League of Women Voters Berkeley Albany Emeryville

THE VOTER

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LWVBAE Goals 4

Read online at http://www.lwvbae.org

# **Annual Fall Meeting**

Join New President Nancy Bickel Affordable Care Act and Beyond

When: Wednesday, Sep 25, 5:00 – 8:30pmWhere: Northbrae Community Center 941 The Alameda, Berkeley

We'll have a full schedule for our annual Fall Meeting, including a delicious dinner, a short business meeting, and featured distinguished speaker Alex Briscoe, Director of Alameda County Health Care Services who will speak on:

#### Health Reform in Alameda County: The ACA and Beyond

His talk will begin at 6:30. A popular speaker, Mr. Briscoe leads the design and development of health services countywide with an entrepreneurial and creative flare. California is one of the states leading the way in implementing the ACA, and Alameda County has embraced forward-planning to take full advantage of the pluses and set up procedures to guard against the possible pitfalls inherent in this complicated legislation. Come with your questions and be prepared to get the answers you seek from one of the leading experts in the country on the topic of local implementation.

The Fall Meeting will launch the League program year with the chance to visit with our League Teams, to see what their plans are for the coming year. We have Teams involved with environmental concerns, climate change, health care, education from pre-K through college, and money in politics. Among these subjects are bound to be topics of interest to you, and you'll have the opportunity to sign up and join these teams – or start one of your own! Visit the Team tables at both the beginning and end of the meeting.

All are welcome and, if you wish to include dinner, it is only \$15.00. You can sign up for dinner <u>online</u> or by sending an email to office@lwvbae.org or by calling our office at 510-843-8824.

## Business Agenda: Approval of 2013-2014 LWVBAE Program Priorities and Positions

At the Fall Meeting the Board is seeking approval of the 2013-2014 LWVBAE Program, with the following recommendations:

- Retain all current positions (see May-June 2013 VOTER <u>http://www.lwvbae.org/voter-pdfs/</u>)
- No new local study
- Emphasize the following for education/action:
  - Climate change
  - Health care

These program recommendations were made at the LWVBAE Program Planning meeting in January 2013 and approved by the Board of Directors for recommendation to the membership.

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# The New VOTER

#### Diz Swift, VOTER Editor

Welcome to our new *VOTER* format! I have been your *VOTER* editor for nearly a year now and we continue to evolve. Last year we launched our new website at <u>www.lwvbae.org</u>, with stories posted frequently under *League News* on the home page. We encourage you to go to the website and explore. Action alerts and topics of interest are also posted. Stories will continue to be carried in the *VOTER*, but the paper version will be published six times a year rather than the previous nine. You'll now receive your issues bimonthly starting with this one.

You'll notice the new look of our *VOTER*, and we'd like to know what you think. Also, we always want to know what you are doing for our League or the community. Send an email to tell us what you're doing or share ideas of what stories or topics you would like to see either online or in our *VOTER* newsletter at office@lwvbae.org.

This is our newsletter, so join in!

## **ON THE WEB**



## Our Broken Criminal Justice System

"The death penalty is only the lid on the garbage can of a very broken criminal justice system," summarized Jeanne Woodford, former Warden at San Quentin, in an inspiring and very informative

keynote speech at the LWVBAE Annual Community Luncheon on August 15. Her talk stressed the failure of California's system to adequately prepare released prisoners for reentry into society.

Ms. Woodford pointed out that passage of AB108 and AB117 in 2011 is a good step forward, but is being executed very unevenly by counties across the state.

See <u>full story</u> at <u>http://www.lwvbae.org/</u>.

# **Supreme Court Decisions Send Voter Rights Backwards**

By Phyllis Gale, Voter Services Coordinator



What was the June 13, 2013 Supreme Court decision? The Court's decision in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* erased fundamental protections against racial discrimination in the Voting Rights Act (VRA).

*LWVUS advocates strong and immediate action by Congress to fix this threat on voting rights across the country.* While waiting for Congress to take action, an all-out attack on voting rights across the country is occurring.

What was eliminated in the VRA? Section 4 of the VRA was ruled unconstitutional. Before the elimination of Section 4, Congress identified jurisdictions with a history of voting suppression (such as literacy tests). Several states, counties, and townships thus identified were required to have any changes to their voting laws reviewed and approved by the Justice

"Today's U.S. Supreme Court decision erases fundamental protections against racial discrimination in voting that have been effective for more than 40 years. Congress must act quickly to restore the Voting Rights Act."

