

# The Voter

League of Women Voters of Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville



SEPTEMBER 2009

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## FALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, October 1 – 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM  
(MEET AND GREET AT 5:30 PM)

Northbrae Community Church  
941 The Alameda, Berkeley

“WHERE’S THE COMMUNITY IN OUR  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES?”

### SPEAKERS:

DR. NICKY GONZALES-YUEN, PERALTA DISTRICT TRUSTEE  
DR. CY GULASSA, PERALTA DISTRICT TRUSTEE  
(TO BE CONFIRMED)  
DR. BETTY INCLAN, PRESIDENT, BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE

At this year’s Fall General Membership Meeting three distinguished local educational experts will discuss the California community college system. (See *Helene Lecar’s* in-depth article on the current status of our community colleges on pp. 2-3.)

Dinner will take place between 6:00 pm and 6:45 pm and will be followed by our program, after which there will be ample time for questions and discussion.

To reserve a dinner and/or to request a ride to this event, please call the LWVBAE office at 510.843.8824; dinner costs \$15.

Don’t miss this convivial, important and informative gathering of our membership!



## THE COMMUNITY IN OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Quick questions:** Do you know who represents *you* on our community college board of trustees? Have you ever met this person?

To find out, join us at LWVBAE's Fall General Membership Meeting on Thursday, October 1 (see page 1 for details). Our speakers, Dr. Nicky Gonzalez-Yuen, one of our Peralta District trustees, (and also, we hope, our other trustee, Dr. Cy Gulassa) and Dr. Betty Inclan, President of Berkeley City College, will be answering the basic question: "Where's the Community in our Community Colleges?"

### The Big Picture

As you know, this year has been rough on all California colleges – indeed, on all of education – because of the budget difficulties. For the community colleges, the final July budget cut of Fiscal Year 2009-2010 amounted to \$936 million, with an increase in student fees from last year's tuition cost of \$20 per credit to \$26 per credit. Even with the added fee revenue (about \$70 million) and a presumed \$130 million from the federal stimulus package (more likely \$80-\$85 million), these legislated cuts are the deepest in the entire history of the State's community college system.

For Peralta alone, the estimated loss in apportionment funding for the current fiscal year is over \$3 million (as of July 4 cut – not yet the final budget, but close). Another cut of \$3 million in State funding could well be mandated to help cover the massive shortfall in the State's 2008-2009 budget – that's over \$6 million in two years from a 2007-2008 District operating budget of about \$150 million. Because the cuts will eliminate many part-time faculty positions, class sections and many categories of student services, the Community College League estimates that Peralta will have a projected loss of almost 5,000 students who would otherwise have been able to attend.

### The Local Scene: The Bad News

The failure of California's budget process and the chaos in the national financial markets during the past year was further compounded by difficulties within Peralta itself. Among the many upgrades funded under the Measure A bond passed in 2006 were sweeping changes district-wide in Peralta's information technology systems, just when Peralta was operating without a Vice Chancellor for Information Technology.

With no in-house technology leader, the District relied on external consultants and committed to purchase expensive applications that no one on staff could test thoroughly to be sure they met the many needs of students and staff. The delay in processing

### THE VOTER

Published monthly except January, June & August by

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE

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Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

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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 at lwvbae.org.

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

checks for people receiving financial aid in the fall term of 2008 created a nightmare for thousands of students on all four campuses who rely on their stipends to pay for books, transportation, child care and other expenses. Registration procedures, especially for new students, were so hard to follow that the colleges had to recruit student ambassadors on all four campuses to serve as mentors helping people enroll.

By dint of heroic overtime efforts on the part of everyone on staff, the student financial-aid fiasco was finally resolved in December, and registration for the spring 2009 semester went fairly smoothly. The District, however, has yet to name a permanent information technology chief; and the entire department remains seriously understaffed.

The latest bad news pertains to possible irregularities in letting large, no-bid contracts for professional services to a firm whose president has been, in other contexts, a business partner of Peralta Chancellor Elihu Harris. Chancellor Harris has rejected any allegations of impropriety out of hand. At his request, the Board asked State Chancellor Diane Woodruff to appoint an independent investigator to report on the actual procedures followed, and she has asked Mark Drummond, a former California community colleges State chancellor, to take on the task.

Unwarranted large pay raises for selected district administrators, while campus workers were asked because of budget cuts to take unpaid furloughs, allegations of extravagance on the part of several trustees and administrators traveling at district expense, and adding of unnecessary District consultants and administrative positions have appeared in local newspapers and will also be coming under scrutiny.

(continued on p. 3)

**THE COMMUNITY IN OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

*(continued from p. 2)*

**The Local Scene: The Good News**

The Alameda County Measure A money for new construction and upgrading has given us a far more stable base than most other community college districts have right now. Our bonds have enjoyed more favorable interest rates on the market than those offered to State bonds.

That money has already enabled the District to address all the most urgent health and safety issues in its physical plant and is now underwriting bigger projects. These larger construction efforts were slow getting started because the trustees and administrators at both the District and campus levels all agreed that the new buildings must be designed as a group in order to serve the needs of the Peralta community of the future. Once the Academic Strategic Plan was in place, planning for the new construction in a Facilities Master Plan for all four colleges could proceed.

Essential to the entire enterprise is green technology. Both the landscaping and architecture on all four campuses are designed to be as efficient and ecologically sound as possible, from low-flow replacement toilets and low-maintenance plantings to energy-saving lighting and temperature control. Our beautiful new Berkeley campus, funded and furnished partly with Measure A money, is a LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Silver certified building. Enrollment has so far exceeded the planning for Berkeley Community College (BCC) that the new building's open space, intended to allow for future growth, is being built out even as the new term opens to serve the students who are already enrolled.

The new Laney Culinary Academy work stations are enough to make any cook envious; and diners at the Laney Bistro have a spacious, wood-paneled room with a view in which to enjoy their lunch. We had hoped to have the students in the Culinary Academy cater our Fall General Membership Meeting, but we will have to wait a while to sample their handiwork. Not everything is yet in place to serve food off-campus.

The upheavals caused by putting up new buildings, renovating old ones and repaving parking lots have temporarily dislocated many programs and classes, but people take pleasure in seeing the changes that are occurring. At College of Alameda, the first new building makeover is Building A, Admissions and Administration. Its new incarnation is just emerging as a light, airy, welcoming space for students and staff alike.

Despite the problems in modernizing and unifying the District's technology systems and the many hardships it has caused, the colleges have managed to preserve thriving programs on a shoestring. All the

turmoil of the past year and the unfinished business surrounding the District's affairs, however, have left relatively little money or energy for reaching out further into the community.

Billboards advertising the District's offerings appear on major bus routes, but there is no money for follow-up. BCC's Student Ambassador Corps, formed to send college students into high schools and middle schools to talk about the benefits of attending community colleges, was extended to all four Peralta campuses but now awaits the resources to expand.

Come to our Fall General Membership Meeting on October 1, meet our trustees and Berkeley City College's President, bring your own questions, and find out how we can help our college and the District integrate more fully into the ongoing life of our communities.

*Helene Lecar*  
Education Director

<b>LWVBAE 2009-2010 OFF-BOARD PORTFOLIOS</b>	
ALBANY ACTION CO-CHAIRS	JEAN SAFIR ALAN MARIS
CIVICS EDUCATION CHAIR	JINKY GARDNER
CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION CO-CHAIRS	JAN BLUMENKRANTZ REGINA BEATUS
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JUVENILE JUSTICE CO-CHAIRS	LOIS BRUBECK PAT KUHI
LWV BAY AREA LIAISON	JEAN SAFIR
LWV ALAMEDA COUNTY LIAISONS	NANCY BICKEL SHERRY SMITH
MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	JINKY GARDNER KAREN NELSON
OFFICE MANAGER/VOLUNTEER TRAINING OFFICE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR	CHERYL NICHOLS JANE BARRETT
WEB MANAGER/COMPUTER CONSULTANT	BILL CHAPMAN
WOMEN'S ISSUES	CHARLOTTE LICHTERMAN

## CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT ON MAXIMILIAN AUFFHAMMER

Economist Maximilian Auffhammer addressed the economics of climate change in his May 18 lecture to Environmental Concerns. The University of California (UC) Berkeley Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics and International and Area Studies is a recipient of UC's Distinguished Teaching Award for 2009.

