



# The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS  
of BERKELEY, ALBANY and EMERYVILLE

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President: Sherry Smith

May-June 2006

Editors: Chapman, Smith & Brandes

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## CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2006 – 5:00 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.  
Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley

*"LET THE SUN SHINE ON CITY GOVERNMENT"*

*Does transparency in local government require the adoption of a Sunshine Law?  
How Oakland answered in 2000.*

*SPEAKER: DANIEL PURNELL*

*Executive Director, Oakland Public Ethics Commission*

Transparency in government has been a longtime goal of the League of Women Voters. In California, our state and local Leagues supported passage of the Brown Act and the California Public Records Act. LWVBAE has pursued strict compliance with these measures locally.

This year the LWVUS urged Leagues across the nation to hold Sunshine Week observances in March to foster the adoption of local Sunshine Laws. The Alameda County Council of the seven Leagues of Women

Voters in Alameda County, including LWVBAE, won one of the few grants from LWVUS to sponsor a forum on this topic. Many Alameda County and local officials attended this highly successful daylong event on March 17 in San Lorenzo.

The forum sparked interest in passing Sunshine Laws for Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville. Oakland's successful 2000 Sunshine Law campaign can serve as our example.

Daniel Purnell, Executive Director of the Oakland Public Ethics Commission, will speak about the purpose of local Sunshine Laws; what must be included in them; and what it's been like to implement Oakland's law. Mr. Purnell is a former civil litigation attorney with a background in employment, contract, land use, and environmental law. Prior to joining the State Bar of California, he served as Manager of Media Relations for Pacific Telesis Group and Bechtel Group, Inc. He is a former Pinole Mayor and Councilmember.

*Jo Ann B. Price, Program V.P.*

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

In early March, there was a wonderful assembly of past Presidents of our League at the home of *Fran Packard*. Fifteen (!) of our former presidents came to join me. Only three of those still living---Jane Vinson (1967), *Wilma Jordan* (1970-72), and *Jane Coulter* (1984-87)---were not able to join us, but that was because of previous commitments, and not because of any kind of infirmity! We joked that being League President clearly contributes to one's longevity and good health.

*Bill Chapman* joined us and captured us in the photograph that you see on this page. The caption identifies everyone, including the years they served as President. Also in the photo is *Jinky Gardner*, our President-in-Waiting, whom the Nominating Committee has proposed as your President for the coming term.

We had a perfectly marvelous time reminiscing and talking about our League's future. I'm so sorry that none of us thought to bring a recorder to capture those memories and wonderful stories. Their League leadership was full of funny moments and profound changes in local government. Almost all went on to serve on City or County Commissions, in League offices at the County and State levels, or, in the case of *Gilda Feller* and *Mim Hawley*, were elected to the Berkeley City Council.

We have much to be proud of in our leadership and our League, and the incoming slate of officers proposed for 2006-2007 by the Nominating Committee (thank you, Chair *Ruthann Taylor* and all Committee members) continues our tradition of excellence.

I look forward to seeing you all at the General Membership Meeting on May 17, 5:00 p.m. at the Northbrae Church. You will find all the information you need in this issue of the VOTER.

Yours in League, *Sherry Smith*, President



**Top row** (l to r): *Anne Henderson* (1995-97), *Eloise Bodine* (1978-80), *Ann Crowe* (1980-82), *Pat Kuhi* (1987-89), *Jo Ann Price* (1999-2001), *Fran Packard* (1982-84), *Nancy Bickel* (2001-04), *Gilda Feller* (1972-74)

**Middle row** (l to r): *Mim Hawley* (1993-94), *Marilyn Couch* (1974-76), *Doris Fine* (1997-99), *Jane Bergen* (1976-78), *Ora Huth* (1965-66), *Pat Wadleigh* (1989-91)

**Front row** (l to r): *Phyllis Clement* (1991-93), *Sherry Smith* (2004-06), *Jinky Gardner* (in-waiting)

**THE LWVBAE BOARD VOTES TO SUPPORT MEASURE A, THE \$390 MILLION BOND FOR THE PERALTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**

(Didn't we just pass a \$153 million Peralta bond in 2000? Whatever happened to all that money?)

Much of the previously-passed Measure E money, about \$65 million, has been used to build our new vertical campus for Vista (now Berkeley City College), scheduled to open for classes in September 2006. Most of the remaining money went to fund construction on Peralta's other campuses—Laney, Merritt, and College of Alameda. And some \$22 million remain uncommitted. Because the bond was passed under the restrictions of Prop 13, however, those funds may be used only for capital construction.

