



Vol. XXXIII No. VI  
February, 2018

# The Palo Alto *VOTER*

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

[www.lwvpaloalto.org](http://www.lwvpaloalto.org)



## PROGRAM PLANNING

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2018

8:30 AM TO 12:30 PM

RAPTOR ROOM, PCC - LWVPA OFFICE

PROGRAM SESSION BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 9:00 AM  
(WITH EXTENDED LIGHT BRUNCH)  
RSVP [LWVPAOFFICE@GMAIL.ORG](mailto:LWVPAOFFICE@GMAIL.ORG) OR 650-903-0600



## Turning Ideas into Action

JOIN THE DISCUSSION AND HELP PUT LEAGUE IDEAS INTO ACTION!

**We need your input:**

Help align our grassroots work with the League's priority issues to make impact on the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®

FIND OUT THE WHAT, WHY AND MEETING FORMAT OF THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM PLANNING ON PAGE 3

LWVPA invites you to hear

### Julie Lythcott-Haims: What It Means to Be Black and American

Tuesday February 20, 7 - 9 pm

Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Rd.  
Palo Alto, CA 94303



Join us for a special event with author **Julie Lythcott-Haims**. Julie is the former Dean of Freshmen at Stanford University, and *New York Times* best-selling author of *How to Raise an Adult* and her most recent book *Real American: A Memoir*. She'll discuss the importance of a generous and wise community as a healing power to fractured race relations and what we can all do to make America a better place for everyone.

Stay after Julie's talk for a champagne toast as we celebrate community engagement and our 80th anniversary. *Real American* will be available for purchase.

Please RSVP by February 18 at [lwvpaoffice@gmail.com](mailto:lwvpaoffice@gmail.com) or 650-903-0600

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## Kick Off the New Year!

### New Member Orientation

Thursday, January 11

7:00-8:30 pm

Join us for wine, tea, and dessert and a fun trivia night of new citizen test questions. Meet others and learn how you can be involved in 2018!

2421 Bryant Street (first block south of Oregon Expressway)

RSVP - [meganfogarty@gmail.com](mailto:meganfogarty@gmail.com)

*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

Now is the time to make your **New Year's Resolution** to become a more **active League member**. Here are some ways you can do so:



- Attend **Program Planning on January 27**. This is the quintessential League grassroots event for members to contribute ideas on what the League should work on at various levels.
- Help **register voters** – particularly high school students – to help us meet our goal of registering 100% of eligible teens in Palo Alto this year. Contact Jeannie Lythcott or Kathy Miller. And to help register voters at new citizen ceremonies, contact Liza Taft.
- Support the League's **advocacy efforts**: **Sign up for action alerts** at national: <http://www.lwv.org> and at state: [lwvc.org/take-action](http://lwvc.org/take-action). And locally, respond to our e-blasts calling for local, county or regional action on many issues as they arise.
- Get involved in **local and regional issues**. Join one of our active committees: **Housing and Transportation** (Steve Levy), **Immigration** (Lisa Ratner) or **Food Labor Justice** (Maureen O'Kicki).
- Support efforts for **Early Childhood Education** by joining the **Education Committee**. Contact Sigrid Pinsky or Diane Rolfe.
- Join the effort to help the public better understand information in all forms of media. Participate in the **Civic Savvy Committee**. Contact Lisa Peschcke-Koedt.
- Discuss **civic responsibility** and the League at other organizations' meetings with young adults and teens. Contact Mary Jo Levy. Or join the **New Voices for Youth** committee. Contact Veronica Tincher.
- Assist at **speaker events** with set-up, clean-up and the welcome table. Contact Maureen O'Kicki.
- **Enter data in the office computer** to support Membership (contact Lynne Russell or Megan Swezey Fogarty) and Fundraising (contact Mary Alice Thornton).
- Help us spread the word by joining the **Communications Committee**, which manages our Facebook page, e-blasts, this **VOTER** and other means of getting the messages out. Contact Ellen Forbes. **Like our Facebook page**. <http://www.facebook.com/PaloAltoLeague/>
- Consider **serving on the Board or in an off-board position** so that you may follow your passion in a particular area of League interest. Contact Chris Logan, nominating committee chair, or Ellen Smith, Board Development Committee chair.
- This is an **election year**. There will be many opportunities to assist with Pros & Cons presentations, Candidates' Forums and the Voters Guide that we prepare.

