Usually you hear me talk about things the League is doing: The civics education contest we'll be taking to the schools. (We're moving forward on the plans.) The universal health care legislation. (A group of us went to Sacramento to lobby in February and we've joined a coalition in active support.) Interviews with newly elected officials. (In progress as I write this. Look for reports in future Voters.)

But this month I want to tell you about something we didn't do.

We didn't write the Berkeley City Council in support of the Brower Center project. The Brower Center is a proposed set of twin towers to be built on Oxford Street between Kittridge Street and Allston Way where the city-owned parking lot sits now. The buildings would have commercial spaces and arts venues and housing for a large number of low-income seniors and disabled people. We have many positions that would support this type of use, and at the past Action Committee meeting *Nancy Bickel* accepted the assignment to research the situation and draft a letter. As she did the research, it came out that there are serious concerns about the financing. Since we hadn't been following the project we didn't have reliable information on which to base our opinion, so your Board voted to take no action.

We were equally unprepared to act on other items which came to our attention. To correct this situation, we need to reactivate our Observer Corps.

In past years, members regularly attended public meetings such as city council, the school board, housing and planning commissions. Lots of decisions that affect us all are made at these meetings but, more importantly, the Observer Corps would find out about projects as they develop and keep us informed at the same time. We would thus be ready to write letters and testify in support of our positions. Our representatives need to hear the League voice - it's often the only rational one!

This last shouldn't need saying, but, of course!, the Observer Corps should cover Albany and Emeryville, not just Berkeley. This would be an important service to the League, and it could be fun.

Jinky Gardner, President

The VOTER

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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The VOTER is free to members, \$10/year for non-members. Current and past issues of the VOTER are posted on our website: <http://lwvbae.org/>.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the active and informed participation of citizens in government and influences

BROWN BAG LUNCHEON: HOUSING THE HOMELESS

On Tuesday, April 3, 2007, from 12:15-1:30 p.m., the public is invited to attend the third monthly presentation in the 2007 Brown Bag Luncheon Series in the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Public Library, located at Marin and Masonic Avenues, Albany, California. The topic is "Housing the Homeless and Low-Income Populations in Berkeley"; the speaker will be Stephen Barton, Ph.D., who is the City of Berkeley Housing Director and a seasoned expert in the area of public housing. Bring your brown bag lunch and your questions; hot drinks and information will be provided. The doors the Edith Stone Room will open at 12 noon. For additional information call *Luanne Rogers* at the LWVBAE Office, (510) 843-8824.

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LWVC CONVENTION 2007: DOLORES HUERTA

Dolores Huerta, activist and co-founder with César Chávez of the United Farm Workers, will be the keynote speaker at the LWVC Convention to be held May 18-20, 2007 in Bakersfield.

Huerta is best known for her activism on behalf of farm workers, which eventually led to the UFW's right to collective bargaining. Of particular interest to Leaguers is her dedication to the promotion of women to leadership roles. She has been arrested twenty-four times for non-violent, peaceful union activities and has received countless awards, including the Outstanding Labor Leader Award bestowed upon her in 1984 by the California state senate. In 1993 Dolores Huerta was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

If any of you have caught an inkling of the excitement that is the LWVC Convention, join the rest of us who will be attending as delegates. At Convention, we pass the budget and vote in the slate of officers for the next two-year term AND, most importantly, choose the areas that the League will put the most energy into through study, education of the public and lobbying the legislature. Call the LWVBAE office at (510) 843-8824 for more details, and let us know of your interest.

ENERGY BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

The University of California-Berkeley, in partnership with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will lead a \$500-million research effort over 10 years which will be funded by the global energy firm British Petroleum (BP). The purpose of this project is to develop new sources of energy and to reduce the impact of energy consumption on the environment.

The new research endeavor is the Energy Biosciences Institute (EBI), which has been referred to as "our generation's moon shot". The EBI will initially explore the production of biofuels – turning plants and plant materials, including corn, field waste, switchgrass and algae, into transportation fuels. The Institute will be unique in both its scale and its partnership with BP, the academic world and others in the private sector.

The EBI will also be dedicated to long-term research into the production of alternative fuels, converting fossil fuels to energy with less environmental damage, maximizing oil extraction from existing wells in environmentally sensitive ways and finding ways to store or sequester carbon so that it does not get into the atmosphere. Tentatively planned to house the Helios

Project (a facility model to create effective approaches for the exploitation of solar energy) and the EBI will be a research facility located on the border between LBNL and the campus.

The Environmental Concerns meeting on Monday, April 9, 2007, 7:30-9:00 p.m., will host a representative of the LBNL team who will discuss EBI, including safeguards to the University. The meeting will take place at 1340 Arch Street (corner of Rose), Berkeley.

