



Vol. XXIX No. V
March 2014

The Palo Alto *VOTER*

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto
www.lwvpalalto.org



Bay Delta Conservation Plan Forum

Saturday, March 1
1:00 to 3:30 pm

Martin Luther King Jr. Library
Main Meeting Room
150 E. San Fernando Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Free and open to the public

Join the Leagues of Santa Clara County to learn about the **proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan**, various perspectives about it, how it will be implemented, how much it will cost, who will pay and the potential impact to the cost and supply of water in Santa Clara County.

Confirmed speakers include:

- **Deirdre Des Jardins**, Sierra Club of California Water Committee, California Water Research Institute
- **Joan Maher**, Deputy Operating Officer for Water Supply, Santa Clara Valley Water District
- **Doug Obegi**, Staff Attorney, Water Program, Natural Resources Defense Council
- **Richard Roos-Collins**, Principal, Water and Power Law Group
- **Curt Schmutte**, Civil Engineer, Water Resources and Environmental Engineering Consultant

For more information, contact Cathy Lazarus:
president@lwvlamv.org

To join a carpool, call the LWVPA office: 903-0600

Support LWVPA by sending in your donation now and by helping with League-a-Thon. More inside on page 3!

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LWVC Regional Event



Saturday, March 1
12:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Chandni Restaurant, 5748 Mowry School Rd., Newark, CA 94560

One Nation Bay Area awardees will be co-hosting one of the "Talking Taxes" workshops by internationally renowned speaker and author, **Kim Klein**. The workshop will provide training materials and opportunities to discuss, in a humorous and understandable format, **what our taxes do for our communities**.

\$15 per person, paid at the door

11:30 am-12 pm, registration; 12-1 pm, lunch; 1-3 pm, workshop; 3-3:30 pm, wrap up.

Please contact [Syeda Inamdar](mailto:Syeda.Inamdar@lwvpa.org) or call her at 510-206-8158 for more information. Please call the LWVPA office if you plan to go and want to carpool.

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

So much has happened since my last letter for the February *VOTER* that it is fair to say that 2014 has begun with gusto!

On January 25, seventeen members attended **Program Planning** at the home of Alice Smith. The Board gave brief reports on all National, Bay Area, County and City positions, a primer in good government principles. The consensus of the group was to recommend no item for National study or update, but to ask for an extension of the Agriculture Study Update deadline.* **For areas of emphasis at the National level, we chose Voting Rights and Campaign Finance Reform.** *Editor's note: On February 6, LWVUS decided not to extend the date for [the Agriculture Update Study](#).

League-a-Thon letters have been mailed to our members and community donors with the **2014 Facts for Voters**, updated by Doris Petersen. Thank you, Doris. **See page 3 for the ways you can help with our fundraising efforts.**

Bay Area League Day was well attended by six from our League: **Julie Barney, Phyllis Cassel, Karen Douglas, Nancy Olson, Karen Sundback** and myself. The new vision for **Bay Area Open Space** is to provide the public with information about the value of our ecosystems, and how it adds to our economy.

The **Budget and Nominating Committees** have begun their work in preparation for the **Annual Meeting on May 10**, so mark your calendars now.

Four members attended **Moderator Training** recently as we prepare our Voter Service work for a June Primary and a November General Election.

On **March 1** you have a choice of two fascinating events to attend: Santa Clara County Council is hosting a forum on the **Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)** at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Library in San Jose. LWVC is co-hosting one of the "**NonProfits Talking Taxes**" workshops by internationally renowned speaker and author, **Kim Klein**. See the front page for details of both of these events.

Finally, please let us hear from you if you did not attend Program Planning but want to add your issue to the list of "**Burning Issues in Palo Alto**" on page 6.

Mary Alice Thornton

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

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS	OFF-BOARD
Mary Alice Thornton <i>President</i> president@lwvpaloalto.org	Veronica Tincher <i>New Voices; Smart Voter Liaison; Speakers Bureau</i>	Nancy Olson <i>eAction Alert</i>
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		Karen Douglas <i>Webmaster</i>
		Karen Sundback <i>Water/Natural Resources</i>
		<u><i>Nominating Committee</i></u>
		Marlene Prendergast, Chair
		Pat Saffir
		Chris Logan
		Trina Lovercheck

February Board Meeting Summary

At the February Board Meeting your board took the following actions:

- Accepted both the December 2013 and January 2014 minutes as well as the Treasurer's report.
- Unanimously ratified the EAC vote on the Palo Alto Core Values document submitted to the City of Palo Alto.
- Based on the Program Planning meeting in January, voted unanimously to submit to LWVUS two issues for emphasis: citizens' right to vote and campaign finance reform.
- Appointed Pat Saffir to the Budget Committee.



The board also:

- Held a debriefing discussion on the results from the January 29 Program Planning meeting.
- Recommended asking LWVUS to extend the agriculture study update.
- Discussed the successful Bay Area League Day on Open Space held in Oakland on February 1.

The board also learned that:

- There is an off-board vacancy on the Nominating Committee which needs to be filled by a board appointment.
- There has been a decline in membership (237 as of February 4) which will affect the number of representatives we send to National Convention.
- There were 600 LAT letters and *Facts for Voters* mailed.
- There is a need for clerks and callers for LAT (League-a-Thon) for March 10 and 11.
- The February Lunch with the League will be on affordable housing on February 12 with speaker Marlene Prendergast.
- Santa Clara County Leagues are holding a forum on Bay Delta Conservation Plan on March 1 in San Jose.

Submitted by Virginia Pirrotta, Secretary

The next **Lunch with the League** will be on the



Public Safety Building

- It seems no one wants to pay for it. Do we need it?
- What constitutes a state-of-the-art public safety building?
- Where would it be sited?
- What would it cost and how would the City pay for it?

Speakers TBD

Wednesday, March 12, 11:45 am - 1 pm

Hobee's

4224 El Camino Real

Palo Alto

Contact Phyllis Cassel for more information.

RSVP to lwvpaoffice@gmail.com or call the office at 903-0600.

LWVUS has issued its "First Call" to Convention 2014 in Dallas, TX, on June 6-10, 2014. Please plan to join national, state and local League leaders from around the country for this lively biennial event. See the [Convention 2014 webpage](#) for more information. Contact Mary Alice Thornton if you wish to go.

League-a-Thon (LAT) is here again!



League-a-Thon is the special time during the year that we reach out to the community for financial support for the League's programs and Voter Service.

More than 20% of our budget is

funded by contributions from the community. The LAT effort has begun with the mailing of over 400 letters to the community detailing the work of LWVPA to educate and to advocate locally.

The **LAT telephoning event** is the follow-up to community supporters who have not sent in their contribution by February 23. League volunteers have successfully conducted this campaign over many years.

Join us at the League office on **March 10 and/or 11 between 3:00 and 5:00 pm** with your cellphones and help us as either a clerk or a caller. You may also make these calls from home. Another clerking session may be scheduled for later in the week as well.

At the same time that we mailed the LAT letters to the community we sent to you, our members, a similar request. We thank those of you who have recently generously supported LWVPA through the 75th Anniversary. However, we can always benefit from more support. **Please send in your donation today.**

Please contact **Alice Smith, LAT Chair**, or **Veronica Tincher, LAT Assistant**, for more information on how you can help keep LWVPA strong.



Advocacy Report - Phyllis Cassel

LWVPA The City of Palo Alto has invited everyone to contribute to a discussion of Palo Alto's **CORE VALUES** http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/topics/open_city_hall.asp

LWVPA sent out a Call to Action last month asking each of you to participate as individuals.

We then composed a letter that we sent to the Council and posted on the City website at "Open City". See page 5. The statement was drawn from our LWVPA positions and the basic League Principles. The details of our positions and principles are at www.lwvpaloalto.org under Where We Stand.

LWVC

League Charges State with Illegally Denying the Right to Vote to Tens of Thousands of Voters.

On February 4, The LWVC, the ACLU of California and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area filed the suit in the Alameda County Superior Court. According to the lawsuit the state's actions clearly violated state law when the Secretary of State issued a directive to local elections officials in December 2011 asserting that people are ineligible to vote if they are on post-release community supervision or mandatory supervision. These are two new and innovative forms of community-based supervision created under California's Criminal Justice Realignment Act for people recently incarcerated for low-level, non-violent, non-serious crimes. Court intervention is necessary because a state official should not be able to disenfranchise 60,000 voters with the stroke of a pen. <http://ca.lwv.org/Home> > [Home](#) > [Public Statements](#)

Legislation: Using Our Updated Initiative Reform Position. LWVC has been part of an almost year-long process, working with a broad and diverse set of civic and advocacy groups on initiative reform. The process led to a package of changes to the current system that all or most of the groups could agree to. This package is about to be introduced in the legislature, with initial backing from the LWVC and California Common Cause. As the bill progresses through the legislature, some local Leagues may get requests to help lobby for the bill.

Money in Politics Action Alert Coming Up!

Campaign disclosure bills that LWVC strongly supports are expected to come up for a vote very soon.

- **SB 2** (Lieu and Yee) increases transparency by toughening slate mailer disclosure, requiring state candidates to "Stand by Your Ad" as federal candidates do, and strengthening enforcement.
- **SB 27** (Correa) closes the loophole that allows nonprofits to contribute huge sums in California elections without disclosure.

- **AB 800** (Gordon) gives the Fair Political Practices Commission important tools to investigate suspected violations.

LWVC also supports **SB 52** (Leno), but it is not on the same fast track as the other three bills. You may get messages from the California Clean Money Campaign about SB 52.

LWVUS

Election Assistance Commission Rejects KS, AZ Request to Change National Voter Registration Form.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) rejected requests from the states of Arizona and Kansas to modify the national mail-in voter registration form to require voters to provide documentary proof of citizenship with that form. LWVUS joined LWVKS and LWVAZ to submit [comments to the EAC](#) regarding this decision. Read the [press release](#) on this important victory by clicking on this link.

LWVUS Urges U.S. House to Modernize and Repair the Voting Rights Act.



LWVUS [sent a letter](#) to the U.S. House of Representatives urging them to act quickly on the bi-partisan Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 recently introduced by Representatives Sensenbrenner, Conyers, Scott, and Lewis. Members of the League's Lobby Corps will also be visiting targeted offices on the hill to deliver this message in person.

Presidential Commission on Election Administration Issues Solid Recommendations.

The Presidential Commission on Election Administration (PCEA) released [their report](#) to President Obama outlining **how to improve the administration of America's elections**. In a [press release](#), the League said "there are many good recommendations in the PCEA report and others that we will need to look at more closely to examine the real impact on American voters." We look forward to working with the Commission to implement the best of these recommendations and improve how elections are run across this nation.

Support EPA's Limits on Carbon Pollution.

President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have [proposed a first-ever federal carbon pollution standard](#) for every new power plant built in America. This is a game changer for the climate – especially because power plants are our single largest source of carbon pollution. [Submit a public comment to the EPA in support of the standard and your voice will be part of the official record.](#)

To link to the [websites](#) in the VOTER, you need to read this in a PDF format on a computer. Go to our website at www.lwvpaloalto.org/VOTER.html or email bbpacker@comcast.net to start receiving the VOTER as a PDF via email.

This is the letter LWVPA sent to the City of Palo Alto Open City website on January 29, 2014:

Palo Alto Core Values: LWVPA Statement

Governance

Palo Alto Governance shall be open and transparent. Meetings, agendas, reports and minutes will be available to all. Each person's ideas will be heard and respected. There will be an open, fair selection of persons serving on boards, commissions, committees and task forces and those persons shall represent a variety of perspectives. Decisions by officials will be made after hearing from many sources, all of which are available to the public. There will be support for the council manager form of government with a mayor elected by the council from among its members.



Respect

Palo Alto citizens, council and professional staff shall treat each other with respect. The interrelatedness of business, commercial and residential land uses will be recognized. The community will strive for a beneficial balance for those uses.

Intergovernmental Co-operation

Palo Alto will support intergovernmental co-operation with other jurisdictions and agencies, such as the school district, the county, neighboring cities and regional agencies. It will have cooperative working relationships with local schools, which provide preschool through college education.

Discrimination

No person will be discriminated against based upon race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. No person shall suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.

Housing

Palo Alto will plan for diverse housing options, including persons of all ages, incomes and abilities. We believe that a wide diversity of people in the community increases our understanding and knowledge of the world and improves our decision making.

Environment

Palo Alto will strive to make decisions that will sustain the environment by reducing global warming and using limited natural resources wisely. It will support policies that reduce adverse climate changes and protect our environment. Waste, including toxic waste, will be disposed of in ways that do not harm the environment.

The city will support measures that maximize open space in the foothills west of Foothill Expressway and that maximize open space and minimize development in the Baylands east of Route 101. The city will promote a balance of housing, commercial, services, research and industrial manufacturing in the city.

Transportation

Palo Alto will cooperate on transportation solutions with local and regional agencies. Development will be encouraged to be along the major transportation routes to make maximum use of alternative transportation modes.

Lunch with the League Report: Planned Community Zones

Last month, about 18 folks gathered at Hobee's to hear from our local experts on Planned Community Zones – currently a hot topic in this City.

The panel began with **Senior Assistant City Attorney, Cara Silver**, who explained that a Planned Community Zone (PC) is an Overlay District that supersedes all other categories in the Zoning Ordinance such as Residential, Commercial, or Industrial zones.



To start the PC process **three findings are needed**: the site is situated such that the project and site are not compatible with existing zones; public benefits will be an asset not otherwise possible with regular zoning; and the project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and adjacent neighborhoods. The PC process is elaborate and more time-consuming than the normal approval process. The application begins with a hearing at the Planning and Transportation Commission, which is advisory to the City Council. Then the project goes to the Architectural Review Board. It then returns to the Planning and Transportation Commission which must determine that the project meets required findings and has a public benefit. The final step is a hearing before the City Council. All through the review process, issues such as the public benefit, height, daylight plane, parking, and variances from regular zoning are taken into consideration.

Judith Wasserman, former member of the Architectural Review Board and the Public Art Commission, noted that the PC Zoning Ordinance is ambiguous. She suggested three solutions: give up PC Zoning as it is not flexible; redefine the public benefits; or clarify the public benefits of the project itself. She concluded by saying, "We [the City] do not sell zoning."

Continued on page 6

Lunch with the League Report continued from page 5.

Phyllis Cassel, former member of the Planning and Transportation Commission and currently a vice president on the LWVPA board, added that once a PC is passed any major changes to the project require a formal amendment with a complete rehearing of the process. Phyllis reviewed all the PCs since the ordinance was enacted over 40 years ago. Approximately 110 PCs passed, but about 10 of those were redeveloped and rezoned to the underlying zone leaving about 100 PC zones in the City. The first PCs recorded with public benefits were in 1979.

The smallest PCs are 5 single-lot projects that were sold as two-unit condominiums on previous school sites. Only approved PCs are listed and most PC applications are withdrawn if the developer feels it will not get approval, so there is no easy way to determine how many PC applications were not approved over the years.

Submitted by Mary Alice Thornton and Phyllis Cassel



Education Committee

The LWVPA Education Committee is growing. We will be having bimonthly meetings at Moldaw Residences. The next meeting will be a luncheon on

April 3 at noon. We are also planning to meet with the Santa Clara County Department of Education regarding necessary county needs assessments and the current status of the costs and availability of space for children in the schools.

We are continuing our work on a **Power Point presentation on Early Childhood Education** to be used for education and advocacy. We are in contact with the LWVC Education Committee and are following **SB 837 on Early Childhood Education which is supported by LWVC.** This is the bill that calls for "expanding transitional kindergarten" so that all 4-year-olds will be able to go to preschool.

Regarding the **Higher Education Study**, LWVC board members postponed a vote on the scope of this study as presented by the higher education subgroup committee. They asked for a narrower scope which the subgroup then submitted. The LWVC board will have a phone meeting on February 11 to discuss this further.

The next meeting of the **LWVSCC Education Committee** is on **Monday, March 24, noon** at Grain d'Or, 137 E. El Camino Real at Grant Road, Mountain View.

