



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.

July/August 2019

Announcements

San Mateo County Transportation Authority Strategic Plan 2020-2024 Surveys Due August 5

The purpose of the survey is to gather your input on how the Measure W Core Principles will be applied to the Measure W program categories administered by the Transportation Authority. Measure W was the half-cent sales tax passed in 2018 by San Mateo County Voters. Complete the survey online at <http://smcta.survey.sgizmo.com/s3>.

Redistricting Commission Applications Due August 9

Are you interested in shaping California's future? Based on the 2020 Census, California's redistricting commission will establish the new boundaries for its Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts. To check your eligibility and to apply by August 9, go to [Shape California's Future](http://shapecaliforniasfuture.auditor.ca.gov/) (<http://shapecaliforniasfuture.auditor.ca.gov/>).

LWVUS Board Nominations

Applications are now available for the 2020-22 LWVUS Board and Nominating Committee. To learn more about these opportunities, please review the FAQ and job descriptions for the Board and Nominating Committee or contact the LWVUS Nominating Committee at nominatingcommittee@lww.org. Consider submitting an application or recommending another leader.

Annual Meeting



Speaker: Rose Jacobs Gibson



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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.

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

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President's Message



The Centennial Year is in planning mode!

Hello to LWVNCSMC members and your families! With great luck, I report to you that I have been elected officially to be the President for the 2019-2021 term. In 2020, we are going to celebrate the Centennial of the 19th Amendment (Women's Right to Vote) and the 100 years of the founding of the League of Women Voters. It's party time!

North & Central and South San Mateo County Leagues are working to prepare many activities in commemoration. I would like to ask you to give me your ideas and perhaps we can plan something additional from your thoughts and make it an even better series of events. The LWV has accomplished so much, and yet there is still a lot to do.

The questions come up. Where have we been? Who are we? What have we done? I will tell you a little about who I am. My place of birth is in another country. English is my second language. My academic degrees include a Masters in Counseling Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations. I have studied in Latin America, Europe, and the USA. As a naturalized U.S. citizen, I was elected and served in public office for 12 years. I came to the United States to study and to realize the promise of "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." I have been married for 47 years and have raised two millennial daughters who actively believe in a democratic system of government and participate in its preservation for all. I hope that you will get to meet them.

Important to me for the next 2 years are to pass the: a) Equal Rights Amendment and b) National Popular Vote to determine presidential election results. Tell me, what is important to you?

For example, some national fun activities in progress for next year: **Women's History** commemorative coin program (H.R. 1923) would create a new set of state quarters with the theme of women's history and commemorating the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment for women's suffrage. Every state would get its own quarter, with the Governor allowed to nominate a woman from the state to be featured. In most cases, we expect Governors will establish a commission and encourage essay contests and graphic design contests that will become a great forum for discussion of women's history, historic women of interest in each state, and an inspiration for young people and history buffs around the country. The LWVUS Volunteer Lobby Corps had a very active spring in 2019. LWV corps lobbying visits for this bill have so far been overwhelmingly positive, with both sides of the aisle hailing it as an "easy ask!"

Trivia Question? How many statues of women do you think are placed as monuments in:
 San Mateo County ____ San Francisco Bay Area ____ California ____ USA ____

I look forward to hearing from you, working with you and having a meaningful and enjoyable time while we continue our commitment to protecting democracy for all.

Marta Bookbinder, President

Board Highlights

At the June Board meeting, our board

- ◆ Heard the highlights of the LWVC Convention 2019 from Ann Kuchins
- ◆ Heard that the Girl Scout leaders are designing a patch for the Voter Girl logo
- ◆ Heard an update on the Observer Corps from Marie Baldisseri who said that the Corps' 2019 – 2020 mission is to start reviewing bond oversight committees
- ◆ Heard a report from Jackie Jacobberger on the meeting for the Stakeholder Advisory Group (Transportation Authority Strategic Plan)
- ◆ Heard a report from Jackie Jacobberger on a meeting where the development of the PUC property in South San Francisco became uncivil and contentious

President's Report from the Annual Meeting

It's hard to know where to start after spending three days at the LWVC convention in Pasadena last weekend.

One of the biggest challenges of the League at the national, state, and local level is to create an organization that is representative of all America. The League recognizes that it is an organization of mostly white, older, middle class women. This might be fine if we were a social organization of people with like-minded interests but the League's mission is to encourage informed and active participation in government, increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy. To fulfill this mission effectively, we need to reach out to all America; we need to understand the aspirations and needs of all the people if we are to take it upon ourselves to advocate for them; we need to be representative of the diversity of America if we are to gain their trust.

So the League at the national and state level has dipped their toes in the water to start the process of becoming more inclusive and more welcoming. The League has a history of exclusion that we need to own as Virginia Case, LWV CEO, so eloquently expressed in response to a member's suggestion that maybe we should accentuate the positive and not talk about the negative that was part of the League's past.

For the past two years, I have participated in the League's diversity, equity, and inclusion activities and I have embraced the League's initiative to extend and reach out. For this reason, I have chosen to take on the role of external relations on the board to reach out to different groups in the community. Our League dipped its toe in the water with the Voter's Choice Act as we worked with a coalition of different groups in the implementation of the new election system. Members of our Census committee are engaging at this moment with a wide variety of organizations and agencies in the community. The Voter Girl Project, initiated and led by Susie Raye, will bring us into contact with the younger generation of parents and children who reflect the diversity of our county. The Observer Corps has reached out to government organizations and agencies to work with them in making them more accessible and transparent to the public. Now the Observer Corps is setting its sights on bond oversight to ensure that the money is being spent as the voters voted.

We will continue the traditional League activities of voter registration, candidate forums, pros & cons etc. We can use these opportunities to reach out to underrepresented groups and groups we don't usually work with. Wouldn't it be nice if we had Spanish or Tagalog speakers working with us at voter registration tables? This is a slow, evolving process. It begins with reaching out to other groups and working with them to gain their trust. We cannot expect people of color, young people, or the LBGTQ+ community to come to us. If we feel that we have something unique to offer, we need to go out to their communities.

I realize that I am getting older and that people are looking a lot younger, but I do think that there were more younger people at the convention this year. The new state board leadership is definitely more diverse as they made a conscious effort to diversify the board. To me it is exciting and encouraging to be involved with an organization that is striving to

become more open and inclusive in a very polarized political environment and divided society where so many feel estranged.

I invite you all to support Marta and the Board in any way that you can whether it be active participation in big or small ways or financial. Our new state president Carol Moon Goldberg used a metaphor of the significance of every little raindrop in washing away the drought. Let's think of ourselves as raindrops in this overarching effort to make democracy work.

Ann Kuchins, External Relations Director

External Relations Report

In June, **Joyce Delyani** and I attended the Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee (VEOAC) meeting. The San Mateo County Chief Elections Officer established this committee in 2018 to work with the community on voter education and outreach issues. Some of the organizations that are actively involved are Thrive Alliance, San Francisco Peninsula People Power, NAACP, Center for Independence of Individuals with Disabilities, National Iranian American Council, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, San Mateo County Democratic Central Committee, Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus, and of course the League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo.

In looking forward to the 2020 election, the committee addressed the following issues:

- ◆ Improving the county's election collateral
- ◆ Educating the public about registration and party preference for the presidential primary
- ◆ Providing election materials in more languages by making them downloadable

I also attended the Climate Ready SMC Collaborative Convening #4 on *Turning the Tide: Connecting for Resiliency*, which is sponsored by Climate Ready San Mateo County, Office of Sustainability. A variety of speakers spoke on issues related to risks and impacts, coordinated approaches and best practices, and building community resilience.

Please let me know if you are interested in attending any of these meetings and I will forward the invite to you.

Ann Kuchins

Welcome to Our New Members!

Donna Colson
Margaret Lukens

New (& Not So New) Member Orientation

When: Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Where: League Office, 444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1, San Mateo



Please join us! Whether you're 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'll plan on attending. The meeting will be 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.

Please RSVP and direct questions to me. Email the League office at lwvnscmc@sbcglobal.net or leave a message at 650-342-5853. I look forward to meeting you.

Marie Baldisseri, Membership Director

Response in a Manner of Speaking...

United Nations Observer, UNObserver@lww.org - Rosalee Keech, Chief Observer to the United Nations, LWVUS - July 3, 2019

The League of Women Voters of the United States maintains a presence as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations. We have an opportunity via our "special consultative status" to weigh in on national efforts to respond to Hate Speech which is definitely a threat to our democracy. When government representatives begin to use hate language as a means of communication, we know that it will incite violence. The United Nations historical documents have recorded grave results up to and including genocide when Hate Speech goes unchallenged. Following are strategies of what is being done.

- ◆ Launch of the *UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech*

On 18 June, UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, which sets out strategic guidance for the UN system to address hate speech at the national and global level. It also includes ways the UN Secretariat can support the work of the Resident Coordinators in addressing and countering hate speech. Its objectives are twofold: first, to enhance UN efforts to address root causes and drivers of hate speech; and second, to enable effective UN responses to the impact of hate speech on societies.

Access the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech

(<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN%20Strategy%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20Hate%20Speech%2018%20June%20SYNOPSIS.pdf>).

- ◆ Watch the [speech](http://webtv.un.org/watch/player/6049614294001) of the Secretary-General and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (<http://webtv.un.org/watch/player/6049614294001>).
- ◆ Watch the Secretary-General's informal comments to the media following the launch (<http://webtv.un.org/watch/player/6049631091001>).

What are other Leagues doing? What can we at the local level do?

Melinda - League of Women Voters of the Charleston (SC) Area wrote on July 7, 2019:

In Charleston, and I suspect like most Leagues, we say often that we are "nonpartisan." Within days of the 2016 election, the Charleston League took that commitment to a higher level and said clearly we believe that civil conversations and respectful listening are essential to the United States political process. During my presidency, when I referenced the League's nonpartisan position, I added the words regarding civility and its importance. I have asked that the League of Women Voters of South Carolina support this standard and the LWVSC ask other local Leagues in South Carolina to follow suit.

There is no easy solution to the hate mongering that is especially shameful in this country. I believe we can reinforce the League's values and work to elevate political integrity by adding just a few words on civility each time we speak of being nonpartisan. Articulating the goal is important.

I look forward to hearing your ideas on this topic about what we can do.

Marta Bookbinder



Observer Corps Report

The Observer Corps' (OC) vision is strengthened public trust, confidence, and participation in government. Observer Corps member, **Maxine Turner**, alerted us to a situation where the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) was planning to modify the publication of its board minutes that would compromise the board's transparency. To that end, OC members have been actively following the San Mateo County Community College District Board of Trustees' proposal to modify board meeting minutes from detailed to action only.

Today SMCCCD does not provide any real-time live visual (live TV/streaming) or on-line video archived recordings of their meetings as most other Peninsula governmental agencies do. They do create an audio tape; however, it is retained for only 30 days. The primary purpose of the audio recording of each board meeting is to assist the Board Secretary's preparation of detailed minutes. The Board makes a CD of the audio recording of a board meeting upon request, but only if it's requested within 30 days after the board meeting. It's important to note the audio recordings of board meetings are erased/destroyed after 30 days which is authorized by the California Records Act.

In response to the proposed board meeting minutes modification, the San Mateo County Leagues sent letters of concern written by **Marie Baldisseri** to each Trustee in advance of their June 12 board meeting. In addition, Marie Baldisseri spoke before the Trustees at the June 12 meeting requesting their minutes not be downscaled until meetings can be televised. The League requested the Board change its policy regarding the retention of the Board meeting audio recordings from 30 days after a board meeting to 30 days after the board meeting minutes are approved. History shows it often takes 60 days to approve Board meeting minutes, which means if there's a question about the minute's content, and more than 30 days have passed since the board meeting, there will be no record to refer to in order to confirm the accuracy of the minutes. The audio recording would have been destroyed.

The good news. All Trustees agreed the audio recordings of board meetings needed to be retained longer, if not indefinitely. There was immediate agreement that access to the audio recordings of their board meetings should be made available to the public via their website. President Goodman, and Trustees Holoher and Mandelkern gave eloquent presentations echoing the Leagues' position. They stated the public's perception of the Board's transparency and access were key objectives. President Goodman stated they needed to make changes that added to the perception that they are welcoming to the public, including at times holding their meeting off-site throughout the District. The Trustees felt they could find a middle ground between detailed and action minutes, and that they could install, in a cost-effective way, the ability to televise their meetings. All agreed video and audio recordings of their meetings should be archived and accessible from their website. Each Trustee was charged with the action item to bring back their recommendations for the best way to go about televising their meetings. All agreed the minutes will remain detailed until a process is in place to visually record their meetings.

The Observer Corps will monitor the San Mateo County Community College District's agendas for these issues and report back outcomes to you.

Marie Baldisseri

Membership Surveys Responses



Thank you for completing and returning our League's newly revised membership survey. Your responses will assist with the scheduling of general meetings on the days and at the times convenient to most of our members enabling greater attendance. In addition, we learned what League activities are of interest to you, plus who and how members want to volunteer their time and talents.

We were delighted most respondents wanted to assist with voter services: present Pros and Cons, assist with candidate forums, distribute voter registration forms, and participate in voter registration drives. There were also many members eager to assist with the 2020 Census, help with general meetings, and others who wanted to participate in preparing League mailings. All volunteers, as well as those who requested more information, will be contacted by the appropriate committee chair in the coming month.

Thank you, again, for supporting the work of the League! Your active engagement makes our League stronger.

Marie Baldisseri, Membership Director

Voter Girl Update



Before we know it, our Voter Girl event will be upon us on October 5 at Notre Dame High School. The League is working with the Girl Scouts to plan and implement this event. This is a one-day event where League members will lead classroom activities for 200 Girl Scouts to earn their Civic Engagement badges.

We still need volunteer help as follows:

- ◆ Instructors and classroom assistants
- ◆ Welcome Area: registration, information, first-aid helpers
- ◆ Election helpers
- ◆ Parent lounge helpers
- ◆ Photographer
- ◆ Setup and cleanup

If you have donations or want to get involved, please contact Susie Raye by Email to the League office
lwvnscmc@sbcglbal.net

Supplies for Voter Girl Project

Each of the Voter Girl classrooms needs supplies for their activities and we are looking for donations, loans, and recycled goods.

Donate: pencils, crayons, washable markers, glue sticks, sticky notes (Post-it)

Loan: rulers, staplers, scissors (small sizes)

Recycle: brown paper grocery bags, paper towel rolls or wrapping paper rolls

Susie Raye, Vice President

August Calendar

Date	Time	Description	Place
Saturday August 3	9:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Voter Girl Meeting If you are interested in helping, please join us.	444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1 San Mateo CA 94401
Monday August 5	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Board Meeting All members welcome	444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1 San Mateo CA 94401
Saturday August 24	10:00 a.m. - Noon	New Member Orientation All members welcome	444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1 San Mateo CA 94401

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: LWVNCSCMC 444 Peninsula Avenue, Suite 1, San Mateo, CA 94401

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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