



Vol. XXVII No. III

The Palo Alto *VOTER*

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

December 2012 - January 2013

Be Part of LWVPA Program Planning!

Saturday, January 26, 2013

9 am to noon



The LWVPA Annual Program Planning meeting is the time for our members to help us decide what issues to focus on in 2013 at the state and local levels!

So please join us for brunch provided by your board and for a lively discussion at

**Alice Smith's home
4284 Los Palos Circle, Palo Alto 94306**

This event is free and open to our members.

Please RSVP to the League office at 903-0600 or email lwvpaoffice@gmail.com

Inside this issue:

President's Message page 2

November Board Meeting Summary page 3

LWVC Convention page 3

Lunch with the League page 3

Initiative & Referendum Process Update Study page 4

Bay Area League Day page 5

New Voices for Youth page 5

Housing Committee page 5

Advocacy Report page 6

LWVUS UN Observers page 6

Book Club page 7

Announcements page 7

Elected Officials page 8

Calendar page 8

Come to our Annual Winter Luncheon:

Water: Where Does It Come From, Where Is It Going?



Dr. Christina Swanson

Director, Science Center, Natural Resources Defense Council

Tuesday, December 11, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Garden Court Hotel

520 Cowper Street, Palo Alto

Bring your friends! Lunch is \$32 per person.

Please RSVP by December 5.

Call the office at 903-0600 or send your check, made out to LWVPA, to our office at 3921 E. Bayshore Rd., Suite 209, Palo Alto, CA 94303. You may pay at the door if you have rsvp'd.

Bay Area League Day:

WATER: CALIFORNIA'S GOLD 2013

Saturday, February 2, 2013

See page 5

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



Message from our President

Wow! What a fantastic **victory for women candidates** on November 6, 2012. I want to highlight some of these victories beginning with the record number (100) of women elected to the United States Congress. The Senate has an all-time high number of women with 20.

In the Senate the newly elected women include Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Baldwin, and Mazie Hirono, who all are the first female Senators from their states. Tammy Baldwin is the first openly lesbian member, and Mazie Hirono is the first Asian-American woman in the Senate.

The House of Representatives will also have a record number (80) of women in the 113th Congress. Some of the new Congresswomen include Tulsi Gabbard and Tammy Duckworth, who have military combat experience, and two women under the age of 40: Tulsi Gabbard and Grace Meng. Gabbard will also be the first Hindu elected to Congress.

The State of New Hampshire elected the first ever all-women delegation, choosing a woman Governor, and two women Representatives joining the two women Senate incumbents.

But closer to home, our own member, **Mitzi Henderson**, is overjoyed to report that her daughter, Elizabeth Esty, won her election to the House of Representatives from the 5th House District of Connecticut. We rejoice with Mitzi, Elizabeth and their family.

There is much work yet to be done, but let us celebrate this wonderful year by attending our **Winter Luncheon** at the lovely **Garden Court Hotel on Tuesday, December 11**. I hope to see you there.

Mary Alice Thornton

P. S. You voted in November. If you want your voice heard in 2013, come to **LWVPA's Program Planning meeting on Saturday, January 26**. It is the start of the grassroots process, and the place for each of us to make our opinions heard. See the front page for the details.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

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

OFFICERS

Mary Alice Thornton
President
president@lwvpaloalto.org

Bonnie Packer
1st Vice Pres., VOTER Editor
lwvpaoffice@gmail.com

Phyllis Cassel
2nd Vice Pres., Advocacy

Gretchen Hillard
Secretary

Doris Petersen
Treasurer



DIRECTORS

Veronica Tincher
New Voices; Smart Voter Liaison; Speakers Bureau

Trina Lovercheck
Voter Service Co-chair

Christine Logan
Membership

Betty Gerard
Publicity

Liza Taft
Voter Registration, VOTER Distribution, Health Care

OFF-BOARD

Nancy Olson
Action Tree

Arnold Petersen
Budget Committee Chair

Alice Smith
League-a-Thon

Diane Rolfe
Community Outreach

Carole Stein
Education

Jeff Rensch
Housing

Luise Maier
Hospitality

Mitzi Henderson
VOTER Mailing

Karen Douglas
Webmaster

Suzanne Bayley
Voter Service Co-chair

Karen Sundback
Water/Natural Resources

Nominating Committee

Nancy Rogers, Chair
Nan Prince
Jean Dawes

November Board Meeting Summary

At its **November Meeting**, your board took the following actions:

- Accepted the October minutes and the Treasurer's Report.
- Voted to send a letter to the Mayor and City Council to recommend approval of the project proposed by the **Palo Alto Housing Corporation** at Maybell and Clemo near Arastradero. This project will include 60 units of **affordable senior housing** and 15 units of market rate housing.

The board also learned that:

- The **LWVC State Convention** (May 17-19) Steering Committee met in October. They are developing a wish list of speakers, including a keynote speaker, various options for member participation and getting the word out.

- Four City and State level **Candidate Forums** were held as well as eight School Board Candidate Forums.
- 21 **Pros & Cons** events took place, the highest number in 25 years. About 2000 Voters Guides were distributed as well.
- **Voter registration** was offered to seniors at Paly and Gunn High Schools.
- **Publicity re League's ballot measure positions:** The Palo Alto Weekly ran one paid ad and the Post and Daily News each ran two paid ads. The the PA Weekly also ran community service ads twice for the League's voter service forums.
- **League-a-thon** fundraising is ahead of last year.
- The office's building will be closed from December 21 through January 2.

Submitted by Gretchen Hillard, Secretary

Coming in May: LWVC Convention close to home!

Held in May in odd-numbered years, the **LWVC Convention will be in Santa Clara County in 2013** at a wonderful, intimate location: the **Hayes Mansion in San Jose**. This becomes a special opportunity for Palo Alto League members. With only a short drive south, you can watch the League in action, hear inspiring speakers and help make it all happen.



Have you ever been to San Jose's stunning **Hayes Mansion**? I hadn't, until Mary Jo Levy and I started working with the planners of the 2013 LWVC Convention. What a choice venue! Sixteen acres of loveliness. Great conference center. Terrific food. Free parking. And wi-fi everywhere!

The large and airy rooms of this 62-room Mediterranean Revival style villa, built in 1905, are beautifully decorated with fine craftsmanship, imported marble and exotic woods, and even ornate stained glass windows.

In the coming months, Mary Jo and I will keep you updated on what volunteer jobs are available. Meanwhile, please mark your calendars with **May 17-19**, and plan to be there!

Submitted by Ellen Forbes, Palo Alto Liaison to the LWVC Convention Steering Committee



Lunch with League

San Francisquito Creek Flood Prevention: Progress and Issues

Speaker: Pat Burt

Palo Alto City Councilmember and Chair of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Board

This is a casual opportunity to learn more about the detailed plans to provide 100-year flood protection for both East Palo Alto and Palo Alto, while retaining a natural habitat in the creek.

Thursday, January 10, 2013, 11:45 am to 1:00 pm

Hosts: Doris and Arnold Petersen, 1803 Edgewood Dr., Palo Alto

Cost: \$7.00 for lunch or bring your own. Please **rsvp, no later than noon on January 7**, by calling the League office at 903-0600, and tell us if you are buying lunch or bringing your own.

Lunch with League in February: **Save the date: Thursday, February 7, 11:45 am to 1:00 pm** for our next Lunch with League. We are planning to talk about the Cubberley Community Center: what are the issues and possible immediate and long-term alternatives for the future? Location and speaker TBD.

Submitted by Phyllis Cassel

LWVC Initiative and Referendum Process Update Study



Are Ballot Initiative Reforms Needed?

In 1911, led by newly elected Governor Hiram Johnson, Californians chose to have a direct say in what laws they wanted enacted. Since that time, voters have approved roughly one-third of all qualified ballot initiatives. Our recent election was an exception, when five of the eleven measures were approved.

Most Californians are happy not to have to decipher and decide “yes” or “no” on what can be complex ballot initiatives until November 2014. “Direct Democracy” exacts a toll on all conscientious voters.

Recognizing that changes should be made to the way measures qualify for the ballot, State League members approved a study and arrived at a consensus in 1984. Fifteen years later consensus was reached on an update to our original study. And in response to member requests, the May 2011 State Convention approved another study to further update our position.

League is not alone in desiring changes in the way ballot initiatives, often referred to as the **Fourth Branch of Government**, are presented to voters. The Center for Governmental Studies published *Democracy by Initiative* in 2008, covering every aspect of the process with suggestions of its own.

Think back to our November ballot’s Proposition 31, called State Budget, State and Local Government. It outlined seven distinct changes that would occur to certain responsibilities of counties, other local governments, the legislature and the governor, if approved. Voters were expected to vote either “yes” or “no” on this complex measure. Even though some of its provisions had merit, the measure was defeated.

This past October, the Public Policy Institute of California found that most likely voters say that the initiative process is in need of change: 40% say major changes are needed, 30% say minor changes are needed, and 23% say the process is fine the way it is.



The survey showed overwhelming support for two initiative reform proposals:

- 1) Having a period of time in which the initiative sponsor and the legislature could meet to see if there is a compromise solution before the initiative goes on the ballot: favored by 79% of likely voters; opposed by 17%.
- 2) Increasing public disclosure of funding sources for signature gathering and initiative campaigns: favored by 84% of likely voters; opposed by 12%.

It’s not too late to join our LWVPA study to learn about the mechanics of ballot measures and referendums. Members of the study committee include Joyce Tavrow, chair, Rosalie Lefkowitz, Julie Barney, Nancy Olson, Mary Alice Thornton, Doris Petersen and Gretchen Hillard. **Contact Joyce Tavrow if you want to join the study.**

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 5, from 1:30 - 3:30 pm, in the club room at Moldaw Residences, 899 E. Charleston Rd.** Another study meeting will be held in February, and the **consensus meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 2 at 9:30 am.** The date, time and location of the February meeting and location of the March meeting will appear in the February *VOTER* to arrive in mid-January.

For additional information about the study go to <http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/> and scroll down to the Initiative and Referendum study.

*Submitted by Joyce Tavrow, Chair,
LWVC study committee on the Initiative and
Referendum Process Update Study*

We are saddened by the passing of **Ellen Fletcher**, a truly amazing woman who contributed so much to our community as a member of the City Council and a tireless advocate for bicycling.

Alice Smith writes: “Ellen Fletcher was a woman of foresight. She used the bicycle, even when suffering from debilitating cancer, she fought resolutely to retain Palo Alto as a livable place, starting with her efforts to not ‘Los Angelize’ Palo Alto. She was a survivor of Nazi Germany, via the Kindertransport to England. She was remarkable in her progressive actions. She will be missed.”

To see **the VOTER in color**, go to our website at <http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/VOTER.html> or get the PDF delivered to your e-mail. Send a message to bbpacker@comcast.net to start receiving the VOTER via email.



New Voices For Youth



We are excited about a new project of the **League's New Voices for Youth** program.

Two young women students are working in collaboration with the Teen Talk organization on the Menlo-Atherton High School campus. They will video the experiences of teens who are mothers and fathers. It is planned to present the videos at a conference on Sex Education in the spring.

You're welcome to attend a meeting of our Steering Committee to learn more about New Voices for Youth.

Contact Veronica Tincher for more information.

Bay Area League Day

WATER: CALIFORNIA'S GOLD 2013

Saturday, February 2, 2013

9:00 am – 2:10 pm

First Unitarian Church of Oakland
685 14th St. at Castro, Oakland, 94612

The **League of Women Voters Bay Area** presents a study of the importance of water in California. The keynote speaker will be **Matt Weiser**, journalist with the *Sacramento Bee* and an expert in the field of California water.

There will be three panels of experts on

- California Water Background
- Governance, and
- Water Conveyance, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and Tunnel Vision

Cost in advance: \$30 (\$15 without lunch); at the door \$35 (\$20 without lunch). To register please write a check payable to 'LWVBA' and mail, including your name and any guest names to LWVBA, 1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612.

Registration is also available online from December 1, 2012, through January 31, 2013, via PayPal at www.lwvbayarea.org.

For more details, please call (510) 839-1608 or email editor@bayareamonitor.org.

LWVPA Housing Committee



Our Housing Committee meets monthly at the new League office, the second Tuesday of each month, at 4:15 pm - 5:30 pm. We are looking for more members, so please consider joining us at our upcoming meetings on **December 11** and **January 8**. Current topics we are exploring include:

- the City's Housing Element as it makes its way to state certification
- proposed senior affordable (with some market-rate) housing near Juana Briones Park
- the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, now facing possible closure

2013 will be an interesting year for local housing. Come join us if you are interested!

You can email Jeff Rensch at jrenschi@gmail.com if you would like more information.

Advocacy Report



LWV BAY AREA: The LWVBA sent a letter to the Metropolitan Commission on November 21, objecting to the transfer of \$20 million of funds from the regional agency to county Congestion Management Agencies. The letter, signed by Marion Taylor, LWVBA president, states that the presentation and action offered no opportunity for public scrutiny, deliberation and comment, was not subject to review by the Commission's advisory committees and is a possible violation of the Brown Act. http://www.lwvbayarea.org/files/nov_21_to_mtc_1_.pdf

LWVPA: The City of Palo Alto Draft Housing Element was returned, as expected, from the CA Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) with required changes. In particular: (1) The City was not allowed to count hotel condominiums as housing units as they do not have complete kitchens. (2) The City must create zoning that will allow building of 100 plus temporary housing beds as a right. The City is considering creating an overlay zone. (3) HCD wants the City to provide incentives for lot combining. Palo Alto had counted a large number of small lots in its potential number of units to be developed in this round



of the Element. The City needs to have an approved Housing Element by Spring 2013; otherwise it may lose State transportation dollars. The City has been assigned 2170 more housing units for the next housing cycle starting in 2014. Remember, the City must zone for these units, not build them.

Buena Vista Mobile Home Park: As reported in the press, residents of this very low-income community have received eviction notices. The residents have sought and are receiving advice on how to proceed. The LWVPA Housing Committee is following the issue. Both the loss of housing and community for these families and the permanent loss of these low-income housing units are a major concern.

San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Association received one more needed approval on November 13, this time from the City of Palo Alto, of a site and design proposal for the lands along the creek east of Highway 101. The EIR has already been approved by the Joint Powers Board. This segment of the creek will be repaired before any improvements upstream. The goal is to provide 100-year flood protection including adjustments for the rising sea level.

Submitted by Phyllis Cassel

LWVUS UNITED NATIONS OBSERVERS

In 1945, at the **UN Charter Conference**, the League of Women Voters was invited by President Harry Truman to serve as a consultant to the U.S. delegation. Since that time, the League has continued its presence at the United Nations through its one official and four alternate observers. In July 1997, the League was granted Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which provides the opportunity to make interventions on issues the League supports. Consultative status allows the League to make formal oral or written statements to the UN and to be consulted by the UN in areas which the League has expertise.

The current UN Observers for the League are:



Rosalee Keech, U.N. Observer. Rosalee has been a member for more than 10 years. At the UN she serves on the NGO Working Group on Girls and serves as co-chair for its task force to prevent violence against women and girls. Her focus at the UN is to promote the democratic process and the prevention of violence.

Suzanne Maltz, First Alternate Observer. Suzie has been involved with different Leagues in a leadership capacity for many years. At the UN she enjoys working on issues relating to women and democracy and attends the meetings and briefings of the Department of Public Information Nongovernmental Organizations (UN-DPI).

Margery Cohen, Alternate Observer. Margery became an alternative observer at the UN in 1987 and full UN Observer in 1990. Margery works for the human rights of women and girls.

Mary Fox, Alternate Observer. Mary is a member of the League of New Castle, NY, where she has served in a variety of positions. Her focus at the UN is environmental sustainability and issues surrounding aging. She serves on the NGO Committee on the Aging.

Nancy Lyman Orem, Alternate Observer. Nancy's work at the UN is climate change and environmental sustainability.

Article from <http://lwv.org/content/united-nations-observers>

The League of Women Voters of Santa Clara County is sponsoring a countywide dinner meeting on:

\$\$ in Politics

Forum: EXCESS & HUBRIS - How Money is Killing Democracy

Wed., March 13, 2013, 6:30 - 9:30 pm

cost: \$35 per person

Los Gatos Lodge

50 Los Gatos-Saratoga Rd., Los Gatos 95032

Watch for more information in the February *VOTER!*

Welcome, New Member!

Sharon G. Espar

We are glad you have joined our League!



