



Vol. XXXII No. VI
February, 2017

The Palo Alto *VOTER*

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

www.lwvpaloalto.org

Lunch with League Protecting Our Civil Liberties

guest speaker:

Nayna Gupta

Attorney for the ACLU of Northern California

Wednesday, February 7
12 - 1:30pm

at the First Congregational Church
1985 Louis Rd, Palo Alto, CA



Attorney Gupta is a graduate of Stanford law school and is the Racial Justice Fellow at the ACLU of Northern California. Ms. Gupta will discuss racial justice issues including ACLU's work on racial profiling and bias within the San Francisco Police Department.

If you would like to order a vegetarian wrap or chicken wrap from Lyfe Kitchen, please send a check for \$11 to LWVPA, 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Suite 209, Palo Alto, CA, 94303. **OR** to pay by PayPal, go to: <http://lwvpaloalto.org/donation.html>, click on the top Donate button and put "Lunch with League" in the space for special instructions. Please be sure to indicate either on your check or in the special instructions, whether you'd like a chicken or vegetarian wrap.



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Because Democracy is not a Spectator Sport



Be a part of Program Planning Saturday, February 4, 9 am to Noon

at the home of Sandra Slater
1001 Emerson, Palo Alto

All members welcome. Brunch provided by your board.

Please RSVP no later than January 31.

See page 4 for more information.

Bay Area League Day:

Bay Area Housing Crisis

Saturday, January 28

9 am - 3 pm

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

The results of the November election have generated in many of us a healthy desire for action. What can our LOCAL League do?



To expand on very good advice: Think globally, think nationally, think statewide, think regionally, think countywide, but **act locally**. To put this advice into the context of the League: support calls to action and educate on issues from LWV United States; LWV California; LWV Bay Area; Leagues of Santa Clara County; and ACT as the Palo Alto League on important local issues.

There has been considerable League action since the election. National continues to work on voter rights and voter suppression issues: http://forum.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2016_end_of_the_year_message.pdf. National has issued calls to action to halt the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, to contact Congress about the president-elect's conflicts of interest and much, much more. National has also given us sound advice on how to react to the current political situation: <http://lwv.org/blog/10-ways-you-can-help-defend-our-democracy>.

Armed with the LWVUS position on Immigration, the Leagues of Santa Clara County submitted a letter in December supporting the County Supervisors' efforts to provide legal support for undocumented immigrants, which is moving forward, and LWVPA submitted a letter to the Palo Alto City Council in support of a Resolution of Inclusion, which passed unanimously on December 12. Our League co-sponsored an Empathy/Inclusive Community event in December and this month we are publicizing the event: Immigrants and Allies, on January 19 (see page 6) and co-sponsoring a pro-choice event on January 22 (see page 7). Bay Area League Day in San Jose on January 28 is focusing on the regional housing crisis. (See page 3.) You can register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bay-area-housing-crisis-tickets-30767989886>.


We kicked off the new year with an inspiring and exciting Action Brunch on January 7, brilliantly organized by an amazing team led by Megan Swezey Fogarty and Lynne Russell, at Sarah Sands lovely home. Over 80 women and men, including those new to the League, discussed ways we can act effectively to make democracy work. We explored potential action and education regarding affordable housing, transportation, sustainability and climate change, education, sanctuary cities, voter suppression, electoral college, civil liberties and more. Your ideas and your energy will do much to inform our Program Planning process on February 4. (See page 4)

You can direct your energies by becoming active on one of LWVPA's committees: Our Housing and Transportation Committee has been and will continue to be active at the city level on the many housing and transit issues that we expect to be high on our decision makers' agendas. We have an Education Committee that plans to focus on the Palo Alto Unified School District Board, as well as continue its efforts in Early Childhood Education. There are two newly formed committees: one is looking into responsible gun ownership regulations for Palo Alto, and the other is exploring the sanctuary city movement.

This will be the Year of the Rooster. With your commitment we can become a vigorously active League to give the League's virtual rooster something to crow about!

Bonnie Packer

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

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS	OFF-BOARD
Bonnie Packer <i>President</i> president@lwvpaloalto.org	Jeannie Lythcott <i>Voter Services</i>	Nancy Olson <i>Action Tree</i>
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		Steve Levy <i>Housing and Transportation</i>
		Lynn Drake Ellen Springer Lynne Russell

Board Meeting Highlights November 22, 2016

Your Board:

- Decided to hold the annual Program Planning Meeting on February 4, 2017. This is the meeting where the membership will be deciding on proposed changes to areas of advocacy emphasis for 2017-18, which will be considered in relation to areas of emphasis at the local, county, and state levels.



- Decided to act as a secondary co-sponsor for the event "Your Voice Matters: Empathy & the Marathon to Create Inclusive Community," December 4, 2016.

