



The Voter



League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo County, California

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

November 2020



General Meeting

Election 2020: A Democracy Report Card

November 17th, Noon-1:30, via Zoom

Registration: http://bit.ly/LWVNCSMC_November2020

This election is unprecedented: voting during a pandemic; record-setting fundraising for key races, national protests against racism, the premature end to the 2020 census, legal challenges to voting laws, and a Supreme Court seat battle.

It's worth arguing that the future of our democracy itself is on the ballot and as of October 15, 20 million Americans had already voted in what promises to be one of the highest turnout elections in history.

We will hear from **Jim Irizarry**, Assistant Chief Elections Officer for San Mateo County, to get an early assessment of how the election process played out in San Mateo County.

Then, join **Meghann Curtis**, COO of The Leadership Now Project and **Mairin Macaluso**, the organization's Director of Membership to learn how the challenges facing our democracy predated the current administration and the outlook for change. They will also discuss what the results of the 2020 election mean for the diverse slate of House and Senate candidates followed by Leadership Now as well as for key democracy reforms.

For more information about Meghann, Mairin, and The Leadership Now Project, please go to <https://www.leadershipnowproject.org/>.

Everyone is welcome. Please register at the link shown above.

Contents: President's Message, p. 2 — Board Highlights, p. 3 — Welcome to Our New Members! p. 3 — New (& Not So New) Member Orientation, p. 3 — Voter Resources for the November 3 Election, p. 4 — Thank you, Voter Service Volunteers! p. 5 — Wednesday Caucus, p. 5 — Mark Your Calendars! p. 6 — November Calendar, p. 7

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Marie Baldisseri, President • Marie Baldisseri, Membership Chair • Ann Kuchins, Editor

Office: 444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1, San Mateo CA 94401 • Phone: 650-342-5853 Email: LWVNCSMC@sbcglobal.net • Web site: www.lwvnscsmc.org.

President's Message



It is clear when there is a dictatorship, when tyranny has taken over, when there is no free speech, and when people live in fear of the government. What is not always clear, is how the country got to that point. If there was a military coup, or an invasion, or other revolutionary take-over, with guns and violence – then yes, that is how the dictatorship came into being. One day free – the next in chains. But many dictatorships start slowly, and insidiously. The rights of citizens and the freedoms everyone has taken for granted disappear one by one, until one day the citizens wake up and it is too late – the dictatorship has already taken firm hold.

To understand how we can learn from history to hold on to our democracy I recommend you read *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, written by Timothy Snyder published by Tim Duggan Books. It's a tiny book listing twenty markers of tyranny in its infancy – twenty changes to identify and to oppose.

The book was published primarily in response to the many populist and far-right movements that seem to be springing up all over the globe including here in the United States. We do not live in a dictatorship, but the precursors are already starting to take hold such as intense/aggressive nationalism; the cries of fake news; the demonizing of minority groups, foreigners, scientific experts; and voter intimidation.

Two quotes in the book I particularly liked are: "To abandon facts is to abandon freedom. If nothing is true then no one can criticize power," and "A nationalist will say 'it can't happen here,' which is the first step towards disaster. A patriot says that it could happen here, but that we will stop it." To oppose tyranny requires many, many people being aware of the danger signs and acting on them.

I am reminded of a poem I love by Pastor Niemöller who was imprisoned in Dachau:

*First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.*

On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century is well-written and very thought-provoking. I believe it needs to be widely read and acted on, but unfortunately the people who most need to read it, probably won't. It is a call to watchfulness and a reminder of the dangers of apathy.

Marie Baldisseri, President

Board Highlights

At the October board meeting, our board

- Reviewed input on our website and suggestions for improvement, and made an action plan
- Was updated on activities to get out the *Easy Voter Guide* and voter registration materials
- Heard about the first Wednesday Caucus and how it brought out fruitful discussions and ideas
- Discussed the many candidate forums and Pros and Cons sessions that have been held and efforts being made to reach diverse communities with more translation services
- Looked ahead to upcoming general meeting plans for the holiday and beyond
- Considered our social media activity level and ways to increase our prominence



Welcome to Our New Members!

Courtney Adams
J. R. (Janise) Brown
Gloria Patane



New (& Not So New) Member Orientation

Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars! Zoom session – Registration email to follow

Whether you are a new member or have been a member for a while and feel you would like a refresher on how the League of Women Voters works, I hope you will plan to attend. The meeting is an opportunity to learn about the League -- its mission, policies, positions, areas of advocacy, and more. In addition, it's a great opportunity to meet other League members and discover how you can get involved. Everyone is welcome, including prospective members. Bring a friend!

You must register to get the Zoom link at http://bit.ly/12-20_New_Member_Orientation.

Your Hosts: Marie Baldisseri and Margaret Lukens

Voter Resources for the November 3 Election



Be sure to see the election information on our website (<https://my.lwv.org/california/north-central-san-mateo-county>). You will find links to the League's resources and publications that will help you prepare for the November 3 election. Be sure to let your family and friends know that these are available.

Voters Edge: Find information about the candidates and measures on your ballot at <http://votersedge.org/ca>. Information is available in English and Spanish.

Pros & Cons: The two San Mateo County Leagues pooled their resources to create a Pros & Cons video. You can view the propositions individually or you can view the entire program.

- To view the videos on You Tube, go to <https://my.lwv.org/california/north-central-san-mateo-county/article/you-tube-links-pros-cons-ballot-measures> on our website.
- You can access the .pdf version of the PROS & CONS at <https://my.lwv.org/california/north-central-san-mateo-county/article/you-tube-links-pros-cons-ballot-measures>.
- For the LWVC ballot recommendations, go to <https://lwvc.org/vote/elections/ballot-recommendations>.

Candidate Forums: To view the Zoom recordings of the candidate forums, go to <https://my.lwv.org/california/north-central-san-mateo-county/event/candidate-forums>.

Easy Voter Guide: The *Easy Voter Guide* is a joint project of the LWV California Education Fund and the California State Library. It is available in several languages. Find it at <http://www.easyvoterguide.org/>.

Voting in San Mateo County: San Mateo County has more days and more ways to vote. For information on voting in San Mateo County, go to the San Mateo County Elections website for information on where and how to vote at <https://www.smacre.org/>.

Where's My Ballot: To verify that your mail-in ballot was received and accepted, go to the California Secretary of State's website at https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-status/wheres-my-ballot?fbclid=IwAR3Kp6Wiib6ahUyD1FhCPY0oYhXXB39BohilpEJYJdYfMiCu_6s1z9t6b14 or just Google where's my ballot.

If you need to register and vote, you can do so at a Vote Center between now and including Election Day to register and vote provisionally. You can go to any vote center in San Mateo County. Once your registration is approved, your provisional ballot will be counted. For information on Vote Center hours and locations, go to: <https://www.smacre.org/vote-center-hours-locations>.

Ann Kuchins, Board Member

Thank you, Voter Service Volunteers!

On behalf of our members and the communities our League serves I want to extend deep appreciation for the historic level of support provided by our voter service volunteers. COVID-19 restrictions brought unexpected challenges requiring endless hours coordinating virtual candidates forums and Pros & Cons sessions with city clerks, librarians, and local organizations, studying to gain a thorough understanding of the November ballot measures, creating scripts (with Spanish translations), researching and inventing the technical support required, patiently teaching the teleconferencing technology to other volunteers, plus the incredible amount of work needed to update and maintain Voter Edge, San Mateo County.

Voter Service Team

Margie Gater and Kathy Wheeler, Voter Service Co-Chairs
 Kathee Tyson, Voters Edge, San Mateo County
 Gayle Hardt, Pros & Cons scripts

Candidate Moderators and Hosts

Carolyn Belknap
 Margie Gater
 Linda Jansen
 Ann Kuchins
 Kathy Wheeler

Rachel Callegari, Community Outreach
 Marta Bookbinder, Spanish Translator

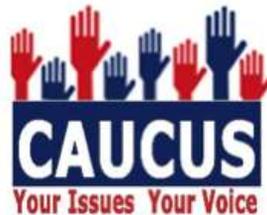
Pros & Cons Hosts

Beth Bhatnagar
 Eddie Flores
 Gayle Hardt
 Susie Raye
 Kathy Wheeler

Thank you!

Marie Baldisseri, President

Wednesday Caucus



The ten members and visitors gathered via Zoom on the last Wednesday of September for the first meeting of The Wednesday Caucus agreed: The Caucus is a winner! Host Kristi Denham invited each person to speak about whatever was on their mind. We got to know one another a little better, and we all came away with a few resources.

Everyone is welcome to attend the monthly online meeting, but registration is a must. Read more on the chapter's calendar page, and register here: https://bit.ly/LWVNCSMC_Wednesday_Caucus.

To give a flavor of the topics we covered, here are some of the notes from the September meeting's participants:

- A participant asked how to find League ballot recommendations online:

<https://lwc.org/vote/elections/ballot-recommendations>

- Jackie Jacobberger recommends a book she’s reading:
Four Threats: The Recurring Crises of American Democracy by Suzanne Mettler and Robert C. Lieberman. <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250244420>
- Linda Jansen is enrolled in a free Yale online course on African American history.
https://oyc.yale.edu/african-american-studies/afam-162?mc_cid=f045706cd4&mc_eid=3bc3a9b4e5
- In answer to a participant’s question, Betty Fleming noted, “A little note - interest groups, aka program committees, also exist at the Bay Area, state and national level. Many stay in contact through the League websites.”
- I (Margaret Lukens) shared the daily newsletter from historian Heather Cox Richardson, “Letters from an American,” which has been a helpful daily recap of the current political news from a historian’s perspective, with source notes: <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/>.



Join us for more, the last Wednesday of each month!

Margaret Lukens, Board Member



Mark Your Calendars!

2020 General Meeting Planner

Date	Topic
2020	
Tues 11/17 12p-2p	Election 2020: A Democracy Report Card – Guest speakers: Jim Irizarry, Asst. Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder & Asst. Chief Elections Officer and representatives from The Leadership Now Project
Tues 12/15	Holiday Celebration

Please note: In compliance with San Mateo County’s COVID-19 guidelines, all general meetings will be hosted on Zoom, a teleconferencing tool that enables you to watch and/or call from your computer or phone to participate. This tool is free.

November Calendar

Date	Time	Description	Place
Wednesday Oct. 28	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	The Wednesday Morning Caucus. Register here: https://bit.ly/LWVNCSMC_Wednesday_Caucus	Zoom Meeting
Wednesday Nov. 4	4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Board Meeting All members welcome! Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82650715838?pwd=MFhmTjJlxbGcvdDNPnhpXmk5TUgRNUT09	Zoom Meeting
Wednesday Nov. 25	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	The Wednesday Morning Caucus. Register here: https://bit.ly/LWVNCSMC_Wednesday_Caucus	Zoom Meeting

JOIN THE LEAGUE!

Where members like you are taking advantage of leadership opportunities and making an impact.

Name(s)

Address

City

Zip Code

Phone Number (daytime)

E-mail address

Amount enclosed \$ _____

(\$75 one member; \$115 two members, same household; \$40 each additional member, same household. *Dues are tax deductible.*)

Mail to: LWVNCSMC 444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1, San Mateo, CA 94401