

The Voter

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

510-843-8824

fax:510-843-8828

office@lwvbae.org

http://lwvbae.org

September 2011

Consensus Unit on The Federal Role in Public Education K-12

Join Us! Now's the time to put in your two cents' worth!

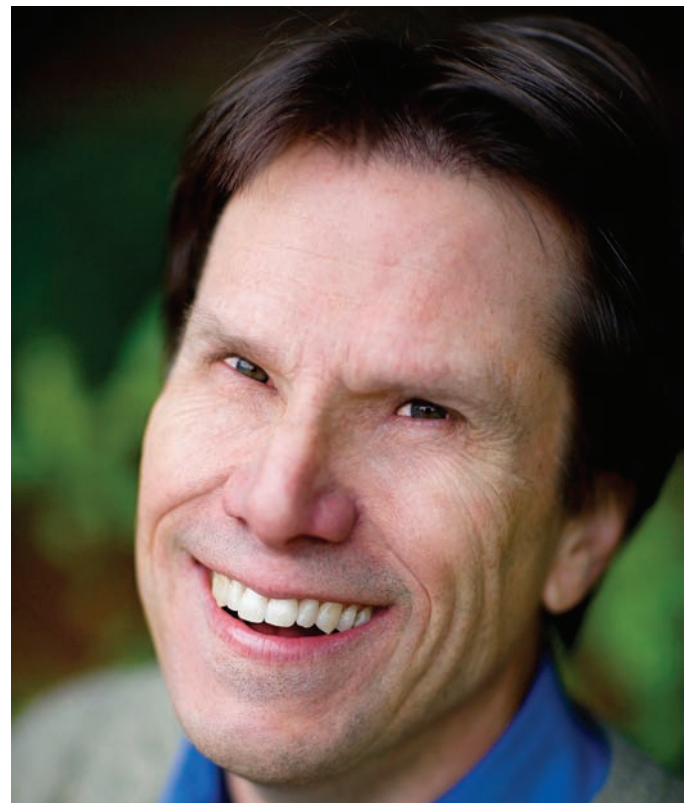
When: Tuesday, October 4, noon to 2:00 pm

Where: Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room
1247 Marin Avenue (at Masonic), Albany

In June 2010, the US League of Women Voters adopted a new study seeking consensus on the “Role of the Federal Government in Public Education, Pre-K-12.” The national League already has many positions on education issues such as equal opportunity, integration, quality education, tuition tax credits, education financing, and meeting the educational needs of special student populations.

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Fall Meeting Features Bruce Fuller Speaking on “The Role of the Federal Government in Education”



When: Monday, September 26, 2011, 5:00 - 8:00 pm

Where: Northbrae Church, 941 The Alameda

Join us at the Fall Meeting and hear Bruce Fuller, UC Professor of Education and Public Policy. His talk will focus on the “Role of the Federal Government in Education.” His presentation will provide invaluable information to prepare us for the Study Consensus Meeting to be held October 4 (see Consensus Unit in the column to the left). If you read the pull-out insert in this issue, it will help prepare you for both Professor Fuller’s talk and the consensus meeting a week later.

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The meeting will begin at 5:00 with a chance to meet and greet and also to visit tables where our various League Committees will have information about their activities and projects, with topics ranging from the environment, health care, and education through the revival of the Observer Corps and information about events being planned to celebrate the Centennial of women voting in California along with our League's 100th Birthday.

Fall Meeting Includes Buffet Supper & Brief Business Meeting

At 5:30, a delicious array of salads will be available for a buffet supper, along with a dessert of honey pound cake with mixed fruit topping, with the menu planned by our own Hostess with the Mostest, Rainey Sykes. If you wish to eat with us, (and surely you will) the cost will be \$15, and you can make a reservation by calling the office at 843-8824 and paying at the door.

The main event after all this initial enjoyment, starting at 6:30, will be the talk by Professor Bruce Fuller. He holds a Ph.D. from Stanford and is a national expert on education policy. He is Co-Director of the Institute of Human Development at Berkeley. He has earned wide recognition for his writings on President Bush's No Child Left Behind Policy; taught at Harvard's graduate school of education; and worked for the U.S Department of State and the World Bank on educational policies.

His latest two books delve into decentralization of educational institutions, including *Inside Charter Schools: The Paradox of Radical Decentralization* and *Standardized Childhood: The Political and Cultural Contest over Early Childhood Education*.

Following Professor Fuller's presentation, he will answer questions from the audience. This will be a unique opportunity to have your questions answered that will have arisen after you read the pull-out insert in this VOTER issue, having to do with the US League Study on Education.

After the Q&A is completed, we will get underway at 7:45 with a brief business meeting, which will have only one item on the agenda. In order for a position to be adopted or altered by the Alameda County Council of Leagues (ACC), the position or its change must be submitted to the Boards of the seven members and, after their approval, then to the local members of each of the seven Leagues. The Board of LWVBAE has approved this new language to an existing ACC position, and recommends approval by the LWVBAE membership.

The position appears in the box to the right. The new language, found at the end of E.1, is in italic boldface.

The meeting will be adjourned at 8:00 pm. We look forward to seeing you at this important, informative and delicious Fall Meeting.

Sherry Smith, President

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

(Adopted 1979)

The Leagues of Women Voters of Alameda County support the need for Children's Mental Health Services and recommend the following:

- A. Increase the priority given Children's Mental Health Services in the County Mental Health program and budget.
- B. Retain present service and ensure equal access to Day Treatment Service throughout the County.
- C. Focus on prevention and early intervention by:
 1. Increased education of parents and public.
 2. Utilization of school resources where feasible.
- D. Finance these services by:
 1. Active pursuit of all available sources of funds.
 2. Coordination of County, State, and Federal budget deadlines.
 3. Sufficient funds for a service from the level of government that mandates that service.
- E. Make most efficient use of funds by:
 1. Retention and expansion of contracts with private providers, ***with ongoing oversight and periodic reviews.***
 2. Support for Case Management system of services.
 3. Increased coordination and communication among all public and private service providers and continuation of the Interagency Council.

Correction: The Health Committee Report in the July August *Voter* confused the bill numbers. The single payer bill the League supports is SB 810 (Leno) formerly SB 840 (Kuehl).

Consensus Unit Continued from page 1

Now, however, the latest version of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), is up for renewal at a time when the economic basis for funding schools at every level of government is strained. Is it time to rethink what the Federal role should be?

Come tell us what you think. The League has an important role to play in the ongoing debates about improving the educational opportunities available to our future doctors and engineers, psychologists and car mechanics, but it can't act until you do. Come share your opinions with us.

To prepare for the discussion, please read the pull-out insert in this issue of *The Voter*, and **bring it with you to the consensus meeting on October 4**. For a more in-depth understanding, go to <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&Template=/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=191&ContentID=17596>

Helene Lecar and Doris Fine, Study Co-Chairs

Solano Stroll Time: Have Fun and Help at the League Table

The Solano Stroll will happen on Sunday, September 11 on Solano Avenue from The Alameda to San Pablo Avenue. The League of Women Voters table will be on the north side of Solano Avenue between Ensenada and Tulare Avenues, about four blocks below The Alameda.

Besides distributing voter registration cards and telling people about other League activities, we will be publicizing the celebration of the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in California (see article on page 5).

Please sign up to spend a two hour shift at the League table, beginning with set-up at 8 a.m. and ending with take-down, from 6 p.m. (This shift will be shorter than two hours). Official hours for the Stroll are 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Participants are asked not to start taking-down until 6 p.m. The parade starts at 10 a.m. at The Alameda and marches to San Pablo.

This is a pleasant, friendly event, with food, music, performers and more. Please call or email the League office to volunteer for two hours, and I will respond to you.

Thank you!

Phoebe Watts

Meeting with Senator Loni Hancock

Representatives from three of the Alameda County Leagues that are located within State Senator Loni Hancock's District 9 met with her July 8 at her Oakland offices.

Along with members from the Piedmont and Oakland Leagues, LWVBAE was represented by Sherry Smith, Carol Stone and Li-hsia Wang. Our interview with Senator Hancock was joined by Nathan Rapp, a member of her staff.

It is the League's policy to ask legislative representatives for permission to quote their remarks in our *VOTER* publications. Sen. Hancock said we were welcome to do so. Here is a summary of her answers to questions that the State League asked local Leagues to pose to our legislative representatives:

Q. The governor has proposed a package of budget cuts, increased revenue, realignment of services and funding between state and local government, and some one-time fixes. What is your evaluation of this proposal?

