



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

March 2016

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Calendar

Thursday, March 3, 2016
1-3 p.m.
Local Program Planning
Home of Sandy Warren
150 Scenic Street
Santa Cruz 95060

Tuesday
March 8, 2016
10 a.m.-noon
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz 95060

Wednesday, March 23, 2016
Noon-1:30 p.m.
Affordable Housing
Julie Conway, SCC Housing Manager
Community Foundation Santa Cruz County
7807 Soquel Drive, Aptos
Bring your own lunch.

Tuesday, April 12, 2016
10 a.m.-noon
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz 95060

Tuesday, April 12, 2016
Reception 6:30 p.m.; program 7-8 p.m.
Equal Pay Act
Syda Kosofsky Cogliati and Ashley Wheelock
Peace United Church, Fellowship Hall
900 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Co-sponsors: LWVSCC and
Women Lawyers of SCC
Free and open to the public
Attorneys: CLE credit available (details at
wlvsc.org)

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*The League of Women Voters of
Santa Cruz County invites you to attend*

Affordable Housing in Santa Cruz County

Featuring

Julie Conway
SCC Housing Manager

**Wednesday
March 23, 2016
Noon-1:30 p.m.**

Community Foundation
Santa Cruz County
7807 Soquel Drive
Aptos

*Free and open to the public.
Bring your own lunch.*



In March, LWVSCC presents a discussion of affordable housing in Santa Cruz County with Julie Conway, housing manager at the county planning department. Her talk will focus on the impacts of the affordable housing shortage in our county and what efforts are being made to address the problem. Conway will bring us up-to-date on changes to the county's affordable housing guidelines and how the county is coping with loss of the redevelopment agency.

Conway has worked in the field of affordable housing since 1983. She has been with the County of Santa Cruz since 2001, working first as Housing Coordinator with the Homeless Person's Health Project, then with the Housing Section of the Planning Department since 2004. She has managed the housing section since 2011.

Bring your own lunch and join the League to learn more about affordable housing on Wednesday, March 23, from noon to 1:30 p.m., at the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, 7807 Soquel Drive, Aptos. This event is free and open to the public. Download and print a flyer for the event at wlvsc.org/calendar.

Voter Service Report

Spring Voter Registration

Volunteers Needed

Voter Service will have a busy spring with both voter education and voter registration activities occurring before the June 7 primary elections. We are collaborating with the Santa Cruz County Elections Department with outreaches in April and May.

High School Voter Education Weeks, from April 18 to April 29, have been officially requested by the California Secretary of State and the California Superintendent of Schools. In March, we will contact high schools and will schedule the visits for April. We are planning classroom visits on voter education and voter registration for eligible voters. We need to know the number of volunteers by mid-March to schedule the visits.

In May we are doing voter registration at Cabrillo College campus events and voter information with classes or clubs. We will also have community outreach at the Brain Center and Senior Centers.

Voter Services are a vital part of the League of Women Voters' mission. We've had great participation from our League members for our voter service outreaches in the last year; if you enjoyed volunteering before and want to do it again, or if you missed out and want to help in this election cycle, this is your chance. If you are interested in volunteering to reach out to high school students, college students, or senior citizens in April or May, please contact our Voter Service co-chairs: Dottie Fry (688-9234) or Sue Becker (462-4160) or by e-mail at elections@lwvsc.org.

We would love to have you participate in this most rewarding experience.

—Dottie Fry, Voter Service co-chair

President's Message

The League of Women Voters has, since its founding, been a major force for social and legislative reform. As a grassroots organization, we welcome the input and donations of all our members, whether or not you can be physically present at some or all of our programs. Since the League has been at the forefront of the battle for legislative reform, the topic of our 96th Anniversary Luncheon at Seacliff Inn, "Legislative Reforms and Political Power Shifts in Sacramento", as presented by Assembly Member Mark Stone, was most appropriate, with its focus on reforms in the legislature and the impact of these changes on government.

I would like to thank the many League members who helped make this event a success: Peggy Marketello, for securing the room and, with the assistance of Morgan Rankin and Kathy Van Horn, for arranging the decorations; Judi Orbach for contacting the speaker and working on the contract; Jan Karwin, for keeping track of reservations and funds received, as well as working at check-in; Dee Takemoto for introducing our speaker; Dottie Fry who assisted with check in and helped me with telephoning our members to remind them of the event. In making calls to our members, I learned that many had scheduling conflicts or health problems and heard their disappointment at not being able to be there on February 21, so would also like to thank Pam Newbury for making a video recording, which our absent members and others can view on our League's website (go to lwvsc.org/videos and click on the [link](#)). You can also read the report on his talk on page 3.

Since we are a grassroots organization, you are encouraged to share your ideas for local programs at our March 3 local program meeting (details at lwvsc.org/calendar). If you cannot be present at the meeting, please contact one of our board of directors (go to lwvsc.org/contact or e-mail league@lwvsc.org), who will either share your suggestion or forward it to someone who will attend the meeting at Sandy Warren's home that afternoon.

Our upcoming program on affordable housing on March 23 at the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, featuring Julie Conway as speaker, is a brown bag lunch event, with no cost to you, and all are encouraged to come and bring a friend. Details for this and other programs of great interest coming in the next few months are listed in the calendar. Jan Beautz, Judi Orbach, and Sue Becker have been working since last June to make these programs happen in 2016.

—Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC



LWVSCC President Barbara Lewis addresses February luncheon

Toward Better Governance in California

At LWVSCC's annual luncheon on February 21, Assembly Member Mark Stone, who represents California's 29th Assembly District, discussed how recent significant changes to our laws have led to better governance in California.

Stone began by pointing out that California's unique reliance on ballot box propositions has had a dramatic effect on how our legislative process functions. Bypassing the long, often frustrating legislative process with the easier ballot initiative can result in the initiative causing unintended consequences, because that very legislative process is designed to find and eliminate such issues. Some of these problems can be fixed in the legislature, but if the initiative changes California's constitution, any changes must go to the voters in a follow-up initiative.

Restrictions to the tax system began in the seventies when proposition 13 took away from local jurisdictions the ability to set property taxes, which led to disasters in funding education, infrastructure, and the disability support system. In the late 1990s, when we had a budget surplus fueled by the dot-com boom, taxes were cut. When the dot-com bubble burst, it was very difficult to raise them again because of the required 2/3 majority vote needed.

When there's not much nexus between revenues and expenditures, it leaves little room for conversation. In order to raise taxes, Stone said, "...because the governor and the legislative leaders had to get so many votes, they then had to go to each assembly member and senator, and effectively had to buy their votes." This led to budgets Stone described as, "Bloated with a lot of things that do not necessarily benefit [California]--beneficial to an individual and their ability to get reelected--but not beneficial across California."

Now that the budget can be passed with a simple majority, thanks to legislative reform, Stone says, "We get the budget done on time, the budget is balanced, we fight a lot with the governor, which is what we're supposed to do."

Adding to California's governance problems were the strict legislative term limits, initially conceived to eliminate Willie Brown as assembly speaker. That accomplished, the term limits became

"a complete and unmitigated disaster." Prior to term limits, the average time a legislator spent in Sacramento was twelve years. Under term limits the maximum time you could remain in the Senate was eight years, a reasonable length of time; for the Assembly, though, it was six years, which meant that by day one, they were having to look for their next job, rather than paying attention to the job they were elected to do. They were voting based on what their next job would be, whether they were looking for a congressional seat or US Senate seat.

Beginning with the legislature of 2012, Stone's first term in the Assembly, members could spend a maximum of twelve years in either house. Now, Assembly members can look long-term, not just to their next election. Stone gave the example of the bill he introduced last year, "probably the largest change to the foster care system in decades." This complex, 800-page bill will take years to fully implement and flesh out, including fixing things along the way. With the possibility of many more years in the assembly, Stone can expect to personally implement the bill over the next several years rather than trusting someone else to keep the momentum going.



LWVSCC Anniversary Luncheon

The longer term limit horizon also leads to more productive working relationships between Democrats and Republicans because they have more opportunities to work together and negotiate solutions, "...literally we're looking at each other [thinking], we're going to be working with each other for twelve years, we might as well figure out how to get along and how to work together."

An additional benefit to the longer view afforded by the term limits change is that legislators have time to build up the expertise and confidence to better perform one of the legislature's key jobs: oversight of the administrative and judiciary branches of government. Instead of relying on lobbyists and staffers for help, elected officials will be the major policy leaders. *continued next page*

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Top-two primaries, where only the top-two vote getters in the primary advance to the general election, is a recent change that concerns Stone. Intended to take away the extremes in politics and elect more moderates, Stone expressed his concerns: “I don't think I have seen that much of a detente from the top-two primary What it has done, though, effectively, is completely silence the minor parties.... Because they know their candidates will never be on the ballot in the general [election], and we have completely taken their voices out of the political dialog, we have disenfranchised them. And I know that's something the League of Women Voters holds near and dear, is not disenfranchising voters. ... have we mellowed out the extremes in the legislature? I don't think we have, but we have silenced a lot of voices, and I just think that was a bit of a mistake and a bit of an overreaction.”



Assembly Member Mark Stone addresses LWVSCC luncheon

Stone voiced his approval of the effects of redistricting, which put determination of the state's senate and assembly districts in the hands of a non-partisan commission. Now districts make more sense, are more compact, and can work together as communities of interest. Having geographically cohesive districts where two assembly districts “nest” within the larger Senate districts gives less populated areas a bigger voice because they can work collaboratively and not be forgotten. This worked to the central coast's advantage when the water bond was passed a couple of years ago; more money was applied to the central coast than would have been before.

Stone, not a fan of the initiative system, referenced the many statewide initiatives to come on the November ballot, including two put up by the “...save the plastic bags coalition. Those poor plastic bags. They need an entire coalition to help save the poor plastic bags. And the reason they're putting two on is to confuse you. And watch the amount of money that the plastics industry is going to put in there to shut down the plastic bag ban that the legislature finally did a couple of years ago.”

Expressing concern about the big influence of money on politics, Stone said he saw it in action last year when the oil lobby tried to derail the climate bill Governor Brown had hoped to take to the Paris climate talks, where California's voice has a big influence because we can show that it's possible to accomplish reductions. The plan, 50% reduction in reliance on fossil fuels, 50% increase in the amount of energy efficiency in the system, and 50% increased reliance on renewables by 2030, had passed the Senate and was headed for the Assembly. Then the oil companies put out ads to scare people with fuel rationing and increases in gas prices, none of which was ever part of the plan. This was enough to derail support in the Assembly, and resulted in the fossil fuel reduction piece being removed.

Big money also had a direct impact on legislators when they tried to put a \$2/pack tax on tobacco to restore cuts in funding to the disability community. Some of his colleagues refused to support the bill, and Stone feels it's due to “...a real lack of sophistication amongst us. A lot of my colleagues are taking the money and then doing what they're told. There's no pushback.” Some legislators try to leverage their vote by asking for favors in return, but Stone feels, “That's playing with fire in my thought, because what's at stake is way too important for little petty games from individuals within the legislature.”

From Stone's standpoint, the legislature is doing a good job: moving some very good policies and having great discussions across the aisle, but he sees forces coming in that could lead us in the wrong direction, “Ultimately, if we can't get money out of politics. we're not going to have a system that's responsive to what Californian's need. It will be responsive to very specific money interests.”

To take away the corrosive effects of big money, Stone suggests removing limits on how much an individual candidate can raise, and enact laws

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Responding to Drug and Alcohol Use: Challenges and Solutions

In May of 2015, the LWVSCC 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 health services department; and County Sheriff James Hart. This is the fifth of a series of articles reporting on what the panelists discussed.

Wheelock asked a question from the audience about how the lack of affordable housing affects those with a substance use disorder and/or mental illness. Asserting that this is truly the 64-million-dollar question, Manov stressed the difficulty of finding housing in our county for people with jobs, much less people in recovery who are not employed. Where funding is available, they will support those who are ready to graduate from acute care into a clean and sober house for a couple of months until they have an income and are stable in their recovery enough to make it in an unsupervised environment. “Having said that,” Manov finished, “the demand for clean and sober housing far outstrips the availability, and this is one of the areas where we have a lot of work to do.”

Libby pointed out the challenges in providing housing solutions for those in recovery by describing the difficulties encountered in San Francisco Tenderloin housing project. They developed old housing projects into single-room occupancy units for homeless people with mental health and substance use problems. While they were able to provide case managers to make sure the clients attended appointments, took their medications, and met other obligations, the program did well. But when money for case managers ran out, “...the whole thing collapsed.” It’s a huge, complex problem, Libby emphasized, “and the amount of money that it takes to solve it properly is enormous.”

Wheelock moved on to the next question: what’s the first thing to do if you are concerned that someone close to you has a substance use disorder?

Manov recommended Al-anon and county websites such as Recovery Wave as a good way to get educated about what to do or not do, how to talk to your child or a family member whom you think may have a substance use problem, and where to get help. If the person you’re concerned about does not share your concerns, Manov suggested a treatment intervention specialist who is trained in how to help family members intervene around a substance use issue.

Wheelock then asked why the drug court in Santa Cruz had been terminated. Manov responded that, when the grant money ran out for providing probation officers for the drug court team, the judges no longer felt comfortable in proceeding with the program, which was unfortunate because it had good results.

The next question concerned the closing of Dominican Hospital’s mental health unit. De la Cruz responded that Dignity Health, who runs Dominican Hospital, decided to get out of the inpatient psychiatry business, so the county stepped in to fill the need by building the Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF), a free-standing inpatient psychiatric facility. The county contracts with Telecare Corporation to staff it. Since the facility is not part of the hospital, it’s not allowed to take patients purely for detox. They can only accept patients who can tolerate oral medications and don’t need IV medication.

The discussion then turned to the downtown accountability program for frequent low-level offenders in the downtown Santa Cruz area, most of whom have substance use disorders. Manov described the typical client as someone whose SUD has progressed to the point that all they have left to lose is their freedom. This can be used as a lever to get them to stick with treatment long enough to benefit from it, so that they don’t continue to cycle through the jail and emergency department. The downtown accountability program provides intensive case management, and the same judge and prosecutor work with the client throughout the process, which prevents them from slipping through the cracks. Typically, the judge orders treatment, with jail time as a consequence for not following through.

Wheelock asked the panelists to give their final thoughts concerning how our community can improve its response to drug and alcohol disorders.

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Libby spoke about efforts at Janus to use available funds more efficiently by moving people from treatment in residential care to outpatient treatment, which is much less expensive. They wouldn't be moving people out of residential treatment who need that level of care, but once they are at the point where they can be successfully treated under less intensive care, they would be stepped down as early as possible. Research has shown that long stays in residential care are sometimes not warranted. "We're able to treat a lot more people for the same amount of money, and do it successfully."

Libby concluded with his thoughts about the necessity for community education. The United Way [Community Assessment Project](#) survey recently showed that 15% of adults in our county think it's acceptable to have underage kids drink at home. Libby emphasized that this is a problem because alcohol is the most seriously addictive substance there is in terms of what it does to you physically.

Dr. de la Cruz emphasized integration of substance abuse and mental health services, as well as cross-agency collaboration. She also stressed the need to educate physicians with the basic skills to provide medication to patients that need them. She concluded, "Some people who are not at the level of a severe disorder might be helped with just an intervention by a primary care doctor. Someone else who's struggling with depression and starting to drift into the substance abuse world could be helped by their psychiatrist."

Sheriff Hart plans to continue looking into innovative corrections ideas and solutions, such as the sobering center and other ideas for diverting low-end offenses out of the main jail in order to maintain those beds for serious, violent offenders. His goal is to have low-end offenders leave their facility better off than when they came in.

Jessica Stone's goal is to talk as much as possible about the idea of reducing the stigma and shame surrounding addiction so that people can admit their problems to themselves and family. It's also important that hospitals and other institutions that face the challenge of treating patients with SUD understand the issues and symptoms and where to refer patients. Personally, Stone is on a mission to spread the word that substance use disorders are a disease that can be treated.

Manov mentioned the community social norming change campaign: a group of community members and professionals seeking to educate the public about SUD and develop more compassion for those affected. The campaign will also work to educate the community about substance use and promote more cost-effective, sensible ways of approaching issues surrounding SUD in our society. Manov concluded, "My principal objectives for the next six months or so is to look at the possible expansion of treatment funds through the drug MediCal waiver through the Affordable Care Act and advocate for expansion of services, because money is not the only answer, but in this situation, money is a definite ingredient to improving the situation."

—Pam Newbury, *VOTER* Editor

Editor's note: This concludes our series of reports on the May 2015 forum. The social norming campaign referenced by Bill Manov is soon to launch throughout the county. Look for more information about the campaign in future issues of the *VOTER*.

Previous installments in this series can be viewed in our [August](#), [September](#), [October](#), and [December](#) 2015 issues of the *VOTER* (which can be viewed online at lwvscc.org/voter)

You can also view the entire [video of the forum](#) by clicking the link at our website's new videos page at lwvscc.org/videos on our website.

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.

*League of Women Voters
of Santa Cruz County
PO Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010
(831) 325-4140
Editor: Pam Newbury
President: Barbara Lewis
Membership: Peggy Marketello
league@lwvscc.org | <http://lwvscc.org>*

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.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

requiring immediate and very, very comprehensive disclosure requirements. The challenges there would be closing loopholes to reveal the true sources of the money. Because candidates have limits on what they can raise, lots of other money gets spent to influence voters, and you may not know where it comes from.



Mark Stone speaks at LWVSCC luncheon

Public financing in campaigns could take away the influence of large donors. This change will not happen from within the legislature because they have no incentive to change anything. Stone concluded, "It has to come from one of those godawful voter initiatives."

—Pam Newbury, VOTER Editor

Editor's note: Assembly Member Stone answered several questions from the audience about reforms to the initiative system, the coastal commission, affordable housing, plastic bag bans, and more. To see the entire [video of his talk](#), go to lwvsc.org/videos and click on the link.

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Tuesday, May 10, 2016
10 a.m.-noon
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
720 Front Street, Santa Cruz 95060

Tuesday, May 17, 2016
Money in Politics.
Helen Hutchison LWVC president, and
Helen Grieco, northern California
Common Cause organizer
Co-sponsored by Common Cause and
LWVSCC

Sunday, June 5, 2016
10 a.m.-noon
LWVSCC Annual Meeting
Seascope Golf Club
610 Clubhouse Drive
Aptos 95003

Equal Pay for Women

In 2009, President Obama signed into law the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. LWVSCC and the Women Lawyers of Santa Cruz County have teamed up to celebrate this milestone on the road to equal pay for women. Our speakers, Santa Cruz Attorneys Syda Kosofsky Cogliati and Ashley Wheelock, will discuss the fascinating story of Lilly Ledbetter, point out where more progress is needed for pay equality, and discuss ways in which we can advocate for fair pay.

Join us for refreshments at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, April 12 in Fellowship Hall at Peace United Church, 900 High Street, Santa Cruz. The program will start at 7. This event is free and open to the public. Attorneys can receive Continuing Legal Education credit for attending this event; more information at wlscc.org.