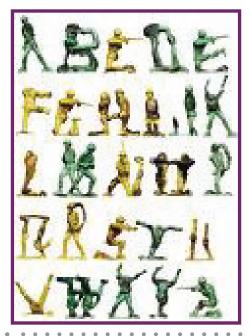
# The Voters of Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville

# MAY-JUNE 2008

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# Call to Annual Meeting

### Thursday, May 22, 2008, 6:00–9:00 рм

Northbrae Community Church 941 The Alameda, Berkeley

# "War Made Easy"

How Presidents & Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death

What is propaganda? How have politicians and our mass news media used it to develop and maintain support for wars we've fought in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Panama, Kuwait, Iraq, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq once more? Those are the questions addressed by Norman Solomon in his 2007 documentary film, *War Made Easy*.

Join us to watch as much of Solomon's film as time allows, then help us decide if it is something that we as a League should bring to teachers and students in the public high schools of the three districts within our jurisdiction.

When we adopted our position on civics education in 2006, we stated, among other things, that "LWVBAE supports civics instruction with components that ... train students to use critical thinking skills to identify and evaluate propaganda (written, spoken, visual); distinguish fact from opinion and belief; and verify assertion". We want to discuss with you whether supporting the dissemination and discussion of this film falls within the parameters of that position.

At the dinner hour, 6:00-7:00 pm, we're trying something new! You may fill your plate with a meal full of delicious appetizers - something for everyone - and circulate. This will give us more time to visit than in the past, AND allow you to see the displays we'll have set up that showcase all the things our League is doing. Cost for the food is \$15. Call the League office (510-843-8824) to reserve your meal as soon as possible. If you would like a ride to the meeting, please mention that as well.

During the **business meeting**, **7:00-7:45 pm**, we will elect our new officers, adopt a new budget and set the program for the coming League year. Your attendance and your votes will help ensure that we are moving in the right direction. Please read the **LEADERSHIP EMERGENCY** article on page 7 before you put this newsletter down!

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# **P**RESIDENT'S COLUMN

Our Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville League has a very long and dynamic history. We are still very active, and in each *Voter* you read about many of the activities in which we are involved -- reports of events that we've hosted or that our members have attended.

We have always been one of the largest Leagues in the State of California. Although relatively large in number, our members are aging and these numbers are shrinking. Our energy level has dropped. So instead of doing less and less of the 'same old, same old', we need to realign our focus. We need to attract <u>young</u> members. We need to move our League into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

What would we look like? What issues are young voters concerned with? In this computer/cell-phone age, how do young people communicate? How do they work for change? I don't know exactly, but I do want to find out.

The November election will be drawing many new voters to the polls. Let's use the coming months to make connections with these young people and draw some of them into membership. Then, with their energy and new ideas, together with the experience and knowledge of League process we long-time members bring, let's keep working for better government.

This is a big vision, but there are six of us who are already meeting and working it. We welcome you to join us. Bring your ideas or just your curiosity – or both. For starters, the group needs a spiffier name; at present, we call ourselves the "Membership Recruit and Activate" group. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, April 30, from 10:30 am to 12 noon at the League office. Do join us then, or if you want more information beforehand, call me, *Jinky Gardner*, at (510) 548-5292.

With the June 3 primary just around the corner, perhaps we could get a jump start by bringing in young people now. If you know someone in the age range of 18 to 35, invite them to the Annual Meeting on May 22. (Older guests are, of course, always welcome!) We are planning a program with punch.

Jinky Gardner, President

### The Voter

Published monthly except January, June & August by

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 at 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.

# ELECTION SPEAKER TRAINING AND ELECTION SERVICES

You are invited to join our Speakers Bureau for the June 3 California Primary. This is the perfect election for which to hone your speaking skills because it is the shortest ballot in memory. There are only 2 state measures – both on the same topic (eminent domain) – and a few primary elections, so the number of facts you need to have at your fingertips will be very few.

The training session will meet at the League office (above Andronico's Market at 1414 University Avenue, Berkeley) from 7-9 pm on Thursday, May 1. If you know of an organization that might like a speaker, let the LWVBAE office know, (510) 843-8824. If you have any questions about speakers or speaker training, contact *Eloise Bodine* at ebodi@comcast.net or (510) 845-0974.

