

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville

SUMMER 2007



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PROFESSOR DANIEL M. KAMMEN

LEAGUE'S ANNUAL COMMUNITY LUNCHEON WILL FEATURE RENOWNED ENERGY EXPERT PROFESSOR DANIEL KAMMEN

Thursday, August 23, 2007 - 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
H^s Lordships on the Berkeley Marina, \$75 Donation
Invitations to be Mailed in July

The highlight of our League's 8th Annual Community Luncheon on August 23 will be a presentation by Professor Daniel Kammen, acknowledged world-wide for his expertise in alternative energy research and systems for energy efficiency.

Prof. Kammen, director of the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley, is one of the lead scientists who is on the executive committee of the Energy Biosciences Institute (EBI), which is hammering out the contract between UC Berkeley and BP (formerly known as British Petroleum) to administer a \$400 million grant from BP. UC President Robert Dynes has described this initial 10-year grant as "reinventing the research university". The basic thrust of the research will be on biofuels that could help save the planet from the catastrophic impact of global warming. Prof. Kammen will describe the University's involvement with the research and provide the details of how UC will maintain its academic independence in what is thought to be the largest private industry-academic partnership ever proposed.

Ever since the announcement of the grant, controversy has swirled around the proposed collaboration. Prof. Kammen, who holds professorships in the Energy and Resources Group and in the Goldman School of Public Policy, is also a professor of Nuclear Engineering. His research areas include the use and impacts of energy sources and technologies on development, particularly in Africa and Latin America. His work is interdisciplinary, and extends from theoretical

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: NEWS FROM CONVENTION

Our league sent 4 delegates to the LWVC convention this year. *Luanne Rogers, Helene Lecar, Jo Ann Price, and me, Jinky Gardner.* Held in Bakersfield, May 18-20, the Convention was both quiet and stimulating. It was quiet because this time there weren't any hard-fought, divisive issues, and stimulating for several reasons.

For one, *Jackie Jacobberger*, who has been president of the State League for two successive 2-year terms, was stepping down. Her Board gave her a very fond and heartfelt farewell.

Dolores Huerta, the keynote speaker, was engaging and ended by leading us in a chant of "*sí, se puede!*"- yes, we can!

The state program items and issues for emphasis which were chosen will give us stuff to bite into during the next two years. The top three program items will be health care, education and redistricting. No new study was set up.

There were, as always, useful workshops and lots of opportunities to network and hear what other Leagues are doing. Cross-pollination does a lot.

Last, but not least, I'm excited with our new LWVC president, *Janis Hirohama*. She is youngish and a practicing lawyer. She is the first "person of color" to hold our state League presidency, so she brings us a new perspective. She also brings lots of League experience since she served a term on the national League board. But most of all, she brings energy and enthusiasm.

The LWVC Convention was a great way to recharge our batteries, pick our new leaders, set our program direction and bring home the message "*sí, se puede!*"

Jinky Gardner, President

THE VOTER

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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The VOTER is free to members, \$10/year for non-members. Current and past issues of the VOTER are posted on our website: <http://lwvbae.org/>.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the active and informed participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

REPORT ON ANNUAL MEETING

On May 10, 2007, the LWVBAE held its Annual Meeting at the Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley. The featured speaker was new Alameda County Registrar of Voters Dave Macdonald. Mr. Macdonald possesses an undauntable attitude combined with perfect job skills, and thus succeeded in stimulating our electoral nerves while giving our members good reason to have confidence in the future functioning of the Alameda County election process. The County is facing several elections in the coming year; and the new voting machines, which are now pending state approval, will provide a back-up record for the verification of each vote.

The meeting started with a buffet supper catered by the Café de La Paz, followed by the meeting itself, which included: a review of the past year, a vote for the new Board, approval of the budget, sign-up for the re-constituted Observer Corps, and presentation of the LWVUS Immigration Study materials. Dave Macdonald's encouraging remarks wound up the evening.

