



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY

Celebrating over 50 years of service to our communities

www.LWVSSMC.org

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June 2017

Editor: Bernadette Burns, bernadetteburns362@gmail.com, 408-757-1250

A Republic If We Can Keep It: American Democracy at a Crossroad with Pamela S. Karlan

Tuesday, June 27, 6:30-8:30 pm

Redwood City Main Library, Community Room

1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City



Don't miss this opportunity to hear from the Stanford Law Professor who is one of the nation's leading experts on voting and the political process!

Contact: Suzanne Fouché, 650-306-9096, or safouche@comcast.net

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER:

Pam Karlan is the Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Professor of Public Interest Law and a founder and co-director of the Supreme Court Litigation Clinic at Stanford Law School. The Clinic has represented parties in more than fifty merits cases before the Court (and in numerous cases at the certiorari stage) and a wide range of amici curiae (from the bipartisan leadership of the House Judiciary Committee to labor unions and civil rights groups to overseas voters and survivors of torture).

One of the nation's leading experts on voting and the political process, Pam has served as a commissioner on the California Fair Political Practices Commission, an assistant counsel and cooperating attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and a Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice (where she received the Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service – the department's highest award for employee performance – as part of the team responsible for implementing the Supreme Court's decision in *United States v. Windsor*). Pam is the co-author of leading casebooks on constitutional law, constitutional litigation, and the law of democracy, as well as numerous scholarly articles.

In 2016, Pam was named one of the *Politico 50* – a group of “thinkers, doers, and visionaries transforming American politics”; earlier in her career, the American Lawyer named her one of its *Public Sector 45* – a group of lawyers “actively using their law degrees to change lives.”

Mailing List for *THE VOTER*

If you received a paper copy of this issue of *The VOTER* and do not want it mailed to you, please tell Shirley Des Marais (sdesmarais@pacbell.net). Or, if you want to be mailed a paper copy and did not receive one, please contact Shirley to be added to the mailing list for *The VOTER*.

FROM THE BOARD

Our Annual Meeting marked the beginning of a new League year. Our new Board will be meeting soon to discuss plans for the coming year, but we already have a wonderful program for the summer, thanks to the advance planning of Ellen Hope and Suzanne Fouché. Check our VOTER, website, Facebook page, and e-blasts for time and venues as meetings become finalized.

The LWVC State Convention has just concluded. Diana Post, Tracy Clark, Corrie Potter and I spend a motivating weekend in Sacramento. Look for our report in the next VOTER. One exciting announcement was that “My League Online (MyLO)” the new Easy Web program will be available this summer. With help from our webmaster, Sanneke Jang, we’ll be working to implement it in the next few months.

Alex Padilla, California’s Secretary of State, was one of several excellent speakers to address the delegates. He explained how the state is making changes to include more of our citizens in the voting process. His speech served to **reinforce my goal** to find the eligible voters in our own area, learn why they’re not voting and work to improve their participation in our next election. **Let me know** if you are interested in helping us to design and implement this new effort.

Our Budget Chair, Wanda Ginner, has asked us to find and install a digital data storage site where we can save our important information and be able to access it as needed. If you know anything about such systems or know how we can start our search, please contact me.

July is League Renewal Month. Watch for your notice in the mail, or renew online at www.lwvssmc.org. Be sure to complete and return the membership survey that will be sent with renewal notices. Your input is important for us to plan for the upcoming year.

With her intelligence, strength, and wit, Ellen Hope has been quietly guiding us for the last four years. We are fortunate that she will continue on the Board as Membership Chair, and I plan to take full advantage of her example and advice as I move into this new and challenging role. Thank you for your faith in me.

Shirley Des Marais,
Incoming President

New Voices for Youth Ends School Year

New Voices will wind up its school year program with an awards ceremony on June 8 at the Siena Youth Center in Redwood City. The East Palo Boys & Girls Club program will also be taking a summer recess. Visit the New Voices web site: <http://www.newvoicesforyouth.org> to see the videos and photos from both sites. New Voices is currently holding its Spring fund raising campaign combined with newsletters about New Voices activities. Click [News from New Voices](#) and [More News from New Voices](#) to see the news.

