



# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 24, Issue 21

Visit us at [www.lwvsonoma.org](http://www.lwvsonoma.org)

## ***LUNCH WITH THE LEAGUE***

Saturday, March 24, 2018, 11:30--1:30

Wine Country Buffet in a beautiful setting  
Delicious Food and Delightful Company

Timely Speaker



**Barbie Robinson**

**Director of Sonoma County Health Services**

Santa Rosa Golf and Country Club  
333 Country Club Drive, Santa Rosa CA

Reservations due no later than March 20.

Make check for \$35 Payable to LWVSC  
Send to: LWV Sonoma County  
555 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 300 O, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

For more information contact Mary Virdeh, [Program@lwvsonoma.org](mailto:Program@lwvsonoma.org)

## President's Message



From  
Rebecca Jones  
LWVSC President

This last month as we celebrated Martin Luther King Day and I was reminded of the foundation of the League of Women Voters...the right to vote.

I found the following article that summarized a little history of Dr King and the Voting Rights Act (taken from : [http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc\\_voting\\_rights\\_act\\_1965.1.html](http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_voting_rights_act_1965.1.html))

"On 6 August 1965 President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) signed the Voting Rights Act into law, calling the day "a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield". The law came seven months after Martin Luther King launched a [Southern Christian Leadership Conference](#) (SCLC) campaign based in Selma, Alabama, with the aim of pressuring Congress to pass such legislation. "In Selma," King wrote, "we see a classic pattern of disenfranchisement typical of the Southern Black Belt areas where Negroes are in the majority". In addition to facing arbitrary literacy tests and poll taxes, African Americans in Selma and other southern towns were intimidated, harassed, and assaulted when they sought to register to vote. Civil rights activists met with fierce resistance to their campaign, which attracted national attention on 7 March 1965, when civil rights workers were brutally attacked by white law enforcement officers on a march from [Selma to Montgomery](#).

Johnson introduced the Voting Rights Act that same month, "with the outrage of Selma still fresh" (Johnson, "Remarks in the Capitol Rotunda"). In just over four months, Congress passed the bill. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 abolished literacy tests and poll taxes designed to disenfranchise African American voters, and gave the federal government the authority to take over voter registration in counties with a pattern of persistent discrimination. "This law covers many pages," Johnson said before signing the bill, "but the heart of the act is plain. Wherever, by clear and objective standards, States and counties are using regulations, or laws, or tests to deny the right to vote, then they will be struck down". "

If we fast forward to 2013, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in the case [Shelby vs Alabama](#) that a portion of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional. The decision overturned the requirement that certain states with a history of voter discrimination obtain preclearance from the Federal government before they could make any changes to voting laws or practices. Since that decision, we have seen multiple examples of states changing their laws that make it harder for people to vote and to blatantly discriminate against certain people. But the League and other voter advocates are fighting back.

Per a 2016 article from LWVUS on the VRA: "Recent hard-fought victories in challenges to laws in [Kansas](#), North Dakota, Texas, and [Wisconsin](#), are not just milestones for advocates but, far more important, the millions of voters whose rights have been threatened. [The League's own victory in North Carolina](#) in 2016, found the state acted with discriminatory intent when it passed sweeping voter suppression legislation. The League of Women Voters of North Carolina had been fighting this law since 2013. This victory bars the state from requiring photo IDs at the polls and orders the state to restore a week of early voting and pre-registration, as well as maintain same-day registration and out-of-precinct voting. [The ruling is a win for voters](#)

that ensures politicians have no business standing in the way of our right to vote.

Multiple federal courts have now made clear that the nation's most restrictive photo voter ID laws and other barriers to the vote were passed with discriminatory intent, for the purpose of suppressing the voices of voters. But there's no denying the fact without the Supreme Court's decision in [Shelby County v. Holder](#), these laws never would have been implemented in the first place. The Shelby decision opened the floodgates to the expansion of discriminatory voting laws across the country."

This brief history lesson reminds me how fragile our rights are and how vigilant we all need to be to protect those rights for ourselves and for others. As Dr King once said, "An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

## Civil Discourse Facilitator Training



Reminder: We will be holding a Civil Discourse Facilitator Training on February 10, 2018 at the Bennett Valley Senior Center from 1:00-4:00. The cost is \$25. Late registration is accepted through February 2. Please email [rebbelle.jones@gmail.com](mailto:rebbelle.jones@gmail.com) and mail your fee to

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SONOMA COUNTY**  
555 FIFTH STREET, SUITE 300  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95401

## Spring Lake Village/LWVSC Forum in March

### Supervisor Susan Gorin to Speak



First District County Supervisor, Susan Gorin, will be speaking at a Spring Lake Village (SLV) Local Issues Forum on March 19th, 2:30. The Sonoma Co. League cooperates with SLV in the planning and presentation of these issue forums.