The above list is just a sampling of the many things you can do to be an involved member of the League of Women Voters. I look forward to seeing you soon.

*Bonnie Packer*

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

#### OFFICERS

**Bonnie Packer**  
*President*  
[president@lwvpaloalto.org](mailto:president@lwvpaloalto.org)

**Aisha Piracha-Zakariya**  
*1st Vice President*

**Ellen Forbes**  
*2nd Vice President,*  
*Communications,*  
*Webmaster*

**Karen Kalinsky**  
*Secretary, Collaborations*  
*Co-chair*

**Steve Levy**  
*Treasurer, Housing and*  
*Transportation Chair*

#### DIRECTORS

**Jeannie Lythcott**  
*Voter Services*

**Megan Swezey Fogarty & Lynne Russell**  
*Membership*

**Lisa Ratner**  
*Advocacy*

**Maureen O'Kicki**  
*Program/Events*  
*Organizer*

**Sue Hermsen**  
*VOTER Editor*

**Tory Bers**  
*Publicity/Media*

**David Springer**  
*Voter's Edge*

**Ellen Smith**  
*Board Development*  
*Chair*



#### OFF-BOARD

**Diane Rolfe**  
*Edu. Co-chair and*  
*Collaborations Co-Chair*

**Sigrid Pinsky**  
*Edu. Co-chair*

**Veronica Tincher**  
*New Voices for Youth*

**Valerie Stinger**  
*Budget Chair*

**Mindy Anderson**  
*Facebook Admin.*

**Mary Jo Levy**  
*League Presentations*

**Liza Taft**  
*Voter Reg., VOTER Distr.*

**Mary Alice Thornton**  
*Fundraising Chair*

**Lisa Peschcke-Koedt**  
*Civic Savvy Chair*

**Kathy Miller**  
*Voter Services Co-Chair*

**Paula Collins**  
*Auditor*

*Nominating Committee*

**Chris Logan, Chair**

**Nancy Smith**

**Ellen Springer**

**Lynne Russell**

**Ellen Smith**

## Board Meeting Highlights - November, 2017



### Your Board

- Ratified the email vote to approve co-sponsorship of the National Voter Corps November event with Ari Berman
- Appointed Lynne Russell and Ellen Smith as the board member representatives on the Nominating Committee
- Decided to change the date of the Program Planning meeting to January 27, 2018, to avoid conflict with Women's Marches on January 20, 2018

### Discussed

- The revitalization of a Speakers' Bureau under the leadership of off-board member Mary Jo Levy. The Bureau will work on providing speakers to various non-League community events to talk about the League's mission and voter education topics.
- How to make our upcoming Program Planning meeting more engaging for our members, and more effective at identifying issues and action items for our future focus
- How to identify and recruit more members for Board positions
- Possible speaker events on Prop 13 Reform – Make it Fair Campaign

### Learned

- From Paige Costello's presentation on how to make more effective use of social media to further the goals of our League
- That our Advocacy team is investigating possible positions on rent stabilization and affordable housing for teachers and others
- That our Voter Services team has made great strides toward their goals—to register 100% of eligible Palo Alto teens, and to register our eligible unhoused neighbors

*Karen Kalinsky  
Secretary*

## LWVPA Program Planning - Saturday, January 27 8:30 am to 12:30 pm - See front page for RSVP information

### What?

The LWVPA will host the annual Program Planning meeting on **January 27, 2018**, to gather member input, set our priorities and share our recommendations at the National Convention in Chicago in June 2018.

**We need your input!** Local and state Leagues meet and make program recommendations at this meeting. We review our past program plans and determine issues for emphasis, advocacy and education for the next period.

### Why?

The program planning process is one of the most important ways we align our grassroots work with our priority issues and the League's mission on **national, state, county and local levels** to have the most impact.

