

The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS
of BERKELEY, ALBANY
and EMERYVILLE



1414 University Avenue, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94702-1509 Tel. 510/843-8824

President: Jo Ann B. Price

May/June, 2001

Editor: Bob Hawley

Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 31, 2001

5:30 to 9:00 pm

• Social • Buffet Supper • Speaker • Business Meeting

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (at Los Angeles), Berkeley

Annual Meeting time is here again. This is a great opportunity for members: to get together with old League friends; to bring new friends who are potential League members to enjoy the social, buffet supper, and inspiring speaker; and to participate in electing the Board for 2001-2002, discuss and vote on program and budget, and hear about the League's accomplishments.

This year our speaker is Judge Brenda Harbin-Forte, Presiding Judge of the Alameda Juvenile Court. We welcome Judge Harbin-Forte who has been in this position for two years and has had some fascinating experiences. Among the issues she will address are the new aspects of life for juvenile offenders as a result of legislation and initiatives recently passed; what is happening with the dependency side of the juvenile justice system; and the alternatives for the new Alameda County juvenile justice facility. She will also share her personal

philosophy regarding how the juvenile justice system can be improved and what needs to be done to ensure the personal safety of children and teenagers. Judge Harbin-Forte looks forward to joining us and to answering our questions on the juvenile justice system. You won't want to miss this evening!

Ruthann Taylor is making the arrangements for the meeting with the help of her committee of *Louetta Erlin, Virginia Laurence, and Janet Strothman*. Please call the office early if you have a special request and make your reservation for supper by Friday, May 25. The cost is \$10 and may be sent or brought to the office or paid at the door if you call and make that arrangement. As always, you may bring your own food. Please let the office know if you need a ride.

Be sure to bring the enclosed "2001 Call to Annual Meeting" insert with you. It contains the Agenda for the evening, as well as the materials you'll need to get through the meeting, such as the proposed 2001-2002 budget and all the local support positions we'll be re-adopting. **HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

- Jo Ann B. Price, President

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Fax: 510/843-8828 E-mail: lwvbae@pacbell.net WebSite: home.pacbell.net/lwvbae

President's Column**End of the League Year Rituals - and Time for Restructure?**

As we come to the final quarter of another League year, the "fun", usual end-of-year activities begin to pile up after a long session of hard work. I'll address the astounding successes of our Board and members at the Annual Meeting on May 31 so I don't want to "steal my thunder" here.

Those "fun" things involve LWVBAE's Annual Meeting, the Bay Area Council, the LWVC Convention, and the final meetings of all the committees and boards before the summer hiatus. Of course, because of necessity, some committees do go on through the summer months even though our office is "officially" closed. This year the Peralta Community College District Study Committee will work through the summer because they must complete the study and ready consensus UNITs for the fall. The 3rd Annual Community Lunch Committee is heavily involved April through August because the event is held as closely as possible to August 26, the anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution that gave women the right to vote. The Board and Executive Committee have the month of August off, but otherwise have to prepare for September and all the League activities that get under way with a heavy commitment through to Thanksgiving.

Right now, however, as we all tie up the "loose ends" before moving on to other things, this is a special time. We get to see and enjoy each other with a more relaxed outlook and opportunity to appreciate the "little things". I have come to look forward to all these end-of-League-year rituals and plan to savor them.

I do want to sincerely thank the LWVBAE Ad hoc Restructure Committee: Chair, *Jane Bergen* and members, *Nancy Bickel* and *Jane Coulter*. After being pressed into service, they completed a fairly daunting task in about three weeks. They followed the charge well and gave the Board a report it could discuss seriously and come up with some immediate proposals for improvement, while being able to recommend to the incoming Board other areas to tackle. There were also areas where we had already made a change or that didn't seem to apply, but on the whole they helped to crystallize actions and activities that surely would help make Board life more efficient, effective, and pleasurable. No one has yet come up with a surefire way to make a majority of our 427 members want to be active in some fashion. The

same 30 to 50 members carry the League activity load, though many others love us, love the League, and support us with applause and money. We actually are grateful.