Elizabeth MacNamara, President LWVUS

Department and federal courts. Nine states, primarily in the south, and several smaller jurisdictions that used to require pre-clearance will now be able to enforce changes to voting laws (such as ID requirements and redistricting, both of which disproportionately affect minority communities).

Although other sections of the VRA still apply, the Court also changed Section 2 which protected the voting rights of citizens of any race, color, or language-minority by shifting the burden of proof from the state to the aggrieved would-be voters to show the law has a discriminatory effect. This will make it difficult to enforce the VRA, and virtually impossible to stop flawed voting laws which could have discriminatory impact before an election. *In its decision, the Supreme Court allowed for Congress to correct these sections.* 

Preclearance States "like Texas that had been subjected to the VRA's federal pre-approval process took steps to implement their voter photo ID laws nearly immediately. North Carolina pushed through omnibus an voter suppression package that the Governor has pledged to sign. If it becomes law, it would impose a voter

Photo ID component, restrict early voting, cut pre-registration for 16 and 17 year olds, eliminate same day registration, and much more." <u>www.lwvus.org</u>.

What can you do? Although Congress held hearings and introduced two new bills to reauthorize the landmark VRA, nothing was completed prior to their August break. When Congress returns we encourage continued contact with Congress to encourage them to correct the Voting Rights Act.

The damage to the VRA can and must be fixed – Congress has the power to fix it. Tell your members of Congress to act - NOW. See more at our LWVBAE website <u>http://www.lwvbae.org/</u>

# **Be Bold**

## **LWVBAE** Goals

Nancy Bickel, LWVBAE President

State League President Jenny Waggoner at the State convention urged local Leagues to be bold.

LWVBAE's seven new board members set the bold <u>three year goal</u> to achieve "a significant increase in members with a wide diversity of ages and other attributes that are representative of the Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville community."

Our overarching goal and the key to all the others is that "Making Democracy Work" becomes a reality in everything we do—not just a slogan.

### For July 2013-June 2014, we aim to:

- Be and be seen as a fair, visible and effective voice in the community
- Expand our range of activities, actions and advocacy
- Seek out the views of other organizations and people in the community and understand their goals and needs
- Reach out to, collaborate with, and partner with a variety of groups to work for shared goals and policies
- Connect with new members immediately and repeatedly as part of a clearly defined recruitment and retention process

- Increase from our current approximately 250 members to 325 members with increasing diversity of all kinds
- Continue to develop efficient 21<sup>st</sup> century administration tools and policies for a smooth running organization

# LWVBAE Key Goals for 2013-2014 Be a fair, visible and effective voice in the community Expand our range of activities Collaborate with other groups Connect with new members

Implicit in these goals is that the League must adapt its traditional practices so people who work, who have family responsibilities, and demanding lives will be able to participate to the extent and at the times they are able to fit League into their lives.

The Board will develop detailed plans to achieve these goals step by step. Teams will develop their own goals and work plans as part of this process.

As always, we invite and welcome your ideas, your time, your energy and, yes, your money, as we may need to pay for some of the upgraded services we can't provide in-house.

Please let me know how you would like to help in meeting these ambitious goals by emailing me at president@lwvbae.org.

# "Hot Topics" – A New Format

### Sherry Smith, Program Coordinator

For years, our League has been offering "Conversations" once a month, for most months of the year (see story page 8). That will continue, but we've been hearing from several of you that we should try offering a time when the discussion can be freewheeling and relatively unstructured. So "Hot Topics" is formed.

Our initial idea is to have you bring topics for a discussion in which everyone will participate. But before we decide, we'd also like your ideas on how you prefer the sessions be done – structured? unstructured? slightly structured? facilitated? featured speaker? suggested topic? totally freewheeling?

Bring your burning issue or issues to the first "Hot Topics" meeting – <u>Wednesday, October 23 at 7:00p</u> at the LWVBAE office – and be prepared to participate in and observe a lively discussion on some timely subjects.

Topic suggestions are welcome. Please send me (Sherry Smith) a message at program@lwvbae.org.

## Sex Trafficking, in Berkeley?

Lori Droste, member Berkeley Joint Sexual Trafficking Subcommittee



Berkeley is located adjacent to well-known sex trafficking hubs for the Bay Area. Although the City of Berkeley has relatively few reported cases, to keep trafficking at bay it is essential that we prepare strong preventive and response mechanisms.

