

The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS
of BERKELEY, ALBANY
and EMERYVILLE



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President: Nancy Bickel

November, 2001

Editor: Jean Safir

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: CONFRONTING RACISM FINDING COMMON GROUND FOR BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

Saturday, November 10
9:30 am to 3 pm
Rosa Parks School
(old Columbus)
920 Allston Way, Berkeley

To register or volunteer, call 898-7625

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The rescheduled Community Conversation is coming up shortly. We need your help to make it a success. We are particularly relying on League members to serve as recorders in each of the small group discussions. We plan to write a report of the meeting to send to each participant and to disseminate widely. If you have not yet volunteered to help or participate, please call now.

In the wake of the September 11 tragedies, some of our fellow residents who may look Middle Eastern or Muslim have feared and some have experienced racist remarks or actions. This has strengthened our conviction that Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville need to confront all the different kinds of racism within our communities.

As we all recognize, this is not a task for a single day or a single group, but our League has committed to working with others to bring our daily life closer to our ideals of democracy and equality.

President's Column

Are you feeling overwhelmed with information? Me too. And yet, many of us joined the League to get its good information. But how to find it, read it, store it and eventually retrieve it and use it? Today's answer — League Web sites.

Whether you are already adept at looking for the information you need on the Web, or a novice, take a look at our Web site, newly redesigned for us by our excellent Web master and member, *Bill Chapman*. The address of the LWVBAE Web site is:

<http://home.pacbell.net/lwvbae/>

This Web site is easy to look at and easy to use. It features a calendar, so even if your *Voter* is lost under that pile of other mail you mean to read when you have time, you can find out what's happening on, for example, **November 6 — Albany and Emeryville elections** — or on **November 10 — our Community Conversation on Confronting Racism**. You can click to get more info about each one. You can also read recent or past editions of the *Voter*, send us e-mail or get information about the League, your ballot and your elected representatives, and link to many other related Web sites with a click of a button.

One button, "Member Portal," is still in development. It will enable members to get "members only" information, — for example, dates and places of meetings that are not open to the public or reports of committee meetings. We expect that some committees will use it to carry out their work, — for example, posting drafts of documents for the committee to read or reporting back on interviews or research tasks. I think it will prove more pleasant and less burdensome to go to the Web site to look at or fetch documents than it is to cope with the flood of e-mail that some of us are receiving and sending for our League work.

The Web is also a much more timely way to get information than print can possibly be. I was able to find out immediately how Carolyn Jefferson Jenkins, president of LWVUS, responded to the tragedies of September 11. Her press releases are posted on the Web site right away.

So turn to the State and National League Web sites for timely and full information about their actions and publications. Both State and National maintain public sites and sites for members only.

You can search them by keyword, to go directly to what you want to find, or just browse.

LWVC — <http://ca.lwv.org/>

LWVC "Members Only" —

<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvonly/>

LWVUS — <http://www.lwv.org/>

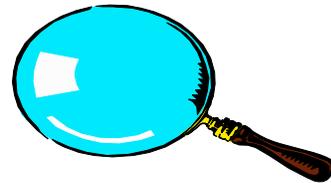
LWVUS "Members Only" —

<http://www.lwv.org/members/index.html>

The LWVUS Members only site requires knowledge of the right name and password to get access. For "Name" type "lwv" and for "Password" type "carriecatt" (for Carrie Chapman Catt, our founder).

When you visit each site for the first time, please add a bookmark on your own computer, so next time you can go to it quickly. These sites can become useful tools to find out what the League is doing and saying locally, statewide and nationally.

-Nancy Bickel, President



For Easier Reading

If you are finding you need glasses or magnifying devices to read print these days, the computer has some wonderful features. Not only is the screen lit from behind, but you can enlarge the type size until you can read it easily. In many programs (Netscape and Internet Explorer browsers, WORD, WordPerfect, etc.), click on the Menu item at the top called "View" and click on "Increase Font Size" or "Zoom" to find a way to increase the size of type on your screen.

“SmartVoter” An Increasingly Valuable Resource

“Smart Voter” is an Internet Web site that offers free space to candidates at all levels of government. Candidate information is then made easily available to voters who access it, based on their home addresses. This service is particularly beneficial during local elections, which rarely receive the press coverage given to national and statewide contests.

For many years, the League of Women Voters has been passionately committed to campaign finance reform. This commitment often takes the form of action in favor of regulatory legislation or ballot measures, but sometimes it has simply involved “leveling the playing field” so that candidates without great wealth can mount effective campaigns for public office.

November 2001 will be the 18th election held since the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund took over the “Smart Voter” project in November of 1997. Since that time the project has expanded and grown. In 1997 “Smart Voter” covered only two counties. Today 23 California counties and four Ohio counties are covered. We are pleased to welcome the most recent addition to the “Smart Voter” family--LWV Salinas Valley and LWV Monterey Peninsula

Voters throughout California will be going to the polls on November 6, 2001, and increasing numbers of them will turn to “Smart Voter” for the information they need to help them make decisions. In Los Angeles County alone, 659 candidates are running for city, county, and school district offices, as well as for special district offices with jurisdiction over public services such as water, irrigation, libraries, parks and recreation.

“Smart Voter” also offers you the ability to access candidate and ballot issue information going back to November 1997. Simply go to www.smartvoter.org and access the archived information.

(Adapted from a report on the California LWV Web site.)

Welcome New Members

*Diane Akers
Ione Elioff
Minnie R. Favre
Lubica Hanacek
Barbara Lippard*

Donors through September to General Fund

<i>Suzanne Adams</i>	<i>Joyce Baldwin</i>
<i>Jane Bergen</i>	<i>Linda Burden</i>
<i>Jane & Tom Coulter</i>	<i>Doris Fine</i>
<i>Wilma Jordan</i>	<i>Erika Kunkel</i>
<i>Betty Parsons</i>	<i>Sally Severance</i>
<i>Patricia Spear</i>	<i>Carol Weinmann</i>
<i>Ruthann & Clyde Taylor</i>	

to Foundation

<i>Jan Blundell*</i>	<i>Mary Lines</i>
<i>Eva Brecher</i>	<i>Ladonna Stoppel</i>
<i>Elaine Grossberg</i>	<i>Renate Tubman</i>
<i>Jane Ann Lamph</i>	<i>Mary Wallmann</i>
<i>Dr. G.B. & Ruth Lewis*</i>	

* Non-members

Speaker Series

**Thursday, November 15, 12 noon
Albany Public Library, 1247 Marin Avenue
Edith Stone Room**

Jan Davis, the Director of Band and Orchestra for Berkeley’s Longfellow School, will tell us about the wide range of musical opportunities offered to Berkeley’s public school students at all levels and will also bring a small group of student performers to share their talents with us.

Come to hear about these fine programs and to listen to these young musicians. The building is wheelchair accessible, and parking and bus service are readily available. Call if you need a ride or more information. Bring lunch if you’d like; LWVBAE will provide juice.

-Janet Strothman, 841-2837

(Community Conversation, Continued from Page 1)

As we go to press, the League is the lead sponsor of the meeting. Community organizations and individuals working with us include: the Berkeley Alliance, which is a coalition of the University, the City and the Berkeley schools; the City of Berkeley's Young Adult Project; In Dulce Jubilo; Asians for Job Opportunity in Berkeley; Father George Crespin; East Bay Asian Youth Center; Sheila Jordan (Superintendent, Alameda County Office of Education); Terry Doran (President, Berkeley Board of Education); and Mayor Shirley Dean, City of Berkeley.

As we have worked on this project with our colleagues, we have developed a tentative plan for a series of Community Conversations to follow this first one. We expect that these discussions will generate specific community plans and actions.

To ensure the success of the first meeting in developing some trust and understanding among the participants, we have hired a team of skilled facilitators, led by Roberto Almanzan, know for his participation in "The Color of Fear."

A carefully planned series of large, small and one-on-one discussions has been planned. The League will provide lunch, babysitting and snacks to all participants.

-Marissa Saunders, Education Chair
-Lois Brubeck, Action Vice President

Board Action, October 3, 2001

New Treasurer: The Board voted unanimously to affirm the appointment of *Jane and Tom Coulter* as joint treasurers. A Finance and Budget committee is being created.

Community Conversation on Racism: The Board agreed to budget up to \$7,000 for the November 10 event. The funds will be drawn, as needed, from the reserve fund.

-Jane Barrett, Board Secretary

Election Services

Election Day will be upon us as you receive this issue of the *VOTER*. On November 6, Albany will vote on one ballot measure, and Emeryville residents will vote for City Council and School Board members and on two ballot measures. There will be no election in Berkeley this fall.

Those who have not yet decided how to vote can get more information by consulting "Smart Voter" at <www.smartvoter.com>. This Web site is sponsored by LWV of California. *Mary Lou Breiman* is our new local "Smart Voter" coordinator.

In October, LWVBAE sponsored three meetings in Albany about Measure C, which proposes to change the way the Chief of Police is to be chosen. We appreciate the cooperation of Albany residents Bob Nichols, Robert Good, and Leon Rimov, who spoke at the meetings. League members *Nancy Bickel, Ruth Greenblatt, Minnie Favre, Helene Lecar, Eloise Bodine, Angharad Jones* and *Sherry Smith* helped put on the meetings. Thanks to all.

For the Primary Elections in March 2002, League members will write pro and con statements about the local measures and distribute them, along with the pros and cons about statewide measures. We will also train our members to be speakers before community groups on the issues. Perhaps we will do some television broadcasts or more public meetings. We will need writers, editors, proofreaders, speakers, researchers and organizers. And since the confusion surrounding the last general election, League members will want to do what we can do to help ensure that the election process is fair, equally accessible to all and accurate. It sounds like a big job, and it is, but it is doable if we all pitch in! We'll start working on this in earnest in January 2002, but I'd be glad to talk to anyone about what you would like to do. Call the office and leave a message for me.

- Phoebe Watts, V.P. Election Services

Environmental Concerns Meeting on Global Climate Change

Physicist and UC Berkeley professor emeritus Wulf Kunkel was the honored guest speaker for the April 9, 2001 Environmental Concerns meeting that addressed global climate change and world energy resources and needs. Global climates are changing and warming trends are a reality, Kunkel said. The solar energy balance that keeps the temperature so even over the years is being upset by the rapid increase of carbons in the air. The global mean sea level is rising in apparent response to CO₂ emissions. We don't have control over water evaporating from the oceans, and water vapor absorbs more heat.

Kunkel cited the U.N.-sponsored Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that reports worldwide temperatures have climbed more than 1°F over the past century with an impact on no fewer than 420 physical processes and animal and plant species in all continents. Humans have increased the concentration of carbon dioxide, the most abundant heat-trapping gas in the atmosphere, to 30% above pre-industrial levels.

The 1990s is the hottest decade on record. By 2100, the IPCC says, the average temperatures will increase between 2.5°F and 10.4°F. Beyond 3° of warming, says Bill Easterling, a professor of geography and agronomy at Penn State and a lead author of the IPCC report, "there would be a dramatic turning point. U.S. crop yields would start to decline rapidly."

Even if temperatures rise moderately, some scientists fear that climate would reach a "tipping point" beyond which any increase would throw the system into violent change. "Ice ages measured in the thousands of years; what we're doing is in the 100s," Kunkel said. An increase in the use of fossil fuels will contribute to this effect.

Kunkel discussed the world energy consumption rate for solid, liquid, gas, nuclear and hydro. Meanwhile, alternative energy sources are limited, he said. According to a recent report on global warming (Time Magazine, 4-9-2001),

worldwide windmill use has been growing by 30% per year and is now replacing the work of 15 coal-fired power plants. Europe is the leader with 70% of all wind power. Kunkel said Germany is No. 1, then Denmark, then India. "It's not clear that any wind power has ever paid for itself," he said. If the energy can't be stored, it's not a viable answer for many of our applications, he said. A decade of increasing subsidies for wind power development leveled in 1990, and world wind generating capacity has been "tiny compared to what we need," he said. "It's going to be too late. It's too slow."

Solar power is limited because the energy can't be efficiently stored, such as in a battery for reading at night, he said. The efficiency of solar depends upon how many clouds, how white the clouds, how much is being absorbed in the atmosphere, etc. Cells that convert energy from sunlight into electricity are a modest \$2.2 billion global business, according to Time Magazine. If fuel is replaced with uranium there will be no more carbon, Kunkel said. "The waste products are scary but not the biggest problem. The problem is always in relation to weapons and I don't think we have any answer to that yet," he said. Regardless of the viability of nuclear power as a clean energy source, there are no new commissions for nuclear power plants in the U.S., he said. (Since the talk, the US administration announced a reversal of this trend.)

Alternatively, it seems one can make fission safe. Kunkel spoke of the invention of fuel cell over last few decades and the Humboldt State University solar hydrogen project. "What is the solar hydrogen cycle and why is it important? To create hydrogen to make fuel cells," Kunkel said. By combining oxygen and hydrogen, fuel cells produce electricity, giving off only water. Used by NASA, they could be employed to power buildings and electric cars. "It's efficient," Kunkel said. "There's light at the end of the tunnel."

- Gail Schickele