Thank you everyone for making the Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville League the unique, warm, crazy, and wonderful group we are!

-Jo Ann

March Board Briefs

Highlights of the March 2001 meeting are as follows:

The budget is on track for the year. Next year's proposed budget will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Membership - A lot of delinquencies have been resolved and a new member orientation is planned for March 17.

Program - The state program planning form, resulting from our local meeting, was approved. A meeting will be held on April 30, 4 pm, for local program planning. UNITs for the Election System Study have been completed and the consensus results will be forwarded to the State Committee. Our Instant Run-off Forum has been held and a proposed Peralta Community College forum is planned for April.

The March 8 Speaker Series will have Allan Maris on the youth programs in Albany. April will have a speaker from the BUSD. May will be Mayor *Nora Davis* in the new City Hall in Emeryville.

The next Environmental Concerns meeting will have a speaker from TURN about the energy situation.

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 31, 5:30 pm, at the Northbrae Church.

Helene Lecar reviewed a draft letter requesting an interview with each Peralta Community College trustee as part of the PCC study.

Restructuring - A committee composed of *Jane Bergen*, *Nancy Bickel* and *Jane Coulter* has interviewed a dozen League members, reviewed current League and Board practices, and submitted a report and recommendations. A discussion of this ensued, and was continued over to a special Board meeting on March 14.

-Beth Springston, Secretary

LWVBAE's 3rd Annual Community
Lunch -
Save the Date !!!

The committee is hard at work on the details of LWVBAE's 3rd Annual Community Lunch. **WE NEED YOUR HELP** with the mailing party and on the day of the event. Please call the Chair to let her know your availability for short periods during June, July, or August. We also need your input to give us new names for possible underwriters of, donors to, and attendees at the event.

We are working on a truly special speaker to attract an audience of 200, and we'll need your help in getting friends and colleagues to buy tickets. We expect every LWVBAE member will want to come and we hope you'll buy a ticket even if you'll be out of town. Our goal is to continue the "tradition" of having a larger attendance each year with more people coming from the community at large. More people means our civic work in our three cities is truly appreciated and it also translates into more money for the League's budget.

As to the date, we're letting the speaker choose one of two: Thursday, September 6 or Thursday, August 30. Please put both dates on your calendar until we're able to confirm one. **WE'RE DEPENDING ON YOU !!!**

-Joyce Jackson, Chair
Annual Community Lunch

++ Speaker Series ++
Thursday, May 10, 2001
Emeryville City Hall - 12 noon to 2 pm
1300 Park Ave. at Hollis

Our final program this League year will be on May 10 when we will meet in Emeryville, have lunch and hear a talk by *Nora Davis*, League member and Mayor, and then have a bus tour of some of the highlights of the city. *Nora* will tell us how Emeryville citizens have been working with City officials, in planning for their community, and how this has led to some big changes in the city's development.

We will meet in the Council chamber of Emeryville's newly refurbished **old** City Hall and have lunch in the patio. Please bring your own lunch, including beverage. The City will provide a bus and *Nora* will lead the tour.

Please be sure to call either *Janet Strothman* (841-2837) or me before Monday, May 7, to let us know that you plan to attend this special event. This is really important, because we have to tell the City what size bus we will need.

About getting to Emeryville, if you are interested in car-pooling and need help in arranging it, please call me about that as well. Parking is tight, so we should all either take public transit or go together. Hope to see you there!!

-Jean Safir, Speaker Series Coordinator

Help Shape The League's Work on Trade Policy!

Wonder what all the fuss was about at the WTO meeting in Seattle in 1999? Want to contribute to the development of a new LWVUS position on trade?

Here's how you can learn more about the challenges posed by the global economy and share your views on solutions to trade issues under debate around the world.

- Read the series of articles on trade in recent and upcoming issues of the National Voter and answer the survey questions that accompany these articles. The first survey, which appears in the March/April Voter, addresses environmental concerns.
- Join the online Trade List and explore trade issues with other League members.