Auffhammer's work on global climate change issues specializes in the intersection of climate change and pollution, the sources of pollution and the policies to regulate those compounds. "CO2 is not the most potent GHG (greenhouse gas) but causes the most warming because it is so abundant," he said.

In 2004 China overtook the U.S. as leading emitter of fossil fuel-related carbon dioxide; yet, says Auffhammer, "We know very little about emissions from other countries; there are no good historical records." A very low emitter of CO2 until now, China has great potential for a climate leadership role, he said. China's self interest could shift energy infrastructure toward being energy efficient, sacrificing short growth for longer, more sustainable growth to help develop and export the market in energy efficient products.

A carbon tax is administratively easy and efficient to collect, he said, with the carbon tax charge at the source built into the price the consumer pays. "This is better than income tax," he said. Carbon tax can be made revenue neutral by reducing existing taxes and fees. A tax on carbon is a move toward more efficient allocation of resources resulting in substantial reductions of air pollution; whereas, many alternative forms of taxation have opposite effect, he postulated.

China stands to gain most from the carbon tax if joint global efforts to impose such tax are under way, he said. Import tariffs would be one way to force compliance by competitors.

Forecasts are crucial in global circulation models, he said. The UN Framework dominates the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emissions forecasts. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is a treaty signed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro by more than 150 countries for the "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system." Forecasts are derived from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) NEMS model. The National Energy Modeling System (NEMS) is a U.S.

Department of Energy economic and energy model of U.S. energy markets that projects the production, consumption, conversion, import, and pricing of energy. The model relies on assumptions for economic variables, such as world energy market interactions, resource availability (which influences costs), and demographics.

Auffhammer said economists relate income and equality reduced from models of CO2 emissions based on the Kuznets curve theory that economic inequality increases over time while a country is developing, then after a critical average income is attained, begins to decrease. Economists who collected data on various air pollutants and looked at correlation between this and income found there was inverse relationship between income and bad air, he said.

"The notion of trying to figure out the carbon is so difficult," he said, "so trying to figure out external costs for carbon is next battleground." Hydro models of climate change are the hardest to understand, he said.

The impacts from climate change will be wide. "Deceleration in the growth of rice production, especially in several Asian countries, is the cause for concern in terms of world food security," he warned.

Changes in the circulation pattern of the oceans, change in evaporation and humidity, change in fire patterns - what's on the horizon of greatest importance? "While these are possible scenarios that could happen, we don't know the threshold at which they will happen," he said. "The problem we're dealing with is that we have thresholds that we don't know where they are and when we pass them they may be irreversible."

"There's a notion we may engage in meaningful legislation and benefit in California with AB 32 and not destroy the California economy," he offered.

*Gail Schickele, Co-Director  
Environmental Concerns*

Environmental Concerns met at the home of Roz and Art Rosenfeld. Roz passed away unexpectedly on June 2 but will long be remembered as a great supporter and friend of LWVBAE. We remain forever grateful for her gracious and generous support of Environmental Concerns as our meeting host and as a leader in energy issues. Our heartfelt sympathies to Art Rosenfeld and to the Rosenfeld family.

## HERE'S HOW TO MAKE A NO-COST-TO-YOU FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR LEAGUE!

You can immediately help rescue the League from its financial straits – without spending one cent. Just join your fellow League members who have already enrolled in the Andronico's scrip program. Here's how it works: You buy the scrip from the League and spend it like money; a coupon for which you pay \$25 buys \$25 worth of groceries at the check-out stand. Andronico's will then contribute to LWVBAE a generous 6% of the value of the scrip you spend.

While 6% of one \$25 coupon seems a paltry amount, you can buy any number of coupons at one time (the League sells them six times a year), and the returns add up nicely over the year. If all the members of our League who ever shop at Andronico's will participate in this remarkable no-pain, lots-of-gain plan, we'll see some great results.

The League has also taken part in a similar program at Safeway – one that does not use coupons, but returns an average of about 2% to the League on purchases by shoppers who have enrolled in the program.

For more information please call *Ruthann Taylor* at 510.527.0673 or email her at *clydetaylr@att.net*. And, as a long-time scrip program participant, I'm happy to talk to any of you about it (510.527.7727). Thanks!

*Mim Hawley*  
Director at Large

### NEW MEMBERS

Our Warmest Welcome  
To Our Newest Members:

*Maria Estrada*  
*Marge Harmond*  
*Dorothy Vucinich*

And To Rejoining Members:  
*Joan Kip Nancy Pakter*

### RECOMMENDED WEBSITE: SHEILAKUEHL.ORG

Former California State Senator Kuehl is now on the California Waste Management Board. Check out her website for a really good analysis of California's budget process and current economic situation. SheilaKuehl.org provides more than thirteen comprehensive and easily-understood essays.

*Janet Strothman*  
Health Care Committee

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE BOARD 2009-2010

Recording Secretary:	ANGHARAD JONES
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Environmental Concerns: (CO-DIRECTORS, ONE VOTE)	CAROL STONE/ GAIL SCHICKELE
Health Care Director:	URSULA ROLFE
Directors at Large:	MIM HAWLEY JEAN SAFIR

### CONVERSATIONS AT THE LEAGUE

Starting in October we plan to offer LWVBAE members an opportunity to discuss issues of League interest. The proposed new format for the noon to 2 pm meetings on the first Tuesday of each month will be to start each meeting with a few brief remarks from a facilitator who is knowledgeable about that month's topic and follow it up with a facilitated group discussion. Our goals are to foster better understanding of the issues as well as to encourage member connections and friendships with one another.

At each Conversation you are encouraged to bring your own lunch, but water is the only beverage allowed in the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Public Library, which is located at 1247 Marin Avenue (between Evelyn and Masonic) in Albany. Look for Conversation details regarding dates, time and place in *The Voter*, as well as the specific topic for each of the Issues Conversations.

*Ginette Polak*, Chair  
Conversations At The League

### NEW HOURS FOR LWVBAE OFFICE

Effective August 2009 our Office Manager's hours are: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm.



**League of Women Voters**  
 Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville  
 1414 University Avenue, Suite D  
 Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

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## how to join

fill in coupon below and mail with your check in the amount of \$75 (\$40 for each additional household member; \$30 for a student membership) to the order of LWVBAE,

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. Eve. \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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 the extent allowed by law.

## calendar

### SEPTEMBER

4 FRI.	5:00 PM	<b>DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER VOTER</b>	A. KISCH, 985.0651
7 MON.		<b>LABOR DAY - LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
14 MON.	7:30-9 PM	ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, LOCATION TBA	C. STONE, 549.0959
16 WED.	1:30-3:30 PM	CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM, LWVBAE OFFICE	J. BLUMENKRANTZ, 548.3845
21 MON.	1:30-3:30 PM	HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE	C. LYNCH, 527.2173
22 TUES.	7:30-9 PM	CIVICS EDUCATION ACTION COMMITTEE LWVBAE OFFICE	J. GARDNER, 548.5292
23 WED.	3-5 PM	BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE	S. SMITH, 548.1769
29 TUES.	3-5 PM	ACTION COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE	S. SMITH, 548.1769

### OCTOBER

1 THURS.	5:30-8 PM	<b>FALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING</b> (SEE P. 1)	LWVBAE, 843-8824
2 FRI.	5:00 PM	<b>DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER VOTER</b>	A. KISCH, 985.0651
6 TUES.	12-2 PM	CONVERSATION ON LWV ISSUE, EDITH STONE ROOM, ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1247 MARIN AVENUE, ALBANY	G. POLAK, 841.4546
12 MON.	7:30-9 PM	ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, LOCATION TBA	C. STONE, 549.0959
19 MON.	1:30-3:30 PM	HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE, LWVBAE OFFICE	C. LYNCH, 527.2173
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28 WED.	3-5 PM	BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE	S. SMITH, 548.1769

**BERKELEY ADDRESSES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED**