



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY

Celebrating over 50 years of service to our communities

www.LWVSSMC.org

650-325-5780

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September 2017

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

The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose candidates or political parties.

FALL KICKOFF & SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

We are again grateful to longtime member (and past president) Lida Urbanek for opening up her lovely house and garden to us for our Fall Kickoff, on Saturday morning, **September 23, from 9:30 until noon**. Catch up with other members and meet new friends over refreshments. Our speaker will begin at 10 o'clock, followed by a Q & A session. We will conclude with a League meeting. The address is 75 Tuscaloosa Avenue in Atherton.

The California Voter's Choice Act (SB 450) is the topic of the day, presented by **Jim Irizarry**, our County's Assistant Chief Elections Officer. This election reform bill, signed last September, makes voting easier by expanding early and mail-in voting, increasing drop-off options, and by allowing in-person voting throughout one's county of residence, not only at a specified precinct, nor only on one day.

He will also address our Voter Registration information, its collection and safeguards, and how California is handling the recent request by the Trump Administration's Voter Fraud Commission, for all voter registration information--including partial Social Security numbers, military statuses, political party registrations and felony records.

Contact: Suzanne Fouché, safouche@comcast.net, 650-868-0320

From the President

Although we've had a busy summer, fall always feels like a new beginning. The official start of the coming League year is our Kickoff, where we will discuss current and upcoming activities and programs. Our speaker, Jim Irizarry from the San Mateo County Elections Office will answer our questions about the Voter Fraud Commission inquiries. He will also explain the state's new Voter's Choice Act and how our county will be implementing it.

The Voter's Choice Act was passed in 2016 to modernize California elections by allowing counties to conduct elections under a new model that provides greater flexibility and convenience for voters. San Mateo County was chosen as one of four in the state to participate in a trial run during the 2018 election. The County will be holding meetings in late September and early October asking for public input on how Voter's Choice should be implemented, such as where Vote Centers and Drop Boxes should be located. They particularly want to hear from language minorities, people with disabilities, and other historically underrepresented communities.

The State League is hoping to prepare the public to participate in the County meetings by educating voters now about Voter's Choice. They are targeting community groups with the hope that they will then educate the members of their various groups.

The North and Central League's September General Meeting will be one of the State League's educational meetings. State will send emails to San Mateo County community groups inviting them to the meeting. Our League has been asked to help staff a phone bank with follow-up calls to encourage each group to attend and answer any questions that they may have. Please consider helping out, September 6, 10 - 4.

Look for North & Central's meeting flyer, the State League's information sheet and "Volunteer Opportunities" elsewhere in this VOTER for more information and details on the meetings and Voter's Choice.

You can get more information about Voter's Choice at:
<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voters-choice-act/>

Shirley Des Marais
President

The Future of Voting



Starting in 2018, all registered voters in participating counties will receive their ballot in the mail a month before the election. You have **3 choices** for how to vote.

VOTE BY MAIL

You can mail your ballot starting as soon as you receive it.

DROP BOX

You can drop off your ballot at any secure Drop Box starting as soon as you receive it. No postage required at Drop Boxes.

VOTE CENTER

You can go to any Vote Center in your county to vote in person. Vote Centers will be open for up to 11 days in a row. At every Vote Center you can:

- Vote
- Register and vote the same day
- Drop off your ballot
- Vote with an accessible voting machine
- Get help and voting materials in multiple languages

WHY THE CHANGE?

The California Voter's Choice Act became law in 2016 to make voting more convenient and accessible.

- **You choose HOW you vote:** Whether using the mail, a Drop Box or a Vote Center, you choose the method that works best for you.
- **You choose WHEN you vote:** Instead of just one day to vote, you can vote in person during an 11-day period—including weekends—ending on Election Day.
- **You choose WHERE you vote:** You can vote in person at any Vote Center in your county.
- **You get the SUPPORT you need:** Vote Center staff will be there to help you have a great voting experience, including providing assistance in multiple languages and helping voters with disabilities.



**Elections in San Mateo County are changing for 2018
And you have a voice as to how it happens!**

Join the North & Central San Mateo County League of Women Voters to:

- Find out about the new Voter's Choice Act
- Discuss ways to give feedback on the county's plans
- Help get the word out to your community

Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2017

Time: 7 PM to 8:45 PM

Place: The San Mateo Senior Center

2645 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo, CA 94403

Directions: from Hwy 92 exit at Alameda de las Pulgas South for 8/10th of a mile. The Senior Center is on the left (Beresford Park is on the right).

Presenters:

Voter's Choice California steering committee members Jonathan Stein (Asian Americans Advancing Justice), Fred Nisen (Disability Rights CA), and Dora Rose (LWVC Ed Fund).

Get Involved!

Learn how to provide input on where Vote Centers and Drop Boxes should be located in your community!

Plan to attend San Mateo County's election planning meetings.

Inform your community!

www.futureofcaelections.org/voters-choice-ca

LUNCH WITH THE MAYOR

October 4, 11:30

Yum Cha Palace, 1039 El Camino Real, Menlo Park

KIRSTEN KEITH, the enthusiastic and energetic Mayor of Menlo Park, will speak to us about **CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES** for MENLO PARK. Mayor Keith was first elected to the Council in 2010. She served as Mayor in 2012 and is doing so again this year. She and her Council deal with all the challenges of urban life in governing the City of Menlo Park. They are the same issues our LWV confronts.

We are delighted that she will speak with us on Wednesday, October 4th. We hope you will join us at 11:30 that day at Yum Cha Palace Restaurant, 1039 El Camino Real in Menlo Park. We regret the lack of adjacent parking. Be prepared! Carpool! Come early! **Please be sure you are seated by 11:45.** Your first will course will be served and the meeting will commence at that time. Each meal is \$20 and includes: soup, fresh vegetables, brown rice and tea.

Detach and complete the form below. The form and your check must be received by September 27th.

Please mark your choice and include your check for \$20 made out to LWVSSMC. Mail to:

Carol Louchheim, 620 Sand Hill Road, Apt. 321 E, Palo Alto, CA 94304

Name _____

____Chicken with fresh vegetables (no peppers)

____Mongolian Beef

____Braised Tofu, Mushrooms & Chinese Greens

Questions? Call Joyce Shefren 650-851-0817 or Carol Louchheim 650-854-5800

RECAP: Dr. Pamela Karlan's Talk, June 27th General Meeting

Voting is a constellation of 3 major concepts: **(1) Participation** is when we register to vote, cast our ballots, and have them counted. In the 1960s and early 1970s, there was the presumption that any restriction on the right to vote should be subjected to the strictest form of judicial scrutiny, as the right to vote is preservative of all of our other rights. Now the pendulum has swung to the concept of not putting 'undue burden' on voting access, which has had detrimental effects in many states, though not so much here in California. A summary statistic: for each time actual voter fraud is avoided by those burdensome voting restrictions, **7,000** eligible voters are denied their right to participate!

(2) Aggregation, or how we collectively decide on our election rules—which have been questioned ever since implementation in 1842. That is, if you can't change the rules about HOW votes get counted, then you might try to change the rules about WHO gets counted—think gerrymandering!

(3) Governance—how is government policy made? Essentially, election day is the end of campaigning and the beginning of governance. The US is now politically hyper-polarized unlike it has been any time since the 1870s; the ideological overlaps between 'liberal' Republicans and 'conservative' Democrats vanished in 2010, as gauged by the Poole-Rosenthal score.

How did Trump become President? The major political parties are not so distinctly cohesive parties as they were; the spectrum is wider, there are more candidates and a splintered electorate. The rise of social media has made it very easy to access a variety of information (and disinformation!) such that people can choose to hear only their desired messages. These ideological slices can be considered 'narrow-casting', as opposed to the former prevalence of 'broadcast' television.

The electoral college is not going away. The political parties are wedded to it; if some states wanted to change to state-wide or congressional-district-wide electors, disadvantages would accrue to any states not playing by the same rules...

There are something like 80,000 voting precincts in the US, most of them not interconnected. The only advantage of our disorganized voting system is that it is **hard to hack!** Ms. Karlan is far more concerned about the consequences of saboteurs taking down the electricity grid on election day, and by disinformation campaigns, or candidates who can be bought.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

East Palo Alto: Duane Bay, Barbara Noparstak, Barbara Wallis

Menlo Park: Lynn Auslander, Geoffrey Ryder, Miyuki Ryder, Mary Sinnott, Nancy Witeck

Portola Valley: Robert Barrett, Linda Hawes Clever, Wendy Hofkenschiel

Redwood City: Alisa MacAvoy, Brian Connor

San Carlos: Liz Curry

A very warm welcome to you all from the Board and members of the LWVSSMC!

Note: If you recently joined and your name is not on the above list or the list in the May 2017 VOTER, please contact Linda Liebes, lindaliebes@comcast.net so that you can be welcomed in the October VOTER.

Briefs From the National LWV

Reflecting on the 97th anniversary of women's suffrage, it is remarkable that today we are still fighting for equal access at the ballot box. Between the so-called "Election Integrity" Commission's work and last week's [reversal by the Justice Department on the Ohio voter purge](#), we are seeing attacks on voting rights continue to escalate. Now more than ever the League's work to register voters in underrepresented communities is essential to ensure their voices are heard at the ballot box. As this work continues, we must stand with our brothers and sisters from all backgrounds, to unite and continue to fight against hate and those who seek to oppress.

Ideas to Combat the Hateful Demonstration in Charlottesville

The LWVUS would like to offer the following opportunities to act on an individual level with faith and social justice groups from around the country.

1. [Call your state legislator](#) and tell them to protect the protesters. Free speech and the right to peaceably assemble are among the cornerstones of our democracy.
2. [Share your story through Communities Against Hate](#). If you or someone you know has experienced or witnessed a hate incident, please encourage them to share their story.
3. **Amplify #BeTheLightForJustice on your social media channels.** Leaders in the faith and racial justice communities, including the NAACP and Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, are teaming up to share positive messages of individuals standing up for justice.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Please help us **staff a phone bank** on **September 6** to encourage participation in the San Mateo County Voter's Choice Act Community Meeting—participate when you can between 10 am and 4 pm, at 444 Peninsula Ave, Suite 1, San Mateo.

