



The Palo Alto *VOTER*

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

www.lwvpaloalto.org

Vol. XXXII No. V

December-January,
2016-2017

Join us for our

Annual Winter Luncheon

with guest speaker

Rodolfo Dirzo, Ph.D.

Stanford University, Department of Biology and
Co-Director, INOGO Program of the Woods Institute for the Environment



Photo by Dex Kotze

Human Induced Global Environmental Change and the Decline of Animal Life

Professor Dirzo's work focuses on the
impact of human activities and the decline of
natural ecosystems including large
mammals.

Monday, December 12

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Garden Court Hotel, 520 Cowper St., Palo Alto

To secure your reservation, your check for \$40 per person (vegetarian/vegan
option) or \$45 per person (sustainable meat option), made out to LWVPA, must
be received by Dec 8. Mail to our office at 3921 E. Bayshore Rd., Palo Alto 94303.

Indicate on your check or call the League office to order gluten-free.

Guests welcome!

“We must not go quietly into this impoverished future”

Inside this issue:

President's Letter p. 2

*Board Meeting
Highlights* p. 3

Lunch with League p. 3

Bay Area League Day p.3

Advocacy Report p. 4

Voter Services p. 5

Membership Report p. 5

New Voices for Youth p. 6

*Communications
Committee Report* p. 6

Professor Dirzo p. 6

Announcements p. 7

Calendar p. 8



Lunch with League

The Current State of
Juvenile Justice in Santa
Clara County

with LaRon Dennis

Thursday, November 17

12-1:30 pm

See page 3



LWVPA Program Planning

Saturday, January 21

9 am to Noon

at the home of Sandra Slater

1001 Emerson, Palo Alto

Be a part of our annual Program Planning.
All members welcome.

Brunch provided by your board.



Bay Area League Day

Affordable Housing
in the Bay Area

Saturday, January 28

9 am - 1 pm

in San Jose

See page 3

*The League is a broadly based organization that encourages informed and involved participation in government
through voter service and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

The League does not support or oppose political candidates or parties.

Message from our President

By the time you receive this *VOTER* the election will be over or almost over. Our League can be proud of a job well done these past few months, registering voters, informing citizens and advocating on the two County ballot measures, and eleven of the California ballot measures..



Now that the election season is behind us, we can look ahead. On January 21, 2017, LWVPA members will have a chance to be involved in **planning our League’s program for 2017-18**. This is a great opportunity for you to participate in the grassroots work of the League. Please put this on your calendar now. See the info on page 3.

We do not need to wait for Program Planning to continue our **advocacy work locally**. Affordable housing promises to be an important issue for our City Council and we will be watching that closely. Equally important is ensuring that our City is well served with adequate transit options for all. LWVPA will be monitoring proposed changes in service by the VTA and, if cuts are made to bus routes, we may urge the City to step up to fill these gaps.

Our active communications team is busy exploring ways to effectively use **social media** to keep the public informed. For the first time, LWVPA ran an ad on Facebook with information about our voter services activities. This ad reached over 8,000 people, most of whom viewed it on their smart phone. **Facebook is a tool that can benefit all of us, if used wisely and within League guidelines**. Try Facebook, if you have not already done so. Once you are on Facebook, you can find our LWVPA page by searching for League of Women Voters of Palo Alto. If you have a Facebook account, you can “like” our page and see our updates whenever you’re on Facebook.

Coming up are two wonderful events you won’t want to miss:

* **Lunch with League at the PCC Raptor rooms – Thursday, November 17**, with LaRon Dennis, Deputy DA: “Current State of Juvenile Justice in Santa Clara County.” See page 3 for lunch ordering details. By the way, the day of the week for Lunch with League will vary depending upon venue and speaker availability.

* **Winter Luncheon at the Garden Court – Monday, December 12**, with Rodolfo Dirzo, Stanford University Biology professor, on the impact of human activities on the decline of natural ecosystems. See front page for reservation information.

Our League has much to be thankful for. I am particularly thankful for our board and off-board folks who are all incredibly talented and resourceful. They are the ones who create and implement all the exciting and vitally important things our League does.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and a terrific holiday season.

Bonnie Packer

LWV of Palo Alto: Officers, Directors, Off-Board Roster (650) 903-0600, www.lwvpaloalto.org

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Committee

Nominating Committee
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Lynn Drake
Ellen Springer
Lynne Russell

Board Meeting Highlights - October 25, 2016



Your Board

- Formally established the Fundraising Committee, a Board Development Committee, and the Communications Committee.

Discussed

- Our current publicity practices and the development of a policy on the use of social media for publicity.
- The role of League observers at meetings of local governing bodies.
- Advocacy action related to possible VTA cutbacks in service to Palo Alto; and a forthcoming proposal to the Board for a 'safe storage of guns' ordinance for Palo Alto.
- Upcoming events including Program Planning on January 21, 2017.

Learned about

- The very well-attended Palo Alto City Council Candidates Forum—with over 150 attendees.
- Eighteen Pros & Cons events held to date, with a combined attendance of over 500 people.
- The successful use of Facebook ads to publicize “The League Recommends” and our voter services events.
- The upcoming Bay Area League Day to be held on January 28, 2017, in San Jose, which will focus on Affordable Housing.

*Karen Kalinsky
Secretary*

Lunch with League

The Current State of Juvenile Justice in Santa Clara County with LaRon Dennis

Thursday, November 17, 12-1:30 pm

The Peninsula Conservation Center,
3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto

Attendance is free. Optional lunch: \$10.00* or BYO

Please RSVP no later than November 15
to lwvpaoffice@gmail.com or (650)903-0600.

*To order a lunch box from Lyfe Kitchen, send your check, made out to LWVPA, to our office at 3921 E. Bayshore Rd, #209, Palo Alto, CA 94303. Order must be received by Nov 15. Include your choice from the following:



- Buffalo Chicken
- Grilled Chicken & Avocado
- Quinoa Crunch
- Grilled Chicken & Hummus
- Forbidden 'Falafel'

Each box lunch comes with a cookie and a side salad. **Please select your salad:** seasonal quinoa or simple greens. Both salads are gluten free and vegan.

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY



Affordable Housing in the Bay Area

Saturday,
January 28
9 am - 1 pm

Berryessa Community Center
3050 Berryessa Rd, San Jose

Cost prepaid is \$35 w/lunch, \$20 w/o lunch
\$40 at the door with lunch and \$25 at
the door without lunch

Online registration will be available soon at
www.lwvbayarea.org Mark your calendar
and watch for more information in the next
VOTER.

Bay Area League Days are always
excellent. You will not want to miss this
one. Please contact the office or send us an
email lwvpaoffice@gmail.com if you are
interested in carpooling.



Advocacy Report by Lisa Ratner

LWV Palo Alto

Getting the Word Out: League Positions on CA Ballot Initiatives

LWVPA has publicized the LWVCA positions on eleven of seventeen California Ballot Initiatives in the Palo Alto Weekly, and in a Facebook ad. We also posted LWVCA positions on our Facebook page, in the *VOTER*, and on our website.

VTA Cut-backs.



Our Housing and Transportation Committee is continuing to monitor **VTA plans to cut its VTA bus service to Palo Alto** which would mean loss of

service to middle school and high school students, and to the elderly and disabled who depend on paratransit service, which is linked to dedicated public transit routes. Limited funds force a tradeoff between frequency of public transit and coverage. We will be drafting a letter to the VTA in consultation with LWV Santa Clara County Council, as this is both a local and county issue. Goals will be to adopt a VTA plan 1) which decreases traffic congestion (attracts riders who would otherwise use a car with reliable, frequent services) and 2) in which vulnerable populations will not be abandoned, whichever entity (city, county, public/private shuttles/buses) ultimately provides services.

Affordable Housing.

Members of the HTC observed a study session of the Palo Alto City Council on October 24 in which Palo Alto Housing (local nonprofit affordable housing developer) detailed its history of building affordable units in Palo Alto since the mid-1970's. Because of the political climate in Palo Alto after the defeat of PAH's Maybell affordable senior housing project, PAH began to pursue affordable housing projects in

Mountain View and Redwood City, where greater density for affordable housing is allowed. At the end of the study session, Palo Alto City Council directed its planning staff to research whether the PC zone (whose use had been suspended after the defeat of the affordable senior project) or some variant could be redrafted to allow affordable housing projects in Palo Alto. The Mayor suggested that perhaps the LWVPA could convene a community dialogue on affordable housing in Palo Alto.

Update of LWVPA Climate Change and Natural Resources positions/goals.

Phyllis Cassel continues to chair an LWVPA study group which will meet on November 18, 1:30-3:30 pm to review these topics. New members are welcome. Email lwvpaoffice@gmail.com if you are interested in joining this discussion.

Responsible Gun Ownership Committee.

The Temporary Responsible Gun Ownership Committee of LWVPA will meet in mid-November to decide if a recommendation for action should be made to the board. Any member interested in attending should email eratner@pacbell.net.

LWV Bay Area and LWV California

Public Financing of Elections

LWVCA President Helen Hutchison recommends that local Leagues consider whether to help local jurisdictions adopt local public financing of election laws because SB 1107 eliminated the ban on public financing for general law cities, counties, and districts.

Bay Area League Day

LWVBA reports that affordable housing will be the topic at the 2017 Bay Area League Day. LWVBA also reports that the Bay Area Quality Management District has adopted a new civic engagement tool, the Open Air Forum, which provides for citizen feedback on specific issues of air quality. See www.baaqmd.gov.



BLUE HIGHLIGHTS in the *VOTER* are linked to pertinent websites. To access the *VOTER* in PDF format, go to our website at www.lwvpaloalto.org/VOTER.html or email lwvpaoffice@gmail.com to start receiving the *VOTER* as a PDF via email.

Outstanding Election Season Work from our Voter Services

Voter Services work at the League involves two kinds of activity: helping citizens to be ready to cast their vote and providing opportunities to inform the public about candidates and propositions, both state and local. Helping citizens to vote involves sessions to register citizens to vote for the first time. We also answer individual questions about changes of address, or name, how to vote by mail, how to get a second ballot when the first had to be scrapped, and what to do about students who are away at college in a different state. The Registrar of Voters of Santa Clara County staff are always very helpful.

Informing the public about options on the ballot involves two types of activity: forums for candidates for public office, and events about the pros and cons of propositions on the ballot.

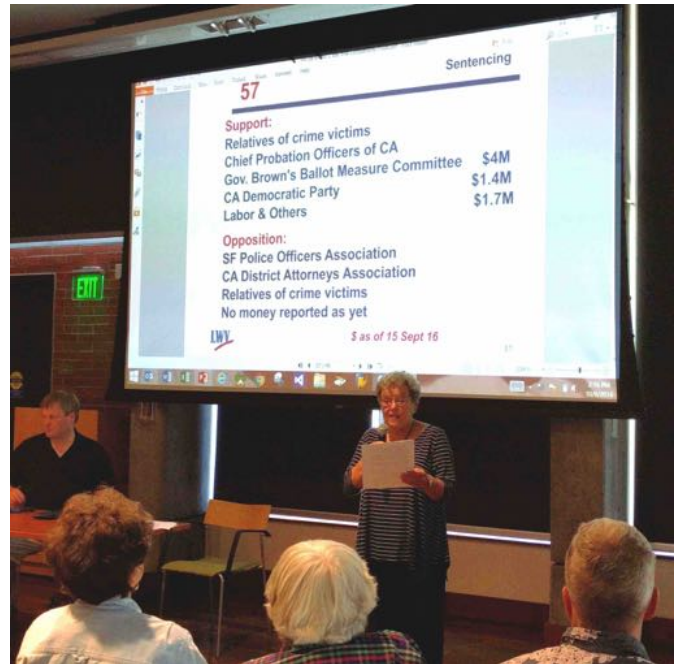
Candidates Forums

Following the Candidates for Palo Alto School Board Forum in September, we held a very successful Candidates for Palo Alto City Council Forum on October 5th for ten candidates. There were good questions from the estimated 150 people in the audience. Midpen Media Center posted the videos of our two Forums on the web on Youtube.

Pros and Cons Events about the State Propositions and Local Measures

We put on twenty-one Pros and Cons events this fall, six of which were open to the public. The 17 state propositions were simply too many to discuss in one setting, so at each event we discussed the 12 that were the most complex, plus the two county measures. We always took questions from the audience at the end. An estimated 880 people attended our Pros and Cons events.

A common question both at those events and on our office phone concerns the League recommendations.



Jeannie Lythcott Speaks at an LWVPA Pros and Cons Event

We do not answer that question at Pros and Cons events but we published our recommendations in our newsletter, in an ad in the local paper and on Facebook. In addition, our website is a fount of information.

Discussions at Stanford about specific Propositions

One of our members organized two very successful events at Stanford. In September, we held a discussion at the Law School about the death penalty propositions, and in October we held a discussion about the proposition to legalize marijuana.

New Members

Even though the election is over, we will continue to do Voter Services work. I will be reaching out to new members who are interested in this aspect of our LWV work to join me for coffee and conversation and to get to know one another.

Jeannie Lythcott, Voter Services Chair

Membership Update

We are nearly 300 strong! If you have a friend who might be interested in joining the League, please bring them to the Annual Winter Luncheon on December 12.

- New Membership Survey for 2017. Check out this year's membership survey, now updated with new programs, studies, and organizational needs. Even if you filled out a survey last year, please complete this year's survey at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5TGTS2R>
- Membership Renewals. Many thanks to all who have renewed for 2017, saving us volunteer time and money! If you haven't renewed, please do so today! Questions? Email meganfogarty@gmail.com
- Use of Membership Directory. As a gentle reminder, the LWVPA Membership Directory should be used *for League business only*.

Megan Swezey Fogarty and Lynne Russell, Membership Co-Chairs

New Voices (NV4Y) Update



This summer, Erendira Parra, a New Voices alum from Menlo-Atherton high school (M-A), led New Voices summer programs at Siena Youth Center in Redwood City and at Puente, a community program for youth in Pescadero. Erendira writes, “At the beginning of the class I showed documentaries dealing with social justice issues along with showing short documentaries so they could get the basic idea of the story structure. After showing them profile pieces done by other students at NV4Y, I asked them to each come up with five different topics relevant to them that touch on social justice in their community. Then I grouped them based on what most interested them in their community and from there they decided as a group what they wanted their film to be about. Overall students at Siena and at Puente were both eager to get their hands on a video camera and just shoot, along with greatly anticipating showing their final projects to their peers.”



Students at Puente graduation

New Voices is pleased to have hired a new director, Jose Saavedra, who is known as Lalo and who brings experience working with youth and media in San Jose and at the Boys and Girls Club in Redwood City. Ana Angel Avendano will continue to consult with the Steering Committee and with Lalo. Shakeam Campbell (who led our program at M-A last year) is becoming a web designer and we have hired him to design a new website for New Voices.

This year we are continuing to work at Siena, taking a break from M-A and, building on our success at Siena, looking forward to working with middle-schoolers in afterschool programs in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. Lalo will be finding new partners and figuring out how to use the video that students made at M-A last spring. It promises to be an exciting year for New Voices. We are eager to bring new members to our Steering Committee. Please call Veronica Tincher if you are interested.

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

Communications Team News

Your Communications Team had a busy election season, including:

Voter Services – Candidate Forums and Pros & Cons

Print

- * 2 Palo Alto Weekly ads
- * 1 Daily News ad
- * 2 Daily POST ads
- * 1,000 flyers
- * 2 *VOTERS* – Oct. and Nov.

Online

- * Website
- * 10 entries on Palo Alto Community Calendar
- * 4 e-blasts
- * Facebook posts
- * Facebook ad for one month

Advocacy - 11 California and 2 County Ballot Measures

Print

- * *VOTER* – Nov.
- * Palo Alto Weekly ad

Online

- * Website
- * Facebook ad for one month

Ellen Forbes

Ecosystem Expert to Speak at the Winter Luncheon



Stanford Professor Rodolfo Dirzo will speak at our annual **Winter Luncheon** this year on

December 12 at the Garden Court Hotel. Professor Dirzo's research highlights the decline of animal life ("defaunation") and how this affects ecosystem processes/services from Latin America to Africa. In addition to teaching at Stanford University, Professor Dirzo conducts science education programs with underserved children in the Bay Area and in Mexico and co-authored the new Framework for K-12 Science Education. To find out more about his research, visit his website at:

<https://web.stanford.edu/group/dirzolab/dirzo.html>

Welcome, New Members!