Since the budget was finally passed, Senator Hancock's comments related to the frustrating process when Republicans would not vote for either a tax election or any additional taxes and Democrats had to pass a budget with no new taxes, some overly optimistic budget projections and some remaining gimmicks. Hancock would like a two year budget with one year devoted to the budget and a second year to concentrate on bills. She is in favor of realignment plans and did support moves to redirect Redevelopment Funds back to schools. She feels that Redevelopment Funds are being used for development that should be self-supporting.

She is worried about low income housing and is in favor of legislation that specifically supports low income housing and which is sustainable, green, and pays the prevailing wage during construction. She favors incentives rather than regulations.

Senator Hancock is very concerned that the budget cuts public support for a family of 3 to \$460 a month (doesn't include food stamps, Medi-Cal or housing vouchers) and she was especially concerned about the lack of legislative support for the UC and State University systems. She feels that only at state universities do students of various income levels and backgrounds meet each other, and the schools are the key to California's future.

What proposals do you support to fix the budget process?

Senator Hancock supports passage of taxes and fees by a simple majority. She worked on the majority budget passage but the initiative that causes fees to be subject to 2/3, plus the Proposition 13 requirement for a 2/3 vote for any

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Senator Hancock Continued from page 3

taxes still makes legislative action on the budget dependent on some Republican support. The good news on this budget, from her point of view: the Democrats did not give in to any Republican requests.

Questions with a focus on SB490

This bill, which Senator Hancock has authored, would eliminate the death penalty in California in exchange for life without possibly of parole. A new report has given the cost for Death Penalty cases at \$184 million dollars per year. This is money that could be spent on education and infrastructure.

Hancock sits on both the Budget Subcommittee on Corrections & Public Safety and the Public Safety Committee. She feels this gives her a unique position. If the legislation passes out of the legislature and is signed by the governor, it will be placed on the ballot. Obviously there is a lot of work to do to eliminate the death penalty in California.

Regarding Redistricting: Redistricting may result in some women legislators finding themselves in new districts with other women legislators. She thinks that under the new election procedures the top two candidates (probably both Democrats, in most districts) after the primary in California will result in candidates needing more money to be competitive which will give power to special interests.

Regarding Single Payer Health Care, a two-year bill needs to be revised in light of the Federal Affordable Care Act.

Thanks to Tamra Hege of LWV Piedmont for her summary of the meeting, on which this article was based.

Sherry Smith, President

Open Government Update

In late June, former LWVBAE President Jinky Gardner and I attended an initial meeting of the newly-formed Berkeley Open Government Commission. A staff report provided an update regarding steps taken to date to train City staff and track information on Public Records Act (PRA) requests, for the year-end report. There was a two-hour training in April in the PRA for affected staff. Each City department has a staff member designated to be their Open Government “go-to” person. All PRA requests are now logged electronically; the system was rolled out June 1. This automated reporting system will allow for more-frequent-than-annual reporting---probably quarterly. Each and every PRA request goes to several people in the City, including the City Manager’s office, someone in the City Attorney’s office, and a couple of others.

A copy of a parliamentary procedure pamphlet was distributed to the Commission members, and they will commit to being more formal in their conduct of meetings, especially when motions are involved. They were urged to ask questions of the Commission Secretary if there is anything they need clarified. They will receive, in the fall, a training on PRA and Brown Act similar to that which City staff had in April.

Commissioners were urged not to get involved with talking about any possible complaints, with people on the “outside”, lest they have to recuse themselves if the matter should come before them. (As of early August, only one complaint has been filed, and it has not yet been heard).

I asked whether the City staff members will be providing information to people who are making PRA requests or Brown Act complaints, about how they can go about lodging a formal complaint with the Open Government Commission, and staff said they would follow up on that.

Take a look at the City of Berkeley’s dedicated Open Government Ordinance site. There is quite an array of information there, with the convenience of having all information resources in one place:

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=65932>

Sherry Smith, President

Redistricting in Berkeley

Our League hosted, on behalf of the City of Berkeley, a community meeting to provide Berkeley citizens with basic information about the City’s redistricting process and criteria. The meeting was held the evening of June 30 at the North Berkeley Senior Center, and was attended by some 50 people.

Members of the City staff from the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk offices, along with the staff member from the Information Technology department who will be doing the physical execution of the maps that will show the proposed new Council district boundaries, were all available to explain the process and to answer questions. LWVBAE President Sherry Smith moderated the session.

The City Council and staff are moving on a fast track in an effort to have the new boundaries in place in time for the November 2012 municipal election.

