

The VOTER

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS
of BERKELEY, ALBANY
and EMERYVILLE



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Are You Ready For Redistricting In 2001?

Editorial Introduction: Since October 1999 the Redistricting Monitor Committee (RMC) of the League of Women Voters Alameda County Council has been meeting to discuss the redistricting issues that are of concern to us in 2001 in Alameda County. The RMC has already sent a letter to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors requesting that they make the topic a priority in the new year and that they follow the appropriate criteria, including significant public input.

The County Council represents the seven LWVs in the county: Alameda, Berkeley/Albany/Emeryville, Eden Area, Fremont/Newark/Union City, Livermore/Amador Valley, Oakland, and Piedmont. The RMC is chaired by Eleanor Parker of the Eden Area League and is composed of two representatives from each of the local Leagues. The following article on redistricting is the committee's first of a 3-part series discussing the issues critical to an understanding of the process and what is at stake. (*Jo Ann B. Price*)

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Nearly all legislative district lines - for federal, state, county, and local government offices - will need to be redrawn following the results of the 2000 census, due April 1, 2001.

Redistricting can be a time-consuming and costly nightmare, suffused with partisanship and political vendettas - because it is a major factor in who can be elected and how much weight a single voter's ballot will carry in determining an election. The process can be conducted fairly and with less divisiveness than we have seen in the past, provided there is meaningful citizen input. The Leagues of Women Voters in Alameda County are pursuing this vision by providing information about the process and encouraging citizens to make certain that local elected bodies responsible for redistricting make the redistricting data and the proposed plans available in a timely manner so that thoughtful input can take place at workshops and hearings held during hours when all citizens can attend.

As a means of achieving this process with meaningful citizen input, the Alameda County Leagues are publishing a three-part series on redistricting, starting with this issue of your local League *Voter*.

-(Continued on Page 10)

President's Column**The League's Challenge - Help to Get The U.S. Version of Democracy "Right"**

Since 1920 the League of Women Voters has had a memorable and effective history of study and action on many fronts towards the goal of making democracy work. Perhaps the most important area of League activity has been in helping to educate citizens about their voting rights and action on behalf of enabling citizens to exercise their right to vote.

It has been widely accepted in the last 30 years or so that the only important concerns in this area now facing the League were getting citizens registered, educating voters so they could cast an informed vote, monitoring the polls on election day, and encouraging citizens to get out and vote. This had become routine and we had turned our attention in this area to wrestling with another major problem: campaign finance reform.

On November 7, 2000, the specifics of the Presidential election revealed that what many had taken for granted as a reasonably well-run election system, was in truth an antiquated system with some basic flaws. If there is no serious effort mounted nationally in time for the next Presidential election to improve the way the United States votes, citizens will become even more cynical and the League of Women Voters will have ignored its mission.

This is a time for the nonpartisan LWVUS to rise to the occasion and lead the rally of all state and local Leagues to both engage in an internal study/action effort and also lobby Congress and state legislatures to make election system reforms their highest priority. How appropriate that LWVUS adopted an Election Systems study at the 2000 Biennial Convention in Washington, D.C., last June. (It should be noted that the Washington state League has just completed its study on this topic. It can be downloaded from www.lwvwa.org/election. Also, in the new year LWV California will be at the UNIT and consensus stage of our study on the same topic. LWVBAE's UNITs are scheduled for February.)

The national League is ideally situated to mount the required effort to focus the nation's will on solving the problem. We have the necessary reputation, organization, discipline, members who believe in the cause, geographic distribution, and 21st century tools to be successful. -(Continued next col.)

In fact, this reform project to assure that each vote

counts and is counted properly, would no doubt attract like-minded people to join our ranks and add their efforts to resolve this nagging and basic problem of our democracy.

The nation and the League now has a two-pronged threat to our democracy : undemocratic election practices and unregulated campaign financing. Both urgently need reform. But because of the serious implications for our democracy of what happened on November 7, 2000, it has become clear that the former should take priority. Taking the lead on this issue provides the League with a perfect match of its purpose, skills, membership, methods, track record, and ability.

I urge you as an individual League member to e-mail, fax, phone, or write to President Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins (see her letter on this subject on Page 5), members of the LWVUS Board, and friends across the state and country in other Leagues to support the LWVUS' providing the leadership in undertaking this project with the full resources of the League committed to it. The country needs us!

-Jo Ann

P.S.: Look in your National VOTER for the addresses or call our League Office.

Lively New Member Event

The Membership Committee hosted an inspiring gathering for new and prospective members on Oct. 28. Several who attended became members of the League immediately and many of our newer members signed up to participate in various League activities. Others who could not attend that day have responded to our outreach efforts.

The success of this Membership event is a result of the invitations and phone calls by hardworking *Winnie McLaughlin*, *Carol Voisin*, and *Evelyn Light*. *Mary Wainwright* enhanced the welcoming aura of the League office and, with *Winnie*, warmly welcomed those attending. The enthusiasm of our local leadership who participated - *Lois Brubeck*, *Jo Ann Price*, *Sherry Smith*, and *Mary Wainwright* - was contagious. My thanks to them all.

With the General Election behind us, the League can now focus on ongoing Action, study committees, Community Services, staffing the League Office, etc. We hope all League members will welcome our enthusiastic new members to League involvement.

-Ginette Polak, Membership Director

Don't Wait Until the Last Day of the Year

Got extra income you want to dispose of before the end of the year? Want to reduce your taxes a bit? Don't let it worry you. The LWV Berkeley Foundation will happily put it to good use - supporting our Education programs. Items such as producing Pros and Cons, City Conversations, etc., don't come free. And we've just seen the whole country realize that every vote can count in an election. It's the perfect opportunity to step up voter education and registration efforts. But it all takes money.

If you'll give it, the Foundation will use it. And that's a campaign promise you can believe in. So before the busy holiday season starts, feel free to send us a gift. Just remember to make it out to the LWVB Foundation and mail it to the LWVBAE office. All Foundation gifts are tax deductible.

-Beth Springston, Treasurer

LWVBAE History

Wanted: League Members with long memories. We are revising and updating our LWVBAE history and need your help. Whatever stands out in your memory of League events - anecdotes, achievements, days happy or disappointing - jot them down and send them to *Marion Luten* at 1414 University Avenue, Suite D, Berkeley CA 94702-1509. Be sure to include dates even if only approximate.

*-Marion Luten, Publications/Historian Director,
524-0940*

Environmental Concerns Meeting

Monday, December 11, 7:30 pm
1340 Arch Street (at Rose)

On December 11, 2000, Environmental Concerns guest speaker Erik Vink will address "Population Growth and Farmland Conversion in California, with special focus on the Central Valley." Mr. Vink has been with the American Farmland Trust for the last 10 years, working with farmland conservation, growth and development, until earlier this summer when he became assistant director at the California Department of Conservation in Sacramento. Join us as we continue our series on sustainable agricultural stewardship.

-Eva Bansner, Co-Chair

Speaker Series

Thursday, December 14, 2000

☞ BERKELEY ARTS DISTRICT ☞

11:30 am - Start at Capoeira Arts Cafe
2026 Addison Street, Berkeley

The new Berkeley Arts District is the subject of our December Speaker Series meeting. We will start at 11:30 with lunch at the Capoeira Arts Cafe, a new Brazilian restaurant at 2026 Addison Street. Those who are not joining us for lunch should come to the cafe at 12:30; we will begin a walking tour of the area at that time, ending by 2 pm. The tour will be led by Mary Ann Merker-Benton, Berkeley's Civic Arts Coordinator.

Come together with League friends to celebrate the holiday season and learn about all the new developments in the arts that are planned for the downtown area, centered around this one block of Addison, between Shattuck and Milvia. Plans include a new 600-seat Berkeley Rep theater, next door to its present location, plus an educational facility at the Rep's present site; the Aurora Theatre and the Freight & Salvage Coffee House will move into the area; plus more developments in various discussion stages.

Be sure to call **Lenora Young, 843-1030**, to let her know if you are coming, for lunch or not, so we will be sure to look for you and to make the right number of reservations. Since parking is difficult downtown, most should plan to use AC Transit, if it is at all convenient, since practically all buses pass close to the cafe. Of course, car-pooling is another good option. Call me if you need help.

NEXT MONTH: On **January 11, 2001**, our own **Sherri Smith** will be the speaker on the **Alameda County Grand Jury**, on which she is currently serving as Foreman. She will tell us what its function is, how it operates, and what are some of the issues it is currently handling.

Please join us at the Albany Public Library on Marin at Masonic, from noon to 2 pm, in the Edith Stone Room. Enter the library and turn right; pass the video and CD shelves, and look for the Edith Stone Room on your right. Bring a bag lunch, if you wish; we'll supply fruit juice.

-Jean Safir, Speaker Series Coordinator

LWVBAE's Election Effort is Huge and Varied

The "high season" for the League is every election year, and this has been a particularly busy and rewarding one for us. Here is a bit of detail about the length and breadth of our efforts.

We produced and cablecast live forums for all of the Berkeley City Council, School Board, and Rent Stabilization Board candidates as well as for the Peralta Community College Board. Special thanks to *Jill Martinucci* and *Phoebe Watts* for producing and coordinating these television productions. Each was repeated at least twice on B-TV, channel 25.

