



President: Nancy Bickel

May-June 2004

Editor: Jean Safir

CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, May 27, 2004 – 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley

Speaker Subject: EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN TO BE ACTIVE CITIZENS

For a healthy society we need educated and active citizens. How do we counter apathy and increase voter turnout? How do we educate citizens about the very process of voting and government? One way, certainly, is to start with the schools. But at what age are children ready to learn civics? Are there new approaches to teaching the subject? We have a wonderful opportunity to explore these topics at our Annual Meeting with the following speakers:

- BARBARA PENNY-JAMES, who was principal of Berkeley's City of Franklin Microsociety Elementary School and is the current principal of Ford International Microsociety School in Richmond, and
- RICK AYRES, who is the lead teacher of Berkeley High School's Communications Arts and Sciences Small School.

The Annual Meeting will begin at 5:00 p.m. with a business meeting. This will be the opportunity for members to vote on Board recommendations for the proposed program for the coming year, changes in the bylaws and election of new officers and board members.

The business meeting will be followed by a buffet dinner at 6:15 pm. Ms. Penny-James and Mr. Ayers will speak at 7 pm.

The buffet dinner will be catered by The Melting Pot. The cost is \$15 and the registration deadline is May 20. Please send checks to the League office, or call and let us know that you will pay at the door. Members may bring their own dinners if they prefer.

We invite you to let us know if you would like a ride; we will be delighted to arrange one.

-Lois Brubeck, Program Vice President

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President's Column

Dear fellow Leaguers,

Ruth Scheer, past president of the Berkeley League (1941-43) and the California League (1945-48) and still flourishing at age 96, recently wrote us a note reminding us of some past League accomplishments. You'll find her note reproduced on page 7.

At our upcoming annual meeting May 27, *Ruth* and all of our past presidents, plus members who have been subjects of our oral history project, will be particularly honored.

Our loyal members. Our League is particularly fortunate in the number of members who continue to work actively for the League, attend our meetings and follow our activities into their 70's, 80's and 90's. Even when they give up particular jobs because "I'm 87 and it's too much for me," they often keep right on volunteering as energetically as they are able. We love and appreciate you all.

Our new members. At the same time, we continue to get several dozen new members joining each year, both directly and through the national League. These members join us either "to support *your work*" or, less often, because they are looking for fresh challenges after retirement or after moving to a new town. Working men and women carefully apportion their spare time and energy. To connect with them, we've been expanding our e-mail communications to members and our website— www.lwvbae.org. If you would like to keep abreast of League activities, please send your e-mail address to lwvbae@pacbell.net. And please give us feedback.

A place for you. If you have a burning question or cause that you think the League should pay attention to—please let us know. We'll try to make a place for you and your issue within the League, learn from you and let you know how

League skills and policies can help. If you find you don't get the response you expect, do let us know. Don't just drift away. We're actively seeking people to work on and follow planning and budget issues and follow many different policy areas—via e-mail and web only—or by attending meetings from time to time.

New study. If you're looking for opportunities to be effective on public issues, we can find many places for you. As you'll see in the enclosed Annual Meeting kit, we're proposing a brand new study that goes right to the heart of League concerns – **Civics Education** in our public schools. Our children and grandchildren may not be learning the traditional civics and American history that we recall learning; they may know less than we do about the Bill of Rights or How a Bill Becomes a Law. But they may be exposed to new ways of learning about their role in our society, of become engaged citizens, through volunteering with local agencies, participating in the management of their own school or serving on a student court.

The new study we are proposing will find out the facts of what is being taught—and being learned—in our three public school systems. Barbara Penny-James and Rick Ayers, the speakers at Annual Meeting, will introduce you to some of the new ways students learn to be citizens of their school and society.

Jobs available. Take the plunge. As we go to press, our nominating committee has found an outstanding new president in *Sherry Smith* and excellent board members. It is still looking for a secretary and additional Board members, so if you'd like to jump in with both feet, please call the office at 843-8824 or me at 526-4055. You're welcome to volunteer instead for tasks that fit into one- or two-hour slots—delivering voter registration cards, answering the office phones or any number of other more limited tasks.

- *Nancy Bickel*, President

EDUCATION IN THE BERKELEY SCHOOLS: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

The Education Committee has invited *Nancy Riddle*, the newest BUSD school director and a League member- to attend our **May 10** meeting and she has accepted. *Nancy* has been active on the BSEP oversight committee (Berkeley Schools Enrichment Project) and now brings her perspective to the issue as a School Director shaping policy for this vital source of funding of the Berkeley schools.

We have asked *Nancy* to address the BSEP legislation, which will expire in November of 2006. The school board is considering putting a BSEP renewal measure on the ballot in Nov. of 2004 or 2006. She will bring her ideas and thoughts on other matters of importance to our schools as well, such as small schools on the Berkeley High School campus and the new Elementary Schools Assignment Plan.

Don't miss this valuable opportunity to speak to her and get a better picture of the BSEP legislation and how it affects the education of our students. Join us on **MONDAY, MAY 10**, from **2:00-4:00pm at the League office**, and bring a friend. How about someone with children in the schools? If you have questions, call *Catherine Lynch* at 527-2173.

SPEAKER SERIES

Thursday, May 13, noon to 2pm
Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room
1247 Marin Avenue at Masonic

Public libraries serve our three communities, but Albany, Berkeley, and Emeryville are differently organized. Come to hear about these differences, and also about some of each library's important but less well-known programs. Our speakers will be:

- Ronnie Davis, Albany;
- Sayre Van Young, Berkeley; and
- Gracie Woodward, Golden Gate Branch, Oakland Public Library (serves Emeryville)

This will be the final meeting for the year, and we would like to hear your reactions to this year's series, and suggestions for next year. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please let us know.

The public is invited to all of our Speaker Series meetings, so please invite a friend to join you. You may bring lunch; juice will be served.

For more information, call *Janet Strothman*, Committee Member, at 841-2837.

BOOKS WANTED FOR VISTA COLLEGE LIBRARY

The Vista College library has secured some storage space and is interviewing for an additional staff member, so they are prepared to accept our donations again.

Marsha Skinner will pick up your donations from your home and deliver them to the library.

The librarian particularly requests African American topics and biographies, dictionaries (including foreign languages) and classics. Staff appreciates donations of California history, US history and Women's Studies. Students are always interested in current fiction, particularly authors such as Amy Tan, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. Books should be in good condition.

Call or e-mail *Marsha Skinner* for a pick-up of your donation: 526-1154 or marshaskinner@yahoo.com.

WINTER 2003 FUNDRAISING DRIVE

December through February

(Some donors gave to both the General Fund and to the Foundation, so they are on both lists.)

Donors to LWVBAE General Fund

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Allen, Jean M.</i> | <i>Frankel, Mary Ann</i> | <i>McLaughlin, Winifred</i> | <i>Smith, Sherry</i> |
| <i>Balderston, Frederick</i> | <i>Friedman, Mary/Stan</i> | <i>Michener, Edna</i> | <i>Sonfield, Lynn</i> |
| <i>Bergen, Jane & Arthur</i> | <i>Goodman, Leo</i> | <i>Mixer, Madeline</i> | <i>Stern, Barbara</i> |
| <i>Blacklidge, Virginia</i> | <i>Harris, Bruce J.</i> | <i>Nagaishi, Haruko</i> | <i>Stoloff, David</i> |
| <i>Brecher, Eva</i> | <i>Hawley, Mim/Bob</i> | <i>Nelson/Benveniste,</i> | <i>Stout, Meredith</i> |
| <i>Brenneis, Aida</i> | <i>Huth, Ora</i> | <i>Karen&Guy</i> | <i>Taylor, Ruthann</i> |
| <i>Burden, Linda</i> | <i>Johnston, Janet</i> | <i>Norton, Allie</i> | <i>Thomasian, Aram</i> |
| <i>Carlson, Gretchen</i> | <i>Jones, Angharad</i> | <i>Okawachi, Jewel</i> | <i>Tranter, Elsa</i> |
| <i>Coulter, Jane/Tom</i> | <i>Koshland, Yvonne</i> | <i>Oliver, Barbara</i> | <i>Trilling, Maya/George</i> |
| <i>Crowe, Ann</i> | <i>Lamph, Jane Ann</i> | <i>Pope, Patricia</i> | <i>Wallach, Anne</i> |
| <i>Davis, Peggy Anne</i> | <i>Lecar, Helene</i> | <i>Rosenfeld, Roselyn</i> | <i>Warrick, Betsy</i> |
| <i>Dehlinger, Jean/Klaus</i> | <i>Lemmon, Maguerite</i> | <i>Rubinow, Marge/Hugh</i> | <i>Watts, Phoebe</i> |
| <i>DeVelbiss, Elizabeth</i> | <i>Loeb, Emily</i> | <i>Safir, Jean</i> | <i>White, Doris</i> |
| <i>Duncan, Susan A.</i> | <i>Luten, Marion</i> | <i>Scheer, Ruth</i> | <i>Wikle, Lessly</i> |
| <i>Erlin, Louetta</i> | <i>Maslach, Doris</i> | <i>Singer, Rosalind</i> | <i>Woodard, Cheryl</i> |
| <i>Ferguson, Michael C.</i> | <i>McLaughlin, Sylvia</i> | <i>Siri, Jean</i> | <i>Young, Lenora</i> |

Donors to LWVB Foundation

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Arnold, Robert</i> | <i>Croly, Betty</i> | <i>Kahn, Adeline</i> | <i>Packard, Fran</i> |
| <i>Barrett, Jane</i> | <i>Feinauer, Violet</i> | <i>Kane, Carolyn</i> | <i>P G & E</i> |
| <i>Bendix, Gil</i> | <i>Franklin, Lissa</i> | <i>Lagarde, Marie</i> | <i>Rader, Wilma</i> |
| <i>Bergen, Jane/Arthur</i> | <i>Friedman, Mary/Stan</i> | <i>Library Gardens</i> | <i>Reinis, Hillary</i> |
| <i>Berkeley.Improvement</i> | <i>Ganong, Ruth</i> | <i>Lichtenberg, Elizabeth</i> | <i>Schooley, Claire</i> |
| <i>Center</i> | <i>Gerson, Linda</i> | <i>Lichterman, Charlotte</i> | <i>Silverstein, Roberta</i> |
| <i>Breiman, Mary Lou/Leo</i> | <i>Good, Anne</i> | <i>Light, Evelyn</i> | <i>Singer, Rosalind</i> |
| <i>Briar, Cecile</i> | <i>Grossman, Joan</i> | <i>Maslach, Doris</i> | <i>Smith, Grace Geyer</i> |
| <i>Brosnahan, Carol</i> | <i>Hoadley, Bruce</i> | <i>Millstein, Gene/Robin</i> | <i>Stern, Barbara</i> |
| <i>Burns, Shireen</i> | <i>Hogan, Ann-Marie</i> | <i>Miyazaki, Sarah/Jay</i> | <i>Tubman, Renate</i> |
| <i>Chun, Suzanne</i> | <i>Huth, Ora</i> | <i>Morris, Gabrielle</i> | <i>Wainwright, Mary</i> |
| <i>Coulter, Jane/Tom</i> | <i>Issel, Shirley</i> | <i>Oliver, Barbara</i> | <i>Warner, Paul</i> |

- Sherry Smith, Development VP

SPEAKERS URGE SINGLE-PAYER HEALTH PLAN

Over 20% of Americans are uninsured; many more are underinsured. They cannot get insurance because they have a disqualifying "previous condition", or are dropped when they get sick. An uninsured person with chest pains, arriving at an emergency room, can be charged \$3,000 before any lab work is even done. Only in the US can sickness drive you into bankruptcy. Doctors do not like taking care of the uninsured, because of the difficulty in obtaining needed studies such as blood tests, x-rays, etc., and needed medication and follow up if the patient has a chronic illness such as asthma or diabetes.

A single-payer health plan is not socialized medicine. The three speakers at our **health forum on March 22** made that very clear. State Senator Sheila Kuehl's bill, which the League supports, provides for a government insurance program and elected Health Commissioner, but private doctors (much like Medicare).

Drs. Ron Adler and Ursula Rolfe, of the California Physicians' Alliance and Marty Lynch of Lifelong Medical Care agreed that we need such a single-payer plan. It would be cheaper than our present non-system; universal enrollment spreads the risks and everyone is covered. It can be funded in many ways including income, payroll or sales taxes. California could see savings of 6 billion dollars a year, much of it from reduced costs of paperwork, which not only chokes doctors, but contributes to the exceedingly high amount of health care dollars (20%) that go for administration. Medicare's administrative costs are only 3%. It eliminates insurance marketing costs and industry profit, and providing early care avoids expensive emergency room visits.

Sheila Kuehl's Single-Payer Plan bill, The Health Care for All Americans Act, passed the Senate last June with a 23-14 margin. It will go to the Assembly Health and Finance Committee in May-June. If it fails to pass this year, it dies. Sen. Kuehl has vowed, however, to reintroduce it. This plan would cover all California residents, be administered by an elected health commissioner, would provide comprehensive medical benefits (including dental and vision care) and allow patients to choose their physicians and

other licensed providers. This plan would be financed by payroll taxes, a tax on tobacco and alcohol, and by folding in moneys presently expanded by federal, state and local governments.

Incremental steps, such as League-supported SB2, Burton's "pay or play" plan to mandate that employers provide health insurance, would help. It would cover 1 million of the 6 million people who are uninsured. Since many employers would probably prefer not to find their own insurance coverage, they would pay in to a state insurance plan, which could be a first step toward a single-payer model. Although this bill passed the Legislature, opponents put it on the November ballot. The League will continue to support it.

What we have now is not a system. Many structural problems contribute to high health care costs: the administrative costs of more than a hundred insurance plans, each with different coverage, rules, regulations, deductibles, co-payments and paper work; also, there are the costs of workmen's compensation and the tort system. Competing interests cause waste. The single-payer plan would give us a coherent system with options, not only for eliminating insurance and legal costs, but also collecting the data necessary to rationalize doctors' services.

Right now we are using band-aids, such as the desperately needed tax just passed in Alameda County to save Highland hospital and community clinics. We do not know whether the Governor will come through with funds to continue the Healthy Families program to insure poor children and their parents, nor what the budget will do to MediCal.

The speakers held out some hope. While drug and insurance companies resist change, other big and small businesses are starting to chafe at surging health care costs and look favorably at a state or national program that would relieve them of the burden of providing health insurance for their employees. Change is not going to be quick, but it will come eventually. We just have to keep working at it.

- Lois Brubeck, Program VP

HAVA AND DRE: WHAT ARE THEY? WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT VOTING MACHINES?

U. S. elections have historically been run and paid for by state and local governments, and the details of how voting is carried out vary from place to place. For instance, North Dakota does not require voters to register at all, and several states allow registration on Election Day. Methods of voting vary: paper ballots (usually counted by optical scanners); lever machines; punch card systems (used until recently in Alameda County); and Direct Electronic Recording (DRE) touch-screen machines. DREs are expensive and were not widely used until after the 2000 presidential election, which focused attention on the drawbacks of punch card voting systems.

The result was the passage in 2002 of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). HAVA stipulates that voters who are not listed as registered may cast provisional ballots and that voters be able to review a summary of the ballot before it is cast. It also contains provisions for greater access for voters with disabilities. But the biggest change HAVA wrought was that \$3.9 billion in funding for improved voting technologies was made available to the states. While states and local governments can decide which technology to use, no HAVA funds may be used to purchase or to update punch card systems.

Alameda County purchased DREs, and we used them in the October, 2003, recall election and the March, 2004, primary election. There has been much criticism of DREs, the main points being that they may fail to record votes or may record them for the wrong candidates, and that the machines are easy for "hackers" to manipulate the way votes are recorded. An important criticism is that while optical-scan systems can be rescanned or counted by hand if discrepancies seem to exist, touch-screen votes exist only in digital form which cannot be recounted. This has led to demands for a "paper trail" -- a record of votes cast on the touch-screen machine that could be recounted.

Secretary of State Kevin Shelley will require all DREs used in California to produce a paper trail by 2006. At the time of writing this article, our State

Senator, Don Perata and Senator Ross Johnson have introduced urgency legislation to ban use of computerized voting machines in California during the November, 2004 election, and Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates has announced his intention to ask the Berkeley City Council to investigate whether Berkeley should run the November election separately from the County, if problems with DREs cannot be solved.

Watch the news for developments, and search the Internet or your local library to find out more about DRE or HAVA.

- Phoebe Watts, Election Service V.P.

DONATIONS in March 2004

To the General Fund

Elizabeth De Velbiss

Joan Glassey

Helen Wachs

Anonymous

Kitty and Hugh McLean

To the Foundation

Sally Elliott

- Evelyn Light

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

At our last meeting of the season on **Monday, May 10, 2004, Robert Cheasty**, President of Citizens for Eastshore State Park (CESP) will give us an update on the progress and issues facing the Park.

In 1997, with crucial help from Assemblyman Tom Bates, California State Parks and EBRPD negotiated the acquisition of 1,800 acres along the 8.5 miles of shoreline between the Oakland end of the Bay Bridge and the Richmond Marina. And on December 6, 2002, the Eastshore State Park was established. Citizens for the Eastshore State Park (CESP) represents a coalition of area residents, the League and environmental organizations that worked hard over a 20-year period to preserve this shoreline in open space.

The meeting will be at **1340 Arch St.** (corner of Rose) at **7:30 p.m.** Contact Carol Stone at 549-0959 or seastone11@hotmail.com for more information.

