



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF BERKELEY, ALBANY, AND EMERYVILLE

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President: Doris Fine

May - June, 1998

Editor: Bob Hawley

Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 16, 1998

9:30 AM to 1 PM

Northbrae Community Church

941 The Alameda, Berkeley

At our business session we will hear the consensus report from this year's study of the Berkeley Rent Board. We will also plan for the future by considering the adoption of a new study, a new budget, and by electing new officers (see enclosed Annual Meeting Agenda).

At 11 am, author and journalist **Peter Schrag** will be our guest speaker. His topic, "Under-Represented and Over-Propositioned?" will start us thinking about the initiative process, the topic of the state study we will present at our UNITS in May and June (see next article). Mr. Schrag, former editorial page editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, is the author of Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future (1998) and is a visiting scholar at the Institute of Governmental Studies, UC-Berkeley.

At noon we will enjoy a salad lunch catered by Shai's Delicatessen, or bring a brown bag lunch.

PLEASE BRING THE ENCLOSED ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE WITH YOU. RSVP to the LWVBAE office (843-8824) by May 8 for LUNCH at \$10.00.

-Phoebe Watts, Program VP

Initiative Study Update

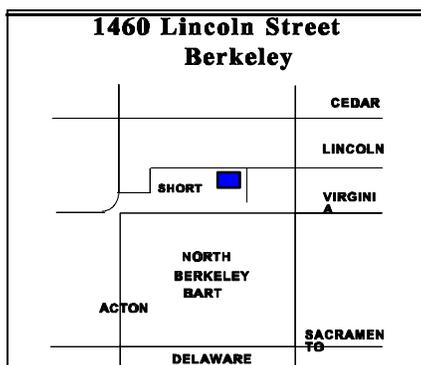
When the Field Institute did a survey on the Initiative and Referendum Process last summer, they found that 74% of respondents agreed that "overall, the initiative process is a good thing." But almost as many agreed that only a few initiatives had been written in understandable language, that campaign spending on initiative campaigns should be limited, and that a review for legality and clarity should be done before an initiative is put on the ballot.

It seems that Californians have mixed feelings about the initiative process. Our intentions to be informed voters may be sorely tested next fall, when more than fifty initiative propositions may appear on the ballot.

So, it is timely that our state LWVC is conducting a study of its position on this topic. Our local committee has decided to divide each UNIT meeting into two sections, each section considering different information. There will be a two-part daytime UNIT, and a two-part evening UNIT - see below for dates and times. The material will be presented in a manner that will be understandable even if you are unable to attend both sections. You are encouraged to come to both, if possible.

To prepare for these UNITS, be sure to hear Peter Schrag speak at our Annual Meeting on May 16. And look for reading material that you may borrow from our office.

- Phoebe Watts, Program VP



May and June UNITS Locations

Initiative I

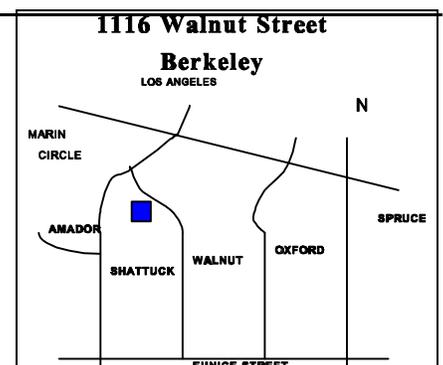
May 21 at 7:30 pm

May 26 at 10 am

Initiative II

June 4 at 7:30 pm and

June 9 at 10 am



President's Message

Election season is upon us. This June we will have an "open primary" for Congressional and State offices. Voters will not be restricted to candidates affiliated with their political party, but may "cross over" and vote for any candidate. Then, in November, the top vote-getter within each party will face one another in the general election. On April 7, we held a Special Primary Election to select a replacement for retired Ninth Congressional District Congressman Ron Dellums in an "open primary" format: 3 Democrats and 1 Republican were running for election. State Senator Barbara Lee was elected by 67% of the vote - with a turnout of only 15%. (A special election to fill the remaining 2 ½ years of her term in the State Senate will now be necessary.)

It is also election time for the League. Many thanks to our hardworking Nominating Committee for coming up with a set of officers and directors to lead LWVBAE in 1998-99! The LWVUS will also be electing new officers at the national convention in June. League President Becky Cain is stepping down after years of outstanding service, most recently in connection with her strenuous efforts on behalf of campaign finance reform.

In addition to selecting candidates for California state and congressional offices, the June 2 election, as in previous years, will again require voters to contend with a complex set of ballot measures or initiatives. Our Voter Service people will be available to help citizens better understand these measures, while our Initiative Study Group will be grappling with the thorny issue of whether or not we want to maintain our LWVC position on the initiative process, or whether the time has come for major reform. Are initiatives an opportunity for citizens, or a vehicle for special interests? Is the legislature serving its function of deliberating public policy, or sitting idly by while consultants and campaign organizers draft measures for direct citizen action? Our May/June UNITS will offer an opportunity for us to discuss these important - and timely - issues, as we contribute to a LWVC consensus that could play a key role in constitutional reform.

Speaking of elections, heartfelt thanks to all of you who participated with us in monitoring the ASUC elections. You have helped support our budget for member services, such as this *Voter*. I look forward to thanking you personally at our Annual Meeting on May 16!

-Doris

Board Briefs

The Board met on April 1, 1998, at the South Berkeley Branch Library.

Reports were heard about the final plans for monitoring the ASUC elections. We were asked to assist the South Berkeley Senior Center when they hold their board election on May 14 and agreed to do so.

The Board approved the Berkeley Rent Control position to be presented for adoption at our annual meeting. Also approved for presentation was the proposal for a new study of housing in our three cities.

There will be four UNITS about the Initiative and Referendum Study. Materials pertaining to this are available in our office. We are fortunate to have as speaker at our annual meeting Peter Schrag, who recently organized a symposium on the California Initiative.

The Nominating Committee reported that the slate to be presented at our annual meeting has been completed and is posted in our office.

Three new members were oriented in March bringing our membership count to 406.

The Presidio Tour, arranged by LWVBA, will be on May 2. Persons who have taken this tour recommend it highly.

-Violet Feinauer, Secretary

LWVUS
Convention
June 13 - 16



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Education Committee Reviews Continuing Needs and Sets Sights For Fall

Recalling the voices of guests who addressed the committee this fall and winter, members identified several continuing needs. We are encouraged that BUSD Superintendent, Jack McLaughlin, may be making progress in improving the operating structure of the district. He has made good appointments, his goals committee has set three prime goals, and his informal monthly luncheons bring together wide varieties of people including students and the community. However, members still see a need for attention to Berkeley High School, and to the problem of bureaucracy even at the elementary level, as well as fiefdoms at all schools and divisions between staff. The entrenchment of powers, the virtual exclusion of teachers from curriculum preparation, and the problem of continuity - following students as they move through the system - are ongoing issues of concern.

High on the committee's aims for next year will be the promotion of civics education in the schools. No longer a required subject, civics is being sorely neglected. We will work on the fall mock election, but beyond that, try to promote instruction in citizenship. Learning through doing...student council elections starting with elementary school? Give us your ideas. Let us hear from our retired teachers! Our next meeting will be on May 21 at 7 pm at the home of *Anne Wallach*, 2310 Ward Street, Berkeley. We welcome new members as well as interested part-time participants.

-*Lois Brubeck*, Education Committee Chair

Shifting the Focus to Learning: California's Accountability Debate

On April 3, the LWVC co-sponsored a gathering of educators, parents and community leaders to discuss the latest efforts to achieve accountability in public education. The conference, called by EdSource, was attended by 12 League members from northern California. We heard from former State Department of Education Board member, Mike Kirst, about the difficulties of making accountability work. A key problem is trying to assimilate standards, externally mandated, to the internal practices of teachers in their classrooms. Teachers generally do not believe that tests, based on standards, measure what they do. Scott Hill, the director of the

Governing America: Our Choices; Our Challenges...

This was the topic of the March Speakers' Series. Members were asked to consider three approaches: (1) *Reducing* government and using private services wherever possible; (2) *Reforming* government by controlling special interests and seeking the most appropriate level of government services; and (3) *Increasing* civic participation and encouraging collaborative efforts between citizens and government.

Members engaged in a lively discussion, bringing up issues that cut across the choices offered. We agreed that government is necessary to address issues on a national level, but that flexibility is essential in local implementation. Enforcement is also important to maintain standards. Special interests are a concern and not only at the national level. Locally, a group of citizens also can manipulate decision-makers at the price of the public interest. Generating broadly-based civic participation, for example among parents of school children, remains a serious concern. Finally, we agreed that civics education is essential for children to grow up understanding and appreciating the responsibilities they will assume for participating in government and monitoring its actions. This may be an area our League will want to explore further.

Thanks to *Pat Wadleigh* for help in facilitating this fascinating meeting. We hope to conduct more such exercises in "civic engagement" on different topics, and to invite nonmembers to join us. Learning how to exercise our responsibilities as citizens is an area we need to share with others in the community.

-*Doris Fine*

California Academic Standards Commission, noted that language arts and math standards are now joined by standards (in draft form) for science, history and social science. He stated that while standards alone won't change educational practice, they are important for establishing the skills and knowledge we want students to learn. The will to implement is up to local districts and their willingness to confront issues is essential if California is to attain accountability for student outcomes. For more information, contact *Helene Lecar* or *Doris Fine*.

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Gabrielle Morris¹

¹In Memory of Fanya Carter

Members and Membership

News You Can Use In Bits and Pieces

A warm and cordial WELCOME to our two newest members:

Joanne Kowalski
Jill Zimmerman

We look forward to meeting each of you, very soon, at a League function.

The news about our membership number is not good. Our April count is down to 406. Your help in support of the League and our programs is needed in alleviating this loss. Please invite your friends and colleagues to join us.

Bits

Ginette Polak found during her recruitment of League poll workers for the ASUC election that our members are an exceptionally peripatetic lot of people. Seven of the twenty-one members she called were out of town, would be out of town at the election time, or had just returned home and had not yet sorted things out.

Wanted: Transportation for a long-time member (over 29 years) who lives near the El Cerrito Plaza, does not drive, and would like to attend League functions, especially our May Annual Meeting. Please call or e-mail our office (numbers in the *Voter* heading on page 1) if you can do this good deed.

In his 1997 book Big Trouble, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner J. Anthony Lukas wrote the following acknowledgment:

“I am especially grateful to Kathy Hodges, who has served as my peerless research assistant in Boise since 1989. Her intelligence, persistence and meticulous reporting have made an incalculable contribution to this book.”

Kathy is an historical researcher and writer, and the daughter of proud *Marjorie* and *Hugh Rubinow*.

-*Eleanor Cox*, Membership Chair

Update on Voters Service

For the April 7 Special Primary Election, LWVBAE joined with other Ninth Congressional District local Leagues to sponsor a candidates' night. *Fran Packard* was our moderator. Audience questions elicited answers from candidates on issues ranging from payment of our UN dues to improving job opportunities, protecting the environment, and reforming campaign finance.

We also produced a video on Measure B, and co-sponsored a forum on Proposition 227, the Unz initiative on bilingual education.

In late May, we will again hold a meeting with candidates for the Ninth Congressional District. Our Speakers' Bureau will visit groups to review the pros and cons, and materials will be distributed throughout the community.

Remember, June 2 will be a statewide open primary. All candidates will be listed by office with their party affiliation; a brief summary of each party's philosophy will be included at the end of the ballot. No biographical information will be provided. (DF)

Ask The League

Do you have questions about the upcoming June primary? Call-in to BTV LIVE on Tuesday evening May 26 from 7 to 7:30 pm at 848-8939. League members involved in Pros and Cons will be available to answer questions about initiatives and process. *Lessly Wikle* will moderate. View the call-in on channel 25 (BTV). This program will replay on Friday, May 29 at 5:30 pm, on Saturday, May 30 at 10 am, and on Sunday, May 31 at 7 pm. Following Sunday's replay, at 7:30 pm we will replay our program on Alameda County's Measure B.

-*Jill A. Martinucci*, LWVBAE Video Director

Environmental Concerns

The Environmental Concerns March meeting hosted a presentation on the Presidio by Michael Alexander, chair of the Sierra Club Presidio Task Force and member of the GGNRA Advisory Commission. The Commission is appointed by the Secretary of Interior to advise the Park Service and the Presidio Trust, and it serves as the connection between these groups and the public.

Until the Presidio was transferred to the Park Service in 1994, it was the nation's oldest continuously operated military post (est. 1776). Today, the 1480-acre park (one and a half times the size of Golden Gate Park) features historic architecture, forest, open space, a public golf course, miles of biking and hiking trails and breathtaking vistas. The former military base is being handled unlike any other base closure in the nation, with initial thanks due to Rep. Phil Burton (D-SF) who in 1972 sponsored the bill to establish the GGNRA that stated the Presidio would go to the National Park Service if the military ever moved out. Subsequently, an Act of Congress led by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-SF) established the Presidio Trust. The Trust manages 80% of the Presidio (the built up areas) while the Park Service manages the 20% by the ocean and bay shores. Current plans include the \$16 million Crissy Field restoration of tidal marshes and dunes with planting of dune grasses by 4,000 school children. Restoration begins in August. One of the biggest challenges is cleaning up the toxins left by the military, Alexander said.