Prop 39, passed in 2000, allows school and community college districts to use bond money for a wide range of purposes—buying land, leasing buildings, repairs, purchasing equipment, furniture, books for libraries—all kinds of things that are not nailed down. Measure A covers expenditures that Measure E, under the restrictions of Prop 13, could not address.

What do the colleges need the money for?

The new Berkeley City College will need to be furnished from the walls inward. Although the state's community college budget sets aside special funds for equipping new buildings, the budget shortfall has meant that the state can only provide about \$2 million of the projected \$2.5 - \$3 million the new campus will need.

Measure A money would fund chairs, lab tables and hoods, desks, books, audio-visual equipment, computers, signs and all the other necessary parts of a working college facility.

The other Peralta buildings are between 30 and 40 years old. They have been limping along with outmoded computers, under-stocked libraries, and aging heating and cooling equipment. Other improvements listed in the Measure A proposal will correct

dangerous existing safety hazards in ventilation and drainage.

By enabling the district to modernize, Measure A should provide major savings on future lighting, heating and water bills. Since money for essential repairs to the existing equipment must come out of the district's annual operating budget, the upgrades Measure A buys will free up maintenance dollars to provide greater services to students.

A big portion of the bond monies will not be spent at once but will create a reserve that should enable the district to meet its maintenance needs for the next ten years.

Under Prop 39 rules, Measure A will pass if it is approved by 55% of the voters. It would add about \$25 per \$100,000 of assessed value (not market value) to people's tax bills.

*Helene Lecar, Community College Chair*

*(see the accompanying Measure A article on page 4)*

**MARCH DONATIONS**

**TO THE LWVBAE TRIBUTE FUND**

Becky Bailey-Findley  
 Frank M. Berger, M.D.  
*Eloise Bodine*  
*Patricia Bradley*  
 Thersea Chekon  
 David Farb  
*Evelyn Light*  
*Ginette Polak*  
 Danielle Power  
*Ruthann Taylor*  
 Leonard Willschick  
*Lenora Young*  
*Lenora Young*

**In memory of**  
 Eva Brecher  
 Anne Wallach

**TO THE LWVB FOUNDATION**

*David Bradford*  
*Kathleen and Harry*  
*Heckman*  
*Alice Mead*  
*Alba Witkin*

*Nancy Fitzgerald*  
*Kitty and Hugh*  
*McLean*  
*Ursula Rolfe*

*Louetta Erlin, Donations Secretary*

**SUPPORT MEASURE A**

At its meeting on April 5, 2006, the LWVBAE Board of Directors voted to take a position in support of Measure A, the Peralta College District Bond, on the June 6 ballot.

**ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A**

Since 1964, over one million students from Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland and Piedmont have benefited from the educational opportunities offered by Laney and Merritt Colleges in Oakland, Vista Community College (Berkeley City College) and College of Alameda.

Aging and inadequate facilities threaten the quality of our community's educational programs. These vital programs provide job training and career advancement for tens of thousands of current and future students. Facilities designed nearly four decades ago to meet yesterday's educational needs are now outdated and threaten the future of education in our community.

Measure A will:

- Modernize classrooms, science labs and job-training facilities to meet the demands of a changing workforce, providing job and college-transfer counseling centers;
- Upgrade electrical systems for safety and to provide access to technology;
- Provide additional instructional space and instructional equipment for Senior Citizen courses and lifelong-learning opportunities for all;
- Provide expanded access to computer, multi-media and bio-science technologies and state-of-the-art instructional equipment;
- Retrofit for seismic safety;
- Make environmental upgrades to existing buildings to provide "green" ecologically appropriate sustainable usage;
- Provide for solar energy system installation and the retrofitting of existing energy systems to save energy costs;
- Upgrade safety systems for disaster and security preparedness;
- Provide classrooms and buildings for the training of paramedics, nurses, police and fire personnel, homeland security and community safety-worker programs; and
- Provide "smart classrooms" and facilities for enhanced distance-learning.

Measure A funds will remain in our community and cannot be taken by the State and spent elsewhere. Measure A cannot be used to pay District salaries or administrative costs and will include guaranteed annual audits and a citizens' oversight committee. Measure A will also allow our community colleges to qualify for state matching funds.

Please join us, community, business and educational leaders in voting YES on Measure A.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

The LWVBAE Annual Community Luncheon is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, August 24, 2006, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. See the Summer VOTER (which should make it to your mailbox by the end of June) for details.

