



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY

Celebrating over 50 years of service to our communities

Website: www.LWVSSMC.org Phone: (650) 325-5780 E-mail: info@LWVSSMC.org

OCTOBER 2015

Editor: Evan Hughes, evanhughesphd@aol.com, (650) 329-8698

OCTOBER MEETING: Wed., October 21, 2-5pm, at Ellen Hope's* NATIONAL LWV STUDY ON AMENDING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION (See Page 4, also.)

Our meeting this month will be our participation in the national League study on Constitutional Amendment. We will discuss a set of questions developed by the national study committee to identify areas of agreement among League members. This discussion will not address amendments on any particular issue. Instead, these questions cover general considerations for evaluating amendments, possible constraints on a constitutional convention, and how to balance policy objectives of an amendment with process considerations. To prepare for this discussion, it is helpful to read the [consensus questions](#) in advance. But the most important thing is to come to the meeting ready to speak your mind and listen to others as we explore these questions together to illuminate the consensus among our members. By participating in this discussion, you will be contributing to a grassroots process central to the League and its reputation for quality work on public policy. [Ed. Note: This paragraph is a revised and abridged version of Page 1 of the October VOTER of LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale. Roberta Hollimon is the editor and president for LWVCS.org.]

*Ellen Hope's house is at 854 Seminole Way, Redwood City; telephone 839-8647; ellenjhope@aol.com.

For more information, or for transportation needs, contact our Vice President for Program, Suzanne Fouché, (650) 306-9096 or safouche@comcast.net.

ELECTION ALERT FOR SAN MATEO COUNTY

1. This election, for the first time, San Mateo County will have an "all-mail" ballot. All registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot. There will be at least one place in every city (city hall & more) where ballots can be turned in by hand or cast in-person as at polling place. And, your vote gets counted if both (1) postmarked on or before Election Day, Nov. 3, and also (2) received by County on or before Nov. 6.
2. The fact that the ballot will be mailed on Oct. 5 has led us to organize our Candidate Forums early in the election season, before anyone can mail in a ballot, which can be as early as Oct. 5. (See Page 3 on our Candidate Forums.)
3. The "all-mail" ballot is a pilot project with San Mateo County joining Yolo County. Kevin Mullin introduced AB 2028 to have our county included in the pilot project. AB 2028 was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2014.
4. As always, election information is at the County elections office's web site:

<http://shapethefuture.org>

FROM THE BOARD*

“Make It Fair” —The Campaign to Reform Prop. 13—Follow-up to Our Fall Kickoff Presentation by Marie Baldisseri

Information sheets about how commercial property tax changes to Prop. 13 would affect San Mateo and Santa Clara counties can be downloaded from www.makeitfairca.com. Make It Fair would change commercial, not residential, property taxes.

And, the links to the Robert Reich video on the Make It Fair website and YouTube are below:

<http://www.makeitfairca.com/press/press-release-robert-reich-releases-new-video-advocating-for-common-sense-commercial-property-tax-reform/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICWx3I26An8>

Marie also chased down answers to several questions she was asked at the Kickoff:

Attached are the answers to the two questions posed by your League I promised to ask the Make It Fair Team:

1. What controls are in place to insure owners of mixed-use property do not pass along property tax increases due to SCA-5 to owners of condos and/or renters of apartments in their buildings. Point – a tax increase might be appropriate for the business portion of the building, but not the residential. How will these home owners and renters be protected?

Answer: For mixed use properties, assessors already determine which percentage of the property base is commercial and residential so reassessment would only happen to the commercial portion of the property.

2. Will there be guidelines to local school districts on how to distribute their portion of the Local School and Community College Property Tax Fund? Can it be used for teachers’ pay? Can it be used for capital improvements? Will there be rules or restrictions?

Answer: School funding is dispersed according to the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) for Schools and Charter schools. Under LCFF, all school districts receive a uniform base amount of funding per student. They also receive supplemental funding for every English learner, low-income and foster youth, plus extra “concentration” dollars when those students make up at least 55 percent of a district’s students. Where the money goes, is largely determined at the local level by school districts through the development and implementation of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCAP lays out detailed goals, actions and spending mandated in the Local Control Funding Formula. The California Department of Education recently cautioned that under the state’s new funding formula, only in “some limited circumstances” can school districts use money that’s supposed to be spent on services for low-income children and English learners for across-the-board pay raises for teachers. The State Board of Education regulations require districts in which more than 55 percent of students are English learners and low-income students to verify in their LCAPs that a pay raise would be “an effective” strategy in improving services for high-needs students. Districts with fewer than 55 percent high-needs students would face “an extreme if not impossible” burden of arguing that a pay raise would be the “most effective” strategy in improving education for the targeted student groups, You can read more about this at Edsource.org.

Marie

If other questions come up, she will find answers.

Suzanne Fouché, Vice President, Program, LWVSSMC safouche@comcast.net

***FROM THE BOARD is written each month by a different member of the LWVSSMC Board.**

Have you received a paper VOTER, but would prefer not to? Have you not received a VOTER but would like one? Please contact Shirley Des Marais, 650-322-0778 or sdesmarais@pacbell.net.

Fall 2015 Candidate Forums

As this issue of the VOTER goes to press, we have held three candidate forums, with at least one more scheduled. The three forums already concluded are for the Sequoia Union High School District Governing Board (on Sept 23), the Redwood City City Council (on Sept 24), and the Redwood City School District Governing Board (Sept 29). All three went well and were recorded by Midpeninsula Community Media Center. The SUHSD forum is currently streaming on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh-pHDEjHds> and is, or will be soon, available through a link to our web site. The Redwood City City Council is streaming on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYSAjK43_No. When viewing information is available we will send it out in an e-mail blast. We hope to have the recordings running on PenTV as well.

On Thursday, October 1, we will hold a forum for the Woodside Elementary School District Board (10:00am-11:30am). There are two other possible forums still under discussion.

Many thanks to, first of all, Diana Post, our Candidate Forums chair, to our moderators Lisa Conrad, Linda Liebes and Ellen Kitamura, to Shirley Des Marais for serving as time keeper, and to Karen Schwarz and Sue Alvarez, for helping generally. We couldn't do it without you!

Please contact me with questions or more information. Videos are, or will be soon, available on YouTube and SmartVoter.org. *Ellen (ellenjhope@aol.com)*

Money in Politics Study

The consensus questions and guide for the Money in Politics study will not be available from National (LWVUS) until mid-October. We almost certainly cannot complete the study in November as hoped. Further information will be forthcoming. Watch this space - and, if you wish, begin reading the information on these two sites:

<http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/money-politics-review> and <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/lwvus-money-politics-mip-review-meetings-box-education-resources-and-sugges>

Please contact me with comments or questions.

Ellen (ellenjhope@aol.com, 839-8647)

WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL PENINSULA CHAPTER

Wednesday, October 7, 2015; 7:00 Refreshments, 7:30 to 9:00 PM Program
Los Altos Youth Center, 1 North San Antonio Road

"Eastern Europe and the Continuing Ukraine Crisis: Future Prospects" *Norman Naimark*, the Director of Stanford's Global Studies Division and Professor of East European Studies, will draw upon his recent visit and extensive experience and research on Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, to discuss the current crisis in Ukraine as Russian backed insurgents have engaged in armed conflict with Ukrainian forces, creating hardships on civilians and the economically challenged government.

Sponsored by: World Affairs Council, www.worldaffairs.org/peninsula. 650-941-8190; and the Los Altos Public Library, 650-948-7683

Ralph Kuiper, Chair, Peninsula Chapter, World Affairs Council of Northern California