You will find both the surveys and the trade listserv in the Trade Update area of the Members Only section of the LWVUS website (www.lwv.org). To access this area, the username is lwv and the password is carriecat.

- Submit more detailed comments to the LWVUS by answering one or more of the discussion questions posted in the Trade Update area of the website.
- Watch for the proposed new trade position in the Dec/Jan 2002 issue of the National Voter and participate in the every-member concurrence process.

- from LWVUS

Donors Through March

Personals

General Fund

Helen Wachs
Paul Warner

Foundation

Guy & Jeanine Saperstein

Welcome New Members

Joshua Demankos
Ardath Y. Miller
Marissa Saunders

In Sympathy

We extend sympathy to *Doris Fine* for the recent loss of her mother, to *Nina Olson* upon the death of her sister Ethel, and to *Eloise Bodine* whose brother died in April.

Enthusiastic New Member Event

The new members attending the Membership Committee gathering in March inspired hope for a growing level of League participation. Many thanks go to *Winnie McLaughlin* for sending out the invitations, organizing the phone calls, and providing delicious refreshments. Thanks also to *Carol Voisin* for helping with the phoning. The LWVBAE leaders who participated on March 17 - *Lois Brubeck*, *Helene Lecar*, *Winnie McLaughlin*, *Jo Ann Price*, *Mary Wainwright* - contributed to the enthusiasm. My thanks to them all.

-*Ginette Polak*, Membership Director



3rd Annual Community Luncheon

The league needs volunteers to serve on the luncheon committee and to help in other areas. If you are available to assist with the planning, please contact the league office at 843-8824.

-*Mary Wainwright*, Development VP

Polly Amrein has returned from a "safe and delightful" 3-week visit to Ghana plus a week spent in London. For 5 years in the 1960s, *Polly* was employed in Nigeria, also in western Africa.

Two weeks in Cuba with the Art Guild of the Oakland Museum were deemed worthwhile and interesting by *Phyllis Menefee*. This spring, *Phyllis* was recipient of a special award by the Art Guild in recognition of her many years as an unstinting volunteer, particularly as chair of the on-going re-organization of their library. *Marcelle Baxter* and *Marilyn Vaage* were recognized at the same assemblage as volunteers on the library project. *Phyllis Gaines* is a board member of the Art Guild.

Ginette Polak and her sister spent a long weekend with Elderhostel in Tiburon! *Evelyn Light* recommends river-barge cruising in Louisiana bayou country.

Fran Packard and *Lois Brubeck* enjoyed a long vacation in Italy with a brief foray into Spain. *Lois* is the current chair of the Juvenile Justice Committee of the LWV Alameda County Council.

Lenore Hawley, daughter of *Mim* and *Bob Hawley* and a nurse at Children's Hospital in Oakland, has returned safely from 7 days in Palestine, West Bank, where she was a volunteer member of a Doctors Without Borders team. This was her third tour out of the United States with Doctors Without Borders.

Lenora Young is enthusiastic about her appointment to Berkeley's City Commission on Aging. *Lenora's* main interest is low-income and senior housing.

A salute to one of our faithful office volunteers: *Emma Lue Kopp*, classified as a supporting member of our League, volunteers regularly in our office although she is an active Alameda LWV member. *Emma Lue*, who travels to Berkeley by BART, formerly served our league as a dedicated, productive board member.

-*Evelyn Light*

Action Update

County Leagues Interview Don Perata

In late March, representatives from the Alameda, Oakland, Piedmont and BAE Leagues conducted their annual interview of our State Senator. The questions concerned the adequacy and flexibility of education funding, the prospects for change in the initiative process, and what role governance, land use and fiscal reforms should play in preserving our quality of life.

Senator Perata said he supports placing a constitutional amendment initiative on the ballot, allowing localities to pass education bond issues without a supermajority. He sees a bias in Sacramento against funding what the legislature can't control, but believes the state should be spending more for education, particularly in light of all its mandates, and suggested that the state match local funding for promising programs.

With regard to initiative reform, he finds the League's proposal for an indirect initiative a "much more rational approach" than the present system. It would allow the legislature to clean up the proposed measure, remove obviously unconstitutional provisions, and then pass the bill itself. Failing this, the measure could go on the ballot in its original form. Perata feared that, because State Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg will be termed out next year, not much will come of Hertzberg's Commission on Initiative Reform. In order to continue the commission's work, Perata said he will look into taking the lead on initiative reform.

As chair of the Senate Bay Area Transportation Committee, Perata is closely involved with trying to solve local traffic congestion problems. Again, term limits make solutions difficult - all those working on the Bay Bridge after the Loma Prieta quake are now gone. Only he and Tom Torlakson are now working on transportation. Bay Bridge estimates keep mounting. Another major problem in the Bay Area is the overlapping authority of five different governmental agencies, and he would advocate, as a start, combining ABAG and MTC. He would also like to see the state give incentives to build transit villages and mandate higher density requirements.

Overshadowing all else is the need to solve the energy crisis, meaning that the legislature may accomplish nothing else of consequence. He feels the Governor's approach is ineffective, and that the state's economy may have to crash before a solution is found. Perata's approach would be to raise rates, establish a four-tier payment scale according to usage, protect the poor, and institute a crash conservation program. And next to energy's

domination of the scene, will be reapportionment.

Two central themes ran through the interview: disillusionment with the Governor's leadership and lack of communication with the legislature, and the conviction that term limits have seriously undermined the legislature's ability to work effectively. Perata is working with a coalition, including the League, Common Cause, the AARP and others, to develop an initiative which would allow legislators who gathered a certain number of signatures on petitions in their districts, to run beyond their term limits.

On the national level, we responded to LWVUS calls for action in support of the McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance Reform bill, which was passed by the Senate in early April. A companion bill will still need to pass the House, however, so we cannot sit back and relax yet. We also wrote letters in opposition to the President's proposed tax cut as being far too vast and regressive, and not at all in line with the League's long-standing support of a progressive tax structure.

State calls to action are still being awaited.

-Lois Brubeck, Action VP

Environmental Concerns Committee Wrap- Up

Agriculture and Energy

**May 14, Monday, 7:30 pm,
1340 Arch Street, Berkeley**

Last fall, the Environmental Concerns Committee had a series of speakers on land for food from the scale of local community gardens to the global food basket of the Central Valley. In the spring, our attention turned to the energy crisis. These subjects require sustained attention to the food production we each support and the energy we each use. Both also seem to demand much better state planning and suggest use of League connections to state government. To wrap up this year we want to pull together common thoughts on future agriculture and energy policy for review of our local board and transmittal to the state League.

Join us May 14. All members are welcome.

*Eva Bansner

Perspectives on California's Power Crisis

The March 13 Environmental Concerns meeting represented varied perspectives on California's power crisis - the worst of which is predicted to come this summer. One thing seems clear to all: it's time to stop relying solely on finite energy commodities, and to commit ourselves to greater conservation efforts and to the development of renewable resources. These longer term solutions, however, don't solve immediate shortages nor explain how we got here.

For detailed information and a fairly balanced view, read "California Electricity Crisis and Implications for the West" by Lawrence J. Makovish, Senior Director, North American Electric Poser at Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA). This is based on testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (January 31, 2001).

On March 13, Graham Brownstein of the Utility Reform Network (TURN) and *Lessly Ann Wikle* of PG&E were welcomed to present their perspectives on the issue. The following precis of their comments does not necessarily reflect the League's position, but rather presents us all with food for thought.

Brownstein, who is also the co-founder of the Oakland Alliance for Community Energy (Oakland ACE), admonished the lack of public involvement in public policy issues. He said the ideology that markets always do things better than governments supports the idea that competition and choice are good, but this doesn't hold true in the energy commodity market. Brownstein said Pacific Gas & Electric and California consumers have been abandoned by the PG&E Corporation. Meanwhile, PG&E is "using a bankruptcy claim to beat out money from consumers" while out-of-state generators are "holding us hostage".