Although our voter education duties seem light (at least so far), we do need as many new voters registered as possible, and we'll need someone to coordinate tabling in public spaces. This is a shorttime one-shot job with a finite close. We would especially like to have registration tables at the North Berkeley and Ashby BART stations during commute hours for at least a few days before the registration deadline closes; BART requires a 7-day turnaround to process a permit. Monday, May 19, is the last day to register to vote in our June Primary Election. If you can help us out in any capacity, please contact *Helene Lecar* at (510) 549-9719 or hlecar1@ix.netcom.com.

> Eloise Bodine, Speakers Bureau Chair Helene Lecar, VP Election Services

### SIERRA FUND SEEKS SOLUTION TO MINING'S TOXIC LEGACY

Millions of tons of gold were mined from the Sierra Nevada "Mother Lode" during the 19<sup>th</sup> century leaving behind mercury, acid mine drainage, and other contaminated sediments that threaten the water, plants, and people of California.

"All of the headwaters are contaminated with mercury," offered Elizabeth "Izzy" Martin, project director for the Sierra Fund, in a presentation March 10 to Environmental Concerns. "Where I live you can suck mercury off the bottom of the creek with a turkey baster."

The Nevada City-based non-profit community foundation provides philanthropic stewardship and charitable support services for environmental conservation in the Sierra Nevada region.

The Sierra Fund's new report, Mining's Toxic Legacy: An Initiative to Address Mining Toxins in the Sierra Nevada, is the first comprehensive look at the long-term impacts of the Gold Rush on the culture, environment and health of Californians.

The Sierra Fund worked with researchers at CaliforniaStateUniversityChico,tribalrepresentatives, government scientists, conservation leaders and medical professionals to develop the report, which was released in March before the State Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee.

Mining's Toxic Legacy discusses environmental impacts of historic mining techniques, and documents the widespread distribution of toxins associated with mining, such as mercury or naturally-occurring toxic minerals, i.e., arsenic and asbestos in mine tailings that were crushed and redistributed throughout the region.

Other important findings:

\* Reservoirs in the Sierra Nevada foothills that form the headwaters of California's water projects are contaminated with mercury and its highly toxic form methylmercury, which works its way up the food chain. Reservoir management practices such as dredging must be monitored and modified for their impact on mercury. Regulations governing suction dredging are outdated. Scientists estimate that 13 million pounds of mercury were left in the land and water from historic gold mining in California.

\* High levels of arsenic or asbestos fibers in mine tailings may constitute a health hazard to children riding dirt bikes or people working on or with these materials as part of construction, forestry or other activities that disturb soil. Research is needed to document the distribution of and potential exposures to these naturally occurring toxic materials. The Sierra Fund report calls for the new Sierra Nevada Conservancy to be funded to serve as a coordinator for many of the actions recommended in the report. Another top priority is the need for new, strategic investments by government and private philanthropic sources in research, education and cleanup.

The Initiative lays out four strategic recommendations:

1. Increase collaboration and research, including the formation of a Mining Toxins Working Group made up of researchers at the University of California and California State University, and other research institutions, to learn more about human health impacts, distribution and behavior of toxins, and how to remediate mining toxins.

2. Improve outreach and education about the longterm impacts of the Gold Rush to improve community awareness of potential problems with exposure to mining toxins and encourage participation by residents of the region.

3. Improve education in the medical community, including increased training and information to ensure that symptoms of mining toxin exposure are well understood and that monitoring the human population for exposure mining toxins is improved.

4. Reform and fund government programs at the local, state and federal levels. Among the fourteen recommendations for action, the report calls for a thorough assessment of state and federal lands to be immediately undertaken, and remediation plans developed and funded.

The report was funded by grants from The California Endowment, True North Foundation and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund.

"We have the last great reservoirs of wildlife (but) we're ground zero for the gold rush, "Martin said."We're trying to find a way to deal with this that's hopeful. Our goal is to being a measurement of attention to the matter."

For more information, or to obtain a pdf file of the report and executive summary, contact the Sierra Fund, 409 Spring St., Nevada City, CA 95959, (530) 265-8454 or www.sierrafund.org.

