



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.

May 2019

Book To Action Events – Open to the Public Burlingame Public Library 480 Primrose Rd. Burlingame CA 94010

The League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo has been working with librarian Elaine Tai at the Burlingame Public Library on the *Book To Action Project*. The following events complement the book discussions and are intended to inspire activism in the spirit of the civil rights movement. All events are free and open to the public. Attendance at the book discussions is not required.

◆ **Thursday, May 9; 7:00 - 8:30:** *Impactful Advocacy Workshop*

Explore how you can take effective action on the most critical issues of our time.

Laura Eberly serves as the Director of Social Change at YWCA San Francisco and Marin. She leads YWCA's Inclusion Inventory DEI consulting program as well as the organization's legislative and coalition advocacy.

◆ **Thursday, May 23, 7:00 – 8:30:** Talking with the following speakers on voting rights past and present:

▪ **Bruce Hartford:** *The Fight for Voting Rights in America, Yesterday and Today*

Mr. Hartford will provide an overview of the historical context and present day efforts to restrict and deny the right to vote.

Mr. Hartford was a civil rights worker during the early and mid-1960s with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and Dr. King's organization the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Alabama and Mississippi. He is author of, *The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom* (2012), *The Selma Voting Rights Struggle & the March to Montgomery* (2014), *Voting Rights in America -- Two Centuries of Struggle* (2018), and *'Troublemaker' Memories of the Freedom Movement* (forthcoming).

▪ **Tessa D'arcangelew:** *Free the Vote, California!*

Ms. D'arcangelew will examine recent voting reforms in California and how they leave out the voices of the most marginalized people.

Ms. D'arcangelew is the Leadership Development Manager who manages the ACLU chapter and volunteer programs across Northern California.

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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.

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

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President's Message



I was browsing the LWVUS League Management website and came across a toolkit for climate change (<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/other-issues-tools/toolkit-climate-change>). It dawned on me that one of our issues for emphasis that we will vote on at the Annual meeting on June 8 is climate change adaptation with a focus on sea level rise and increased fire risk. It also dawned on me that there is no one in our League who is overseeing this issue. If you are really interested in doing something about climate change, I invite you to take a look at the toolkit, which might spark some ideas on taking action. If you are interested in providing some leadership to our League on climate change, please let us know (lwnvncsmc@sbcglobal.org). LWV South San Mateo County has some active participants working on climate change and perhaps we could combine forces as any action we might take would apply to the whole county.

Members of our League's census committee have been attending planning meetings with strategy work groups, such as Communications & Media and Elections & Census, with the Complete Count Committee of San Mateo County, which, coalition of agencies and organizations. On May 9, we will come together and present our findings. The next step is to form community action teams to implement these strategies.

Our League's Observer Corps has been busy defining and building their 2019 Action Plan, as well as examining their Mission and Vision Statements for possible revisions to ensure the statements accurately reflect their 2019 Plan. The Observer Corps will be examining local bond measures. The Observer Corps was honored to receive the support of the California League of Bond Oversight Committees (CaLBOC), a statewide volunteer, non-artisan association of compliance experts. Don't feel you need to be an expert; the Corps will train you. If you are interested in becoming involved, contact us at lwnvncsmc@sbcglobal.net.

I am very excited to announce that the speaker for our Annual meeting on June 8 is **Rose Jacobs Gibson. Betty Bernstein** raved about her as a truly inspirational speaker on getting involved and making a difference. Currently, Rose is the CEO of the Hagar Services Coalition, Inc. whose mission is to "plan and implement programs designed to restore, rebuild, and renew families and community." Prior to founding Hagar Services Coalition in 1994, Rose served on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the East Palo Alto City Council.

This month, you will receive the Annual Meeting Kit in the mail. There will be a light breakfast. In addition to the speaker, there will be a business meeting where we will elect new leadership, approve our program, and adopt a budget. You might say that it is a day of renewal as we prepare for 2019 – 2020, which will be a very busy year with Voter Girl in October, an early primary in March 2020, and the start of the census on April 1.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has — Margaret Mead

Ann Kuchins, President

Board Highlights

At the April board meeting, our board

- ◆ Heard that our cemetery tour fundraiser made \$425 for our League
 - ◆ Agreed that in place of an April meeting, League members should be encouraged to attend some of the public events put on by the Burlingame Public Library
 - ◆ Learned that the Voter Girl event with the Girl Scouts will be on Saturday, October 5 at Notre Dame High School in Belmont
 - ◆ Learned that the Observer Corps will look at bond measures approved by voters and see how the money is being spent
 - ◆ Decided to urge our members to get involved in promoting the 2020 Census
-



Our League is mourning the loss of one of our most active and dedicated members, **Renee Kaseff**. Renee was a Life Member as she had been a member for over 50 years. She has been described as warm, loving, and thoughtful with a quick wit and sharp intellect. She was a perfectionist at heart and worked hard to meet her own exacting high standards. She participated in numerous studies, was a regular at League meetings, and was instrumental in working on fundraisers where she shined in her ability to bring in a host of notable sponsors. In recent years, many of us remember her during her term as Program Director. Her wide circle of friends and acquaintances from many different walks of life coupled with a wealth of knowledge on how to recruit them resulted in monthly meetings with distinguished speakers and panels on a wide variety of topics.

Renee was very generous in opening her house for committee meetings and board meetings. If a meal was served, there was a touch of elegance reflecting her love of entertaining and her generous spirit. Her door is now closed, but we have our memories of a woman who devoted her life to her family as wife, mother, and grandmother and who worked ceaselessly to make democracy work for all people for over 50 years.

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

2019 Annual Meeting
Saturday, June 8
9:30 a.m. - Noon

**Congregational Church of
 Belmont**
751 Alameda de las Pulgas
Belmont 94002



**Speaker: Rose
 Jacobs Gibson**
**Civic Engagement
 and Leadership
 Development**



Voter Registration Training

Saturday, May 11, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

LWV Office

444 Peninsula Ave., Suite 1, San Mateo, CA 94401

For members who want to learn how to register voters or those who need to refresh their skills, there will be a training session on Saturday May 11 at 11 a.m. at the office.

We're going to need a well-trained team of registration volunteers for 2020, so let's get started!

RSVP to Joyce Delyani at lwvncsmc@sbcglobal.net or 650-342-5853.

Action Report

LWVUS

The League has put out a call to support the For the People Act. The act provides same-day and online voter registration; expanded early voting and simplified absentee voting; a ban on voter purges that kick eligible voters off the registration rolls; public financing of elections; and independent redistricting commissions. All of these are League priorities. The Senate is holding up the bill even though it has passed in the House. The Senate leadership is not allowing a vote or even so much as a hearing on the bill.

The LWVUS is urging League members to make sure that every Senator supports this legislation. The Senate owes the American people an explanation as to why they won't ensure that every eligible citizen is able to register and vote. The time range for this action alert is April 15 – May 15.

Another voting topic is the National Popular Vote (NPV) effort. The League has formed a task force to evaluate state League support, assess momentum around the NPV effort, make recommendations on the likelihood of gaining additional votes to pass the NPV interstate compact, and determine a plan of engagement for national staff by August 2019.

The census will be in full swing in less than a year. The League wants every resident counted, but we will have to wait for the SCOTUS to deliver an opinion on the inclusion of a citizenship question in the census.

LWVC

It is nearly convention time in Pasadena, and changes are in the works. Trying to be greener, the LWV California will not provide paper copies of the convention workbook. The workbook will be available May 1 when you can print a copy or download it to your laptop. Read more about speakers, workshops, special activities, and more at the website: <http://lwvc.wordpress.com>.

If you are interested in attending, our League still has two spots open for delegates. If interested, send an email to lwncsmc@sbcglobal.net or leave a message on the phone at 650-342-5853. The convention runs from Friday, May 31- Sunday, June 2.

Diana Stephens, Action Director

Legislative Interview with Assemblymember Kevin Mullin



Question: Redistricting, State and Local

Would you support a bill to require local governments that have district representation to establish independent redistricting commissions that would use a transparent process and fair criteria similar to the State, including safeguards against discriminating against any political party?

Answer:

Assemblymember Mullin is in favor of local redistricting and thinks local groups as well as other states can use the California model. District elections democratize the cost of campaigning for local office but raises the bar for candidates especially in vote-by-mail areas since all voters automatically receive ballots. Automatic voter registration is part of that effort and gets more voter participation. A side effect may be that districts that are too small may have difficulty getting enough candidates to run. This is an experiment and what might result is less consensus. He has noticed that more power is moving to regional governance, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Association of Bay Area Governments. Local districts are gaining more representation but less power. Sacramento is devolving more power to regional and local government. We will have to see how this works out and challenges democracy.

