



President: Nancy Bickel

February 2004

Editor: Jean Safir

MARCH 2 ELECTION: LEAGUE SUPPORT FOR BERKELEY MEASURE I INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING (IRV)

The League is working hard to pass Berkeley Measure I in the rapidly approaching March 2 primary election. Measure I would permit the City Council to adopt an Instant Runoff Voting system-- if and when it becomes technically and legally possible and when it would cost the City no more than the current system.

The Board's decision to support Measure I is solidly based on our study of Instant Runoff Voting in 2000.

The League study concluded that IRV would:

- Strengthen majority rule
- Lower the cost of elections
- Increase voter turnout
- Reduce negative campaigning
- Broaden the array of candidates and viewpoints

To pass Measure I, we need your contributions and your help in educating voters about what IRV is and why Berkeley should adopt it. By the time you read this, you should have received a request for a contribution—signed by me, as League president, and co-chair of the “IRV for Berkeley” committee. If you haven't yet sent a contribution, please do so now.

Passage of Measure I will require the League's active participation in educating the public—something we all know a lot about. The campaign will be giving briefing sessions, then walking neighborhoods to distribute literature and talk to our fellow citizens every Saturday morning. We'll also do phoning and neighborhood meetings. Please call the campaign at 903-9537 to volunteer and/or visit the campaign website for more info at irv4berkeley.org. [Details of the measure are described in the article on page 2.]

-Nancy Bickel, President

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MEASURE I WILL HELP BERKELEY SAVE MONEY AND EXPAND DEMOCRACY

Measure I, on the March 2, 2004, Berkeley ballot, promises to save the City hundreds of thousands of dollars. It will expand democracy and save voters the inconvenience of a December runoff election. Measure I will give Berkeley the option of enacting Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) in the future, if the City Council determines that it will not cost more money than current elections and is feasible.

Measure I addresses several problems with December runoff elections used in Berkeley: they are expensive for taxpayers, they contribute to low voter turn-out, and they undermine campaign finance reform. According to the City Attorney, a citywide runoff costs \$300,000 and a districtwide runoff \$100,000. That's money that could go to pay for social, health and other services that are threatened with cutbacks.

The purpose of the runoff -- to ensure majority support for elected officials -- is sound, but the defects outlined above undermine this worthy goal.

Measure H. Another charter amendment on the March Ballot -- Measure H, Runoff Elections -- suggests a more modest, but less satisfactory solution to the costs and problems of the December runoff. H would move the runoff to February and reduce the votes needed to win in

the general election to 40% from the current 45%.

Measure H can be thought of as a short-term stop-gap solution to the runoff issue. Reducing the percentage needed to win to 40% runs strongly against the League's position that candidates should be elected by a majority of voters. However, it does provide a temporary solution to the additional expenses of preparing for a runoff only one month after the general election. Consequently, the League decided to remain neutral and take no position on H.

Measure I -- Instant Runoff Voting -- is a better solution, but it may take a few years to be put in place. Instant runoff voting (IRV) achieves the goal of a runoff election -- majority rule -- without the cost and hassle of a second election. Here's how it works. IRV is much like the December runoff, except that voters select their runoff choices ahead of time. Voters select their favorite candidate, and then indicate their runoff choices by ranking other candidates as second choice, third, etc. If a candidate receives a majority of first choices, she or he is declared the winner. If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and a runoff round of counting occurs immediately using voters' "runoff" rankings. Your ballot counts for your top-ranked candidate if she/he is still in the race. Runoff rounds continue until there is a majority winner.

In many ways, the "instant" runoff is not much different from an ordinary runoff -- except that voters indicate their runoff choice at the same time as their first choice, so they don't need to return to the polls if no candidate receives an outright majority. By doing it all in one election, we not only produce majority winners; we also save millions of tax dollars over time. We also avoid the considerable headaches of a second election in the middle of the busy holiday season.

Moreover, with IRV, candidates have an incentive to court the supporters of other

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REPORT OF BERKELEY TASK FORCE ON PERMITTING & DEVELOPMENT

Following nine months of work, the Berkeley Task Force on Permitting and Development issued a final report with 72 recommendations to improve the City's process for approving residential, commercial and large-scale development.

Join us on **Monday evening, February 2, at 6:30 pm at the Berkeley Central Library** to hear some of the highlights of the report and of the discussions that led up to the recommendations.

Presenters will include three members of the Task Force: Nancy Skinner and Polly Armstrong, both former Berkeley Council members, and Jean Safir, LWVBAE Housing Action Chair.

For more information, call Jean, 524-9088.

MARCH 2 CALIFORNIA PRIMARY ELECTION

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE LWV is supporting the following ballot measures:

- State Prop. 55: Public School Construction Bonds Act
 - State Prop. 56: Budget Accountability Act
 - Regional Measure 2: Regional Traffic Relief Plan [Bridge Toll Increase]
 - Berkeley Measure I: Instant Runoff Voting
- (For more information, call the LWVBAE office at 510-843-8824.)

ELECTION SERVICES

Election Services activities during this last month before the **March 2 Primary Election** will include: (1) distribution of our printed Pros-and-Cons about the statewide, Bay Area, Alameda County and Berkeley measures on the ballot (there are no Albany or Emeryville measures); (2) Registering voters (February 16 is the last date); and (3) Speaking to community groups about the ballot measures that the League actively supports.

If you have just a little time to take part, please call the office right away!

-Phoebe Watts, Election Services VP

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS In November & December, 2003

Marlyce Johnson	Walter Rex
Catherine Lim	Meri Simon
Stephanie Lim	Carol L. Starr
Clarence Weinmann	

- Evelyn Light

SPEAKER SERIES

Thursday, February 19, noon to 2 pm
Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room,
1247 Marin Avenue at Masonic

(Please note change in Feb. meeting date from second Thursday of the month to third Thursday. Albany Library will be closed on Feb. 12 for Lincoln's birthday.)

For a progress report on Vista Colleges, please join us on February 19. *Jacquiline Shadko*, Vice President of Instruction and a new LWVBAE member, will speak to us about the new Vista building, the courses offered and plans for a new library.

The public is welcome at all our Speaker Series meetings, so please invite a friend to join you. You may bring lunch; juice will be served.

Tentative schedule and subjects for upcoming events:

- March 11 - Vector Control
- April 8 - City Parks
- May 13 - Public Libraries

For more information call *Janet Strothman*, committee member, at 510-841-2837.

January 8 Meeting Summary

A lively rundown on the functions and activities of our 3 senior centers was presented at the January 8 Speaker Series meeting. A surprisingly wide range of services is offered, including meals, exercise, support groups, classes, massage, health screening, flu shots, podiatry services, health insurance counseling, trips, and much more. All these are generally open to all seniors, usually considered to be anyone over age 50.

For more information, or to be placed on the mailing list for newsletters, call:

- Aisha Boykin, 524-9122 (Albany)
- Lisa Ploss, 981-5178 (Berkeley)
- Ellyn Bloomfield, 596-3730 (Emeryville)

- Janet Strothman

BOARD BRIEFS

At its meeting on November 13, the Board

- discussed possible ballot measures for the March 2 election;
- voted to support Instant Runoff Voting on Berkeley's March 2004 ballot and to sign ballot arguments, if its provisions conform to LWVBAE's support position;
- heard reports of other recent and ongoing LWVBAE activities.

At its meeting on December 11, the Board

- appointed *Jinky Gardner* and *Mary Wainwright* to the Nominating Committee;
- accepted a gift of two historic photos of Berkeley from Georgia Schwaar;
- reviewed possible follow-up on electronic voting concerns;
- discussed efforts for the March 2 election, including support for Propositions 55 and 56;
- voted not to support the Common Cause proposal for public financing of elections in Berkeley;
- voted to take no position on the proposals for Feb. 4 date for Berkeley runoff elections or for lowering to 40% the proportion of votes required to be elected;
- decided to offer "Vote with the League" speakers rather than "pros and cons";
- heard a few reports of ongoing League activities and postponed others.

