CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2007, 5 PM-8:30 PM NORTHBRAE COMMUNITY CHURCH, 914 THE ALAMEDA, BERKELEY

"ALAMEDA COUNTY:
VOTING SUCCESSES AND AREAS OF CONTINUING CONCERN"
SPEAKER: DAVE MACDONALD,
ALAMEDA COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Dave Macdonald, the new Alameda County Registrar of Voters, came to the post in January 2007 after having been Acting Registrar since May 2006. Prior to May 2006 Macdonald had served as Director of the Alameda County Information Technology Department since July 1985. Under Macdonald's direction, Alameda County has been consistently recognized as a leader in the use of technology in county government. *Computerworld* recently identified the Alameda County website as one of the best county government websites in the country. Dave Macdonald has been active in many organizations and has welcomed the League of Women Voters in collaborative efforts to improve access to trouble-free voting for Alameda County residents.

Our own *Nancy Bickel* and *Bill Chapman* have worked with Registrar Macdonald on issues related to voting results verification and public observation of the process. Come and hear the latest in what equipment and procedure changes may be required before our rash of elections begins next February, and where instant runoff voting is in its road toward implementation.

Dinner will be catered by Café de la Paz and will cost \$15. Be sure to call the League office as soon as possible to reserve your place. You may pay for your dinner at the door, but paying ahead of time would be **greatly** appreciated; LWVBAE members may bring their own dinner. If you would like a ride to the meeting, please contact the LWVBAE office.

At the business meeting we will elect our new officers, pass the new budget and set the program for the coming League year. Add your vote to make sure we're going in the right direction, then jump in and make sure we get there!

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Anyone who thinks there's nothing for the League to do between elections needs to think again. As I have told anyone who will listen, voting is like learning to add 1 and 1 to get 2: It's important, it's foundational, but a person has to go on from there.

After the polls close, citizens need to watch what their elected reps do once in office and they need to keep abreast of issues. As my favorite bumper sticker says, "Democracy is not a spectator sport." I would add, "and the season lasts all year!"

The League of Women Voters at all levels has been very active before, during and after the elections. The national League is conducting a study on immigration that is generating good papers. Our local League will form units to read and discuss these, and participate in the consensus process which will give us a position from which we can lobby Congress.

Our State League has joined the OneCareNow coalition to support SB840, the California Universal Health Care Act. The Coalition is working on many fronts, and our Berkeley-Albany-Emeryville is planning a major public education event for June.

The Bay Area League has been studying our water systems, and put on an excellent forum on housing recently.

The Alameda County Council of Leagues is following education, health and juvenile justice issues at the county level; last but not least, our local League is putting together a contest to stimulate civic participation at our 5 high schools.

With all of us working together we can do so much!

Jinky Gardner, President

The VOTER

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE

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The VOTER is free to members, \$10/year for non-members. 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 the active and informed participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVBAE OFFICE ORIENTATION

Orientation for League office volunteers will be held on Thursday, May 3, 2007, in the League office from 6-7 pm, before the scheduled Board meeting. Call Jane Barrett, VP Administration, at (510) 845-8055 to let her know of your interest. We look forward to having you on board!

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LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW WITH ASSEMBLYWOMAN LONI HANCOCK

Each year the state League asks local leagues to interview their state legislators in order to share League concerns with them and to find out what their priorities are. On March 15 an interview was conducted with Assemblywoman Loni Hancock, by Betty Brown and Linda Young, West Contra Costa League, Bonnie Hamlin, Oakland League, and Jane Bergen and Eloise Bodine, Berkeley, Albany & Emeryville League.

Ms. Hancock chairs the Assembly Natural Resources Committee and is on the Health Care Policy Committee and the Housing & Community Development Committee.

Question 1. Health Care. This is one of Loni Hancock's major priorities for the legislative session. She said it will probably take an initiative to craft a good singlepayer bill. The best thing would be to get SB 840 (Kuehl), which she sponsors in the Assembly version, passed; but the Governor has promised he will veto it, and it will be almost impossible to over ride a veto. The problems with the governor's proposal (not yet in bill form) are: 1) the assumption of federal reimbursements which do not pencil out; 2) required employer reimbursements which will probably cause cut backs in health benefits to employees; and 3) covers catastrophic care only. Loni is working with Assembly Speaker Nunez on his bill to cover primary care. Senate Majority Leader Perata has a spot bill in the Senate which is holding a place for the Speaker's bill. The question is what will finally be included after all of the legislators' concerns are taken into account.

Accommodation for anticipated Question 2: population growth. Loni stressed the importance of transit development and coordination. She pointed out that 15 units per acre are needed to support good transit and that we need housing development with good design along transportation corridors, especially for families. She feels that the density bonus law for lowincome housing is bad because increasing density beyond agreed upon limits increases opposition to development. She favors positive incentives for infill, such as parks, under-grounding utilities, and improved infrastructure, which could be funded by the state bonds passed in last election, which included \$850 million for incentives; the incentives have yet to be defined by the legislature. Loni talked about her San Pablo Avenue Corridor (downtown Oakland to Hercules) improvement project that has a problem because proposals to have tables and chairs on wider sidewalks cannot be done because San Pablo Avenue is a state highway. We mentioned the need for land to be set aside in long-range plans for utility structures (power and pipe lines and their access).

Question 3. Budget: Loni stated that money should be spent carefully. She favors raising taxes for growing population and essential services, but the 2/3 majority vote requirement means the minority controls the budget. CA is the only state with this restriction. She says there are dozens of bills to close tax loopholes, but it will never happen until public financing of elections is a reality. Loni also said that the Governor wants to pay back pension bonds used to balance the budget a few years ago by cutting services for the poor, which the legislature will oppose. She asserted that Prop. 13 should be repealed, or at least modified, to have commercial and industrial property pay more.

Question 4. Redistricting. Loni is open to changing how redistricting is done, but feels that public financing is more important. Re citizen's commission to do the redistricting, it depends on who does the choosing. Loni felt that changing term limits so that legislators serve for a longer time is essential. She suggested expanding length of term limits for insurance commissioner as a pilot project and appointing a commission to track how it is working.

Question 5. Priorities: Loni's priorities are health care, the budget process, changing term limits to eliminate the chaos of the turnover in the Legislature, campaign finance and education.

<u>Campaign Finance</u>: Current campaign finance laws, with independent expenditures allowed, leave no one responsible for last minute hit pieces which are not truthful. Tribal gambling is a big player, along with business and labor.

<u>Education</u>: Loni talked about Asset Academies to train people in the construction trades, in order to overcome the notions that everyone has to go to college, and that it is bad to work with your hands. She also mentioned a program sponsored by school librarians whereby the state purchases data bases of all kinds of information, which are distributed to schools.

Being able to participate in legislative interviews is one of the privileges of being active in the League of Women Voters.

Eloise Bodine Treasurer

NEW MEMBERS

OUR WARMEST WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS:

Marlou Belyea Charlene Harrington George Trilling

DANIEL KAMMEN TO BE ANNUAL 2007 LWVBAE COMMUNITY LUNCHEON SPEAKER

Dr. Daniel Kammen will be the distinguished speaker at our League's Eighth Annual Community Luncheon, to be held on Thursday, August 23, 2007, at Hs Lordships Restaurant at the Berkeley Marina.

As Director of the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory, Dr. Kammen holds a Professorship in the Energy and Resources Group as well as in the Goldman School of Public Policy, both on the UC Berkeley Campus.

Dr. Kammen's work is highly interdisciplinary and includes the technical and economic impacts of energy generation and use, analysis of health and environmental impacts and their effect on social policy. He focuses on renewable energy and development of energy policy. Kammen's research has covered such subjects as climate change and energy forecasting and risk analysis.

Daniel Kammen is the author of over 90 journal publications, as well as a book suitable for the classroom and as a guide for policymakers and citizens confronted by the increasing number of decisions requiring risk and cost/benefit analysis: Should We Risk It?: Exploring Environmental, Health, and Technological Problem Solving, which he wrote with co-author David Hassenzahl. Dr. Kammen's recent work on Energy Research and Development policy appeared in Science and Environment, and has been featured on PBS, KQED, CNN and in many newspapers via the Reuters news service.

Dr. Kammen enjoys a reputation as an outstanding speaker and teacher, and his presentation continues the tradition of preeminent speakers on community and national issues at our Luncheons. Former speakers include Dean Christopher Edley, Jr. of Boalt Hall School of Law, Attorney General Bill Lockyer, State Senator Jackie Speier, former Smithsonian Secretary and UC Chancellor Ira Michael Heyman, UC Professor (and former Clinton Administration Labor Secretary) Robert Reich, and UC Professor Bruce Cain.