Adrian Fine, Terry Godfrey,
Carrie Jeffries, Sheryl Klein,
Caitlin Halferty Lepech,
Mary Lorey, Natalie Morin,
David Springer,
Jane Uyvova,
Sara Woodham



We are so glad you
have joined the
League.

The LWVPA Book Group

will meet

Friday, December 2, at 10 am

to discuss:

**Sisters in Law: How Sandra Day O'Connor
and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the
Supreme Court and Changed
the World**



by Linda Hirshman

The meeting will be at the home of Betty
Gerard.

Visitors are welcome.

Like Us on
Facebook



[League-of-
Women-
Voters-of-Palo-Alto](#)

Follow Us
on Twitter



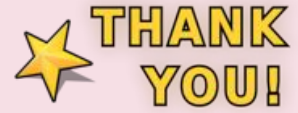
[lwvpaloalto](#)



Thank you to all the board and off-
board members who reviewed this
VOTER, and for the invaluable
proofreading of **Ellen Forbes, Betty
Gerard, Bonnie Packer, Karen
Kalinsky, Lisa Ratner and Jeannie
Lythcott.**

Sue Hermsen, VOTER Editor

THANK YOU to the many
generous members and
donors who have already
contributed in response to
receiving our *VOTERS GUIDE*.



Mary Alice Thornton, Fundraising

Donate Online



**It's easy to join the LWVPA —Do it now! You will be glad you did.
Joining at the local level makes you a member at all levels: National, State,
Bay Area and Palo Alto. Voting membership is now open to non-citizens and to
individuals 16 years of age or older. Men are encouraged to join.
Dues grants are available.**

For more information, call the League office (650) 903-0600.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____ email _____

Annual membership: \$70. Additional membership, same address: \$35. Student membership: \$35.

Mail check with this form to LWVPA, 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Suite 209, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

You can also join or renew online via PayPal at

<http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/join.html>

Membership dues to the LWVPA are not tax deductible.

League of Women Voters of Palo Alto
3921 E. Bayshore Road, Suite 209
Palo Alto, CA 94303
(650) 903-0600

Address Services Requested

Dated Material

Please Expedite

How to contact your elected officials:

UNITED STATES

President Barack Obama (202) 456-1414
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/>

Senator Dianne Feinstein (415) 393-0707
<http://feinstein.senate.gov> - click "email me"

Senator Barbara Boxer (415) 403-0100
<http://www.boxer.senate.gov/>

Rep. Anna Eshoo (650) 323-2984
<http://eshoo.house.gov/>

CALIFORNIA

Governor Jerry Brown (916) 445-2841
<http://gov.ca.gov/home.php>

Senator Jerry Hill (650) 212-3313
<http://sd13.senate.ca.gov/contact-us>

Assemblymember Rich Gordon (650) 691-2121
<http://asmdc.org/members/a24/>

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Supervisor Joe Simitian (650) 965-8737
joe.simitian@bos.sccgov.org

OTHER AREAS in CALIFORNIA

Locate your elected officials with your street address
<http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov>

CALENDAR

<http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/Calendar.html>

Thu, Nov 17, 12-1:30 pm
Lunch with League
 PCC, Raptor Room

Fri, Nov 18, 1:30-3:30 pm
LWVPA Position
Review/Study Group
 Cassell

Tue, Nov 22, 7-9:30 pm
Board Mtg
 PCC, Raptor Room

Fri, Dec 2, 10 am
Book Group
 Gerard

Wed, Jan 4
VOTER Deadline

Mon, Dec 12, 11:30
am-1:30 pm
Winter Luncheon
 Garden Court Hotel

Sat, Jan 21, 9 am-12 pm
LWVPA Program
Planning
 Slater

Tue, Jan 24, 7-9:30 pm
Board Mtg
 PCC, Raptor Room
Sat, Jan 28

Bay Area League Day
 Berryessa Community
 Center
 San Jose