At its meeting on January 8, 2004, the Board

- discussed the treasurer's midyear financial report and plans for next year's budget;
- reviewed advocacy efforts, including campaigning for Props. 55 and 56 and Berkeley's IRV Measure on the March 2 ballot;
- reviewed voter service educational

efforts for the election, including registering voters and the preparation and distribution of Pros & Cons on local and state ballot measures;

- admired the redesign of our improved website (LWVBAE.org), which provides election information and links;
- heard reports on the many LWV meetings scheduled for January and February and other ongoing League activities;
- approved changing the layout of the Voter's back page to conform with postal processes, to cost no more than \$500;
- brainstormed about recruiting new members and encouraging more involvement in LWV activities.

--*Ginette Polak*, Secretary

DONATIONS IN NOVEMBER and DECEMBER 2003

To the General Fund

<i>Jean M. Allen</i>	<i>Helene Lecar</i>
<i>Polly Armstrong</i>	<i>Jill & Piero Martinucci</i>
<i>Robert Arnold</i>	<i>Madeline Mixer</i>
<i>Jane Bergen</i>	<i>Penny Nellis</i>
<i>Nancy & Peter Bickel</i>	<i>Dirk Neyhart *</i>
<i>Virginia Blacklidge</i>	<i>Pat Pope</i>
<i>Cecile Briar</i>	<i>Jean Safir</i>
<i>Arrietta Chakos</i>	<i>Sherry Smith</i>
<i>Jane & Tom Coulter</i>	<i>Iris Starr</i>
<i>Mary Ann Frankel</i>	<i>Lassie Ulman</i>
<i>Edith Gladstone</i>	<i>Andrea Washburn</i>
<i>Irene Hegarty</i>	<i>Betsy Warrick</i>
<i>Jane Ann Lamph</i>	<i>Lessly Wikle</i>
<i>Louise Larson</i>	<i>Lenora Young</i>

* In memory of *Debby Neyhart*

To the LWVB Foundation

<i>Cecile Briar</i>	<i>Jinky Gardner</i>
<i>Sherry Smith</i>	

-- *Evelyn Light*

PROGRAM PLANNING

Thursday, February 26, 4-6 pm

LWVBAE Office, 1414 University Avenue, Ste. D

(Upstairs, above Andronico's market)

Which issues most call for League action?

Bring your concerns and ideas to a Program Planning meeting on February 26, at the office from 4-6 pm. Look at Local, Bay Area and National positions and weigh in on what needs new or updated study.

Studies are the lifeblood of League; they build our understanding of issues, provide the background for action, and attract committed new members. What we study is what we may influence. We can speak out not only locally, but through our Bay Area League, the largest Inter-league organization in the country, and LWVUS, representing leagues across the state and nation.

League has a powerful voice. Let's use it.

- Lois Brubeck, Program V.P., 526-5139

DO YOU CONCUR* WITH THE PROPOSED NEW LWVUS POSITION ON THE SELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT?

It is time for League members to express their opinions on the LWVUS proposed update of the 30+ year-old position on the Selection of the President. The wording of this new position is as follows:

"The League of Women Voters (of the United States) believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished.

"The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

"The League supports changes in the presidential election system - from the candidate selection process to the general

election - to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself.

"The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information."

Would you like to discuss these statements and their implications before sending in your response to LWVUS? LWVBAE is offering its members the opportunity to discuss the proposed new wording at either an afternoon or evening meeting-- even though LWVUS is seeking member concurrence directly from individual members.

Whether you attend one of these meetings or not, you are asked to study the proposed new position statement, strongly agree, agree or disagree with it, and send your response to the LWVUS office either by using the LWVUS website at www.lwv.org/concurrence/ or by mailing your response to League of Women Voters, Selection of the President Concurrence, 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036

Postmark deadline: March 1, 2004.

Online deadline: March 4, 2004.

You will receive the proposed new position on the Selection of the President, together with background information and a concurrence response form, in the January-February 2004 issue of the *National Voter*. Further background information, along with other suggested readings, are available in the May/June 2003 and September/October 2003 issues of the *National Voter* and online at the concurrence website.

The meetings will be held at the League Office on Tuesday, February 17 at noon and on Monday, February 23 at 7 p.m.

*To concur means to agree with the statement as worded.
- Eloise Bodine,

For more information about the **Selecting the President** issue, go to the link on our new website lwvbae.org to read the discussion on the LWVUS website and the three articles in the *National Voter*.

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candidates, asking for their second or third rankings. Successful candidates usually win by building coalitions, not by tearing down their opponents through negative campaigning. That's good for democracy too.

Voting with IRV also takes away the "spoiler" effect. If IRV had been used in the 2000 presidential election, the 100,000 Ralph Nader voters would have had the option of ranking their second/runoff choice. Undoubtedly thousands of them would have chosen Al Gore, and Gore would be president right now.

San Francisco passed IRV recently, and it will probably be used for the first time in the November 2004 elections. Oakland, San Leandro and Santa Clara County have passed measures similar to Measure I. IRV also is used to elect the president of Ireland, the mayor of London, and the president of the American Political Science Association (and they know a thing or two about elections).

Measure I will not implement instant runoff voting. It would give us the option of using IRV at a future date if the City Council determines that it will not cost more money and is feasible from an election administration standpoint.

Before the Council may adopt an instant runoff voting system, it must make three findings: 1) voting equipment and procedures are technically capable of handling IRV; 2) IRV will not prevent consolidation of City elections with Alameda County elections; and 3) there will be no increase in City election costs as a result of IRV.

In keeping with the advice in our consensus report, when Measure I passes, the League will continue to participate actively to ensure that the details of the particular system adopted will conform to our policy positions and to the promises of the legislation.

(NOTE: Much of this text was written by Dave Heller, coordinator of the IRV for Berkeley campaign, with help from Steven Hill, Center for Voting and Democracy and author of *Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner-Take-All Politics*. I've adapted it to reflect League positions.)
- Nancy Bickel, President

DR. BEA FRAENKEL-CONRAT CELEBRATES A LANDMARK YEAR AS LEAGUE MEMBER

Dr. Bea Fraenkel-Conrat is celebrating her 50th year as a League member. According to her oral history, currently a work-in-progress transcript, she took an active role in League activities, especially as President of the then-Berkeley League in 1968-69. *Dr. Bea* continues to serve the UC Berkeley community as a renowned scientist, first in virology and later, since the 1970s, in overseeing a cancer research laboratory for many years.

She joined the League originally through the influence of early Berkeley League members *Dorothy Spitzer* in particular (League President in the early 1960s) as well as *Connie Holton* and *Joyce Baldwin*. At that time, in the 1950s-1960s, members were largely faculty wives like herself with young children, seeking a stimulating outside interest. She gradually took on jobs within the League -- membership, treasurer, finance chair, working with an Administration of Justice Study and moderating political meetings.

Dr. Bea observed the beginning of women's election to the Berkeley City Council (like Sue Hone, also a League member). Her community work expanded to Berkeley boards and commissions, such as the Charter Review Commission and the CETA Commission. All the time she was active in this work, she valued the League's contribution to the public and to her own work experience in the community.

Dr. Bea was interviewed in 1997 for the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville Oral History Project. *Marilyn Couch* has assisted the effort as editorial assistant. Through generous assistance from the League's Foundation funds, the oral history should be completed this spring.

-- *Therese Pipe*, Oral History Coordinator and Interviewer

REGIONAL MEASURE 2: NEW DOLLARS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Regional Measure 2, "The Regional Traffic Relief Plan", will be on the **March 2, 2004 ballot** in seven Bay Area Counties. It would authorize an increase of \$1 in the tolls on all seven state-owned toll bridges in the Bay Area, raising the fee to \$3 for passenger vehicles. (Golden Gate Bridge is a separate district and currently charges \$5.) The added revenue would be designated for a number of specific projects to relieve congestion, especially on the bridges and their approaches.

These include money to BART for seismic retrofit of the Transbay Tube, for expansion in the East Bay including the Warm Springs extension, the connection to Oakland International Airport and feeder trains in east Contra Costa County. Dumbarton Rail Bridge would be upgraded with rail to connect to BART, Caltrain, Capitol Corridor and ACE trains.

Expanded ferry services, certain express bus services and facilities, intermodal hubs and the Transbay Terminal would all receive funds. Up to 38% of the new revenue would be set aside for transit operating costs.

A simple majority vote is required to pass Regional Measure 2 because it is not seen as a new tax but as an increased user fee.

League Positions for many years have supported multi-modal, efficient, convenient, cost-effective, equitable, safe transportation systems planned in coordination with land use, with a goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled and single-occupancy vehicle use. In the Bay Area we support transit systems linked into a regional transit network with easily comprehended directions for routes, schedules, and transit hubs, and passes for moving between systems. We support transportation funding that is more reliable and consistent with needs and long-term planning.

(For additional background information, be sure to read the front page article in the Dec./Jan. Bay Area Monitor, copies in office and also posted on at www.bayareamonitor.org)

-Irene Sampson, LWVBA Transportation Director

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Monday, February 9, 2004, 7:30 P.M.

1340 Arch St. (corner of Rose)

Marguerite Naillon will speak to us about the huge expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir, a proposal that the Contra Costa Water District has placed on March 2, 2004, ballot as an advisory measure.

Marguerite is the Project Manager of the CALFED Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Studies. She is a professional Civil Engineer with a background in planning, design and construction on a variety of environmental engineering projects. Prior to joining Contra Costa Water District in 2000, Marguerite worked for an engineering consulting firm.

For more information, contact *Carol Stone* at 549-0959 or seastone11@hotmail.com

MARCH FOR FREEDOM OF CHOICE

The League of Women Voters is a co-sponsoring organization for the "Save Women's Lives: March for Freedom of Choice" to take place in Washington, DC, on Sunday, April 25, 2004. For twenty years the LWVUS has worked to preserve the right to privacy in reproductive choice, so we are proud to join with the Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, the National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other organizations for the March.

The march will begin at noon from the Lincoln Memorial, although participants may begin assembling as early as 10 a.m. After the march, a rally will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. on the National Mall. Special seating will be available for people with disabilities. The rally program will be signed for the hearing impaired. The route is wheelchair accessible and transportation will be provided for those who cannot negotiate the route. To learn more about the march, contact lobbying@lww.org or <http://www.marchforchoice.org/>

-from LWVC Board Update, November 26, 2003, on Social Policy

 Berkeley addresses unless otherwise indicated 

CALENDAR

January

26 Mon. 7:30 pm New Member Orientation LWVBAE Office Gardner, 548-5292
 30 Fri. 9:30a -3p Bay Area League Day: State & Local Govt. Finance Reform -- Preregister
 First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 14th & Castro Sts., Oakland Office, 843-8824

February

2 Mon. 2-4 pm Education Committee LWVBAE Office Lynch, 527-2173
 2 Mon. 6:30 pm Report of Berkeley Task Force on Permitting & Development
 Berkeley Central Library, Shattuck & Kittredge Ave. Safir, 524-9088
 6 Fri. Noon March VOTER Deadline jeansafir@att.net Safir, 524-9088
 9 Mon. 7:30 pm Environmental Concerns 1340 Arch St. (Bansner) Stone, 549-0959
 11 Wed. 10a-2p Distribute "Pros & Cons" LWVBAE Office Watts, 525-6614
 12 Thurs. 4-6 pm Board Meeting LWVBAE Office Bickel, 526-4055
 16 Mon. LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN MARCH 2 PRIMARY ELECTION Young, 843-1030
 16 LWVBAE Office closed for Presidents Day
 17 Tues. Noon UNIT: New LWVUS position on Selection of the President
 LWVBAE Office Bodine, 845-0974
 19 Thurs. Noon-2pm Speaker Series: Vista College Albany Public Library Strothman, 841-2837
 1247 Marin Ave. @ Masonic
 19 Thurs. 7:30 pm Action Committee 1419 Grant (Watts) Bickel, 526-4055
 22 Sun. 2-4 pm Therese Pipe, Lecture on Berkeley League Women, 1878-1953
 Berkeley History Center, 1931 Center St. Pipe, 841-5493
 23 Mon. 7 pm UNIT: New LWVUS position on Selection of the President
 LWVBAE Office Bodine, 845-0974
 26 Thurs. 4-6 pm Program Planning LWVBAE Office Brubeck, 526-5139



IT'S EASY TO JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Just fill in the blanks below, clip and mail this information to us with your check for annual dues made out to:

LWVBAE

1414 University Avenue, Suite D
 Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. Day: _____ Eve: _____

Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

\$55

Joining the local level makes you a member at all levels: LWVBAE, Bay Area, State and National. Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to the LWVB Foundation are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS
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