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President: Nancy Bickel

Dec. 2002 - Jan. 2003

Editor: Jean Safir

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## STUDY KICKOFF: ELECTING THE PRESIDENT

Monday, January 20, 7 p.m.

**Berkeley Main Library, Shattuck & Kittredge, 3rd Floor Meeting Room**

Since its founding in 1920, the League of Women Voters has been concerned with the process for electing the President of the United States. Come to the LWVBAE meeting on January 20 to learn about and discuss how the President is currently elected in relation to other possible systems. Recently enacted federal election reforms and their impact on the process for electing the President will also be discussed. This meeting is a prelude to updating the League of Women Voters of the US (LWVUS) position on the system for electing the President last studied in 1972 and updated in 1984. The current position calls for the abolition of the Electoral College and the direct nationwide election of the President.

The election of a President who did not get a majority of the nation's votes, along with the confusion and questions regarding ballots, vote counting and other irregularities in Florida in November 2000 once again raised questions about the role of the Electoral College in the election of the President. It also highlighted the variety of state and federal laws that regulate the process. Should the Electoral College be abolished? Should there be uniform hours for voting throughout the US for federal elections? What about having a national holiday? How could direct election of the President be accomplished?

At the LWVUS June 2002 convention, appropriately held in Miami Beach, Florida, delegates from local leagues throughout the US voted to conduct an update study of the League's position regarding the election of the President. The League takes action on positions, arrived at through the process of study and consensus. The update is needed because the membership did not appear to understand the basis for taking action on the current position.

All members are invited to join the study committee that will gather information on constitutional, legal and political considerations and present it to the LWVBAE membership for local review and consensus. The result of our local study will be included in the nationwide League consensus on the system that should be used to elect the President.

Call *Eloise Bodine*, Program VP, at 845-0974 for more information.

### In This Issue

- p. 2 President's Column  
Board Briefs  
Scrip for Holiday Giving
- p. 3 Election Service Report  
Speaker Series
- p. 4 High School Mock Elections  
Donations  
New Members Welcome Event
- p. 5 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Lunch  
Environmental Concerns  
"Bury the Hatchet" Reception  
Reproductive Choice Update  
A Gift that Keeps on Giving
- p. 6 Calendar

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By now we all know who got elected and whether the League's positions on ballot measures were supported by voters or not. Whatever the outcomes, I'm proud to report that I and the others who handed out "Vote with the League" recommendations at grocery stores and around town were greeted with thanks and compliments. Even people who at first refused, often did double takes and then accepted our handout with: "Did you say the League of Women Voters? Then I will take it — thanks so much. I always check with the League's recommendations before voting."

As I write, I know only the results of the Mock Elections that *Jinky Gardner* and *Karen Carlson-Olson*, Education Co-chairs, carried out at the high schools in our three cities. Our press release of November 1 reported:

"In the Mock Election at Berkeley High, students soundly defeated Measure P, the height initiative, by more than 2 to 1, and Measure O, an initiative ordinance to restrict the sale of non-organically grown brewed coffee. All 3 of Berkeley's revenue measures, I (the animal shelter), L (pedestrian safety improvements) & M (funding for affordable housing), got a majority, but failed to receive the necessary 2/3 approval for passage."

In voting on state candidates, students at Berkeley High and Alternative School, Emery High and Albany and MacGregor highs elected Davis, with Camejo a strong second.

Registration, pros and cons, candidate and issues forums and advocacy on ballot measures all got exceptional attention by LWVBAE this year. (*Phoebe's* article on page 3 has many of the details.) We publicized and used the "SmartVoter" Web site and our own Web site much more than in the past. In keeping with this new emphasis, you can go to our website for full reports and for pictures of some of our candidate forums.

- Nancy Bickel

## BOARD BRIEFS

At its November Board meeting, held October 30, the Board:

- voted to ask the LWVB Foundation to pay for the additional \$2,722 LWVBAE spent for Election Services (for more election publications for community groups and for the Mock Election in 5 high schools);
- appointed an *ad hoc* committee, chaired by *Tom Coulter*, to evaluate our membership dues structure and recommend possible changes;
- approved plans to send a letter appealing for donations to everyone on the LWVBAE mailing list, in early December;
- appointed an *ad hoc* committee to recommend whether to sponsor a special training class for prospective future leaders;
- heard reports on Election Services, Action on Berkeley ballot measures (yes on M for affordable housing, and no on P, height limits), membership plans and events, Community Luncheon plans, LWVC State Convention plans, and upcoming League meetings.

-Ginette Polak, Secretary

## SCRIP FOR HOLIDAY GIVING

Can't find the right gift for some of the people on your list? Make it easy for yourself and support the League at the same time: give Gift Certificates (SCRIP)! Books and videos, apparel and cosmetics, tools and electronics, hotel rooms and restaurants, and much more are available with scrip at local and national businesses that donate a percentage of the purchase price to the League.

For more information and/or to place an order, please contact me at 527-1992 or [evabrecher@aol.com](mailto:evabrecher@aol.com).

- Eva Brecher, Scrip Coordinator

## ELECTION SERVICE REPORT

Last summer League members began to work to produce "Pros and Cons" on the local measures in Albany, Berkeley, Alameda County and regional transit districts. Those who wrote, edited and proofread were *Eva Bansner, Nancy Bickel, Eloise Bodine, Lois Brubeck, Jinky Gardner, Helene Lecar, Evelyn Light, Ginette Polak, Jean Safir, Sherry Smith* and *Phoebe Watts*. Then *Marylyn Coons* transformed it all into a handsome publication.

*Suzanne Chun, Minnie Favre, Dorothy Lindheim* and *Sara Mathews* stuffed envelopes and counted stacks of Pros & Cons (both local and state ones, and Easy Reading Voter Guides on state issues). And many, many of you distributed them to your neighbors, churches and synagogues, workplaces, shops and clubs.

We trained "Pro and Con" speakers who went to 20 groups. *Peggy Anne Davis* helped with scheduling. *Nancy Bickel, Eloise Bodine, Lois Brubeck, Linda Carothers, Dennis Layton-Rodin, Jean Safir, Helene Lecar* and *Fran Packard* were speakers.

As they do all year, *Allie Norton* and *Marie Lagarde* distributed voter registration cards. *Polly Amrein, Marilyn Couch, Jessica Fine, Pat Kuhl, Ginette Polak* and *Winnie McLaughlin* (and all the people who were at our table at the Solano Stroll) registered voters. *Mary Lou Breiman* took care of the Smartvoter Web site, with help from *Lea Barker*.

We helped present six candidates' forums: three at Berkeley Community Media, which were broadcast over Channel 25. *Jill Martinucci* organized those, *Lessly Wikle* was moderator, and *Lois Brubeck, Nancy Bickel, Jessica Fine, Neil Goldstein, Dennis Layton-Rodin* and *Masako Yamada* helped. *Jane Coulter* was moderator at two School Board forums in Berkeley. An Albany forum for Council and School Board candidates was organized by *Karen Carlson-Olson; and Polly Amrein, Jane Coulter, Sherry Smith* and *Lessly Wikle* helped make it a success.

Thanks to everyone who generously shared skills or who patiently did boring tasks. Kudos to those who said, "Yes, I can do that" several times over and apologies to any whose names I have missed. It's surprising how many people depend on the League for information at election time. Supplying it couldn't be done without all of you.

- *Phoebe Watts*, Election Services V.P.

## SPEAKER SERIES

**Thursday, January 9, 2003, noon to 2 pm**  
**Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room**  
**1247 Marin Avenue, at Masonic**

Save the second Thursday in the New Year for the Speaker Series event — January 9, 2003 — to hear *Anne Henderson* brief us on the results, as well as the resulting impacts, of the November election. Anne has been the legislative director of LWVC for several years and is also a past president of LWVBAE.

As usual, we will meet at the Albany Public Library in the Edith Stone Room at the rear of the library, facing the parking lot. Bring a bag lunch if you'd like; we'll provide juice.

- *Janet Strothman*, committee member

## Review of October 10 Speaker Series

The Speaker Series meeting on October 10 was a great success. John Selawsky of the Berkeley Board of Education, Marsha Skinner of the Albany Board and Forrest Gee of Emeryville had the rapt attention of the many League members in the audience.

The subject was school finance, and the speakers gave us a broad picture of the many differences among our three cities in the problems they face and their ways of coping. Interest was so intense that the meeting lasted until well past 2 p.m. with questions and discussions among speakers and members.