The last day that people, including members of the City Council, may submit a redistricting proposal to the City Clerk is September 30. Complete packets of public hear-

Continued on page 5

Suffrage Centennial News

Suffragist Organizer Hester Harland's Difficult Life

The life and character of Hester Harland, the magnificent organizer of Berkeley's successful campaign to pass the 1911 suffrage amendment, described in a March *Voter* article, is emerging in more and more detail as the Berkeley Centennial Committee pursues its research on the campaign for suffrage. On the last Saturday of July, Phyllis Gale and other committee members greeted Jane Frederick, one of Mrs. Harland's great-granddaughters, who arrived with neatly arranged stacks of Mrs. Harland's photographs, newspaper clippings and handwritten records. She also recounted new-to-us accounts of Mrs. Harland's history.

Mrs. Harland, mother of three young daughters, had been widowed when her husband Francis (Frank) Harland was murdered. At the time, in 1885, he was superintendent of the Pilgrim mine in Sierra County; the mine was yielding inconsistently; the workers were being paid irregularly.

According to the *Reno Evening Gazette*, Sept 13, 1888, some of the miners accused Harland of "stealing the amalgam" and threatened him. The next day he was found dead with a pistol by his hand. The Coroner's jury declared the death a suicide. "For a time, until the destitute wife of the deceased endeavored to obtain payment on a life insurance policy of a large sum, the matter rested. Mrs. Harland was refused the insurance money."

"Then the laggard friends of the dead man, ever skeptical in regard to the suicide theory, enlisted in behalf of the widow and detectives were engaged....Many months passed by, when one day, the Italian, Aroni, was arrested in San Francisco, whither he had removed shortly after Harland's death, and charged with the murder of the whilom [one-time, or former] superintendent...The swarthy foreigner's countrymen...believing the prisoner innocent...engaged the best counsel...to refute the terrible allegation." According to the *Reno Evening Gazette*, in a second trial the prosecution "brought new and conclusive evidence of the man's guilt to light." He was convicted and sentenced to hang. "The insurance company must now pay over the amount of the policy on the dead man's life, destitution will be relieved and crime punished."

Mrs. Harland and her daughters had moved to the Bay Area and she became active in many projects, including a study of educational methods, and in the 1896 and 1911 suffrage campaigns. In some of the clippings Mrs. Harland preserved, we learned that she had suffered "a nervous breakdown" at the end of the campaign and was not able to attend some of the celebrations.

Nancy Bickel

September Centennial Events

To learn more about the heroes and heroines of the Berkeley suffrage campaign, visit the **exhibit at the Berkeley Historical Center in the Veterans Building between September 18 and March 30**. At the September 18 opening, Robert P.J. Cooney, Jr, author of the excellent book, *Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Woman Suffrage Movement*, will speak. See the Event Calendar for more fall centennial exhibits and events at <http://www.berkeleyhistoricalsociety.org/news.html>

Join us at the Solano Stroll Parade on the morning of Sunday, September 11, to cheer our 1911 suffragists. If you would like to march as a suffragist, sign up and get more information at berkeleywomenvote@gmail.com

Redistricting Continued from page 4

ing dates, timelines, process information, maps, and other data are available now and will continue to be distributed until the submission deadline. Just days later, on November 3, all redistricting proposals are to be made available to the public through the City Clerk and published on the City's Website.

The first public hearing by the Council on proposals to adjust boundaries of districts will be held the evening of November 15 at the Council Chambers.

People interested in the full redistricting timeline can go to <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=70814>. The City has put together comprehensive information on redistricting at <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=9882>.

The League will continue to monitor the progress of City redistricting throughout the procedure. The Alameda County Registrar of Voters has fixed April 1, 2012 as the deadline to submit new boundary lines and maps for the November 2012 election.

Sherry Smith

Environmental Concerns will meet on Monday, September 12, 2011 from 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the home of Jeanette Zerneke and Mark Nyman at 1174 Euclid (just past Eunice) in north Berkeley (the same house we met at last spring).

Natural Resources/Environmental Concerns Meetings 2010-2011 Summary

In September Anna Goldstein from 350.org spoke to us concerning the worldwide day of action, the Global Work Party held 10/10/10. 350.org was founded by Bill McKibben based on data showing 350 parts per million is what many scientists, climate experts, and some national governments are now saying is the safe upper limit for CO² in our atmosphere. Accelerated arctic warming and other early climate impacts have led scientists to conclude that we are already above the safe zone at our current 392ppm, and that unless we are able to rapidly return to below 350ppm this century, we risk reaching tipping points and irreversible impacts such as the melting of the Greenland ice sheet and major methane releases from increased permafrost melt.

In October just before the November election, Abby Young, Principal Environmental Planner for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District spoke to us about climate change and air quality, and why AB 32 is necessary. Relevant air district initiatives, such as the CEQA guidelines that are working to move AB32 forward are the aggressive first steps to a solution to curb greenhouse gas emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020.

In November we joined the LBNL "Science at the Theater" to hear a presentation on "GET SMART ABOUT CARBON" featuring a number of scientists reporting on their cutting edge research.

In December, our annual Pot Luck appetizer and dessert event hosted Edwin Bernbaum, author (*Sacred Mountains of the World*), lecturer, mountaineer and scholar who showed a beautifully illustrated presentation of *THE HEIGHTS OF INSPIRATION, Culture and the Environment*. From the Himalaya to the Sierra Nevada, people around the world look up to mountains as sources of inspiration, renewal, wisdom, creativity, and vision.

In January we held TWO environmental events; hosting a "Conversation with the LWVBAE" at Albany Public Library as well as Gail's participation in Bay Area League Day entitled Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Taking it to the Next Level, an all day conference.

In February we had as a speaker Elanor Starmer, the Western Region Director of Food & Water Watch. In her Round Up of Current Food Policy she gave us a sense of where we are with a new Congress and a Farm Bill coming up in 2012 as well as some background on the Food Safety Modification Act which had just been signed by President Obama.

In March we were pleased to have Claire Kremen, a conservation biologist and MacArthur Fellow as a speaker on Bees and other Pollinators and our Food supply.

In April, Professor Eric B. Norman, UC Berkeley Department of Nuclear Engineering, gave a Powerpoint presentation one month after the Fukushima nuclear plant radiation leak following the major earthquake and tsunami in Japan and its implication for California.

In May, Dean of the College of Natural Resources J. Keith Gillless, spoke on "Forests, the Lungs of the Earth" and what to expect with ongoing climate change emphasizing Northern California.

Carol Stone and Gail Schickele

League to Host Forum on Senior Mobility

Is the Bay Area prepared for a "silver tsunami"?

When: Wednesday, September 21, 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Where: Berkeley Public Library, 3rd floor
2090 Kittredge Street

As the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age, the region is seeing a dramatic increase in its elder population. From 2010 to 2020, the number of seniors in the Bay Area is expected to rise by 35 percent. This shift demands additional planning for the specific needs of people 65 years or older — especially with respect to transportation, given that driving starts to become a less optimal option for this demographic.

In order to address this pressing challenge, the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Education Fund and the League of Women Voters of Berkeley-Albany-Emeryville will host an upcoming senior mobility forum featuring many speakers with expertise on transportation and aging.

The forum will be held on Wednesday, September 21 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the community meeting room on the third floor of the Berkeley Public Library at 2090 Kittredge Street, just off Shattuck Avenue. The library is adjacent to the Downtown Berkeley BART Station and several AC Transit lines. This event is free, open to the public, and wheelchair accessible. For more information, call (510) 839-1608.

Community College Report Year-End Summary of Activity (May 28, 2011)

The Perils of Peralta

In addition to all the shortages and instability affecting California's schools K-12, 2010-11 has been a year of struggle at the Peralta Community College District, as it has labored to climb out of its own self-inflicted financial mess. Extensive gaps in record-keeping left the District unable to account for where money came from and where it was spent. The causes were many: years of lax internal fiscal controls, inadequate staffing of both the Business and Information Technology (IT) departments, insufficiently detailed reporting to the Board of Trustees, and overoptimistic estimates about repaying the costs of borrowing in the event of a budget downturn.

These all came to light under investigations by a variety of external agencies. At one point last summer, the District's independent auditing firm, the Alameda County Grand Jury, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), and the FBI were all demanding much stricter accounting for the flow of money, more rigorous procedures in recording income and expenses, and sufficient staff training to ensure that the District's financial documentation would hereafter be accurate and appropriately detailed.

Threatened with de-accreditation, the beleaguered Board of Trustees looked to a financial recovery team, FCMAC, or the Financial Crisis and Management Assistance Team, recommended by the state Chancellor's office, which specializes in turning around community college fiscal management. They required trustees and administrators throughout the District to ferret out the missing information and reconstruct the actual income and expenditures for items dating back to 2007. A new business manager and several additional IT programmers were hired to establish new procedures and train existing staff in implementing them, to ensure that the same casual disregard for financial responsibility never recurred.

Not all the news is bad, and some of it is very good

The trustees, working closely with Interim Chancellor Wise Allen and his staff, under the advice of the FCMAC Recovery Team, have spent the year slowly digging out from under, and are beginning to see daylight. The auditors have been able to close the books on years past, the ACCJC threat of de-accreditation has been set aside under a strict timetable.

Despite all the turmoil, Measure A, the \$393 million bond that the local community passed in 2006, continues to fund major upgrades to the District's physical facilities. Construction is underway for new buildings at Laney, Merritt will get a new Science building and solar heating projects are near completion at Laney and Merritt. Until the Merritt labs are ready for use, a new Genomics lab, jointly operated by College of Alameda and Merritt College is being housed in Alameda to enable the District to accept federally funded grants of very

expensive equipment. Already completed are the new dental clinic at College of Alameda, part of the new Admissions and Student Services building there, and the final build-out of the Berkeley City College campus is ahead of schedule. BCC has grown so rapidly that even with the build-out, the college is now looking for added space elsewhere in the neighborhood to accommodate its students

What lies ahead

Money shortages will continue: Even with the resolution of most of Peralta's particular fiscal problems, the District's trustees still have to confront the same "ordinary" worries afflicting all community colleges in this time of shrinking state support. Allocations have been sliced and diced by the legislature annually, as part of the budget wars in Sacramento, and Districts have been forced to meet their payrolls with short-term loans (often squeezing their already inadequate operating budgets to pay the interest on them). Rising health care costs, for current employees and for retirees, is an ongoing concern.

Peralta is seeking a new chancellor. The District has been operating with no permanent leader for the 18 tumultuous months at the brink of disaster. Chancellor Wise Allen, after decades of service to the college community in various capacities, stayed on to steer the District through its financial recovery, but the first-round search for his successor failed, and another search is currently underway. Everyone hopes to have a new Chancellor in place by the start of 2012.

Peralta's trustee districts must change to accommodate new residents

Redistricting is coming to the District as well as to California's higher legislative bodies. The decade since the last census has seen sizable shifts in Peralta's population within its six-city service area. South Berkeley and Emeryville have gained new people, adding voters who will need equal representation on the Board of Trustees. A consulting firm has digested the data and drawn up four possible configurations to incorporate the census results within the rules. Their first-draft maps are available in the League office. Public hearings on the possible changes were held at each of the campuses this spring, and the consultants are now reviewing people's comments to create two second-round maps. These in turn will go before the trustees, who will make a final selection in September. The boundaries they choose will serve until the next census in 2020.

Helene Lecar

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League of Women Voters
 Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville
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Telephone: 510.843.8824
 Facsimile: 510.843.8828
 Email: office@lwvbae.org

Editor: Fran Packard
 Editorial Board: Jane Brandes, Bill Chapman, Sherry Smith
 Technical Consultant: Bill Chapman
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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages active and informed participation in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Calendar — Berkeley addresses unless otherwise noted

August

24	Wed	3:00-5:00 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE Office	S. Smith	548-1769
25	Thur	10:00 - noon	Education Com, LWVBAE Office	H. Lecar	549-9719

September

11	Sun	10 am-6:00 pm	Solano Stroll	P. Watts	843-8824
12	Mon	7:30-9:00 pm	Environmental Concerns 1174 Euclid Ave	C. Stone	549-0959
18	Sun	3:00-5:00	Berkeley Women Vote Exhibit Opens Berkeley Historical Society, Veterans Bldg., 1931 Center St	N. Bickel	526-4055
19	Mon	1:30-3:30 pm	Health Care Com, LWVBAE Office	L. Wang	848-5765
21	Wed	1:30-3:00 pm	Forum on Senior Mobility Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge		839-1608
26	Mon	5:00-8:00 pm	Fall Meeting, Northbrae Church 941 The Alameda	S. Smith	548-1769
28	Wed	3:00-5:00 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE Office	S. Smith	548-1769

October

4	Tues	noon- 2:00 pm	Consensus Unit, Albany Library 1247 Marin Ave, Albany	H. Lecar	549-9719
26	Wed	3:00-5:00 pm	Board Meeting, LWVBAE Office	S. Smith	548-1769

Save the date October 30 for LWVBAE's celebration of its 100th anniversary