

President's Report

2014-2015: Looking Forward and Back



LWVBAE delegates to the LWV-California Convention. Top left: Jill Martinucci, Christine Wenrich, Barb Singleton. Middle: Nancy Bickel, Li-hsia Wang. Front: Carol Stone, Janice Blumenkrantz, Gail Schickele. Diz Swift not shown.

I'm optimistic and energized about the coming League year. We've recruited talented new board members to lead us into the future. We are poised to wage vigorous campaigns to register young people and under-represented groups and to fight ever more strongly to reduce climate change, expose dark money and big money in politics, strengthen our health care system, and work to reduce economic inequality and win a living wage for everyone. And, heads up, LWV California is joining an effort to fix Prop. 13.

Three new studies will begin in the fall – California Higher Education funding and access [see box p.2]; and two related LWVUS studies: on the process of amending the Constitution as a way to change law or court decisions; and does the Constitution really indicate that money equals free speech and corporations are equivalent to people.

We thank our outgoing board for helping lead us to this effective future. *Sherry Smith*, who led the League for more than 10 years and extended her yeoman service when I became president; *Pat Day*, our secretary, who also helped organize outstanding community luncheons; *Dean Metzger*, who shared his long experience in local politics; and *Carol Stone*, whose passion for fair local government and battling climate change helped make our lobbying effective.

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Some highlights of the past year

Our website, edited by Diz Swift and managed by Linda Carothers, won the award for best website in our category among all the California Leagues. As part of a team, I won an award for the best idea for a campaign to encourage voting and oppose big money in politics.

Renaming the South Berkeley Library. We joined forces with Charles Austen and hundreds of local residents to campaign to rename the South Berkeley Library for the remarkable local African-American leader Tarea Hall Pittman, whose weekly radio program "Negroes in the News" and work with the NAACP led to passage of the California Fair Employment Practices bill.

High visibility and effectiveness of our League at state and national levels: Our delegates and attendees at last year's national and this year's state conventions stood out for running effective campaigns to enable Leagues to lobby to raise minimum wages, learn more about economic inequality, fight more powerfully against climate change, and work for health care for immigrants in California.

Independent Redistricting Commission and Public Financing of Elections for Berkeley: our work continues on these two measures.

Monday, September 21

Save the Date

Annual Community Luncheon

For her outstanding public service over more than 40 years, we're honoring State Senator Loni Hancock as our speaker and "Spirit of the League" awardee.



Berkeley Public Library's Berkeley Reads, Adult and Family Literacy Program will also be honored with a "Spirit of the League" award.

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Income inequality to building resilience in Berkeley. A wide range of topics were covered in 2014-2015.

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To keep up with League news, check our website regularly at <http://www.lwvbae.org/>

Note from the Editor

After three years, this will be the last VOTER for which I am editor. I am now passing the job to Gail Schickele and Jeanette Zerneck who will co-edit.

I've enjoyed the challenge as editor and hope you have enjoyed the news!

Diz Swift



Voter Services Team

2014-2015 by Phyllis Gale, Voter Services Coord.

The Voter Services Team had a very busy and dynamic year. The Team worked on many aspects of the 2014 Election including voter registration, candidate forums, candidate informational videos on YouTube and SmartVoter.org, LWVBAE Pros and Cons handouts and forums, along with other activities. Our review of the 2014 Election season is guiding our preparation for the 2016 Election season.

We are exploring new approaches including a live audience for videos, partnering with and training organizations to register their community to vote, supporting online voter registration with the in-house development of an app for smart phones, and exploring "Easy Voter" style pros and cons publications for busy voters. And of course, many voter registration events. JOIN US!

State Study

Higher Education Funding and Access

Want to explore problems in public higher education in California? Want to help find some solutions? The state study of higher education begins this summer and fall.

Interested? Send an email to Carol F. Thomas at carolthomas@lwvbae.org.



Healthcare Team

2014-2015 by Li-hsia Wang, Chair

During the 2014 election we supported Berkeley's Soda Tax, leafleting several times and attending meetings.

We are supporting CA bill SB4, offering healthcare coverage to undocumented California residents via MediCal and the Affordable Care Act lower exchanges, although without any subsidies. We worked with the Capistrano Bay League to do a workshop at the state convention in San Diego, coordinating healthcare and immigration interests. The bill has now been revised downward, only offering coverage to under-19 year olds. It goes to the entire Assembly soon, following three Senate committee hearings and one Assembly hearing. As rallies are held we will encourage Leagues to attend.

We are celebrating Medicare's 50th birthday at the end of July, and will be recruiting through local Leagues for local events.

Action Highlights

2014-2015

by Carol Stone, Action Coordinator

We had an active year working on issues aligned with our core values. We attend meetings, write letters and speak to relevant organizations and government bodies.

Significant Community Benefits beyond those already required for very tall buildings in downtown Berkeley: LWVBAE drafted a letter to City Council, with a copy to Zoning Adjustments Board, urging benefits be legally enforceable, proportional to monetary value of the project, with long term oversight and penalties for non-compliance. Copies will be sent to news organizations and read to ZAB and Council.

Citizen's Redistricting Commission in Berkeley Because of the political confusion and court challenges of the redistricting proposals in the last election, Council members Jessie Arreguin and Laurie Capitelli recently invited Nancy Bickel, Carol Stone, and Dean Metzger to meet to review and modify an independent Citizen's Redistricting Commission proposal that LWVBAE supported before the 2014 election. This measure is now moving along in the Open Government Commission. We plan to lobby to put it on the ballot in 2016. If passed, it would be implemented for the 2020 Census.

Public funding of elections in Berkeley, proposed by Maplight and supported by LWVBAE, is now before the Fair Campaign Practices Commission. Commissioners will discuss whether to include funding of ballot measures and which elected officials should be included.

Local Ballot Measures: Members advised the Board on positions LWVBAE should take on the November 2014 local ballot measures, after pro-con presentations on the measures. We tried to invite speakers who truly favored or opposed each measure to give their best arguments. The board then voted on each ballot measure whether to endorse, oppose, or take no position. "Vote with the League" flyers were distributed at Sunday Streets, Solano Stroll, BART stations, outside markets, etc. All the local measures we supported passed. These included: Alameda County BB to raise the Transportation Sales Tax by ½ cent; Berkeley Measures D, Tax on Sugar Sweetened Beverages; F, to increase the Parks Tax; and O, to clean up provisions for recall of elected officials; Albany Measure LL to renew and modify the parcel tax for the schools; and Emeryville Measure K, to renew the schools parcel tax; and Measures U and V to make the city a charter city for the purpose of adopting a local real property tax with a rate large enough to support city government.

Raising the Minimum Wage in Emeryville Thanks to changes in the national League's interpretation of its

► *From previous column*

policies and the work of Barb Singleton, we were able to lobby to support Emeryville's successful effort to raise their minimum wage to \$15 by 2020.

Community Choice Energy [Aggregation] for Alameda County got a big boost this year. First by the award of a grant from the City of Berkeley to the Ecology Center and the CCE subgroup of the Climate Action Coalition for an informational forum and by the County of Alameda funding a feasibility study for CCE in the county. A steering committee has been chosen and will meet in June.

Following Local Issues

Measure D (2014) tax on sugary beverages: the advisory committee of experts has promised to spend about 50% of its revenue this year on funding the school garden program. The members are committed to spending all the money generated by this new tax on health-related issues.

Measure M (2012) streets and watershed bond: We are watching the spending of the \$30 million bond and implementation of the plans we helped the City formulate.

Berkeley Neighborhood Council, a coalition of neighborhood groups led by Dean Metzger, Shirley Dean and others, has been holding public meetings in varying locations on neighborhood issues of concern—many of interest to the League.

State and National Action

The Climate Change Team was incredibly active this year; in particular, successfully lobbying LWVC to support SB 32 (the Global Warming Solutions Act) and SB 350 (Golden State Standards for Energy), now in the state legislature. The Team is now urging local leagues to lobby their legislators. See Climate Change Team Report, page 5.

Crude Oil By Rail: As more and more 100-car trains carrying crude oil – including a more flammable and explosive type of oil-- roll through California, Leagues and other Californians are concerned. We've been learning more and looking for ways to take effective action. Although railroads are governed by national legislation, LWVC policies on hazardous materials may cover some situations and local planning bodies can control expansion of some facilities. We are working informally with other leagues on the issue to find ways to take action.

Healthcare Thanks to Li-hsia Wang, our point person on this issue, we have been following healthcare in California. Beyond the Affordable Care Act, the Healthcare Team have focused on building a statewide network of organizations supporting single payer for California. At a caucus at the LWVC convention, Li-hsia and others discussed extending healthcare to all immigrants in California, documented or not. See Healthcare Team report page 2.

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Wide Range of Program Offerings in 2014-2015

By Sherry Smith, Program Coordinator



Robert Reich, economic reformer and professor at UC Berkeley, kicked off the year, drawing a record crowd of nearly 250 to our Community Luncheon on September 4, 2014, speaking about "Inequality and the New Billionaire Political Bosses."

Berkeley Public Schools Fund: Erin Rhoades, Executive Director of the Fund, and Josh Daniels, President of the BUSD School Board, discussed how the Fund helps teachers and students in the Berkeley schools.

Ballot Measures: Pros and cons of the State, County and Local propositions and measures were discussed.

Higher Education for All: Rev. Michael Burch of the Northbrae Community Church spoke on the importance of extending higher education opportunities to ethnic minorities and low-income young people

Program Planning: Our membership set Climate Change and Education as our top priorities for 2015.

Younger Voters and Generational Change: was addressed by UC Associate Professor Laura Stoker.

Resilience in Berkeley: Timothy Burroughs, Berkeley's Chief Resilience Officer, spoke on how Berkeley might adapt to climate change and prepare for disasters.

Building a Better BART: BART Directors Rebecca Saltzman and Zakhary Mallett discussed plans to improve the look, signage, and accessibility at BART stations.

Language, History and the Common Core: Using a 16th century text, Bill Chapman demonstrated how the Common Core could improve history teaching.

Sexual Violence: Kim Thuy Seelinger, Director of the Sexual Violence Program of the UC Berkeley Law School's Human Rights Center, described the program's past work and future plans.

Environmental Concerns

Speaker Series

By Carol Stone and Gail Schickele, Co-Chairs

Once again we hosted an amazing array of speakers.

"Disruption" – a dramatic film on the dangers of climate change—was shown, just before the People's Climate March on Sept 21 and the U.N. Climate Summit in New York City.,

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Sara M. Kamins, Supervisor of the Customer Generation Program in the energy office of the California Public Utilities Commission discussed AB 327, a bill to reform electricity pricing and allow **Net Energy Metering**, so customers with solar panels can be paid for the electricity they feed into the system.

Severin Borenstein, Director of the University of California Energy Institute, spoke on **the economics of renewable energy**, economic policies for reducing greenhouse gases and alternative models of retail electricity pricing. His research focuses on business competition, strategy, and regulation.

Mechanical Engineer, inventor and bike advocate **Leif Bansner** with Rock the Bike addressed the **Climate Crisis One Bicycle at a Time**. Leif shared a slide show and a pedal-powered demonstration of making hot apple cider.

Crude Oil Transportation in the Bay Area was discussed by **Leslie Stewart**, Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Commissioner. The increasing numbers of crude oil tank cars coming to the Bay Area represent a controversial change in both the type of crude oil supplying the region's refineries, and the way it gets here.

A First Hand Report from Lima, Peru of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, was given by **Kathleen Dervin**, who worked at the California Department of Public Health studying the relationship between climate change and public health.

Vera Pardee, Senior Attorney of the **Center for Biological Diversity** explained her work with the center's Climate Law Institute to set legal precedents to show that existing environmental laws require analysis, regulation, avoidance, and mitigation of greenhouse gas and climate impacts.

U.S. EPA Engineer **Eric Magnan** gave an overview of **EPA's Clean Water Act enforcement program and the EBMUD sewage settlement** which should eliminate millions of gallons of sewage discharges into San Francisco Bay. Keeping sewage out of our nation's waters is one of the U.S. EPA's National Enforcement Initiatives.

Our final speaker was **Antonio "Tony" Rossmann** of the Berkeley Law faculty, an expert on land use and water policy, speaking on **The Great California Droughts of 1977 and Today: What We Learned and What We Didn't**.

For more detail on these speakers and their issues,

go to the appropriate team web page at

<http://www.lwvbae.org/about-the-league/our-committees/>



The Climate Change Team is celebrating its tenth year with the LWVBAE by expanding its reach and effectiveness.

Monitoring Agencies

Bay Area Air Quality Management District: Members monitor the push for more stringent regulations to reduce Green House Gas [GHG] emissions. Members also met to discuss possible actions with John Gioia, BAAQMD Board member, CARB member, and Contra Costa Supervisor.

California Public Utility Commission: members monitor the implementation of net metering.

Local Action

City of Berkeley Building Energy Savings Ordinance (BESO): This measure will require commercial and residential buildings to pay for energy audits over the next 15 years with the goal of encouraging owners to invest in changes to reduce energy use. The team proposed, and League Board approved, a letter to Council requesting that the Council reconsider the residential portion of the ordinance because of the financial stress it would put on homeowners. Chair Regina Beatus spoke for the League at a Berkeley City Council meeting; the Council removed the household section of the ordinance for further consideration.

Berkeley Climate Action Coalition: The Team continues to work as part of this coalition to help engage the community in implementing Berkeley's Climate Action Plan. Team members belong to several working groups and support educational and lobbying efforts.