To tackle the problem, in 2012 the Berkeley City Council adopted a resolution to establish a joint subcommittee - chaired by Vice Mayor Linda Maio and including commissioners from the Commission on the Status of Women and the Peace and Justice Commission – to address sex trafficking in Berkeley. The Sexual Trafficking Joint Subcommittee has engaged with a trafficking survivor, members of the public, and with the Mills College Graduate Program in Public Policy. The subcommittee has also heard firsthand accounts of sexual trafficking from Berkeley community members,

conducted a preliminary review of existing curricula, and reviewed current police training materials.

The Sexual Trafficking Subcommittee's focus at this point includes the following:

- Determine the scope of the trafficking problem in Berkeley – beyond police data – by doing a quantitative study of service providers (citizen groups helping victims of trafficking).
- Create a clear set of policies and training for Berkeley Police to identify and offer services to trafficking victims.
- Work with the Berkeley Unified School District and educators to implement trafficking awareness curricula, particularly for at-risk youth, as a preventive measure.
- Join the Alameda County Sexually Exploited Minors (SEM) Network, a network of service providers and system partners (government agencies with a role in stopping sex trafficking), to help them create coordinated care by sharing knowledge and information.

If you are interested in learning more or joining an effort to curb sex trafficking, contact Action Coordinator Carol Stone at <u>action@lwvbae.org</u>.

## IN THE NUMBERS

25

Percentage of all world prisoners incarcerated in the U.S.. The U.S. is 5% of world population.

NAACP

# 68

Percentage of total homicides in the U.S. using guns. Total homicides was 16,259 (2010). *Center for Disease Control* 

# 393

Percentage increase of installed photovoltaic solar capacity in U.S. from 2010 to 2012.

Solar Energy Industries Association

# 123,200

Maximum individual dollar contribution to candidates, PACs and parties every 2 years.

Federal Election Commission

# What's on Their Minds?

League Interviews of Berkeley Council Members



In recent months the League has been interviewing Berkeley City Council Members; we asked them four openended questions. There were always at least two interviewers from the LWVBAE and sometimes three. Below we mention just a few of their priorities. We plan to interview Council Members in Albany and Emeryville in the coming year. Occasional articles in this series will follow.

Berkeley City Council Members have many deep concerns and strong priorities across a wide range of issues. For example, they want to make sure the City is able to pay for its long-term liabilities, such as pensions, and to improve the economic development and attractiveness of neighborhood business districts and the City as a whole. They did not limit their concern to the districts that elected them although they emphasized primarily areas of importance to their constituents and the business areas within their districts. Below we highlight just a few of their issues.

**How to improve Telegraph Avenue** was asked of all. Of top concern were the high crime rate associated with People's Park, the presence of many "TAY's" (transition age youths) – who may cluster with dogs and possessions on the street and may suffer from mental illness or alcohol and drug abuse – and the empty lots waiting for years to be developed. What can help? Among the suggestions:

• Encourage the University to develop People's Park, which it owns, in ways that would prevent drug dealing and camping that keeps many away from Telegraph at night.

- Make Telegraph a pedestrian-only street.
- Encourage more retail to serve student needs so, for example, students don't have to take a bus to buy sheets and pillows. All those interviewed mentioned better serving the needs of students.
- Improve coordination of University and City parking plans.

There was mixed opinion on merchant quotas. Some espoused saving merchant quotas to protect existing businesses from being taken over by higher profit businesses such as coffee shops and restaurants, while others saw this as anti-business and difficult to enforce.

**Children and Young People** were a shared concern. Some Council members stressed the importance of Berkeley's 2020 Vision, which is the joint city and school district plan to eliminate the gap in school performance between low income and higher income children by 2020. The 2020 Vision also stresses the need to expand pre-school education to all four-year-olds.

(see <a href="http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/2020vision/">http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/2020vision/</a>)



By Diz Swift, Climate Change Team



"We need to act." President Obama, in a June speech, outlined strong steps to combat climate change. On a hot day at Georgetown University, the President described a multifaceted program with three key pieces: to reduce U.S. carbon emissions, to adapt to the effects we will inevitably see, and for the U.S. to be a global leader in the fight against climate change.

Using Executive Powers Today 40% U.S. carbon about of emissions come from power To lower that, plants. the President ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to come up with stronger emission standards for both new and existing power plants.

The President announced a goal to double our energy from wind and sun, by "directing the Interior Department to green-light enough private, renewable energy capacity on public lands to power more than six million homes by 2020."

The Department of Defense – the biggest energy consumer in America - was ordered to install three gigawatts of renewable power on its bases.

Increasing energy efficiency will be accelerated by setting stricter Federal standards for vehicles, buildings, equipment, and appliances.

Federal agencies will lead the way by reducing their carbon emissions, with a new goal to get 20% of electricity for Federal government use from renewable sources by 2020.

Federal agencies are directed to make sure that any

"...the question now is whether we will have the courage to act before it's too late."

President Obama

new project funded with taxpayer dollars is built to withstand increased risks caused by climate change, such as flooding, rising sea levels, and storms.

The League Agrees Global climate of Defending change, as part the Environment, is one of the top

four priorities for LWVUS, and is the top priority for our League. As is so often the case, the most powerful action is our knowledgeable vote. Join our Climate Change Team at their monthly meeting (see Calendar page 10), and Vote Climate!

For more information on Obama's plan see http://www.whitehouse.gov/share/climate-actionplan



After midnight July 19, at the end of a marathon joint meeting, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments approved Plan Bay Area, an integrated transportation and land-use strategy through 2040. This marks the nine-county region's first regional plan that consolidates policies for transportation, housing and open space into one document. The Plan also meets the target of a 15 percent percapita reduction in greenhouse gas emissions within the Bay Area by 2030, as required under California Senate Bill 375.

This round of planning stretched over three years with varied opportunities for public participation.

For decades, the LWV of the Bay Area has supported comprehensive planning for the region. The Plan focuses future regional growth within priority development areas (PDAs), which are neighborhoods within walking distance of frequent transit service. These areas are expected to accommodate 79 percent of new housing and 63 percent of new jobs by 2040.

## **Conversations with the League**

#### September and October

#### Sherry Smith, Program Coordinator

Two of our outstanding LWVBAE Teams developed and presented a workshop and two caucuses for the State League Convention in San Jose in May. They were such an attraction that crowds flowed out the doors, and received outstanding evaluations. Since most of our members were not at Convention, we will "bring home" these valuable and interesting presentations and share them with you.

September 17 – Affordable Care Act The Health Care Team will present "What League Members Need to Know About the Affordable Care Act to Help Educate Others and Spread the Word". California is now implementing the ACA. The LWV is committed to educate Californians on their rights and privileges under the Act, and to evaluate its implementation. This talk will complement the presentation of Alex Briscoe at the Fall Meeting (see story page 1).

**October 15 – Climate Change: What's Hot** The Climate Change Team will present an overview of cap-and-trade and carbon tax as presented at the Convention as well as updates on other new information. The presenters will include Regina Beatus, Gail Schickele, and Diz Swift.

Join us on a Tuesday every month, 12:00-2:00p at the Albany Library, Edith Stone Room, 1247 Marin Ave (see current *VOTER* for dates and topics). Topic suggestions for future Conversations are welcome. Please send them to program@lwvbae.org.

# **Term Limits for Berkeley Commissions**

Carol Stone, Action Coordinator

In May of this year, two members of the Berkeley City Council proposed term limits for four quasijudicial City Council appointed commissions – the Planning Commission, the Zoning Adjustment Board, Landmarks Preservation, and the Housing Advisory Committee.

Is this a good idea? LWVBAE has a longstanding position supporting term limits for all Berkeley boards and commissions, but we have not been following board and commission activities in recent years. We will be doing some research and interviews to inform ourselves about their current activities and structure. If you are interested, please contact Carol Stone at <a href="mailto:action@lwvbae.org">action@lwvbae.org</a>. Meetings will begin in the Fall.

## **Donations to Our League**

June-August 2013

Louetta Erlin, Donations Secretary

#### To the LWVBAE General Fund

#### To the LWVB Foundation

Judith Bloom Marie Le Garde Yvonne Koshland

Many thanks for remembering our League.

# **Membership Report**

Mina Jenner, Dues Coordinator

In July-August we welcomed *Carole Kennerly* as a new member. Please join us in welcoming her.

We also lost Jewel Okawachi (see below).

## Jewel Okawachi Remembered

By Jean Safir, LWVBAE

Life-long Albany resident and former Mayor Jewel Okawachi died at home on Sunday, July 7th. She gave tirelessly to the City of Albany, serving on the City Council for eight years, including one year as Mayor, and on several commissions and Boards, including Parks and Recreation, Waterfront, the Pension Board and the Waste Management Authority Board. She spent most of her adult life not only running her own business and raising three sons, but also volunteered for schools and other community needs. Jewel was a loyal member of the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville for many years. She will be greatly missed by her many friends and admirers.

# **September and October Environmental Concerns Meetings**

Carol Stone and Gail Schickele, Environmental Concerns Team Co-chairs

Meetings are from 7:30-9:00 at 1174 Euclid, Berkeley (corner of Chyrstal Way at the home of Mark Nyman and Jeanette Zernecke). For information or rides contact Carol Stone <u>action@lwvbae.org</u> or Gail Schickele <u>gails@bayarea.net</u>.

# September 9: The Climate Crisis: Science, Denial, Solutions

The Climate Crisis looms as the most serious threat to human civilization. How can the public and decision-makers cut through the resistance to do what is needed to avoid dangerous climate change and return the Earth to a safe-climate future?

<u>Peter G. Joseph</u>, M.D. is an emergency physician and member of Citizens Climate Lobby, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and The Climate Reality Project. After a 35-year career in Emergency Medicine, Dr. Joseph is devoted to educating the public about the looming consequences of climate destabilization and the available solutions at hand. Dr. Joseph will review the latest scientific data, and discuss both the technical and political aspects of humanity's greatest challenge.

#### **October 14: Community Choice Aggregation**

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) is one of many possibilities that may help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Join us at our Environmental Concerns meeting on Monday, October 14 to learn a bit more about what it is and what is involved.

<u>Al Weinrub</u> will speak on the topic. He is co-chair of Community Choice Energy Subgroup, a working group of the Berkeley Climate Action Coalition of which LWVBAE is a member. He will explain what CCA is all about as well as bring us up to date on what is happening in the Bay Area regarding CCA Programs (for example, Richmond has joined with Marin Clean Energy). Come learn what such a program might look like if Berkeley were to join an East Bay community choice effort and bring your questions.

Board	2013-2014	<sup>®</sup> League of Women Voters of Berkeley 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite F
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Health Care	Li-hsia Wang	
Education	Dianne McNenny/	
	Cathy Lynch	
Env. Concerns	Gail Schickele/	
	Carol Stone	
Money in Politics	Barb Singleton	

September

**Calendar** – Locations are the LWVBAE office, 2530 San Pablo Ave, Suite F, Berkeley, unless otherwise noted.

Non-Profit

Organization U.S. Postage PAID Berkeley, CA Permit No. 29

September							
9	Mon	7:30-9:00p	Environmental Concerns 1174 Euclid Ave, Berkeley	C. Stone	549-0959		
10	Tues	10:00-12:00p	LWVBAE Board Meeting	N. Bickel	526-4055		
10	Tues	5:30-6:30p	Money In Politics Team	B. Singleton 415-902-5784			
16	Mon	1:30-2:30p	Health Care Team	L. Wang	848-5765		
17	Tues	12:00-2:00p	Conversation	S. Smith	548-1769		
			Edith Stone Rm, Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave				
20	Fri	1:30-3:30p	Education Team	C. Lynch	547-2173		
25	Weds	1:30-3:00p	Climate Change Team	R. Beatus	524-6904		
25	Weds	5:15-8:30p	Annual Fall Meeting	S. Smith	548-1769		
			Northbrae Comm'y Ctr, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley				
30	Mon	5:00-6:00p	Action Team Meeting	C. Stone	549-0959		
Oct	ober						
1	Tues	10:00-12:00p	LWVBAE Board Meeting	N. Bickel	526-4055		
11	Fri	1:30-3:30p	Education Team	C. Lynch	547-2173		
11	Fri	6:00p	Nov-Dec VOTER Deadline	D. Swift	548-4808		
14	Mon	7:30-9:00p	<b>Environmental Concerns</b>	C. Stone	549-0959		
		•	1174 Euclid Ave, Berkeley				
15	Tues	12:00-2:00p	Conversation	S. Smith	548-1769		
			Edith Stone Rm, Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave				
21	Mon	1:30-2:30p	Health Care Team	L. Wang	848-5765		
23	Weds	2:30-4:30p	Climate Change Team	R. Beatus	524-6904		
24	Weds	7:00-8:00p	Hot Topics	S. Smith	548-1769		
28	Mon	6:00-7:00p	Action Team Meeting	C. Stone	549-0959		

*The VOTER* is published 6 times a year by League of Women Voters Berkeley Albany Emeryville 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite F Berkeley, CA 94702-2000 Telephone: 510-843-8824 Email: office@lwvbae.org

Editor: Diz Swift Editorial Board: Nancy Bickel, Jane Brandes, Sherry Smith Current and past issues of the *VOTER* are posted on our website http://www.lwvbae.org/voter-pdfs/

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.