



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY, AND EMERYVILLE

1414 University Avenue, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94702-1509 Tel: (510) 843-8824
Fax: (510) 843-8828 E-mail: lwvbae@pacbell.net WebSite: home.pacbell.net/lwvbae

President: Jo Ann B. Price

September, 1999

Editor: Bob Hawley

Fall Meeting

Thursday Evening, September 23, 1999, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley

Program

- 5:30 p.m. Supper and Social Hour.** Supper costs \$10, catered by Shai's Delicatessen. Make reservations for supper by calling the League office (843-8824) by September 17. Car pools and rides home will be arranged if requested when you sign up. You may send payment to the office or bring it with you to the meeting.
- 6:30 p.m. Brief business meeting** and preview of League activities planned for the coming year.
- 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Michael Pyatok**, FAIA, architect and principal of his own design firm since 1985. Topic: "Community Development Strategies and Designs for Affordable Housing". Mr. Pyatok has designed award-winning multi-family housing for non-profit and for-profit developers throughout the US. He has worked closely and successfully with many inner-city community groups. His talk is especially timely for our League, since we will be holding a number of discussion meetings and UNITs to reassess and revise our housing positions in the coming months (see related story on Page 3).

All League members, prospective members and friends are invited to attend.

Join us for the social hour over supper, or come after supper for the business meeting and speaker, but please call and let us know.

The church is wheelchair accessible from the parking lot, which has spaces reserved for disabled..
AC Transit buses 7 (last bus 9 pm) and 43 (last bus 11:30 pm) stop nearby. Call 817-1717 for schedules.

Y2K Is Here - Are We Ready?

To stay viable an organization has to change. The history of the League of Women Voters has proven this to be a fact. In the 1940s, LWV made significant changes in its programs and outreach in order to stay relevant and vigorous in a rapidly changing society. Now, in the dawn of the 21st century, the League is challenged AGAIN to take some bold new steps.

Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, President of LWVUS, in her address to the League of Women Voters of California convention in May 1999 said "...the League stands for a government, at all levels, that is as diverse as the people it governs - government of the people...And we stand for a government that addresses the real concerns of all Americans - a government for the people." Her directive for change on behalf of the national board was clear.

If the League does stand for a government "...that is as diverse as the people it governs...", then our membership must also reflect that diversity in its fullness. This means we need to be open and receptive to differences in our midst.

-(Continued on Page 7)

President's Column Welcome Back!

As I write my remarks for this September *Voter*, it is early August and all the world seems to be on vacation. However, let me share with you how League members are "minding the store".

The dedicated, hard working Development Committee for the Inaugural LWVBAE Community Luncheon is handling every detail of this late-August kick-off event to make sure it is memorable, successful, and a pleasure to attend. The Program Committee for the Fall Meeting is working on every aspect of that first gathering of the new League year to see that the speaker, food, and League volunteer opportunities are perfectly showcased. The *Voter* staff, writers, and mailers are poised for the ritual of getting out yet another informative, well-laid-out issue that arrives in timely fashion.

The committees of our two ongoing and two new studies are gathering and honing information to make appropriate presentations to League members according to the phase each study is in. The Administration and office crew are preparing improved user-friendly materials and making the office an even better work place for League meetings and activities. The Executive Committee is getting ready for its late August meeting in preparation for the first Board meeting of the new League year in early September.

Action Committee members are following the last days of the State Legislature and Congress while enjoying the local Council and School Board hiatus in our three communities. They are also gearing up to make comments on the next draft of the new Berkeley General Plan. The Community Services team is planning new ways to reach out effectively through League Consultant Services, the Cable TV Project, Voter Services, Smart Voter, and the Speakers Bureau.

The Membership team is organizing new ways to increase and diversify League membership, while acknowledging, enriching, and retaining current members. Our Treasurer, who rarely has a respite, is keeping the finances on track making per member payments (PMP) to the national, state, and Bay Area Leagues; depositing dues and donations; and paying bills.

This group of friendly, talented, and committed League individuals - your Board and its committees -

Board Briefs

The 1999-2000 board held a Retreat/Future Planning meeting on 7/21/99 at the Emery Bay Club House. It was not a regular business meeting, but one to enable new and continuing board members to become better acquainted with one another and to share ideas and plans for League activities in the coming year.

Two business items were approved. They were the Community Luncheon plan and budget and the application to the LWVC incentive program titled "Building the Future". The latter involves choosing and attaining five out of eight designated areas to focus upon in the coming year. Success will be rewarded by being able to keep the LWVC portion of our per member payment for all new members we gain between 7/9/99 and 4/1/2000; therefore, we can augment our funds by recruiting new members. The areas we selected to work on are membership growth, membership enrichment, diversity, voter service, and development. We added a ninth designated area, Program, to the State's eight. We thereby acknowledged all the work we'll be doing in the Program area.