Community Choice Energy [Aggregation]: Prompted by our work with the CCE working group of the Berkeley Climate Action Coalition, we are seeking endorsements from other Alameda County Leagues to support Community Choice Energy. Alameda County is doing a feasibility study on a possible county-wide Community Choice Energy program.

State Action

The Team campaigned vigorously, with other Leagues, to get LWVC to actively support SB32 and SB350, which would put state climate reduction policies into law. At the State League Convention, our caucus urged leagues to contact their legislators to pass these climate bills. SB32 sets 2050 pollution targets into law. SB350 sets into law the Governor's 2030 climate goals. Also, we are working on talking points with LWVC to advocate for the bills

Public Education

The LWVUS has resolved that putting a price on carbon emissions is an important issue. In support, later this year we intend to co-sponsor a public forum with the Citizens' Climate Lobby on Putting a Price on Carbon.

Taking Public Education National on the Web Diz Swift of our team, launched www.priceoncarbon.org providing information and arguments for business leaders and others that putting a price on carbon makes good economic sense. The LWVUS Advocacy Committee has endorsed the website.

If you are interested in joining our effort, please contact Regina Beatus at 524-6904 or regina.a.beatus@gmail.com.



"Environmental Concerns" and
"Conversations with the League"
are on summer vacation!

Our new season will begin in September.

Membership Report

May-June 2015

Mina Jenner, Membership Secretary

New Members

Virginia Johnson
Madeleine Trilling
Candace Hyde Wang

Death

Masako Yamada

Donations to Our League

May-June 2015

Elizabeth Russell, Donations Secretary

To the LWVBAE General Fund

Almalee Henderson	Ursula Rolfe
Preston Jordan	Claudine Torfs
Allie Norton	Elizabeth Warrick
Susan Pownall	

To the LWVB Foundation

Barbara Alesandrini	Elizabeth Lichtenberg
Jean Allen	Grace Smith
Joyce Jackson	Claudine Torfs

Many thanks to our donors.

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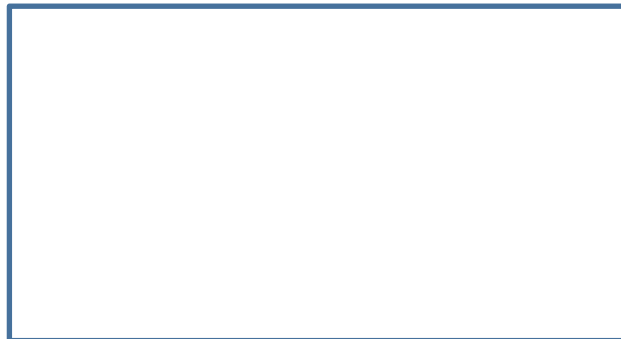
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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages active and informed participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Calendar — Locations are the LWVBAE office, 2530 San Pablo Ave, Suite F, Berkeley, and area code is (510) unless otherwise noted. www.lwvbae.org/calendar

July

6	Mon	5:00-7:00p	Action Team	D. Swift	548-4808
			<i>Snacks provided</i>		
17	Fri	1:30-3:00p	Climate Change Team	R. Beatus	524-6904
23	Thurs	7:15-9:00p	Board Meeting	N. Bickel	684-6302

August

1	Sat	11:00p	VOTER Deadline	G. Schickele	415- 922-5826
3	Mon	10:30-11:30a	Voter Services Team	P. Gale	548-0591
3	Mon	5:00-7:00p	Action Team	J. Martinucci	527-0468
			<i>Snacks provided</i>		
21	Fri	1:30-3:00p	Climate Change Team	R. Beatus	524-6904
27	Thurs	7:15-9:00p	Board Meeting	N. Bickel	684-6302
31	Mon	5:00-7:00p	Action Team	J. Martinucci	527-0468
			<i>Snacks provided</i>		

September

3	Mon	10:30-11:30a	Voter Services Team	P. Gale	548-0591
7	Mon	7:30-9:00p	Environmental Concerns	C. Stone	549-0959
			1174 Euclid Ave, Berkeley		
13	Sun	10:00a-5:00p	Solano Stroll	P. Gale	548-0591
15	Tues	12:00-2:00p	Conversation with League	L. Wikle Field	526-3676
			Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave, Albany		
18	Fri	1:30-3:00p	Climate Change Team	R. Beatus	524-6904
21	Mon	11:30-1:00p	Annual Community Lunch	A. Jones	548-3606
			Hs Lordships, Berkeley		
25	Tues	2:00-4:00p	Economic Inequality Team	P. Kuhi	526-6589
24	Thurs	7:15-9:00p	Board Meeting	N. Bickel	684-6302