Our many thanks go to the wonderful crew who contributed to making this event so pleasant and informative: *Jane Barrett, Janice Blumenkrantz, Eloise Bodine, Suzanne Chun, Tom Coulter, Barbara Nelson, Ginette Polak, Sherry Smith and Phoebe Watts.*

*Luanne Rogers,
Program VP*

CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE REFORM AS VIEWED BY THE CALIFORNIA LEAGUE

Health care reform is now at the top of the California political agenda. As of this writing, Senator Kuehl's California Universal Healthcare Act, SB840, has passed the full Senate, and is headed to be heard by the Assembly Health Committee. This bill is strongly supported by the LWVC as well as by numerous consumer advocate organizations. Most Democrats in the California State Legislature regard this bill as the "Gold Standard"; but some also support alternate bills which, in their opinions, are more likely to be signed into law: SB48 by Senator Don Perata and AB4 by Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's health plan has been widely publicized but, to date, has not been submitted as a bill in the legislature.

The LWVC has approved the following criteria to evaluate healthcare reform proposals:

Elements the LWVC can support:

- Universal access
- Comprehensive coverage
- Expanded risk pools
- Expanded public programs
- Purchasing pools that offer affordable, comprehensive benefits to all residents who choose to participate
- Proposals that ensure affordable comprehensive coverage for the working poor
- Limits on administrative costs of insurers (required medical loss ratio)
- Community rating and guaranteed issue
- Proposals that would improve access to preventive and primary care, disease management, and evidenced-based practice
- Initiatives to support Information Technology development and implementation

Elements the LWVC will not support:

- Individual or employee mandates
- Proposals that promote limited coverage in order to provide affordability—such as high deductible plans and Health Savings Accounts
- Proposals that encourage individual coverage rather than expanding risk pools
- Proposals without effective and assured cost controls

Proposals that do not ensure the same basic level of care for all:

- Employer mandate that does not require employer contributions equivalent to the current average employer contribution
- Employer mandate that does not apply to most employers
- Proposals that shift funds from safety net hospitals before the number of uninsured has been reduced to an equivalent extent
- Insurance regulation that does not include:
 - Community rating—Guaranteed issue
 - Minimum medical loss ratio
 - Standardized comprehensive benefit package
 - Rate regulation

Ursula Rolfe,
Director of Health Care

BERKELEY FOOD & HOUSING PROJECT

For over thirty years, the Berkeley Food & Housing Project's mission has been to ease and end the crisis of homelessness for Berkeley men, women and children. The BFHP strategy combines housing, food, case management and resource counseling with compassion to nurture individuals and families who have struggles with poverty and homelessness.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS SPRING REPORT

UCB Professor of Molecular and Cell Biology Dan Rokhsar was the featured speaker at the April Environmental Concerns meeting. Prof. Rokhsar presented detailed background regarding global fossil carbon emissions, which now amount to 7 billion metric tons per year from fuels; about half the carbon from fossil fuels ends up as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Levels are higher than ever and continue to rise. The solution, said Rokhsar, is a new energy mix that includes energy conservation; a decrease in fossil fuels and an increase in biofuels and solar, nuclear, hydraulic and wind power.

Global energy production – particularly the development of next-generation, carbon-neutral transportation fuels – is the focus of the highly anticipated and controversial Energy Biosciences Institute. EBI represents collaboration between UCB, LBNL, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and BP, which will support the Institute with a 10-year \$500 million grant.

“We want to do something that’s net carbon neutral,” Rokhsar said. “Biomass as a source for transportation fuels is a very good starting point for biofuels.”

Plant material that can be converted into fuel includes grasses, waste, wood and paper. “Grasses are a great starting point” and the Poplar tree is a model tree due to its rapid and dense growth, compact root system and pest and drought resistance, he said. On the subject of synthetic biology, Professor Rokhsar cited insulin as one of the drugs that has resulted from engineering microbes.

Rokhsar said the goals are: to solve scientific and technical problems required to create the future, to enable development of cellulosic biofuels industry and to educate scientists, policymakers and the public. Addressing concerns over

ownership of technology and intellectual property, Rokhsar assured, “There are very clear boxes here. When you’re an inventor it’s very clear regarding patents. It’s not a matter of trust, it’s a matter of law.” The universities, LBNL and BP “share a vision of creating robust and long-term global solutions to global energy challenges,” he said.

EBI’s multidisciplinary teams will collectively explore total-system approaches to problems that include the sustainable production of cellulosic biofuels, enhanced biological carbon sequestration, bioprocessing of fossil fuels and biologically-enhanced petroleum recovery.



At the May Environmental Concerns meeting, threats and protection to open space and parkland in California were discussed in a presentation by California State Parks Commissioner Caryl Hart. State Parks face serious threats from the impacts of toll roads, power lines, casinos, large-scale dairy operations, late maintenance in excess of \$1 billion, a growing and diverse population and climate change, Hart said.

State Park concerns include:

Colonel Allensworth State Historic Parks’ air and water quality threatened by a 12,000-cow dairy located 1,000 feet from the park. AB 576 (Carter) proposes a 2.5-mile buffer around the park.

Big Lagoon by Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park and National Forest threatened by casino plans by an adjacent Indian reservation. A proposal to move the casino to Barstow needs to be ratified by the Senate, Hart said, with SB 157 (Wiggins) now in subcommittee to address the gaming impacts.

A 4-lane toll road that could have dire effects on steelhead trout, and Federal endangered species such as the Pacific pocket mouse and Coastal California gnatcatcher threatens San Onofre State Beach.

In southeast California the 600,000-acre Anza Borrego Desert State Park, the largest state park

in the lower 48, is threatened by a proposed Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Project, a 500 kV transmission line in conjunction with several 230 kV transmission lines, by the San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E).

Hart said that each situation has an accompanying legislative answer, but the permanent solution is to render State Parks as sacrosanct.

“People need to have a new vision of parks,” she said.

California State Parks is responsible for almost one-third of California’s scenic coastline: the agency manages nearly 1.4 million acres, over 280 miles of coastline, 625 miles of lake and river frontage, nearly 15,000 campsites and 3,000 miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails.

Caryl Hart is a public defender and a Ph.D. candidate in the Division of Society and Environment in UC Berkeley’s Department of Natural Resources. She is the recipient of a \$3,500 grant from the LWV Berkeley Foundation’s Eva Alexis Bansner Fund for Sustainable Communities for her work to create a framework for park and open space planners to better serve the needs of the diverse and underserved populations.

*Gail Schickele, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns*

NEW MEMBERS

Our Warmest Welcome
To Our Newest Members:

*Jan Collins
Gordon Gaines
Charlene Harrington
Patricia Shanks*

LEAGUE’S ANNUAL COMMUNITY LUNCHEON

(continued from p. 1)

studies to highly practical field projects and the design and development of specific policy initiatives and pieces of legislation. Daniel Kammen is uniquely qualified to address questions about the EBI and about the public policy concerns surrounding alternative energy research.

Prof. Kammen is a gifted speaker who can make the most complex topics comprehensible to the listener. His knowledge and enthusiasm, and now his lead association with EBI, have made him a much-sought-after speaker, and the League is honored that he has joined the list of past Community Luncheon speakers that have included former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, Dean Christopher Edley, Jr. of Boalt Hall School of Law, and former UC Chancellor and Smithsonian Secretary I. Michael Heyman.

The Luncheon will be held August 23, 11:30 to 1:30 p. m., at H^s Lordships at the Berkeley Marina. Members and those who have attended past Luncheons will be receiving invitations in the mail in July, and are urged to bring friends to this gala event. It’s a wonderful way to show people what the League does in the community-- the Luncheon is the main fundraiser of the year to support the League’s many activities and programs.

Cody’s Books has once again generously agreed to contribute half the proceeds from sales of topical books at the event, and there will also be the popular League Bazaar of items for sale to benefit the League.

The Luncheon will highlight your summer. Watch for your invitation and join us on August 23.

*Sherry Smith (548-1769) and
Suzanne Chun (843-7855),
Luncheon Co-Chairs*

BROWN BAG LUNCHEONS

On Tuesday, June 5, our Brown Bag Luncheon presenters were Lily DiVito of "The Bread Project" and Lila Blanchard of Rubicon Programs Inc. The Bread Project is housed at the Berkeley Adult School, where their products may be purchased each week day starting mid-morning through the lunch hour. Rubicon, which now runs the "One-Stop Business and Career Center" at 1918 Bonita Avenue in Berkeley, addresses workforce development for Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville and Piedmont. Since 2000, The Bread Project has provided 500 formerly jobless individuals with a 9-week training period; the employment success rate is very high. Rubicon also serves a very low-income population, and also reports referrals from the homeless, Berkeley Mental Health and the Department of Rehabilitation.

Both speakers brought samples of their baked goods, which were delicious (Rubicon desserts are sold at Andronico's), and both organizations welcome any help you might be able to provide; there is a limited number of employment opportunities in each organization. For further information, go to www.breadproject.org or phone and fax to order baked goods: (510) 644-4575; also go to www.rubiconprograms.org or phone (510) 549-8820 or fax (510) 982-7130.

Upcoming Brown Bag Luncheons

The meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, from 12:15 p.m. to 2 p.m., except for no meeting in July and the November meeting will be on the second Tuesday, 11/13, because there is an election in Emeryville on the first Tuesday. All Brown Bag Luncheons are held in the Edith Stone Room at the Albany Library, Marin and Masonic Avenues, Albany.

August 7: "Youth Prison Reform: Does the Governor Have it Right?" to be led by our resident expert on Juvenile Justice, *Pat Kuhi*. There are big changes in the works and Pat has decades of experience and history to share with us.

September 4: "What Happened to the High School Students Who Did Not Pass the Exit Exam in 2006 and 2007?" to be led by *Helene Lecar*, our resident higher-education expert. *Helene* will explain what should have happened and what we can do to improve the current education system.

We hope to see you and your friends and neighbors at these Brown Bag Luncheons and those that follow in October, November and December.

Luanne Rogers
Program VP

BOARD BRIEFS

At its May meeting, the LWVBAE Board approved a corrected Proposed Budget for 2007-2008 for adoption at the Annual Meeting; approved plans for a WHY VOTE? contest in our public high schools; voted to encourage youth memberships @ \$30/year; approved a new design for the LWVBAE Voter; and discussed several other ongoing League activities.

Ginette Polak,
Substituting as Secretary

APRIL & MAY DONATIONS

To the LWVBAE General Fund

Jean M. Allen

Eva Bradford

Linda Burden

Peggy Casey

Barbara Gross Davis

Mary K. Gaillard

Gordon & Phyllis Gaines

Heidi Gillies

Marianne Graham

Dorothy Jansizian

Patricia Kates

Allie Norton

Susan Pownall

George H. Trillins

Judy Walters

To the LWVB Foundation

David Bradford

Joan Grossman

Joyce Jackson

Jeanne McHugh

Many thanks for remembering your League.
Louetta Erlin,
Donations Secretary

A BIG THANK YOU!

For the past 11 months I've had the privilege of serving as Editor of *THE VOTER*. My tenure has been both fun and instructive, and I was therefore very pleased to be offered the opportunity to serve for another year, which I do with renewed energy.

Because my name has appeared on the cover of each issue of *THE VOTER*, my participation in this effort is visible. However, there are several people whose critical input into each issue is somewhat *sub rosa*, and I would like to thank these people publicly:

First, my deepest thanks to LWVBAE members *Evelyn Light* and *Marj Rubinow* for their wonderful proofreading skills. *Marj* has decided to take a sabbatical from *THE VOTER*, but I am delighted that *Evelyn* will continue to help us with her invaluable proofreading abilities, which are enhanced by an absolutely encyclopedic knowledge of LWVBAE history.

Next, my gratitude to former Office Manager *Karen Carlson-Olson* and to current Office Manager *Cheryl Nichols* for overseeing the assembling and mailing process of *THE VOTER*. This effort involves preparation of mailing labels, coordination of volunteers for sorting and labeling, and actual trekking to the post office. From my vantage point, this last step has always taken place smoothly and with good cheer.

Finally, I wish to thank *Jane Brandes*, whose superb editing and re-write skills have rendered possible a sometimes daunting task. Because of the recent re-configuration of the LWVBAE Board, *Jane's* name will no longer appear on the Board roster, but in the coming year I look forward to being able to rely on *Jane's* considerable talents!

My gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all,

Alice Kisch, Editor

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE
BOARD 2007-2008**

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
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| Membership: | KAREN NELSON |
| Director of Health Care: | URSULA ROLFE |
| Director of Observer Corps: | PHOEBE WATTS |

IMMIGRATION TO BE TOPIC OF FALL GENERAL MEETING

The Fall General Dinner Meeting will take place at the Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley on Thursday, September 27, from 5:00 pm. to 8:30 pm. The speaker, yet to be determined, will address the local impact of present and future immigration policy. Stay tuned, and SAVE THE DATE.

Luanne Rogers,
Program VP

LWVUS IMMIGRATION STUDY

While we wait for the Study Guides to arrive from the US League in mid-September, we have other background materials available for you to look at. It is also possible to access some useful information from the "members only" section of the LWVUS website. If you have trouble logging in or registering for the first time, please contact *Luanne Rogers*, Program VP, at (510) 559-1006.

We still need members for the LWVBAE Immigration Study Group, and we are looking for a Study Chair or Co-Chairs. We are currently in the process of getting literature on immigration to local reporters and libraries. Call *Luanne Rogers* if you are interested in any aspect of this short-term commitment.

Luanne Rogers,
Program VP



League of Women Voters

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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
LWV Foundation are deductible to
the extent allowed by law.

calendar

JULY

| | | | | |
|----|-------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7 | SAT. | TBA | BOARD RETREAT, 2339 EDWARDS ST. | <i>J. GARDNER, 548-5292</i> |
| 17 | TUES. | 7:30-9:30 PM | CIVICS EDUCATION ACTION COMMITTEE | <i>B. CHAPMAN, 527-0827</i> |
| | | TBA | BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE | <i>J. GARDNER, 548-5292</i> |

AUGUST

| | | | | |
|----|--------|----------------------|--|---|
| 3 | FRI. | 5 PM | DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER VOTER | <i>A. KISCH, 985-0651</i> |
| 7 | TUES. | 12-2 PM | BROWN BAG LUNCHEON SERIES, ALBANY LIBRARY'S EDITH STONE ROOM | <i>L. ROGERS, 559-1006</i> |
| 13 | MON. | | LBVBAE OFFICE REOPENS AFTER SUMMER BREAK | |
| 21 | TUES. | 7:30-9:30 PM | CIVICS EDUCATION ACTION COMMITTEE | <i>B. CHAPMAN, 527-0827</i> |
| 23 | THURS. | 11:30 AM- 1:30 PM | ANNUAL COMMUNITY LUNCHEON, H ^S LORDSHIPS, BERKELEY MARINA | <i>S. CHUN, 843-7855</i> <i>S. SMITH, 548-1769</i> |
| | | TBA | BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE | <i>J. GARDNER, 548-5292</i> |

SEPTEMBER

| | | | | |
|----|--------|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 4 | TUES. | 12-2 PM | BROWN BAG LUNCHEON SERIES, ALBANY LIBRARY'S EDITH STONE ROOM | <i>L. ROGERS, 559-1006</i> |
| 7 | FRI. | 5 PM | DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER VOTER | <i>A. KISCH, 985-0651</i> |
| 10 | MON. | 7:30-9 PM | ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, 1340 ARCH STREET | <i>C. STONE, 549-0959</i> |
| 18 | TUES. | 7:30-9:30 PM | CIVICS EDUCATION ACTION COMMITTEE | <i>B. CHAPMAN, 527-0827</i> |
| 27 | THURS. | 5:00-8:30 PM | FALL GENERAL MEETING NORTHBRAE COMMUNITY CHURCH | <i>L. ROGERS, 559-1006</i> |
| | | TBA | BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE | <i>J. GARDNER, 548-5292</i> |

BERKELEY ADDRESSES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED