

What are impacts of sea level rise and what are the state, region and municipalities doing? That and other climate change topics were discussed at Bay Area League Day. Videos of sessions are on our website at www.lwvbae.org.

How high will sea level rise and by when? Both are still very uncertain. As ice melts in Greenland and Antarctica the sea *will* rise. Prominent researchers estimate sea level rise to be 1 to a maximum of 1.8 meters (3.3 to 6 feet) by 2100. But the authors admit that there is significant uncertainty, particularly in melt rates for West Antarctic glaciers. Just after the estimate was published, other work showed that the Amundson Sea sector of West Antarctica is in an "irreversible state of decline", with nothing stopping glaciers from melting into the ocean. Melting of this sector alone would add about 4 feet (1.2 meters) to sea level rise. So an increase of sea level of nearly 10 feet (3 meters) by 2100 is possible. And if not by 2100 then soon thereafter.

► **Continued next column**

► From Previous Column

The figure on the left shows our area for the more conservative estimate of two meter sea level rise. Interstates 580-80 are flooded along most of their route. The rail line for freight and Amtrak is partially flooded. Golden Gate Fields and Aquatic Park are flooded, and water is approaching many businesses and facilities, including Berkeley's transfer station.

Scary? At first, but it doesn't have to be. Two things to keep in mind. First, we will know much more about the extent and rate of sea level rise in the coming decades. Second, as we make plans, we need to think of a different future. Maybe we'll have self-driven cars. Maybe cars will be a different size and shape. Maybe we won't want big asphalt freeways.

We're already building a more beautiful and sustainable city in Berkeley, and the state and region are well ahead in planning. Our new future can be not only cleaner, it can be literally greener, more efficient, and beautiful.

Berkeley's Resilience Efforts

Timothy Burroughs Speaks at
"Conversations"
Tuesday, March 17, 12:00-
2:00p, Albany Library



Also see story on "Berkeley's Resilience Efforts" at
www.lwvbae.org.

A Better BART

April 21 "Conversation", 12:00-2:00p

BART Directors Rebecca Saltzman and Zakhary Mallett, who between them share jurisdiction over the BART stations within our area, will speak about the "Building a Better BART" program of station and equipment improvements, and will answer questions that usually only occur to you when you go to the website to find information, or are riding on a train.

The LWVBAE offers this series in collaboration with the Albany Public Library. Bring a friend to the Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room, Tuesday, April 21, 12:00-2:00pm.

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Voter Turnout and Our League

By Ruby MacDonald for the Voter Services Team



Voter turnout in 2014 was embarrassingly low across the country – and only 45% of registered voters in Alameda County. The LWVBAE Voters Services Team is already meeting the first Monday of every month to work on boosting voter turnout.

Same Day Voter Registration (SDRV) is one of the few efforts that boosts voting by 10-12% according to research gathered by the Voter Services Team from relevant websites and "California Votes", a postmortem on the 2014 election sponsored by UC Berkeley's Institute for Governmental Studies and "Future of California Elections", organized by a coalition of good government groups including LWVC. (Exciting races boost turnout too.)

Unfortunately, SDRV cannot occur in California until June 2016 when a statewide database of voters, VoteCal, should be in place. In the interim, our team is organizing publicity and targeting outreach towards low-turnout voter groups.

We need a few of your hours and your ideas and energy each month to help us "save our democracy," as newly elected Secretary of State Alex Padilla puts it. Volunteer with the Voter Services Team at voterservices@lwvbae.org.

Convention Season is Coming!

LWVBAE Annual Meeting

Thursday May 28, 2015, 5:00-8:00p

Featuring dinner, speaker and election of new Board

LWV California Convention

Friday, May 15, through 3 pm, Sunday, May 17, 2015

The Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter

Number of delegates is limited. Apply to the LWVBAE Board if you want to attend.

ON THE WEB

To keep up with League news, check our website regularly at <http://www.lwvbae.org/>

Civics Education Makes Progress



By Christine Wenrich for the Education Team

We urgently need a more informed public on civic matters. And we're seeing some progress. Concerned about that need, State Superintendent of Education Torlakson and Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye formed the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning. The task force created a steering committee, named the Power of Democracy. Civics instruction will be added to the required framework for social studies instruction at every grade level in 2013 (AB 137).

Seven regional meetings followed, and two more bills, (AB 1599, Committee on Education, 9/15/14) and SB 897, Steinberg 9/19/14), were signed which recommended a number of specific historical documents and objectives for the framework's civics education component. The draft for the K-12 History-Social Science Curriculum Framework was approved September 19, 2014 and opened to field review, but adoption of the framework has been delayed until March 2016.

Meanwhile, the Power of Democracy has moved forward by side-stepping local control funding and Common Core structures. Instead, citing the urgent need for young people to be critical thinkers who participate in our democracy, California groups of civic leaders have formed to work with Districts to bring civics education into the schools now. Such an effort is reported to be starting in Alameda County.

California Climate Goals

Governor Brown's 2015 State of the State Address

"I propose three ambitious goals to be accomplished within the next 15 years [by 2030]:

- "Increase from one-third to 50% [California's] electricity derived from renewable sources;
- "Reduce today's petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50 percent;
- "Double the efficiency of existing buildings and make heating fuels cleaner."

New President at CPUC Faces Major Challenges

By Bob MacDonald for the Climate Change Team

The new California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) President Michael Picker will have his hands full trying to repair public opinion and move toward a more efficient CPUC.

Our Climate Change Team tracks the CPUC policies and activities. The CPUC regulates electricity and natural gas utilities as well as telecommunications, water and transportation companies. It has major responsibilities in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the CPUC and its past-president, Michael Peevey, helped make California a leader in renewable energy. In recent years, however, the agency's reputation has been badly tarnished.

Problems at the CPUC began in 2010 with the San Bruno natural gas disaster, after which its inadequate safety oversight was revealed. Since then a host of breaches of ethics and rules have surfaced. In October, president Peevey announced he was stepping down. In late December, Governor Brown named Michael Picker, a commissioner since 2014, as Peevey's replacement. Picker, at his first meeting as president, pledged to repair the broken parts of the CPUC, which included focusing on public safety, being responsive to the public, making significant cultural changes and improving internal communications.

Influence and Fun Combined

By Nancy Bickel

The Berkeley Energy Savings Ordinance (BESO) had its second reading before the City Council Tuesday, Jan, 27, 2015. We, the League of Women Voters of Berkeley Albany Emeryville, had raised our concerns about the possible impact of high costs of the proposed energy audits on homeowners in a letter to the City Council in November.

Regina Beatus, Chair of our Climate Action Team, drafted the League's original letter, and spoke in support of this change at the January 27 Council meeting. Regina reported, "Last night I attended the City Council meeting and spoke on behalf of the League! The turn-out was good for



speakers on this issue. After our and others' comments, the Council decided to wait on single family homes and consider them in three years, 2018, after some assessment of the program with larger buildings. I actually really enjoyed the entire meeting! A woman I sat next to was very appreciative that the League weighed in on this Ordinance."

Cap and Trade Proceeds

By Regina Beatus and Cynthia Lloyd for the Climate Change Team

The Bay Area stands to benefit from the first year of Cap and Trade proceeds. The Cap and Trade program is part of the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) passed in 2006 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The total funds allocated in 2015 will be \$832 million with eleven state agencies having responsibilities for fund disbursement.

The procedures for selection and review of projects require an application and review process, although the procedures vary among agencies. For example, the Strategic Growth Council, lead agency for dispersing \$130 million for the "Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Programs" has released guidelines for funding eligibility, held public workshops, and released funding solicitations. Awards will be announced in June 2015. By contrast, the Air Resources Board has already made most funding decisions for low carbon transportation.

SB 535 (passed in 2012) mandates that 25 percent of the moneys allocated from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund must go to projects benefiting disadvantaged communities. At least 10 percent of the funds must go to projects that are physically located within the disadvantaged communities. The California Environmental Protection Agency was given the responsibility for identifying disadvantaged communities.

Over the next years the Green House Gas Reduction Fund will increase substantially because Cap and Trade will begin to include vehicle fuels starting January 1, 2015. Look for a follow-up article later this year describing funded projects. With the Cap and Trade Budget permanently allocating 60 percent of future auction proceeds to public transit, affordable housing, sustainable communities, and high speed rail, that is where we anticipate seeing the most investment.

Be a Part!

You've been meaning to get more involved in the League? Now's your chance. Jane Coulter, chair of the Nominating Committee, is seeking members interested in building – or using – their skills and experience. We have tasks ranging from a few to many hours a month and some that can be done in short bursts – all contribute to the League's effectiveness and visibility. All positions can be shared with another person or a whole team, depending on how you like to work and how much time you have. Our teams have fun together and, yes, teams is our new name for committees.

Board of Directors – all Board Members share responsibility for all work of the League, as well as doing particular jobs.



Continued next column



From Previous Column

President – coordinates overall League activities and League Board; spokesperson.

Program Coordinator and Team Members – organizes meetings and events, works with event teams.

Voter Services Coordinator and Team Members – registers voters and carries out all election activities.

Action Coordinator and Team Members – lobbies and advocates for LWVBAE positions and priorities. **Action Team** seeks new members to follow and recommend action in many different policy areas.

Membership Coordinator and Team Members – recruits and welcomes new members, helps them find their niche in League activities and more.

Secretary – keeps records of meetings and more.

Treasurer – keeps track of our funds, pays our bills.

Assistant Treasurers – helps with Paypal and other aspects.

Outreach Coordinator and Team Members – connects with the larger community, works with community groups

Communications Coordinator & Team Members – internal communications and external communications with the public. Positions include media coordinator, web manager, eblasts, web and VOTER editor, **Social Media Manager[s]** are particularly needed by the Communications Team.

City of Albany Liaison – follows city activities, connect with citizens, organize some meetings on local topics

City of Emeryville Liaison – follow city activities, connect with citizens, organize some meetings on local topics.

Administrative Coordinators for in-office and on-line activities and records.

New Teams are created as needed. If you have a special interest, talk to us about how to bring it to the League.

Interested? Contact Jane Coulter, tcoulter2@comcast.net, 510-524-0525.

Environmental Concerns Summaries Online

See the web for summaries and/or slides of past Environmental Concerns presentations on the Team page at www.lwvbae.org. A recent speaker, Leslie Stewart, a hazardous materials expert, discussed crude by rail nationwide, and now, likely in the Bay Area. Bakken, a light crude, is highly volatile and flammable with a history of explosive accidents; Tar Sands, or heavy crude, seeks the lowest points including bottom of waterways and cannot be skimmed. All are potential dangers to the environment and communities.

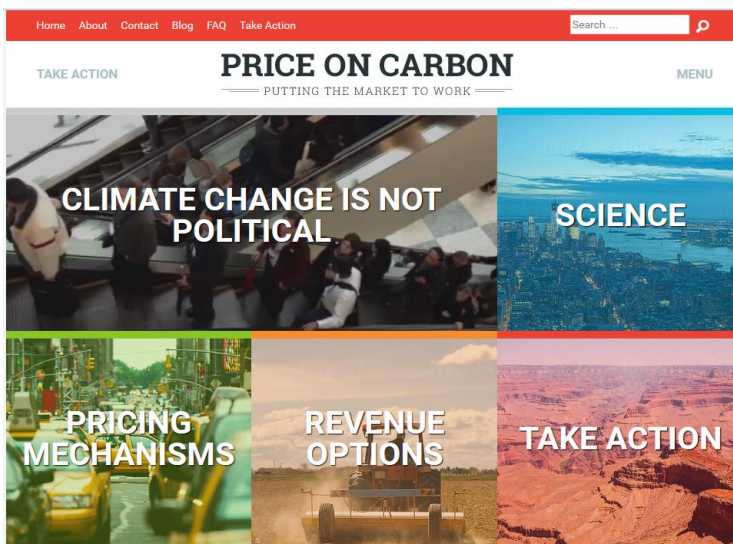
Price on Carbon Website

By Diz Swift

A growing amount of work tells us that climate change is a significant threat, caused principally by emissions from fossil fuels. But what can we do to decrease emissions and not hurt our economy? We can put a price on carbon and release the powerful forces of the marketplace. Let the market work to decrease demand, drive down emissions and grow innovations. That future is exciting – and profitable. With the collaboration of other advocates I have just launched a new website as a tool for education and advocacy – www.priceoncarbon.org

At the national LWV convention in June 2014, delegates overwhelmingly passed a resolution to put a price on carbon emissions. All Leagues were encouraged to advocate strongly for it.

California's cap and trade system puts a price on carbon (see story p. 4). The California system is linked with Quebec for trade and covers 85% of all carbon emissions. Nine northeastern states have created The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to reduce carbon from power plants, also through a cap and trade system. The RGGI covers about 20% of emissions and is popular in the participating states.



Washington and Oregon are moving toward a price on carbon and have joined with California and British Columbia in a regional effort. There are now 29 pricing schemes across the globe, with 12 more planned for the next year or so.

The trend is positive. The timing is now. Share the website with friends in other states and help move the whole country to reduce carbon emissions.

March and April Environmental Concerns Speaker Series

By Carol Stone and Gail Schickele

Meetings are from 7:30-9:00 at 1174 Euclid, Berkeley.

For information or rides contact Carol Stone action@lwvbae.org or Gail Schickele gails@bayarea.net.

March 9: Center for Biological Diversity

The Center for Biological Diversity believes that the welfare of human beings is deeply linked to the existence in our world of a vast diversity of animals and plants. They work to secure a future for all species, great and small, hovering on the brink of extinction. This is done through science, law and creative media, with a focus on protecting the lands, waters and climate that species need to survive. They want those who come after us to inherit a world where the wild is still alive.

On July 12, 2011, the Center for Biological Diversity struck an historic legal settlement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The settlement, requiring the agency to make decisions on whether to add hundreds of imperiled plants and animals to the endangered species list by 2018. The Endangered Species Act is America's strongest environmental law and surest way to save species threatened with extinction. By now many more than 100 species have won final Endangered Species Act protections through this settlement.

April 13: Environmental Protection Agency

Join us to learn how EPA programs and actions affect our area. In 2014, EPA awarded millions of dollars in grants to promote green technology, to design safer products, to help fight asthma in schools, and to restore water quality and wetlands; recognized companies using green chemistry to create renewable and plant-based fuels; addressed Bay contamination including a major Clean Water Act settlement with the East Bay Municipal Utility District and East Bay communities to stop discharges of untreated and partially treated sewage to San Francisco Bay; and recognized regional water-saving partnerships through EPA-sponsored WaterSense, which seeks to protect our nation's water supply.

While great progress has been made to reduce smog, improve water quality, clean up hazardous waste and create sustainable, healthy communities, the EPA needs to keep working to achieve its goals of protecting our environment and ensuring public health.

Our League's Direction

Proposals for 2015-17 State and Local Program

By Nancy Bickel and Sherry Smith

At our January 20 Program Planning meeting 19 members agreed on the following: the three top state priorities for advocacy should be Climate Change, Health Care, and a "Close the Loophole" resolution. Our local priorities should continue to be Education and Climate Change.

LWVC Study and Advocacy

We recommend that Climate Change continue to be the highest priority for state advocacy and public education and that the name of the group of policy issues related to climate change be changed to Natural Resources/Climate Change to emphasize the relevance of all the natural resources positions to this major issues.

Health Care is our second ranked issue for advocacy and education. Li-hsia Wang, who chairs the state and LWVBAE's Health Care Committees, reports we'll need to take more action this year. Our third choice priority, recommended by Julie Lovins, Los Altos-Mountain View Area LWV, was the "close the Loophole" resolution proposed by a non-profit group called Evolve. This resolution proposes reforming the tax of commercial properties originally set up by proposition 13. It would create a "split roll" for taxes, with commercial properties getting larger increases than residential properties.

Thanks to an unexpected decision by the LWVUS Board of Directors, our initial first proposal for a state study—Raising and Maintaining a Livable or Living Wage—is now moot. See story to right on this page.

We support a proposed study from the LWV San Diego on "Death with Dignity" and recommend that all current State League policy positions be retained.

Local Advocacy and Studies

Climate Change and Education will continue as our highest priorities for advocacy and public education in the 2015-2016 program year.