### Meeting Format: Campaign for Making Democracy Work®

- Review, discuss and endorse current national program priorities that support League positions in the area of voting rights, election reform, campaign finance and redistricting.
- Review our existing positions and their impact on the campaign to make democracy work. Gather member input and identify [LWV positions](#) we use in education and advocacy on local, county and Bay Area issues. This is your chance to say what issues we want LWV to prioritize, and what action to take.



# League of Women Voters of Palo Alto Highlights From an Eventful Year

# 2017

One year ago, League of Women Voters of Palo Alto members and friends gathered for an action brunch to renew our collective commitment to democratic process. One year later we want to toot our own horn a bit, by sharing what our membership has accomplished in 2017.

Our membership grew from 319 members in January 2017 to 384 in December 2017. Our previous membership high was 349 in 1989.

Here is how you made a difference through your membership, financial gifts, and volunteer hours:

- Informative educational programs focused on critical issues for voters and included sessions on the electoral college, fake news, civil liberties, agriculture and climate change, immigration, and early childhood education. We also hosted a televised forum with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo.
- Advocacy included local action on housing and transportation and on immigration at the County level. We redoubled efforts to share action alerts from the state and national Leagues – particularly regarding voting rights and voter suppression, but also reproductive health, climate change, children’s health insurance, early childhood education, and campaign finance disclosure.
- Voter Service and education grew exponentially and worked to register veterans and their families, new citizens, and local unhoused residents. We are also well on our way to registering 100% of eligible teens in time for the primary elections.
- In addition to our in-depth *VOTER* newsletter, social media became a stronger communication strategy. We grew our Facebook followers from 10 to 230 and sent 30 e-blasts that increased turnout for events. Plans are underway for a content-rich new website in early 2018.
- We formed several new board committees in addition to our active Housing and Transportation, Membership, Program, and Education committees. New committees include Fundraising; Civic Savvy; Immigration; Collaborations and Community Outreach; Board Development; and Food, Labor and Justice.
- New Voices for Youth, a joint project between the Leagues of Palo Alto and South San Mateo County, opened an after-school program at the East Palo Alto Boys and Girls Club—through which students learn to use video to tell their stories—sponsored a successful summer program at Siena Youth Center, taught by Nimsi Garcia, who participated in the program in high school; assisted Siena Youth Center students to document neighborhood demonstrations on housing displacement issues; and was awarded a contract from the County of San Mateo’s Measure K funds to encourage youth civic participation.
- The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Committee educated the community on why ECE must be high-quality, accessible, and affordable through a showing of the film “The Raising of America” and developed collaborative partnerships with the Mid-Peninsula ACLU, Avenidas, the Childcare Law Center, Congregation Beth Am—Equal Start, Strong Start, the American Association of University Women Palo Alto Branch, and the other six Santa Clara/ San Mateo County Leagues. This unified coalition of pro-ECE organizations combined with an educated public will be key to efforts in 2018.

*Megan Swezey Fogarty*



## LWVPA Hosts an On The Table Event

On November 15, 2017, LWVPA hosted a lunchtime discussion on housing at the PCC as part of the SV Community Foundation’s On The Table. Older and younger community residents from multiple organizations shared their thoughts regarding policy issues, the transportation-housing link, concerns and hopes for the future of housing in our community and more.

*Sue Hermsen*



### LWVC Joins Prop 13 Reform Effort

The LWVC and a broad coalition of allies have kicked off a campaign to put an initiative on the November ballot to amend Proposition 13. The “Make It Fair” campaign would change the way commercial and industrial property is taxed, while leaving residential and agricultural property still subject to the original Prop 13 reassessment rules which allow reassessment only on sale of the property. Under the proposal, commercial property could be reassessed every three years, rather than when a change of ownership occurs.



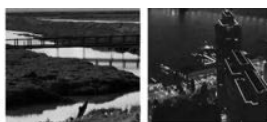
The unfairness of the present system arises because commercial property has escaped reassessment due to the way “change of ownership” is defined under Prop 13. As a result, many commercial properties owned by established businesses are enjoying very low tax rates established in the 1970s, while newer businesses must pay much higher taxes, giving older businesses an unfair advantage over newer ones. Because Prop. 13 limits the ability of local jurisdictions to levy new property taxes, school systems and local government services dependent on these taxes have been extremely underfunded since 1978, leading to a unconscionable decline in funding of our schools, community colleges, health care clinics, and other government services. New tax revenues under the amendment would be allocated 50% to schools and the balance to cities, counties, and special districts. Also, small businesses would receive a tax break under the initiative.

The current system also results in residential property taxes paying a substantial majority of the real property taxes collected to support schools and local services, while commercial and industrial properties pay a much smaller percentage. Prior to Prop. 13, commercial property and residential property owners paid a much more equal proportion. Under the current system, the brunt of paying for schools and local governmental services falls on homeowners. Studies estimate that \$11 billion in property taxes are unfairly avoided by commercial property owners under the present system. The proposed initiative aims to collect that money and distribute it to local governments.

The initiative was recently filed with the state attorney general’s office and is awaiting an official title and summary before signatures may be gathered.

LWVC and its allies hope to start gathering signatures in February and encourages both members and nonmembers to sign up to help with the campaign. Please go to: [LWVC.org](http://LWVC.org) and sign up for the google group “Make It Fair.” Once signed up, LWVC will provide training, including how to circulate a petition, talking points, Frequently Asked Questions, and guides for writing newspaper op-eds, letters to the editor, and gathering endorsements from elected officials. This is a great opportunity for members—old or new—to take part in an important advocacy campaign.

Please let me know if you are interested in having our local chapter work on this campaign by emailing: [advocacy@lwpvalto.org](mailto:advocacy@lwpvalto.org)



### Regional Government - Winds of Change

February 3, 9:30 am to 3 pm  
Laney College, Oakland

Planning for Bay Area League Day is now in full swing. This signature event will be held on February 3 at Laney College from 10 am to 3 pm. We will be exploring Bay Area Regional Governance - a topic which covers developing and implementing regional policies on land use, transportation, housing and more. We will be sharing a historical perspective as well as presenting panels introducing the most current thinking about forming a regional government in the Bay Area. This topic has extremely broad implications - impacting many areas of interest to our Leagues.

For more details, and to register online, go to: <http://lwvbayarea.org/2018-league-day-regional-governance>.



## New Voices Students Document Civic Engagement

Our two new co-Directors, Nimsi Garcia and Rebecca (Becca) Gourevitch, have finished up Fall programs at both the Siena Youth Center in North Fair Oaks and at the Boys and Girls Club in East Palo Alto. In classes since early October, students have learned about making videos that demonstrate civic engagement (documentaries vs PSAs, close-ups vs mid-shots, A-roll vs B-roll). Students are gaining technical proficiency AND understanding what makes a story engaging. They get hands-on experience using cameras to capture images and using computers to edit those images. Almost all of the students are new to video, so the classes move slowly, building skills that can be applied to future projects.

Their first videos are profiles of themselves, focusing on what makes their home special. At Siena Youth Center, New Voices has coordinated with Siena’s student-led Advocacy group, culminating in filming their march against displacement. Their final videos combined their profiles and video from the march. These videos were screened on December 21 and were very well received. They will be posted to our NV web site on the Video Gallery page —<http://www.newvoicesforyouth.org/video-gallery/>.



NV4Y Students film the march against displacement organized by Siena Youth Center’s student-led advocacy group.

*Veronica Tincher  
Co-Chair, New Voices for Youth Steering Committee*

## High School Voter Registration Drive Launched: 300 Teens Registered to Date!

This fall, our Voter Services co-chairs, Jeannie Lythcott and Kathy Miller, launched an ambitious program to register (or pre-register) 100% of Palo Alto teens who will be eligible to vote in the November 2018 mid-term election. [Note that citizens who are 16 or 17 years old may now pre-register to vote in California; upon turning 18, they will automatically become registered voters!]

