

The Palo Alto VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

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Assemblyman Rich Gordon addresses LWVPA Annual Meeting

The Honorable Rich Gordon, our 21st District Assemblyman, addressed over 50 LWVPA members and guests at our Annual Meeting on May 7. Gordon focused on the State budget and its \$25 billion gap between income and expenses.



Gordon explained that Governor Brown's goal is to resolve this gap by cutting \$12.5 billion from the budget and raising another \$12.5 billion by extending certain taxes that would otherwise expire on June 30. So far the legislature has agreed to cut \$11 billion; still unresolved is \$1.5 billion from the Redevelopment Program. Republicans are currently unwilling to extend the taxes; however, Gordon expressed his hope that at least two Republicans from each house will join Democrats to avoid budget cuts that would have devastating results. It takes a two-thirds vote to extend the taxes; only a simple majority is needed to vote on the budget cuts.

Gordon also shared his thoughts on the impact of term limits where so much institutional knowledge is lost each time an elected official is termed out. Now, most of the institutional knowledge resides in permanent staff and lobbyists. Gordon also noted that there are so many bills introduced each session – for example, there are currently 1388 Assembly bills for the current session – that there is little time for deliberate consideration of important policy issues. Gordon answered many questions from the audience, covering issues such as redistricting, prisons, labor unions and public employees and what we need to do to compete globally.

LWVPA thanked Rich Gordon for adjusting his schedule on short notice to speak to LWVPA when official business prevented Congresswoman Anna Eshoo from speaking.

Submitted by Bonnie Packer. ■

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SAVE THE DATE! SUMMER SOCIAL - August 16, 7-9 pm Details in the August VOTER



The League is a broadly based, nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and involved participation in government through voters service, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The VOTER welcomes articles. Please submit them to: lwvpaoffice@gmail.com. Deadline is the first Monday after the first Tuesday of each month, but earlier submissions are most appreciated.

Presidents' Messages

One last President's greeting!

I thank all the members of our Board and those of you who have contributed to a strong League of Women Voters of Palo Alto. For, as you all know, our League is strong because so many people contribute. You give your best. And our League receives the benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the president of our League of Women Voters these past three years. I have truly had a good time. Lots of work, yes, but I have learned new skills and have met many new people. I have practiced controlling frustration and celebrated when all went well. I have learned that I still shake when discriminatory comments are made at official city meetings.

This year Ellen Forbes decided to leave our Board (not the League) to nibble on grass in a different pasture. We will miss her. She has served our Board off and on in various capacities since the 1980s. For the past six years she has been our efficient secretary. We hope that she will rejoin us in the future.

We are fortunate to have Mary Alice Thornton accept the presidency next year. Mary Alice has chaired high school registration drives, been our membership chair and worked intimately with our League-a-thon fundraising effort. She is passionate about keeping Caltrain running, quality education and other social policy issues. I look forward to working with her next year. I'm sure you do too.

Welcome and thank you, Mary Alice!

Phyllis Cassel ■

Dear Friends,

On behalf of all of our membership I want to express our enormous thanks to Phyllis for her three years as our President. Thank you everyone for having enough trust in me to elect me President for the 2011-2012 League year. I am grateful for all of the members of the Board and Off-Board who are on my team.

Our mission is to provide Voter Service, to study issues related to governmental action, and to act on issues that have already been studied. There are two national studies this year: The Role of the Federal Government in Education and Privatization.

We will have our Summer Social again on August 16 (watch for details in the August *VOTER*) and our Kick-off meeting in September. And we will take action on issues affecting Palo Alto, the Bay Area and the State. The Stanford Hospitals Expansion plans should be completed soon, and the Palo Alto Baylands/Parkland issue will be on the November ballot.

What issues are important to you? With more member involvement we can accomplish even more. We always need people to work on short-term projects throughout the year, so please call the League office and leave us your name and phone number and your message.

Help us keep democracy strong.

Mary Alice Thornton ■

LWV of Palo Alto: Officers, Directors, Off -Board Roster (650) 327-9148 lwvpaloalto.org

OFFICERS

Mary Alice Thornton
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Bonnie Packer
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lwvpaoffice@gmail.com