The next regular board meeting will be September 1.

-Violet Feinauer, Secretary

President's Column (continued from col. 1)

are united in their desire to make our communities reflect as closely as possible the League ideal of participatory and effective democracy - where all citizens are welcome, informed, and involved in shouldering the responsibilities of citizenship. I hope you'll find it possible during this new League year to make time to get involved in helping LWVBAE to make League ideals, goals, program, and action happen in truly effective ways. Welcome Back!

-J o A nn

Report From the Housing Study Committee

LWVBAE's Housing Study Committee has spent the past year interviewing local officials, reading city documents, and following news and lectures on the housing problems of this area and the state as a whole. We are winding down the research portion this summer with interviews of developers, realtors, and citizens active on housing matters in Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville. In the fall the committee will schedule UNIT meetings to share information with the membership. Then we will set up the problems which our League's policy should address for spring UNIT consensus meetings. Meanwhile, in each *Voter* we will give the members some facts to be thinking about.

As many of you realize, most of the cities around the Bay have been in a housing crisis for over a decade. The crisis is defined by the rising costs of buying or renting, which push many of those working and studying in these cities to suburbs farther and farther from their daytime activities. This is true for young adults who have grown up here, and for those coming from elsewhere. One result is the increasing traffic on our streets as the workers and students move in for the day and out for the night. Another is the shrinking income of local governments and school districts due to incomes earned in these cities often being spent in the suburbs. Along with Prop. 13, this has had serious effects, such as deteriorating infrastructure. Since all residents pay relatively high taxes, the sense of frustration over declining livability is strong.

A lot of interesting facts and ideas have been proposed this past year. The future in the form of more people in California is coming very fast. California is projected for a 50% population increase by 2020, which amounts to 300,000 new living units needed per year, of which 30,000 are needed annually in the Bay Area. (That amounts to yearly adding a city the size of Albany.) Something like these numbers will be used by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) during the next few years to assign targets to the existing cities for further growth. Of the three cities covered by our League, only Emeryville has taken a hard look at its future and made plans for it.

Two things are immediately clear from this brief report. 1) We can continue to frustrate increased density within our existing cities and lose open land

for miles around in neighboring areas, or meet our

A Silver Opportunity To Be A Part Of The Passing Parade!

Join the LWVBAE marching unit for a stroll urging people to register to vote as part of the **Solano Stroll Silver Parade on Sunday, September 12.** We'll meet at the top of Solano Avenue (near The Alameda) at 10:30 am and walk a mile downhill to Key Route Blvd. A cable car will be running on Marin Avenue to take you back up, or you can find the League booth and continue your efforts to get people to register and vote.

We will wear a simple uniform-dark slacks (navy preferred), black shoes and a white blouse. Depending on the weather, you may want to wear a hat and sunglasses and sun screen.

The theme of the parade is the 25th (Silver) anniversary of the Solano Stroll; ideas about how to incorporate that theme in the "gimmick" that identifies the League's marching unit will be much appreciated. To sign up and for information on where to meet, call the office, *Peggy Anne Davis*, Community Services VP, or *Eloise Bodine*

Eloise Bodine

Housing Study (continued from col. 1) targets by infill. 2) The results of this decision will determine whether we continue to suffer from increasing traffic and parking problems throughout Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville, or allow more of the people who work and study here to find affordable housing within walking or transit distance from their daily occupations.

The good news is that some cities, Seattle and Portland famously, San Jose more quietly, have been working with these problems constructively. They found that increasing density by managed planning can increase the vitality of neighborhoods and the efficiency of transit while reducing traffic and increasing local revenues to meet infrastructure needs.

-*Suzanne Adams*, Chair, LWVBAE Housing Study

Good News About Y2K

League wall calendars are here -
\$3.00 if you pick up at the office
\$3.50 prepaid if mailed

Membership Personals

This column, new to the *Voter*, will bring you news of League members: the times and events in our personal lives.

There is good news from *Regina Minudri*! She was moved to the Herrick Campus of Alta Bates Hospital, where she is receiving physical therapy and has been able to take several steps. Keep up the good work, *Gina*. Getting out, coming home day is August 11.

Members and their families have been a peripatetic group this summer. *Charlotte Bernardin* visited Bali and Singapore and is now preparing for a trip to England to visit her grandchildren. *Eleanor Cox* attended a family reunion in Bend, Oregon. *Doris Fine* motored through Europe. *Dildar Gartenberg* is in MONGOLIA (not Macedonia as previously reported) and has invited members to visit her should they be traveling in that vicinity. *Mina Jenner* is on her way by motor home to the Arctic Circle and beyond. *Helene Lecar* has returned from Connecticut, where she received a very warm reception but cooled off on Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. *Jo Ann Price* chose New Hampshire as her destination. *Jean Safir* is back home in Albany from Oregon. *Gail Schickele*, family, and friends used a 37-foot-long motor home to get to Moose, Wyoming, where they spent two weeks at the family compound. *Beth Springston* visited Vermont, and *Lenora Young* spent time with family in Oregon.

Marj and *Hugh Rubinow* are proud great grandparents of Stefan Carl Faaland who arrived in San Francisco on July 30. We will appreciate learning about the ups and downs and ins and outs of our 400+ members lives. Please call *Eleanor Cox* at 526-2970 or leave a message by way of any of the numbers listed in the masthead of the *Voter*.

In Memoriam

We offer our condolences to the family and friends of *Ilse E. Feiger* who died on Friday, July 2, 1999. *Ilse* had been a loyal member and supporter of the League since October of 1991.

-*Eleanor Cox*, Corresponding Secretary

Join the League Office Staff!

One way you can participate and benefit more from League membership is by helping staff our revitalized office. Office Volunteers **ARE** the League to many people who telephone or come to the door in search of answers to their questions. We expect the office to be at the hub of our activities this year, a more lively and educational place. League leaders will often be there working on their various responsibilities; committees will meet there regularly. The Office Volunteer will meet other League members and learn what is going on. Specific duties will continue to be answering the phone, forwarding messages, greeting visitors, processing incoming mail, and assisting with special projects upon request.

Barbara Stern is now recruiting and scheduling the office staff for three-hour shifts Monday to Friday, 10 to 1, 1 to 4. Most helpful are volunteers willing to work the same time slot each week, but many commit to once or twice a month. Working less than a three-hour shift is also acceptable - we're flexible! Substitutes willing to help out at the last minute are also needed. *Barbara* is eager to show you the who, what, when, where, how, and maybe even the why.

Please call *Barbara Stern*, or the office, 843-8824, to join our team of office staff. Leave your name and phone number if no one is there to answer immediately.

See you in the League office.

-*Ginette Polak*, Administrative VP

Donors Through July

General Fund

<i>Georgia Babladelis</i>	<i>Ruth Schoner Loran</i>
<i>Eloise Bodine</i>	<i>Ann Swidle</i>
<i>Lois Brubeck</i>	<i>Jeanine Saperstein</i>
<i>Helen B. Canin*</i>	<i>Meredith L. Stout</i>
<i>Arrietta Chakos</i>	<i>Helene Strauss</i>
<i>Teresa Hultgren</i>	<i>Anne Wallach</i>
<i>Patricia Kates</i>	

* In memory of *Charlotte Libby*

Foundation

<i>Anonymous</i>	<i>Elizabeth Lichtenberg</i>
<i>Georgia Babladelis</i>	<i>Lessly Wikle</i>

-*Carol Voisin*, Membership Director

Instant Runoff Voting Study Begins

The local study of the proposal to use Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) for single-office elections in Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville will get under way in early October. At this writing, there are 5 members of the study committee, but others are more than welcome.

IRV is a voting method whereby voters rank candidates (first choice, second choice and so on) instead of casting a single vote for the candidate of choice. If no candidate achieves a majority of first choice votes cast, the weakest candidate in first choice votes is eliminated and the second choice votes for those ballots are transferred accordingly. The process continues until a candidate emerges with a majority in the tabulations and is declared elected.

Impetus for study of the proposal stems from 1) widespread dislike for runoff elections and 2) recent adoption in Berkeley of a questionable device for reducing the number of runoffs. A candidate can presently be elected despite opposition by as many as 55% of those voting.

Like all LWV studies, emphasis will be on ascertaining the pros and cons and balancing them before arriving at a position. Another issue would be to choose between a limited form of IRV (first and second choices only) - which can be accommodated by election materials presently in use in Alameda County - versus a full-fledged IRV, which would have to be deferred until new election materials become available.

The schedule of meetings will be available at the Fall General Meeting. Those interested in participating or in observing should inform *John Reynolds*; e-mail: reynolds@socrates.berkeley.edu.

-*John Reynolds*, IRV Study Coordinator

Monitor a Regional Agency and Benefit LWVBAE

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area (LWVBA) encourages local League members to regularly monitor regional transportation, air quality, water quality, parks and open space, and land use agencies of special interest to the the Bay Area Monitor Project (BAMP). It publishes a highly regarded, bimonthly review of regional issues for local and regional agency officials and regional public interest groups. You can see copies of this Bay Area Monitor on the publications shelf in LWVBAE's office. Monitors or their local leagues are reimbursed \$25.00 for each meeting they observe and write a report about.

BAMP currently needs monitors for the following agencies:

Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation Agency - 2nd or 4th Fridays - 10 am - Admin. Bldg., Toll Plaza, SF

Port of Oakland - 1st or 3rd Tuesdays - 3 pm - 530 Water St., Oakland

Bay Area Air Quality Management District - 1st & 3rd Wednesdays - 9:30 am - 939 Ellis St., San Francisco

AC Transit - 2nd Wed. - 3 pm; 4th Wed.- 6 pm - 1600 Franklin St., Oakland

We can also use a back-up monitor for BART - 2nd and 4th Thursdays - 9 am - 800 Madison St., Oakland

For information on duties and procedures, contact the LWVBA/BAMP office: (925) 283-7093, FAX (925) 283-2613; E-mail: monitor@lwvba-ca.org. Editor Leslie Stewart will be delighted to hear from you.

-*Yvonne San Jule*, LWVBA Liaison

Voter Registration Forms

Thanks to the following for their help in delivering voter registration forms:

Cecile Christian
Mina Jenner
Evelyn Light
Jean Safir
Lenora Young

-*Allie Norton*, Voter Registration Coordinator

Good News About Y2K

League wall calendars are here -
\$3.00 if you pick up at the office
\$3.50 prepaid if mailed

Environmental Concerns Series

League members are encouraged to come to the Environmental Concerns presentations this fall at 1340 Arch Street, Berkeley. As usual, we have outstanding people willing to share information in their areas of expertise with the League.

On September 13, at 7:15 pm, our guest will be Tim Frank of the California Futures Network. His degree is in Economics; his focus is on the application of those principles to furthering environmental quality and social equity. The endeavors of California Futures often mirror League positions. They require pressure at the state level to make changes in the forces that perpetuate wasting of natural resources in sprawling land use patterns. Among the efforts of California Futures are getting Smart Growth criteria for investments in infrastructure that would maintain existing urban infrastructure first, and a stable fiscal structure for local governments that would end local subsidies for big box retail stores.

October 11, we'll have John Woodbury, head of the Bay Area Open Space Council, and November 8 will feature Iris Prestover on groundwater issues.

As many League members have worked on these governance and planning issues for decades, it is refreshing to hear from people who see the opening for real progress now. Come be refreshed.

-Eva Bansner, Environmental Concerns

Grocery Scrip - The Inexpensive Way To Support Your League

In alternate months you can buy scrip for Andronico's or Safeway stores in denominations of \$10 or \$20. They work just like cash with the only restriction that your purchase must amount to at least 90 percent (at Safeway) or 80 percent (at Andronico's) of the scrip's face value. Scrip can be used in any of the chains' stores in California and is valid for 2 years. We urge you to join the close to 100 LWVBAE members who use this program regularly and to encourage your friends and relatives to join it as well.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all the people who help run this program, many for several years: *Ida Braun, Bill Davis, Margaret Dumas, Evelyn Light, Barbara Nelson, Allie Norton, Ginette Polak, Sally Severance, Ruthann Taylor, and Phoebe Watts*. Without them, there would be no program.

-Eva Brecher, Scrip Chair

Come join the Education Committee, where the action never slows down! The STAR test results published in late July show clearly how much work remains to be done in all three of LWVBAE's districts. This past year, our concerns have been two-fold: early literacy for all children and broadening their exposure to work-life experience while they are still in school. Both these efforts are directed at raising the level of school achievement so that students can succeed whether they enter the world of work immediately or pursue advanced education. This year we will broaden our coalition building with the parents of school-age children and also with local institutions of higher education (UCB, Cal State Hayward, Vista Community College, Berkeley Adult School), who receive our graduates.

New Study: As an outgrowth of our work, we are taking a closer look at Vista, our community college, which will be celebrating its 25th anniversary this year by starting construction on its first permanent campus. At the same time, the long-standing problems that sparked Vista to seek deannexation from the Peralta Community College District have not all been resolved. The major issue still outstanding is money. There is no local or state League position on community colleges. Our study will analyze how to make this vital resource as useful as possible for the residents of all our communities.

Logistics: Education Committee meetings are Tuesday, August 24, at 10 AM, and Tuesday, September 21, at 1 PM, both at the home of *Anne Wallach*. Meeting times in the future can be adjusted to meet members' needs.

Our first Community College Study meeting was in August. For the time and place of the September meeting, or for more information about the Education Committee, please call *Helene Lecar*.

-Helene Lecar, Education Committee Chair

Y2K Is Here (continued from Page 1)

When we look at ourselves in a mirror we see primarily white, middle class, over-50 women. We need to change from this to representing the ethnic, age, and sex demographics of our respective cities.

The LWVBAE is in a singular place to do this. We have over 400 members; we have strong leadership; we have the diversity of our three communities of Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville. But do we have the will to change?

At the recent LWVBAE Board retreat, the Board committed to increasing our membership by at least 5% by April, 2000 and to reaching out to new areas (for us) of our communities to ensure that new members will bring more diversity to our ranks. Each member of the Board committed to recruiting at least two new members. But that alone won't reach our League's goal. In order to do that, we need your interest, assistance, and commitment. Invite your neighbor/friend to one of the many programs sponsored by our League. The quality of our programs and the graciousness of our members takes over from there.

LWVBAE's Membership team plans to approach neighborhood groups and other types of associations in our three communities to actively listen to their concerns and to find ways to collaborate in areas of mutual concern. If we are really listening, then we will have some new and challenging issues to face with new partners in our exercise of democracy. As President Jefferson-Jenkins said in her address: We in the League need to actively listen for what the "real concerns of ALL AMERICANS" are.

The Membership team invites you to join them and the Board in this outreach. Please call *Mary Wainwright*, Development VP or *Carol Voisin*, Membership Director, or the office to let us know of your interest. We concur with Ms. Jefferson-Jenkins' belief that the League of Women Voters can continue to be the premier citizen participation organization in the U.S. Let's work together to make it so!

-*Carol Voisin*, Membership Director

League News: LWVUS, LWVC, LWVBA

LWVUS Presidents Council '99

- LWVUS Presidents Council meets in Washington, DC, on alternate years when there is no national convention. Each state has 2 voting delegates; big city, capital city, and ILO presidents are invited as special guests. The following reports were made and are available for any member to receive: Future Plan, Diversity Implementation Task Force, Field Support Team, Vision 2000 Campaign, and Making Democracy Work. The current status of the League's work to gain voting rights for DC citizens was reviewed, and the new executive director gave information on the reorganization of the national office.
- The operating budget for 1999-2000 of \$2,938,862 was passed. Most of that amount comes from direct mail and per member payment. The expenses were allocated to lobbying (\$451,322), field support (\$1,283,561), and development (\$1,203,979). This includes a national staff of 66 people.
- The national board proposed programs that would carry out the major goals of LWVUS's Future Plan: increasing visibility, strengthening the organization, and having impact on our communities, our nation, and the world. These programs include: Project Voter, Project Reform, Project Diversity, and Project Citizen.
- Although the LWVC Board followed the directive of its Convention '99 delegates to seek a thorough discussion and review of the national board's stand not to include Smart Voter with DNet as possible voter information software, the California delegates received no response from the national board and no place was allowed on the agenda for this discussion. DNet was chosen as the national League's sole voter information software and the agreement is for five years. LWVC President Gail Dryden said: "Our task now will be to move ahead making Smart Voter the best online election service it can be for all those who want to use it in their communities, even though it has been set aside by the national board."
- LWV California's liaison with the national board is LWVUS VP Kay Maxwell, from Connecticut.

-(Continued on Page 8)

Good News About Y2K

League wall calendars are here -
\$3.00 if you pick up at the office
\$3.50 prepaid if mailed.

League News (Continued from Page 7)

Proposition 10 Commissions

- The program: California Children and Families First, established by Proposition 10 upon its passage in November 1998, is getting underway in every county in California. It is funded by the increased tax of \$.50 per package of cigarets and the equivalent increase on other tobacco products. All 58 counties are mandated to set up a commission to benefit all children from prenatal to 5 years. LWV California requests each League to monitor and/or participate in getting these commissions "off on the right foot". The Alameda County Presidents Council Chair, Judy Cox, is pursuing this on behalf of Alameda County LWVs. Virginia Laurence, Health and Welfare Director, is our League's observer for this issue.

Open Door Computer Training

- LWV California has received \$5,000 to make Open Door computer communication training available to local League members. It is a two-day workshop of the latest way to do e-mail and surf the Web, led by Debbie Hunt, a librarian whose work sites include the Exploratorium in San Francisco, Diablo Valley Jr. College, and UC Berkeley Extension Program. Call the League office at 843-8824, send a fax at 843-8828, or e-mail us at lwvbae@pacbell.net to let us know if you want this training. We need to have evidence of interest before we can set up a session.

Know Your Bay Area

- The LWV Bay Area has set September 25, 1999, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm for its annual "Know Your Bay Area" Day. It will be held at the Marin County Waste Management Facility near the Richmond Bridge in San Rafael.

- LWVBA has joined the Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition.

- A request to cooperate with Greenbelt Alliance (GA) on the issue of housing has been sent out by LWVBA. GA has been endorsing exemplary infill housing developments for 8 years. It wants to expand its program by having local Leagues take action by testifying at public hearings when a project that GA endorses is up for approval.

(Compiled from LWVUS, LWVC, and LWVBA sources)

-Jo Ann B. Price, President

LWVUS Survey Shows Americans Seek More, And More- Meaningful Community Involvement!

The League of Women Voters US recently released the results of its national survey "Working Together - Community Involvement in America". Surprisingly, the survey finds that "Americans are actively engaged in their communities and are interested in becoming even more involved - as long as they don't have to participate in politics to do so." Here are some of the main highlights.

- A majority of Americans (56%) report they are at least somewhat involved with community activities and issues. This cuts across racial, ethnic, and age lines: 57% of whites; 56% of African-Americans; 54% of Asian-Americans; 52% of Hispanics; 54% of adults under 30; 57% of adults under 45; 57% of those 45-64 years old; and 53% of seniors.
- Contrary to conventional wisdom, Americans don't want to withdraw further from community life: 46% would like to be more involved; 18% would like to be much more involved; 28% are satisfied with their level of involvement; 19% are not presently involved; and only 4% want to be less involved.
- African-Americans (53%), Hispanics (58%), and Asian-Americans (50%) are more enthusiastic than whites (43%) about increasing their level of community involvement.
- Targets for organizations that want to increase involvement are two types: those currently involved who want to be more so (28%) and those not currently involved, but who want to be (19%). The first group feels efficacious, but pressed for time, and includes younger, college-educated people, urban residents, unmarried mothers, people with kids over 6, people with annual incomes over \$40,000, and people who have lived in their community for 6 or more years. The second group tends to be less efficacious, has lower levels of trust, includes those who are not regular voters, has some college education - but not a degree, includes African-American men and Asian-American women, married dads, working moms, and parents with children under 7.
- Time is the most significant barrier to increased community involvement. Preferring to spend free time with friends and family is a big or moderate barrier for 52% of all adults. Information is the

-(Continued on Page 9)

LWVUS Survey (Continued from Page 8)

second biggest barrier: 39% worry about whether groups can be trusted, 47% want enough information to know whether or not a project is worthy of involvement.

- Community activism seems a more fruitful activity than political activism: 75% think groups of people working together can solve community problems, while 65% think the same is true of people trying to lobby politicians.
- People most heavily involved in community activities are significantly more likely to be registered to vote than the least involved (97% vs. 66%). They also are more likely to pay a great deal of attention to politics (51% vs. 13%).
- In general, people want to understand why their involvement is important and what it will accomplish. A strong plurality chose issues around children and education as those most likely to get them involved.
- Americans register more positive feelings about the direction of their communities than about the nation as a whole. They do not limit their concept of community to geography - shared values often play a role.

The LWVUS survey ends with: "At the close of the 20th century, civic involvement is alive and well in America and many people want to become even more involved." There is much in the survey that should prove useful to LWVBAE's efforts: to make membership more meaningful for a diversity of people; to recognize and meet the needs of more of the residents of our three communities; to fulfill the mission of the League.

-Jo Ann B. Price, President

Good News About Y2K

League wall calendars are here -
\$3.00 if you pick up at the office
\$3.50 prepaid if mailed

Be Informed And Be Heard

According to legislative assistants, the most effective way to influence elected representatives is through spontaneous letters from constituents. You may fax your letter, use e-mail or the telephone. Even when representatives sponsor bills that the League favors, they need evidence of our support in order to influence others.

If you have e-mail, join the state League's new **Grassroots Action Team!** You need only eight minutes or less to write, call or e-mail your legislator. Choose one or more topics of importance to you: children's issues, health care for all, voting rights, juvenile justice, gun violence, the initiative process, campaign finance reform, etc. Then e-mail Donna Vaughn at <dvaughn@compuserve.com> and give her your name, address, phone number, League, and issues important to you. You will get information on bills in your area of interest, the League's stand on the measures, and two or three points to make.

The League needs to know what the Berkeley commissions are doing-maybe not all 42 of them, but at least Planning, Budget, Landmarks Preservation, Transportation, and Housing. Any Leaguer with experience serving on a commission, testifying before one, or observing is invited to come to the Action Committee monthly meeting and share your observations.

Actions taken by LWVBAE in June and July include:

- Comments to Planning Commission on the first draft of the Berkeley General Plan Update.
- Letter to Sen. Feinstein to advocate support/consideration of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty this year.
- Letter to Rep. Lee in support of McCarthy amendment on gun safety legislation.
- Letters to Sen. Boxer and Sen. Feinstein with thanks for co-sponsoring the Patients' Bill of Rights.
- Letter to Rep. Lee urging full and prompt payment of U.S. arrears to the UN without conditions.

-Lois Brubeck, Action VP

CALENDAR

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

August

26 Thurs. 11:30 am **INAUGURAL COMMUNITY LUNCHEON -**
Radisson Hotel, Berkeley Marina (Nelson)

September

1 Wed. 9 am-noon Board Meeting South Berkeley Library (Price)
 3 Fri. Noon — Deadline for October VOTER — (Hawley)
 6 Mon. — LWVBAE Office Closed for Labor Day — (Polak)
 9 Thurs. 2-4 pm Housing Study (Adams)
 10 Fri. 2 pm Regional Impacts Study (Safir)
 12 Sun. 10 am-6 pm Solano Stroll Solano Avenue (Davis)
 13 Mon. 7:15 pm Environmental Concerns (Bansner)
 15 Wed. 9 am-noon Action Committee (Brubeck)
 16 Thurs. 7:30 pm Program Planning Team (Safir)
 21 Tue. 1-3 pm Education Committee (Lecar)
 23 Thurs. 5:30 - 8:30 pm **FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (Safir)
 25 Sat. 9:30-12:30 Know Your Bay Area Day -
Marin County Waste Management (San Jule)
 28 Tue. 2-4 pm Regional Impacts UNIT Albany Library
Marin @ Masonic, Edith Stone Room (Safir)
 29 Wed. 9 am-noon Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)
 30 Thurs. 7:30-9:30 pm Regional Impacts UNIT (Safir)

October

6 Wed. 9 am-noon Board Meeting South Berkeley Library (Price)
 8 Fri. Noon — Deadline for November VOTER — (Hawley)
 11 Mon. 7:15 pm Environmental Concerns (Bansner)
 14 Thurs. 2 - 4 pm Housing Study (Adams)
 20 Wed. 9 am-noon Action Committee (Brubeck)
 21 Thurs. 11 am - 1 pm Speaker Series SAVE THE DATE (Safir)
 27 Wed. 9 am - noon Executive Committee LWVBAE Office (Price)

IT'S EASY TO JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Just cut out and mail this coupon
with your \$50 dues check to:

LWVBAE

1414 University Ave., Suite D
Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

Joining at the local level makes you a
member at all levels: LWVBAE, Bay Area, State
and National.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. Day: _____ Eve: _____

Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible.
Contributions to the LWVB Foundation are deductible
to the extent allowed by law.

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

U. S. Non-Profit Org.

PAID
Berkeley, CA
Permit No. 29

Action Update

September, 1999

ACTION ALERTS

LOCAL

Berkeley General Plan public workshops on the updated plan were held in June and July and the revised plan will be submitted to the Planning Commission in September. The Planning Commission will hold public hearings in the fall. Submission of the final plan to the City Council is currently slated for January, 2000. For a copy of League comments on the first draft, call the League office. The document will be available in the League office; at the planning Department, 2118 Milvia St.; at the public libraries and on Berkeley's website (www.ci.berkeley.ca.us). If you want to contribute to League comments on the document, please call *Lois Brubeck*, or attend a fall Action Committee meeting.

Watch the League's program with background on the General Plan and live call-ins, which will be filmed and aired on September 7 from 7 to 8 pm on BTV, Channel 25.

STATE INITIATIVES

The State Board has decided to oppose two initiatives now being circulated for signatures, the Unz-Miller measure called the California Voters Bill of Rights Initiative which appears likely to qualify for the March ballot, and the Mandatory Parental Notification Initiative which seems to be headed for the November 2000 ballot. The State Board is also moving ahead with plans to work closely with coalitions being formed to support the Majority Vote on School Bonds Initiative and to oppose the Wilson Juvenile Justice Initiative.

- THE UNZ-MILLER "CALIFORNIA VOTERS BILL OF RIGHTS INITIATIVE": While it would provide some public financing and set limitations on contributions, has major loopholes, in particular (soft money) exemptions for donations to parties, and it sets the contribution limits at \$5,000 for statewide candidates and \$3,000 for local candidates. LWVC believes it would be inconsistent to support a measure with a soft money loophole at the same time that LWVUS is struggling to get the same thing out of the Federal campaign finance law. Endorsing the measure could also undercut the efforts of a number of local Leagues who are fighting moves to raise local limits.
- MANDATORY PARENTAL NOTIFICATION INITIATIVE: Although this would allow judicial bypass if parental consent for an abortion cannot be obtained, the Board believes we should not erect barriers that prevent young people from seeking important health care.
- SCHOOL BONDS INITIATIVE: Delegate support for the measure was clear at the LWVC convention in May, and LWVC will be attending an organizing meeting of a coalition for passage of this initiative to reduce the requirement for passage of local school bonds. Called the "Let's Fix Our Schools" campaign, it already has support from a broad range of organizations. Local Leagues should be active participants in the campaign. Petitions to qualify the initiative for the March, 2000, ballot are being circulated now, and must be submitted by August 20. Call Lois Brubeck quickly if you want a petition to circulate. And be sure to sign when you see a signature gatherer!
- THE WILSON JUVENILE JUSTICE INITIATIVE: The array of punitive measures for juvenile offenses introduced by this measure would probably come at the cost of the preventive measures we support. LWVC expects to play an active role in a coalition being formed to educate the public and oppose this measure.

STATE BILLS

- ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE AB 525 (Kuehl and Thomson): This is a comprehensive bill designed to prevent loss of reproductive health services resulting from mergers of some religious hospitals with non-religious hospitals. The bill failed passage, but will be taken up again in January. While it may not directly affect our area, we should talk about it, inform others, and thank Rep. Dion Aroner for supporting this bill.
- WOMEN'S CONTRACEPTION EQUITY ACT AB39 (Hertzberg) and SB41(Speier): These bills require that health care plans and insurance policies that provide outpatient prescription drug benefits must include coverage for a variety of FDA approved prescription contraceptive methods. The League strongly supports both bills, and members should watch the newspapers in August and September. If these bills emerge from the legislature, members should write Governor Davis urging his signature.
- MENTAL HEALTH CARE AB34 (Steinberg), AB88 (Thomson), and SB468 (Polanco): These bills expand mental health care and are moving through the legislature. League members are asked to write the Governor urging him to sign these measures if they come to his desk.

NATIONAL

While Congress is in summer recess, it's a good time to write or call our representatives at their local offices. Tell them that you strongly support the following bills:

- CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM: In the House, the Shays-Meehan bill (which should come up in mid-September); in the Senate, the McCain-Feingold bill.
- U.S. ARREARS PAYMENTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS: Let Rep. Lee know that you support HR.1211, or any measure for US payment of its arrears to the UN that is unencumbered by links to restrictions on family planning funds or such unrelated policies. You can point out that the US has a legal obligation to pay, it is vital to the stability of the UN, the failure of the US to pay off its arrears will ultimately lead to the loss of its vote in the UN General Assembly and the UN is an invaluable forum for collectively addressing an increasing number of threats that transcend international borders.
- PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS: HR358, which guarantees basic health care protection for patients, including the right to emergency room care using the "reasonably prudent person" standard and the right to have medical information kept confidential. It will enable patients to receive clear information about different health care plans and establish an appeals process that will resolve grievances in a timely, balanced manner. (We oppose any legislation that claims to provide health care protection, but fails to deliver, such as S.1344.) If you have e-mail, sign the petition on the League's web site: www.lwv.org.
- FAMILY PLANNING AND CHOICE PROTECTION ACT OF 1999 S 1400 (Boxer): A comprehensive act that codifies Roe v. Wade, expands funding for family planning, requires contraceptive coverage by health plans and more. Let Sen. Boxer know we appreciate this effort.

Write President Clinton in opposition to the CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION ACT HR 1218. This dangerous bill passed the house. It creates a new crime for anyone but the teen's parent to help a young woman by transporting her across state lines to obtain an abortion, unless she has complied with her home state's parental involvement law. Both our Senators oppose it, but it was expected to pass. Ask the President to veto this legislation and get your friends to do the same. Tell him that in an ideal situation it is a good idea for parents to be involved in medical decisions affecting their children, but this bill criminalizes the action of any adult who is concerned for the health and safety of a young person, other than the parent. This could be any other close relative, sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle. It jeopardizes the health of desperate young women.

ALL INTERESTED MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO OUR COMMITTEE MEETINGS-- COME WHERE THE ACTION IS!

-Lois Brubeck, Action VP