*Gail Schickele,* Co-Chair Environmental Concerns

### **New Members**

Our Warmest Welcome To Our Newest Members:

> Bonnie Glaser Gregory Grossman

# LWVUS BOARD ADOPTS IMMIGRATION POSITION

PAGE 4

After a lengthy and comprehensive study of this complex issue by our grassroots members, the LWVUS Board of Directors unanimously adopted the League's position on immigration which calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants....The 18-month study was successful thanks to the hard work of the Immigration Study Committee, led by LWVUS Board Member Carolie Mullan, and the high level of participation -67 percent (560 Leagues). The new position provides for federal enforcement of immigration laws and full due process rights for immigrants. State and local Leagues may oppose efforts in their communities to deport, detain or harass unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity. As with all League positions, if your League is interested in taking action, please contact LWVUS Grassroots Lobbyist Christina Vamvas at cvamas@lwv.org.

LWV Leaders' Update, April 3, 2008

## **LWVUS I**MMIGRATION POSITION

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

### Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

### **Administration and Enforcement**

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

# Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

[The LWVUS Immigration Position is at http://www.lwv.org/ AM/Template.cfm?Section=ImmigrationPosition.] Press Statement on Immigration Released by LWVUS on April 2, 2008:

### LEAGUE OPPOSES DEPORTATIONS, SUPPORTS EARNED CITIZENSHIP FOR UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS

### League of Women Voters Announces Its Position on Immigration

**Washington, DC**– The League of Women Voters today announced its official position on immigration reform policy.

"After a lengthy and comprehensive study of this complex issue by our grassroots members," said national League president Mary G. Wilson, "the League's position calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants."

"As part of overall immigration reform, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria," Wilson stated. "We oppose deportations of current unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity," she said.

The full immigration policy approved by the national League's Board of Directors in March was studied by the organization's membership for more than eighteen months. The policy achieved member consensus through a survey of the nearly 850 local Leagues....

Other elements of the League's position include support for increased enforcement personnel at borders, more effective tracking of individuals who enter the U.S., and significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers. Furthermore, the League will champion due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment. The League position sets criteria for legal admission to the U.S., including family reunification of spouses or minor children; economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.; political persecution or humanitarian crises; and studying in the U.S.

The League will use this recently adopted position to guide its advocacy work on federal legislation introduced on this very important public policy issue.

[The LWVUS press statement is at ww.lwv.org/AM/Template. cfm?Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=11034.]

# BROWN BAG MAKE-UP

Our apologies to the many of you who came out on April 1 to hear about the measures that would be on the June ballot – crossed lines of communication caused the Brown Bag to be cancelled. BUT those lines are now uncrossed, and we are ready to cover the ballot measures at our May 6 meeting.

Two state measures will be on the June 3 ballot. Both are on the same subject: eminent domain. The League of Women Voters opposes Prop. 98 and supports Prop. 99. Come and find out why the League thinks one proposition is bad and the other is good.

Also included on the June 3 ballot is a utility users tax for Alameda County. Our League is likely to take a position on this as well, and we plan to discuss the utility users tax at our gathering. This meeting will *not* be a presentation of pros and cons, but is designed to be an advocacy meeting.

The date is Tuesday, May 6; the time is 12:15 pm to 2:00 pm; the place is the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Public Library, 1247 Marin Avenue (at Masonic Avenue), Albany. Do bring your lunch, but no liquids, please, other than water. We look forward to seeing many of you at our last Brown Bag Lunch discussion meeting of the season!

*Eloise Bodine* Speakers Bureau Chair

# WORK AT THE POLLS FOR HALF A DAY AND HALF THE PAY

Those of you who have been reluctant to serve as election poll workers because of the long 14to 16-hour days will be happy to learn that you can serve for a half day with pay. Polling place inspectors and judges must work the full day, but clerks can do a split shift.

For further information or to offer to work in the June 3 Primary Election, contact the County Registrar of Voters at (510) 272-6971 or go to the website http://www.acgov.org/rov/workers.htm. In order to qualify as a poll worker, you must be either registered to vote in Alameda County or be an employee of Alameda County or a high school student participating in the Student Poll Worker Program.

*Eloise Bodine* Speakers Bureau Chair

### PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

PAGE 6

A Primary Election is a nominating election in which voters in each political party choose the nominee who will run against the other political parties' nominees in the General Election. I've seen a voter at a primary election weeping because she could not vote for her chosen candidate, as that candidate was not on the ballot to which the voter was entitled. So perhaps a review of the differences between primary and general elections is useful.

At primary elections, the party you chose on the voter registration card matters because you can only vote for candidates of that party, with certain exceptions for those who checked "decline to state".

Political parties may adopt a rule permitting unaffiliated ("decline to state") voters to request their party's ballot. For the California primary election on June 3, the Democratic, the Republican and the American Independent parties have adopted such a rule. Voters who declined to state a party may request a Democratic or Republican ballot at the polling place. (The American Independent Party has no candidates running in our area in this election.) Unaffiliated voters who do not request a Republican or Democratic ballot will vote only on the non-partisan issues (two propositions and an Alameda County Superior Court Judge position).

When your ballot booklet comes in the mail, it will show what your ballot will have on it, depending on how you are registered. If you want to see what will be on <u>all</u> the ballots, go to www.smartvoter.org; on the line for "party" choose "Show All". If you decide vou want to vote a different ballot from the one you are registered for, you have until 15 days before the election (May 19) to change your registration (by filling out a new registration card).

This year, in an unusual arrangement, the Primary Election for presidential candidates was held in February. On June 3 we will vote for U.S. Representative, State Senator, Member of the State Assembly, and the non-partisan issues (two propositions and a Superior Court Judge). Members of the Democratic Party will vote for members of the Democratic Party Central Committee, and Green Party members will vote for Green Party County Council.

A General Election is held for voters to make a final choice among the candidates nominated at the previous Primary Election(s). All voters (in a precinct) vote the same ballot, regardless of the way they are registered. At the General Election on November 4, 2008 we will vote for candidates for national, state and local offices, and for propositions or other measures which have not been determined yet.

Phoebe Watts **Director of Observer Corps** 

### MICHAEL KRASNY WILL BE ANNUAL **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON SPEAKER** AUGUST 21, 2008

Popular KQED-FM "Forum" host Michael Krasny will be the guest speaker at LWVBAE's 9th Annual Community Luncheon.

The Luncheon will be held again at Hs Lordships Restaurant on the Berkeley Marina.

The date is August 21, and the event will begin with a social gathering at 11:30 am; the luncheon will start at noon and conclude at 1:30 pm.

The Luncheon is the League's largest fundraising event each year and is attended by more than 200 people from our three communities and local universities and colleges.

Mark your calendars now to reserve the date. More details will follow in the Summer issue of the VOTER.

Sherry Smith and Suzanne Chun for the Luncheon Committee

### CHANGE OF MEETING TIME FOR **CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM**

Please note that the meeting time for the LWVBAE Climate Change Team has changed to the third Wednesday of each month, 12:30-2:30 pm, at the LWVBAE office. Our next meeting is May 21.

### LWV BAY AREA CONVENTION Saturday, May 31, 2008, from 9:30 am to 12 noon

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area will hold its biennial convention at the Martin Luther King Library, 150 E. San Fernando Street at 4th Street, San Jose. The Convention Kit will be mailed to each League before the end of April. Presidents are requested to submit delegates' names by May 23, 2008. The cost will be \$10 per person attending, and will include morning refreshments.

The budget, as well as the program for 2008-2010, will be debated and adopted by the convention delegates. The Board is not recommending an increase in the LWVBA dues.

As at the League of Women Voters California and LWVUS conventions, delegates should be informed about what their local League thinks about the proposed items but are not instructed as to how to vote on any of them.

### MAY-JUNE 2008

# THE VOTER

# **BOARD BRIEFS**

The LWVBAE board voted by email on March 25 to join the United Nations Association in co-sponsoring a speaker event on or around September 21, 2008, the International Day of Peace. The proposed speaker for the event is Stephen H. Schneider, professor in the Department of Biology at Stanford University and co-director of the Stanford Center for Environmental Science and Policy. Professor Schneider would speak about the link between peace and climate change, as well as public policy steps that need to be taken in order to increase sustainability.

At their regular monthly meeting on March 27, the Board voted to approve the League of Women Voters of Berkeley Foundation Board nominees, who are: *Nancy Bickel, Eloise Bodine, Shireen Burns, Mim Hawley* and *Sherry Smith*.