ACTIVITIES HERE IN OUR LOCAL LEAGUE

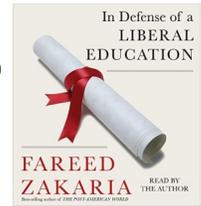
SMALL GROUPS: Do you want to be part of a small group—e.g., Book Group or "Climate Change & Local Issues" (sea level rise, transit-oriented housing/development, land use, affordable housing, high speed and/or electric rail, etc.)? Or, do you want to participate in a League study, such as the one this Oct. 21 [Page 1]. Or, are either of the other two studies of interest to you? [See Pages 1, 3 and 4.] Do you want the League to consider a position or to take an action (for example, on minimum wage or right to die)? [See the Feb. 2015 VOTER.] Are you interested in taking a closer look at responsible lending, as part of a joint task force together with the LWV North/Central San Mateo County? For any, and all, of these matters, or others of interest to you, contact: *Ellen Hope, President, or any of the officers, topic leaders and contact persons listed on Page 6.*

BOOK GROUP

LWV Book Group reading selections: For October (October 22nd, noon) our book group selection is *In Defense of a Liberal Education* by Fareed Zakaria. The location is still to be confirmed.

For November (November 19th, noon) our book group selection is *Six Amendments: How and Why We Should Change the Constitution* by John Paul Stevens. Location to be confirmed.

Members interested in attending should contact Judy Orttung (jorttung@comcast.net) for information about the location of these meetings.



SAVE THE DATE !!! Dec. 15 (Tues.), 6pm, Holiday Dinner at Lida Urbanek's

OUR LEAGUE'S STUDIES THIS FALL AND WINTER

We have two National studies this fall, and a State study of Higher Public Education in California scheduled for the spring – so we have a busy year ahead of us.

Amending the Constitution Study

Our first national study this year will be Amending the Constitution. The consensus meeting will be held on Wednesday October 21, at Ellen Hope's house, 854 Seminole Way in Redwood city, from 2:00 to 5:00. If you are interested in either (1) helping present the subject matter, or (2) attending the consensus meeting, please let me know.

The consensus meeting will not discuss amendments on any particular issue, but will cover general considerations for evaluating amendments, possible constraints on a constitutional convention, and how to balance the policy objectives of an amendment with process considerations.

Some of the questions we will be considering are –

- What should be considered in identifying an appropriate and well crafted amendment?
- Does the public policy objective address matters of such importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed?
- Would the amendment as written be effective in achieving its policy objective?
- Would the amendment make our political system more democratic, or protect individual rights?
- Can the policy objective be achieved by less difficult means than a constitutional amendment?
- What conditions should or should not be in place for a constitutional convention initiated by the states?
- The convention should be transparent and not conducted in secret.
- Representation at the convention should be based on population rather than one state, one vote.
- State delegates should be elected, not appointed.
- Voting at the convention should be by delegate, not by state.
- The convention should be limited to a single topic.

For those who want to dig deeper, there is a great deal of information at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/constitutional-amendment-study>.

Information on the second national study will be out shortly. *[See Money in Politics on Page 3.]*

I look forward to seeing you October 21.

Ellen (ellenjhope@aol.com, 839-8647)



League of Women Voters
of the Bay Area



An Inter-League Organization of the San Francisco Bay Area

SAVE THE DATE: Bay Area League Day, Saturday, February 6, 2016. Topic: Transportation

The Bay Area Monitor

The Education Fund of the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area is the publisher of the *Bay Area Monitor*. The editor is Alec MacDonald. Articles in the new issue (Oct.-Nov. 2015) cover these topics:

- Natural reserves in the Bay Area (There are six, including Ano Nuevo in our county.)
- Transportation funding developments as they affect the Bay Area
- "WaterFix" replaces the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and the twin tunnels are still in while habitat restoration is moved to a separate plan called "EcoRestore"
- Backup generators in the Bay Area: energy and air quality impacts

Go to <http://BayAreaMonitor.org/read/>. You should soon receive an email notice from "Editor, Bay Area Monitor" giving you a link to this new issue as soon as it has been posted.



League of Women Voters ® of California
LWVC.org

STUDY ON PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

Editor's Note: Below is a letter to League presidents, and others, telling of the September 19th meeting at Foothill Community College, the Forum on Public Higher Education in California. The letter is from Eleanor Yick who is the chair of the statewide committee organizing the study. She can be reached at egyick@icloud.com.