Mark your calendars for August 23, 2007, when the luncheon will begin at 11:30 a.m. The League Bazaar will again be featured, including topical books available for sale by Cody's Books, who will once more generously share their sales proceeds with the League.

Sherry Smith

MARCH DONATIONS

To the LWVBAE General Fund

Arnold and Elaine Grossberg in memory of Lillian Jankelson Harry and Kathleen Heckman Martin and Charlotte Lichterman Doris Maslach Alice Mead Gordon and Evelyn Wozniak

To the LWVB Foundation

Ruth Arkley Georgia Babladelis Harry and Kathleen Heckman Mary M. Jacobson Barbara Oliver Heidi Seney

Many thanks for remembering your League.

Louetta Erlin

Donations Secretary

ASUC SENATE ENDS 28 YEARS OF LEAGUE ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT

By adopting the Consent Calendar at its February 28, 2007 meeting, the Associated Students University of California (ASUC) Senate ended 28 consecutive years of League oversight of UC Berkeley student elections. SB 49, adopted with no discussion or debate, removed the following provision from the ASUC Elections By-laws:

ARTICLE V - NEUTRAL THIRD PARTIES 5.1 Contract With Third Parties

- 1. In order to ensure the integrity of the elections, the Elections Council shall contract with a neutral third party to observe and assist in ASUC Elections.
- 2. The Neutral Third Party may be the League of Women Voters, or any professional or volunteer agency which regularly acts as election overseers, provided the organization is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) Vote of the Entire Senate.

When members of our League's ASUC Elections Committee read about this change in the March 1 edition of the Daily Californian, we immediately contacted this year's ASUC Elections Chair to verify the article's accuracy. Once we received confirmation, we drafted and sent the following open letter to the ASUC Senate (SEE page 5). To date, we have received no reply.

Bill Chapman ASUC Elections Committee

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ASUC SENATE

March 9, 2007

An open letter to the ASUC Senate:

The League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville believes that the ASUC Senate's recent resolution (SB 49) to strip the provision requiring a neutral third party observer for ASUC elections from the Elections By-laws is a serious misstep.

Election officers throughout the world (including here in Alameda County) require observers and advisors with no direct stake in the outcome of elections to assure that elections are carried out impartially and in accordance with law. If budget constraints prevent providing a fee for service, the Senate should immediately look for a volunteer team or take other cost cutting steps. The neutral third party need not be the League, but there needs to be a neutral third party.

No matter how fair, impartial or neutral the Elections Council, the Attorney General or Student Information Services is, each is too intimately involved in the conduct of the election to serve as a neutral third party. ASUC elections, indeed all elections, need to be seen by voters as having been conducted fairly, impartially and transparently. The League's role has served to ensure such elections in the ASUC for nearly 30 years. The neutral third party provision was added to the By-laws in 1979, after an election was so compromised by mishandled ballots that it was invalidated by an Alameda County court. League oversight in each ASUC election since then has prevented any similar concerns regarding the ballot or count.

The League finds it ironic that the Senate relied on the outdated Quigley-Heilig Elections By-laws to assess the role and importance of the neutral third party. For the last five years the League has included in its contract with the ASUC a detailed description of the tasks to be performed, because the By-laws had not been adequately revised to reflect changes in procedures over time. In the era of paper ballots, the By-laws clearly stated the balloting and counting procedures to be followed, and the League's role was to oversee adherence to these By-laws. As the ASUC moved from paper to computerized balloting and counting during this first decade of the 21st century, new procedures were created ad hoc, setting up conflicts with the existing By-laws that continue to exist, even taking into account the By-law changes enacted so far this year. A review of our recent contracts with the ASUC shows that dealing with paper ballots has not been a major part of the League's job in ASUC elections for several years.

The League has made recommendations to the Elections Council after every recent election. They have usually included the need for By-law revisions to reflect current election procedures. This year we sent detailed, specific recommendations to the Senate By-law Revision Committee pointing to By-laws which are in conflict with actual practice. Of special importance is the procedure for counting ballots in executive races. Despite repeated past requests, no Senate has offered the League time to hear or discuss its suggestions. We are especially disappointed that the current Senate would take such drastic action regarding the neutral third party without seeking input from the only group to have served in that capacity.