We are sorry to announce that our Program Director, Jose Saavedra (Lalo) is making a career move. He has contributed a great deal to the program this year and we will miss him. The League Steering Committee will be busy in the coming months recruiting a new Program Director. League members are most welcome to visit the Committee and find out more about our work.



Lalo with the Siena students - December 2016

Veronica Tincher, LWV Palo Alto
Sheila Botein, LWV South San Mateo County
Co-chairs

KEPLER'S "COMMUNITY PARTNERS" INCLUDES OUR LEAGUE

Don't forget when you are buying books, or anything, at Kepler's any time of year, to mention the League when you check out. They will donate back to us 6% of the sale. If you make your purchase online through Keplers.com, begin your shopping by clicking Community Partners, then Shop For Your Nonprofit, and then League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County.

BOARD NOTES from the May 8th meeting:

- Membership is now 144.
- 31 have signed up to date to attend the Annual Meeting on May 16.
- Ann Draper reported that the next Bay Area League Day will be February 3, 2018, probably in Oakland. Topic will be Regional Governance because of the probable ABAG and MTC merger to form a new regional agency.
- Discussion on how to handle PMP (per member payment) to Bay Area LWV—now that they have merged their Ed Fund and League Fund, which does our payment come out of?
- When we are less busy, we want to learn more about what is involved in the merger process, and potentially do the same.
- Read proposed letter on Sea Level Change to pass along to Board of Supervisors. Ann Draper given authority to make minor changes, then forward it.
- ACT Committee report; reviewed membership plan email from Kathleen Weisenberg. We need to develop a more comprehensive database which would include new member interests, other searchable requests, etc., as we need robust information to report to ACT.
- **Board members need help!** We all need committees; Publicity needs 2 or 3 people to help plan more meetings; Diana Post (Candidate Forums) needs someone to train; Secretary (Joyce Shefren) needs backup; Ann Draper wants an observer corps to attend meetings on transportation issues and climate change; Outreach needs help. **Please contact any Board member if you think you might help in any of these areas.** Bernadette has agreed to assist the Treasurer.
- Joyce discussed Lunches with Mayors; plans are under way for an early October lunch with Menlo Park mayor
- Monday June 19th joint meeting of new board at Lucile Spurlock's. Pot luck 6 pm; meeting 7 pm.
- Lisa Conrad discussed ILead meeting; a non-partisan organization with many elected officials there. Our contact is Rose Jacobs Gibson. An EPA academy high school economics teacher wants us to come to the school to talk about voter registration; Lisa will follow up.

Timely Topics Conversation Series

China & the U.S.

with Dr. Nicholas Hope

June 20, 6:30-8:30 pm

Mark your calendars for our June 20, 2017, Timely Topics Conversation on China and the U.S. with Dr. Nicholas Hope! This is our chance to follow up on Dr. Hope's presentation on the subject at our League's Annual Meeting in May.

Light refreshments and **socializing** at 6:30 pm
Program from 7 – 8:30 pm

Location: Home of Susan and William Grindley
151 Laurel Street, Atherton, CA 94027
650-324-1069

President Trump has pulled out of the Paris Climate Change Accord. North Korea continues to test medium and long-range missiles. Renegotiating trade deals and creating U.S. jobs remain a focus of the Trump administration. What are the implications of these events for China and the U.S. going forward?

Don't miss this opportunity to tap Dr. Hope's extensive knowledge of China, and his perspective on the latest developments between two of the world's major economies. Bring your questions!

Dr. Hope was the China Director for the World Bank, and the Director of the Stanford Center for International Development, where his personal area of focus was China. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Tasmania, his Bachelor of Philosophy from Oxford, and his Ph.D. from Princeton. He retired from Stanford in January.

Directions: Located between Oak Grove and Glenwood Avenues, the Grindley's not-to-be-missed Victorian home is on a flag lot not visible from the street. Please park on Laurel Street and walk down the 500-foot driveway, which is adjacent to Nativity School. There is a For Sale sign at the foot of the driveway. If you are unable to walk that distance, you may drive down the driveway and park in the Grindley's lot.

Please RSVP to klweisenberg@gmail.com

LWV Legislative Interview
State Senator Jerry Hill, 13th District
17 March 2017

Question 1: Funding of Elections. *State and local governments have a fundamental obligation to provide an election process that ensures integrity, accessibility, and security of our right to vote. However, the current approach to funding elections in California has many flaws. What legislative measures would you support to ensure adequate and stable funding of election administration in California?*

Election systems need to be safe and accessible. The Senator feels that they are reliable and voter fraud is not a problem. However, the challenge is to reach the most voters and get them to participate in voting. He favors all mail elections when possible and notes that the return envelopes should be postage paid – as they are in San Mateo County. This encourages more people to vote and therefore is a worthwhile expense.

There have been 9 unfunded mandates on easy and accessible voting for all citizens given to the counties. The understanding was that the State would pay for those but the \$76 million allocated for that in the budget was removed by the Governor.

The Secretary of State's office is working on updating voting systems technology statewide. The last time money came from the federal government to do so was in 2002. The Senator touched on Open Source versus proprietary systems such as Diebold. We must analyze the future of voting election technology. It must be secure but also cost efficient.

The Senator did urge the League to take on the issue of Open Source as an election process technology. He would like us to really analyze the best approach for the future of voting in California. Our credibility on an issue like this cannot be questioned. League is trustworthy and we are impartial.

Question 2: Higher Public Education. *To increase access for students, the legislature has asked public higher education institutions to increase enrollment of Californians and to ensure that students with greater needs are also accommodated. Yet despite increased funding from the legislature in recent sessions, per student funding is currently less than before the recession and costs have risen. How can California meet the challenge of enrolling more students, including students with greater needs, at the UC and CSU? Is more state funding needed? Where does this issue rank in your legislative priorities?*

The Senator noted that he had benefited from the Master Plan for Education but that it no longer works. We must increase the money available to meet the needs of California residents who wish to attend CSU and UC. The Senator does not see international or out-of-state students as a way of ensuring that more Californians benefit from these universities.

He has introduced SB 769 which will provide greater access to baccalaureate degrees at the community colleges; currently 15 community colleges are participating in the program and this bill would expand that to 30. It would also increase the number of subject areas granting baccalaureates at the community colleges. These degree programs are specifically job-related such as Dental Hygiene. The Senator also supports the Cal Grant program and wishes to see more Cal Grant funding going to private non-profit colleges such as Notre Dame de Namur and Cal Tech.

Overall, he is in favor of increasing funding for the UC and CSU systems which he sees as a gemstone in education.

Question 3: Water Resources. *The recent multi-year drought has made many Californians aware of the need to rethink the way they use water. California's economic activities in infrastructure are based on management models that were developed in the unusually wet 20th century. A report published in August 2014 by UC Davis researchers found that California has issued water rights for at least five times more surface water than the state receives on average from precipitation, even in a non-drought year. What kinds of legislative proposals would you support to ensure that enough water of adequate quality is available for municipal and industrial uses, agriculture, and the environment in the face of over-stretched surface water and groundwater resources and climate conditions different than those California experienced in the last century?*

The Senator notes that California seems to have finally awakened to the problem of water and allocating water resources. He thinks it is prudent that the Governor and the Water Resources Board have continued the restrictions put in place during the drought. The drought was a wake-up call for all Californians.

He is in favor of using reclaimed water, both storm runoff and gray waste water. We need to use water in a responsible way.

He thinks the time has come to penalize those who greatly exceed their water allocations yet suffer little or no penalties. He did note that many local water districts don't want to decrease their revenue and therefore do not crack down on customers who far exceed their allocation. He favors doing what East Bay MUD did and publicly shaming abusers by publishing their names. He notes that many local water districts' interests are contrary to conservation.

The Bay Delta Plan was discussed. He notes it is a balancing act to distribute water to agricultural and residential customers as well as diverting water to the Tuolumne River and to the Bay.

Overall, conservation is necessary. Desalination plants are a stop gap measure.

When asked about water rights, the Senator noted California has been discussing water rights for over a century. He was disappointed the Governor chose not to address this issue during the last two years of his term.