Discussed:

- Where do we go from here in the aftermath of the election? Where do we direct our energies? What are we best at? What role can we play in directing the newly awakened energy of our youth and others who now want to become more civically engaged? How can we utilize the gifts and energy of our many members? There is so, so much that needs doing locally.
- The Action Brunch to be held on January 7, where we hope to recruit new members and excite and re-energize our membership about action that individuals can take to help 'make democracy work'.

Learned about:

- The well-attended lunch with the League on November 17, with LaRon Dennis from the Santa Clara County DA's Office speaking about the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice system.
- Upcoming speaker events, including Jack Rakove to speak on the Electoral College in January, and Nayna Gupta, Staff Attorney with the ACLU of Northern California, to speak on civil liberties in February.

*Karen Kalinsky
Secretary*

Can We Ever Get Rid of the Electoral College?

Stanford University historian Jack Rakove will speak about the history of the Electoral College and the implications of the system in today's world.

**Wednesday, Jan 11, at 7 pm
at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills**

BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY

BAY AREA HOUSING CRISIS

**Saturday, January 28
9 am - 3 pm**

Camden Community Center
3369 Union Ave
Multipurpose Room
San Jose, CA 95124

**Key Address Speaker:
State Assemblymember
Tony Thurman**

**Plus a Four-Panel discussion on the
current housing situation in the Bay Area**

Program

- 9:00 am - Registration & Continental Breakfast
- 9:30 am - Opening Remarks; PANEL ONE:
Measuring the Affordability Gap & Its Impact
- 10:30 am - PANEL TWO: The Relationship Between
Housing Production & Affordability, and
Displacement in the San Francisco Bay Area
- 11:30 am Keynote Speaker: Tony Thurmond,
Assemblyman, District 15
- 12:00 pm - 12:45 pm - Lunch
- 12:45 pm - PANEL THREE: State, Regional & Local
Roles in Addressing Affordability
- 1:45 pm - PANEL FOUR: The Agenda Moving
Forward

For direction, last mile and special needs: [http://
www.lwvbayarea.org/about.html](http://www.lwvbayarea.org/about.html)

For registration information go to:
http://www.lwvbayarea.org/2017_League_Day.html

Early Bird with Lunch \$35 or Early Bird without Lunch \$20. Day-of registration will be available at the door (\$40 with lunch; \$25 without).

Please contact the LWVPA office or send us an email at lwvpaoffice@gmail.com if you are interested in carpooling from Palo Alto.

What is Program Planning?



On February 4, all members are encouraged to come together to discuss what should be the League's work for 2017-18 for the local and county Leagues and for 2017-19 for the state League. Your recommendations at this meeting will be voted upon at LWVPA's annual meeting later this spring and at the state convention in June.

What does Program Planning entail? The term "Program" in League jargon means: the issues that League members choose at the grassroots level for concerted study, education and action at each League level: Palo Alto/Stanford area, Santa Clara County and, this year, for California. (Next year we discuss the program for the National League.)

Unlike Program Planning in past years, local Leagues are NOT being asked to advise whether the League positions at each level need to be retained, dropped or updated. Rather, we are being asked to focus our energies on deciding issues for emphasis.

Issues for emphasis are those issues that our members decide should be the priority for our League, the County Leagues and the State League over the next year or two. Questions to consider when recommending these priority issues for each of these levels include:

- * Does this issue involve a need not being well met by other groups?
- * Could the League play a significant role in impacting community concern and/or public policy decisions on this issue? Does it further our long-term vision and impact?
- * Is there member interest and commitment to this topic?
- * Is this an issue that would attract participation from the community and our members? Would it entice new members? diverse members?
- * Do we have the capacity (staff, members/volunteers, funds, project management) to take on this issue? Is it an issue that will attract financial support?
- * Is this an issue on which legislative or regulatory action is needed? Will political realities permit effective government action during the next one or two years?
- * If this is a topic for study, will the issue still be timely when the study is completed in several years?

Once members decide on a particular issue for emphasis, **what should the League do?** Where should the League engage? Where can the League make a difference? Where will our League have the most impact? Here are some choices:

- * Pursue community education about an issue
- * Advocate on an issue

- * Study an issue (a traditional study or possibly a concurrence with a position reached by another League or the recommendations of a resource committee)
- * Consider an update study of an issue on which the League (on any level) already has a position
- * Consider any combination of these—for example, advocacy on one aspect of an issue while another aspect is being studied or updated; or a combination of action and community education on the same issue

At Program Planning on February 4, to put this effort into context, your board will briefly summarize what actions have been taken at the various League levels over the past year or two. Then we welcome your input on what should be the League's issues for emphasis in the coming year or two. We will also consider the ideas generated at the Action Brunch on January 7.