Twenty-seven years of participating in student elections have been a rewarding experience for the League. Guiding our work has been the LWV standard that voting systems should be secure, accurate, recountable and accessible. We have worked with hundreds of students and had many occasions to discuss with them the conduct of fair elections which are the cornerstones of good government. We thank the ASUC for having afforded us this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jinky Gardner

President, League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: FROM DELTA SMELT TO SMOG

On March 12, 2007 the Environmental Concerns group heard an attorney and a research scientist who work in two of the Bay Area's four divisions of Earthjustice. Andrea Treece specializes in water quality and endangered species cases, litigating on behalf of other nonprofit groups such as the Natural Resources Defense Council against governmental projects harmful to the environment. The Bay Delta is central to California's water conveyance system, which provides 2/3 of the drinking water for the State as well as irrigation for Central Valley agriculture. The Delta smelt, a unique fish native only to the Delta and now almost extinct, was the focus of Earthjustice's challenge to plans for a new dam and peripheral canal to increase water exports by 50% or more from the Sacramento River. The Delta smelt is only one of many native species which have suffered from habitat changes, low water levels, salty and stagnant water, huge pumps and many invasive species.

The legal process takes years, but Earthjustice has won small victories along the way. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, under extreme political pressure from agricultural interests, issued a Biologic Opinion that endangered species would not be harmed by the proposed plans. A Federal court ruled that the Opinion was not valid, and the California Department of Water Resources was thus forced to consider scientific facts and the ecosystem.

Sarah Jackson focuses on the lower section of the Central Valley and air pollution. The Central Valley has been called the most productive unnatural farming area on earth. The land in the Central Valley was originally desert, which became very fertile when water (subsidized by the government) was imported. Ozone (smog) and particulate matter from agricultural processes (tilling, harvesting, and unpaved roads on the mechanized corporate farms) pollute the stagnant Central Valley air all year round. Trucks hauling 45% of the imports from the ports drive along the two major highways through the Valley. Agencies charged with reducing air pollution don't do their job.

Hence, Earthjustice challenges EPA to adopt stronger rules to protect public health. Earthjustice, the Sierra Club and the Latino Issues Forum are among the 70 groups which formed the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition. They call the key pollutants DOA: Development, Oil, Agriculture.

For further information visit www.earthjustice.org.

Ginette Polak

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS: WILL PARKS BECOME THE NEXT ENDANGERED SPECIES?

On Monday, May 14, 2007, 7:30-9:00 pm, the Environmental Concerns interest group will hear from California State Parks Commissioner Caryl Hart.

As California's population continues to grow, California State Parks have become the path of least resistance for toll roads, freeways and power lines. In addition, State Parks face serious threats from unregulated buffer impacts including casinos and large-scale dairy operations. In this presentation, Caryl Hart, recipient of the 2006 Eva Alexis Bansner Award for Sustainable Communities, will detail the specifics of these challenges and proposed state legislation to address these threats, as well as the impact of these proposals on low-income populations and people of color throughout the state.

Carol Stone, Co-Chair Environmental Concerns

BROWN BAG NEWS

The Brown Bag Luncheon on the subject of Housing was held on April 3, 2007 and brought out 25 folks, one third of whom were not League members. At least one non-member expressed interest in joining the Berkeley Albany and Emeryville League.

Our meeting was interesting and informative, with presenters Steve Barton, Housing Department Director for the City of Berkeley, and Amy Hiestand, Community Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Emeryville. In April, the City of Albany Social and Economic Justice Committee reported on this topic to the City Council, and will report further in May.

A centerpiece of the discussion was the Alameda County-wide Homeless and Special Needs Plan, "EveryOneHome"; one may obtain a copy of the fact sheet at the LWVBAE office, at the annual meeting, or by visiting http://www.everyonehome.org, where one may obtain further information on the subject of housing.

Luanne Rogers Program VP

BROWN BAG LUNCHEONS IN MAY, JUNE AND BEYOND

May 1, Tuesday

Topic: "Energy Policy in California: LWVUS 2006 Study Results and Aftermath"

Presenter: Jane Bergen, member, LWVC Energy Committee

June 5, Tuesday

Topic: "Workforce Development in Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville"

Presenters: The Economic Development Departments of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville, The Alameda County Workforce Investment Board, and The Bread Project.

All Brown Bag Luncheon meetings are held in the Edith Stone Room at the Albany Library, Masonic and Marin Avenues in Albany. Edith Stone Room doors open at noon; the program starts at 12:15 pm and ends by 1:45 pm. You are invited to bring a brown bag lunch with you, as well as your friends, relatives and neighbors; we supply water and League tea.

