

# The Palo Alto *VOTER*



The LWV of Palo Alto

August 2009

Vol. XXIV  
No. I

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

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## *Summer Social*

Tuesday, August 11

7-9:30pm

Garden Court Hotel

520 Cowper St., Palo Alto

Join us for

*An Evening with*

*New Voices*

*(Read more on page 4)*

Contact Doris Petersen at (650) 327-9148



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

# President's Message

Greetings everyone!

I thought I would say welcome back; however except for the *VOTER*, our League has not taken a summer break.

- In June we sponsored the showing of “\$100 Per Day.” There were 150 people in attendance at City Hall to see the movie and hear the panel discussion.  
A trailer for the video is on Youtube - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0TGXtOEIYo>
- The initial planning is taking place for our Candidate Forums for this fall's local elections.
- On Friday July 24<sup>th</sup>, there is a workshop on the status of Health Care legislation for which we are one of the sponsors. Be sure to carpool with us to that event, and invite a friend as well! Health care is a hot topic and affects us all.
- The on-board /off-board members are planning to do some simple strategic planning at our summer retreat. (We think it will be simple.)
- Our local education committee is exploring the possibility of organizing a writing contest with our youth.
- The housing committee is following the progress of the city comprehensive plan and housing element updates.
- Another committee has started reviewing our local League housing position.
- Irene Sampson is seeking people to be part of our environmental action team, that is, to work on sustainability issues. We have lots of good positions that support a more sustainable environment. Our voice should be heard!
- Doris Petersen and her committee are planning our general meetings. The summer social will feature “New Voices for Youth” which is an LWV-supported program to develop communication skills for youth.

And all of this is just our local League work this summer. I am sure that I missed something.

Thanks for all the good work you are all doing. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Phyllis Cassel

<b>LWV of Palo Alto: Officers, Directors, Chairpersons, (650) 327-9148</b>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OFFICERS</b></p> <p><b>President</b> Phyllis Cassel <i>president@lwvpaloalto.org</i></p> <p><b>1st Vice Pres., Action &amp; Transportation</b> Irene Sampson</p> <p><b>2nd Vice Pres., Program Planning</b> Doris Petersen</p> <p><b>Secretary</b> Ellen Forbes</p> <p><b>Treasurer</b> Karen Douglas</p> <p><b>Director, Membership &amp; LAT</b> Mary Alice Thornton <i>Membership@lwvpaloalto.org</i></p>	<p><b>Director, Candidate Forums</b> Pat Bendigkeit</p> <p><b>Director, Speakers Bureau</b> Sara Whitehead</p> <p><b>Director, League A Thon</b> Veronica Tincher</p> <p><b>Director, VOTER Editors</b> Karen Sundback Relly Davidson <i>lwvpaoffice@gmail.com</i></p> <p><b>Director, Membership Co-Chair</b> Virginia Pirrotta</p> <p><b>Director, Publicity</b> Betty Gerard</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OFF-BOARD CHAIRS</b></p> <p><b>Housing</b> Sally Probst Jeff Rensch</p> <p><b>Health Care &amp; Education</b> Geri Stewart</p> <p><b>Community Organizations &amp; Relations</b> Diane Rolfe</p> <p><b>Co-Membership, Action Tree Chair</b> Nancy Olson</p> <p><b>Webmaster</b> Karen Sundback(Acting)</p>	<p><b>Juvenile Justice</b> Relly Davidson</p> <p><b>Voter Mailing Education</b> Nan Prince</p> <p><b>New Voices</b> Sandy Eakins</p> <p><b>Budget Committee Chair</b> Marianne Dieckmann</p> <p><b>Director, Voter Registration, Voter Distribution</b> Liza Taft</p> <p><b>Nominating Committee</b> Alice Smith, Chair Rosalie Lefkowitz Luise Maier</p>

## Board in Brief—June Minutes

- Approved motion that the Education Committee pursue an essay contest designed to connect high school juniors to their adult community, improve their understanding of civics, and increase the League's visibility to younger people.
- Discussed the agenda for the Strategic Planning Retreat to include analysis of current business model; trends of analysis, and what can be done regarding a future business model. Also challenges facing the League.
- Reports from the 2009 LWVC Convention.
  - Delegates chose Redistricting Implementation and Government Reform as issues for education and advocacy.
  - Decrease of about 7.6% from previous year's budget puts in doubt the future availability of "In-Depth," and the "Easy Voter Guide."
  - Invitation by governor's appointments secretary, to League members to apply to state boards and commissions of their choice.
- Matters which LWVPA is tracking or involved in
  - 801 Alma St.
  - JJ&F plan to expand grocery store
  - LWVBA's need to do a better job with communications.

## Juvenile Justice Annual Meeting Report

The Juvenile Justice Committee continued to monitor promised changes in the system since the passage of Measure A which transferred responsibility for juvenile incarceration from judges to the County Supervisors.

Emphasis now, is on rehabilitation and alternatives to lock-up, using programs that have a track record of some success.

Joined this time by Nancy Rogers, Santa Clara County League Voter Education Committee Chair, and Laura Casas-Frier, Foothill-De Anza Trustee, we toured several facilities where minors are incarcerated, such as Juvenile Hall, and two ranches set in the San Jose foothills. We found the managers of these facilities to be quite dedicated, although the challenges of poverty, drug addiction and gang activity persist.

We also interviewed Dependency Court Judge, Katherine Lucero and learned of her efforts to establish a family wellness court among other innovative programs which she oversees.

*Relly Davidson, Juvenile Justice*

## Election Workers Make Contribution to LWVPA

Thanks so much to the poll workers who have chosen to donate their earnings to the League. Election Officers from the May 19, 2009 Special Election who generously selected this option include:

**Isabelle Arabian**  
**Vivian Blomenkamp**  
**Phyllis Cassel**  
**Richard Cassel**  
**Charlotte Epstein**

**David Epstein**  
**Patricia Saffir**  
**Irene Sampson**  
**Geraldine Stewart**

Contributions totaled \$1,107.50 and are a very welcome addition to our general fund.

*Karen Douglas, Treasurer*

## Membership Renewal Time

Many thanks to Relly Davidson, Nancy Olson, Irene Sampson, Lee Sendelbeck, Alice Smith, Karen Sundback, Elizabeth Taft and Veronica Tincher who helped complete the Membership Renewal bulk mailing in record time - 2 hours!

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR Interest Survey, Statement (with any changes) and check as soon as possible. The new Handbook will be updated and sent to the printer in late August.

*Mary Alice Thornton, Membership Co-Director*



**Shalini Azariah**  
**R-Kali Azariah**  
**Uday Koppikar**  
**Georgia Lee**  
**Dr. P. Herbert Leiderman**

We are delighted to have you as members  
of the LWV Palo Alto.

## **SUMMER SOCIAL FEATURE: New Voices For Youth**

### **High school students making their own videos!**

#### **About community issues!**

It seemed like a cool idea more than five years ago when representatives from the Palo Alto and South San Mateo County Leagues and the Media Center met to consider applying for a legacy grant from Cable Co-op. Our vision was to provide access to video to reach young people from under-represented communities so that they could tell their own stories about their communities. The Leagues planned to sponsor the project now called New Voices for Youth, develop the organization, provide volunteers and together with the Media Center provide the facilities and training. For the past three school years, the project, now under the professional leadership of Anne-Marie McReynolds, has flourished at the Computer Academy, a school within a school, at Menlo-Atherton High School.

Each year all students in the Junior Computer Academy class learn the basics of making videos as well as how to develop a compelling story and critical thinking skills. We expected that learning how to express their views and tell their stories would develop community awareness and lead to civic engagement. You can see the actual results in their videos at the Summer Social. Titles include: *Free to Ride*, *East Palo Alto: Changing City*, *East Menlo Park, 5 Years*, and among others on YouTube - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vibG\\_-S80k8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vibG_-S80k8)

## **The LWV Palo Alto Book Group**

### **Join Us!**

We are only five, Irene Sampson, Veronica Tincher, Rosalie Lefkowitz, Diana Steeples and me. While we have a great time and wonderful discussions during our book group get-togethers, we would like a few more members interested in reading non-fiction books about politics, history, biographies and more. Our policy is to read only books in paperback.

Most recently we discussed “Decartes Bones: A Skeletal History of the Conflict Between Faith and Reason” by Russell Shorto. Other recent books include: “Master of the Senate The Years of Lyndon Johnson” by Robert Caro; “Free Thinkers, a History of American Secularism” by Susan Jacoby, a book about how our cherished traditions of freedom evolved; “The Worst Hard Time” by Timothy Egan, the untold story of those who survived the American dust bowl; “A Team of Rivals” by Doris Kearns Goodwin, about Lincloln’s cabinet; “1491: New Revelations, by Charles C. Mann, many new insights about the Americas before Columbus; “The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court” by Jeffrey Toobin, about the Rehnquist/Roberts courts.

Our meetings are held on Fridays every other month. The schedule for the remainder of this year is:

September 18, from 10 am – noon at my house. We will discuss “American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House” –a NYT Notable Book.

(continued on page 5)

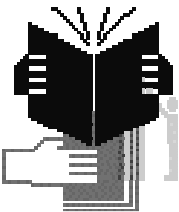
## The LWV Palo Alto Book Group

## ACTION...YES!

(continued from page 4)

November 20<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am – noon—at Irene Sampson's. We will discuss: "Pennsylvania Ave.: Profiles in Backroom Power: Making Washington Work Again" by John Harwood and Gerald F. Seib.

January 15<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am-noon—at Veronica Tincher's. This will be our annual pot luck lunch in the club house at Veronica's condominium. We read for that meeting, "The Squandering of America: How the Failure of our Politics Undermines our Prosperity" by Robert Kuttner.



Doris Petersen

Irene Sampson, Action Chair.

## PROS & CONS NEEDS YOUR HELP!

## ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GO

The Housing Position Update Committee is off and running, but not so fast that newcomers can't easily catch up.

What kind of actions do we really want our position to allow us to take in this area? This is your opportunity to help us shape this important part of our League's Portfolio.

Please feel welcome to join us at our 2nd Tuesday afternoon (2:00 pm) meetings. Contact Irene at [ij2sampson@juno.com](mailto:ij2sampson@juno.com) for more details.

Irene Sampson

Volunteers are one of our greatest assets. Please consider giving your time and talents to continue our service to the community.

We need help to prepare voters for the upcoming FALL election---TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd 2009.

Activities include researching and preparing voter materials, helping with community events and giving presentations about ballot measures. We will likely consider a local City of Palo Alto ballot measure, a Business License Tax.

Please contact Sara Whitehead, Speakers Bureau Director, at 650-380-2178 or [sara.whitehead@yahoo.com](mailto:sara.whitehead@yahoo.com).

With health reform at the top of the public agenda, the Leagues of Women Voters of Santa Clara County Council is sponsoring "Health Care Reform Update: Healing What Ails Us" on Friday, July 24, in San Jose. The free public event will be held at Cadence Design Systems, Bldg 10, 2655 Seely Avenue, San Jose, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Drawing on years practicing medicine abroad, Claudia Chaufan, M.D., will speak on "International Health Care Systems: What Can We Learn?" Chaufan is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Health Policy at the University of California, San Francisco.

Health policy experts will assess Washington's current reform proposals and offer an action plan, focusing on President Obama's principles and Congressional Committee proposals, including health insurance exchange, employer and individual mandates, public option and payment proposals. Panelists are Ellen Shaffer, Co-Director, Center for Policy Analysis; Deborah LeVeen, Professor Emerita-Political Science, San Francisco State University; and Giorgio Piccagli, President, California Public Health Association – Northern California.

A response panel will speak to prevention and health policy, keeping hospitals viable, and physician and patient concerns. A video on state Senator Mark Leno's SB 810, "CaliforniaOneCare: Full Care, For All, For Less" will be shown.

Pre-register at [vgilfix@pacbell.net](mailto:vgilfix@pacbell.net). On-site registration is available from 8 to 8:30 a.m. if seating permits.

Co-sponsors are Cadence Women's Forum, the Leagues of Women Voters of Oakland and San Francisco; California Retired Teachers Association, Div. 54; World Affairs Council, Peninsula Chapter; and California Public Health Association- North.



Health care is the hot topic of the moment and for good reason. Costs are escalating and increasing numbers of people are uninsured or only partially insured, and despite the cost, the U.S. does not have the high quality care available in many developed countries. Most of us can tell tales of the miracles of modern medicine, and tales of woe as well.

The LWVUS studied health care in the early 1990's and developed its position in 1993 in time to testify at public hearings in the fall of that year. It has continued to testify in Congress on a number of health care bills since that time. I have included the full LWVUS position in this VOTER. If you are like me and have not read it recently, I thought you might like to review it. This position is the basis upon which the LWVUS is lobbying Congress. Mary Wilson, president of LWVUS, states that the LWVUS is pushing for universal health coverage for all residents with a viable public option. The League is also pushing for other issues such as cost containment and improving quality of care. While the single payer option is the ultimate goal, the LWVUS feels that it is not possible to attain single payer coverage at this time. The League is therefore pushing for universal coverage as its primary goal for comprehensive national reform and lobbying for an effective public insurance option.

Many state LWVs, including CA, using the national position, have pushed for single payer coverage in their states, and are disappointed that we are not seeking single payer financing at the national level. The LWVUS position allows for both options. State Leagues are allowed to continue to work for single payer health coverage, however, the final goal at the national level continues to be single payer universal coverage. One of the most difficult decisions that a Board must make is how much to be idealist, how much to be pragmatic, and when the proposal so bad that it must say no.

As I read and try to learn more about the proposed changes to our medical care system, it seems that there are some very basic questions to ask about the impending comprehensive health care program changes; 1. Who will be covered? 2. How much will the eventual program cost, and is it affordable? 3. Will the actual cost of medical care be reduced? Will the quality of care be improved? It seems that most of the attention surrounds the financing issues with little attention around quality of care. It will take careful evaluation and much lobbying to develop a viable effective plan. Don't just stay tuned. We will be receiving action alerts. Please sign up to receive action alerts by calling the League office, or you may check "action alerts" on your interest survey when you renew your membership.

Phyllis Cassel

## Editors' Note—*The Palo Alto VOTER* is now online!

Dear Readers,

Relly and I are excited to take on the roles of the new Palo Alto *VOTER* editors and would like to thank our previous editors, Arnold and Doris Petersen, for their help with this, our first issue. As editors we plan to continue the Petersens' fine work, but also hope to innovate whenever innovation helps you, our readers.

Our first innovation is to put current issues online. Can't find your current issue or having trouble with the small print?

- To check out *The Palo Alto VOTER* online, go to <http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/>.
- On the League website, click on "VOTER" on the left side of the page.
- After you click on "current issue," downloading the file may take awhile depending on your connection. Have patience.
- Once you have the online issue before you, you can change the magnification at the top of the page. Mine comes up at 130%. To change the print size, press the "+" or "-" buttons to the left of the magnification (130%).
- Having trouble? Please let me know.

We hope that this issue continues to help you understand what goes on in the League. For up-to-the-minute information on upcoming events, please check online with the League's website calendar (<http://lwvpaloalto.org/Calendar.html>) for any last minute changes or additions. The world changes quickly and we try to keep the website updates apace.

We hope that this information helps you and please feel free to contact us if you have questions or suggestions.

Best wishes,  
Karen Sundback  
Relly Davidson  
lwvpaoffice@gmail.com  
The Palo Alto *VOTER* Editors

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The League of Women Voters, born out of suffrage, now educates and advocates. Any citizen 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., 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><b>Calendar...</b></p> <p><b>August</b></p> <p><b>5 Wed</b> 7:15pm Board Meeting</p> <p><b>7 Fri</b> Noon Voter Deadline</p> <p><b>11 Tues</b> 7-9:30pm , Summer Social (see pg..1)</p> <p><b>September</b></p> <p><b>2 Wed</b> 7:15pm Board Meeting</p> <p><b>4 Fri</b> Noon Voter Deadline</p> <p><b>10 Thur</b> Noon-1:30pm IN—South, Office Atrium, brown bag lunch</p> <p><b>October</b></p> <p><b>6 Tues</b> 7-9 pm City Council Candidates Forum, place TBD</p> <p><b>7 Wed</b> 6:30-8:30pm School Board Candidates Forum, PAUSD Board Room</p> <p><b>9 Fri</b> Noon Voter Deadline</p> <p><b>10 Sat</b> 1:30-3:30pm City Council Candidates Forum Unitarian Universalist Church</p>	<p><b>UNITED STATES</b></p> <p><b>President Obama</b>.....(202) 456-1414  Send e-mail messages via website: <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/">http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/</a></p> <p><b>Senator Feinstein</b>.....(415) 393-0707  E:mail: <a href="http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/email.html">http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/email.html</a></p> <p><b>Senator Boxer</b>.....(415) 403-0100  E:mail: <a href="http://www/boxer.senate.gov/contact">http://www/boxer.senate.gov/contact</a></p> <p><b>Rep. Anna Eshoo</b>.....(650) 323-2984  E:mail: <a href="http://www/eshoo.house.gov/contact.aspx">http://www/eshoo.house.gov/contact.aspx</a></p> <p><b>CALIFORNIA</b></p> <p><b>Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger</b> .....(916) 445-2841  E:mail <a href="http://www.governor.ca.gov">http://www.governor.ca.gov</a></p> <p><b>Senator Joe Simitian</b>.....(650) 688-6384  E:mail: <a href="http://www.senator.simitian@sen.ca.gov">http://www.senator.simitian@sen.ca.gov</a></p> <p><b>Assemblyman Ira Ruskin</b>.....(916) 319-2021  E:mail: <a href="http://www.assemblymember.ruskin@assembly.ca.gov">http://www.assemblymember.ruskin@assembly.ca.gov</a></p> <p><b>SANTA CLARA COUNTY</b></p> <p><b>Supervisor Liz Kniss</b>.....(650) 965-8737  E:mail: <a href="http://www.lizkniss.org">http://www.lizkniss.org</a></p> <p><b>LWVC GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT</b>  Locate your elected officials with your street address  <a href="Http://www.guidetogovernment.org">Http://www.guidetogovernment.org</a></p>
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