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The Palo Alto VOTER

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Help LWVPA Empower Voters and Defend Democracy!

On the 100th Anniversary of women voting, and on the 100th Birthday of the founding of the League of Women Voters, we continue to fight for all people to have the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate in our democracy.

We need your help to create a more equitable future. **Please consider making a gift in honor of the 100th Birthday of the League of Women Voters:**

Donate to your local LWVPA: <https://www.lwvpaloalto.org/donate.html>

Donate to the LWV of California: lwc.org/100

Not a member yet? Join the League today and play a part in continuing next 100 years:

<https://www.lwvpaloalto.org/join-or-renew1.html>

Message from our President

"Democracy is not a spectator sport."

The League of Women Voters' Lotte Scharfman is credited with coining the phrase "Democracy is not a spectator sport." Scharfman, a refugee of Nazi Germany, was the League's president until her death in 1970. We think of this as a new, "it" quote. It's part of the League's history and our mission. The League of Women Voters is 100 years old today. Yes, the League was founded (February 1920) before the 19th Amendment was passed (August 1920). There was a burning desire to ensure that the new voters were educated on the issues and motivated to vote. Today our shorthand for this is Empowering Voters – Defending Democracy. We will strive to ensure voters have access to voting and information to ensure all voices are heard. This month your League is hosting a winter event we're calling Vote-a-Palooza to support voters. It will be an open-house-style event where our community can drop off their ballots for the March 3rd election, register to vote, get a new ballot if needed, participate in kids' voting activities, learn more about the League, the 2020 Census and the new Voters Choice Act. Julie Lythcott-Haims, NY

REMINDER!

**Have You Renewed Your
Membership for 2020?**

The League of Women Voters of the US requires us to drop members who haven't renewed by January 31, 2020. We appreciate your membership and support of the League, so if **"I meant to renew... but life happened"** applies to you, please [renew now!](#)

Not sure if you've renewed? Email Lynne Russell, Membership Co-Chair, at lwvpaoffice@gmail.com

Times best-selling author, will address attendees at 3:00. [See more details here.](#)

Vote-a-Palooza is just one part of our effort to turn out 100% of our voters. We also have a series of events, "Increasing and Broadening Participation in 2020 Elections and The Census." As you may know, Santa Clara County is modernizing voting with the Voter's Choice Act (VCA). The intention of the new act is to make it easier for people to vote, expanding how, when, and where you can vote. Come learn about these expanded opportunities. Events can be found on the [calendar](#) on our webpage or you can learn from anywhere with these awesome videos produced by the [MidPen Media Center](#) and featuring our own League stars, Jean Lythcott and David Springer. One of the videos explains the new [Voter's Choice Act.](#)" The LWV's second video, [Census 2020 – Everyone Counts,](#)" addresses why the census is so important and the lengths taken to get an accurate count of the US population. Join us at an event AND check out the videos!

While we're gearing up for voting and Vote-a-Palooza we are also looking further ahead. Two weeks ago dozens of our League members came together at Channing House for our annual Program Planning session. As an aside, the view from the 11th floor of Channing House is hands-down the best view in Palo Alto. While spectacular, the view didn't keep us from our work of surfacing our priorities for both our local League and those that we will raise up for consideration by the national League. Stay tuned for a full report out of that morning's work.

As always, I'm grateful for your partnership and teamwork as we tackle empowering voters and defending democracy.

Warmly,

[Terry](#)

LWVPA January Board Meeting Highlights

The following motions were approved:

- Support for the Responsible Gun Ownership's proposal to work toward a safe storage of firearms ordinance for the City of Palo Alto.
- Adoption of revised sections of the Board Policy.
- Ratification of the following EAC approvals:
 - Reach out to University AME Zion Church to offer support and submit letters to the editors of the Mercury News, PA Daily and PA Weekly;
 - ✓ Co-sponsor the January 22nd AAUW Los-Altos-Mountain View branch's annual event commemorating the anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v Wade decision;
 - ✓ Co-sponsor the January 15th SIG lunch talk with Kathleen Unger, President/CEO of VoteRiders; and
 - ✓ Submit a letter to City Council to advocate for housing as a City priority for 2020.
- Co-sponsorship (level 2) of the Peninsula Women's Chorus April 30 community outreach concert.

Board Discussion and Other Business:

- Plans are in place for the Vote-a-Palooza event. Publicity is especially focused on young families.
- The Annual Meeting date is set for May 16.
- Our League will request that Palo Alto proclaim February 14 “League of Women Voters Day.”

February 14: “League of Women Voters Day” in Palo Alto



Palo Alto Mayor Adrian Fine (center) presents to the LWVPA **the City’s Proclamation of February 14 as League of Women Voters Day**, in recognition of the LWVPA’s 100th birthday. Pictured (L-R): Council Members Lydia Kou, Eric Filseth, Liz Kniss, Alison Cormack, Mayor Adrian Fine, LWVPA Members Ellen Smith, Ellen Forbes, Dennis Smith, Paula Collins, Jeannie Lythcott, and Liz Jensen, Council Member Greg Tanaka, and Vice Mayor Tom DuBois. Photo credit: City Manager Ed Shikada

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DEI includes everybody! Were you aware of these diversities within Arab and Muslim American communities?