There will be no Brown Bag Luncheon in July. All Luncheons are held on the first Tuesday of the month, except in November as Emeryville will hold an election on that date. The Brown Bag Luncheon schedule for the remainder of 2007 is:

August 7: "California Youth Authority" (Pat Kuhi)

<u>September 4</u>: "What Happened to the 2006 and 2007 High School Seniors Who Did Not Pass the Exit Exam" (*Helene Lecar*)

October 2: "Immigration: California Overview, emphasis on our local communities (a panel of experts)

November 13: "Recycling in Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville" (LWVBAE Natural Resources Committee)

<u>December 4</u>: Holiday celebration to honor all the 2007 speakers and preview the 2008 Brown Bag Series

Questions? Comments? Call Luanne Rogers, Program VP, at (510) 559-1006.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE BOARD 2006-2007

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Kristina Lim

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BOARD BRIEFS

At its April meeting, the LWVBAE Board approved the Nominating Committee's proposed slate of officers and board members for next year. The Board also approved the proposed 2007-2008 program, including the new Alameda County League's position on the county Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, all to be recommended to our membership for adoption at the Annual Meeting on May 10, 2007.

The Board hopes to send nine delegates to the LWVC convention in May, and decided to split the budgeted allotment among the delegates to help reimburse most of their expenses. Reports on membership activities, office-volunteer training, legislative interviews, the workshop on drafting a sunshine ordinance for Berkeley, OneCareNow events, Brown Bags programs and the Community Luncheon were also briefly discussed.

Ginette Polak Substituting as Secretary

ESTATE PLANNING

The boards of the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville and the Berkeley League of Women Voters Foundation welcome the inclusion of the League in your estate planning.

Annu			
APRIL 26 THURS.	7:30 pm	Action Committee, 1419 Grant Street	H. Lecar, 549-9719
	7.00 p	, 151.51, 551.11.11.15.1	
MAY 1 TUE.	12-1:45 pm	Brown Bag Luncheon Series, Albany Library's Edith Stone Room	L. Rogers, 559-1006
3 Thurs. 3 Thurs. 10 Thurs.		Office Orientation, LWVBAE office Board Meeting, LWVBAE office Annual Meeting, Northbrae Community Church,	J. Barrett, 845-8055 J. Gardner, 548-5292 LWVBAE Office, 843-8824
	7:30-9 pm 7:30-9:30 pm Friday-Sunday	941 The Alameda (see Annual Meeting Kit Environmental Concerns, 1340 Arch Street Civics Education Action Committee LWC Convention in Bakersfield MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED - LWBAE office Action Committee, 1419 Grant Street	C. Stone, 549-0959 B. Chapman, 527-0827 J. Gardner, 548-5292
_	7.00 pm	Action Committee, 1777 Ordin on our	2000., 0 .,
JUNE 5 TUES.	12-1:45 pm	Brown Bag Luncheon Series, Albany Library's Edith Stone Room	L. Rogers, 559-1006
7 THURS. 8 FRI.	7-9 pm 5 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE office <u>Deadline for Summer VOTER</u>	J. Gardner, 548-5292 A. Kisch, 985-0651
18 MON. 19 TUES. 28 THURS.	7:30-9:30 pm 7:30 pm	LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSES FOR SUMMER Civics Education Action Committee Action Committee, 1419 Grant Street	B. Chapman, 527-0827 H. Lecar, 549-9719
JULY			
5 THURS. 17 TUES. 26 THURS.	7:30-9:30 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE office Civics Education Action Committee Action Committee, 1419 Grant Street	J. Gardner, 548-5292 B. Chapman, 527-0827 H. Lecar, 549-9719
AUGUST			
2 THURS. 3 FRI. 7 TUE.	7-9 pm 5 pm 12-2 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE office <u>Deadline for September VOTER</u> Brown Bag Luncheon Series, Albany Library's Edith Stone Room	J. Gardner, 548-5292 A. Kisch, 985-0651 L. Rogers, 559-1006
13 MON. 21 TUES. 23 THURS.	7:30-9:30 pm 11:30 am	LWVBAE OFFICE REOPENS AFTER SUMMER BRE Civics Education Action Committee ANNUAL COMMUNITY LUNCHEON	<u>AK</u> B. Chapman, 527-0827 S. Smith, 843-8824