



Vol. XXVI No. III

The Palo Alto VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

November 2011

Election Day is November 8!!!



*Please join us at an Avenidas
"Ask Not" Forum*

**The First Amendment, the Supreme Court
and the *Citizens United* Decision -**

**The Role of Corporate and Union Money in
the Electoral Process**

Gautam Dutta, election and voting rights lawyer
Frederick K. Lowell, political law expert and author
of *The Regulation of Politics in California*
Nancy Neff, California Clean Money coordinator
Ray Bacchetti, Moderator

Saturday, November 5, 9:30 am - 12:00 noon

Avenidas, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto
Refreshments at 9:30 am; Forum at 10:00 am
Free Admission

Sponsors: The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto
American Association of University Women of Palo Alto
The League of Women Voters of Los Altos/Mountain View
The Mid-Peninsula Chapter of the ACLU of Northern California

For more information contact Ginger Johnson at
650-326-1938 or gjohnson@avenidas.org

Save The Date!

Saturday, December 10

LWVPA Winter Luncheon!

**"Democracy & Journalism:
Can They Be Salvaged?"**

Bill Johnson

**Publisher of the Palo Alto Weekly
at the Garden Court Hotel**

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

Message from our President



I am pleased to report that the LWV of Palo Alto is off to a brisk and brilliant fall season. A large crowd of League, PTA and community members enjoyed the riveting and inspirational presentation by **Professor Linda Darling-Hammond** on **“The Flat World and Education.”** Her travels around the globe to observe high performing educational systems led her to recommend that schools decrease dependence on structured learning and introduce more projects for investigation, critical thinking and collaborative learning. **We all owe a big Thank You to Erwin Morton for his enormous time and talent in organizing this event.**

Our local Education Committee has launched the **Third Annual Essay Contest for Palo Alto and Gunn High School Juniors**, with first, second and third place monetary prizes. This year’s topic, “Compromise and Conviction,” asks the students to discuss the benefits, limits and dangers of each, using examples from history and current events. **Nan Prince** has been the driving force for all three Essay Contest events and she deserves our thanks for her vision, time and passion in leading this successful program.

Thank you for participating in **League Day on October 15** to answer the consensus questions on the National League Study of the Federal Role in Education. Our report on the consensus is due to LWVUS on November 30th. **Doris Petersen** has invested her passion in leading this National Study for more than six years at all levels of League. Words cannot adequately express our deep sense of gratitude for her commitment.

On October 11, the **LWVPA-sponsored Debate on Measures D and E** at Palo Alto City Council Chambers gave voters an opportunity to hear from the Pro and Con side of each measure on the November 8 ballot. Special thanks to **Veronica Tincher** who produced the *Voters Guide* that was mailed to members and donors.

On Saturday, November 5, the LWVPA will **co-sponsor with Avenidas a forum on the First Amendment, the Citizens United decision and its impact on the electoral process.**

We look forward to seeing you at our **Winter Luncheon on Saturday, December 10, at the Garden Court Hotel.** Our speaker will be Bill Johnson, Publisher of the Palo Alto Weekly. The three winners of the Essay Contest will be awarded their monetary prizes at the luncheon.

We have an outstanding board and committed membership in our Palo Alto League, and it is a joy to work with each of you.
Mary Alice Thornton

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

Gretchen Hillard
Secretary

Doris Petersen
Treasurer



DIRECTORS

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

Trina Lovercheck
Candidates Forums

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

Carol Bechtold
Program Planning

Betty Gerard
Publicity

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Voter Registration, VOTER Distribution

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Remembering Diana Steeples

We have lost one of our most inspiring and devoted League members, Diana Steeples. A wonderful summary of Diana's life and work and her many



Courtesy of the Palo Alto Weekly

contributions to society appears in the Palo Alto Weekly http://www.paloaltoonline.com/weekly/story.php?story_id=15689.

Rather than repeat Diana's amazing achievements here, we thought we would share some of our members' memories of Diana's role in the Palo Alto League. Before Diana came to Palo Alto, however, she was part of a group that founded the LWV of Glendora in Los Angeles County and was its first President.

Diana had been active in the LWVPA for many years. She often went to state and national conventions, presented and arranged Pros and Cons and was an active member of the Book Group.

She joined our League board in 1997 after she retired from Avenidas (then the Senior Center). In 2001-02, she shared the board presidency with Nancy Olson and Doris Petersen. They called themselves the 'OOPS' for "office of the president!" Doris remembers that they would meet weekly in the League office to decide who would do what. Nancy reminisced: "Diana always had a fresh approach to issues we had to address. She was always pleasant to work with and ready for a 'business' lunch. She was a friend. I will miss her."

Veronica Tincher first met Diana when she needed help in getting some publicity in local papers for a League event. Veronica remembers that Diana was very organized and handled press releases very professionally using a FAX machine in her home.

When ads were still composed by actual cut and paste, Diana and Ro Dinkey would meet to construct advertising to present League's position to the public. Ro remembers: "We had a good time adjusting borders to fit the space we were buying, printing our copy, and pasting the League logo in the proper place. It was a pleasure to work with Diana and share a laugh or two."

Later, Diana formed the Channing House *VOTER* mailing party and helped it every month that she was able. Her participation in the League Book Group was lively and interesting. She often brought her copy of the book under consideration bristling with post-its marking passages that she wanted to talk about.

We all remember Diana as a gracious, capable and generous Leaguer and wise role model for new League members. We offer our deepest sympathies to her sister, Susan Hartzell, and her family.

Submitted by Bonnie Packer, with help from many.

October 2011 Board Meeting Summary



At its October Meeting, your board took the following actions:

- Accepted the September minutes and Treasurer's Report.
- Agreed to co-sponsor the California Clean Money Campaign's Passion Raiser for the California DISCLOSE Act, AB148, at the Palo Alto Unitarian Universalist Church on January 7, 2012.

The board also learned that:

- Final arrangements are in place for League Day, Saturday, October 15, at which the local League will develop consensus on the Federal Role in Education study questions.
- The LWVC supports the California Clean Money Campaign to pass AB 1148 which would require disclosure of top funders of each political ad.
- Final arrangements are completed for the League co-sponsored Avenidas program on November 5 addressing the First Amendment, *Citizen's United* decision and the impact on the electoral process.
- The *Voters Guide* on Ballot Measures D and E in the November election has been mailed to members and donors.

Submitted by Gretchen Hillard, Secretary

High School Essay Contest in its Third Year!

The topic for this year's essay contest for Palo Alto Unified School District juniors is "**Compromise versus Conviction.**" The juniors were given this introduction: "No society...can fail, in time, to explode if it is deprived of the arts of compromise, if it knows no way of muddling through. No good society can be unprincipled, and no viable society can be principle-ridden." Alexander M. Bickel (U.S. legal scholar, 1924-1974)

The essays, due on October 26, must run between 600 and 800 words. **Members of the LWVPA Education Committee, chaired by Nan Prince**, will judge the entries based on development of topic, supporting information, reasoning and writing skills, and originality. This year, three prizes will be offered: \$500, \$300, and \$200, and will be presented to the winners at the LWVPA annual luncheon on December 10. Winning essays will appear on our website: lwvpaloalto.org.

For more information, please contact Nan Prince.

The Citizens United Decision and Federal Disclosure Rules

In January 2010, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* that corporations may spend unlimited funds on federal elections. In the second part of *Citizens United*, eight out of nine justices importantly agreed: **"The government may regulate corporate political speech through disclaimer and disclosure requirements."**

Justice Kennedy's majority opinion continues,

Citizens can see whether elected officials are 'in the pocket' of so-called moneyed interests ...and disclosure permits citizens and shareholders to react to the speech of corporate entities in a proper way. This transparency enables the electorate to make informed decisions and give proper weight to different speakers and messages.

While the decision advocates for disclosure, the Supreme Court does not write regulations. Furthermore, the deadlocked Federal Elections Commission does not agree on the enforcement of existing disclosure rules and is unlikely to write stronger ones.

Neither **Congress nor the White House** has acted to remedy the lack of court-recommended disclosure. Last year, the Federal DISCLOSE Act, which would have required disclosure of donations over \$1,000 for campaign ads, passed the House but had "only" 59 votes in the Senate, one vote short of overcoming a filibuster challenge. President Obama has not acted on a proposal for disclosure for government contractors.

Some argue that the best chance to fulfill the promise of corporate disclosure is to allow shareholders to police such spending through **SEC regulations**. (See *Fulfilling the Promise of 'Citizens United'*: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/fulfilling-the-promise-of-citizens-united/2011/09/02/gIQAa4np7J_story.html)

California never had rules preventing corporate spending on elections, but our state led the country with disclosure requirements in the Political Reform Act of 1974. Please see the accompanying article on the California DISCLOSE Act of 2011, AB 1148, a proposal to significantly improve our disclosure laws and continue to lead the country.

Submitted by Nancy Neff

The California DISCLOSE Act

AB 1148, the California DISCLOSE Act, is a proposal to significantly strengthen our state's campaign finance disclosure laws. The DISCLOSE Act requires the largest funders of a political ad to be clearly and unambiguously identified on the ad itself, so voters know who is actually paying for the ad.



Authored by Assemblymember Julia Brownley (D-Santa Monica) and sponsored by the California Clean Money Campaign, AB 1148 will apply to all ads supporting or opposing ballot measures and to ads supporting or opposing candidates paid for by independent expenditures. As an amendment to the Political Reform Act of 1974, the California DISCLOSE Act can either be put into effect by a two-thirds vote of the legislature or by a majority vote placing a measure on the ballot for the voters to decide.

In July, the League of Women Voters of California joined California Common Cause, California Church Impact, and the California Nurses Association in endorsing AB 1148.

"The League works to make sure that all voters go to the polls fully informed about the issues on the ballot," said Jennifer A. Waggoner, President of the LWVC. "The California DISCLOSE Act gives voters needed information in a form that they can understand - no more political gobbledygook covering up who is behind political ads."

There is overwhelming bipartisan support of legislation requiring greater disclosure in political ads. In a national poll done by Hart Research in June 2010, 91% of Democrats, 91% of Independents, and 87% of Republicans favored legislation requiring ads to say which corporations paid for them.

AB 1148 must clear the Assembly by the end of January. The California Clean Money Campaign is arranging carpools to go to Sacramento for the Assembly Elections and Appropriations Committee hearings. There are also meetings on AB 1148 on the fourth Tuesday at 7 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto at 505 E. Charleston. And, at the same location, there will be a **Passion Raiser for Disclosure on January 7, 2012**, in the afternoon. For more information, please contact Nancy Neff (nancy@neffs.net or 650-858-2436). The California Clean Money Campaign website is www.caclean.org

Submitted by Nancy Neff



New Voices for Youth is starting its second year at Menlo-Atherton High with Tanuj Chopra and Ana Angel again leading the program. The program is changing from an after school program

to a before-regular-class morning program. This is a good time for our staff and we hope we will find another fine group of kids such as we had last year. The students will work with Ana and Tanuj to select a topic for a film that reflects their community concerns and then learn how to use video to express their ideas about their subject.

Last year's project, "The Green," portrayed how students at M-A segregate themselves on campus and what M-A diversity means in their daily lives. You can now see the video on the New Voices for Youth web site www.newvoicesforyouth.org. Click on the "Screening Room" section and watch the show.

New Voices is an outreach program of the Leagues of South San Mateo County and Palo Alto. For more information contact Kathleen Weisenberg, LWV South San Mateo County, or Veronica Tincher, LWV Palo Alto.

Submitted by Veronica Tincher

November 8 Election Voter Services

The LWVPA *Voters Guide* was recently mailed to members and supporters of the League. A big thank you goes to **Phyllis Cassel**, who helped write the material, and the mailing crew who did a great, speedy job: **Doris Petersen** (crew head), **Phyllis Cassel, Ruth Consul, Bonnie Packer and Lee Sendelbeck**. More copies of the *Voters Guide* are available in the League office. Call if you would like copies for your friends, family or clubs and organizations.



The League and its co-sponsors held a **debate on the two ballot measures on October 11 in City Hall**. Many thanks go to **Sigrid Pinsky**, our moderator, **Trina Lovercheck**, volunteer recruitment, **Larry Lovercheck**, time keeper, **Richard Cassel**, technical support, **Eve Agiewich** and **Ellen Smith**, question sorters, **Gretchen Hillard, Joan Holtzman, Trina Lovercheck, Doris Petersen and Carol Stevens**, question collectors. And thanks to **Carol Bechtold** for making the arrangements with City Hall.

*Submitted by Veronica Tincher,
Voter Service Coordinator*

Professor Linda Darling-Hammond on *The Flat World and Education* at our Fall Kick Off!



On September 20, over 300 people filled the Haymarket Theater at PALY to hear Professor Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University highlight the points in her recent book, *The Flat World and Education*. She spoke of a rapidly changing world and changing expectations. From 1999-2003, more knowledge was created than ever before in history. Routinized and rote learning no longer prepare children for a society where robots have eliminated many of the manufacturing jobs in the U.S. and sent them overseas. We now require self-reliant, self-motivated individuals, requiring more analytical and adaptive skills.

Success has been shown to be unrelated to high GPA or SAT scores, but rather to extra-curricular activities—where self-motivation and time management skills are learned. As an example, Professor Darling-Hammond presented a short video of a PALY journalism class where students were in a lively discussion among themselves about the content for the school paper.

Professor Darling-Hammond noted that from 1960s through the 1970s, American schools became more integrated and the achievement gap was largely closed. In the 1980s, funding for the federal programs that made this possible were cut and some were discontinued. When we compare ourselves with other developed countries that are academically high achieving countries, we are falling farther and farther behind. Compared to our 30% drop-out rate, South Korea achieves a 95% graduation rate.

Our high drop-out rate has contributed to a school-to-prison pipeline. We have 5% of the world's population and 25% of the world's prison inmates. We spend more on incarceration than on college education. We have fallen from 1st to 17th in college graduation among developed countries. In the U.S., we spend up to three times more in some schools than in others, and California is at the bottom in spending per pupil.

Professor Darling-Hammond recommended giving up the factory-model teaching and testing and our punishment mentality. Instead, we need universal preschool, equity in funding for schools, increased investment in teacher training and support and a huge investment in higher education.

*Submitted by Doris Petersen,
The Federal Role in Public Education Study Chair*

Thank You

Phyllis Cassel, Betty Gerard, Gretchen Hillard, Luise Maier, Erwin Morton, Nan Prince, Liz Russell, Ellen Smith and Karen Sundback for all your work making our Kick-Off Meeting with the Sixth District PTA such a success.

Submitted by Doris Petersen



LWVPA Book Group

Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power
by Robert D. Kaplan
(available in paperback)

Friday, November 18

10 am-noon
at Del Silverman's home
Moldaw Residences

Robert D. Kaplan is a national correspondent for *The Atlantic* and a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, in Washington, D.C.. He has written widely about international affairs. In *Monsoon*, he examines the Indian Ocean where the interests of America, China and India are starting to intersect.

For more information, contact Doris Petersen.



Don't forget to vote on November 8.
Visit www.smartvoter.org for information on this election and your polling place.

GREAT DECISIONS 2012



Yes, it is time to start thinking about great discussions with the **Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions** program.

The **Great Decisions briefing book** provides balanced material on each of eight foreign policy topics for weekly discussions. Background material and resource guides for further education are included.

No experience necessary. Plan to come, to learn, to discuss difficult and intriguing topics (list of titles will be released soon).

Contact **Nancy Olson** or the League office (650) 327-9148 if you would like to order a book for 2012. Books will be delivered in January and the eight weekly discussions will begin in February. Books are \$20 when received in January.



From our Action Chair

LWVUS Call to Action: Please call or write our three U.S.

Congresswomen and tell them that you support the EPA and want strong **Clean Air** measures. Remember, we promised our children (and grandchildren) clean air!

LWVC supports the **Redistricting Commission Maps** for U.S. Congress and the California Assembly and Senate. There are petitions circulating to place redistricting on the ballot. Please, **DO NOT SIGN** any petition that would place redistricting on the ballot. In addition, legal challenges have been made to the CA redistricting maps in court. The courts are expected to expedite their review of these challenges.

LOCAL: At a **Friends of Caltrain** meeting on October 4, the discussion focused on a survey of voters related to potential permanent funding for Caltrain. At this time the survey shows a small sales tax increase appears to reach the necessary two-thirds vote and would raise enough money to support Caltrain. A three-county special district would be needed to implement the tax. That takes legislation. Sam Mateo could have a sales tax for its transit district which would relieve the pressure to drop funding for CalTrain by SamTrans, but with no guarantee.

As **LWVC** supports the **DISCLOSE Act, AB 1148**, **LWVPA** can support local action. **DO SIGN petitions in support of the DISCLOSE Act.** These will be given to the legislature to demonstrate support for the DISCLOSE Act and are not petitions to place an initiative on the ballot. If you want some petitions for your friends to sign call the League office. **We are co-sponsoring the Avenidas education meeting on the First Amendment and Citizens United on Nov. 5.** (See the front page for details.) **We will co-sponsor a Passion Raiser for Disclosure on January 7.** This is an advocacy meeting in favor of the DISCLOSE Act. (More on this in the next *VOTER*). Nancy Neff led a group of people, including myself, to meet with Rich Gordon, Assembly District 21, to discuss his support of AB 1148 and how he will help with passage of this bill. Hearings for AB1148 start in January. If this bill passes by a two-thirds majority of the legislature it will become law. If it passes with less, it will go to the voters next November.

Submitted by Phyllis Cassel, Action Chair

The **VOTER** welcomes articles from you. Please submit them to: lwvpaoffice@gmail.com or bbpacker@comcast.net no later than the first Monday after the first Tuesday of each month, but earlier submissions are most appreciated.

Welcome New Members!
Jayne Ralston
Stephanie Beach
We are delighted that you
have joined the League!



Thanks to **Mitzi Henderson** for helping to organize the mailing party for the October *VOTER* and to **Isabel Arabian, Vivian Blomenkamp, Ruth Consul, Mary Cooper, Mary Ann Michel, and Geri Stewart** for helping to fold and seal that issue.

Also thanks to **Sally Probst and Trina Lovercheck** for their careful proofreading of this issue of the *VOTER*.

Submitted by Bonnie Packer, VOTER editor

LWV members and friends are invited by the **Peninsula Chapter of the World Affairs Council** to a free lecture on

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

**Pakistan and Afghanistan:
Where Are We
and the Road Ahead**

Neil Joeck, Senior Fellow, Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Refreshments: 7:00 pm

Program: 7:30 - 9:00 pm

**The Los Altos Youth Center
1 South San Antonio Road
Los Altos**

For more information, call Carol Stevens (650) 494-0757

Don't let your LWVPA membership lapse!

Please send in your Membership Renewal and Interest Survey NOW!

Your membership will be dropped if we do not receive your renewal by the end of January, 2012.

Thank You!

LWVPA Positions on City of Palo Alto Ballot Measures:

Measure D: No position

There are no League positions on this issue.

Measure E: Support

Our support is based on a careful reading of our Natural Resources positions which include positions on the Baylands and waste-to-energy plants. These positions will guide us in evaluating any composting projects that the City of Palo Alto may study should Measure E pass.

Want to see the December/January *VOTER* before you receive it in the mail? You can take a **sneak peek** of the *VOTER* online **in color** <http://lwvpaloalto.org/VOTER.html> (click on "current issue") after November 15.



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) 327-9148

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, 953 Industrial Ave., Suite 113, Palo Alto, CA 94303**

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Palo Alto, CA 94303
(650) 327-9148

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

CALIFORNIA

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

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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

LWVC GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT

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

CALENDAR

Tue Nov 1, 7 - 9:30 pm LWVPA Board Meeting Betty Gerard	Sat Dec 10, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm Winter Luncheon Bill Johnson Garden Court
Sat Nov 5, 9:30 - 12 noon First Amendment Forum Avenidas	Tue Jan 3, 7 - 9:30 pm LWVPA Board Meeting Carol Bechtold
Mon Nov 7, noon VOTER Deadline (Dec/Jan issue)	Sat Jan 7, afternoon Passion Raiser for Disclosure (AB 1148) Unitarian Universalist Church
Tue Nov 8 ELECTION DAY	Mon Jan 9, noon VOTER Deadline (Feb issue)
Fri Nov 18, 9 - 10 am VOTER Mailing Party Channing House	Sat Jan 21, 9 am -12 noon Program Planning Location TBD
Fri Nov 18, 10 am - 12 noon Book Group Del Silverman	Sat Feb 4 Bay Area League Day
Tue Dec 6, 7 - 9:30 pm LWVPA Board Meeting Phyllis Cassel	