Advice from young politically involved Arab & Muslim Americans:

Be aware of differences within the Arab & Muslim communities:

- 63% of Arab Americans in the U.S. are Christian, 24% Muslim.
- 42% of Muslim Americans are white, 28% Asian, 20% black, 8% Hispanic.

Muslim Americans are racially and ethnically diverse.

Fully half of Muslims whose families have been in the U.S. for at least three generations are black (51%).

Arab Americans tend to be either highly educated or low educationally.

They are often in the top 10% of their schools scholastically, despite a lower income average.

— Excerpted from “DEI Success Stories: LWV of Dearborn/Dearborn Heights” (Michigan)

Voter Services Starts 2020 with a Burst of Activity

It's an election year, with a primary in March and a general election in November, so our Voter Services volunteers are extremely busy! We will also need more volunteers as the year progresses. Read on for opportunities.



Spreading the Word about the Voter's Choice Act (VCA)

Santa Clara County adopted the VCA last year. This new system offers voters more days and more ways to vote starting with the March 3rd primary. Our volunteers are making a dozen presentations about the VCA at multiple venues in the area. The final public one will be on February 20, from 7 to 8 pm, at the Mitchell Park Library. If you haven't been to one of these presentations, can't make it on the 20th, and have questions about how the VCA affects voting, visit the [Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters](#) website or contact Jeannie Lythcott, our co-director of Voter Services.

Jeannie has also made it a personal mission to share VCA and voting information with the work forces of at least twenty companies in Palo Alto! She has talked to workers, and had the information posted in break rooms, at restaurants, pharmacies, community centers, grocery stores, and a variety of other establishments around town.

Registering Teens to Vote

In 2020, our volunteers have already visited three independent schools to register teens to vote. At Kehillah High School we registered 34 students; at Menlo School we also (coincidentally!) registered 34; and at Sacred Heart School, we registered 27.

We will continue pre-registering students during 17 classroom visits at Palo Alto High School on

March 10-11 and another 17 classroom visits at Gunn High School **April 13-17**. We usually take four volunteers into each classroom, so there are lots of opportunities to pitch in. For more information, contact co-director of Voter Services Kathy Miller and visit our [LWVPA High School Voter Registration website](#).

Getting Out the Teen Vote

Our Youth Vote Team, which meets monthly, developed a novel and exciting new program for encouraging teens to vote in the March 3rd primary. It is being rolled out right now and includes [announcements](#) for teachers to make in senior classrooms during the month leading up to the election, as well as [posters](#) to put around school campuses and a [website](#) to help students learn about voting. The program is in place at Paly, Gunn, Woodside Priory, and Menlo School.

Training Students to do Voter Registration Drives

We taught two classrooms of AP Government students at Sacred Heart School, as well as a group of teen leaders at the Palo Alto Youth Council, about the art of running a voter registration drive. These young people are eager to make a difference in the voting habits of their peers, which is a terrific thing to see.

Voter Education

We talked to a Girl Scout troop about the March and November elections, ways youth can support their favorite candidate(s), and how to vote while away at college.

We also delivered to the Palo Alto libraries: location lists of all nearby Vote Centers and VCA ballot Drop Boxes, as well as Easy Voter Guides in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Voter Registration at Elmwood Women's Correctional Facility

In early February, our volunteers visited Elmwood for two busy days of voter registration and engagement. We worked with inmates in eight different areas of the jail and registered a total of 41 women. Often the women posed great questions and seemed to want more information, which we were able to provide.

Vote-a-Palooza Party on February 22, 2-4 pm

This party is a double celebration, of the LWV's 100th Anniversary and of our right to VOTE! Five teenagers, plus a Leaguer, have been outfitted in period dress with a "Votes for Women" sash. These "suffragists" will lead parades to the next-door Rinconada Library, where people can cast their ballots. The first parade will start at 2:15 and others will follow at 30-minute intervals until 4:00.

Volunteer Thanks

LWVPA extends heartfelt thanks to all these volunteers who have helped in the activities outlined above: Cari Anderson, Jennifer Antonow, Sonya Bradski, Erika Buck, Paula Collins, Jean Dawes, Ellen Forbes, Lizzy Gardner, Annie Hempstead, Liz Jensen, Anne Kastner, Rachel Kellerman, Myra Lessner, Mary Jo Levy, Trina Lovercheck, Jeannie Lythcott, Jean MacDonell, Kathy Miller, Jane Moss, Bonnie Packer, Sandy Peters, Daja Phillips, Judy Pickering, Pamela Polos, Margaret Rosenbloom, Pat Saffir, Ellen Smith, David Springer, Joyce Tavrow, and Virginia van Kuran.



The teen members of our Youth Vote Team and our five teen suffragists are playing a very special role in our February 22 Vote-a-Palooza, and we thank them.

Finally, a shout-out to Britt Jensen for creating our colorful [Vote-a-Palooza flyer](#)! It went on to become the theme for our online and mobile ads that will run in the Palo Alto Weekly from February 16 to 22.

And to Reed, our terrific assistant designer, for the creative Vote-a-Palooza ad that will run in the Palo Alto Daily Post February 12-22.



More Voter Services Work Coming in the Fall!

As the November 3rd general election approaches, the Voter Services team will be faced with a flurry of tasks to accomplish and will need all hands on deck. We'll appreciate help with candidate forums and pros & cons events (where we educate the public about ballot propositions) as well as many other activities.

If you are new to the League and would like to be part of the fun, please [contact Jeannie Lythcott](#) or [Kathy Miller](#), our co-directors of Voter Services.

Advocacy Report

Bills supported by the League of Women Voters of California this legislative session included:

State

Housing. LWVC supports measures to streamline the supply of safe, decent, adequate housing for all Californians and supports equality of opportunity in housing, including policies which remove housing barriers due to discriminatory reasons. LWVC supports **SCA 1**, which would repeal California Constitution Article 34. That article prohibits the development, construction, or acquisition of any “low-rent” housing by any state public body (city, town, or county) unless the project is approved by majority vote in a local election. Although the U.S. Supreme Court in Shelley v. Kraemer ruled in 1948 that overtly racially restrictive housing covenants could not be enforced through the court system, California’s Article 34 was enacted in 1950, as an appeal to racists fears that building low-rent housing would integrate white communities. The constitutional requirement of submitting certain types of public housing projects to a vote is unique to California. It erects an unneeded barrier to the ability of cities and counties to address the dire need for housing for all by adding delays and increasing costs.

SB 50, supported by LWVC, which would have required cities and counties to allow denser housing near transit and jobs, failed to pass the state senate. The bill will be reintroduced with changes in the next session.

School Facilities Financing. LWVC supported AB 48, signed into law by the Governor, which makes state monies available for school facilities financing more equitable. School districts are eligible for state financing of facilities if they match state money through local bond revenues, which are tied to the district’s assessed property values. Because wealthier districts find it easier to raise bond money, they are awarded more state facilities financing money than less wealthy districts. The League advocated for taking into account a district’s tax base in deciding how to award facilities financing. AB 48 does so, by awarding greater points to districts with lower property tax assessments.

Voter Education/Voting Age. LWVC supported AB 963, the Student Civics and Voter Empowerment Act, signed into law, which establishes a partnership between the Secretary of State’s office and community colleges and Cal State Universities to provide college students with information needed to participate in the democratic process. It makes voting information easily accessible to college students by establishing a position of Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator on each campus to implement requirements that campuses use email, campus calendars and social media to do outreach to students on registration, voting and election dates. This law addresses the problem that college-aged students have one of the lowest voter turnouts in California. LWVC also supports ACA 8, which would amend the California constitution to lower the voting age to 17, to help address the low voter participation rates among youth.

Lisa Ratner

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League Events through March 11

See more at lwvpa.org/calendar.html

Friday, February 14
LWV's 100th BIRTHDAY!

Thursday, February 20, 4:00pm – 5:00pm
[LWV webinar on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\)](#)

Thursday, February 20, 7:00pm – 8:00pm
LWVPA Presentation: Voter's Choice Act (VCA)
Mitchell Park Library

Saturday, February 22, 2:00 – 4:00pm
Vote-a-Palooza! LWV 100th Birthday Celebration!
Palo Alto Art Center

Tuesday, February 25, 7:00pm
LWVPA Board Meeting
Peninsula Conservation Center

Saturday, February 29, 9:30am – 2pm
[Bay Area League Day 2020: Looking Back, Moving Forward](#)

Dominican Center in Fremont

Tuesday, March 3
Election Day!

Thursday, March 5, 7:00pm – 8:00pm
Census Workshop for Newcomers
Mitchell Park Library

Tuesday, March 10, 8:20am – 12:45pm
Voter registration at Paly
Palo Alto High School

Wednesday, March 11, 8:20am – 3:35pm
Voter registration at Paly
Palo Alto High School

League of Women Voters' 100th Birthday
Friday, February 14

VOTE!
Tuesday, March 3
(or earlier by mail or at a Vote Center)

How to contact your elected officials

United States

[President Donald Trump](#) (202) 456-1414
[Senator Dianne Feinstein](#) (415) 393-0707
[Senator Kamala Harris](#) (415) 403-0100
[Rep. Anna Eshoo](#) (650) 323-2984

California

[Governor Gavin Newsom](#) (916) 445-2841
[Senator Jerry Hill](#) (650) 212-3313
[Assemblymember Marc Berman](#) (650) 691-2121

Santa Clara County

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

Other Areas in California

[Locate your elected officials by street address](#)

For a [complete list of ALL your electeds](#), see [here](#) on our website.