



THE

VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY, AND EMERYVILLE

1414 University Avenue, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94702

Tel. (510) 843-8824 Fax (510) 843-8828 E-mail lwvbae@pacbell.net

President: Doris Fine

December, 1997 - January, 1998

Editor: Bob Hawley

President's Message

National Program Planning for Convention '98

As we approach the new year, I would like to invite all of you to share with members of Leagues across the country in planning our National Program for 1998-2000. Come and add your voice in the selection of the program that will take the League into the 21st century. Help us choose a program that will revitalize citizen participation in the democratic process. What should all levels of the League emphasize over the next two years?

LWVBAE will be sending your views and ideas to the LWVUS to be counted with those of other Leagues when the LWVUS Board makes recommendations next April for the 1998 program. Then, in June at San Diego, convention delegates from across the country will discuss, debate and adopt a national league program.

A special meeting of LWVBAE, devoted to National Program Planning, will be held on Tuesday, January 13, from 10 am to noon at the South Berkeley Library. After discussing the many options already proposed, as well as any new ones that we believe are appropriate, we will seek agreement on one Issue for Emphasis, and we will also determine whether to recommend that LWVUS undertake multi-issue lobbying at the national level. Based upon earlier suggestions, we have the following options, but can also forward our own proposals:

- Sustainable Communities
- Campaign Finance Reform
- United Nations
- Health Care
- Welfare Reform
- Children's Issues
- Education

Please join us and bring friends or prospective members. Our Board is preparing materials we will review together, including LWVUS Bylaws, current LWVUS positions, and a list of possible Issues for Emphasis submitted by state and local Leagues. But we will also try to answer your questions about the program planning process. For example, we will address such issues as:

- What is an Issue for Emphasis?
- What is an LWVUS Legislative Priority?
- What is consensus and how does it differ from concurrence?
- How does a study differ from an Issue for Emphasis?

Just as voting is an important right and an obligation of citizenship, so joining together to shape our program at the grassroots level is key to ensuring that the League of Women Voters remains a democratic organization, its program and direction determined by and for its members.

I look forward to sharing the spirit of program planning with you as we start the new year.

Happy holidays and best wishes.

-Doris

Check out LWVBAE's "brandnew" Home Page on the Internet at
<http://home.pacbell.net/lwvbae> (note: no www)
Our thanks to computer consultant and webmaster, *Bill Chapman*

Board Briefs

The Board met as usual on the first Wednesday morning of November at the South Berkeley library. It was a long meeting with many informational reports whose contents will appear in this or the next *Voter*.

The Board regretfully accepted the resignation of *Regina Minudri* as Community Services Vice President. Her position as interim director of the San Francisco Library System is lasting longer than she had first planned, which doesn't leave her time for League duties. The nominating committee is asking for suggestions for a new Community Services VP.

Marion Luten will be Executive Vice President.

There will be a literary gathering with Ann Swinler, author and recipient of this year's Soulages award, on January 28, 1998. It is an opportunity for informal discussion with her. More information about her books and this event will be available in our office.

Masako Yamada, who has worked faithfully on the production of League videos for Berkeley Community Media, was named Volunteer of the Year at the BCM annual meeting.

Doris Mendell has agreed to be Publicity Consultant for LWVBAE.

Our Web page is almost completed. Those of you with computers can watch for it. You will find much to interest you (including a recent *Voter* issue).

Our office will be closed on November 11 for Veterans' Day and on 11/26 (pm only), 11/27 and 11/28 for Thanksgiving.

-*Violet Feinauer*, Secretary

Donors As Of November 1, 1997

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Emeryville Candidates' Night

On October 16, LWVBAE held a meeting of the candidates for Emeryville's City Council and the Emery School Board. The six candidates for the City Council all attended and, after introducing themselves, answered questions posed by members of the audience. Among the issues discussed were safety, development, traffic, open space, and communication between citizens and the city.

Four of the six candidates for the school board attended and addressed issues concerning the quality of education, schools-to-career programs, teacher training and civics-in-the-classroom.

The moderator for the evening was *Eva Bansner*; she was ably assisted by *Therese Pipe*, *Jean Safir*, and *Masako Yamada*. Arrangements for the event were made by *Doris Fine*. The meeting was televised and rebroadcast several times on Emeryville's public access television channel prior to the November election.

Community Services

We need someone to lead the LWVBAE's Community Services activities. The person we are seeking will -

- encourage and enable citizens to be politically involved, and
- promote active and effective citizen participation in government.

Among the responsibilities of this position are the organization of voter registration drives, candidates' meetings, and the LWVBAE's Speakers Bureau.

This is normally a position held by a Vice President, but since it will expire in July, 1998, we would welcome anyone interested in serving but not willing to assume the responsibilities of a Vice President.

If you are the person we are seeking, or know someone who is, please contact the Nominating Committee Chair, *Louise Larson*.

WRITE IT!

This is what we are calling the program we have developed with the community to increase civic participation through an exchange of letters between students at Berkeley High School and interested adults. After several meetings with community representatives invited to join us in helping to determine how our community can “make democracy work” (this is the Issue for Emphasis adopted by LWVUS in 1996), it was agreed to start by involving adults and students with one another. We know from studies of voting patterns, people who are involved in their communities are the ones who vote. Getting students involved in an exchange with adults who care, we believe, is key to “making democracy work” in our community.

We hope that many of you, our members, will participate in this program. It is an opportunity to get to know our young people, to encourage their literacy skills, to share our concerns for better government, and to mentor by mail. Do you have an interest, hobby, or skill you could share with a young person? Just **WRITE IT!** It won't take up much of your time, and you'll be surprised how much you will look forward to receiving a response.

Applications to become a part of **WRITE IT!** are available at the LWVBAE office and also at the office of the Berkeley School Volunteers, the agency coordinating this program; their address is 1835 Allston Way, phone 644-8833. For more information about the program, contact *Lois Brubeck*, *Nancy Polsky*, or *Doris Fine*.

Environmental Concerns

Monday, January 12, 1998

“Housing As If People Mattered”

Claire Cooper Marcus, Prof. Emeritus,
Dept. of Architecture, UCB

Meet at 7:15 pm, 1340 Arch Street, Berkeley

Note that this is the **second**, not the **third**
Monday of the month due to the Martin Luther
King, Jr. Birthday Holiday on January 19, 1998.

Contact *Erika Kunkel*,



SPEAKER SERIES

Program

WHEN: Wednesday, December 10, at 7 pm
WHERE: Northgate Hall, UCB
 Library, Second Floor
SPEAKER: Terry Francke, Attorney for the
 California First Amendment Coalition

No Sunshine In Berkeley?

A Sunshine Ordinance is a law governing public access to meetings and records that extends and amplifies existing state legislation including the Brown Act and the Public Records Act. Among other provisions, a Sunshine Ordinance can extend open meeting requirements, call for earlier access to agenda-related information, expedite and lower the cost of obtaining public records, make computerized information more accessible through use of the World Wide Web, and ensure continued monitoring and protection of the public's rights.

LWVBAE, together with the UC School of Journalism, sponsored an initial meeting on October 22 to discuss the need for such a local ordinance in Berkeley. Guest speaker was Terry Francke, attorney for the California First Amendment Coalition, who has been very helpful in advising local communities how to go about obtaining passage of such an ordinance. For example, he served as advisor to the Oakland League which last year succeeded in passing a Sunshine Ordinance, and to San Francisco as well.

A second public meeting to continue discussion, and to review the objections to such an ordinance raised by the Berkeley city attorney, has been scheduled as a Speaker Series program on December 10 on the UC campus as noted above. Our Board will be considering whether to support or sponsor such an ordinance. Any member interested in joining with us as we explore this issue is welcome. For more information, call me at the number shown below.

-*Doris Fine*, LWVBAE President

Head of Teachers Union Meets With Education Committee

Very few people know what the school district's goals are, according to Jackie Fox Ruby, president of the Berkeley Teachers Union. There need to be fewer goals, a person in charge, and time lines. Nor is there any clear-cut way to have input into goal setting. She spoke with great intensity to a well-attended Education Committee meeting as part of its current review of goals and decision-making at BUSD. She said that the district is a dysfunctional family with schools functioning at less than high efficiency. While dedicated teachers and support staff keep the schools going, they are demoralized by problems of infrastructure, late paychecks, poor school maintenance, late buses, etc.

A summary of the information she gave us follows:

The demographics of teachers are changing rapidly. At BUSD, 43% of teachers have been hired within the last five years; many are young and fresh out of college, and a rapidly decreasing percentage stick it out for the minimal five years considered necessary to develop their crafts. They need to be given more support and to become better paid. Because education professors don't believe in classroom management, trainees get little classroom practice. New teachers get some mentoring, but they and all teachers need time for joint planning and consultation with their colleagues. Students are coming to classes with less preparation, more diverse backgrounds and greater needs. District-wide performance and behavior standards have been lacking. If priorities were on classrooms and interventions for those in need, money could be allocated accordingly and found within our budget. In fact, intervention needs to occur even before school. While teachers always have and will continue to do parental outreach, demands upon them are great. The numbers of school nurses, librarians, counselors and community aides have been cut. Teachers still must put in 150 clock hours of new training every five years to maintain their credentials.

Those are the problems. Ms. Ruby also looked toward the positive. She had high praise for the Berkeley superintendent who has set out to bind budget to goals. She hopes that his 30-member Goal Commission, in which LWVBAE is represented and which is now meeting, will actually do something and become the basis for shared governance. It needs to whittle down the nineteen current goals to a

manageable three per year and to create time lines and responsibilities for meeting those goals. Maintenance and school site support problems could be overcome if unhappy janitors, bus drivers and secretaries were included in shared governance. Teachers have tried to set high standards, but state standards would be helpful. When asked about the high school, Ms. Ruby said that it is too big and fails to teach the whole child. There are teachers ready to start experimental programs in small schools within the high school, but the public must be willing to allow for trial and error in order to let such schools succeed. All those who have a stake in Berkeley High should enter into the discussion of such a reconfiguration. Only through real shared decision making will we be able to solve our problems throughout the District.

The next guests in this series of Education Committee meetings will be *Nancy Spaeth*, BUSD Associate Superintendent for Instruction, on Thursday, December 4, followed on January 15 by Joann Biondi who is in charge of Special Education.

-Lois Brubeck, Education Chair

Education Issues

There are two statewide initiatives that the LWVC is concerned about:

1. Educational Efficiency Act of "95/5." This has qualified for the June, 1998, ballot. The LWVC is opposed to this measure because it undermines local budgeting and is unresponsive to particular needs at the local level.
2. "Sheltered English Immersion," an act that would replace bilingual education for children not fluent in English with a more concentrated approach taught in English. Signatures are still being collected for this measure.

Other issues the LWVC is following include:

- School facilities funding
- Charter schools
- Teacher credentialing
- Statewide assessment test
- Standards

The California Standards Commission has sent its report on standards for reading and math to the State Board of Education, and they are currently the subject of statewide hearings. Work in standards for science, social studies and history will start in January 1998.

-Adapted from LWVC Update, October 1997

Environmental Concerns



Publications



The October 20 Environmental Concerns meeting focused upon Urban Agriculture with a presentation by Patrick Archie, coordinator of the Urban Farm Collaborative at The Gill Tract (located at San Pablo and Marin avenues in Albany). In its two seasons, the farm's education programs have served 20 teens, eight young adults and 10 UC Berkeley interns. School tours have served some 400 children. The one-acre farm began in 1995 on land donated by UCB. In its first year, the farm focused on cash crops but changed, in 1997, to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). In the Japanese CSA model, increasingly being used by small farmers nationwide, diverse crops are grown as opposed to single crops which can deplete the many uses of a farm's soil. CSA members subscribe for the harvest season to receive fresh vegetables and fruit. In 1990 there were two CSA farms in California and about 50 nationwide; today there are about 100 in California and more than 600 nationwide using the CSA model.

Mr. Archie also discussed the Center for Urban Sustainability in Alameda, a nonprofit center due to open in 1998-99. Its goal is to create a resource center where people can learn about sustainable living techniques which will generate jobs and training. Anticipated foci will be upon economic development, education for sustainability, and community organizing for food security. Community Food Security (CFS) is a new nationwide movement whose idea is to go beyond band-aid hunger relief programs to a holistic view that includes whole food systems and a look at national policies in an attempt to address the issues of hunger from a system-wide perspective.

Nationally, as well as globally, there is a growing understanding of the need for urban gardening. 100 years ago, over 50 percent of US population was involved in agriculture while today it is only 2.5 percent, Archie said. Today, most of the world's population lives in cities; by 2025 more than two thirds of us will be urban dwellers. The world's urban areas are growing by one million people each week. "Ultimately we must re-inhabit the land," Archie concluded. "It's critical for our survival."

-Gail Schickele, Environmental Concerns

WE the PEOPLE ...Skills for Democracy

This citizenship curriculum guide for grades K through 6 was published by the LWV of Minnesota Educational Fund. A few examples using the Preamble to our US Constitution are:

"We the People..." What do those words mean? Who are "We the People"? What if we were all alike and members of the same group? How do differences in each of us contribute to the 'We'?

"...in order to form a more perfect Union..." What is a 'Union'? Is it a government? A family? A couple? A workplace? A school? What functions do each of the unions perform? What role do each of us play in our unions? What makes a 'perfect Union'?

"...establish Justice..." Is justice a part of everyone's life? Who determines if a system is just? Did Prop. 209 establish justice?

"...insure domestic Tranquility..." What can we each do to ensure domestic tranquility in families, neighborhoods, schools, governmental relations?

"...provide for the common defense..." What is the 'common defense', and from whom or against whom is it used? What kinds of common defenses exist: weapons, doors/locks, fences, environmental barriers, or are knowledge and reason better defenses? How do we defend our ideas?

"...promote the general Welfare..." How do we, individually, define 'general welfare'? as food? shelter? clothing? medical care? education? friends and community? 'healthy' natural environment? Who should provide for the 'general welfare'?

The above examples are paraphrased from those in this curriculum guide and are posed to help see how this guide is not only useful in schools but how this guide can be used by all of us to help us assess our responsibilities and rights in our activities. If you participate in the WRITE IT! program at Berkeley High, you might find some of the ideas described in this guide useful.

Look for WE the PEOPLE on the publications shelf in the office, or call me.

-Lenora Young, Publications Chair

Rent Control: A Comparison

A comparison of Berkeley's Rent Control program with other programs in California (shown in order of city population):

<u>City</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Number of Units Under Rent Control</u>	<u>Annual Program Costs (\$)</u>
Cotati	6,500	600	55,000
East Palo Alto	24,710	2,000	275,000
West Hollywood	39,000	16,000	2,000,000
Santa Monica	90,000	32,000	4,016,437
Berkeley	105,000	19,000	2,400,000
San Francisco	760,000	180,000	1,800,000
San Jose	870,000	44,000	283,000
Los Angeles	3,000,500	460,000	5,563,736

Registration fees to finance these programs range from \$10 in San Francisco to \$132 in Santa Monica. However, tenants in Santa Monica repay landlords by having \$11 per month added to their rent. In Berkeley, the \$112 registration fee is a landlord expense and is used in calculating the Annual General Adjustment.

-Doris Maslach, Rent Board Action Committee

A January Special Event!!! A Conversation With Ann Swidler

On Wednesday, January 28, at 7:30 pm, at the home of *Fran Packard*, LWVBAE members and friends are invited to meet and have a conversation with Ann Swidler. Professor Swidler is the LWVBAE-Soulages Writing Award recipient for 1998 and is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at UCB.

The League is honoring Prof. Swidler for her contributions to two widely acclaimed books: Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life (Univ. of Cal. Press: 1985), and The Good Society (Knopf: 1991). These books were written by a brilliant team of academics: Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tiplin. Each author contributed from his/her area of expertise and research.

In these books, the morality of the American political experience, from individual to family to city, state, and nation is related, commented upon, and analyzed. The underpinnings of the virtually amoral political state of affairs we find ourselves in and the ethical dilemmas posed by the need to raise obscene sums of money to get elected are dealt with via the experiences of earlier times. The complex nub of what

contributes to make for a healthy political life is dealt with in depth. Both books are fascinating "reads".

The Berkeley Public Library has copies of both books and you'll find at least one copy of each available for lending at our League office. Please read some or all of these affecting books. You'll need to keep a pad of paper handy to keep track of the flood of questions and bits of inspiration your reading will engender. Hang on to your results and bring them, yourself, and a friend to this League January literary event. We're all truly looking forward to it.

-Jo Ann B. Price, Chair
LWVBAE-Soulages Writing Project

Bay Area League Day

Reserve **January 31** for a look at how focusing upon solving transportation problems neglects other important regional issues. A panel of experts in various fields will speak to the theme: "Starting with What We Have: Will Transportation 'Fixes' Work for All the People, for the Environment, and for the Economy?" Moderator Marge Macris will sum up by restating the case for a comprehensive regional plan with teeth.

Save the date: **Saturday, January 31, 1998** from 9 am to 1 pm in Oakland. Flyers will be available.

-Yvonne San Jule, LWVBA Rep.

Members and Membership

Pieces, Bits, and News You Can Use

Pieces

A warm and cordial welcome to new members:

Barbara and James L. Beatty

Guy Benveniste

Charlotte Bernardin

Jan Blundell

We hope to meet you soon at a League activity. LWVBAE membership: 422 (one small step in the right direction!)

Dildar Gartenberg, president of the East Bay Chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of America, is planning to return to Bosnia for another duty tour. Her report of her prior assignment as an election supervisor in Krupac appeared in the UNA chapter newsletter for October-November 1997 and is hereby condensed:

“The polling place looked much like my polling station in Berkeley. But Krupac is in the middle of a mine field. ‘If you didn’t drop it, don’t pick it up’ limited our movement. Asphalt roads were the way to go. Freedom to vote in Bosnia meant 93% turnout in Krupac and 97% in a neighboring town. The preponderance of voters were older people. The nearby grave yard told the story. My suggestions were usually responded to with ‘Why not?’ Why not together, working for peace, freedom and justice.”

An article about *Frances Townes* from the October 30 Berkeley Voice is condensed as follows:

“Thirty years ago, *Frances Townes* applied for admission to UCB’s graduate library science program. She was rejected because, at age 52, she was ‘too old’. Her anger led to the founding of the first women’s advocacy organization on campus, the Center for Continuing Education for Women. *Townes* is now being recognized by COOL (Celebration Of Older Life) which began on November 3 to honor the ‘rich history that older people have experienced and the active lives they are living now.’ She helps run the Berkeley Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless and campaigns against the use of pepper spray together with the Religious Coalition.”

Volunteer of the Year Award to *Masako Yamada* (condensed from MONITOR, the Berkeley Community Media Newsletter (BCM) for October, 1997):

“*Masako* was named Volunteer of the Year by

BCM because of her work as the interim Program Coordinator and Government Meeting Producer. She is an active member of the Video Feedback crew (which) produces work for LWVBAE...and collaborates with the Berkeley Historical Society. Ms. *Yamada* is quoted: When I retired 3½ years ago I was worried that I would lose daily contact with the outside world - then I joined BCM and that solved the problem...after retirement...now there is a complete feeling of accomplishment. I am really grateful (that) I can help in some small way... and..further the cause of opening up the airways.”

Bits

The eyes have it:

Dan Luten, recovering from cataract surgery.

Nina Olson, scheduled to have her other eye repaired before the December holidays.

News You Can Use

Wanted: A graphic artist to design three 8½ by 11 sheets to announce to recipients that they have received either a Hanukkah, Christmas, or New Year’s gift of a LWVBAE membership.

Wanted: LWVBAE members to take advantage of an easy solution to gift problems: give a membership in LWVBAE.

May your holidays be filled with love and laughter and the new year with hope, health, and happiness.

-*Eleanor Cox*, Membership Chair

Fanya Carter, 1910 - 1997

Fanya Carter, an active 49-year League member, died November 2 at Chico, California. She was a journalist and used those skills in helping to write and proof read League materials such as Know Your Town and Voters Service information.

She was a war correspondent for United Press and the Office of War Information during WW2. Later, she did fund-raising publicity for Planned Parenthood, was active in the Older Women’s League, was a docent for the Oakland Museum and the UC Botanic Garden, and a volunteer in the English In Action program. She belonged to several environmental organizations, an area in which she was much interested.

-*Margaret Dumas*

CALENDAR

November

- Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated -

- 26 Wed. 9 am Executive Committee *Fine*
 26 Wed. 1 pm Thanksgiving Holiday LWVBAE Office Closed
 From 1 pm Wednesday, November 26, to Monday, December 1
 27/28 Thurs./Friday LWVBAE Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 3 Wed. 9 am Board Meeting South Berkeley Library *Fine*
 4 Thurs. 7 pm Education Committee *Wardwell*
 10 Wed. 7 pm Speaker Series Northgate Hall, UCB Library, Second Floor
Fine
 19 Fri. 4 pm LWVBAE Office Closes for the Holiday Season
 31 Wed. 9 am Executive Committee *Fine*

January

- 5 Mon. 10 am LWVBAE Office Reopens for 1998
 7 Wed. 9 am Board Meeting South Berkeley Library *Fine*
 9 Fri. 4 pm Voter Deadline LWVBAE Office
 12 Mon. 7:15 pm Environmental Concerns *Kunkel*
 13 Tues. 10 am National Program Planning Meeting
 South Berkeley Library *Watts*
 15 Thurs. 7 pm Education Committee *Brubeck*
 28 Wed. 9 am Executive Committee *Fine*
 28 Wed. 7:30 pm Literary Discussion *Packard*
 31 Sat. 9 am Bay Area League Day CalTrans building, Oakland *San Jule*

February

- 4 Wed. 9 am Board Meeting South Berkeley Library *Fine*

1998 LWVC Pocket Calendars

1998 LWVC pocket calendars are available for \$2.50 (\$3.00 for mail order). Pick up a copy at our office, at a meeting, or call the office for a mail delivery.

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member at all levels: LWVBAE, Bay Area, State
and National.

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1414 University Ave., Suite D
Berkeley, CA 94702

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