Carol Stone, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns

CALIFORNIA STATE SECURE YOUTH FACILITIES ARE IN TROUBLE

In January 2003 a lawsuit was filed in Alameda County Court against the California Youth Authority (CYA), now named the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), claiming that CYA failed to provide adequate care and effective treatment programs to its incarcerated youthful offenders, called wards. In late 2003 expert reports were released that evaluated the programs and procedures in the CYA. The experts found DJJ to be incompetent in every area reviewed: the safety of the facilities, the quality of education and health care, and the efficacy of the mental health, substance abuse, sex offender and other treatment programs. The system was not simply failing to rehabilitate; it was demonstrably inflicting damage on incarcerated youth, who were often discharged with increased criminal sophistication, entrenched gang involvement and exacerbated mental illness.

In November 2004, Governor Schwarzenegger agreed to plaintiffs' demand that the state develop and implement remedial plans in the areas covered by the reports. Since the settlement was reached in 2004, however, little progress has been made towards reformation.

The reforms will be expensive and difficult to bring about. The Legislative Analysts's Office (LAO) estimates that these reforms will cost an additional \$100 million annually once fully implemented. There is, as well, a culture among the DJJ correctional counselors of resistance to change.

For more on this issue, watch for an article on the LWVC website www.ca.lwv.org and attend the August Brown Bag Luncheon.

Pat Kuhi, LWVC Off-Board Program
Director for Juvenile Justice

THE GREENING OF THE BAY

(continued from p.1)

To ride a zero-emission fuel cell bus, check the scheduled passenger service information at www.actransit.org and take the HyRoad link. To inquire about facility tours for a company or organization, call (510) 891-7245 or email fuelcell@actransit.org.

January's Environmental Concerns program presented Thimmakka Certified Green Restaurants (TCGR) Founder and Executive Director Ritu Primlani. TCGR conducts environmental outreach to restaurants in the San Francisco Bay Area; Miami, Florida; and Vancouver, British Columbia. Initiated in 2001, TCGR partners with government and private organizations to implement 60 environmental measures that include solid waste minimization, water and energy conservation and pollution prevention. These environmental changes can increase efficiency and save money because they produce less air pollution, reduce health care costs, use less paper, save trees, reduce our landfill fees and use less toxic chemicals at their facilities.

Businesses are among the greatest consumers and producers of resources, Primlani said. Restaurants consume more energy per square foot than any other retail industry and they consume exorbitant amounts of water because of the high number of clientele and their concomitant pre-cooking and post-cooking requirements. Restaurants generate an enormous amount of solid waste. Food waste alone accounts for 16% of the solid waste that goes into California's landfills and 40% of the solid waste in Vancouver's landfills. Generally, restaurants can divert 83% of their solid waste into recycling and composting, she said.

In the past five years the project has diverted 11,204.58 tons (the equivalent of 3,395.3 Asian elephants each weighing 3.3 tons) of solid waste from the landfill; the initiative has saved 10,844,560.5 gallons of water (sufficient to fill 44 Olympic-sized swimming pools); has saved 940,530 Kilowatt hours of energy; prevented 472,990.695 pounds of carbon dioxide from release into the atmosphere and helped 104 restaurants save more than a combined \$883,000.

TCGR awards include the San Francisco Bay Area Community Hero award, the California Governor's Economic and Environmental Leadership Award and the U.S. EPA's Environmental Achievement Award. For information and a listing of restaurants, you may log on to <http://www.thimmakka.org>, or telephone (510) 655-5566, or email thimmakka@thimmakka.org.

February's program expanded the "Greening" dialogue with Leila Khatapoush of Sustainable Berkeley discussing Berkeley's Office of Energy and Sustainable Development and how Bay Area businesses become "certified green" by complying with environmental regulations and taking steps to conserve energy and water, reduce waste and prevent pollution. "Any small business under 50 kilowatt demand can get a free audit," Khatapoush said.

Sustainable Berkeley provides leadership and practical solutions to help businesses, residents and city agencies create a healthy physical environment, a more livable community and a prosperous local economy. The program is compliant with the City of Berkeley Goals of Zero Waste, or a 75% waste reduction by 2010; and the G mandated 80% reduction in Green House Gas emissions by 2050. See www.sustainableberkeley.org for further information.

Sustainable Berkeley works with the Bay Area Green Business Program developed to reduce hazardous and solid waste generation, conserve resources and prevent pollution. The program is coordinated by the Association of Bay Area Governments, which represents the region's nine counties and 101 cities. For more information and a list of green businesses go to www.greenbiz.abag.ca.gov or call (510) 464-7961.

On Monday, March 12, two staff members of EarthJustice spoke about their legal activities in the Bay Area.

Environmental Concerns meetings are held on the second Monday of the month, September through May, at 7:30 p.m., 1340 Arch Street (corner of Rose Street) in Berkeley. For information, contact Carol Stone at seastone01@comcast.net or call her at (510) 549-0959.

Gail Schickele, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!!!

We need more Leaguers to help us keep approximately thirty sites in Berkeley stocked with Voter Registration Forms. Please participate in this important work – the more of you who join this vital enterprise, the fewer sites each person will need to cover and the more voters we'll have on our voter rolls! Interested parties should call *Claudia Berger* at (510) 524-1920. Thank you!

BOARD BRIEFS

By email on February 25, 2007, President *Jinky Gardner* polled LWVBAE Board members about Police Accountability Legislation which State Assemblyman Mark Leno was introducing to overturn the recent Supreme Court ruling and re-open Police Review Commission meetings to the public. All Board members responded promptly and voted by email (10 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstain) to join Oakland and San Diego Leagues in urging LWVC to support the legislation.

At its regular meeting on March 1, 2007, the Board concurred with the recommendation from *Nancy Bickel* that LWVBAE not become involved in the controversy over the Brower Center/Oxford Plaza project. Despite strong LWVBAE positions in favor of more affordable housing in Berkeley, LWVBAE has not been following the details of this project during the last four years, especially its financial aspects.

The Board accepted the recommendations from the Budget Committee and voted to recommend to the membership the Proposed Budget for 2007/08 as presented. Also approved for presentation to the membership at the Annual Meeting were the recommendations from the Local Program Planning meeting: Retain all local support positions, begin no new local study, emphasize our Civics Education action, reactivate the "observer" program and provide education about Instant Runoff Voting for the 2008 election.

Ginette Polak
Substituting as Secretary

ADDITIONAL FEBRUARY DONATIONS

To the LWVBAE General Fund

Elihu Harris
Marie Lagarde
Lloyd and Lassie Ulman
in memory of *Eva Brecher*

To the LWVB Foundation

Keith Carson
Marie Lagarde
David Richardson

Many thanks for remembering your League.
Louetta Erlin
Donations Secretary

ESTATE PLANNING

The Boards of the Berkeley League of Women Voters Foundation and the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville welcome the inclusion of the League in your estate planning.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE BOARD 2006-2007

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LWVBAE OFFICE ORIENTATION

Orientation for League office volunteers will be held on Thursday, April 5, 2007 in the League office from 6-7 p.m., before the scheduled Board meeting. Call *Jane Barrett*, VP Administration, at (510) 845-8055 to let her know of your interest. We look forward to having you on board!

NEW MEMBERS

OUR WARMEST WELCOME
TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER:

Juanita Peterson

RECEPTION FOR NEW MEMBERS

All LWVBAE members are invited and encouraged to attend a Reception for New Members at the home of *Karen Nelson*, 150 Montrose Avenue, Berkeley, on Sunday, March 25, 2007, 2-4 p.m.

LWVBAE ANNUAL MEETING

The 2007 Annual LWVBAE Meeting will take place on Thursday, May 10, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, in Berkeley. The featured speaker will be the new Alameda County Registrar of Voters, and the program includes dinner and a business meeting. Dinner is not mandatory, but if you plan to have dinner, reservations are a must and can be made at the LWVBAE office, (510) 843.8824.



LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS
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CALENDAR

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IT'S EASY TO JOIN The LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS

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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 extent allowed by law.

MARCH

20 TUES. 7:30-9:30 pm	Civics Education Action Committee	<i>B. Chapman, 527-0827</i>
22 THURS. 7:30 pm	Action Committee, LWVBAE office	<i>H. Lecar, 549-9719</i>
25 SUN. 2-4 pm	Reception for New Members (see p. 5), 150 Montrose Road	<i>K. Nelson, 525-1673</i> <i>K. Lim, 701-1704</i>
26 MON. 1:30 pm	Health Committee, LWVBAE office	<i>U. Rolfe, 841-2239</i>

APRIL

3 TUE. 12-2 pm	Brown Bag Luncheon Series (see p. 2), Albany Library's Edith Stone Room	<i>L. Rogers, 559-1006</i>
5 THURS. 6-7 pm	Office Orientation, LWVBAE office	<i>J. Barrett, 845-8055</i>
5 THURS. 7-9 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE office	<i>J. Gardner, 548-5292</i>
6 FRI. 5 pm	Deadline for May-June VOTER	<i>A. Kisch, 985-0651</i>
9 MON. 7:30-9 pm	Environmental Concerns (see p. 3), 1340 Arch Street	<i>C. Stone, 549-0959</i>
17 TUES. 7:30-9:30 pm	Civics Education Action Committee	<i>B. Chapman, 527-0827</i>
26 THURS. 7:30 pm	Action Committee, 1419 Grant Street	<i>H. Lecar, 549-9719</i>

MAY

1 TUE. 12-2 pm	Brown Bag Luncheon Series, Albany Library's Edith Stone Room	<i>L. Rogers, 559-1006</i>
3 THURS. 7-9 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE office	<i>J. Gardner, 548-5292</i>
10 THURS. 5-8:30 pm	Annual Meeting, Northbrae Community Church, LWVBAE Office, 843-8824 941 The Alameda (see p. 5)	
14 MON. 7:30-9 pm	Environmental Concerns, 1340 Arch Street	<i>C. Stone, 549-0959</i>
15 TUES. 7:30-9:30 pm	Civics Education Action Committee	<i>B. Chapman, 527-0827</i>
18-20 Friday-Sunday	LWVC Convention in Bakersfield (see p. 3)	<i>J. Gardner, 548-5292</i>
28 MON.	MEMORIAL DAY - LWVBAE office closed	
31 THURS. 7:30 pm	Action Committee, 1419 Grant Street	<i>H. Lecar, 549-9719</i>