

# *The Voter*

*“ . . . to promote informed citizen participation in government.”*

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December 2011 & January 2012

## **League Will be Moving our Office**

Just as the last issue of the Voter went to press, the League received word that we are subject to eviction from our current office space.

Not because of anything we did or did not do (we have been model tenants for over 20 years at this site), but rather because of fallout from the bankruptcy of Andronico's Markets.

As a condition of the bankruptcy filing, Andronico's must divest itself of any "encumbrances", which includes our sublease (and that of the other sublessees in the building, which include the Gray Panthers and the United Nations Association of the East Bay and its UNICEF cards store).

The really tricky part for us is that Andronico's does not own the building in which we are tenants. It is owned by a property firm in Palo Alto called Berkeley Bazaar Partners (BBP). In addition, Andronico's Markets business was purchased by another company, which then made the determination to close the University Avenue store and as of now it is completely closed down.

**Continued on page 2**



## **Surprises and Delight at Our 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration October 30**

Loni Hancock and Nancy Skinner, our state Senator and Assembly Member, surprised us with a generously expressed and handsomely framed Resolution. Our cup runs over. Our Congresswoman Barbara Lee presented us with a similar honor earlier this year. In early November both the City Council and the Board of Directors of the Berkeley Unified School District honored with proclamations.

President Sherry Smith had a small shock a few days before the event. She learned that "Whatever 4," the Sweet Adelines barbershop quartet group that had stepped in when our first group couldn't make it, did indeed sing period music—of the 1930s and 40s rather than of the early 1900s. "Oy vey!" she e-mailed. But we reversed the order of the program and potential dismay turned to delight.

Senator Hancock spoke briefly and eloquently about why we need to revive reforming energy of our suffrage for-bearers to confront efforts around the country to make it harder for many people vote and to work to reverse the growing gap between rich and poor. The new "Hymn to the Right to Vote" with lyrics composed by Berkeley mu-

**Continued on page 2**

### **Inside This Issue**

Future of our League.....	3
Federal Government Role in Education.....	3
Environmental Concerns Report .....	4
Environmental Concerns Meeting.....	5
Bay Area League Day .....	5
Working to End the Death Penalty .....	5
Women Vote Events Calendar.....	6
Help Would-be Voters .....	6
Donations.....	6
Welcome.....	6
Centennial Collage .....	7
Calendar .....	8

## **Moving Our Office** Continued from page 1

We have about four years remaining on a five-year lease, but in bankruptcy proceedings, all such leases and other contracts into which a company may have entered are wiped out (this can include union agreements, although it appears that the buyer of Andronico's business intends not to negate those agreements, and will likely rehire most of the employees under the contract).

Essentially, we have no contractual right to remain at 1414 University Ave., and have been given notice that "while there is no advance notice requirement that you vacate your space, we understand the landlord will be in touch with specifics on the timing for vacating as well as other instructions". While a representative of BBP has stated orally that there is a possibility we will be given 60 to 90 days notice before we must finally vacate, we have received nothing in writing.

As we go to press with this issue of the Voter, the League Board is seeking a new office space for us, and we are "weeding and purging" our current office furniture and files so that we will be "leaner" in our need for square footage requirements. We are currently leasing 542 square feet and are paying \$943 monthly.

We are receiving useful assistance from the City of Berkeley's Office of Economic Development, which is functioning as a liaison between us and BBP, the owners of our building. It's very helpful to have the City rooting for us.

We have been given information about several possible properties and we are busily following up on leads.

When the decision is made about where our new office will be located, as well as when the move will take place, we will send out an email notification to all members and will have an appropriate message on our telephone line.

We're looking at this unexpected situation as an opportunity to cull unneeded furniture and files, and will be selecting files that should be archived to send to the Bancroft Library, which has been cataloging and storing our historic files for a number of years. If you would like to assist with this "weeding and purging" project, please leave a message on our office phone (843-8824) or send us an email message at [office@lwvbae.org](mailto:office@lwvbae.org). We'll be very happy to hear from you.

Time is of the essence as we make these decisions, and we hope that by the next issue of the Voter, the dust will have settled and we will be able to tell you details about our new office home.

Sherry Smith, President

## **Birthday Celebration** Continued from page 1

sician Mary Rogier, struck the same note as it ended with a stirring exhortation:

Our nation stands for freedom and for opportunity  
We stand for equal rights and cherish our democracy

We must still protect those rights in every century  
Our precious right to vote!

We always must defend this cause, we never must concede

We owe it to our country and especially those in need

That's what we must remember and reject this age of greed

So justice will prevail!

Glory, glory hallelujah!

Glory, glory hallelujah!

Glory, glory hallelujah!

With equal rights for all!

The audience of about 60 joined the chorus with gusto as the Suffrage Singers, led by City Auditor Ann-Marie Hogan and sung by members of the Berkeley Community Chorus and the League, Nancy Benson, Nancy Bickel, Eloise Bodine, Helen Canin, Jinky Gardner, Helene Lecar, and Sherry Smith. The Suffrage Re-Enactors, led by Cathy Foxhoven, Academy of Art University, San Francisco, Professor of Theater Arts and AAUW-CA Program Director, introduced three heroines of the California suffrage campaign, Selina Solomons, Clara Shortridge Foltz and Caroline Severence. Actresses Cathy Foxhoven, Leslie Ragsdale and Linda Miliken brought these women vividly to life in their brief monologues describing Selina's San Francisco center for working women where she offered free lunches and discussions of women's rights; Clara Foltz's efforts to become a lawyer, to force Hastings Law School to admit women and then to shape other landmark legislation; and Caroline Severence's organizing of women's clubs to educate women and organize them to fight for worthy causes.

Thoroughly edified and amused by the suffragists, the audience was delighted to be brought closer to the present day with the mellifluous and swinging harmonies of "Whatever 4." Patti Bauer, Patty Easley, Pat Hunter, and Marjie Jenkins, who had traveled from Pollock Pines, Shingle Springs, Auburn and Vacaville, delightfully embodied the girl groups of the 1930's. and '40's.

Continued on page 3

## Birthday Celebration Continued from page 2

Loni Hancock and Nancy Skinner were so entranced by the brief program that they stayed to the end—instead of departing to other pressing obligations. When the songs and applause ended most of the audience and performers walked across the street for lemonade and cookies and a tour of the fascinating exhibit “Berkeley Women Vote: Celebrating California Suffrage 1911-2011.”

The homemade snacks and lemonade were the work of Leaguers Regina Beatus, Nancy Bickel, Tom and Jane Coulter, Patricia Day, Jinky Gardner, Helene Lecar, and Rainey Sikes. Phyllis Gale, curator of the exhibit, and Phil Gale, treasurer of the Berkeley Historical Society, opened the museum and assisted the group generously.

The performances and music are done, but the exhibit will continue through March. It is open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons. See the calendar on page 6 for details of this and the many other centennial events that you still have a chance to enjoy.

Nancy Bickel

## The Future Of Our League

On Tuesday, January 3rd, please participate in a discussion about recent changes in our local League. How has the demise of Andronico’s store on University Avenue affected us? The brief answer is that the LWVBAE Office must vacate its longstanding premises. Looking for a new office location forces us to rethink how our League has been operating and how we might function differently. Now is also the time to consider leadership for next year and choose issues of emphasis.

**When:** Tuesday, January 3, noon to 2:00 pm

**Where:** Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room

1247 Marin Avenue (at Masonic), Albany

You will learn what has been happening since October 2011 and help our League evaluate its choices.

For more information or to convey your ideas, call LWVBAE at 510-843-8824 or email [office@lwvbae.org](mailto:office@lwvbae.org). Or call Sherry Smith at 548-1769, or Ginette Polak at 841-4546.

## LWVBAE Members Support a Federal Government Role in Public Education

The Study for the League of Women Voters of the United States in 2011 is that of “The Federal Role in Education.”

On October 4, LWVBAE members were invited to attend a Consensus Unit at which our local Study Committee made their presentation of the background information and Study Questions that had been formulated by the LWVUS Study Committee.

Our local Study Committee (Doris Fine, Helene Lecar, with Jinky Gardner as Consensus Reporter) condensed all the LWVUS-developed study materials into a concise 8-page summary that appeared as a pull-out in the October issue of the Voter newsletter. They performed the admirable task of boiling the material down to information that could be handled in a two-hour Consensus Unit.

The work of the Study Committee was admirably augmented by a presentation at the League’s annual Fall Meeting on September 26 by UC Berkeley Professor Bruce Fuller of the School of Education. His perspective on the Federal role, in particular its dependence on the contingent and variable state of politics, helped us see the potential risks of extending the Federal role beyond its special competence in assuring access and equity, to such less well-studied areas as teacher evaluation, charter schools and similar attempts at innovation.

The Consensus Unit on October 4 was attended by 26 members of LWVBAE who, after Study Committee presentations and lively group discussion, reached consensus that the current role of the Federal Government in public education is about right, with a substantial number feeling it could be even larger. When asked specifically what that role should be, everyone in the group who expressed an opinion said that the most important was to ensure that all students pre-K through 12 receive a quality education, and they also said that “developing accountability measures that will study the process of all students”, and “mandating Common Core Standards for all students K-12” ranked in the top three (out of five ranking choices).

On the other end of the spectrum, the group ranked “measure teaching effectiveness through test data” as their last of five ranked choices.

The entire group felt that a quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.

Continued on page 4

## Federal Government Role in Public Education

Continued from page 3

On their way to coming to consensus on these points, the group discussed twelve other questions that helped them come to their conclusions on the final three “general questions”, as outlined above. To see all of these questions, go to the LWVUS Web site ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) and click on “For Members”, then “Projects and Programs”, and then, under “Taskforces and Studies”, “The Education Study”, and go from there.

The LWVBAE Board was presented with a summary of consensus reached at the Unit, and approved that report unanimously. In addition to the responses to the Consensus Questions, the group discussion on October 4 yielded the following comments, which the Board agreed should be forwarded to LWVUS as well:

- LWVUS is urged to react to changes in the Federal role with great caution, such as when considering “Common Core Standards”, and charter schools.
- The League must continue to support public education and be cautious in supporting innovations that are not yet “real”.
- We must not undermine what is good in public education. Our current support for access and equity helps perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.

On behalf of our League, I want to express our deep appreciation to Doris, Helene, and Jinky for all the many hours they put into preparing and presenting Study information for the consideration of the members at the Consensus Unit. Studies support the League’s positions on a wide spectrum of public policy issues, providing fodder as the Leagues at all levels promote legislative proposals that further the conclusions reached via our Studies. It’s a sound method for which we are afforded unique credibility when we support or oppose issues. Studies provide a solid platform on which to stand---a sturdy soapbox from which to speak and write and lobby.

Thanks to all of you who came out to engage in the discussion and express your opinions. A Study Consensus is a wonderful vehicle by which the League can be “League-like”!

Sherry Smith, President

## Environmental Concerns Report: Fracking

Hydraulic Fracturing known as “fracking” was the topic presented by Food and Water Watch National Organizing Director Mark Schlosberg for our League’s Natural Resources /Environmental Concerns October 10 meeting. Fracking is a means of natural gas extraction employed in deep natural gas well drilling. Once a well is drilled, fracturing fluids consisting primarily of water and sand, along with chemicals, are injected under high pressure into the producing formation, creating fissures that allow resources to move freely from rock pores where it is trapped.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, “The use of horizontal drilling in conjunction with hydraulic fracturing has greatly expanded the ability of producers to profitably recover natural gas and oil from low-permeability geologic plays, particularly shale plays.” Shale gas plays are found throughout the Mountain West, the South and throughout the Northeast’s Appalachian Basin.

Fracking has emerged as a contentious issue in many communities. While vertical fracking is used to extend the life of an existing well, horizontal fracking differs in that it uses a mixture of some 500 chemicals, many of them proprietary, and usually 1 to 8 million of gallons of water per frack. A well may be fracked up to 18 times, according to the award-winning documentary “GasLand.” According to Food and Water Watch, many of the chemicals are highly toxic and have serious short- and long-term effects on human health.

“It presents an unacceptable risk to the American people,” Schlosberg said. There’s an impact on water due to potential contamination and the vast amounts of water required for the process; an impact on air because of the release of toxic contaminants such as benzene, which is linked to nosebleeds and asthma; and other impacts on agriculture due to contamination to both livestock and crops. A possible link to earthquakes also has been questioned.

Schlosberg cited ten recent studies on fracking, including an investigative report in the New York Times (February, 2011) that highlighted environmental problems, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee finding that fluids contained hundreds of chemicals including benzene, lead, and diesel fluid. A Cornell University (March 2011) report posited that fracking could have greater climate impact than coal or oil because of the release of methane, one of the most poisonous of greenhouse gasses. Yet there continues a national push for natural gas extraction by fracking, which is not regulated under the Clean Air Act nor the

Continued on page 5

## Environmental Concerns

Continued from page 4

Safe Drinking Water Act. The Act that ensures safe, clean drinking water free from both natural and man-made contaminants.

In 2005, the Bush-Cheney Energy Bill exempted natural gas drilling from the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Act exempts companies from disclosing the chemicals used during hydraulic fracturing, and this provision that took the Environmental Protection Agency off the job. It is now commonly referred to as the Halliburton Loophole. The FRAC Act (Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness to Chemical Act) is a House bill intended to repeal the Halliburton Loophole and to require the natural gas industry to disclose the chemicals they use.

Food and Water Watch says that there have been more than 1,000 documented cases of water contamination near drilling sites around the country.

Schlosberg urged Californians to get in touch with their Senators—Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer—and their representatives to oppose fracking and to contact Oakland Rep. Barbara Lee who a co-sponsor of the FRAC Act, H.R. 1084/S.58,7. In addition, Berkeley Councilmember Kriss Worthington called for support of the FRAC Act, and BREATHE Act, H.R. 1204 to Repeal the Fracking Exemption to the Safe Drinking Water Act and Require Disclosure of Chemicals Used in Fracking. For more information, [www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fracking](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fracking)

Gail Schickele, Natural Resources Director

## Bay Area League Day February 4, 2012

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area will hold its annual Bay Area League Day forum on Saturday, February 4, 2012, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the MetroCenter at 101 Eighth Street in Oakland. The event will focus on regional housing, and will feature expert speakers addressing policy, financing, and equity issues related to this topic.

## Environmental Concerns December Meeting

On Monday, December 12, 2011 the Environmental Concerns special event will be our annual Appetizer and Dessert Pot Luck followed by Zoo mystery stories.

The pot luck will start at 7:00p.m. (instead of 7:30) and will feature Author Ann Littlewood (who is the sister of League member Nancy Parker). Ann will give a slide show about her journey as a zoo mystery author highlighting some wildlife conservation issues.

Please join us for this very special presentation at 1174 Euclid Avenue (at Chrystal Way, just north of Eunice) in north Berkeley, the home of Jeanette Zerneke and Mark Nyman.

Carol Stone, Natural Resources Director

## Working to End the Death Penalty in California

A statewide coalition, Taxpayers for Justice, recently filed the SAFE California Act to place an initiative on the November 2012 ballot to replace the death penalty with life in prison without the possibility of parole. If passed, it would save \$1 billion over the next five years. A portion of the tax dollars saved would be used to create the SAFE California Fund to invest in local law enforcement in order to reduce the number of unsolved murders and rapes in California.