- *Doris Mendell*, committee member

## HIGH SCHOOL MOCK ELECTIONS

All five of our high schools, Berkeley High, Berkeley Alternative High, Albany High, MacGregor High, Emery High, participated in the Mock Election! The Mock Election is an attempt to make high school students aware of their approaching voter eligibility and excite them about exercising their right to vote when that time comes. This project was started by the University of Arizona (UA) and the League joined some years ago. It has now become a nationwide event. The UA, working with the partnership of sponsors in all the states, coordinates and reports the voting. In California, our partners were Secretary of State, Bill Jones, and Superintendent of Public Instruction, Delaine Eastin.

Each high school ran things slightly differently. At Berkeley Alternative, Albany and Emery Highs, only juniors and seniors were included. Berkeley and MacGregor (Albany Alternative) Highs opened the election to all students. All 5 schools required the students to register before receiving their ballots, teaching that "in the real world" registration is a required first step. Ballots did not include everything on the real ballot. We got a standard ballot from the State League which included Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Proposition 52.

Berkeley expanded their ballot to include the 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Berkeley Mayor and School Board, Propositions 47 & 49, local Measures I, K, L, M, O, P, and AC Transit Measure AA. One history teacher said this ballot expansion gave him the opportunity to teach kids how much is done at the local government level. Many teachers thanked us for giving them this opportunity to make government and politics real to their students and for the support and materials LWVBAE provided to help them do this. *Nancy Bickel* and *Joyce Jackson* visited classes at Emery High, where School board member Forrest Gee

had volunteered to substitute as a teacher and made the Mock Election his special project. The Easy Readers and Pros & Cons were provided to all students to use and take home.

In addition to *Nancy* and *Joyce*, the Education Committee wants to enthusiastically thank members *Suzanne Chun, Tom Coulter, Peggy Anne Davis, Penelope Hanan-Dahman, Nancy Kron, Helene Lecar, Therese Pipe, Marsha Skinner, Ruthann Taylor, Anne Wallach and Phoebe Watts*, who helped so much with all the behind-the-scenes work that made this possible. Thanks also to *Bill Chapman* for posting results on our Web site.

Besides the Mock Election, the League also went to the high schools to register students who would turn 18 before November 5.

- *Karen Carlson-Olson* and *Jinky Gardner*,  
Education Committee Co-Chairs

## DONATIONS

(Through 10-31-02)

### to the General Fund:

*Bea Fraenkel-Conrat*      *Therese Pipe*  
*Penelope Nellis*      *Sherry Smith*  
*Lassie & Lloyd Ulman*

### to the Foundation:

*Erika Kunkel*      *Glenda O'Donnell*

### to the Tribute Fund:

*Babette Maccoby*,  
In memory of *Lauriel Anderson*

- *Evelyn Light*

## NEW MEMBERS WELCOME EVENT

Come and meet local League leaders, tell us your interests and concerns, and find out how you can make a difference on current social and political issues.

**Sunday, January 26, 3-5 p.m. at  
President *Nancy Bickel's* house  
1033 Colusa Ave., Berkeley**

Please call, *Jinky Gardner*, Membership Director, at 548-5292, with any questions.

**4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COMMUNITY  
LUNCH Thursday, February 27, 2003  
Raddison Hotel, Berkeley**

The invited Guest Speaker will meet the high standards set by *Ira Michael Heyman*, Bruce Cain and Jackie Speier

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS**

**Monday, December 9, 2002, 7:30 pm  
Holiday Potluck Dinner  
1340 Arch St. (at Rose), Berkeley**

Once again, a Pot Luck Dinner will be the main event at our December meeting. Everyone attending should bring a dish to share.

Following dinner we will have an "open mike" for short environmentally relevant comments, concerns, observations or poems, readings, slides, pictures, cartoons, etc., by anyone and everyone who cares to participate.

**Monday, January 13, 2003, 7:30 pm  
Environmental Review, Risk Assessment,  
and Unnecessary Controversy  
1340 Arch St. (at Rose), in Berkeley**

*Gil Bendix*, retired environmental consultant and long time member and co-chair of the LWVBAE Environmental Concerns Committee, will talk about some of the local projects in Alameda and Contra Costa counties on which he has worked. In many of these, the project sponsors have undermined their own cases by either ignoring or unrealistically "snowing" their neighboring communities. There are implications here for action that the LWVBAE may want to take on future projects.

For more information on either of these events, please contact me at 549-0959 or at [seastone11@hotmail.com](mailto:seastone11@hotmail.com).