Phyllis Cassel
2nd Vice Pres., Action

Gretchen Hillard
Secretary

Doris Petersen
Treasurer



DIRECTORS

Veronica Tinch
Voter Service Coord., New Voices and Smart Voter Liaison

Trina Lovercheck
Candidates Forums

Karen Sundback
Membership, Water/Natural Resources
Membership@lwvpaloalto.org

Carol Bechtold
Program Planning

Betty Gerard
Publicity

Liza Taft
Voter Registration, VOTER Distribution

OFF-BOARD ROSTER

Nancy Olson
Action Tree

TBD
Budget Committee Chair

Alice Smith
League-a-thon

Diane Rolfe
Community Outreach

Nan Prince
Education

Geri Stewart
Health Care

Sally Probst and Jeff Rensch
Housing

Luise Maier
Hospitality

Mitzi Henderson
VOTER Mailing

Karen Douglas
Webmaster

Nominating Committee

Mary Jo Levy
Ellen Forbes
Lanie Wheeler

Annual Meeting

Mary Alice Thornton elected President of LWVPA at Annual Meeting

LWVPA members gathered at the First Presbyterian Church on Saturday, May 7, to elect new directors, approve the budget and by-laws changes, and adopt LWVPA positions and programs for emphasis as set out in the Annual Meeting kit sent earlier to all members. In addition to electing Mary Alice Thornton as President for a one-year term, the following officers and directors were elected:

Bonnie Packer, First Vice President, two-year term, *VOTER* Editor
Phyllis Cassel, Second Vice President, (filling second year of Mary Alice Thornton's term), Action
Gretchen Hillard, Secretary, two-year term
Karen Sundback, Director, two-year term, Membership, Water/Natural Resources
Carol Bechtold, Director, two-year term, Program Planning.

The following were also elected to serve on the nominating committee for next year: Ellen Forbes, Mary Jo Levy and Lanie Wheeler. The new Board convened after the Annual Meeting to appoint the following directors for one-year terms: Liza Taft, Voter Registration and *VOTER* Distribution; and Betty Gerard, Publicity. ■



Your new Board from L to R: Phyllis Cassel, Karen Sundback, Veronica Tincher, Doris Petersen, Mary Alice Thornton, Gretchen Hillard, Bonnie Packer, Carol Bechtold, Trina Lovercheck, Betty Gerard, Liza Taft

Special thanks
to those who helped
provide and set out the
delicious brunch at the
Annual Meeting:
**Doris Petersen, Luise
Maier and Carol
Bechtold**

Joan Mansour - Life Member

Joan Mansour was honored at the May 7 Annual Meeting with a **Life Membership Certificate** from LWVUS. Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President, stated in the letter accompanying the certificate:

“Your dedication and continued contribution through the years are what make the League one of the most effective and powerful organizations in the country. It is the generous gift of time and other personal resources you’ve given that creates meaningful change in communities here and throughout the world. May your life of service stand as a model for the generations that follow you.”

Congratulations, Joan! ■

We were pleased to see Samara Trilling at the Annual Meeting. Samara was our **Student Essay Contest winner** in 2009. She will be enrolling at Columbia University in the fall. Congratulations, Samara! ■

Board Summary – May meeting

At its May meeting, your Board:

- Reviewed details of the May 7 Annual Meeting.
- Voted to purchase a new computer and back-up drive.
- Set dates for the Board retreat and the August Summer Social.
- Discussed a member interest survey to go out soon.

The Board also learned that:

- Phyllis Cassel, Karen Sundback and Bonnie Packer will attend the LWVC convention in Ventura May 13-15.
- At the convention Phyllis will give two workshops on membership and participate in a voter service workshop.
- Phyllis has been attending the Santa Clara County redistricting commission meetings for the League.
- Our own Veronica Tincher is being honored by Avenidas with a richly deserved Lifetime of Achievement award!

Submitted by Ellen Forbes ■

The Role of Federal Government In Public Education: Historical Perspectives

By Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins and Margaret Hawkins Hill of LWVUS

Defining League Positions in Public Education

The League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS), through its positions on equality of opportunity, supports public education and a range of federal education programs. The League worked for the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutes that receive federal aid. Additionally the League, under its position on early intervention for children at-risk addresses issues related to the federal role in public education.

To understand and reach consensus on the present and future role of the federal government in public education, it is important that we have some understanding of the history of the federal government's role in education activities.

Where Have We Been?

From the very beginning of our Republic, a well-educated citizenry was thought to be essential to protect liberty and the general welfare of the people. Even before the Constitution of the United States was established, the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 included responsibilities of the nation for an education system.... Through federal action, education has been encouraged and financially supported from the first Northwest Ordinance in 1787 to the present. Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution granted Congress the power to lay and collect taxes to provide for the general welfare of the United States. It is under this "general welfare" clause that the federal government has assumed the power to initiate educational activity in its own right and to participate jointly with states, agencies and individuals in educational activities.



During the first century of the new nation, Congress granted more than 77 million acres of the public domain as an endowment for the support of schools through tracts ceded to the states for the support of public schools. In 1841, Congress passed an act that granted 500,000 acres to eight states and later increased grants to a total of 19 states....

During the 19th century the federal government involvement in education included vocational training, land grants, and the establishment in 1867 of the Office of Education. The purpose of this office was to collect information on schools and teaching that would help states establish effective school systems.

The passage of the Second Morrill Act in 1890 gave the Office of Education responsibility for administering support for the original system of land-grant colleges and universities. Vocational education became the next major area of federal aid to schools with the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act followed by the 1946 George-Barden Act focusing on agriculture, industrial arts and home economics training for high school students.

World War II led to a significant expansion of federal support for education. The Lanham Act of 1941 and the Impact Aid laws of 1950 eased the burden on communities affected by the presence of military and other federal installations by making payments to school districts. In 1944 the GI Bill authorized postsecondary education assistance that would ultimately send nearly 8 million WWII veterans to college.

The Supreme Court handed down the landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, declaring state laws that established separate public schools based on race unconstitutional. In 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik. This legislation included support to teachers through graduate fellowships to improve the teaching of science, mathematics and foreign languages.

Continued on page 5

The Role of Federal Government In Public Education: Historical Perspectives

(continued from page 4)

The anti-poverty and civil rights laws of the 1960s and 1970s dramatically increased the role of the federal government in public education. Laws passed included: Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964; Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, now known as NCLB; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex and disability.

How Did We Get Here?

In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act launched a comprehensive set of programs including Title I program of federal aid to the disadvantaged. The Act funds primary and secondary education, while explicitly forbidding the establishment of a national curriculum. As mandated in the Act, the funds are authorized for professional development, instructional materials and resources to support educational programs and parental involvement promotion. The Act was originally authorized through 1970; however, the government has authorized the Act every five to ten years since its enactment. The current reauthorization of ESEA is called the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). NCLB also allows military recruiters to access 11th and 12th grade students' names, addresses and telephone listings when requested.

In 1980, Congress established the Department of Education as a Cabinet level agency making education a federal priority issue.... With the introduction of tax credits, parental involvement and vouchers religious and private institutions became involved.... In 1983, the publication of *A Nation At Risk* warned that the United States no longer held the education edge when compared to the rest of the world.



In 1989, President George H. W. Bush signaled public school choice to be a "high priority." He formed a task force to study Hispanic education and called for an "Indian education bill of rights" to help improve education for Native Americans. Drug education also came to the forefront during his Administration. In 1991, he formed the National Education Goals Panel to create a national assessment system to measure progress toward the national education goals for 2000. In that same year, Congress passed a bill to create a national council on education standards and testing, the purpose of which would be to study the feasibility and desirability of creating national standards and a national examination system for students.

During President Bill Clinton's administration, education achievement focused on the Goals 2000 competitive grants. School districts realized significant gains by using these funds. However, the grants were limited to those districts that had the resources to write the grants and study their implication.

President George W. Bush made education issues a priority. NCLB, as described above, was one of the first bills passed by Congress during his Administration.

Where Are We Now?

....Congress is currently embroiled in a debate and stalemate over the reauthorization of ESEA, the 2001 NCLB. Major issues include the purpose and role of the federal government in education, funding, and the extent to which the federal government should play a role in public education. Areas for national debate involve school choice, accountability, teacher quality, goals, standards and above all, funding. Federal funding currently averages about 10 percent of local school budgets.

Produced by The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education, 2011

Editor's note: This article is extracted by Doris Petersen from background information provided by LWVUS. If you are interested in changing our national policies on education, consider joining this study. Contact Doris, Nancy or Nancy at lwvpaoffice@gmail.com for more information. The original article is available at www.lwv.org. ■

From our Action Chair —



LWVPA advocates with your help!

Priorities for LWVPA next year are issues related to the Baylands and Caltrain. LWV California is monitoring and lobbying on the redistricting process and the California budget. If you are interested and wish to help please call or e-mail me. My contact information is in the membership handbook. We will tailor-make a role for you.

Other issues that the LWV has studied and has a position on can be acted upon provided that there is a specific individual willing to be the point person for that subject. We can study further; and we can educate others on positions that we currently have. With permission of the Board, we can advocate on our current positions.

My job is to coordinate, to keep us within League policy, and to facilitate action where appropriate. There are a variety of tools in the League tool box that can be implemented. We are limited only by our people power.

I look forward to your call.

Phyllis Cassel, Action ■

Volunteer Opportunity - LAT needs YOU!

In my new role coordinating **League-a-thon**, I welcome help from all of you, experienced or not. Please send me an e- note saying "Yes!" and we'll take it from there.

Submitted by Alice Smith, League-a-thon
asmith36@sbcglobal.net ■

Smart Voter has a New Face

Have you seen the new Smart Voter website? You've probably used **Smart Voter** – smartvoter.org – in the past to find information about candidates and ballot measures during the run-up to an election. It's easy – just type in your street address and zip code and all the information comes to you. The League is able to present this web site through contributions from local leagues, individuals, County Registrars and the State Secretary of State.



What's so great about Smart Voter is that candidates for office are invited to participate at no cost by setting up a link to Smart Voter where they provide information about their biographies, their priorities in office, their supporters and contributors and answer three questions about relevant issues posed by the League of Women Voters. Here's what the Smart Voter annual report said:

"During the November election cycle alone, Smart Voter provided over 7.7 million web pages of information – a record for a non-Presidential election. Over 2200 candidates posted exclusive background information on Smart Voter. In California, local ballot information was available for counties that encompassed a record 93% of all registered voters – and moved us ever closer to an objective of providing local ballot information for all 17 million people eligible to vote in the largest state that we serve. In addition, for the first time every federal and state legislative candidate in California was asked questions about issues such as the economy, budget, education, health care, energy and campaign financing – giving voters more information on which to base their choices."

Would you like to participate in making **Smart Voter** function? Contact Veronica Tincher for more information.
vtincher@yahoo.com

Check out the new **Smart Voter website** and learn more about Smart Voter. Visit the "about us" section:

<http://smartvoter.org/voter/about.html>

There's a clever short video titled "Why Would You Vote Without Smart Voter?"

Submitted by Veronica Tincher, Smart Voter Liaison ■

SAVE THE DATE! SUMMER SOCIAL - August 16, 7-9 pm. Details in the August VOTER

Thank You

We thank the following people for making the assembly and delivery of the May *VOTER* possible:

Barbara Bowden, Diana Steeples, Geri Stewart,

Isabel Arabian, Janet Creelman, Jean Colby, Vivian Blomenkamp and Mitzi Henderson, organizer.

Thank you to **Sally Probst, Alice Smith, Karen Sundback** and **Trina Lovercheck** for such careful proofreading of this issue of the *VOTER*, and to **Dave Thornton** for the pictures on pages 1 and 3.

Submitted by Bonnie Packer, VOTER Editor ■

Membership Renewal Time!

Your Membership Renewal Letter and Statement will arrive in late June or early July. We ask that you update information about your address, phone number and email address *for the new 2011-2012 handbook*.

Please send your renewal check and form to the League office as early as possible, but certainly by August 15, so you will be current in the new handbook. There is no increase in the dues this year.

Thank you!

Submitted by Karen Sundback, Membership ■

LWVPA Board Retreat Saturday, July 2 : 9 am-2 pm

At its last meeting, the LWVPA Board of Directors agreed to proceed with our **Annual Board Retreat**. If you are a continuing Board member from last year or new this year, please mark the date. This is a time to mentor new Board members and to plan for the future.

The purpose of this meeting is to set our goals and objectives for the new League year, identify the resources we need to achieve them, and the measures needed to evaluate our performance.

For more information please call the League office. Updates will be posted on the League's website: <http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/Calendar.html> ■



The *VOTER* is online in color at www.lwvpaloalto.org

You Can Take a Sneak Peek at the next issue

Want to see the **August *VOTER*** before you receive it in the mail? The August *VOTER* will be posted online at <http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/VOTER.html> (click on "current issue")

by **Monday, July 25.** ■

**The League of Women Voters, born out of suffrage, now educates and advocates.
Anyone of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.**

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____ e:mail _____

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

Mail check to LWVPA, 953 Industrial Ave., Suite 113, Palo Alto, CA 94303

Membership dues to the LWVPA are not tax deductible.

Men are encouraged to join.

Dues grants are available.

For information, call the League office
(650) 327-9148

League of Women Voters of Palo Alto
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(650) 327-9148

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CALENDAR is constantly updated at
<http://lwvpaloalto.org/Calendar.html>

June

- 7 Tue 7:15 pm. Board Meeting, Doris Petersen
- 10 Fri 10 am. Dues Renewal Mailing Party
- 13 Mon Education Committee/Nan Prince

July

- 2 Sat 9 am-2 pm. Board Retreat.
- 11 Mon Noon. *VOTER* deadline.
- 22 Fri 9am. *VOTER* mailing, Channing House

August

- 16 Tue 7-9 pm Summer Social - see August *VOTER* for more details.

UNITED STATES

- President Obama.....(202) 456-1414
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/>
- Senator Feinstein.....(415) 393-0707
<http://feinstein.senate.gov> - click "email me"
- Senator Boxer.....(415) 403-0100
<http://boxer.senate.gov/contact/email/policy.cfm>
- Rep. Anna Eshoo.....(650) 323-2984
<http://eshoo.house.gov/>

CALIFORNIA

- Governor Jerry Brown(916) 445-2841
<http://gov.ca.gov/interact>
- Senator Joe Simitian(650) 688-6384
<http://www.senatorsimitian.com/main/contact>
- Assemblyman Rich Gordon(650) 691-2121
<http://asmdc.org/members/a21/>

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

- Supervisor Liz Kniss(650) 965-8737
liz.kniss@bos.sccgov.org

LWVC GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT

Locate your elected officials with your street address
<http://www.guidetogovernment.org/>