We will be calling the organizations we have invited that have not yet responded to the emailed invitation. There will be a **call script** to use and **refreshments** available. And we'll all be there to support one another! This will be fun and exciting – and give our League an opportunity to forge new connections and community partnerships, as well as supporting our friends in the North & Central SMC LWV.

Please **sign up** to participate in the phone bank by contacting **Ann Kuchins** at president@lwnncsmc.org or **leave a message at 650-342-5853**. Make sure you bring your cell phone and charger! And thank you for all you do to help San Mateo County voters!

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Our **Program Director** needs volunteers to help with refreshments and set-up at our Kickoff on **September 23**, at Lida Urbanek's house 75 Tuscaloosa Avenue, Atherton.

Contact Suzanne Fouché, 650-868-0320, or [safouche@comcast.net](mailto:safouche@comcast.net).

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Interested in helping with **National Voter Registration Day, September 26**? Contact Shirley Des Marais, 650-322-0778, or sdesmarais@pacbell.net.

BOARD NOTES

The Board held our annual Retreat on August 11 to discuss our program for the coming year. We considered priorities at our Local, Bay Area, State and National levels as well as our summer programs and ones that are already scheduled for the fall. We decided to concentrate our efforts on transportation in San Mateo County, the future of health care in California, women's equity, and housing.

A second big concern for us this year will be updating our use of technology. We will be looking at programs to help with our website, newsletter, data storage and emails to members.

Please contact any Board members with your suggestions.
Shirley Des Marais

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


President: Shirley Des Marais, sdesmarais@pacbell.net
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 Chair of the Education Fund: Sue Gould, susanbgould@gmail.com

**League Office: LWVSSMC, 3723 Haven Avenue, Suite 112, Menlo Park, CA
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2244, Menlo Park, CA 94026-2244**

UPCOMING EVENTS		
SEPTEMBER		
6 Weds	10 - 4	Phone bank for Voter’s Choice Community Meeting. Contact: Ann Kuchins, president@lwnvncsmc.org or leave a message at 650-342-5853.
9 Sat	10:30 to 12	New member reception at Lucile Spurlock’s house, 856 Creek Drive, Menlo Park. Contact: Lucile Spurlock, caspurlock@aol.com
9 Sat	10:30 to 12	In Studio with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo: The View from Silicon Valley to D.C. MidPen Media Center, 900 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto.
14 Thurs	7-9 pm	LWVSSMC BOARD MEETING at Lucile Spurlock’s house, 856 Creek Drive, Menlo Park. Contact: Shirley Des Marais, sdesmarais@pacbell.net or Lucile Spurlock, caspurlock@aol.com
16 Sat	1 pm	Joe Simitian (Santa Clara County Supervisor) “Listening to Trump’s America” Palo Alto City Council Chambers, 250 Hamilton Street, 1 st floor, Palo Alto.
19 Tues	7 pm – 8:45	San Mateo County Voter’s Choice Community Meeting. Sponsored by North & Central SMC LWV; San Mateo Senior Center, 2645 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo.
23 Sat	9:15 to noon	FALL KICKOFF! 75 Tuscaloosa Avenue, Atherton. Speaker Jim Irizarry, Assistant Chief Elections Officer, San Mateo County. Contact: Suzanne Fouché, safouche@comcast.net

23 Sat	3 pm – 4:30	Zoe Lofgren, US Representative “Keeping Abreast of Federal Legislation & Understanding How You Can Impact It!” Saratoga Library, 13650 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga.
24 Sun	2:30 pm - 6:30	World Affairs Council Fall Kickoff at Lida Urbanek’s, 75 Tuscaloosa Avenue, Atherton. Francis Fukuyama will address <i>Democracy: Challenges and Hazards for its Future</i> . Registration: www.worldaffairs.org/events 415-293-4600. Contact: Ralph Kuiper, rkuiper@earthlink.net
28 Thurs	12 noon	Book Group Meeting to discuss <i>Broad Influence: How Women Are Changing the Way America Works</i> , by Jay Newton-Small. At Lucile Spurlock’s, 856 Creek Drive, Menlo Park. Contact: Judy Orttung, jorttung@comcast.net
OCTOBER		
4 Weds	11:30 am	LUNCH WITH MENLO PARK MAYOR KIRSTEN KEITH , Yum Cha Palace, 1039 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Contact: Carol Louchheim 650-854-8500 or Joyce Shefren 650-851-0817.
12 Thurs	7-9 pm	LWVSSMC BOARD MEETING at Lucile Spurlock’s house, 856 Creek Drive, Menlo Park. Contact: Shirley Des Marais, sdesmarais@pacbell.net or Lucile Spurlock, caspurlock@aol.com
26 Thurs	12 noon	Book Group Meeting to discuss <i>Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right</i> , by Arlie Russell Hochschild. At Lucile Spurlock’s, 856 Creek Drive, Menlo Park. Contact: Judy Orttung, jorttung@comcast.net

The League of Women Voters Ed Fund AmazonSmile Account



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