He quoted TURN senior attorney Mike Florio, who represents consumers on both the ISO and PX (the state boards that oversee the transmission grid and calculate hourly prices) as saying that sellers of power ask as high a price as they think they can get rather than charge the cost-based price. Generators are gaming the market. "For example, in order to avoid the ISO's price cap, generators schedule their power as an export to Arizona or Oregon, not for actual sale, but to 'sit and wait' until the ISO is facing a shortage and needs the power to avoid blackouts. Generators then try to extract a price higher than the cap, in order to keep the lights on." This has come to be known as "kilowatt laundering". Florio

also was quoted as saying that the ISO occasionally has been forced to pay over the cap, and power generators will collect about \$3 billion in excess profits from California this year. "In one case where the PX caught the offender gaming the system, the penalty was less than the cost of the investigation. And there is strong opposition to changing a system that is so beneficial for so many of the market participants."

Brownstein said that caps are going after short term profit, and that TURN opposes bail-out. "Throwing more money at the utilities does nothing to solve our energy crisis. We propose that money go to invest in energy efficiency and renewables." Energy-saving investments include heating and cooking systems, tankless water heaters, better insulation, and compact fluorescent lightbulbs. "This is an opportunity to get it right," Brownstein said. "We need to get people educated and energized (and) motivate people to act."

LWVBAE member *Lessly Ann Wikle*, a PG&E employee, pointed out some key factors of AB1890, the legislation that led to energy restructuring in California.

The legislation opened competition so customers could choose electric service providers (ESPs), while utilities were required to divest at least 50 percent of their generating capacity to create a large number of independent generators. The legislation replaced the existing decentralized wholesale power market with a centralized energy market called the California Power Exchange (PX). Another institution, the Independent System Operator (ISO), became the traffic cop in the transmission grid that physically interconnects the electric consumers and producers.

The California restructuring plan faced a particular complication - "stranded costs". For a good discussion of this complicated issue read the CERA publication mentioned at the beginning of this article. Flawed decision making, flaws in the market design, too few power plants, and little understanding of the need for conservation efforts were some of the major problems that have led to the crisis situation California faces today.

Wikle said that PG&E's audit, which covers the period through December 2000, doesn't support the allegation that PG&E was "hiding money" within the corporation and its affiliates. The utility is in debt for

-(Continued on Page 7)

Redistricting in Alameda County 2001

The League of Women Voters Alameda County Council (LWVACC) voted in March, 2001 to act on the recommendations of its Redistricting Monitor Committee to focus the redistricting attention of the seven Alameda County Leagues of Women Voters on the Board of Supervisors and the County Board of Education.

Last year the LWVACC sent a preliminary letter to the Board of Supervisors, reminding them of the legal criteria mandated for redistricting and asking them to get involved with the process as soon as possible after the census figures were available in 2001. A second letter will be sent in April urging them to get on with the redistricting task and pointing out the need to reconfigure the existing district lines to be more coherent and to take into account the population surge in the southern and eastern parts of the county in their draft proposal that is supposed to go to the citizens for their input before the Board of Supervisors adopts new district lines. According to Brad Clark, the County Registrar of Voters, he needs the final adopted districts in August in order to make all the necessary boundary determinations for the supervisorial candidates running in the state primary in March 2002. Members of the LWVACC plan to have interviews with all the Supervisors after Easter to impress upon them the urgency of their acting on this if it's to be done legally and correctly. Once the situation is clear, LWVACC will write letters to the editor to inform the public of the Supervisors' plans and to comment on the legality, efficacy and timeliness of their plan.

As for the County Board of Education, the LWVACC asked the President of the Board to place an action item on redistricting on the March 27 Agenda. The Leagues wrote a letter to each Trustee, covering two topics: the need for the Board of Education to use the legal criteria and solicit meaningful public input before adopting new district lines; and the timeliness of considering at the same time the reduction of Board members from 7 to 5 to cover approximately the same districts as those of the Board of Supervisors. A number of reasons for the reduction in number were listed. These were uncovered by a 1996 LWVACC County study. Representatives of each League in Alameda County were present and spoke at the March 27 meeting.

Unfortunately, the Trustees were so unhappy with the recommendation to downsize that they spent the time allotted to the item attacking that and never addressing the more important redistricting issue. LWVACC has

written another letter to them, answering many of the points made and requesting interviews with them. We are also writing a third letter to the Board of Supervisors, requesting that they place the downsizing from 7 to 5 of the County Board of Education on the March 2002 ballot if the Trustees don't take that action on their own, as they are empowered to do. By placing the issue on the ballot, the Supervisors would be allowing the public to have a direct voice in the decision.

The redistricting issue comes up only once every ten years, at which time there's a window of opportunity to act. Once gone, that window is beyond the reach of concerned citizens until 10 years later. The downsizing issue, however, is within the powers of the County Board of Education and could occur at any time. As LWVACC stated in the two articles published earlier in this *Voter*, the overtly political aspects of redistricting that is done by members of the very board involved make it almost impossible to reach a result that truly benefits the voters. An article in the fall will sketch what happens as a result of League lobbying between now and then.

- Jo Ann B. Price, President

Perspectives (continued from Page 6)

unrecovered energy costs. According to Barrington-Wellesly Group (BWG), the consultants engaged by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to review the utilities financial situation, "PG&E made an accurate representation of its borrowing capability, credit condition, and potential events of default. PG&E cannot obtain the credit it requires." (1/31/01) Looking at the transition period 1/1/98 to 5/31/00, the review found that roughly 80 percent of the money collected from customers to pay energy costs and transition costs was used just to keep the lights on. The financial review confirms there is no money, either at the holding company or the unregulated affiliates with which to "bail" out the utility. "The next step is to increase supply and reduce demand, and to fund conservation," Wikle said.

(For more information: www.TURN.org or WWW.OaklandAce.org. For PG&E: www.pge.com. The California Energy Commission: CEC@ca.gov. The Smarter Energy Line is 1-800-933-9555.)

-Gail Schickele, E. Concerns Coord.,

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

April

- 25 Wed. 4-6 pm Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)
 28 Sat. 9:30 am-1 pm LWVBA Council Sunnyvale (Koshland)
 S.F. Bay Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Alviso Environmental Ed. Center
 30 Mon. 4-6 pm Local Program Planning **UNIT** LWVBAE Office (Price)

May

- 2 Wed. 4-6:30 pm LWVBAE Board Meeting LWVBAE Office (Price)
 5 Sat. 10:30 am-noon LWVC Convention Briefing LWVBAE Office (Price)
 7 Mon. 4-6 pm Education Committee (Lecar)
 10 Thu. noon-2 pm Speaker Series: Citizen Input in Emeryville (Safir)
 Mayor *Nora Davis*, at the newly refurbished Emeryville City Hall
 14 Mon. 7:30 pm Environmental Concerns 1340 Arch Street (Bansner)
 Committee Wrap-Up
 16 Wed. 9 am-noon Action Committee (Brubeck)
 16 Wed. 4-6 pm Peralta Community College District Study (Lecar)
 LWVBAE Office
 18-20 Fri., Sat., Sun. LWVC Biennial Convention Los Angeles (Price)
 30 Wed. 4-6 pm Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)
 31 Thu. 5:30-9 pm **LWVBAE Annual Meeting** (Price)
 Northbrae Community Church

June

- 6 Wed. 4-6:30 pm LWVBAE Turnover Board Meeting (Price)
 LWVBAE Office
 8 Fri. Deadline for July/August Voter (Safir)
 11 Mon. 4-6 pm Education Committee (Lecar)
 15 Fri. 4 pm - LWVBAE Office Summer Closing - (Taylor)
 20 Wed. 9 am-noon Action Committee (Brubeck)
 20 Wed. 4-6 pm Peralta Community College District Study (Lecar)
 (call for location)