## HEWLETT MINI-GRANT PROJECT COMPLETED

A meeting for the parents of 8th grade students at King Middle School on March 4 completed a project, funded by the Hewlett Foundation, to encourage students to take charge of their own learning as they enter high school.

Members of the Vista College Ambassador Corps talked with all 8th grade classes during the first week of February. They described their lives at 12 years old, how they changed over time, got to college and came to their present career interests.

After the visits, teachers asked students to interview an adult friend or relative about how they found career interests. Teachers then asked students to write an essay on what they themselves wanted to do after high school and what courses they would need in order to achieve their goals. The student essays were full of great plans and hope.

The parents' meeting on March 4 focused on how parents could help their children, both at home and at school, to stay on track for educational success. Speakers talked about career training available at Vista, its very modest cost and ways to finance college. Everyone attending received a packet of helpful steps to take with their children and their children's high school teachers and counselors.

League members *Claudia Berger, Helene Lecar, Liz Schaaf* and *Ruthann Taylor* ushered, answered questions and helped to make the day go smoothly.

## WHY DO THIS PROJECT?

About one million Californians ages 18-24 never finished high school. Starting this year, all students have to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in order to graduate. The young adult population without a diploma is expected to jump by an additional 40,000.

How will these young people establish themselves, find work, earn a living wage? For those without a high school education, the economic prospects are bleak. A 2000 US Census Bureau study compared the average yearly incomes of full-time workers over 18 based on educational attainment. Those with diplomas averaged \$30,166, while those without earned \$21,633. Since nearly 70% of all existing jobs require some kind of post-high-school education, simply finding a full-time job is difficult, and the level of knowledge required in the workplace is only expected to increase.

The effect on society of such large numbers of undereducated workers is staggering. How can California maintain its economic health when roughly 30% of its young adults are equipped only for menial jobs? As one college administrator remarked, "Watch out for your Social Security check. It's only being paid for out of the wages of current workers. If they are working near the poverty line, you'll be there too."

Why are we losing so many students before they finish high school? What will we have to do to get them to want to stay in school? Our program was designed to help students see the purpose of high school. If we can help them make the connection between schooling and adult success, and we can empower their parents to support them in their efforts, perhaps they will be able to persist in school and achieve their potential.

*Helene Lecar*, Project Coordinator

### NEW MEMBERS

Our warmest welcome to our newest members:

<i>Elizabeth Allison</i>	<i>Janice Gulley</i>
	<i>Blumenkrantz</i>
<i>Joanne Carder</i>	<i>Linda Davidson</i>
<i>Rachelle Distefano</i>	<i>Catalina Garzon</i>
<i>Pam Graybeal</i>	<i>Caryl Hart</i>
<i>Harry Heckman</i>	<i>Elizabeth Heyman</i>
<i>Glenda Humiston</i>	<i>Sikina Jinnah</i>
<i>Sarah L. Thomas</i>	<i>Darlis Wood</i>
<i>Megan Ybarra</i>	



**LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS**  
of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville  
1414 University Ave., Suite D  
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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.

**CALENDAR**

Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated

**MAY**

- 3 Wed. 7-9 pm Board Meeting, LWVBAE Office *S. Smith, 548-1769*
- 6-7 Sat-Sun LWV Calif. Leadership Conference, Sacramento *S. Smith, 548-1769*
- 8 Mon. 7:30-9:30 pm Environmental Concerns *C. Stone, 549-0959*  
1340 Arch St.
- 13 Sat. 9:30-1:00 pm Bay Area League Convention--S.F. Bay Model, Sausalito *S. Smith, 548-1769*
- 17 Wed. 5:00-8:30 pm **LWVBAE Annual Meeting** *J. Price, 548-5206*  
Northbrae Community Church  
941 The Alameda  
(read the story on page 1)
- 22 Mon. Last day to register to vote in the June 6 California Primary
- 29 Mon. League Office closed in observance of the Memorial Day holiday

**JUNE**

- 3 Sat. 8:30 am-12:30 pm *N. Bickel, 526-4055*  
Alameda County Council of Leagues
- 6 Tue. 7 am-8 pm California Primary Election
- 7 Wed. 7-9 pm Transition Board meeting *S. Smith, 548-1769*  
LWVBAE office
- 9 Fri. noon Deadline for Summer VOTER *B. Chapman, 527-0827*
- 10-13 LWV of the United States Convention - Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 19 Mon. League Office closes for the summer. It will reopen August 14.

**AUGUST**

- 14 Mon. League Office reopens after the summer break
- 24 Thurs. **Annual Community Luncheon** (details in the Summer VOTER)