Question: Water Resources

What ideas do you have for addressing the needs of your own constituency while advancing water management planning that benefits all Californians?

Answer:

The water problem is multifaceted. He said, "I generally support Governor Newsom's plan to shrink the plan from two to one tunnel." The governor is taking a new approach. While the transfer of water from north to south is regarded with suspicion, we know that the water conveyance system needs updating. We also know that climate change requires us to be smarter about water policy. What ASM Mullin sees is a new water bond, possibly as high as \$9 billion, with state and federal regulatory agencies and the governor working together to define the bond terms. This will probably occur within the next four years.

Question: Public Education in California – Closing the Achievement Gap

For years closing the achievement and opportunity gaps has been both a clear state and local priority. We join with the researchers in asking a different and equally important question: "Are there ways to avoid the gaps in the first place?" As a legislator, what are your thoughts about the findings of Getting Down to Facts II? What action(s) would you support to further these goals?

Answer:

ASM Mullin supports universal access to affordable quality early childhood education. The state has to start earlier in the education process. In high cost areas physical facilities are a problem because the overhead expenses are so high. ASM Mullin serves on a task force focused on finding facilities and space. One solution might be to convert from fund programs to having the state give grants to cover costs. K-12 needs more money as well. CA will have to spend more to become one of the top ten funding states. Important as money is, it is not the only factor. California needs to reform its tax system.

California has an over-reliance on the wealthy and the stock market along with a shrinking middle class. We need to completely redo the revenue stream to provide more stable funding for government. We need to consider taxing services making exceptions for health and certain educational services since we have a service-based economy. This might include legal and accounting services. As for Proposition 13, Proposition 20 is on the ballot to close the business property tax loophole. The legislature will hold public hearings and maybe have a better bill or provide a companion bill. If Proposition 20 passes unmodified, cities and counties will have an incentive to zone for commercial use because of the cash that it will bring in. Affordable housing is not great for city budgets, and they need money for their own expenses.

California is a boom or bust state. Recession will eventually hit. What can be done to improve this situation is to take advantage of the good times, the governor's political capital, and the current enthusiasm for political change to improve education. The \$2 billion in the current budget will bring education up to the level before the last big recession. Equity in education will be an ongoing effort.

Question:

What other major issues do you think the Legislature must deal with in 2019? What are your personal priorities?

Answer:

A bill giving 17-year-olds the right to vote in the primaries if they will be 18 by the next general election is working its way through the legislature. It would not need the governor's signature to go on the ballot as a constitutional amendment. This move is to involve the young in government, not a push to get more Democrats. If the bill gets through the current session, which ends in September, it will be on the March 2020 ballot.

Transportation and housing are two of his top priorities. He is pushing for restarting redevelopment agencies, but the governor is not enthused. ASM Mullin thinks yanking funds if communities do not meet housing goals is a negative approach and believes that accessing funds if you meet goals is a more positive message. He said, the state ought to partner with local entities: if they can build enough units, then they can access funds for transportation etc. It will result in more affordable housing. Communities should meet their target housing numbers and be incentivized to do so. "

He is working to extend disclosure requirements to issue ads. The public has a right to know who is funding them. He is also working on having lobbyists report monthly while the legislature is in session instead of quarterly as they do now. He expects lots of resistance to this. While he finds people more energized about government, he wants them to stay engaged even after the 2020 election. ASM Mullin thinks the social media revolution has changed society, and we are still grappling with it. He said the purpose of the issue ads and lobbyist requirements were "to provide a more timely way to see who is trying to purchase influence at the state capitol as bills are being passed.

Diana Stephens



Cemetery Tour

May Calendar

Date	Time	Description	Place
Monday May 6	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Board Meeting All members welcome	444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1 San Mateo CA 94401
Wednesday May 8	Noon – 1:00 p.m.	Brown Bag Lunch with the League Mueller Report	444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1 San Mateo CA 94401
Thursday May 9	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Impactful Advocacy Workshop Open to the public	Burlingame Public Library 480 Primrose Rd. Burlingame CA 94010
Saturday May 11	11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Voter Registration Training	444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1 San Mateo CA 94401
Saturday May 18	10:30 – Noon	Census Meeting	444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1 San Mateo CA 94401
Thursday May 23	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Voting Rights Past and Present Bruce Harding, Civil Rights Veterans Tessa D'arcangelew, ACLU	Burlingame Public Library 480 Primrose Rd. Burlingame CA 94010

JOIN THE LEAGUE!

Where new members just 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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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