We look forward to an exciting and important discussion. Thanks for being an involved League member.

Bonnie Packer

Together we will make a difference in 2017!

Over 80 women and men met at the home of Sarah Sands on January 7 for the LWVPA's inspiring **Action Brunch**.

Attendees broke out into groups to get things started on issues such as building an informed electorate, climate change, education inequity, and defending voter rights. A big thank you to the event organizers: **Megan Fogarty, Lynne Russell** and to **Sarah Sands** for offering her beautiful home for this event. Thanks to the breakout group leaders - **Phyllis Cassel, Jeannie Lythcott, Maureen O'Kicki, Bonnie Packer, Sigrid Pinsky, Lisa Ratner, Shauna Rockson, and Mila Zelkha**. Organizers will send follow-up information to all who attended, and together we will make things happen in 2017!



Jeannie Lythcott kicks things off at the Action Brunch

Sue Hermsen



Sigrid Pinsky introduces her break-out topic to a main group of over 80 attendees.



Advocacy Report by Lisa Ratner

National

LWVUS issued a **Call to Action**

for all members to call our senators and congressional representatives to investigate Donald Trump's business dealings which create unconstitutional conflicts of interest, since he has refused to sell his holdings. The LWVUS also asks members to call Congress and tell our representatives to support Elizabeth Warren's bill which would require the President to sell his holdings. **It is not too late for your phone call.** We urge all members to sign up to receive email notifications of calls to action at this link: <http://lwv.org/get-involved>.



Despite valiant efforts by LWVUS and other plaintiffs to head off **voter suppression** using the federal courts, thousands of otherwise eligible voters did not get a chance to cast their votes in the November election because of voter ID laws, purges of voter lists, and reduced precinct resources. Read the article: <http://lwv.org/press-releases/2016-presidential-election-was-rigged>

State:

LWVC summary of legislative action for 2016 can be reviewed at <http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/docs/2015-2016-legislative-advocacy-review.pdf>

Local

Housing Impact Fees. Our Housing and Transportation Committee continues to follow the city's proposed housing impact fee, which would levy a fee on residential, commercial and office development at a level far above surrounding cities. We have sent a letter opposing such a drastic upward fee, questioning whether it would simply discourage the building of more affordable housing. We also sent a letter on November 30 to the Planning and



Transportation Committee supporting Accessory Dwelling Units in Palo Alto, see:

http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/LWVPA_Advocacy.html

VTA Bus Service. We continue to follow the VTA's proposed plan for bus service in the County. The current proposal would cut service in Palo Alto, with obvious painful impacts on residents of senior housing and affordable housing facilities which lie on the existing bus routes. The rationale for the cuts is that VTA money is best spent on more heavily used, more frequent routes. Although the VTA claims it might continue paratransit service even if the routes are cut, public pressure is required to make sure this problem is fairly solved. The VTA will hold a public hearing on January 19 at 6 pm at the Palo Alto City Council chambers for comments on the plan.

Stormwater Fee Increase. LWVPA has been asked to support the upcoming city stormwater fee ballot measure coming in April 2017. Current fees will expire in June 2017, leaving insufficient money to fund needed storm drain infrastructure and green water conservation measures. We have reviewed the reports documenting the need for the increase and will be reporting to the Board soon on this issue.

Immigration and Civil Rights.

LWVPA supported Councilman Wohlbach's resolution of inclusiveness brought before the Palo Alto City Council on December 12. We are also working on a potential amendment to the Police Policy Manual which would align city policy with the California Trust Act. This act forbids county and state law enforcement from direct cooperation in immigration enforcement actions absent probable cause, a warrant, or a serious criminal offense. A community meeting sponsored by the City of Palo Alto and many civic organizations will discuss Immigrants and Allies at 7 pm on January 19 in the Auditorium at Cubberley Theatre. The topics will include immigrants' rights and our community response. (See page 6.)



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.

New Voices (NV4Y) Update



New Voices For Youth (NV4Y) is an after school program for youth in Redwood City, Belle Haven and East Palo Alto designed to encourage civic engagement through video production. It was founded by the Leagues of Palo Alto and South San Mateo in 2004. For more information see: <http://www.newvoicesforyouth.org>.

New Voices' new project director, Jose 'Lalo' Saavedra, is rapidly learning our program while leading the middle-school students in our ongoing classes at the Siena Youth Center. Most of the students are new to New Voices and Lalo reports that he has given them freedom to develop individual pieces but that all of them are talking about the gentrification of Redwood City in some way.

At the same time, our team is actively exploring opportunities to reach East Palo Alto and Belle Haven middle-school students with "M-A Speaks Out: The Truth About College" video created by our Menlo-Atherton (M-A) students last spring. This short film expresses "what we wished we'd known before going to high school" and was designed for students, teachers and parents in this middle-school community.