Are you one of the few who have yet to renew your membership?

Your membership in LWVPA will be dropped if we do not receive your renewal by December 31, 2012. **Please send your check and statement** to the League office now! **There is no increase in the dues this year.** Thank you!

Chris Logan, Membership Chair

Our website has a new look!

Check it out at www.lwvpaloalto.org

Thank You!

Thanks to **Mitzi Henderson** for organizing the **Channing House mailing party** for the November *VOTER* and to **Isabel Arabian, Jean Colby, Mary Cooper, Janet Creelman, Mitzi Henderson, and Geri Stewart** for helping fold, stamp and seal that issue.

Also thanks to all the Board and off-Board members who reviewed this *VOTER* and a special thanks to **Ellen Forbes, Betty Gerard, Trina Lovercheck and Ellen Smith** for their extra careful and invaluable proofreading.

Submitted by Bonnie Packer. VOTER editor

The *VOTER* welcomes articles from you. Please submit them to: lwvpaoffice@gmail.com or bbpacker@comcast.net. The deadline for the February 2013 *VOTER* is January 9, 2013!



All are invited to join the LWVPA Book Club!

Our next meeting is on

Friday, January 25, at 10 am

at Doris Petersen's home, **1803 Edgewood Drive, Palo Alto**, followed by **our club's annual holiday luncheon**. Bring something to share.

The book is: "**The New Jim Crow**" by **Michelle Alexander**. This book looks at the restrictions faced by felons returning to society, which parallel many of the forms of discrimination formerly suffered by African Americans re employment, right to vote, educational opportunities, denial of food stamps, etc.

Please contact Betty Gerard for more information.



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.

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.

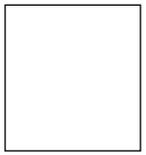
Mail check with this form to LWVPA, 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Suite 209, Palo Alto, CA 94303

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:	CALENDAR	
<p>UNITED STATES</p> <p>President Obama (202) 456-1414 http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/</p> <p>Senator Feinstein (415) 393-0707 http://feinstein.senate.gov - click "email me"</p> <p>Senator Boxer (415) 403-0100 http://boxer.senate.gov/contact/email/policy.cfm</p> <p>Rep. Anna Eshoo (650) 323-2984 http://eshoo.house.gov/</p> <p>CALIFORNIA</p> <p>Governor Jerry Brown (916) 445-2841 http://gov.ca.gov/interact</p> <p>Senator Joe Simitian (650) 688-6384 http://www.senatorsimitian.com/main/contact (Until December 31, 2012)</p> <p>Assemblyman Rich Gordon (650) 691-2121 http://asmdc.org/members/a21/</p> <p>SANTA CLARA COUNTY</p> <p>Supervisor Liz Kniss (650) 965-8737 liz.kniss@bos.sccgov.org (Until December 31, 2012)</p> <p>LWVC GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT</p> <p>Locate your elected officials with your street address http://www.guidetogovernment.org/</p>	<p>Tue, Dec 4, 7-9:30 pm Board Meeting Packer</p> <p>Tue, Dec 11, 11:30 am-1:30 pm Winter Luncheon Garden Court Hotel</p> <p>Tue, Dec 11, 4:15 pm Housing Committee League office</p> <p>Tue, Jan 8, 4:15 pm Housing Committee League office</p> <p>Tue, Jan 8, 7-9:30 pm Board Meeting Cassel</p> <p>Thu, Jan 10, 11:45 am-1 pm Lunch with the League Petersen</p> <p>Fri, Jan. 25, 10 am Book Club/Luncheon Petersen</p>	<p>Sat, Jan 26, 9 am-noon Program Planning Smith</p> <p>Sat, Feb 2, 9 am-2 pm Bay Area League Day Oakland</p> <p>Tue, Feb 5, 7-9:30 pm Board Meeting Lovecheck</p> <p>Thu, Feb 7, 11:45 am-1 pm Lunch with the League TBD</p> <p>Tue, Feb 12, 4:15 pm Housing Committee League office</p> <p>Sat, Mar 2, 9:30 am Initiative Consensus Moldaw</p> <p>Wed, Mar 13, 6:30 pm \$\$ in Politics Los Gatos Lodge</p>