- *Carol Stone*, committee co-chair

January 16, 2003, 5 pm  
**"Bury the Hatchet" Reception for  
Newly Elected Berkeley Officials**  
Union Bank, 2333 Shattuck Avenue

**REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE  
UPDATE**

**California Passes Broad Abortion-Rights  
Legislation**

Historic legislation has been signed into law in California to protect women's right to choose. The League of Women Voters of California supported most of this legislation and made advocacy for SB 1301 (Kuehl) a high priority. We are pleased to have been able to help pass this legislation, which eliminates unconstitutional provisions of a 1967 statute that made abortion legal but imposed restrictions later made invalid by court action.

The bill inserts *Roe v. Wade* language into California law, protecting women's fundamental right to choose a safe and legal abortion. Now even if *Roe* were overturned at the federal level, reproductive choice would be protected in this state.

SB1301 provides greater access to early abortion methods like mifepristone (RU-486) by allowing health-care providers, acting within their particular scopes of practice, to perform or assist in the performance of surgical and non-surgical abortions.

**The 30th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade***

A celebration of the 30th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision will take place at the Capitol in Sacramento on January 21, 2003. This will be a celebration and a time to reflect on accomplishments and what's to come. Mark your calendars now.

- *Charlotte Lichterman*

**A Gift that Keeps on Giving  
Give a League membership  
for Holiday or Birthday**

If the League is a rich source of information, friendships or activities for you, offer the same pleasure to the younger men and women in your life. Whether or not they have time now to participate actively, they can read the VOTER and check out our Web sites and newsgroup coverage on current issues. Send \$50 and the person's name and contact information to the League office and we will do the rest.



# CALENDAR

## November

- 19 Tue. 10:30a Consensus Unit: State Community College Study *Lecar, 549-9719*  
Berkeley Central Public Library, Community Room, Shattuck & Kittridge
- 24 Sun. 3-5p New Member Welcome 1033 Colusa Ave. (*Bickel*) *Gardner, 548-5292*
- 28-29 Thurs.-Fri. LWVBAE Office closed for Thanksgiving Holiday *Taylor, 527-0673*

## December

- 4 Wed. 4-6p Board Meeting LWVBAE Office *Bickel, 526-4055*
- 9 Mon. 7:30p Environmental Concerns 1340 Arch St. (*Bansner*) *Stone, 549-0959*
- 10 Tue. 10:30a Consensus Unit: State Community College Study *Lecar, 549-9719*  
Berkeley Central Public Library, Community Room, Shattuck & Kittridge
- 12 Thurs 4-6p Education Comm. LWVBAE Office *Carlson-Olson, 524-7004*
- 23 Mon. LWVBAE Office closed, beginning winter holiday *Taylor, 527-0673*

## January

- 6 Mon. 10a LWVBAE Office reopens, ending winter holiday *Taylor, 527-0673*
- 8 Wed. 4-6p Board Meeting LWVBAE Office *Bickel, 526-4055*
- 9 Thurs. Noon-2p Speaker Series: Results & Impacts of November Election *Mendell, 526-1588*  
Albany Public Library, Edith Stone Room, Marin @ Masonic
- 9 Thurs. 4-6p Education Comm. LWVBAE Office *Carlson-Olson, 524-7004*
- 10 Fri. Noon February VOTER deadline *jeansafir@att.net* *Safir, 524-9088*
- 13 Mon. 7:30p Environmental Concerns 1340 Arch St. (*Bansner*) *Stone, 549-0959*
- 16 Thurs. 5p Reception for newly elected Berkeley officials, Union Bank, 2333 Shattuck Ave.
- 16 Thurs. 7:30p Action Committee 1419 Grant St. (*Watts*) *Brubeck, 526-5139*
- 20 Mon. 7-9p State Study Kickoff: Electing the President *Bodine, 845-0974*  
Berkeley Main Library, Shattuck & Kittredge, 3rd Floor Meeting Room
- 21 Tue. Celebrate the Anniversary of Roe v. Wade Sacramento *Lichterman, 841-5258*
- 26 Sun. 3-5p New Member Welcome 1033 Colusa Ave. (*Bickel*) *Gardner, 548-5292*

## February

- 27 Thurs. LWVBAE Annual Community Lunch, Raddison Hotel, Berkeley

### 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 \$50 annual dues made out to:*

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel. Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Eve: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*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.*

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