At the request of Carol Stone and the study committee, whose work was interrupted by the election, the group recommends that the "Local Boards and Commissions Study" continue for an additional two years, with the proviso that the Study Committee bring to the April 2015 LWVBAE Board meeting the study scope, questions, and timeline for review and approval.

The group recommends keeping all current local policy positions. One small change in the text will now identify the local community college by its current name, Berkeley City College, rather than as Vista College. The group recommended that LWVBAE start to track and record the use of local positions in our advocacy and education, so that we will have some sense of which are currently useful.

We Did It!

LWVUS Supports Living Wage

By Nancy Bickel for the Economic Inequality Team

In a startling and welcome reversal, the Board of the LWVUS has just decided that the Meeting Basic Human Needs position does permit state and local leagues to lobby in support of raising state or local minimum wages or adopting living wage provisions. "The entire Board, as well as the Advocacy Committee, 'strongly supports' this new interpretation", according to a reliable source. LWVUS does indicate that state and local leagues will need to do the research necessary to determine the appropriate wage for their own community. The position will not be used by the National League to support raising the national minimum wage.

Pat Kuhi, chair of our Economic Inequality Team, was the driving force in bringing to League attention that the Basic Human Needs position was being interpreted so narrowly by LWVUS that Leagues could not lobby using the obvious meaning of the position itself, which we quote below.

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS (LWVUS Position)

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that one of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and that the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty.

Pat brought the issue to our 2014 Program Planning meeting then to the 2014 national convention. Pat led a vigorous and successful effort to get our proposal considered on the floor of convention. We won more than 50% of delegate votes, but adoption required a 2/3 vote so we lost that campaign.

But now we've won. Thanks to this LWVUS board decision, we no longer need a living wage study. We and other Leagues can lobby for living wage and raising of minimum wage based on the existing national position. The state of California, and the cities of Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco and others have recently adopted new raises in their minimum wage.

Emeryville is currently considering raising the minimum wage. We have written to the City Council supporting a raise and urge the Council to give a full hearing to the views of all stakeholders before making a final decision. Our letter is posted on our website as "Emeryville Minimum Wage".

More streamlined, less cumbersome advocacy? LWVUS is strongly encouraging state and local Leagues to use national positions to do advocacy at their level "no matter what the issue." An upcoming webinar will assist in this effort.

Alba Witkin Remembered

By Sherry Smith



Alba Witkin, a civic activist and humanitarian who donated millions of dollars to educational and legal causes, passed away in her Berkeley home December 26, 2014 at the age of 95.

A member of the League of Women Voters for more than 70 years, Alba was engaged in civic

affairs for almost all of her adult life. When LWVBAE presented her with our "Spirit of the League" award in 2009, Alba spoke of her work with the League as a young woman who, in gloves and hat, lobbied the Legislature in Sacramento on behalf of League issues, and then decided to enter politics herself, in a winning campaign (and subsequent re-election) to become one of the first elected members of the Sacramento Board of Education.

She participated in a multitude of civic projects including serving with the Governor's Conference on Juvenile Delinquency; on the commission that revised the Sacramento County Charter; as president of the Sacramento Civil Service Board, and on the California Advisory Committee of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. All while raising her three children as a widow.

In 1978, she married Bernard Witkin, and together they formed the Bernard E. and Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation. The Foundation supported music in the Berkeley schools, affordable housing and food, refugee studies, mental health services, and many other projects.

Remembering Florence Butter

By Eloise Bodine

Florence Butter came to the Berkeley League in the 1970's as an experienced Leaguer from Indiana. She had a BA in social work from the University of Indiana, a husband and 6 children. Her focus was on election services.

► *Continued next column*

Membership Report

January-February 2015

Mina Jenner, Membership Secretary

New Members

Saheli Datta
Michael Goldhaber
Rose Ellen Morrell

Deaths

Florence Butter
Alba Witkin

A warm welcome to our new members.

► From Previous Column

Florence's work on the first Associated Students of UCB election was invaluable. She helped set up procedures for handling the ballots and recruiting poll workers. She managed ballot counts, which had to be done by hand, in one of the first ranked-choice voting systems. Soothing anxious students turned out to be part of the job.

Florence brought a calm, no-nonsense spirit to the many tasks she took on. Florence died at the age of 89 on Dec. 21, 2014.

Donations to Our League

January-February 2015

Elizabeth Russell, Donations Secretary

To the LWVBAE General Fund

Diane Akers and Steven Schwartzberg	Elaine Grossberg
Gertrude Allen	Bruce Harris
Robert Arnold	Miriam Hawley
Ellen Barth	Cynthia Johnson
Regina Beatus	Angharad Jones
Gilbert Bendix	Yvonne Koshland
Ellen Bennett	Jane Ann Lamph
Jane Bergen	Helene Lecar
Nancy and Peter Bickel	Bill and Louise Lidicker
Suzanne Chun	Piero and Jill Martinucci
Tom and Jane Coulter	Jean Matsuno
George Crowe	Dean Metzger
JoAnne De Philips	Madeline Mixer
Violet Feinauer	Rose Ellen Morrell
Doris Fine	Julie Nachtwey
Donald and Stephanie Friedman	Barbara Nelson
Stanley and Mary Friedman	Karen Nelson and Guy Benveniste
Edith Gladstone	Therese Pipe
Leo Goatman	Jonathan Ryshpan
	Stephanie Thomas

To the LWVB Foundation

Diane Akers	Cynthia Johnson
Robert Arnold	Yvonne Koshland
Ellen Barth	Marie Lagarde
Regina Beatus	Jane Ann Lamph
Gilbert Bendix	Helene Lecar
J.L. Bloom	Elizabeth Lichtenberg
George Crowe	Jill and Piero Martinucci
JoAnne De Philips	Ellen Matthews
Violet Feinauer	Junichi and Sarah Miyazaki
Andrea Foley	Julie Nachtwey
Stanley and Mary Friedman	Judy Nakadegawa
Leo Goodman	Marion Shapiro
	Theresa and Otis Wong

Many thanks to our donors.

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2014-2015

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Pat Day
Sarah Miyazaki
Carol Stone
Sherry Smith
Dean Metzger
Phyllis Gale

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VOTER/Web Editor Diz Swift
Climate Change Regina Beatus
Economic Inequality Pat Kuhi
Education Action Cathy Lynch &
 Dianne McNenny
Env. Concerns Gail Schickele &
 Carol Stone
Health Care Li-hsia Wang



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

Calendar – Locations are the LWVBAE office, 2530 San Pablo Ave, Suite F, Berkeley, and area code is (510) unless otherwise noted. www.lwvbae.org/calendar

March

4 Weds 10:30a-12:30p
9 Mon 7:30-9:00p

13 Fri 1:30-3:30p
16 Mon 10:30-11:30
17 Tues 12:00-2:00p

20 Fri 1:30-3:00p
24 Tues 2:00-4:00p

April

1 Weds 10:30a-12:30p
10 Fri 1:30-3:30p
11 Sat 9:00a
13 Mon 7:30-9:00p

17 Fri 1:30-3:00p
20 Mon 10:30-11:30
21 Tues 12:00-2:00p

28 Tues 2:00-4:00p

Board Meeting N. Bickel 526-4055
Environmental Concerns C. Stone 549-0959
Center For Biological Diversity, 1174 Euclid Ave, Berkeley
Education Action Team C. Lynch 527-2173
Voter Services Team P. Gale 548-0591
Conversation with League S. Smith 548-1769
Timothy Burroughs – “Berkeley’s Resilience Efforts”
Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave, Albany
Climate Change Team R. Beatus 524-6904
Economic Inequality Team P. Kuhi 526-6589

Board Meeting N. Bickel 526-4055
Education Action Team C. Lynch 527-2173
VOTER Deadline D. Swift 548-480817
Environmental Concerns C. Stone 549-0959
Environmental Protection Agency, 1174 Euclid Ave, Berkeley
Climate Change Team R. Beatus 524-6904
Voter Services Team P. Gale 548-0591
Conversation with League S. Smith 548-1769
Rebecca Saltzman and Zakhary Mallett, “A Better BART”
Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave, Albany
Economic Inequality Team P. Kuhi 526-6589