The Board unanimously approved the proposed budget for League year 2008-2009. *Kristina Lim* 

Secretary

# HELP SUPPORT THE LEAGUE

When you order Andronico's Scrip, 6 percent of the amount you pay comes back to the League. In other words, for every \$100 you buy, the League receives \$6. Every two months your Scrip will either be delivered to your home, or you may pick it up at the LWVBAE office. If you are interested in participating in the Scrip program, please contact *Ruthann Taylor* at (510) 527-0673 or at clydetaylr@att.net.

Ruthann Taylor

### **DESK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

In our attempt to have the LWVBAE office open and available to Leaguers and the general public as much as possible, we are asking our membership to volunteer for Desk Duty! Desk Duty can be once or twice a month, in shifts of 2-4 hours, and is a wonderful way to become acquainted with the daily workings of our League and of our office.

Desk duty includes answering the office phone, fetching and processing the mail, and doing whatever else needs doing. Now that we have three new, up-to-date computers in the office, there will certainly be other tasks that desk volunteers can perform. Please respond to this call and sign up for a shift or two by contacting me, *Jane Barrett*, at (510) 845-8055 or janebarrett@onebox.com. Desk Volunteer training is available!

Jane Barrett Co-VP Administration

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE BOARD 2007-2008

President:	JINKY GARDNER	
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Membership:	KAREN NELSON	
Director of Health Care:	Ursula Rolfe	
Director of Observer Corps:	Phoebe Watts	

# LEADERSHIP EMERGENCY

The good news is that our Nominating Committee has two-thirds of our Board positions covered. Some positions will continue under the leadership of people who have been generous enough to agree to stay on for one more term; others of you have offered to "step up to the plate" for the first time. But the bad news is that we have several positions which are still unfilled, namely: President, VP Administration, VP Program and VP Development/Outreach.

So in case we overlooked you or someone you know who may be interested in filling these open positions, please call me, *Doris*, at (510) 409-1030 to talk about it. Your interest and enthusiasm would be so appreciated.

With all our thanks,

Doris Nassiry, Chair Nominating Committee

### March Donations

TO THE LWVBAE GENERAL FUND

Mina Bissell Suzanne Chun Jane Coulter

Many thanks for remembering your League. Louetta Erlin

Louetta Erlin Donations Secretary



League of Women Voters Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville 1414 University Avenue, Suite D Berkeley, CA 94702-1509 Non-Profit Organization U.S.Postage Paid Berkeley,CA permit No. 29

# 

# how to join

fill in coupon below and mail with your check in the amount of \$65 (\$30 for each additional household member; \$30 for a student membership) to the order of LWVBAE,

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

Joining at 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.

APRIL calendar						
24	THURS.		Board Meeting, LWVBAE office Member Recruit & Activate LWVBAE office	J. Gardner, 548-5292 J. Gardner, 548-5292		
May			No Voter Deadline in May			
1	THURS.	7:00-9:00 рм	Speakers Bureau Training (see p. 2) LWVBAE office	E. Bodine, 845-0974		
5	Mon.	1:30-3:00 рм	HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE LWVBAE OFFICE	С. Lүмсн, 527-2173		
6	TUES.	12:15-2:00 рм		L. Rogers, 559-1006		
12	Mon.	7:30-9:00 рм	Environmental Concerns 1340 Arch Street	С. Stone, 549-0959		
15	THURS.	7:30-9:00 рм	Civics Education Action Committee Home of Doris <i>Nassiry</i> , 2746 We			
	Mon. Wed.	12:30-2:30 рм	LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN JUNE PRIMARY			
22	THURS.	6:00-9:00 рм	LWVBAE OFFICE 2008 Annual Meeting (see p. 1)			
	Mon. Thurs.	7:00-9:00 рм	Northbrae Community Church Memorial Day Observed - LWVBA	E OFFICE CLOSED		
	Sat.	9:30 ам-12 рм	LWVBA CONVENTION (SEE P. 6) San Jose	J. Safir, 524-9088		
JUNE						
6	Tues. Fri. Wed.	5:00 рм 12:30-2:30 рм	CALIFORNIA PRIMARY ELECTION (SEE PR DEADLINE FOR SUMMER VOTER CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM LWVBAE OFFICE			
BERKELEY ADDRESSES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED						