



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

September 2015

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Calendar

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

10 a.m.-noon

LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz 95060

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

Noon-2 p.m.

Re-Energizing the Vote
Gail Pellerin
SCC Clerk/Registrar of Voters
Downtown Branch, SC Public Library
Meeting Room (second floor)
224 Church Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Bring your own lunch
Free, open to the public

Tuesday, October 13, 2015

10 a.m.-noon

LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz 95060

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Electoral Reform: Beyond Red vs Blue
Paula Lee, LWV Sacramento
Scotts Valley Branch Library
251 Kings Village Road, Scotts Valley
Bring your own lunch
Free, open to the public

Tuesday

November 10, 2015

10 a.m.-noon

LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz 95060

LWVSCC invites you to attend

RE-ENERGIZING THE VOTE

Featuring

Gail Pellerin

**Santa Cruz County Clerk/
Registrar of Voters**

Tuesday

September 15, 2015

Noon to 2 p.m.



Downtown Branch of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries
Meeting Room (second floor)

224 Church Street | Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Free, open to the public. No Reservations required

Invite your friends. Download a [flyer](#) to post at lwvsc.org.

Bring your own lunch. The League will provide water and cookies.

On Tuesday, September 15, Gail Pellerin, Santa Cruz County Clerk/Registrar of Voters, will address League members and the public at the Downtown Branch of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries in the meeting room on the second floor. At this free event, Pellerin will discuss how to re-energize the vote.

After the dismal voter turnout in 2014, state and county election officials are looking at ways to improve the voter experience and expand voting options. Some proposals to make registration and voting easier include automatic voter registration and all-mail-ballot elections with voter centers and ballot drop boxes, as are currently being done in Oregon and Colorado.

There are new efforts to revitalize K-12 civic learning in an effort to restore the power of democracy in our youth. This year, as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, and the 95th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, it is appropriate for us to discuss ways to improve the voter experience by enhancing access for voters with disabilities, utilizing social media and plain-language tools, and ensuring all voters, including former offenders, can easily find out how to register and exercise their right to vote.

Gail Pellerin, Santa Cruz County Clerk/Registrar of Voters, manages all elections conducted in the county and serves as the Commissioner of Civil Marriage. Her office is responsible for voter registration, conducting elections, managing candidate and campaign filings, issuing marriage licenses, conducting marriage ceremonies, maintaining fictitious business name filings, and serving as a passport acceptance facility. Pellerin's 29 years of experience in public service include seven working for the State Legislature in Sacramento and 22 serving as the primary elections official in Santa Cruz County.

Voter Registration Events: Volunteers Needed!

This year our League is coordinating voter registration events in September with the County Elections Department. Helen Ruiz-Thomas, the department's Program Coordinator for Voter Registration/Outreach, has requested volunteers for September 16 at Cabrillo College's Aptos campus and September 17 at Cabrillo's Watsonville campus. Also, registration dates have been established for UCSC on September 18 and 21.

On National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, September 22, the Elections Department is promoting online registration with the Santa Cruz Public Libraries. The Library has requested registration volunteers for all 13 branches on September 22.

If you can volunteer to register voters for any of these dates, or want more information about times and locations, please contact Dottie Fry at 831-688-9234 (email: fryfrydl@comcast.net) or Sue Becker at 831-462-4160 (email: suebecker108@sbcglobal.net). There will be a voter registration training day at the County Elections Office on Wednesday, September 9, at 10:00 a.m. Please contact Dottie or Sue to sign-up for the training.

Celebrate Women's Equality Day

To celebrate 95 years of women's suffrage, test your knowledge of the 19th Amendment with this [interactive quiz](#) from the national League at lwv.org.

Also, check out these [vintage League photos](#) to find the true meaning of good citizenship (hint, read the photo captions carefully for clues to some of the quiz questions).

President's Message

The 2015-16 program of the national, state, and local League of Women Voters reminds me of a quote attributed (albeit



somewhat controversially) to Edmund Burke, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Of course, we would add women.

As a group, we become informed about issues affecting voting, government, social, and environmental problems, then take action leading to change in a positive direction based on knowledge and understanding of the issues. Currently, the national League of Women Voters is

reviewing our position on [Money in Politics](#) and the [LWV Constitutional Amendment Committee](#) is studying the process of amending the U.S. Constitution. This year's state League [Public Higher Education Study](#) focuses on the university system and its rising costs for students. I encourage you to learn more about these studies by reading about them online at lwv.org (click on the [League Management](#) tab) and lwvc.org (click on the [Higher Ed](#) tab).

At the local level, this fall we are excited to have Gail Pellerin, a current League of Women Voters member, return to speak to us at the Downtown Branch Library on September 15. Pellerin, longtime County Clerk/Registrar of Voters and an excellent speaker, will discuss how to improve the voter experience and expand voting options, a topic at the forefront of our local concerns. Thank you to Dottie Fry, Judi Orbach, Dee Takemoto, Joyce Anderson, Sue Becker, Jan Karwin, Peggy Marketello and yours truly for their help in arranging for and publicizing this important program. I hope you will come if available for this Tuesday event.

This summer our lively board of directors has been discussing and planning the calendar for this coming year. Current plans include a program on alternative voting systems this November, climate change and sea level rise in January, an affordable housing update, and, in the spring, programs on the living wage and equal pay, money in politics and our June annual meeting. I look forward to what promises to be a varied and enlightening year of programs. Our new board member, Judi Orbach, has been coordinating this effort, with advice from her co-chair, Jan Beautz, me, and members of the program committee, Pam Newbury, Dee Takemoto, and Joyce Anderson.

— *Barbara Lewis, President*

Looking at Drug and Alcohol Use in Our Community

Part Two: It's a Health Issue, Not a Crime: Treatment Versus Incarceration

Last May our League sponsored an educational forum about substance use disorders (SUD). League member and attorney Ashley Wheelock moderated a panel that included Rod Libbey and Jessica Stone of Janus, Vanessa de la Cruz, M.D., and Bill Manov, Ph.D., of the county's health services agency, and Sheriff James Hart. This is the second of a series of articles reporting on what the panelists discussed. Part one of the series (available in the [August VOTER](#) newsletter at lwvsc.org) covered the definition of SUD and co-occurring disorders (COD), how drugs and alcohol interact with the culture of our community, and the different effects of drugs versus alcohol.

The discussion continued with the question of intervention and resources for young people. Bill Manov related the new policy for school suspensions. Previously, students suspended for drug and alcohol use were simply sent home for a few days with no supervision. The new option provides for the student to attend a SUD early-intervention program instead. He also mentioned the [Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance](#) program. The Sheriff's office and the California Highway Patrol provide training for faculty and administrators on how to identify potential substance use and what to do about it.

Rod Libby explained that few residential care facilities for adolescents remain in California. Many facilities closed because the high staffing levels and very high levels of therapeutic care required were too costly and could not be sustained. His hope is that future legislation will provide new funding for more programs.

Wheelock then turned the focus to why so few adults seek treatment for SUD. Jessica Stone felt that people don't know that public funding is available for treatment. Another problem is the waiting list for public funds to pay for treatment. People who seek treatment are ready in that moment, and if treatment is not available at the time they are ready, they return to previous behavior.

The problem is also exacerbated with pregnant women who are parents; they are afraid to report drug and alcohol use for fear of being arrested or reported to Child Protective Services or the Sheriff's office.

Dr. Manov discussed the availability of treatment in the county. While the county is licensed for 90 treatment beds, they only have the funds to staff half of them. Those that are involved with a government program with dedicated funds to pay for treatment, such as child welfare or AB109 prison realignment, can get quick access to care. Programs for the general public are very underfunded and have long waiting lists.

Wheelock asked about methods of treating SUD and how to define success. Rod Libby emphasized that SUD is a chronic disease, and that they are working to get people to a point where the disease is "in remission" or "in recovery". Libby emphasized the importance of assessing an individual coming into treatment so that, "you know not only what their substance use history is, but also what their psychological and psychiatric aspect of their addiction may be as well, so that you can set up a treatment program that treats both the substance use disorder and the co-occurring psychiatric disorder." He stressed the importance of treating both in an integrated fashion, so that one issue does not overcome the other.

Long-term treatment is another critical element to success, Libby continued. For those who have been using for 20 years, even a 90-day program is not enough. "It's going to take longer than that. It takes practice in sobriety, and we find that people who continue on in outpatient programs after they've been through...a residential stay, who continue living ...for a while with other people where they can practice sober living together, have a much better success rate than those who simply go through in-home basic treatment."

Dr. de la Cruz agreed that treating mental health issues and SUD concurrently, rather than sequentially, is important, "there's no one right intervention; residential treatment is not the answer for everyone...There

are lots of options...primary care doctors can offer interventions, psychiatrists can offer interventions, they offer you interventions when you enter the jail system...It's more about increasing different points that you can offer various services.”

Wheelock asked Sheriff Hart how SUD and co-occurring mental health disorders played out in the county jail system. Hart noted that our jails, which, due to prison realignment, are now essentially prisons holding people for up to four years, have turned into detox and mental health facilities. Seventy percent of those who are brought in under the influence stay a few hours to sober up, then get released with a court date. The other 30% stay longer and end up detoxing in the facility under the care of medical staff. Once stabilized, they get mental health and substance abuse services.

Hart mentioned the federal grant of \$700,000 a year for three years for a sobering center in Santa Cruz County. This pilot project will develop a 10-bed facility to defer chronic inebriates from the main jail into a recovery center, with services provided by Janus and the county. “They're not going to get booked,...but...they're going to have a place to sleep off their entire intoxication, they're going to get checked by a nurse, they're going to get a therapeutic professional...to offer them services, and there's also going to be security there...It's going to be a great way to free up police officer time.”

Hart continued, “By the time an officer responds to the call for service, arrests the person, waits in line for county jail, gets them booked, writes the police report, one police officer has wasted two to three hours of their shift on, really, a relatively minor crime when you look at the scope of the criminal justice system.

“And now that officer will be able to drive to a location at the main jail, drop them off to Janus staff, get back out on the street...I'm really excited about it, I think it's a new way of looking at public intoxication. There are many states where public intoxication is not a crime, it's a health issue.”

The panel touched on the topic of the homeless population, a high percentage of whom are affected by SUD and COD. Libby indicated that a good number of those who pass through the sobering center are likely to be homeless, and will be able to access care from that point.

The discussion then moved on to discuss the cost of treatment. Manov mentioned that the Affordable Care Act means more people will have coverage through MediCal, and MediCal has expanded the types of services it covers.

Manov urged awareness of the costs of untreated SUD on the community: having folks show up at the jails, hospitals, and in child welfare services is not a cost effective way to spend our dollars.

De la Cruz added that the stigma around SUD affects funding because people feel those with mental illness are more worthy, “...we're pitting the addicts against the mental health patients; I don't think that's very productive.”

Libby pointed out that when “two police cars and an ambulance and a fire truck” are called in to deal with an inebriate, “you're talking about an ambulance ride to Dominican, another thousand dollars [for a] check-up at Dominican,...and all of the sudden you've run up a bill where [instead you could have treated] a couple of people for substance use disorder.” He suggested putting aside the issue of whether or not you liked addicts, and considering where you want your money most effectively spent. “I think prevention of those kinds of problems and treatment is a better way to spend the money than on trying to sweep up all of the sequelae [secondary consequences] of that activity.”

Hart mentioned the changes made by last November’s two successful ballot initiatives, Propositions 47 and 27, which reduced penalties for possession of small amounts of drugs from felonies to misdemeanors. Those that were once housed in the county jail, at \$105 per day, are now diverted from jail to courts, where they can get mandated treatment. Hart also mentioned that money from prison realignment will be going not just to realigned inmates, but to a lot of other people who are suffering from SUD.

This ends part two of our report on last May’s forum. Look for more installments in future issues of the VOTER. You can also view the entire [video of the forum](#) online by clicking the link on the calendar page of our web site.

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check payable to League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745.

____ \$65 Individual annual membership
____ \$100.00 Two members in a household
____ \$30.00 Student membership
____ Contribution \$ _____

Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWV Education Fund.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVC 95 for 95

Celebrate the California State League's 95th birthday and buy a [gift membership](#) for someone special in your life! The recipient of your gift membership will receive these special one-time benefits: a copy of the new *Guide to California Government*, a beautiful LWVC poppy pin, and a fun and engaging "Intro to the League" webinar.

More information at <https://lwvc.org/membership>.

Voter Service Report

Local elections: No county-wide measures or elections will occur on November 3. However, on November 17 the Santa Cruz City School District will have a Special Election mail-only ballot on two measures: parcel taxes for high schools and elementary schools (renewal). There will be a voter information pamphlet mailed to all registered voters in the Santa Cruz City District in October.

Voting rights and elections update: California now supports voting rights for non-violent felons on post-release community supervision. Last year, the American Civil Liberties Union, the LWV of California, and other civil rights groups won a Superior Court judgement against then-Secretary of State Debra Bowen. The decision reversed Bowen's attempt to classify prisoners relocated from state to local custody (under the prison realignment law) as state prisoners, thus making them ineligible to vote. In August, current Secretary of State Alex Padilla declined to appeal the decision, saying that we need to engage—not shun—former prisoners.

Pending state legislation to follow: AB 1461 creates automatic voter registration when an eligible person registers with the DMV. SB 450 creates county vote centers opening 14 days preceding an election in order to increase early voting options. SB 415 requires local governments to conduct their local elections on statewide election dates when voter turnout is generally higher.

On the national level, a federal appeals court struck down the Texas ID voter law on August 5. The court ruled that the 2011 Texas law violated the Federal Voting Rights Act. This decision was on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the 1965 landmark civil rights law.

— *Dottie Fry, Voter Service Co-chair*

School Reserve Cap Fix

On August 18, a bipartisan coalition announced [Senate Bill 799](#) (Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo). SB 799 aims to fix the school budget reserve cap by giving more flexibility to school districts to set aside reserve funds to best suit their students' needs. The "reserve cap" limits what school districts can save for a rainy day and limits what schools can save for large, critical investments in classroom technologies, school repairs, textbooks and other classroom investments.

Trudy Schafer, Senior Director for Program, League of Women Voters of California said, "Allowing districts to keep adequate reserves protects classroom programs and services and local education jobs."