Recently, Dr. Anna Waring, Executive Director of the Foundation for a College Education, and our NV team explored ways our two programs might work together to reach our target audience while enhancing their students' experience. Going forward, Lalo and FCE's Associate Director of Programs, Asra Hussain, will meet in January to further plan their strategy. We are cautiously hopeful that this will lead to a fruitful collaboration for more students.

NV is very pleased to welcome three new members of our League Steering Committee. We are recruiting more members of the committee from LWV Palo Alto. The Committee meets monthly and committee members may participate with as much time as they would like. No commitments are necessary. Contact Veronica Tincher if you're interested.

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 into 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*

Annual Winter Luncheon a Great Success

Over 70 people gathered at the Garden Court Hotel in Palo Alto last month to hear Stanford Professor Rodolfo Dirzo's talk, "Human Induced Global Environmental Change and the Decline of Animal Life", and to mingle with fellow League members and their guests. Professor Dirzo delighted the crowd with his engaging and thought-provoking presentation on the interconnectedness of all life, and how "life begets life". However, through human impacts such as the burning of fossil fuels, habitat destruction and meat consumption, life is on the decline and earth is facing massive extinctions including the potential loss of the iconic and highly evolved African elephant. Despite such grim news, Professor Dirzo left his audience with hope that through engaging people in the wonders of all life, and ending harmful environmental practices, biodiversity can be preserved for both human and planetary health.

Maureen O'Kicki

Membership Update

We are thrilled to report that our membership is now **over 300 strong** and with wisdom and energy we are poised for 2017. **A few of you have yet to renew for 2017.** We would hate to lose you so **please take a moment to renew** via [PayPal](#) on our website or by mailing your check **today!** We are finalizing our 2017 Member Directory in the coming weeks and **we want to include you!**

*Lynne Russell and Megan Swezey Fogarty,
Membership Chairs*

Immigrants and Allies in 2017: Feeling Safe in a New Era

**Thursday, January 19, 7 pm - 9 pm
Cubberley Theatre
4000 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto**

We must be ever-vigilant in ensuring that there is no place for intolerance or anti-immigrant bias in our neighborhoods of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. There are members of our community who do not feel safe. That is unacceptable. Please join us for an important evening as we come together. En ingles y español.

Sponsored by the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission, and others.

Step Up for Pro-Choice!

Sunday, January 22
12 pm - 1:15 pm

Los Altos Youth Center,
1 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos



Celebrating the 44th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade

Lupe Rodriguez, Director of Public Affairs, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, will speak on the continuing assaults against Planned Parenthood and the shift in the political climate and offer action ideas to those who support reproductive rights.

Dr. Sophia Yen will also speak and give a physician's response to the threats to reproductive choice.

The community is welcome. Registration is \$3 at the door. Sponsored by Los Altos-Mountain View AAUW, LWVPA, and others.

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**, and **Lisa Ratner**.

Sue Hermsen, VOTER Editor



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on Twitter



[lwvpaloalto](#)

The LWVPA Book Group

will meet

Friday, February 3, at 10 am

to discuss:

A Fighting Chance
by Elizabeth Warren



The meeting will be at the home of Doris Petersen.
Visitors are welcome.

Welcome, New Members!

**Mindy Anderson, Mary-Louise Boyd,
Melissa Baten Caswell,
Andrea Gargiulo, Linda Henigin,
Natalia Kachenko, Deepa Lalla,
Deirdre Lyell, Heather MacDonald,
Stephanie Martinson,
Kathy Miller, Miriam Rotman,
Sarah Sands, Heidi Schwenk,
Mara Wallace, Aisha Zakariya**

We are so glad you have
joined the League.



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

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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 Kamala Harris (415) 403-0100
<http://www.harris.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 Marc Berman (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, Jan 19, 7-9 pm
Immigrants & Allies
Cubberley Theatre
4000 Middlefield, Palo Alto

Sun, Jan 22, 12-1:15 pm
Step Up for Pro-Choice
Los Altos Youth Center
1 San Antonio Rd,
Los Altos

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

Sat, Jan 28, 9 am-3 pm
Bay Area League Day
Camden Community Ctr.
3369 Union Ave,
San Jose

Fri, Feb 3, 10 am
Book Club
Petersen

Sat, Feb 4, 9 am-noon
LWVPA Program
Planning
Slater

Tue, Feb 7, 12-1:30 pm
Lunch with League
First Congregational
Church
1985 Louis Rd, Palo Alto

Tue, Feb 8
VOTER Deadline

Wed, Feb 28 7-9:30 pm
Board Mtg
PCC, Raptor Room