League members are invited to attend at 5555 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa. The forum will be held in the Montgomery Center Auditorium Car pool because of limited parking. A few parking spaces will be held especially for League members, but park in any free space.

Supervisor Gorin, whose Oakmont home was destroyed in the fire, has been asked to speak on several post-fire issues. They include,

- the continuing and increased **homelessness in Santa Rosa**. Is enough temporary housing now available?
- the county's **public transportation** network. Can it handle the traffic increases generated by new affordable and replacement housing?
- post fire **building codes and fire prevention measures**. Will the measures be stricter than those in place pre fire?
- the county **Health Services Department**. Are their resources adequate to handle the increased number of fire-related health issues?

Come and ask questions. SLV residents welcome League members.

## Program Planning Meeting



At the Program Planning meeting on January 25, we discussed both the LWVUS program and our local program priorities. The focus of LWVUS is entitled The Campaign for Making Democracy Work which encompasses four key areas: Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics, and Redistricting.

Our League we will be supporting these areas on a local level. There are two areas that are especially relevant locally. One is Improving Elections. Donna Roper lead a great brainstorming session on how we can improve elections through getting people registered to vote, educating them on how, when and where to vote, and encouraging them to get out and vote. The Voter Service Committee will be contacting the Registrar of Voters office to clarify many questions that we have regarding improving the election process. This will be a big year with the primaries coming up in June and the general election in November. The Voter Services Committee has been working hard but will need the help of more members to address this busy election season.

The other locally relevant area is Redistricting. Both the City of Santa Rosa and the Santa Rosa School Districts will be establishing new district based elections to replace the current at large elections and they want our input.

Also discussed was the upcoming 2020 census which is intended to count all residents not just citizens. There are vast funding and governmental representation consequences if the count is not accurate. This is an area that will be a focus in the future.

Other local issues under the umbrella 'Rebuilding Sonoma County' were Housing/Homelessness, Transportation, and Health/Mental Health. Gene Zingarelli heads the Advocacy Committee where many of these issues are addressed. As always, there is much to do and we need the help of our members to make a difference.

In upcoming Voter publications, we will be having articles on what is happening in these priority areas. Please contact Donna, Gene or Rebecca if you would like to help. Full minutes of the meeting can be found at [http://lwvsonoma.org/files/Minutes\\_Program\\_Planning\\_January\\_27\\_2018.pdf](http://lwvsonoma.org/files/Minutes_Program_Planning_January_27_2018.pdf).

## Voting Information for Those Displaced by the Fires

The following site provides extensive information on how to register and vote for those displaced by the October 2017 wild fire. Please share with anyone you know who may need this. .

<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CRA/News/Voters-Displaced-By-The-October-2017-Wildfires/>

## Citizen Input Needed

### Redistricting

Redistricting is both a national and local issue. In Santa Rosa both the City Council and the Santa Rosa Unified School District are in the process of transitioning from At Large elections to District Based elections.

On July 17, 2017, the City of Santa Rosa received a certified letter from the law firm of Shenkman & Hughes, alleging that the at-large voting system impairs the voting rights of the City's Latino population and thus violates the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA). The letter threatened litigation if the City did not voluntarily transition to a district-based election system.

The CVRA was enacted in 2002, and prohibits the use of an at-large election system if racially polarized voting and the at-large election system combine to impair the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or to influence the outcome of an election. It is important to note that no finding of racial animus or intent to discriminate is required to find a violation of the CVRA. If the city agreed to voluntarily transition to district elections, their legal fees would be capped at \$30,000. The costs of entering into a legal battle could have cost millions.

In August of 2017, the Santa Rosa City Council voted to voluntarily change from At Large elections to District elections. The City began their process with the first public hearing for input on the districts held on October 3rd. Then the wildfires caused the process to be put on hold.

At their meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, the City Council voted to restart the process. A total of five public hearings will be held during February and March. For specific hearing dates go to <https://srcity.org/2593/District-Based-Elections>. Our League has been invited to give input on the City Council districts. If any League members is interested in working on this issue, please contact our League president, Rebecca Jones.

The Santa Rosa Unified School District (SRUSD) received a similar letter in 2017 alleging the At large elections for School Board seats was a violation of CVRA. The School Board also voted to voluntarily transition from At large elections to District Elections. Over the past three months, the SRUSD has held several public hearings and public outreach meetings regarding this transition with the last public hearing held Jan 24<sup>th</sup>. The SRUSD Board will adopt district election maps in the next few weeks.

**DEMOCRACY is NOT a Spectator Sport**  
Get Involved with YOUR Government

## LWVSC Calendar

### Coming Events

#### **Civil Discourse Facilitator Training**

Saturday, February 10, 2018, 1:00-4:00pm.

Bennett Valley Senior Center, 704 Bennett Valley Rd, Santa Rosa, CA (See Page 3)

#### **Together at the Table--Blackness in America**

Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 7-8:30pm

Forum Room, Petaluma Regional Library, 100 Fairgrounds Drive, Petaluma, CA (See Page 7)

#### **SLV Forum with Supervisor Gorin**

Monday, March 19, 2018, 2:30-3:30 pm

Spring Lake Village, 5555 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa, CA (See page 3)

#### **Lunch with the League**

Saturday, March 24, 2018, 11:30-1:30

Santa Rosa Country Club, 333 Country Club Drive, Santa Rosa, CA

#### **Together at the Table- Women's Rights**

Monday, March 12, 7-8:30pm,

Sebastopol Regional Library

Wednesday, April 18, 6-7:30pm,

Rincon Valley Regional Library (See Page 7)

### Standing Meetings

**Board Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 10-noon.

**Advocacy Committee Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 10:30-noon

**Book Club:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 10:30-noon.

**Voter Service Committee Meeting:** 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 10-noon.

LWVSC meetings are held in the third floor Conference Room at the LWVSC office, 555 5th Street, Santa Rosa.

LWVSC Board meetings are open to all LWVSC members, and to the public upon request. All other meetings are open.

Visit our [website](#) for updated calendar information.

## Make It Fair Campaign

Helen Hutchinson led a webinar on January 3, 2018. The following are notes from that event:

**Background:** When prop 13 first passed, property taxes were paid from about 50% residential & Ag and 50% commercial property. Because under prop 13 property is only reassessed when sold or changes ownership and commercial property changes ownership much less frequently than residential, that ratio has shifted dramatically. Now commercial pays only about 28% of property taxes, and residential pays about 72%.

The League originally opposed Prop 13. The CA League feels we have an opportunity to fix what is wrong with prop 13 in 2018. There is the fact that business will get a break due to federal tax cuts, and there is a concern that there will be less funding for local services due to federal cuts.

**What does the Make It Fair Initiative Do?**

It would require commercial property to be reassessed for property tax computation every three years. There is a break for small businesses (but no details were provided in the Webinar). It is believed that if passed the initiative would provide \$11 billion to local jurisdictions, with the allocation the same as current property taxes, which primarily go to schools, special districts and local governments, such as cities and counties.

There would be no scheduled reassessment of Ag or residential property. Those would continue to only be reassessed at the time of ownership change, with all the current exemptions still intact.

**Status of the State initiative:**

The ballot language has been submitted to the State Attorney General (AG) for review. The League is waiting for the AG to issue a title and

summary. Once those have been issued, the League will begin collecting signatures on petitions to put the initiative on the Nov 2018 ballot. Signature gathering will probably begin in Feb 2018. The League plans to use both paid and volunteer signature gatherers, and is partnering with other local organizations such as the ACLU, Ca Federations of Teachers, Courage Campaign, etc. The League and the other organizations need to collect about 1 million signatures in order to have enough valid signature to qualify to be on the Nov 2018 ballot. The League expects the main opposition to the initiative to come from the Howard Jarvis organization and other tax payer groups. The League expects to be outspent, but hopes to get out their message through our volunteers.

The League believes it will need to raise several million dollars to do a successful campaign and will look to local Leagues to help with this fund raising. We can ask for member contributions and we can do fund raising activities.

The CA League is drafting several documents:

A petition circulation guide

A list of other organizations supporting the initiative

Sample letters to the editor and OP Ed pieces

Endorsement forms for elected officials and organizations to formally endorse the measure

Flyers and informational handouts

(The League would like help with finalizing the above documents.)

To be a part of this effort you can join the google group at the LWVC.org website click on CA Make It Fair google group then ask to join the group and tell who you are—name and to which local league you belong.