In addition, LWVBAE sponsored, co-sponsored or assisted in presenting several other candidate meetings in Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville; and we produced two for area-wide candidates with the LWVs of Oakland, Piedmont, and Alameda.

The writing and preparation for production of the local Pros and Cons tabloids is done within a very compact time frame, and we are especially grateful for the tremendous effort of *Jo Ann Price* during the final production process. We then distributed our own Pros and Cons, state Pros and Cons, and the Easy Reading Voter Guides in English, Spanish, and Chinese in public places, at election events, and to community groups.

Through the efforts of the 10 members of the Speakers Bureau and the coordination of *Fran Packard*, there were at least 25 presentations before civic and community groups on Pros and Cons for the state and/or local ballot issues - groups running the gamut of A-Z, from the Albany Orientation Center for the Blind to the Zonta Club. In addition, our speakers accommodated several special requests for in-depth discussion of selected measures and led four English As A Second Language classes through the intricacies of the U.S. electoral process.

We assisted with student elections and offered voter service in the schools. We were involved in several versions of mock elections, including the November 2 National Mock Election (see Page 9 of this *Voter*) that was conducted in the high schools. Again working within a very compact time frame, work with our schools was coordinated by *Helene Lecar*.

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Smart Voter Feedback November 7, 2000



What Smart Voter Users Said

I just wanted to let you all know that I thought this one of the most functional, best organized, and useful web sites I have come across in a long time. - Alameda

I am a discussion leader in a group discussing current events. You are absolutely the best source that I have seen to get information about our next election. We congratulate you for the outstanding work. - Los Angeles County

Great! Fantastic! ...as soon as my tax refund arrives, LWV will get a donation from this household. - Sonoma County

Outstanding information! Thanks for helping me weed through all of my choices! - Orange County

IMPRESSIVE...send info on local contact to rejoin. - Santa Clara

I recently turned 18 and am registered to vote. With your site I found the answers to my questions...and lots of information on the candidates and issues. Thanks! - Ohio

Your web site saved my life tonight. I didn't get a sample ballot in the mail, so I had no idea who I was even voting for tomorrow. - Los Angeles

Thank you so very much for your invaluable web service - a prime example of the most creative and practical use of the Web medium. Working abroad as I am, it's very difficult to keep up on the candidates and issues from here in the U.K. But with your web site, I've been able to track vital newspaper coverage and read the candidates' responses to no-nonsense questions. As a result, I can vote intelligently and feel and act a part of the nation as a whole even when I'm an expat. Thank you, thank you!

- gathered from Smart Voter sources by *Jo Ann B. Price*

As always, our ongoing outreach to register voters was in high gear right through the registration cutoff date.

In addition to those we thanked in the last edition of the *Voter*, we want to acknowledge the help of *Elizabeth Lichtenberg*, *Marion Luten*, *Winnie McLaughlin*, and *Karen Nelson*.

This was a wonderful effort from a large segment of our membership, which is what the League is all about.
-*Sherry Smith*, Community Services VP

News From LWVUS

Statement on the Presidential Election of November 7, 2000

The uniquely American story now being played out in Florida illustrates two key points about our political system. First, in the age of the Internet, we still rely on a horse-and-buggy election system. Second, despite the uncertainty and confusion surrounding the outcome of the presidential election, our democracy is strong and stable.

The League believes wholeheartedly that the current legal steps being taken to determine the outcome of the 2000 presidential election should be deliberately pursued to their final conclusion. There is no rush. There is no need to short-circuit that process. The rule of law must prevail. The process is proceeding appropriately and peacefully, and all parties have pledged to abide by the eventual result. Even so, the American people are deeply and appropriately concerned. And that is why, after the outcome of this election is determined, we must make reforms to ensure a broad-based representative democracy in 21st century America.

American elections are a crazy quilt. Ballots and administrative procedures vary from state to state, and even from county to county. Our system is a relic of the past that is lagging behind the rest of our 21st century democracy. For example, the next President of the United States may be determined by the placement of names on a ballot made by one county's officials. Voters in several states who registered when they renewed their drivers licenses found their names missing from the rolls on election day. We need a technology upgrade.

The course of American history has been an inexorable trend toward greater fairness, uniformity, and inclusiveness in our democracy. Yet, the systems for electing the most important representative of the American people are stuck in a time warp. The Electoral College, a curious vestige of the 18th century, violates the principle of one-person, one-vote. The time has come to abolish it.

It's time to bring our elections into the 21st century. It's time to streamline the confusing patchwork system that undermines voters' faith in their government. It's time to ensure that the President of the United States is directly elected by the people he or she will represent. It's time to

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News From Alameda County LWV Presidents Council

- LWV of Fremont/Newark/Union City has a flourishing cable television unit. They just produced an interview with San Francisco attorney Jack Zepp, President of the California Grand Jurors Association, on an overview of California Grand Juries and the Grand Jury system. Next will be an interview specific to Alameda County with former Assistant District Attorney Stacy Walthall who resigned in March after 30 years of service. Their tapes are available for broadcast in other areas.
- The Alameda County Council sent a letter to the Alameda Board of Supervisors with recommendations regarding holding public hearings on redistricting once the criteria, rationale, and other details have been developed to draw the boundaries of new districts. (See the 1st of 3 articles on Alameda County redistricting beginning on page 1 of this issue.)

-Jo Ann B. Price

Benefit the League with Scrip for Holiday Shopping

Make your holiday shopping easy - buy Scrip for your own shopping or as gift certificates. Place your order a.s.a.p. for Macy's, Williams Sonoma, EddieBauer, Barnes & Noble and many more by E-mail to me at evabrecher@aol.com or call me at 527-1992.

-Eva Brecher

guarantee that, across the country, every person's vote counts - and counts the same.

-Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, President, LWVUS,
November 9, 2000

- True to the motion passed at National Convention 2000, the LWVUS recently reimbursed LWVBAE \$5 for each of our members recruited nationally. Our check was for \$105. We thank LWVUS and urge them to continue their successful program of national recruitment.

-from recent LWVUS information gathered by
Jo Ann B. Price

Update On Rent Control in Berkeley And The Costa- Hawkins Bill

Contrary to some public belief, rent control has not been abolished by the passage of the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act (in force since 1/1/96). Currently, 19,154 of Berkeley's 24,500 rental units are under rent control. About half of them are in the University area, which is bounded by Cedar, MLK Jr., Dwight, Fulton, and Ashby. Central Berkeley and South Berkeley have just under 20% each, North Berkeley just under 10%, with West Berkeley just under 5%. Rent ceilings are lowest in West Berkeley, slightly higher in South Berkeley, and a little higher in Central Berkeley. They are highest in the Berkeley hills, and slightly lower in the University area.

About half of all rental units have not had legal vacancies since 1/1/96. This means half of rent-controlled rentals have had no 15% increase if a legal vacancy occurred during the three-year phase-in period of Costa-Hawkins, nor a market rate increase if such a vacancy occurred after 1/1/99. The average rent ceiling for these units is \$686.58 and for 1 bedroom, \$600.96. For the 28.27% of all units that have had legal vacancies since 1/1/96 to bring their rents to the market price, the comparison average rent ceilings are \$1,068.91 for all units and \$991.87 for 1 bedroom. Rentals therefore divide into three groups: (1) 47.9 % which have not had a legal vacancy since 1/1/96, (2) 23.83 % which have had a 15% increase, and (3) 28.27% which have market rent. The differing circumstances of these three groups merit distinct consideration regarding fair return.

The Annual General Adjustment (AGA) for 2001 has just been determined after a consulting firm calculated the overall change in rent necessary to cover annual changes in operating costs. In buildings where the landlord is responsible for covering gas and electric costs for all units, the increase for the median rental was found to be 3.2%. In buildings which are individually metered, the increase recommended was 1.7%.

At its regular meeting on 10/16/00, the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board adopted the AGA Order for 2001 which allows eligible landlords to increase the 2000 permanent rent ceilings of their rental units by \$10 per month, plus an additional \$8 if the landlord pays for the gas and electric costs. However, the 2001 AGA may not be charged on any rental units with a

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Action Plans

With an updated position on Housing and new positions on Instant Runoff Voting and Vista College, we can now try to spread the word to our community. We want to stimulate wide discussion of these topics and are considering forums as the means to do so. Our League will itself be kept focused on these issues due to the always urgent housing problem, our second year of involvement in the study of the Peralta Community College system, and our participation in LWVC's study of election systems.

We will continue monitoring our three city councils, planning commissions, and school boards, trying to help ensure that public business is handled openly and through proper procedures. We always need people to observe some of Berkeley's multitudinous commissions and welcome volunteers. At Action Committee meetings, our members will also share information on education, youth, juvenile justice, health and welfare, transportation and other regional matters, as well as state and national League concerns.

Once more, we welcome every member to our meetings on the third Wednesday of the month. It's a wonderful way to keep up-to-date. You may simply listen or participate, as you wish. Join us.

Remember also to sign up for LWVC's Action Network on e-mail so that you can quickly, easily, and effectively get your word to our state representatives and the governor when requested. These e-mails make a difference! E-mail your name, e-mail address, name of our league, and any specific areas of interest to DEVaughn@compuserve.com.

-Lois Brubeck, Action VP

current tenancy established on or after 1/1/00, pursuant to the Costa-Hawkins Act. The median rent is calculated to be \$577.01, so the fixed dollar amounts of \$10 and \$18 were the recommended percentages for the median rent. Allowing all units to raise rents by the same amount gives a larger percentage increase to landlords with the lowest rents, and successively smaller increases for those with the highest. The allowed AGA does not include indexing a landlord's profit for inflation as the Searle decision stipulated, since the Rent Board judged that the Searle decision increases in the early 90's were too high and should be offset.

-Doris Maslach, Rent Board Consultant

Environmental Concerns

The importance of community gardens, sustainable agriculture, and community food security were topics addressed at the Environmental Concerns September 11 and October 10 meetings.

Berkeley Community Garden landscape architect Karl Linn discussed responsible landscape design including common gardens that provide community resources, skills, employment, and a place for neighbors to develop relations. "The community garden to me has become the last residue of the Commons," Linn said. "And it takes so little." In addition to gardens, Mr. Linn's projects include the Ohlone Natural and Cultural History Greenway Project designed to preserve, educate, and provide opportunities for socializing and community building within Westbrae's rich and multi-faceted history where, "the landscape is an unwitting autobiography of a social group" Linn said. Another project is Berkeley Eco-House, located adjacent to community gardens and the Ohlone Greenway pedestrian and bicycle trail. This is a house being transformed into an ecological demonstration home that will showcase modern technologies and traditional means for environmental healthy living, sustainable building systems and materials usage, healthy living, and organic gardening techniques. For information, visit www.ecohouse.org or call (510) 433-9575.

In October, Gail Feenstra, nutritionist and food systems analyst at the UC Davis Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP), addressed Environmental Concerns on the importance of community food security and sustainable agriculture.

While California's food system is one of the most productive in the world, the dominant trends in the state, as in the nation have been toward increased pressure from population growth on farmland, diminished natural resources (particularly water), and concentration in ag production and processing operations. Family-owned farms and local control over production, marketing and labor has been superseded by large, non-local agribusiness control. Consumers have gradually lost the knowledge of where their food comes from, and food insecurity in rural and urban communities throughout the state continues to be a major problem. "It takes away our ability to see what we have locally and how we can

contribute to begin to head us in a direction that is more sustainable," Feenstra said.

Since 1987, SAREP has administered many competitive grants programs for research, education, and demonstration projects in sustainable agriculture. SAREP has funded 263 projects totaling more the \$6,800,000. Several of these project have received state and national recognition for their innovative approaches to linking local farmers with communities.

Among these is the Willard Greening Project in Berkeley where students grow and harvest fresh produce for the school cafeteria. The project continues to produce 15 to 30 pounds of lettuce and salad greens per week which are used in the lunch programs at Willard Middle School and Jefferson Elementary, sold at the local farmers market, or donated to Harrison house, a homeless shelter for families. The project is an integral part of the Berkeley Food Systems (BFS) Project, a city-wide project to increase the amount of locally grown produce from area farmers and community gardens and school gardens purchased by the school food service. This effort is helping to initiate a citywide food policy with the goal of ensuring community food security for all residents.

SAREP also is conducting an evaluation of the Berkeley Food Systems (BFS) Project, A USDA-funded Community Food Security project, which is forming a local food policy council and attempting to incorporate more produce from local farmers, and school and community gardens into the Berkeley Unified School district's school food service. A report of baseline data has been completed from which the project can measure its accomplishments in the he next few years.

For information on community food security contact the CFS Coalition, www.foodsecurity.org or (310) 822-1440. For information on SAREP contact Gail Feenstra at gwfeenstra@ucdavis.edu or (530) 752-8408.

-Gail Schickele, Co-Chair

Are you ready for 2001?

We have Calendars for Sale

LWV pocket size: \$ 2.00 each

Wall style: \$ 3.00 each

Add 50¢ each for mailing either size

Welcome New Members

Lea Barker
Tom Brougham
Richard Dorn
Ruth Greenblatt

Donors Through November 6, 2000

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In Honor or Memory of:

- 1- *Jo Ann Price*
- 2- *Jean Dehlinger*

Personals

Huzzahs for *Miriam (Mim) Hawley* who was chosen by the electors of Berkeley District 5 to represent the district as a member of the Berkeley City Council. *Mim*, past president of LWVBAE July '93 through June '95, has served as a member of the AC Transit Board and will now join fellow League members *Polly Armstrong*, *Linda Maio*, and *Kriss Worthington* as a City Council member on Tuesday, December 5. Thank you, *Mim*, for your commitment to good government

Mountain climber *Mina Lou Jenner* has returned from Tibet where she was a member, for a month, of

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In Memoriam

John Reynolds, April 3, 1923 - November 4, 2000

We offer heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of our member *John Reynolds*, in particular to his wife Ann. A Physics professor at the University of California at Berkeley, *John* was one of the world's greatest mass spectroscopists. He invented a number of important techniques and applied them to fundamental problems in physics and geo- and cosmochemistry. He was called the "father" of extinct radioactivities because of his most important discovery that allowed for the measurement of the time that it took for the meteorites to form after the sun formed. He received many honors for his achievements. *John* also held administrative posts at the University, including being Chairman of the Physics Department.

After his retirement, *John* joined the League of Women Voters in 1993 out of a sense of civic duty and appreciation of the role the League has played in making democracy work in all parts of the United States. He grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, got a Harvard undergraduate degree, served in the Navy during WW II, and got his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. *John* chaired LWVBAE's recent Instant Runoff Voting Study, seeing it through to the position we currently hold on the subject. He had also agreed to chair our League's participation in the state study on Election Systems. He died suddenly of a pulmonary embolism. He will be sorely missed by the members of his committee and the others of us who knew him well.

-*Jo Ann B. Price*

a group which climbed to the 20,000-foot level of Mount Everest. They backpacked and camped out in arid, unforgiving areas in Nepal and Lhasa where water was scarce and had to be purified before being safe to drink. You're a brave woman, *Mina Jenner!*

We wish every one of our readers joy and laughter as you celebrate the fall and winter Holidays, and good health, hope, and happiness ever after.

-*Eleanor Cox*, Corresponding Secretary

National Student Mock Election 2000

LWVBAE helped to organize and run the student Mock Election at the High Schools in Berkeley and Albany on November 2. This was part of a nationwide effort to get high school students involved and familiar with our democratic election process. The elections turned out very well in both instances, but quite different. As in real elections, students who hadn't registered couldn't vote, some students who registered didn't end up voting, and there were spoiled and incomplete ballots that had to be discarded. In addition to voting for President and Vice President, and on 3 California state ballot measures: Prop. 36 (drug rehab.), Prop. 38 (vouchers), and Prop. 39 (55% vote for school bonds), California students were asked to answer 4 multiple-choice questions on national issues: 1. the most important problem facing America (education);

2. what would do the most to improve education (increase federal spending);
3. the best change we could make in the criminal justice system (more money for prevention);
4. what should be done to restore people's faith in government and elected officials (shorten campaigns and use only public money).

The complete results are available in the League Office. For your appreciation of the full flavor of each city's high school voting experience, two reports follow.

Ballots and Bunny Slippers: Berkeley High Goes to the Polls

Berkeley High School held its Mock Election in the middle of Spirit Week. For those of us who are a long way from high school, Spirit Week involves a series of theme days: Wacky Tacky Day, Island Day, and so on, culminating in the Homecoming Dance on Saturday evening.

Mock Election Day was also Pajama Day. As a result, our voters came to the ballot box with bathrobes, teddy bears, alarm clocks, toothbrushes, bunny slippers, Superman pajamas, Calvin Klein sleep shorts, you name it. They were a sight to see, but they took their voting seriously.

Thanks to the help of BHS Student Activities Coordinator Michele Janssen, History Department Chair Bob Collier and his faculty, Mr. Posey at the Alternative School, and volunteers from the PTSA as well as from the League, the mechanics of staging the election ran very smoothly. Parents Joel Blumenfeld, Frances Martinez, Erin Sanchez, and Suzanne Chun pitched right in and kept the kids moving. *Ruthann Taylor* supervised the voting at the Alternative School. At BHS, Leaguers *Jane Barrett*, *Jim Lindsay*, *Patti Kates*, and *Phoebe Watts* got us through the day, tallying votes even while the polls were still open, so that we met the Secretary of State's deadline for submitting results at 3:20 p.m., with ten minutes to spare. Whew! And hats off to all.

-*Helene Lecar*, LWVBAE Mock Election Chair

A Textbook Mock Election: Albany High Goes to the Polls

Albany High School's Mock Election was an example for the nation. The 868 students had two days to register and 380 students made it, with some being turned away after the deadline. On Mock Election Day, 263 registered voters cast their ballot - 69%. This is a success story!

Parents on the PTA Mock Election Committee played a big part in making this work so well. Valerie "Not the Chair" Fuller helped organize a group of some 20 parents who not only provided the registration and voting experience, but also utilized the e-mail tree to alert parents about the election AND contacted a local business, United Artists Emery Bay 10, which donated 30 movie passes to the homeroom with the most students registered.

Karen DeHart, History Department Chair, led the staff effort, using students from the Home Room Senate to deliver voting information to the student body. DeHart also sponsors the Speech and Debate Club, which held a Bush vs. Gore debate, with each played by a student. Mary Lou Sumberg, Journalism staff, helped publicize the event and wrote pieces for the school newspaper. Amy Hansen, Vice Principal, provided backup support, and the custodial staff made the process possible. Parent *Marsha Skinner* (LWVBAE) volunteered during the entire time. The LWVBAE Albany Mock Election Coordinator provided initial contact, advice, and copies of the League's Pros & Cons. But it was the students, staff, and parents who took charge and made this a memorable civics experience. - *Karen Carlson-Olson*,

Redistricting (continued from Page 1)

The information in these articles should help prepare members to monitor redistricting actions of their local governments with an understanding of what constitutes fairness and equality of treatment and, thereby, ensure that government actions are taken with adequate notice and public hearings where citizens can tell elected officials when they stray from accepted redistricting principles.

Part One - Why, Who, What and How of Redistricting

Nationally, the new census is the first step in the process of redrawing the political map of Congress that is carried out at the beginning of every decade. Each state is allocated one seat, with the remaining 385 apportioned according to a formula based on the new census data for each state, adjusted by the number of seats previously allocated.

Since 1950, nearly 60 seats have shifted from northern states to the so called 'sunbelt'. California's congressional representatives increased from 5% of the total 435 in 1930 to 12% in 1990. California's current population is estimated to have increased 17% since 1990, and the expectation is that the state will be entitled to one or two additional congressional seats. In California congressional districts are created by the State legislature.

The State legislature also determines the district boundaries for its own members. LWV-California's position on this method of creating districts in the state is that it is an inherent conflict of interest when legislators are responsible for the drawing of their own district boundaries.

Locally, redistricting can take on a personal note when expected revenues are not forthcoming. For example, in a five-member county board of supervisors, if three districts emerge from the census redistricting in the southern and eastern parts of the county where formerly two districts existed, the three elected representatives of these districts can be a majority vote, and their vote could result in a reduction of revenues allocated to the northern and western districts.

Redistricting criteria that traditionally have passed legal muster include continuity, compactness, and communities of interest.

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What are the formal criteria for redistricting?

The League of Women Voters of California publication lists the following:

Population equality. The numbers of each district would approximate one another; no district would be significantly larger or smaller than the others.

Geographic contiguity. There would be geographic closeness for all those in a given district, with no islands, peninsulas, or other separated areas.

Compactness. There are many ways of measuring compactness. It does not prevent "gerrymandering", but does relate to many of the features of campaigning and voting.

Respect for existing political boundaries. Districts would have a meaningful relationship to the cities, towns, and unincorporated areas already in existence. A large city may be divided into districts, but small cities and towns would be kept in their entirety within a district.

Communities of Interest. This is related to respect for existing political boundaries, but may affect consideration of them. Types of interest include ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic level, rural location, urban neighborhood, and interest in a particular political issue. It is the most difficult of the criteria to define in the redistricting process.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (& 1982 amendments)

This Act prohibits redistricting which reduces or dilutes the voting strength of racial and linguistic minorities that have suffered past political discrimination. There is some dispute about the best ways to achieve this goal, but the preferred method appears to be keeping members of the minority in districts where they are the majority or as much so as possible.

Apparently politically neutral, even these criteria have political consequences. They may offer or preclude opportunities for political parties to compete equally, or may inadequately or unfairly reflect the diverse composition of the population.

While courts have generally avoided involvement in partisan gerrymandering, in contrast to their concern for *racial* gerrymandering, the two issues can be blurred in actual cases.

A new wrinkle in the Voting Rights Act is the *Shaw v. Reno*, 1993 U. S. Supreme Court case, which declared "excessive use of race" to be

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unconstitutional, making some future redistricting actions ripe for court decisions.

Germander was a word which came into use in 1812 when Massachusetts was divided into election districts to defeat the Federalist party. One of the districts had such a queer shape that some of the people said it looked like a salamander. It was finally called a “gerrymander” after Elbridge Gerry, then governor of the state of Massachusetts. Ironically, Gerry, who had been a signatory to the Declaration of Independence, had refused to sign that final document because there “was no adequate provision for the representation of the people.”

Who are the players in local redistricting?

At the County level, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors sets the boundaries for each county electoral district, including the unincorporated areas. City councils set electoral districts within their incorporated areas. According to the State Education Code, the Alameda County Board of Education is the authority to set local school district boundaries.

Who monitors these authorities? Aye, that is the question! An alert citizenry is the best way to ensure fairness, but only if that element has public hearing access to the process, reasonable time to respond, and knows what to look for and how to give its input.

Going about redistricting has been left to these jurisdictions, but the LWV Monitor Committee has already outlined a process to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors which could provide a model for others.

- Following adoption of appropriate criteria, the Board of Supervisors should draw up a draft redistricting plan for public input. The plan should explain how the criteria were arrived at, what kind of redistricting needs to be done, who will be involved in devising the new boundaries, and the dates for the various steps in the redistricting process.
- A careful process of public hearings should allow for changes in both the criteria and the plan before new boundaries are proposed. This careful public process should include ample notice, maps, and explanations of how the changes meet the specific criteria of the Board. Sufficient time for citizens to study, discuss, and understand the implications of the proposed changes should be allowed.

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Invite Your Friends to Join LWVBAE

The Membership Committee needs your help with introducing the League to prospective members. New neighbors particularly might find League contact welcome as an entree and orientation to the broader community. Please invite your non-member friends and neighbors who are interested in governmental issues and policies to consider joining LWVBAE. If you give the League Office their names, addresses, phone numbers, we will send them a packet of information about the League and how to enroll, and invite them to our next special event introducing our local League to newcomers.

-*Ginette Polak*, Membership Director

Note: The League specifically called attention to the point that the protection of the political prospects of an incumbent supervisor or preferential treatment for a political party should not apply.

-the Redistricting Monitor Committee,
LWV Alameda County Council

On An Historical Note:

The State League has long held a position which would vest responsibility for redistricting in a bipartisan special commission, with membership that includes citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and minority group interests.

In 1990, the California League was branded a ‘puppet of the Republican Party’ when it took action in support of Proposition 19 espousing an independent commission to curb the political abuse of gerrymandering. Willie Brown, then Assembly Speaker, told the League that it should “stay in the kitchen where it belongs”.

This retort went national when the Wall Street Journal published an article headed “Gerrymandered to the Kitchen”, noting that the League said “California voters were being denied a free choice at the ballot box by carefully gerrymandered districts that make it impossible for an incumbent to lose. In the 580 state and federal races in California since the 1981 gerrymander, only nine incumbents have been defeated.”

November

29	Wed.	1 pm	Peralta Com. Col. Study		(Lecar)
29	Wed.	4:30-6 pm	Executive Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Price)
29	Wed.	7 pm	Election Systems Study	LWVBAE Office	(Lindsay)

December

6	Wed.	4-6:30 pm	LWVBAE Board Mtg.	LWVBAE Office	(Price)
11	Mon.	7:15 pm	Environmental Concerns		
			Population Growth and Farmland Conversion in California		(Bansner)
14	Thur.	11:30 am	Speaker Series Lunch/Talk “Berkeley Arts District”		
			Capoiera Cafe, 2022 Addison Street		
		12:30 pm	Walking Tour		(Safir)
16	Sat.	10 am	Albany League Coffee		(Carlson-Olson)
18	Mon.	LWVBAE Office Closed for the Holidays until Tuesday, January 2, 2001			
20	Wed.	No Action Committee Meeting			
27	Wed.	4:30-6 pm	Executive Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Price)

January

2	Tue.	10 am	LWVBAE Office Reopens		(Light)	
3	Wed.	4-6:30 pm	LWVBAE Board Meeting	LWVBAE Office	(Price)	
5	Fri.	Noon	Deadline for February Voter		(Hawley)	
8	Mon.	7:15 pm	Environmental Concerns		(Bansner)	
11	Thur.	Noon-2 pm	Speaker Series	“Alameda County Grand Jury”		
			Albany Library	Edith Stone Room	(Safir)	
11	Thur.	5-7 pm	Reception for new Council and School Board Members			
			Co-sponsor: Chamber of Commerce (at Union Bank)		(Smith)	
13	Sat.	8:30 am	Alameda County LWV Council			
			Everybody’s Bagels	San Leandro	(Price)	
15	Mon.	LWVBAE Office Closed for M. L. King’s Birthday				(Light)
17	Wed.	9 am-noon	Action Committee		(Brubeck)	
17	Wed.	1 pm	Peralta Com. Col. Study		(Lecar)	
22	Mon.	9 am-2 pm	Reproductive Choice Lobby Day, Sacramento		(Lichterman)	
27	Sat.	9 am-12:30	Bay Area League Day	EBMUD Bldg., Oakland	(Bansner)	
27	Sat.	LWVC National Issues Forum Moderator Training, Sacramento				(Price)
29	Mon.	1-3 pm	Special Events Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Nelson)	
31	Wed.	4:30-6 pm	Executive Committee	LWVBAE Office	(Price)	