

# THE V O T E R

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

### OF BERKELEY, ALBANY, AND EMERYVILLE

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Editor: Bob Hawley

### Public Forum on the Future of Medicare: A Report

“Medicare in the Next Millennium” was the title of a well-attended forum sponsored by the Leagues of Women Voters of Berkeley/Albany/Emeryville, Eden Area, Livermore-Amador Valley, Oakland, and Piedmont on Saturday, February 20, 1999, at the Oakland City Hall. The panel was moderated by Joan A. Ward, Health Care Consultant to LWVC. She expertly engaged the panelists: Thomas S.

Bodenheimer, M.D., Professor of Family and Community Medicine, UCSF School of Medicine; Lonnie P. Bristow, M.D., Past President of the American Medical Association; and Dorothy P. Rice, Emeritus Professor, Institute for Health and Aging, UCSF.

Professor Rice provided the background information as well as her view of the future of Medicare. She stated that since Medicare was enacted in 1965, the following has happened, among other things:

- 97+% of the elderly are covered, though long-term care and outpatient drugs are not.
- Beneficiaries have access to “the best”.
- Poverty rate would be four times higher without Medicare.
- Administration costs of Medicare are less than 2% of the total program, compared with 11.9% for HMOs.
- The quality of life for all elderly has improved, but particularly for the poor.

- In 2008 Medicare will exceed its revenues if nothing is changed.
- In 2011 the first of the Baby Boomers will become 65, greatly increasing the numbers eligible for Medicare.

What can be done to improve the outlook for Medicare? Professor Rice said many options are available. First, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 set up a Bipartisan Commission to propose Medicare reform. Its report is due shortly. Some of the

following may be proposed:

- Budget cuts in Medicare to get doctors and hospitals to cut costs;
- More attention to curbing fraud and abuse;
- Eligibility age raised - likely to 67;
- Possible “buy-ins” at an earlier age - say 62;
- Raising payroll taxes for Part A;
- Raising premiums for Part B;
- raising “sin” taxes (e.g., cigarettes, alcohol).

<p><b>Don't Miss Out!!</b></p> <p><b>ASUC Elections Coming Up Fast!!</b></p> <p>Tuesday, April 6 through Thursday, April 8</p> <p>Plus: Ballot counting days April 16-April 18</p> <p>You still have a chance to sign up for a 3-hour shift to work either on campus overseeing students' voting or in Eshleman Hall helping to keep the whole operation on track.</p> <p>If you are available, PLEASE CALL <i>Sherry Smith</i> at 548-1769.</p> <p><i>-Lassie Ulman, VP Community Services</i></p>
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Dr. Bristow expressed his opinion on Medicare reform which is not necessarily that of the AMA. He believes that what is special about American medicine is the relationship between the patient and the doctor. Medicare needs true reform because things have changed and flaws exist, though they were not intended. He wants “the nation to save Medicare and not just throw it a life preserver.” He proposed a five-point plan: choice, voice, cost-sharing, competition, and individual contribution. -(continued on Page 10)

## President's Message

### Community Service...Studies...Action

These are the three pillars of our program. Many people are familiar with the League's work on voters service - our pros & cons, candidates' forums, and speakers' bureau. This is one piece of our community service program, which includes, for example, our current TV series "City Conversations;" our participation in the ASUC election; and many other community activities.

But there is more to the League's program: there are the studies conducted at all levels of League, and the action we take based on our positions. These two aspects of League are not well understood or appreciated, in part because how we conduct these activities is quite unique. Unlike most advocacy organizations, we do not just act. We first study, discuss, reach consensus, develop positions, ask all our members for support of those positions -- and then act. Moreover, over the years we have developed positions on a multiplicity of social policies, ranging from domestic policies, such as child care and health, environmental protection and voting rights to international issues such as arms control, trade and the U.N. These are just our national positions. In addition, we have a comparable array of positions at the state, Bay Area and local levels, providing us with support for action on a wide range of policies and issues.

Why engage in this complex and time-consuming process? Just as our voters services are distinctive for their non-partisan, comprehensive coverage of candidates and issues, so our studies and advocacy activities are special because they are based on information, discussion and consensus among all our members, as well as the judgment of our Boards at all levels. Last year at a national convention, League members adopted a two-year program extending our efforts to "make democracy work" in our communities. Next month at a statewide convention, local leagues, having completed a study on Juvenile Justice and an update of our position on the Initiative & Referendum, will consider and adopt new statewide studies and/or issues for emphasis. The Bay Area League last year initiated a two-year study of local decisions that have regional impacts. In June, at our own annual meeting, we will review all of our local positions and consider continuing and/or adopting local studies. Next month's *Voter* will contain our local positions as well as proposals for new studies for your consideration.

Meanwhile, we can take action on issues that affect any of our existing positions at all levels of League. In this session of Congress, the LWVUS will give priority to campaign finance reform. The LWVC's priorities include state finance, women's reproductive rights, and welfare reform among others. LWVBAE action for the coming year will be determined at our annual meeting.

From LWVBAE to LWVUS, you, our members, are the foundation and the source of the strength that enables us to speak with pride, "On behalf of the League of Women Voters . . ." And when the League acts, there is usually a strong and positive response. We may not prevail, but our views, given the firm foundation our studies provide, are always taken seriously.

So if you are asked "what does the League do?" remember the three pillars: Community Service, Study, and Action. Finally, consider where you can contribute, and please join us. **-Doris**

### "City Conversations"

Our regular series of television interviews with Berkeley city officials continues in April with two programs:

- **Neighborhood Services:** We will show you how our senior centers, fire stations, recreation centers are now serving as neighborhood service centers. City Manager Jim Keene will describe the services and Deputy City Manager Weldon Rucker will discuss their budget implications.
- **Housing and Urban Design:** We will be looking at various kinds of housing developments in Berkeley, including public housing, and discussing the city's housing program with Planning Director Liz Epstein.

These "city conversations" aim to introduce citizens to the people and programs that make up city government. They involve both on-site views of city services, and studio interviews with city department heads. Our interviewer is *Doris Nassiry*, and our video crew includes *Phoebe Watts*, *Nancy Bickel*, *Masako Yamada*, *Lois Brubeck*, *Doris Fine* and *Carol Voisin*.

Watch us every Tuesday at 6:30 pm on Channel 25 just before the Berkeley City Council meeting, or catch the repeat broadcast Sunday mornings at 8:30 am. Copies of the video tapes are also available for loan from our office. Your feedback is most welcome!

## Board Briefs

At the March 3 meeting, the board: accepted by consent, the minutes of the February 3 board meeting and the final financial statement for January, 1999; amended and approved the proposed revised action policy regarding official League representation and the role of league observers; passed a motion to approve the edited and amended local support positions for presentation to the membership at the annual meeting; were reminded to prepare recommendations for LWVC awards at the State Convention and to use the Sign-In sheet when coming into the office; agreed to change the date of the April board meeting to Wednesday, March 31; discussed the role of libraries as a source of social services; heard plans for monitoring the April 6-8 ASUC election; discussed the February 20 Medicare forum, a possible fund-raiser luncheon and the annual meeting; heard about Emery Village and Emeryville city hall, and; heard that Berkeley's master plan is on track;

- learned that Jean Matsuura of LWVBA has been appointed to LWVUS Nominating Committee.

-*Eleanor Cox*, Secretary pro-tem

## The League At Work



Members of the LWVBAE Board discuss plans for future programs at a social gathering. From l to r: *Lenora Young*, *Jean Safir*, and *Yvonne San Jule*.

## LWVBAE Joins with Oakland League for Welfare Reform Update Meeting

The Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville League has been invited to join the Oakland League in sponsoring a forum on the current status of implementing last year's welfare reform legislation. Invited speakers include Assemblywoman Dion Aroner, who helped draft the state legislation, and Keith Carson, former Alameda County Supervisor. They will address issues of jobs, transportation, child care, mental health and the "safety net."

DATE: **Saturday, April 17, 1999**

TIME: **10 am to noon**

PLACE: **Oakland Public Library,  
Dimond Branch, 3565 Fruitvale Avenue**

There is ample parking in the immediate area, but let's car pool. If you plan to drive or if you want a ride, please call me at 524-9088 and we'll figure out the mechanics.

-*Jean Safir*, Program VP

## LWVC Convention, May 14- 16

We will be sending 8 delegates to the LWVC convention in San Jose. At this meeting local leagues adopt a program and budget for the following 2 years, and vote for a new Board of Directors.

Our league has proposed a restudy of our education position, expanding it to include preschool and community colleges. We plan to lobby for adoption of this position - convening caucuses, preparing flyers, and working the aisles.

You can learn all about the convention on the LWVC webpage at [ca.lwv.org/lwvonly](http://ca.lwv.org/lwvonly). Before and during the convention there will also be a special webpage with the latest news about what is happening. That site is [pw1.netcom.com/barbward/conv99.htm](http://pw1.netcom.com/barbward/conv99.htm). Log on and follow the league in action.

-*Doris Fine*

## Donors Through February

General Fund  
*Lois Brubeck*  
*Elizabeth DeVelbiss*  
*Susan Duncan*  
*Charlotte and Martin Lichterman*  
*Kitty and Hugh McLean*  
*Margaret and Thomas Tenney*  
*Ruth Stimson*  
*Paul Warner*

Foundation  
*Phyllis Clement\**  
 Katherine B. Dunlap  
*Grace Geyer Smith*

\* In memory of Judith Riggs

A grateful "Thank You" to all our contributors!

## Membership

A cordial welcome to new member *Hugh McLean*. We hope to see you at our "Getting to Know You" meeting on Saturday, March 20, in the League office. *Hugh's* membership brings the number of our men members to 53 or 15% of our membership roll. *Kitty McLean* has been a member and supporter of LWVB and LWVBAE since March of 1968. We greatly appreciate their loyalty to the League.

The San Francisco Chronicle recently heralded the impending return of our member *I. Michael Heyman*, chancellor of UCB 1980 to 1990, to the Bay Area. *Heyman*, former Law Professor, was named Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute in our nation's capital in 1994, the first nonscientist to hold that post. Professor *Heyman*, who began his career as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren, is quoted as saying he hopes to teach a class at Boalt Hall School of Law and resume his involvement in regional planning. LWVBAE welcomes you home, Professor *Heyman*, and hopes we may have the opportunity to take advantage of your expertise in our mutual concerns. (Attention: League program planners.)

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of our member *Judith Metzger Riggs*, who died on Friday, February 5. She is survived by her husband, James, her daughters Katherine and Nancy, sister Lenore, brother Mortimer and three grandchildren. Memorial services were held. *Judith* had been a member of LWVB/LWVBAE since 1969.

## A Big Show

The Berkeley Arts Mini-Festival #3, March 1-31, at the Nexus Art Gallery, 2701 Eighth Street, Berkeley is produced by our office Administrative Assistant Linda Carothers and fellow artists. For information: call 533-9342 or 849-0106  
 -*Eleanor Cox*, Membership Chair

## Community Service in Action

LWVBAE was asked to moderate a discussion on February 21 about Temple Beth El's proposal for a new center to be built on a vacant lot that extends between Spruce and Virginia streets in north Berkeley.

This meeting provided an opportunity for community and Temple representatives to present information about the project and to allow neighbors to express their ideas and concerns about its potential impacts.

I volunteered to be the moderator, and this experience brought me a renewed realization of the value of our community services. The presence of the League brings expectations of fairness and respect for differing views. The result, demonstrated at this meeting, was a willingness of people with strong feelings and differing views to agree to an agenda and rules of procedure, as well as a productive meeting. Our community services are a cornerstone of the good will we enjoy in Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville.

-*Mim Hawley*

Thank you, Mim, for your many contributions to our League and the community.  
 -*Doris*

## A New Look for The National Voter

From *The National Voter*: The LWVUS board approved an exciting new direction for the organization's most important communications tool, *The National Voter*. Beginning with the June/July 1999 issue, the League's magazine will take on a new, more colorful look and add a special section to highlight "League Connections." The redesign and repositioning of *The National Voter* is a central element of the board's commitment to better serve current and potential League members.

## Local Program Planning Meeting Recommends Two New Studies For Next Year

Members attending the Local Program Planning meeting in February worked hard to review all our existing positions and then identify areas for new studies in the upcoming year. First, they agreed that the housing study should continue for another year. Next, they considered proposals for two new studies and concluded that both warrant recommendation to the annual meeting for member approval.

One of the proposed new studies would focus on Vista Community College and would examine its relationship to the three communities of our League, to their high schools, to other community colleges and to 4-year colleges and universities.

The other proposed new study would examine "Instant Runoff Voting" as it would apply, if adopted, in Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville. This is an election system wherein voters rank their preferences when voting to fill a single position for which more than one candidate is running. It avoids the need for separate runoff elections when no candidate receives a majority of votes.

More details on both of these proposals will be presented to the membership in the Annual Meeting packet that will be mailed out with next month's *Voter*. The packet will also contain proposals for adopting positions reached by members of the Berkeley League for action in Albany. All of these recommendations have been reviewed and approved, with some modification, by the Board, but still need member approval at the Annual Meeting. Look for the packet next month.

-Jean Safir, Program VP

## Emeryville Update

Emeryville continues to move ahead with a number of major projects. Construction is nearing completion for the Emery Station office building; is continuing on Pixar Animation Studios, the new City Hall and the Woodfin Suites hotel; and has just started on IKEA. The South Bayfront retail - entertainment - office - housing project on Shellmound St. has received final EIR certification and demolition is proceeding on the remaining buildings on that property.