I thought I'd write and let you know about a Forum on Public Higher Education that a League county-wide team (representing the five Leagues in our county) planned this past Saturday, September 19th at Foothill College. We had about 100 people in attendance which speaks to the incredible PR and outreach every League did to publicize the event. One of the planning team members, Ellen Wheeler, also advertised the event when she was interviewed at the local Mountain View Art Fair's segment, "Man on the Street Interviews."

Each speaker received a draft copy of the Study Guide (and was asked not to duplicate or distribute) about 3 weeks prior to our event and was then asked to speak about specific issues. The audience was rapt throughout and paid strict attention during the 2.5-hour event. Dr. Christ, from the Center for Studies in Higher Education at UC Berkeley, was fantastic. She spoke for about 40 minutes without notes and hit so many of the points in our study.

The four panelists (Chris Funk, superintendent East Side Union High School District; Dr. Patricia Lopez from SJ State; Trustee Laura Casas from Foothill; and, LooLoo Amante, current president of the Study Body Association at SJS), were all so well prepared and articulate. Wade Ellis from SWSCV and a study committee member was the panel moderator and Frank Biehl, trustee from the East Side Union High School District, League member and long time member of the SCC Ed Committee, facilitated the audience Q and A. . . .

I hope this description might give you some ideas for planning a launch of the Study Guide in your area. The power behind this was the county-wide planning team [Santa Clara County] and input from all the local Leagues. . . .

[Editor's Note: The announcement of this meeting last month on Sept. 19 was on Page 5 of last month's VOTER for our League, LWVSSMC. Also in our Sept. VOTER, on Page 4, was an editor's note saying that Carol Louchheim of our League is offering to coordinate communications within our League regarding the statewide study. Carol has attended study-related meetings of the Palo Alto League.]

OFFICERS AND CONTACTS FOR OUR LEAGUE (LWV OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY, 2015-16)



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 VOTER Editor: Evan Hughes, evanhughesphd@aol.com

League Office: LWVSSMC, 713 Santa Cruz Ave., #9, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Our League phone and email: (650) 325-5780 and info@LWVSSMC.org

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR (LWVSSMC)		
OCTOBER		
1 Thurs	10:00am-11:30am	CANDIDATE FORUM: Woodside Elementary School District, 3195 Woodside Rd, Wildcats Room #39, Woodside, CA. <i>(See Page 3.)</i>
7 Wed	7pm; 7:30-9pm program	WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL PENINSULA CHAPTER "Eastern Europe and the Continuing Ukraine Crisis: Future Prospects" <i>Norman Naimark</i> , the Director of Stanford's Global Studies Division and Professor of East European Studies. <i>(See Page 3.)</i>
12 Mon	7:00pm	LWVSSMC BOARD MEETING at Ellen Hope's. Contact: Ellen Hope, ellenjhope@aol.com .
21 Wed	2pm-5pm	Amending the U.S. Constitution: Our League's Meeting on the National LWV Study. We meet at Ellen Hope's, 854 Seminole Way, Redwood City 94062, 839-8647, ellenjhope@aol.com . <i>(See Page 1, and also Page 4.)</i>
22 Thurs	noon	LWVSSMC BOOK GROUP The book is <i>In Defense of a Liberal Education</i> by Fareed Zakaria. Contact: Judy Orttung at jorttung@comcast.net . <i>(See Page 4.)</i>
NOVEMBER		
3 Tues	all day	ELECTION DAY Remember to vote and remind others. See Page 1 on new features of this "all-mail" ballot. Postmark on the day, Nov. 3, is OK!
9 Mon	7:00pm	LWVSSMC BOARD MEETING at Ellen Hope's. Contact: Ellen Hope, ellenjhope@aol.com .
19 Thurs	noon	LWVSSMC BOOK GROUP The book is <i>Six Amendments</i> by John Paul Stevens. <i>(See Page 4.)</i>
DECEMBER		
15 Tues	6pm dinner; 7:30pm meeting	SAVE THE DATE !!! OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNER AND PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING, THIS YEAR AT LIDA URBANEK'S