Question 4. Transportation and Traffic Congestion.

Traffic congestion is a significant problem within the Senator's district. He noted that SB1 (Beall) is a multiyear transportation package. Approximately \$6 billion per year for the next 10 years would be generated by the bill's provisions, including increased Vehicle License Fees and gasoline tax. Some of the money would be dedicated to improving public transit. The Senator remarked that currently public transit is not meeting the needs and that in turn is a key factor in traffic congestion. Facebook is undertaking a feasibility study on the Dumbarton rail bridge. Though he does not favor a heavy rail option there, the Senator thinks that either light rail or autonomous buses might be a good option. He did touch on the electrification of Caltrain and how the \$650 million from the federal government will not be forthcoming this budget year.

BART is looking into a second tube beneath the Bay.

He also said he has a long-term goal of a lane of autonomous vehicles moving close together to help ease traffic congestion. Right now there are 129 permits for computer-driven vehicles with a person behind the wheel in testing. He predicts by the end of the year there will be permits for fully autonomous vehicles on the road. SB 145 would eliminate the 180-day waiting period for companies that file an application to deploy driverless vehicles.

Question 5: What other major issues do you think the legislature must deal with in 2017? What are your personal priorities?

Given the current situation in Washington, DC, the Senator feels California must put up an aggressive defense as concerns immigration, the environment, and health care.

He supports legislation that would make it illegal to drive while actively smoking marijuana. He also supports combining marijuana use with a blood alcohol level of 0.04 to be considered driving under the influence.

He has introduced SB 273 which would make 18 the legal age for marriages within California. In some cases, it could be 17 with parental consent and a judge's consent. This bill resulted from a call from a constituent who knew of a 12-year-old girl who was engaged to be married to a 14-year-old boy.

He supports a bus seat belt law (SB 20) whereby if a bus has seat belts, they must be used the same way seat belts within a car must be used or a fine imposed.

He supports SB22 which would require law enforcement agencies to report and account for missing and stolen firearms.

SB 751 would reform the school district reserve cap, currently at 6%. Many districts feel this is not enough savings for a rainy day.

SB 464 would beef up security in gun stores.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Town Hall Meeting with Assembly Member Marc Berman

Tuesday, July 25, 6pm – 8pm

Assembly Member Berman will meet with constituents on July 25 to update them about the 2017 legislative session and to answer questions. He has made enhancing secure access to the ballot in underrepresented communities a priority. Come hear about this and other issues that he is working on. Menlo Park City Council Chambers, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park.

**OFFICERS AND CONTACTS FOR OUR LEAGUE
(LWV OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY, 2017-18)**

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UPCOMING EVENTS		
JUNE		
19 Mon	6-9 pm	LWVSSMC BOARD MEETING ; preceded by potluck, at Lucile Spurlock's. Contact: Shirley Des Marais, sdesmarais@pacbell.net or Lucile Spurlock, caspurlock@aol.com
20 Tues	6:30- 8:30	Timely Topics Conversation Series: China & the U.S. with Dr. Nicholas Hope. 151 Laurel Street, Atherton. Contact/please RSVP to: Kathleen Weisenberg,
11 Sun	4-6 pm	Garden party to benefit VoteRiders, a voter ID education organization. 715 Frenchmans Road, Stanford. Register at http://voteriders.brownpapertickets.com/
27 Tues	6:30- 8:30 pm	Speaker Pamela S. Karlan , Stanford Law School professor, a leading scholar on voting rights and the political process. Our JUNE GENERAL MEETING . Redwood City Main Library, Community Room (upstairs) 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City. Contact: Suzanne Fouché, safouche@comcast.net
JULY		
10 Mon	7-9 pm	LWVSSMC BOARD MEETING in the new office conference room. Contact: Shirley Des Marais, sdesmarais@pacbell.net
25 Tues	6:30- 8:30 pm	Town Hall Meeting: Assembly Member Marc Berman. Our JULY GENERAL MEETING . Menlo Park City Council Chambers, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Contact: Suzanne Fouché, safouche@comcast.net