The general management plan adopted with public input in 1996 is a 15-year projection on how the park should be managed, allowing for preservation of open space, removal of non-historic buildings, and preservation of some 500 historic ones. "This isn't a wilderness park. It's an urban park," Alexander said. "It's scenic, natural, historic and recreational resources are given equal protection." Focus is on education and on activities that address major world problems, such as sustainability. "This vision plan looks at the broad picture," he explained. "It's up to the Presidio Trust to put meat on that framework. We need to make the Presidio sustainable in 15 years or it goes back on the for-sale block. The keys are: (1) to preserve the resource and provide educational opportunities; and (2) to reduce the cost to taxpayers. The cost of maintaining the Presidio is out of line with other parks." Its annual operating budget is \$29 million (Yosemite's is \$18 million) compared to

the estimated annual \$75 million it took the military to operate the park.

As mandated by Congress, a 15-year financial feasibility plan must be in place by July 8. The Trust has the authority to retain rental and other monies raised for the Presidio rather than returning the money to Washington to the General Fund from which it is then allocated to the Park Service. The key, Alexander said, is to find tenants appropriate for a national park and who are capable of generating their fair share of costs without being subsidized by the federal government. At present, the Department of Defense occupies 400 units in a short term program to keep certain houses occupied. Presidio fire and police occupy 80 units. Current tenants include the Tides Foundation, FEMA, YMCA, and the Gorbachev Foundation. About 60% of the buildings are residential, 20 % institutional, and 20% are warehouses, paint houses, or recreational.

Alexander said there has been great public support from environmental, civic, and business groups. "Each of these is critical in preserving the park," he said. "We're going to make it sustainable - it's going to work."

-Gail Schickele

Environmental Concerns

Monday, May 18, 1998
(the third Monday of the month)

Population: 200 Years and What's New?

Dan Luten, Professor Emeritus,
Department of Geography, UCB

Meet at 7:15 pm

This will be our last meeting of this series.

Contact *Erika Kunkel*

CALENDAR

April - Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

- 25 Sat. 10 am - 3 pm Earth Day MLK Jr. Civic Center Park (*Bansner*)
 25, 26 Sat./Sun. Presidents' Council Claremont, Calif. (*Fine*)
 29 Wed. 9 am Executive Committee (*Fine*)

May

- 1 Fri. 10 am - noon Initiative Study Group League Office (*Watts*)
 2 Sat. 10 am - 1:30 pm "Go See Tour" San Francisco Presidio (*San Jule*)
 4 Mon. Last Day To Register to Vote in the June 2 State Primary Election
 6 Wed. 9 am - noon Board Meeting So. Berkeley Library (*Fine*)
 8 Fri. 10 am - noon Initiative Study Group League Office (*Watts*)
- 16 Sat. 9:30 am **LWVBAE Annual Meeting**
 Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (Office, 843-8824)
- 18 Mon. 7:15 pm Environmental Concerns (*Kunkel*)
 20 Wed. 9 am - noon Action Committee (*Bansner*)
 21 Thur. 7 pm Education Committee (*Brubeck*)
 21 Thur. 7:30 pm UNIT - Initiative I (*Severance*)
 26 Tues. 10 am UNIT - Initiative I (*Severance*)
 27 Wed. 10 am Executive Committee (*Fine*)

June

- 2 Tues. 7 am - 8 pm State Primary Election
 3 Wed. 9 am - noon Joint Board Meeting (*Nelson*)
 4 Thur. 7:30 pm UNIT - Initiative II (*Watts*)
 5 Fri. 4 pm Deadline for Summer *Voter* at the LWVBAE Office
 9 Tues. 10 am UNIT - Initiative II (*Watts*)
 13 - 16 4 days LWVUS National Convention San Diego
 17 Wed. 9 am Action Committee (*Price*)
 19 Fri. 4 pm LWVBAE Office Closes for Summer Break
 24 Wed. 9 am Executive Committee (*Fine*)



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Action Update

May - June 1998

NATIONAL: Action Alert

United Nations Funding

As reported in this section in October, 1997, the US owes the UN more than \$1 billion in unpaid dues. In the President's January State of the Union address, he urged Congress to approve a speedy payment of these legal treaty obligations. A supplemental appropriation of \$1.021 billion for UN arrears was submitted by the President in early February. Action on the President's request is expected in late April or early May. Last year, House Republican leaders linked an unrelated dispute over abortion to the UN payment bill, causing defeat. These same leaders indicate they'll pursue the same strategy again when the bill comes up.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Write, call, fax, or e-mail Senators Boxer and Feinstein and to Representative-elect Barbara Lee (elected by the April 7 Ninth Congressional District Special Primary election to fill out Representative Dellums' term.) Urge them to support prompt payment of our UN legal treaty obligations. Make the following points:

- Payment of UN arrears is vitally important and deserves to be considered on its own merits, not held hostage by Congressional Republican leaders to unrelated family planning issues.
- The US had not paid its obligations in full and on time since 1995.
- The international credit of the US, the ability of the President to conduct foreign policy, and the financial viability of the UN are all at stake.
- Polls consistently show that the vast majority of Americans support the UN. Congress should not heed the small, vocal minority opposed to US participation in the UN.
- Working alone, the US can't solve problems that transcend national borders. The UN provides an invaluable forum for collectively addressing global threats and advancing US national interests. Working through the UN, US taxpayers aren't saddled with the entire cost of addressing international crises that affect us as the de facto superpower in the post-cold war world.
- Write a letter-to-the-editor of your local newspaper as an individual and make the above points and others, in your own words. (A sample is available at our League office.)

N.B.: Senator Boxer - Fax / 415.956.6701 Phone / 202.224.3553
Senator Feinstein - Fax / 202.228.3954 Phone / 202.224.3841
E-mail can be sent to members of Congress through the League Action Line on the LWVUS web site at www.lwv.org.

LOCAL: Berkeley

Under the chairmanship of *Eva Bansner*, LWVBAE is working on the following actions:

- Completion of the Berkeley City General Plan.
- Review of the Waterfront Plan, including the Berkeley Marina proposals.
- Review of LWVBAE's run-off election position.
- Following and supporting the Berkeley City Council's Rules Committee efforts to streamline Council meetings and make them more effective.

**BRIEF LWV ACTION GUIDE FOR BALLOT MEASURES ON THE
California, June 2, 1998, Primary Election Ballot**

*** BE AN ADVOCATE FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT - VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ***

The League of Women Voters is always non-partisan. It does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. However, we are political because we support or oppose legislation, lobby legislators, and take stands on ballot measures on which we have positions, such as some of those on the June 2 primary ballot. The League is seen as being most effective when taking action. People listen when the League chooses to act.

For the ballot measures on the June 2 primary, the League will engage in its traditional dual roles: Voters Service (education) and Advocacy (action). Under Voters Service, our representatives will go to speak to community groups about the Pros and Cons of each of the nine ballot measures on the June ballot, without advocating for or against. They will also distribute the State League's Pros and Cons publication. At the times that we advocate, we will write letters-to-the-editor or op-ed pieces, issue press releases, distribute flyers, speak on radio and TV panel discussions, and provide speakers who advocate the League's positions to community groups. These two roles will be kept completely distinct.

After study, consultation, and reviewing our positions, of the nine measures on the June 2 ballot -

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RECOMMENDS:

NO on Proposition 223 - SPENDING LIMITS ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION.

This would neither improve children's education nor promote efficiency, but would restrict the ability of local districts to manage while adding unnecessary administrative costs and procedures.

NO on Proposition 225 - LIMITING CONGRESSIONAL TERM LIMITS.

We already have term limits. They're called elections. Supporters of this measure now say this proposition is unconstitutional and would like to remove it from the ballot.

NO on Proposition 226 - LIMITS ON UNION POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

This proposition is misleading and unfair as it applies only to labor and not business. The League supports true campaign finance reform, but this is bad public policy.

NO on Proposition 227 - ENGLISH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

This mandates a single method for teaching all children who are English learners and does away with flexibility for local districts. It has several other features that are unworkable.

LWVC HAS NO RECOMMENDATIONS ON:

Proposition 219 - BALLOT MEASURES. APPLICATION.

Proposition 220 - COURTS, SUPERIOR AND MUNICIPAL COURT CONSOLIDATION.

Proposition 221 - SUBORDINATE JUDICIAL OFFICERS. DISCIPLINE.

Proposition 222 - MURDER. PEACE OFFICER VICTIM. SENTENCE CREDITS.

Proposition 224 - STATE-FUNDED DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SERVICES.

N.B.: Be sure to get and read the LWVC materials from our office.

- PROS and CONS for the June 2, 1998, Primary Ballot.
- ACTION GUIDE, with complete information and background on the four propositions opposed by the League.

(This information was compiled from publications of the League at the national and state levels, and from discussions of the Action Committee.)

-Jo Ann B. Price, Action VP