A background paper on prop 13 currently exists and is available at the LWV CA website <https://lwvc.org/search/make%20it%20fair>

**Sonoma County League  
Will Partner with the Library  
for  
“Together At the Table”**

“Together at the Table” is a grant-funded program offered by the Sonoma County Library. These evening events will provide space for dialogue and reflection on specific topics of community interest. In spring the League will provide input on the topic of Women’s Rights. The spring dates have now been established.

**Blackness in America**

Wednesday, February 28, 7-8:30pm, Forum Room, Petaluma Regional Library.

Partners presenting at this event are:  
Santa Rosa-Sonoma County NAACP  
Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County  
SSU American Multicultural Studies Dept.  
Racial Justice Allies of Sonoma County  
Sonoma County Black Forum

**Women’s Rights**

Monday, March 12, 7-8:30pm, Sebastopol Regional Library  
Wednesday, April 18, 6-7:30pm, Rincon Valley Regional Library

Partners presenting at this event are:  
ACLU of Northern California  
League of Women Voters of Sonoma County  
Sonoma County Chapter of National Organization of Women  
National Women’s History Project  
YWCA of Sonoma County  
County of Sonoma Commission on the Status of Women

Other topics that will be scheduled in 2018 are LGBTQI and Income Inequality.

For more information on the program go to the following websites:

Sonomalibrary.org/togetheratthetable  
<http://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/7645183-181/sonoma-county-library-program-highlights?artslide=0>



SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY  
**TOGETHER**  
*at the* **TABLE**

**Welcome New Member!**

**Phyllis Butland  
James DuPont  
Janis Oatham**

**We’re so glad you’re here!**



## Board Briefs

January 2018

Victoria Fleming, Secretary

- Civil Discourse--February 10th. Martha Cox from San Diego LWV will be coming up for 3-hour training.
  - LWVUS Convention—The Convention will be held in Chicago from June 28<sup>th</sup> to July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Make It Fair Campaign— LWVC is asking local Leagues to help promote the efforts of signature gathering and promotion of getting the proposal on the ballot.
  - Program Planning—January 27<sup>th</sup> at the Bennett Valley Senior Center. Members are asked to bring a snack or dessert to share potluck style.
  - Program—March Luncheon at 11:30am on March 24<sup>th</sup> at the Santa Rosa Country Club featuring speaker Barbie Robinson.
  - Spring Lake Village Events—March 19<sup>th</sup> with Susan Gorin; tentative April 16<sup>th</sup> with Mike Thompson
  - Advocacy—And Advocacy Webinar to be held January 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12-1pm “Nitty Gritty of Legislative Review.”
  - Advocacy—Sonoma County along with Catholic Charities will do a homeless count on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.
  - Voter Service—Election Year Services: Four different venues have been planned for Sheriff’s Forums, dates to be determined.
  - Administration—An ad hoc committee will meet to discuss a plan for the long-term storing of our archives.
- The Voter—The February Voter will include information about the Census, Make It Fair, At the Table, Spring Lunch flyer, Civil Discourse
  - Administration—Stephen Harper from Shomrei Torah has invited us to table at a film event on January 27<sup>th</sup>. The film series is “Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport.” Anita and Victoria to table at the event.
  - Census 2020—Susan Rouder to write an article about the upcoming census for The Voter.
  - Nominating Committee to identify members’ interest in participation for the next year.

## Advocacy Notes

Current topics are possible participation in citizenship classes, review of the possible Program Planning Meeting agenda, local and state districting and the possible effects of an inadequate 2020 census count. Regarding homelessness several members were interested in possibly working on the So. Co. homelessness count in February. If you are interested in more information contact [Michael.Gause@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Michael.Gause@sonoma-county.org). Congregation Shomrei Tora of Santa Rosa is presenting three films and panel discussions under the banner, "Democracy Is Not A Spectator Sport 1/27, 2/24, and 3/17." For more information contact [www.cstsr.org](http://www.cstsr.org)  
Next meeting on February 14 at 10:30.

Gene Zingarelli, Advocacy Committee Chair  
[action@lwwsonoma.org](mailto:action@lwwsonoma.org)

## 2018 Women's March

Women and men in Sonoma County and around the world marched to champion women's rights, human rights, voting rights, and participation in our democracy, from the voting booth to the halls of Congress and beyond.



Over 20 voter registration forms were given at our table, out mostly to those displaced by the fires.





## On the World Wide Web

Did you know that there are a number of people under Temporary Protected Status because of disasters and wars in their countries?