These efforts are already bearing fruit: During the fall semester, the League registered 286 students at Palo Alto High School and 16 at Gunn, and our Voter Services team has plans to register many more in the next few months.

LWVPA representatives laid the groundwork for this project last summer by meeting with the PAUSD Social Studies Committee and Principal’s Committee, both of which were extremely supportive. Then, in October of 2017, groups of LWVPA volunteers began piloting their lesson plan and slide presentation in seven different journalism classes at Paly. In December, they also visited a journalism class at Gunn, laying the groundwork for further activity at Gunn in the Spring.

Finally, in December the team visited twelve Paly economics classes (a required course for seniors). In most of these classes, LWVPA was allotted just 20 minutes to complete their presentation and register students. But the process went very smoothly, thanks to a terrific cadre of more than 20 LWVPA volunteers (4-5 in each classroom).

In the coming semester, the high school voter registration project will visit many more classrooms at Gunn High School, four more economics classes at Paly, and several independent schools. If you are interested in joining this effort, please reach out to Jeannie Lythcott or Kathy Miller.

*Kathy Miller, Voter Services Co-Chair*

**LWV** League of Women Voters of the United States  
53<sup>RD</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION

CREATING A  
**MORE PERFECT DEMOCRACY**

**June 28 – July 1, 2018  
at Hilton Chicago  
720 S. Michigan Ave.**

Find out more at:  
<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/countdown-convention-2018>

## Welcome, New Members!

Sonya Bradski, Michael Fogel,  
Susan Miller, Sandy Peters,  
Paula Powar, Missy Reller,  
Anna Schultz, Phyllis Wedvick,  
Amy Yang



We are so glad you have  
joined the League.

## Step Up for Pro-Choice!

Monday, January 22, 2018

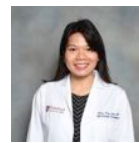
11:45 am to 1:00 pm

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



### Marking the 45th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade

Join **Los Altos-Mountain View AAUW**  
and the **Santa Clara County Pro-Choice Community**  
Co-sponsors: Palo Alto AAUW, Sunnyvale-Cupertino  
AAUW, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte,  
Palo Alto League of Women Voters, Mountain View-  
Los Altos League of Women Voters



**Dr. Wing Kay Fok** is an Ob/Gyn and family planning fellow at Stanford University. She will speak on expanding access to medication abortions and resident training in abortion care.



**Dr. Sophia Yen** will give an update on emergency contraception, bringing birth control to women using the internet and a mailbox, and Plan C.

Photos for use on social media will be taken and made available.

“Raging Grannies” will lead a brief rally outside Los Altos City Hall at the program’s conclusion.

**Registration is \$5 at the door.**

The LWVPA Book Group will meet

Friday, January 26, at 10 am

to discuss:

**How the Post Office Created America**

By Winifred Gallagher

The meeting will be at the home of Doris Petersen.

Visitors are welcome.



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,** and **Lynne Russell.**

*Sue Hermsen, VOTER Editor*



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on Twitter

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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: \$85. Additional membership, same address: \$40. Student membership: \$40.**

**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>**

**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**

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### How to contact your elected officials:

#### UNITED STATES

**President Donald Trump** (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](mailto: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 11**  
**7-8:30 pm**  
**New Member**  
**Orientation**  
Fogarty

**Mon, Jan 22**  
**11:45 am-1 pm**  
**Step Up for Pro-**  
**Choice**  
Los Altos Youth  
Center

**Tues, Jan 23, 7 pm**  
**Board Mtg.**  
PCC

**Fri, Jan 26, 10 am**  
**Book Group**  
Petersen

**Sat, Jan 27**  
**8:30 am-12:30 pm**  
**LWVPA Program**  
**Planning**  
PCC

**Sat, Feb 3**  
**10 am-3 pm**  
**Bay Area League Day**  
Laney College  
Oakland

**Tue, Feb 20, 7-9 pm**  
**What It Means to Be**  
**Black and American**  
Palo Alto Art Center

**Thu, Jun 28 -**  
**Sun, Jul 1**  
**National Convention**  
Chicago