

The Palo Alto *VOTER*

The LWV of Palo Alto

April 2010

Phyllis Cassel, President ; Mary Alice Thornton Membership;
Karen Sundback & Relly Davidson, *VOTER* Editors; Phone: (650) 327-9148; <http://www.lwvpaloalto.org>



Vol.
XXIV
No. VIII

Candidates Forums

June 8, 2010 Primary Election

Afternoon Forum- Superior Court Judge

Saturday, April 24, 2 - 4 pm

Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto

505 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto

Evening Forum- District Attorney and Sheriff

Wednesday, April 28, 7 - 9 pm

Los Altos Public Library, Program Room

13 South San Antonio Rd., Los Altos

Written questions from the audience will be fielded by the candidates.

sponsored by the Leagues of Women Voters of Palo Alto and of Los Altos-Mountain View

Vote on Tuesday, June 8, 2010

For more election information, go to www.lwvpaloalto.org or www.smartvoter.org

Measure A May 4 Special Election 2010

Mail-in ballots must be received by 8 pm on Tuesday, May 4.

If you need to register to vote, your form must be received by Monday, April 19.

The LWVPA Board supports this parcel tax.

VOTE YES ON MEASURE A



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.

The League welcomes articles. Please submit them to: lwvpaoffice@gmail.com. Deadline is the first Friday after the first Wednesday of each month.

President's Message



Greetings Everyone!

This is the April VOTER. Elections are upon us, and what am I thinking about? Health care! During my nursing education back many years in a big-city hospital, we were taught that every one deserved good health care. Those with money paid more than it cost and helped to cover the cost of the poor. Those with money had private doctors and private rooms. The poor saw the interns and residents, were housed in 4- and 16-bed wards, and waited in long lines in the clinic. But the concept was that every one received health care. I think this was a bit idealistic, and I did not go near the business office. As I look back there has never been a commitment to give everyone in this country good health care. The rich paid for the best they could buy. Later the middle-income folks bridged some of their care with insurance, and the lower income folks received care if they were lucky. Many people have worked hard to provide care for those who cannot afford to pay for themselves.

Today's proposed health care legislation is considered by most to be an improvement over what we have today. Still, if the bills pass, 6-8% of people will not have insurance when the plans are fully implemented. When that 6-8% is in need of "urgent" care, they will likely receive it, and someone will pay. It is just not clear who. Or perhaps they won't get care; no money, no medical care. When you read this letter health care legislation may or may not have passed. It is hard to know as I write this letter. If the legislation passes it will be better than what we have now, but the League will not be off the hook. The League position states that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all. There are many models around the world for how this can happen. Health care for all is not yet an accepted norm. There is still work to be done.

Phyllis Cassel
President LWVPA ❁



LWV of Palo Alto: Officers, Directors, Chairpersons, (650) 327-9148

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The VOTER is online at www.lwvpaloalto.org

Events Column

check <http://lwvpaloalto.org/Calendar.html>
for more events



Peninsula Chapter of the World Affairs Council

Wednesday, April 14

Program: 7:30 - 9 pm.

Los Altos Youth Center

1 South San Antonio Rd., Los Altos

LWV members and friends are invited to a panel with prominent Knight Fellow journalists at Stanford University, entitled, *Meet the Press: International Journalists Address Global Issues in the New Media*. Panelists will be Justin Arenstein (South Africa), Teru Kuwayama (U.S.), Lydia Lim (Singapore), and Paul Radu (Romania). Admission is free. For information, call Carol Stevens (650) 494-0757. ✱



LWVPA Annual Meeting 2010- Funding Palo Alto

Schools in Tough Times

Saturday May 8, 2010

Garden Court Hotel

520 Cowper Street, Palo Alto

9 am. Brunch

9:30 am Speaker: Melissa Baten Caswell,
PAUSD Board Member

10 am Business Meeting

noon Adjourn

Complimentary Valet Parking ✱

“Proposition 15 will allow elected officials to start focusing on the public’s interest, instead of returning political favors to their campaign donors.” (<http://ca.lwv.org/action/prop1006/flyer.html>)

Proposition 15 Gets Politicians Out of the Fundraising Game

“A pilot project for voluntary public financing for Secretary of State candidates in 2014 and 2018. It will:

- Impose strict reporting requirements and prohibitions on campaign spending for participating candidates. Violators would face fines, possible jail time, and prohibitions from running for office in the future.
- Ensure that only Secretary of State candidates who agree to strict spending limits and demonstrate broad grassroots support by gathering a large number of \$5 qualifying contributions and signatures (7,500) qualify to participate. Qualified candidates receive \$1,000,000 in public funds for the primary campaign and, if they win their primary, \$1,300,000 in the general election – about the same amounts spent by Secretary of State Debra Bowen in 2006. A candidate may also receive “fair fight” funds if they are outspent or attacked by a third party.
- Ban participating candidates from raising or spending money beyond the limited public financing.
- Pay for itself, primarily through registration fees on lobbyists, lobbying firms, and lobbyist employers. No taxpayer dollars will go to candidates. Currently lobbyists only pay \$12.50 per year in California.

“Fair Elections Work

- Nearly 400 elected officials are now serving in seven states and two cities after being elected using Fair Elections funding instead of private contributions.
- Fair Elections create a more competitive playing field that allows more women and candidates of diverse backgrounds to pursue elected office.
- Since Fair Elections began in Arizona and Maine, elected officials have passed bi-partisan, ground breaking legislation that would not have been possible if they had to fear retribution from powerful special interests.”

“Who pays? Will it affect my taxes?

With Proposition 15, no taxpayer dollars will go to candidates. Prop 15 is funded primarily by a \$350 annual registration fee on lobbyists, lobbying firms, and lobbyist employers. Currently lobbyists only pay \$12.50 per year in California, among the lowest in the nation. Californians who support fair elections can also make voluntary contributions on their state income tax return.”

— <http://www.yesfairelections.org/>

Submitted by Ellen Forbes ✱



US Census 2010

Defining the Face of our Country

What's harder – counting all the stars in the heavens or all the people in our country? We'll find out on April 1, Census Day. On this one day, the Census Bureau hopes to collect enough information to determine the precise number of the U.S. population either through the return of mailed-in questionnaires or through the follow-up of census-takers hitting the streets.

The results will fuel every government policy that uses population numbers, such as determining the number of our congressional representatives or dispersing more than \$400 billion in federal funds. Fueling the census itself is the U.S. Constitution which mandates such a tally every 10 years.

Three years went into planning this one day. During the beginning of March, a short questionnaire was sent to every household in the country. Of particular interest are the extensive lists to describe one's race. The term "Negro" is used, as well as "African American" and "Black". Census Bureau spokesman Jack Martin stated that, "Many older African-Americans identified themselves that way [as Negro] and many still do. Those who identify themselves as Negroes need to be included." When the term was used in the 2000 Census, over 56,000 people identified themselves as "Negro."

In June 2009, the Census Bureau announced that it would count same-sex married couples. However, it remains to be seen if the computer software can follow through with this or if they will be listed as "unmarried partners." The difficulty lies in developing uniform terminology for the nation when many states have different laws. Same-sex marriages are currently granted by five of the 50 states (New Hampshire, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts and Vermont), one federal district (Washington, D.C.) and one Native American tribe (Coquille Indian

Tribe in Oregon).

In April 2009, the Census Bureau announced its intention to work with community organizations to count all illegal immigrants. After an undercover video showed suspicious activities in certain offices at ACORN, this particular partnership was terminated in September 2009. The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) is a collection of community-based organizations across the nation that advocate for low- and moderate-income families by working on neighborhood safety, voter registration, and other social issues. Since the 2006 mid-term elections, ACORN has been the subject of public controversy over voter registration fraud.

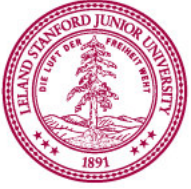
Following is the stand of LWVUS, taken from its website, "The League of Women Voters has taken on the 2010 Census as a central project for the upcoming year. Leagues across the country have begun establishing partnerships with their local census offices to ensure every resident is counted. Nationally, we have officially partnered with the Census Bureau and joined the national Ya Es Hora, Hagase Contar! ("It is Time, Make Yourself Count!") Campaign along with NALEO [National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials], Univision, SEIU [Service Employees International Union], and others."

Submitted by the editors ❁

One Thing both Parties agree upon

80 percent of Americans oppose the high court's *Citizens United* decision according to an ABC News/Washington Post poll.

In the *Citizens United v. FEC* ruling, the Supreme Court declared that the government may not ban political spending by corporations in candidate elections. ❁



University Committee on Health & Safety (UCHS)

Stanford UCHS is charged with policy development and oversight of the full range of health and safety issues at Stanford. The Associate Vice Provost, who heads this committee, reports directly to the president of the university. Members of the committee are appointed by the president.

Stanford University UCHS is another area in which a LWV Palo Alto member serves as the community representative. Each committee member has input in each meeting and can suggest changes in policy and areas that should be covered in future meetings.

The monthly meetings are low-key, but packed with information. At a recent meeting we discussed the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Program. AEDs are devices that are used on a victim of sudden cardiac arrest to assess the heart's rhythm and, if needed, automatically recommend whether or not an electric shock be delivered to correct the heart's rhythm. To provide a reasonable chance of survival, defibrillation must be available soon after cardiac arrest. AEDs are being placed in strategic locations throughout the campus.

We also reviewed the 2009 Stanford University Safety, Security & Fire Report which is compiled annually in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act, and with the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

The Clery Act outlines requirements for reporting crimes and crime statistics on campus. A crime could be a theft, or an assault, etc. Crime statistics indicate annually what kind of crime was committed, and what percentage of crimes committed on campus were thefts, assaults, break-ins, etc., and how each type compares with previous years. These stats are collected for all campuses and compared across the country.

The public is invited to an annual meeting to hear highlights of the year's programs and to ask questions. The next open public meeting will be on June 10 at 5 pm., the location to be announced. Your participation and feedback are encouraged.

Submitted by Nancy Olson ❁



Action - YES

After reviewing information and League positions both for and against the Palo Alto Unified School **Parcel Tax**, the LWVPA board voted to support the tax and authorized our President Phyllis Cassel to sign the ballot measure in favor.

Some of our members are actively working in support of the **California Fair Elections Campaign** (Prop. 15 on the June ballot), and all of us are urged to become involved. Call Ellen Forbes for more details.

Don't give up on **Health Care Reform**, yet. LWVUS still urges you to call and e-mail your legislators.

Submitted by Irene Sampson, Action Chair ❁



Board in Brief - February Minutes

At its February 3 meeting, your board:

- Heard that our net assets grew by about \$2,000. We used \$3,112 from our Ed Fund to pay National Per Member Payment (PMP).
- LAT contributions of \$5,395 arrived before evening of phone calling.
- Voted to support the “School Parcel Tax” vote-by-mail election, and to sign the ballot statement.

Recommendations from January Program Planning Meeting

- National Program: Voted to support a study of the Federal Role in Public Education, and to authorize \$125 for an advocacy table to support this study at LWVUS convention.
- Bay Area Program: Chose to Monitor various Joint Policy Committee agencies, and monitor and comment on water-supply issues.
- LWVSCC Program: Continue Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) as issue of emphasis.
- Voted to support the June 8 ballot measure, “California Fair Elections Act”.
- Announced meeting to discuss issues concerning CA budget matters and constitutional convention.

Portfolio Reports

- Phyllis reported that we will work with other county Leagues on Voter Service issues, such as races for sheriff, judges and DA.
- Congratulated Mary Alice and Virginia for 6% increase in membership in 2009-10. Each Jan. 31, total membership (now 286), which becomes basis for our PMP for the next year, is reported to LWVUS.
- Mary Alice reported that essay competition has been announced.

Submitted by Ellen Forbes & Relly Davidson ❁



Board in Brief - March Minutes

At its March 3 meeting, your board:

- Learned of the Voter Service plans for the elections in May (parcel tax for schools) and June (primary and propositions)
- Discussed what questions should be asked of candidates for six offices on the June ballot: sheriff, assessor, district attorney, county supervisors, judges and political party central committees. The candidates’ answers to the questions will appear on Smart Voter and in printed form.
- Received the proposed 2011 budget and the nominating committee’s report
- Heard that our Annual Meeting speaker on May 8 will be School Board member Melissa Baten Caswell
- Discovered some important ways for both LWVPA and individuals to support the Clean Elections ballot measure (Prop 15), which is strongly backed by LWVC
- Approved the wording for our updated LWVPA housing position, which will be voted on at Annual Meeting, and
- Received the Membership Recruitment & Retention Task Force report, with eight ideas for expanding and maintaining our membership numbers.

Submitted by Ellen Forbes ❁

It’s Official – We are 90!

February 14, 2010 was officially "League of Women Voters Democracy Day" according to a U.S. Senate resolution submitted by Sen. Cardin (D-MD) and Sen. Durbin (D-IL) Source: LWVUS ❁

Thank you!

We would like to thank the following people for making the assembly and delivery of the March VOTER possible:

Jean Colby, Mary Cooper, Janet Creelman, Patty “Cattie” Peck, Vivian Blomenkamp, & Diana Steeples

We would also like to thank **Sally Probst** for proofreading the VOTER.

Submitted by the editors ❁



Shoot like a Pro!

Support a Venerated Institute to Boot!



Here's a great opportunity for LWV members to acquire skills that would leverage the work we do. Join a new video-making community project, no experience or equipment necessary. It's a great opportunity to create videos about issues important to our LWV of Palo Alto, to create video coverage of LWV events or features about inspiring people. [The Midpeninsula Community Media Center](http://www.midpenmedia.org) is launching “Zoom In”, a video workshop and production collaborative. More details are at <http://www.midpenmedia.org/zoomin>. A tailored, low-cost, fast-track course will provide all the basics you need to shoot and edit videos, as well as publish them on the web. Whether you want to pull your camcorder out of the closet or borrow one from the Media Center, you will be able to put your learning into practice, and then enjoy the public screenings and community feedback. This is an engrossing opportunity that will simultaneously serve the community and your own creative aspirations. Mentors and other team members will help you progress.

The cost for about 16 hours of training is only \$100, and for an extra \$50 you can have access to Media Center camera equipment for six months. For more information call Becky Sanders at (650)494-8686 x 11, or go to the Media Center's website at www.Midpenmedia.org/zoomin. ❁

The League of Women Voters, born out of suffrage, now educates and advocates. Anyone of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

It's easy to join the LWV—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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____ e:mail _____

Annual Membership: \$68.00 Additional membership, same address: \$34.00

Mail check to LWV, 953 Industrial Ave., Suite 113, Palo Alto, CA 94303

Membership dues to the LWV are not tax deductible.

Men are encouraged to join. Dues grants are available. For information, call Membership Chair Mary Alice Thornton (650) 327-9148

LWV of Palo Alto
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<p>CALENDAR is constantly updated at http://wvpaloalto.org/Calendar.html</p> <p>March—WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH</p> <p>26 Fri 10 am. Book Group, Ursula Moore’s House. <i>Europe’s Promise: Why the European Way is the Best Hope in an Insecure Age</i> by Steven Hill</p> <p>27 Sat 4 pm. Prop. 15 Kickoff (see p. 3 of Feb issue or check the website above)</p> <p>April</p> <p>7 Wed 7:15 pm. Board meeting. Karen Douglas</p> <p>9 Fri Noon. VOTER Deadline</p> <p>16 Fri 9:15 am. VOTER Mailing. Channing House, 8th floor.</p> <p>24 Sat 2 - 4 pm. Candidates Forum. Unitarian Universalist Church</p> <p>28 Wed 7-9 pm. Candidates Forum. Los Altos Library</p> <p>May</p> <p>8 Sat 9-noon. Annual Meeting/Brunch</p>	<p>UNITED STATES</p> <p>President Obama.....(202) 456-1414 Send e-mail messages to- http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/</p> <p>Senator Feinstein.....(415) 393-0707 Send e-mail-http://feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContactUS.EmailMe</p> <p>Senator Boxer.....(415) 403-0100 Send e-mail - http://boxer.senate.gov/contact/email/policy.cfm</p> <p>Rep. Anna Eshoo.....(650) 323-2984 Send e-mail - http://eshoo.house.gov/</p> <p>CALIFORNIA</p> <p>Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger(415)703-2218 Send e-mail messages via website - http://gov.ca.gov/interact</p> <p>Senator Joe Simitian(650) 688-6384 Send e-mail messages via website-http://www.senatorsimitian.com/main/contact</p> <p>Assemblyman Ira Ruskin(650) 691-2121 Send e-mail -http://legplcms01.lc.ca.gov/PublicLCMS/ContactPopup.aspx?district=AD21&</p> <p>SANTA CLARA COUNTY</p> <p>Supervisor Liz Kniss(650) 965-8737 Send e-mail -liz.kniss@bos.sccgov.org</p> <p>LWV GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT</p> <p>Locate your elected officials with your street address http://www.guidetogovernment.org/</p>
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