LWVBA Convention 2004

May 8, 2004

Berkeley Public Library
Kittredge & Shattuck
10 am- 1 pm

Free to you—LWVBAE pays. Apply now to attend, and you might even be appointed one of LWVBAE's 7 official (voting) delegates.

E-mail nkbickel@locrian.com or call the office.

Optional tour of Gaia Building and picnic on the roof terrace; need to pre-register for this also.

The Bay Area League addresses a wide range of environmental and regional issues on behalf of the Leagues of the nine Bay Area counties. LWVBA and its constituent Leagues helped achieve successful passage, with 56%, of Regional Measure 2, which will provide funding for construction, coordination and operation of many good regional transportation projects.

LWVBA publishes outstanding "white papers" on key issues such as transportation hubs [posted on their website at <http://www.lwvba-ca.org/>] and LAFCO, the Local Agency Formation Commission, which determines whether cities or special districts can absorb additional areas [not yet posted].

At the Convention, the Board proposes adopting an ambitious list of action and education recommendations including, among many others,

- Build a regional constituency for an integrated land-use transportation plan
- Join with LWV California in securing fiscal reforms that will encourage responsible long range planning for sustainable development patterns
- Write a regional water quality and supply issues paper
- Review land use plans at transit stations for planned density and built densities and review transit ridership numbers and relationship to densities

If you have interest and/or expertise in regional and environmental issues, LWVBA would welcome your application to join the board, to observe a regional board or commission, to review proposed plans of various kinds, to participate in studies. Email *Eva Alexis Bansner*, evaalexis@comcast.net

- Nancy Bickel, President

LETTER FROM PAST PRESIDENT *RUTH SCHEER*

Hi!

Was so interested to read about the 1946 battle over the City Manager's position, as I was State President at the time. As a result, I didn't participate actively but met several times with the active group.

I'd like to remind you that Berkeley League was the group that instigated the cleanup of the sewage problem in the S.F. Bay. We insisted that, not only must something be done but that it be regional, not city by city. It was a great project. . . .

Best wishes,

Ruth Scheer

CHOOSING THE PRESIDENT 2004 *A Citizen's Guide to the Electoral Process*

The presidential election process is constantly evolving. The advent of television and then the Internet, the increasing role of money in politics, and ever-accelerating schedule of primary elections, and declining voter interest are just a few of the developments that have transformed the way we choose the president.

In this new book, *Choosing the President*, produced by the LWVUS, you'll learn about these and many other topics. It also offers pointers for getting the most out of the election. The League office has copies for sale at \$12 each. Call the office at 843-8824 or *Lenora Young* at 843-1030.

CALENDAR

Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated

April

27 Tues. Noon ANNUAL COMMUNITY LUNCHEON *K. Nelson & Ganong*,
Doubletree Hotel, Berkeley Marina 843-8824

May

8 Sat. 10-1 pm LWVBA Convention Berkeley Public Library
Kitteridge and Shattuck, 3rd Floor Meeting Room *Bickel*, 526-4055

10 Mon. 2 - 4 pm Education Committee LWVBAE Office *Lynch*, 527-2173

10 Mon. 7:30 pm Environmental Concerns 1340 Arch St. (*Bansner*) *Stone*, 549-0959

13 Thurs. Noon Speaker Series Albany Public Library
1247 Marin Ave., Edith Stone Room *Strothman*, 841-2837

13 Thurs. 6 - 8 pm Board Meeting LWVBAE Office *Bickel*, 526-4055

20 Thurs. 7:30 pm Action Committee 1419 Grant (*Watts*) *Safir*, 524-9088

21 Fri. Noon Summer VOTER deadline *jeansafir@att.net* *Safir*, 524-9088

27 Thurs. 5 - 8 pm LWVBAE ANNUAL MEETING Northbrae Community Church
941 The Alameda *Brubeck*, 526-5139

June

3 Thurs. 6-8 pm Transition Board Meeting LWVBAE Office *Bickel*, 526-4055

12-15 Sat. - Tuesday National LWV Convention Washington, D.C. *Bickel*, 526-4055

14 Mon. 2 - 4 pm Education Committee LWVBAE Office *Lynch*, 527-2173

21 Mon. LWVBAE Office closes for summer

24 Thurs. 7:30 pm Action Committee 1419 Grant (*Watts*) *Safir*, 524-9088



IT'S EASY TO JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Just fill in the blanks below, clip and mail this information to us with your check for annual dues made out to: **\$55**

LWVBAE

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. Day: _____ Eve: _____

Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

Joining the local level makes you a member at all levels: LWVBAE, Bay Area, State and National. Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to the LWVB Foundation are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. It encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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