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports ending the death penalty. The League of Women Voters of California has endorsed the campaign to gather signatures for the SAFE California Act. The seven Leagues in Alameda County are participants in the Alameda County Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

League members wanting to end the death penalty in California should consider working on the signature-gathering campaign which will continue through March 2012. Training sessions for signature gathering began in October. If you are interested in volunteering with the SAFE California Campaign, send a message to Ana Zamora [azamora@aclu.org](mailto:azamora@aclu.org)

Marion Taylor, LWV representative to Alameda County Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

## Berkeley Women Vote Events Calendar

The Exhibit “Berkeley Women Vote : Celebrating California Suffrage 1911-2011”, continues through March at the Berkeley Historical Center in the Veterans Building, 1931 Center Street. Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons between 1 and 4 pm. Call (510) 848-0181 before making a special trip downtown to make sure volunteers are present. Free. Wheelchair accessible.

### **NEW— Exhibit Speakers Series—NEW**

#### **All speakers at 2:00 PM at the Berkeley Historical Center**

- 12 /04/2011 **Steve Barton:** In 1911, Berkeley’s Socialist Mayor Stitt Wilson was a very popular Suffrage speaker. Mayor Wilson had a special message to the women of Berkeley and the Bay Area regarding how to vote
- 1/08/2012 **John Calderwood:** The Woman Suffrage Vote in 1911 was one of many changes that fueled the progressive revolution brought on by the election of Governor Hiram Johnson
- 2/05/2012 **Barbara Babcock:** Stanford Law Professor Emerita is the author of ‘Woman Lawyer: The Trials of Clara Foltz. This young woman, a single mother of five authored the Women’s Vote Amendment that California men approved October 10, 1911.
- 3/2012 **TBD:** In celebration of Berkeley Women’s first election in April, 1912, we are planning a reception honoring Berkeley’s elected and appointed Women both present and past. We will keep you posted on the details of this event!

### **Other Companion Activities**

- 8/15/2011- **“A Centennial Celebration: California Women and the Vote”** in the Bancroft Library display cases. University of California, Berkeley
- 10/07/2011- **“Women at Cal: 1910-1915: When California Passed the Women’s Suffrage Amendment”** in the Bancroft Library Rowell display cases. University of California, Berkeley
- 10/25/2011- **“Berkeley Women Vote”** exhibit expands to the Berkeley Central Public Library display cases.

## Help Would-be Voters! Help the League!

Our League contracts with the county to distribute voter registration cards to public locations in Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville—locations such as post offices, senior centers, libraries. More distributors to do a few locations each would be very helpful. To assist with this important, yet simple, task contact [phoebe.watts@sbcglobal.net](mailto:phoebe.watts@sbcglobal.net) or leave a message on the office phone: 843-8824.

## October Donations

### **To the LWVBAE General Fund**

*Julie Nachtwey*

*Vivian Scharlach*

*Sherry Smith*

### **To the LWVB Foundation**

*Sherry Smith*

Many thanks for remembering our League.

Louetta Erlin

Donations Secretary

## Welcome New Members

Abigail Bok

Phyllis M. Housel Gale



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 Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

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 U.S. Postage  
**P A I D**  
 Berkeley, CA  
 Permit No. 29

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The Voter is published 9 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville 1414 University Avenue, Suite D Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

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 Current and past issues of the *VOTER* are posted on our website <http://lwvbae.org>.

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 — Berkeley addresses unless otherwise noted

#### November

30 Wed 1:30-3:00 pm Climate Change Team R. Beatus 524-6904  
 LWVBAE Office

30 Wed 3:00-5:00 pm Board Meeting, LWVBAE Office S. Smith 548-1769

#### December

12 Mon 7:00-9:00 pm Environmental Concerns C.Stone 549-0959  
 1174 Euclid Ave

28 Wed 3:00-5:00 pm Board Meeting, LWVBAE Office S. Smith 548-1769

#### January

3 Tue noon-2:00 pm Conversation: Future of the League G. Polak 841-4546  
 Albany Library  
 1247 Marin Ave, Albany

6 Fri 5:00 pm Voter Deadline F. Packard 845-3037

4 Sat 9 am-2pm Bay Area League Day J. Safir 524-9088

9 Mon 7:30-9:00 pm Environmental Concerns C. Stone 549-0959  
 1174 Euclid Ave

#### February

4 Sat 9 am-2 pm Bay Area League Day J. Safir 524-9088