The Oliver Rubber Company is working on plans to convert its building on 65th St. into 63 loft apartments. Chevy's has taken over the old Charley

Brown's restaurant on the waterfront and hopes to open on Cinco de Mayo.

The Planning Commission recently reviewed a proposed Emery Village Center at San Pablo Ave. and 45th St. Plans call for 26,000 sq. feet of retail on San Pablo in four buildings with surface parking. 112 townhouses in 10 buildings would be located behind the retail facilities. This project is being designed to encourage pedestrian access from the surrounding area and is expected to be a major improvement for San Pablo Ave.

Efforts are continuing on the Park Avenue Overlay District, a City initiative to revitalize the Park Avenue area west of the Town Hall. This area was formerly the historic center of Emeryville. The City's hope is to transform this area into a contemporary, pedestrian-scaled urban environment with encouragement for re-using and renovating existing buildings.

-Beth Springston, Emeryville Representative

## National LWV Legislative Priorities

As the 106th Congress convened, the Board of the League of Women Voters of the United States adopted the following legislative priorities for 1999:

Level One -

- Campaign Finance Reform Enhancing Voter Participation
- Protecting the National Voter Registration Act
- Voter Participation Initiatives
- Voting Representation for the District of Columbia

Level Two -

- A Patients' Bill of Rights
- Global Warming/Clean Air
- United Nations Funding.

The League will be proactive on both Level One and Level Two issues in Congress, including lobbying and grassroots action. Action Alerts from LWVUS to LWVBAE on either Level One or Level Two issues will be published in the *Voter* together with guidelines for contacting the appropriate person. For background information on the legislative priorities, visit the National League's Website ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) or stop by the LWVBAE Office for a printed copy.

-Charlotte M. Bernardin,  
State & National Action

## Bay Area Affordable Housing Issues

The Bay Area lacks a governmental body that monitors the development or preservation of affordable housing throughout the region.

Some private agencies, such as East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO), deal with some housing issues on a local, regional, state and national level. For instance, EBHO sponsors an annual affordable housing week each June, with open houses in many of the East Bay low-to-moderate income housing developments, and media events highlighting the need for additional affordable housing. But the private organizations cannot provide regional planning, nor can they monitor what happens in each one of the many governmental jurisdictions within their area of operation.

Moreover, their work has been made very difficult in the last few years, with the gradual withdrawal of the federal government from the production and preservation of affordable housing. From the 1930s to the 1980s, the federal government was the chief player in the impetus for affordable housing, providing an ever-increasing number of housing programs and 100% financing for the production of affordable housing. From the 1980s on, the federal government gradually withdrew as facilitator for housing production. Today, affordable housing advocates must not only find local sources of financing for the production of new housing - a very difficult, costly, time-consuming, and endlessly frustrating activity - but also watch carefully that existing affordable housing is not taken off the market.

Thus, among the issues that are of concern to every community are, first of all, those that deal with the preservation of existing housing.

Three main issues relate to the preservation of existing affordable housing:

- Do existing affordable housing developments have sufficient funds to keep their buildings from physical deterioration?
- Are there for-profit owners planning to convert subsidized housing to market-rate housing?
- Are there for-profit owners not planning to renew their Section 8 contracts?

Communities need to know the answer to these questions and be ready to deal with the potential loss of such housing resources.

In addition, there are three tools for adding to the supply of affordable housing that could be used by

every local jurisdiction:

“Inclusionary zoning ordinances” encourage or require developers to include a specified number of affordable units in their new housing developments. It is important to know if one’s city has such an ordinance; whether it is mandatory or just voluntary; whether it actually addresses the demographics of the area; and whether it is actually enforced. (How many units of affordable housing have been produced as a result of the ordinance?).

Another tool that can add affordable housing to the area, without any public cost at all, is the adoption of a “secondary unit ordinance,” the “granny housing” ordinance that permits the legal addition of small units - second units for specified occupants - to already existing housing in single-family zones.

Lastly, there is a long-range planning tool that housing advocates would like to see implemented in every political jurisdiction - the creation of a “housing trust fund,” a fund with a designated source of income, to be used for loans and grants to affordable housing developers. Many states, counties and cities in the United States now have such funds and have been able to assist in the production of affordable housing in their communities.

While it is probably not possible to solve California’s housing crisis without the renewed financial assistance of the federal government, presently available tools can be used to alleviate the critical shortage of affordable housing.

-*Lucie Buchbinder*, LWVBA Housing Chair  
Reprinted from the LWVBA Voter

## New Video On Housing Crisis

“Hometown Blues”, a 30-minute documentary on the region’s housing crisis produced by ABAG and KTEH-TV will be broadcast by BayArea PBS television and cable access stations later this year. For more information, call ABAG, 510.464.7900.

-From the March/April 1999  
Bay Area Monitor

## Housing Study Hears Report on UCB Housing for Students

At the February meeting of the Housing Study committee, members heard a report on UC's current plans to build a new residence hall on Channing below Bowditch, to add 27 beds in an existing house on Bowditch and to renovate the Underhill parking structure with recreational fields on top. Members also learned that the neighborhood has registered complaints about the effect of these plans on People's Park and about objections to the parking structure.

Student housing has always been an issue in Berkeley, since, under state law, any university-built housing must be paid for out of the income raised from rental fees charged students. This also applies to the University Village in Albany, which provides married student housing and is currently undergoing reconstruction. The new apartments will have much higher rents than the older ones that are being torn down. However, a portion of the site along San Pablo Avenue is to be used for retail stores, so that any profit can be used to help reduce rents charged student families.

Reports were also given on the problems with Section 8 housing vouchers, the lack of any effective actions in Albany to pursue its adopted housing goals, and continuing activities in Emeryville to build housing mixed with commercial uses. Committee members will continue to conduct interviews with city officials, realtors and developers. Before going to public forums next fall, the committee will put all their findings into a single report on the three-city area.

The committee agreed to the following meeting dates for the next few months: April 8, May 6 and June 10, all at 2 to 4 pm, and all to take place at *Suzanne Adams'* home. It is still timely to join the group and take part in this interesting effort. For more information, call *Suzanne*.

-*Jean Safir*, Program VP

## Delaine Eastin to Speak at "Women in Action Lobby Day" in Sacramento

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction will be the keynote speaker at the annual "Women in Action Lobby Day" in Sacramento on Wednesday, April 28, from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. The meeting will convene at the Sacramento Convention Center to hear speakers and attend workshops on the topic of "Women's Access to Education." After lunch, the group will move to the State Capitol for everyone to meet with elected representatives and their staffs.

The sponsors of the event consist of a statewide coalition of women's organizations, one of which is the League of Women Voters. This is a chance for Leaguers to "network" with members of other groups with similar interests, to learn about lobbying and to see how our State government does its business.

The cost for advance registration, which must be received by April 10, is \$35.00; after that date it will be \$45.00. Everyone who wants to attend must complete and send in a separate registration form, which can be obtained at our League office. The registration covers the cost of a materials packet, morning refreshments and lunch, a choice of which is to be indicated on the form.

When you call the office (843-8824) to request a registration form, let us know if you want to car pool, either as a driver or a passenger.

-*Jean Safir*, Program VP

### Reminder!

The League office at 1414 University Avenue is generally open for 3 hours each day Monday through Friday, but hours vary. Between noon and 1 pm, there is always a volunteer in the office. But if you cannot come at that time, please call first to make sure someone is on hand to greet you. The number is 843-8824.

-*Marj Rubinow*, Office Coordinator

## What Is Happening With Berkeley's General Plan?

The good news for Berkeley citizens is that at the February 23, 1999, council meeting, the city council approved a year-long plan to update and integrate Berkeley's General Plan and to complete its EIR. If the city can keep to the schedule, the city council will be able to approve the final draft of the General Plan and certify the final draft EIR by February 2000.

The League, other local community organizations, businesses, and concerned individuals have been supporting such a move for many years. However, there has been ever more vocal criticism of delays by the city council, the city manager, the planning department, and the planning commission during the last two years. For those who are not aware, the city has been working with a 1977 Master Plan and its various unintegrated amendments, essentially ignoring a State mandate for regular updates.

In an interview with Andrew Thomas, Director for the General Plan Update Project and Environmental Review, he described what he plans to accomplish:

- February/April 1999: All the pieces of the 1977 Master Plan and amendments since then will be rewritten and integrated into the first draft of the new document. Thomas will be working with an intern hired for this purpose, with appropriate members of the planning department, and with the planning commission subcommittee on the General Plan consisting of Laurie Capitelli, chair, *Mary Ann McCamant*, *Gene Poschman*, and Rob Wren. The planning commission will act on this at its April 21, 1999, meeting.
- May 4, 1999. The first draft will go to the Council for approval and will then be used in the next phase involving community input. This first draft will be available on the city's web site: [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us) - as well as being available at the city clerk's office.
- May-July 1999 will allow for intensive community input, planning commission discussion, and other appropriate public comment. A minimum of four workshops on different dates will be planned in different parts of Berkeley. They will not be sequential, but repetitive, so that everyone who wants to participate may choose one. In addition, workshops will be offered to any community group(s) wishing to sponsor one. Through the workshops, the city clerk's office, and the city web site, a standard comment form will be available to everyone who wants to suggest

changes and is willing to write a rationale. These will be due at the planning department by July 31, 1999.

- August 1999 will see the comment forms and input from the planning commission and other appropriate commissions integrated into the second draft. The comment forms will be collated and assessed in a separate report that indicates and explains which of the ideas were incorporated into the second draft. The draft EIR will be completed and the staff report on the major issues of the general plan will be presented.
- September 1999 will find all the documents available for downloading from the city's web site, as well as being available at the city clerk's office. At the planning commission meeting of September 8, the first public hearing on the second draft of the general plan and of the draft EIR will be held. At the planning commission meeting of September 22, the second public hearing on the second draft of the general plan and of the draft EIR will be held.
- October 1999. At the planning commission meeting of October 13, the first commission discussion of the second draft and draft EIR will occur, followed by a second discussion on October 27.
- November 1999. The planning commission will act upon the second drafts of the general plan and the EIR.
- December 1999. The third draft of the general plan, the final draft EIR, and the final major issues report will be written.
- January 2000. The city council will hold one or two public hearings on the third draft of the general plan and the final draft EIR.
- February 2000. The city council will adopt the general plan and certify the EIR. The general plan layout and publication will follow its official adoption.

LWVBAE looks forward to having a general plan document that clearly puts forth the goals and public policies upon which future land use decisions will be based. An updated general plan will provide a clear idea of the vision Berkeley has adopted for itself with regard to housing, transportation, open space, historic preservation and citizen participation.

-Jo Ann B. Price, Action VP

## LWVBAE Interview with Senator Don Perata

Leagues in California Senatorial District 9 were pleased to meet with newly elected Senator Don Perata on Thursday, February 25, 1999. Leading the meeting was Julie McDonald of the LWV Piedmont. Also present were Tam Hege, Piedmont; Lynn Groh, Alameda; Marie Credit, Oakland; *Lois Brubeck*, *Pat Kuhi*, and *Jo Ann Price*, LWVBAE.

Senator Perata has been highly involved in many areas since his election. With the reorganization of the Senate for this legislative session, he chairs the Governmental Organization Committee and is a member of the following Standing Committees: Agriculture and Water Resources; Appropriations; Elections and Reapportionment; and Local Government. He also chairs the Bay Area Transportation Select Committee.

After introductions, he began the meeting by informing us of his bill, coming up the next day, to place the Oakland Unified School District under the supervision of Oakland's Mayor. However, following a few questions on that topic, Julie McDonald focused the meeting on the four issues the LWVC had prepared.

### #1: Juvenile Justice

Senator Perata mentioned he had chaired the Public Safety Committee while he was in the Assembly, and so is keenly aware and interested in all aspects of juvenile justice. He looks forward to legislation on this topic (vetoed by Governor Wilson) coming back to be passed. Following are additional points he made:

- Bill Lockyer, who authored important legislation on juvenile justice, is now in a position as Attorney General to make things happen.
- There are some excellent programs for girls in Alameda County that he believes should be continued.
- The County Superintendent of Schools should do more with County schools for youngsters confined in juvenile hall.
- A real problem is that some counties can reap excellent results by putting more money and effort into this area, but not all have sufficient resources.

### #2: The State's Role in Financing Local Government Services

According to Senator Perata, the surest "fix" would be a constitutional amendment. He then mentioned some immediate items for legislation:

- Changing the current 2/3 requirement to a simple majority for local bond issues. He said an initiative

was being circulated.

- Making state transportation bond measures also subject to a simple majority. (John Burton is working on this.)
- Supporting legislation that says the state may not take local taxes. He believes, with term limits bringing more local officials to the legislature, this won't prove as difficult as it now seems.
- Supporting the repeal of the vehicle license tax rebate.

### #3: Implementing the CalFed Program to Develop Solutions to Environmental and Water Use Conflicts re: the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

With Senator Perata on the Agriculture and Water Resources Committee as one of two northern Californians (Senator Debra Ortiz - Sacramento, is the other), he is committed to protecting Bay interests. However, he highlighted how "dense" a topic this is with all kinds of environmental and practical ramifications. He said that "water policy can't be about everyone's self-interest", and mentioned there would be a fight with the East Bay MUD very soon over American River water. He suggested reading "Cadillac Desert" and said he was constantly educating himself in this area of public policy.

### #4: Senator Perata's Priorities for the 1999 Legislative Session

- Being on the Appropriations Committee, he feels well-placed to make his priorities happen.
  - With Governor Davis making education such a high priority, Perata feels confident strides will be made.
  - The fact that public employees have not had a raise in four years must be addressed.
  - The MTBE additive to gasoline must become illegal and phased out.
  - The Assault Weapons Bill (trigger locks) and the Saturday Night Specials Bill must be passed.
- Senator Perata looks forward to working long, hard, and "smart" to form coalitions for success around the issues he ranks as priorities.

-*Jo Ann B. Price*, Action VP

## Medicare Forum (continued from Page 1)

- Choice and Voice have to do with the quality of care. Choice affects the patient's ability to choose a physician and Voice concerns the doctor's ability to determine and prescribe the appropriate care.
- Cost-sharing speaks to a realistic ration of the cost of care between the government and the individual. He believes that this has been blunted by medi-gap insurance which covers only deductibles and co-pays. Statistics show that those with medi-gap insurance use the system 28% more than those without it. Therefore, he wants the government to provide this insurance. That way it would be less expensive because of lower administration costs.
- Competition, as he describes it, requires patients to be keen, aware, and active. He expects patients to seek care for a lesser amount than Medicare allows, with the incentive of being able to pocket the difference - whether from a doctor's bill or hospital charges.
- Individual Contribution concerns making the current pay-as-you-go program into a Medicare trust fund. Currently it takes 3.9 workers to fund one retiree. Allowing for inflation, if every worker paid 3.4% of his/her annual salary during his/her work years, it would cover her/his own medical expenses upon retirement.

Dr. Bristow believes this five-pronged approach would assure quality and efficiency from a secure funding base.

Dr. Bodenheimer strongly disagreed with some of Dr. Bristow's proposals, but mainly discussed the proposals likely to come from the Bi-partisan Commission. He said that 10 of the 17 members on the Commission favor a proposal by Senator John Breaux, (11 are needed) that he calls "premium support," but is really a voucher system. Following are some of the main features of this proposal:

- The average annual cost for a Medicare patient now is \$5,700. The Commission would have government support start at 88% of this amount leaving the average individual to pay \$764. For those wanting more coverage, the cost would be 88% of \$6,700, with the individual paying over \$1,700.
- Most people would be likely to choose the lower cost plan with the danger that government contributions would decrease over time,

shortchanging those unable to pay the higher premiums.

- While voucher increases might go up slower than real costs in the short term, the crunch would come in later years, disadvantaging the poor elderly.
- Now, 21% of elderly income is spent for health services. With the voucher it will likely be much more.
- Even if vouchers went up at the same rate as private health care, there would be no money saved on cost control by the government.
- This type of choice plan will be very confusing to the elderly, as well as more costly.

Dr. Bodenheimer's alternative was a three-stage proposal:

- Protect Medicare fiscally by adopting a yearly Medicare budget that would not shift costs to beneficiaries.
- Use some of current budget surplus to finance improvements to Medicare.
- Create Universal Medicare by applying it to everyone. This would impose cost controls on the entire medical system.

A Question and Answer period began with the panelists querying each other. The audience was soon involved with many probing questions, including:

- How can medical costs be cut?
- How can the system be made more efficient?
- Shouldn't those who have more money pay more taxes rather than providing those better off with a more expensive choice of medical plan?
- Why not have a Universal Health Plan?
- How do we determine the "right" cost of care?

-Doris Fine and Jo Ann B. Price, Action VP

This forum was taped for later use. The following are cablecast dates and times for the forum on B-TV, Berkeley Cable Channel 25:

Wed., 4/14 at 10:30 am - 12:15 pm  
 Friday, 4/16 at 1:00 pm - 2:45 pm  
 Sunday, 4/18 at 7:00 pm - 8:45 pm

The tape can also be borrowed from the LWVBAE office.

## Publications Corner



### Dispelling Myths: The Realities Of Affordable Housing

**Myth:** Affordable housing costs too much.

**Fact:** People who live in affordable housing own fewer cars and drive less.

There are fewer auto trips and less car ownership in medium density neighborhoods than in single-family tract areas, as shown in numerous comparison studies. In areas of increased density, businesses find it more economically viable to serve neighborhoods; therefore, there are fewer non-work trips than in low-density areas.

In California's six largest metropolitan areas, 66 percent of renters and 75 percent of households below the poverty level own no cars or only one car as compared to 54 percent of all households and 44 percent of homeowner households. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission found that low-income households made an average of 3.6 trips per day compared to 6.9 trips for middle-income and 9.9 per day for high-income households.

It is more cost-effective for traffic connections in high-density areas above 8-10 units per acre.

**Myth:** High density development strains public services and infrastructure.

**Fact:** Compact development offers greater efficiency in use of public services and infrastructure.

Higher density infill residential development can bring about revitalized commercial areas and this can mean higher retail sales and increased taxable income which, in turn, provides increased revenue for most jurisdictions.

A 1989 study showed that in an area located 10 miles from central facilities and employment centers with 3 units per acre, it costs \$48,000 per unit for services, but the cost for providing the same services to an area with 12 units per acre which was located closer to an urban center was \$24,000 per acre.

**Myth:** People who live in affordable housing won't fit into my neighborhood.

**Fact:** People who need affordable housing already live and work in your community.

Families earning less than 67 percent of the area's middle income are officially "low-income" and those earning less than half are designated as "very low-income." For example, a starting elementary or high

school teacher in a local community with a gross monthly income of around \$2,000 can afford to pay \$600 per month for rent, and this is considered low-income for a single person or very low-income for a wage earner supporting a spouse and one child.

This criteria for low-income wage earners also includes librarians, deputy sheriffs, nurses and fire fighters.

**Myth:** Affordable housing reduces property values.

**Fact:** No study in California has ever shown that affordable housing developments reduce property values, and many studies have been done.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development reviewed research projects carried out between 1960 and 1986. In 13 of 14 studies, subsidized and manufactured housing had no negative effect on property values.

**Myth:** Affordable housing increases crime.

**Fact:** Density does not cause crime.

Not one study has shown any relationship between population or housing density and violent crime; however, design can play an important role in providing protection by insuring visibility.

The information presented in this article was summarized from a leaflet prepared by the Housing Action Coalition composed of a diverse group of governmental, construction, business and environmental groups, the Santa Clara County Manufacturing Group and five Leagues in Santa Clara County. Resource material from the California Planning Roundtable and the California Air Resources Board was utilized in the preparation of the leaflet. Copies of reports from these agencies and the leaflet can be obtained from the manufacturing group by calling (408) 496-6801.

*-Lenora Young, Publications Chair*

### More Websites To Check Out

For LWVBA: [www.lwvba-ca.org](http://www.lwvba-ca.org)

For The Bay Area Monitor (from LWVBA): [www.bayareamonitor.org](http://www.bayareamonitor.org) (same page as for LWVBA)

You will find these and many other useful links on LWVBAE's own site at [home.pacbell.net/lwvbae](http://home.pacbell.net/lwvbae).

# CALENDAR

## March

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

- 20 Sat. 10 am - noon "Getting to Know the League & You" Gathering  
LWVBAE Office (Cox)
- 24 Wed. 9 am - noon Executive Committee (Fine)
- 25 Thurs. 7:30 - 9 pm Local Actions/Regional Impacts (Safir)
- 31 Wed. 9 am - noon Board Meeting So. Berkeley Library (Fine)

## April

- 6-8, Tuesday thru Thursday **ASUC ELECTION** - See Page 1 (Smith)
- 8 Thurs. 2 - 4 pm Housing Study (Adams)
- 9 Fri. 4 pm May-June **VOTER** Deadline LWVBAE Office (Hawley)
- 12 Mon. 7:15 - 9 pm Environmental Concerns: Bay Trail Project -  
Halfway to Success (Bansner)
- 14 Wed. 9 am - noon Action Committee (Price)
- 15 Thurs. 11 am - 1 pm Education Committee (Wallach)
- 17 Sat. 10 am - noon "Welfare Reform Update" Forum, Oakland Public Library,  
Dimond Branch 3565 Fruitvale Ave. (Safir)
- 27 Tue. 9 am - noon Executive Committee (Fine)
- 28 Wed. 8:30 am - 3 pm Women in Action Lobby Day, "Women's Access to Education"  
Sacramento Convention Center & State Capitol (Office, 843-8824)

## May

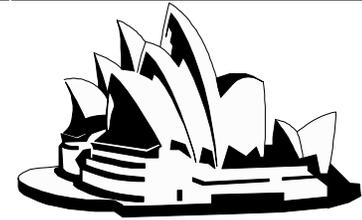
- 5 Wed. 9 am - noon Board Meeting So. Berkeley Library (Fine)
- 6 Thurs. 2 - 4 pm Housing Study (Adams)
- 10 Mon. 7:15 - 9 pm Environmental Concerns: Program Planning for Next Year  
(Bansner)
- 14 - 16, Friday - Sunday LWVC CONVENTION San Jose (Fine)

## June

- 5 Sat. 9:30 am-1 pm **LWVBAE ANNUAL MEETING**  
Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (Safir)

## September

- 23 Thurs. 5:30 - 9 p.m. **FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: SAVE THE DATE!**



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