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/09/what-is-tps-and-what-will-happen-to-the-200000-salvadorans-whose-status-is-revoked/?utm\\_term=.720d29e700d6](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/09/what-is-tps-and-what-will-happen-to-the-200000-salvadorans-whose-status-is-revoked/?utm_term=.720d29e700d6)

Here are some more interesting facts about immigrants from Africa. They are more educated than people knew them to be.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/african-immigrants-are-more-educated-than-most-including-people-born-in-us/>

This is what the League of Women Voters had to say about President Trump's statement about immigrants from Haiti and Africa.

<https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lwv-statement-presidents-discriminatory-comment#.WlwbwoVIPY.facebook>

To receive Facebook updates as they happen, be sure to "Like" our LWVSC Facebook page! We'd be glad to be one of your friends.

## Book Club Reads

### February 15: Moderated by Carole Sunlight

*Quakeland: On the Road to America's Next Devastating Earthquake*, Kathryn Miles, 368 pages, 2017. We have been making enormous changes to subterranean America, and Mother Earth, as always, has been making some of her own. . . . The consequences for our real estate, our civil engineering, and our communities will be huge because they will include earthquakes most of us do not expect and cannot imagine—at least not without reading *Quakeland*. Kathryn Miles descends into mines in the Northwest, dissects Mississippi levee engineering studies, uncovers the horrific risks of an earthquake in the Northeast, and interviews the seismologists, structural engineers, and emergency managers around the country who are addressing this ground shaking threat

### March 15: Moderated by Sukey Robb-Wilder

*Creating A World Without Poverty - social business and future of capitalism*, Muhammad Yunus, 261 pages, 2017.

Efficiently recounts examples of microcredit and social businesses (organizations designed to help people while turning profits), including Yunus's own Grameen Bank, for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. It reveals the next phase in a worldwide economic and social revolution that is underway to eliminate poverty by unleashing the productive energy of every human being. French food giant Danone's partnership to market yogurt in Bangladesh is described in detail, along with 25 other businesses that operate under the Grameen banner. Infused with entrepreneurial spirit and the excitement of a worthy challenge, this book is the opposite of pessimistic recitals of intractable poverty's horrors.

The 2018 Reading list is online at <http://www.lwvsonoma.org/files/bookgroup2018.pdf>

## Connect with the League

### LWVSC Board of Directors

Rebecca Jones, **President**

Anita Lytle, **VP Administration**

Gene Zingarelli, **VP Advocacy**

Victoria Fleming, **Secretary**

Terry Wall, **Treasurer**

Gayle McKinney Peterson,

**Membership Chair**

Chlele Gummer, **Media Outreach**

Donna Roper, **Voter Service**

Mary Virdeh, **Program**

Nancy Burrington, **Member-at-large**

Juanita Roland, **Editor**

Because of privacy concerns, we do not include email addresses for the Board in the Voter. Readers can find email addresses in the directory or they can send email to Board Members from the contact us page of the LWVSC website. [www.lwvsonoma.org](http://www.lwvsonoma.org)



LWVSC [www.lwvsonoma.org](http://www.lwvsonoma.org)  
[www.facebook.com/lwvsonomacounty](https://www.facebook.com/lwvsonomacounty)

LWV of Bay Area <http://www.lwvbayarea.org>

LWV of California [www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org)

LWV of the United States [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters>

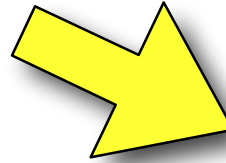
Voter's Edge <http://votersedge.org/en/ca>

Addresses of Members Only websites are in the front of the LWVSC directory.

*Remember to sign up for email alerts and newsletters when you visit these websites.*

Tell us what you think!  
Send in your comments,  
questions, and  
suggestions.  
Email, snail-mail, or call!  
**We want to hear from you!**

Become a Member of the LWV of Sonoma County



Make a DONATION

or

Fill out the form below and mail it to us at:

League of Women Voters Sonoma County
555 5th Street, Suite 300 O
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name
Address
City Zip
Phone Email

Memberships Levels

Table with 2 columns: Membership Level and Price. Includes Susan B. Anthony Individual Membership (\$65), Student/ Limited Income Individual Membership (\$40), Amelia Bloomer Household Membership (\$100), Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership (\$100), and Carrie Chapman Catt Membership (\$200 or more).

Membership dues and donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law

Please circle any topics you are interested in knowing more about.

- Voter Registration, Candidate Forums, Transportation, Housing/Homelessness, Climate Change, Immigration, Newsletter, Website Management, Local Governance

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. We do, however, take action on selected government issues in the public interest.

555 5th Street, Suite 300 O
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
(707) 546-5943

The Voter is published nine times a year by the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County.