Submitted by Carole Stein, Off-board Education Chair and member of the LWVC Education Committee

Burning Issues

At **Program Planning** in January, participants offered the following list of burning issues that our League might consider:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Housing Density
- Citizen Participation
- Core Values - Open City
- Affordable Senior Housing - Affordable Housing
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety Building
- 27 University Project
- Public Parking
- Traffic
- Use of the Hamilton Avenue Post Office Building
- Quality and Quantity of Child Care
- Grand Boulevard Initiative - El Camino Real Corridor

Let us know what your burning issues are. These may be considered at the **Annual Meeting on May 10.** Next month's *VOTER* will include the Call to Annual Meeting and a request for non-recommended items.

Great Decisions 2014

Don't know much about foreign policy? Or you know lots about foreign policy!

Either way you are welcome to the discussions at our weekly **LWVPA Great Decisions** meetings. You are invited to join the small group discussions on **each Friday morning during February and March: 9:30 - 11:30 am in the 6th floor lounge at Channing House** (thank you, **Geri Stewart**, for making the arrangements). You do not need to purchase a Foreign Policy Association book. You can drop in to a topic that interests you and we will learn together. Bring any articles, books, etc. on the subject to share.



- February 14** Israel and the U.S.
- February 21** Turkey's challenges
- February 28** Islamic awakening
- March 7** Energy independence
- March 14** Food and climate
- March 21** China's foreign policy
- March 28** U.S. trade policy

Comments or questions to Nancy Olson, 327-8009



Housing and Transportation Committee

The Housing and Transportation committee will have a busy year tracking the City of Palo Alto's

Housing Element update (draft due in November of this year) as well as following, and perhaps influencing, the parts of the Our Palo Alto planning process that affect our issues. These include TDM (transportation demand management) and the long-term fate of PC zoning.

Our next meeting is on **Monday, February 17, first floor conference room, League office building, at 4:30 pm.** Please email **Jeff Rensch** at jrench@gmail.com if you would like to attend. You are most welcome!

THANK YOU!

Thanks to **Barbara Bowden, Janet Creelman and Mitzi Henderson** for helping with the mailing of the February *VOTER*. And special thanks

to **Mitzi Henderson for organizing the Channing House mailing party.**

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 Alice Smith** for their extra careful and invaluable proofreading.

Submitted by Bonnie Packer, VOTER editor



Don't forget to send in your donation to LWVPA as part of our League-a-Thon campaign.

Then put the dates, **March 10 and 11,** on your calendar to help with our calling to community donors.

Contact **Alice Smith** or **Veronica Tincher** to say you will help!

Thanks!



All are invited to the LWVPA Book Club!

The next selection is

Bill Bryson's "One Summer: America, 1927"

-- a journey back to an amazing season when Charles Lindbergh became a worldwide hero and Babe Ruth was tearing up batting records.

The meeting will be at the home of Ursula Moore, on **Friday, March 14, at 10 am. All are welcome.** Please RSVP to Ursula Moore.

Please call **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 _____

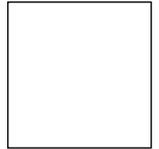
Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____ email _____

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



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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>

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

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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

LWVC GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT

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

CALENDAR

Wed, Feb 12, 11:45 am-1 pm
Lunch with the League
Hobee's

Mon, Feb 17, 4:30 pm
Housing Committee
League office

Sat, Mar 1, 1 pm-3:30 pm
Delta Plan Forum
San Jose

Sat, Mar 1, 12 pm-3:30 pm
Taxes Workshop
Newark

Tue, Mar 4, 7-9:30 pm
Board Meeting
Taft

Wed, Mar 5, noon
VOTER Deadline

Mon, Mar 10, 3 pm
League-a-thon
League office

Tue, Mar 11, 3 pm
League-a-thon
League office

Wed, Mar 12, 11:45 am-1 pm
Lunch with the League
Hobee's

Fri, Mar 14, 10 am
Book Club
Moore

Mon, Mar 24, noon
LWVSCC Education Committee
Grain d'Or, Mountain View

Tue, Apr 2, 7-9:30 pm
Board Meeting
Cassel