



Vol. XXXIII No. VIII
April, 2018

The Palo Alto *VOTER*

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

www.lwvpaloalto.org



How do we know what's true anymore?

Learn tips and tools from experts at Snopes, Google, Facebook, Stanford University, Data for Democracy and the Institute for the Future.

Monday, April 9, 7 - 9 pm

Palo Alto High School Performing Arts Center, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto

Co-sponsored by the LWVPA and the Palo Alto PTA Council.

For registration and more information go to Eventbrite: <https://goo.gl/SHLwmm>

Join us for an important event about assessing the credibility and accuracy of information in our world.

Democracy requires well-informed voters to thrive. Yet truth and facts are under assault from misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and fake news. Do *YOU* know how to assess what's true and accurate? Learn strategies, tips and tools to gauge the credibility of information from experts.

For additional information, please contact Lisa Peschcke-Koedt by email at: lisa_peschcke_koedt@hotmail.com.

Defining the Limits of Free Speech: Hate Speech and its Impact on Civic Engagement

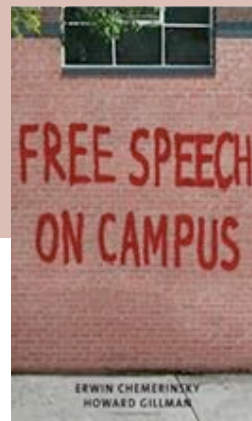
Tuesday, March 27 Noon - 1 pm

MidPen Media Center,
900 San Antonio Rd., Palo Alto

Join us for a discussion about our First Amendment rights with

Berkeley Law School Dean Erwin Chemerinsky

Please RSVP at lwvpaoffice@gmail.com or 650-903-0600 by March 26. This event is free and open to the public.



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*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

Our community is fortunate to have such an amazing League of Women Voters. I am constantly being inspired by the energy, creativity, thoughtfulness and dedication of the members of your board and off-board. They are the ones, with your help, who make our League so strong.



We do so much because so much needs to be done.

Voter Services – the core of our League - is busy at the high schools registering teens to vote. They are also beginning to gear up for the June primary; getting ready for pros and cons on ballot measures, candidates forums, and learning how to use Voters' Edge. There is a lot to do and your help is always appreciated.

Advocacy – our other important arm – is busy locally following and commenting on the actions of the City Council and Planning and Transportation Commission as they review various important proposals and ordinances to help increase the supply of affordable housing. We have also been before the Human Relations Commission supporting a proposed ordinance to address discrimination against women – inspired by CEDAW (United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

Advocacy is also busy helping with the all-important effort to collect signatures for the Prop 13 Reform initiative for the Schools and Communities First Campaign. Please see p.6 for info on how you can help.

Our League also participated in the annual Legislative Interviews with Assemblyman Marc Berman and Senator Jerry Hill. See p.4 for a summary of the Marc Berman interview.

Programs and Events: These are amazing in their scope and impact.

Recently, Julie Lythcott -Haims gave a most moving talk from her recent book, *What it Means to Be Black and American*, on February 20. Then Chris Field, Director of the Stanford Woods Institute, hosted a fascinating webinar on Food Production and Carbon Emissions. (See pictures on p.3) Upcoming is an event with Berkeley Law School Dean Chemerinsky on the First Amendment, at the Media Center on March 27 and a not-to-be missed panel, co-sponsored with the Palo Alto Council of PTAs at Paly on April 9, titled *How Do We Know What Is True Anymore?* – put together by our **Civic Savvy Committee**. See front page for more info.

Thanks to those of you who attended a productive Program Planning event in January. This event helps us plan how to focus our energies in the next League year. You will vote on the issues for emphasis recommended by the Board at our **Annual Meeting on May 12**, where you will also vote on next year's leadership and the budget. Please be sure this is on your calendar.

As our League grows in membership, we are working to ensure that our Board and Off-Board are organized effectively to do what needs to be done. We also are dependent on your generosity, so please respond with a donation during our **LAT campaign**.

Thanks again for all you do, for our community, our nation, and our world.

Bonnie Packer

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

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OFF-BOARD

<p>Diane Rolfe <i>Edu. Co-chair and</i> <i>Collaborations Co-Chair</i></p> <p>Sigrid Pinsky <i>Edu. Co-chair</i></p> <p>Veronica Tincher <i>New Voices for Youth</i></p> <p>Valerie Stinger <i>Budget Chair</i></p> <p>Mindy Anderson <i>Facebook Admin.</i></p> <p>Mary Jo Levy <i>League Presentations</i></p> <p>Liza Taft <i>Voter Reg., VOTER</i> <i>Distribution</i></p>	<p>Mary Alice Thornton <i>Fundraising Chair</i></p> <p>Lisa Peschcke-Koedt <i>Civic Savvy Chair</i></p> <p>Kathy Miller <i>Voter Services Co-Chair</i></p> <p>Tory Bers <i>Publicity/Media</i></p> <p>Paula Collins <i>Auditor</i></p> <p><i>Nominating Committee</i> Chris Logan, Chair Nancy Smith Ellen Springer Lynne Russell Ellen Smith</p>
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Board Meeting Highlights - February, 2018



Your Board

- Ratified an email vote to approve a letter to City Council in support of the Housing Work Plan, sent on 2/5/18
- Ratified an email vote to approve a letter to Planning & Transportation Commission in support of an Affordable Housing zoning overlay, sent on 2/10/18
- Ratified an email vote to approve a letter to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors asking them to support a proposal to create and fund a plan to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment (women's right to vote), sent via email on 2/22/18
- Ratified an email vote to have Packer delegate Lisa Ratner read a letter at the Human Relations Commission on behalf of LWVPA in support of an ordinance reflecting the intent of CEDAW (UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) on 2/8/18
- Approved a Motion to add additional faith-based organizations to the list of potential "publicity only" co-sponsors of our events, which would be vetted by the Collaborations and Community Outreach Committee and contacted as appropriate on an event-by-event basis
- Approved a Motion to refer to County Council the question of what the Santa Clara County Leagues should consider doing as an educational event regarding the recall of Judge Persky
- Approved a Motion to join the LWV of California campaign to gather signatures to get the "California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018" (reform of Prop. 13) on the November ballot
- Accepted the Program Planning report: i. to be sent to the LWVUS; ii. to be sent to the Bay Area LWV; and iii. issues for emphasis to be submitted to the LWVPA membership for approval at the Annual Meeting.

Discussed

- A reminder from the Board Development Committee about League rules for board members regarding political or partisan activity
- Ideas from the Board Development Committee on reorganizing our board's structure, which will be presented as a proposal at the March board meeting
- Planning for an LWVPA 80th anniversary event and a social event for new board/old board members after the Annual Meeting.

Learned

- About an April 9th event organized by our Civic Savvy Committee and co-sponsored by the Palo Alto PTA Council about practical tips on how to evaluate the integrity of information
- That the Education Committee will be looking for volunteers to help gather signatures for the "California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018"
- About the continuing efforts of the Voter Services team to register teens at Palo Alto and Gunn High Schools and local independent schools, as well as our unhouseed citizens.

Karen Kalinsky, Secretary

LWVPA Hosts a Variety of Speakers

LWVPA hosted two more thought-provoking and informative events in recent weeks. Author Julie Lythcott-Haims spoke to a full room at the Palo Alto Art Center in February about race in America. In March, Director Chris Field of the Stanford Woods Institute spoke on Food Production and the Environment at a lunchtime event at the PCC. Special thanks to **Maureen O'Kicki** for arranging for such engaging speakers.



Left: Julie Lythcott-Haims at the PA Art Center
Above: Chris Field at the PCC



Advocacy Report by Lisa Ratner

Interview with Marc Berman. Representatives of local Leagues from Palo Alto, San Mateo County, Los Altos/Mountain View and Sunnyvale/Cupertino interviewed **Assemblymember Marc Berman** (Assembly District 24) on February 16. We asked about his stance on several state-wide issues followed by our state League.

Money Bail Reform Currently, 46,000 Californians are in county jails awaiting trial because they cannot make bail. LWVC supports getting rid of our current money bail system. LWVC believes the law should be changed to allow release based on a determination of whether an individual is a threat to society or a flight risk, not based on ability to pay bail. Berman voted for Assembly Bill 42 which reflected that principle. The bill did not pass the Assembly. SB 10 (supported by LWVC), a pending two-year bill reflecting the same principles, needs Governor Brown's engagement, said Berman.

CEQA Reform The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has been used to delay affordable housing projects. Recent legislative changes have streamlined the CEQA process for in-fill projects (urban development surrounded by existing development, not next to any critical habitat). We asked whether other legislative changes to CEQA are needed. Berman said CEQA is critically important to protect the environment, but has also been subject to abuse that has stopped some worthy projects. He introduced AB 1404, that would have provided a CEQA exemption in unincorporated urban in-fill situations, such as in the North Fair Oaks section of Redwood City, but the bill died in Senate Appropriations. He has reintroduced it as AB 1804. A similar bill has passed in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee, applicable to housing and mixed use.

Sea Level Rise LWVC believes California needs a regional, coordinated effort of several state agencies to plan for public works threatened by sea level rise. One scenario where greenhouse gas emissions are not controlled predicts sea-level rise of nearly 4 feet by 2050 and 10 feet by 2100. Highways, railways, bridges, and other public works will need to be moved and rebuilt (to say nothing of people). Berman said that AB 184, his first bill to deal with this critically important "slow-moving emergency" (building on efforts of his predecessor, Rich Gordon), which would have established state-wide planning for a sea-level-rise database, hit a sunset clause. Berman sought to make it a permanent project, but had to accept a sunset clause with a 5-year extension. Currently, UC Berkeley's Climate Readiness Institute is supporting implementation of the database. A report is due soon, and recommendations from this report could spur coordination among agencies.

Assemblymember Berman's Areas of Special Concern He is Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on the 2020 Census and Chair of the Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee. California receives about \$76 billion in federal monies. A correct count of all residents, as required by the Constitution, is essential for California to get its proportional share of funds and seats in Congress. CA now has 53 seats in the House. Population projections show one seat may be at risk if the population is undercounted.

The Trump Justice department has proposed adding an untested question to the 2020 Census which asks about citizenship status. This question has the potential to deter immigrants from answering census questions and lead to undercounting. A coalition of civil rights organizations, including the LWVUS, opposes using this question, as does the state of California, the County of Santa Clara, and the scientific community, which fears the loss of an unbiased census count will have a negative effect on vast amounts of scientific research which rely on accurate census data.

The state budget has allocated \$40.3 million and the state will seek another \$40 million from philanthropic sources for outreach to "hard to count" communities. This is an area where LWV could do public education and outreach.

Other issues Berman introduced AB 1957 which would streamline access to social services such as CalFresh and CalWORKS, allowing use of email or texting rather than postal mail. He also wants to identify the best online training for school staff and students to prevent youth/student suicide and support it by state funding. He also wants to revise the ballot format to be more user friendly, citing a Los Angeles County proposal.



LWVPA Advocacy Chair Lisa Ratner and other League members with Assemblymember Marc Berman

LWVC Announces Positions on June 5 Ballot Issues



The LWVC board took final positions on the measures scheduled for the June ballot. Look for our *The League Recommends* flyer (a.k.a. Vote With the League) by early April. Here's a quick summary of the League position on each measure:

PROPOSITION 68 - California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act (SB 5) - SUPPORT

This measure would authorize California to issue general obligation bonds, with the money used to finance state and local parks, water conservation measures, water reliability to disadvantaged communities, and flood protection projects. California parks provide open space and recreation, improving health and community well-being. The water projects funded by this bond are forward thinking, and are a key part of our state response to climate change.

PROPOSITION 69 - Motor Vehicle Fees and Taxes (ACA 5) - SUPPORT

If passed, this constitutional amendment would ensure that the existing transportation revenues we pay at the pump and when we register our vehicles can ONLY be used for road and transportation improvement projects. This amendment protects these transportation funds by prohibiting the state legislature from using these revenues for non-transportation purposes. ACA 5 protects existing taxes and fees we are already paying. It does not raise taxes one cent. The League supports measures to ensure adequate revenue to support needed services, including safe roads and good public transportation.

PROPOSITION 70 - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Reserve Fund (ACA 1) - OPPOSE

This measure would add a requirement that two thirds of legislators approve the first appropriation of any money collected from the sale by CARB (California Air Resources Board) of Cap-and-Trade allowances after 2024. At a time that we need efficient and effective investments in climate change solutions, this requirement could lead to deadlocks, inefficiency, and poor decisions.

PROPOSITION 71 - Effective Date of Initiatives (ACA 17) - SUPPORT

Currently, an initiative that is approved takes effect the day after the election unless the measure provides otherwise. Election results are not officially certified until five weeks after the election. While most election results are clear shortly after election day, that is not always the case. Prop 71 would provide that an initiative would take effect five days after the Secretary of State certifies the election results. This is a common-sense measure, ensuring clarity about what is – and is not – California law.

How does the League make ballot measure endorsements?

We only take positions on ballot measures based on current [policy positions](#) and [League principles](#). Positions are developed based on grassroots member [study and consensus](#).

from the LWVC Website

Membership News

New Member Orientation: New to the League (or ready for a refresher)?

Join us on Thursday, April 12, at 7:00 pm (dessert and drinks).

RSVP to meganfogarty@gmail.com for location and details!

Special thanks to those members who, beyond your membership dues, donated to our education and general funds. If you would like acknowledgment of this much-appreciated contribution for tax purposes (beyond your canceled check or credit card statement), email meganfogarty@gmail.com. Only donations to the Education Fund are tax-deductible.

— Megan Fogarty and Lynne Russell, Membership Co-Chairs

Volunteer to Circulate Petitions for Proposition 13 Reform!

The [League of Women Voters of California](#) and LWV Palo Alto are backing the [California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018](#), a long-sought reform of Prop. 13. The League needs to get a huge number of signatures in less than 6 weeks in order to qualify for the November ballot. This is going to be a real blitz!

About the Act:

The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018 would create a “split-roll” tax system that would increase taxes on commercial and industrial properties while not touching Prop. 13 tax protection for homeowners and residential properties. It would raise over \$11 billion yearly, to be divided between schools and local agencies.

Please join us to circulate petitions by responding now! Training will be provided.



Click here to [email](#) our Education Co-Chair, *Diane Rolfe* to volunteer.

Thank You!



The new 2018 **FACTS FOR VOTERS** is full of helpful information for voters this year. Thanks to **Mary Jo Levy & Kathy Miller** as they did the editing and formatting... a big job!

Another big Thank You to those who helped at the Membership Mailing Party: **Julie Barney, Nancy Olson, Joy Sleizer, Pat Saffir** and **Alice Smith**. Each member received the 2018 **FACTS FOR VOTERS**. These helpers also prepared the bundles for board and off-board members who wrote personal notes to all of our donors!

And thanks to all the note-writers: **Megan Fogarty, Ellen Forbes, Sue Hermsen, Karen Kalinsky, Mary Jo Levy, Chris Logan, Jeannie Lythcott, Bonnie Packer, Doris Petersen, Diane Rolfe, Lynne Russell, Alice Smith, Ellen Smith, Liza Taft, Joyce Tavrow, David Thornton, Mary Alice Thornton** and **Veronica Tinchler**.

Thanks, Mary Alice Thornton



An Invitation from the LWV Santa Clara County Council to participate in a Civil Discourse Facilitator Training Workshop

In today's world the negative, destructive and confrontational approach to communicating seems to be the norm. This incivility creates division and inhibits practical problem solving in our country. The Civil Discourse movement is aimed at reviving civility in our public discourse and addressing the need to change the tone of our current politics.

The Leagues of Women Voters of Santa Clara County is hosting a three hour facilitator training workshop:

Saturday, April 7, 2018. 1:00-4:00 pm
Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church
726 Fremont Avenue, Sunnyvale
The cost is \$15.

League members, as well as members from other organizations in the community, are invited to attend. Topics include principles of civil discourse in action, and conducting civil public dialogues that inform, engage and resolve. Our workshop leader is Martha Cox of the LWVC Board.

This workshop will include interactive exercises and role playing, and is based on a topic that impacts us all. Please contact m.shovlin@comcast.net to register.

The LWVPA Book Group

will meet

**Friday, March 23,
at 10 am**

to discuss:

Lab Girl

by Hope Jahren



The meeting will be at the home of
Ursula Moore.

Visitors are welcome.

Welcome, New Members!



**Cari Anderson,
Leslie Armistead,
Colleen Backstrand
Cristina Ballerio,**

Lorrie Castellano,

**Amy Joachim, Patricia Kinney,
Daja Phillips, Paula Tuerk**

**We are so glad you have joined
the League.**

The next Luncheon meeting of the
**LWVPA Education
Committee (ECE)**



will be held on Friday, March 16
at Diane Rolfe's home
1360 Emerson Street, Palo Alto.

11:45 am – 1:00 pm. Lunch will be served.

*Diane Rolfe and Sigrid Pinsky
ECE Co-chairs*



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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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

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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://asmcd.org/members/a24/>

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Supervisor Joe Simitian (650) 965-8737
joe.simitian@bos.sccgov.org

OTHER AREAS in CALIFORNIA

Locate your elected officials with your street address
<http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov>

CALENDAR

<http://www.lwvpaloalto.org/Calendar.html>

Fri, Mar 23, 10 am Book Group Moore	Mon, Apr 9, 7 -9 pm How Do We Know What's True Anymore? Paly High Performing Arts Ctr.
Tue, Mar 27, Noon - 1 pm Defining the Limits of Free Speech MidPed Media Ctr.	Thurs, Apr 12, 7 pm New Member Mtg Fogarty
Tues, Mar 27, 7 pm Board Mtg. PCC	Tues, Apr 24, 7 pm Board Mtg. PCC
Sat, Apr 7, 1-4 pm Civil Discourse Facilitator Training Workshop Sunnyvale Pres. Church	Sat, May 12 LWVPA Annual Mtg. TBA
	Thu, Jun 28 - Sun, Jul 1 LWVUS Convention Chicago