

# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY

*Celebrating 50 years of service to our communities*

Website: [www.LWVSSMC.org](http://www.LWVSSMC.org) Phone: (650) 325-5780 E-mail: [info@LWVSSMC.org](mailto:info@LWVSSMC.org)

**FEBRUARY 2009**

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## **COUNTY LEAGUE DAY**

### **Can San Mateo County Sustain A Sustainable Economy?**



**WHEN:** Saturday, February 21

**WHERE:** The Green Building Exchange  
1 Chestnut Avenue, South San Francisco

**SCHEDULE:** 9:00–10:30 am League Business Meeting  
10:30–12:30 pm Panel Discussion, Q & A  
12:30–1:00 pm Lunch

A new economic paradigm is emerging in San Mateo County, and it's all about "sustainable prosperity." The same strategies needed to tackle global warming and create a healthier environment – innovation, efficiency, and conservation in the use and reuse of all resources – are the same strategies needed to strengthen the economic vitality and social equity of our County. Can we do it? Learn firsthand how industry and government leaders think we can! Then tour the Green Building Exchange's remarkable facilities and see how to do it yourself!

***THE PUBLIC IS INVITED. ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO ATTEND!***

#### **PANEL SPEAKERS:**

- **VICKI MORROW** President, Skyline College
- **PAT BURT** Owner, Acteron Corporation
- **FRED SLOAN** Workforce Development Manager, San Mateo County's Human Services Agency

#### **MODERATOR:**

**TINA KING** Outreach Director, Sustainable San Mateo County

**COUNTY LEAGUE DAY IS CO-SPONSORED BY LWV NCSMC  
AND SUSTAINABLE SAN MATEO COUNTY**

*See the insert for registration details*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



Last night I was profoundly moved as I listened to Jo Gilbert's accounts of her travels last year in Afghanistan and elsewhere throughout the Muslim world.

Not only were her stories fascinating in the telling but I was even more struck by the fact that here was a woman of small stature who was determined to see the world as it really is by going there - how "League-like" is that! Her stories are, however, hard to swallow. So difficult are the everyday struggles of the Afghan people who live in the "modern" city of Kabul that one can hardly imagine how life must be for those whose lives are at the subsistence level in the countryside. More than once she was told that these hardships would be tolerable if the Afghans had a system of government that was honest, accountable and respectful of its people.

Contrast that to the US today. Too many stories of the current administration's foibles and falsehoods have made headlines. Yet we look forward to next week's inauguration as a new day in American government and hopefully in the American psyche. "Yes, we can" make America work for all its citizens. "Yes, we can" remain vigilant of our democracy. "Yes we can" continue to make a difference in our local communities. How "League-like" is that!

*Jamie Shepard, Board President*  
[jamieshepard@att.net](mailto:jamieshepard@att.net)

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE



The Nominating Committee is charged with proposing candidates for elected 2009-2011 Board positions and any vacancies in the current year 2008-2009. If you want to be on the Board, serve in an off-Board position, or can suggest someone else, contact the **Committee Chair Mary Kneip** ([marykneip@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marykneip@sbcglobal.net) / 323-5450) or any of the other Committee members: **Carole Grace** (328-5881), **Evan Hughes** (329-8698), **Ellen Kitamura** (854-6946), or **Lida Urbanek** (324-9105).

## LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS



### WHERE DOES THE NATIONAL LEAGUE STAND ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

Find out more as we discuss **Topic #2: CLIMATE CHANGE** on **February 12,**

**1-3pm at Kathy Armstrong's home, 732 Laurel Ave, Menlo Park**

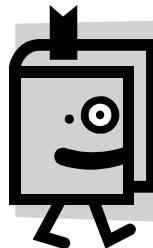
The League has always prided itself on being ahead of the curve when it studies and takes positions on issues. On the national level, we have many positions that might actually become policy or law in the new Obama administration. Last month, we began by examining the national League positions related to tax policy and income inequality. **This month, we will focus on the League's positions on climate change.** To aid your understanding and facilitate our discussion, please read the article (*see pages 4-5*) reprinted from "Letter to the New President" in the October issue of the National Voter. Plan to join the discussion at **1pm on Thursday, February 12, at Kathy Armstrong's home, 732 Laurel Avenue, Menlo Park.**

*Contacts: Ellen Hope, 650 839-8647 / [ellenjhope@aol.com](mailto:ellenjhope@aol.com) or Barbara Boles, 650 368-4766 / [boleswh@aol.com](mailto:boleswh@aol.com)*

## LEAGUE BOOK GROUP

**READ A GOOD BOOK!** On Thursday, Feb 19 (3rd Thursday each month) at 7:30pm, we'll discuss

*Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* by David M. Kennedy.  
**Location:** Joanne Bruggemann's home, 3 Lido Circle, Redwood Shores. **Contact:** *Judy Ortung, 650 234-9837 / [jortung@att.net](mailto:jortung@att.net)*



# LEAGUE'S PROGRAM PRIORITIES PROPOSED FOR 2009 - 2010



At our December 8th Annual Program Planning and Holiday Dinner, hosted by the Board at Kathleen Weisenberg's home, Linda Craig explained the state League and Bay Area areas of emphasis. In the lively discussion which followed, members agreed that no additional studies should be undertaken by the state or our local League. Instead, we agreed to retain our local positions on "housing and transportation" as a County priority (not just our South San Mateo County), continue monitoring the Sequoia Healthcare District as a purely local priority, and upholding "Stanford land use" as a joint priority with Palo Alto League.

## BOARD MEETING BRIEFS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MONDAY EVENING, JAN 5, 2009:

**PROGRAM PLANNING:** Minutes from the December Program Planning membership meeting were amended as follows: It was agreed that priority #1 "housing and transportation" are county priorities, Priority #2 "Sequoia Healthcare District" is a local priority, and Priority #3 "Stanford land use" is a joint priority with Palo Alto League.

**BYLAWS:** The Board adopted a motion to recommend three minor bylaws revisions, to be included in the Annual Meeting kit for approval by the membership later this year. All three pertain to the Budget Chair, recommending that this be an appointed rather than an elected position.

**LEAGUE JOB DESCRIPTIONS:** Progress was reported on updating all League Board and Director job descriptions, which will help the Nominating Committee with its work recruiting League members for the various roles. Several obsolete job descriptions were eliminated. A new Communica-

tions Committee was proposed, to include the Public Relations Director, the VOTER Editor, the Publications Director, the Webmaster, and a new "Electronic Membership Communications" role.

**MEMBERSHIP DATABASE:** The Board thanks Jessie Schilling for her work on upgrading our membership and fundraising databases. The Board further agreed to ask Jessie to take the lead in managing the database structure and all technical aspects of the database, and to coordinate a meeting with the various users of the database to agree on roles and responsibilities with regard to input, usage, and management of the data going forward.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** The first meeting of the Nominating Committee is scheduled for Monday, January 12. Committee members are Carole Grace, Evan Hughes, Ellen Kitamura, Lida Urbanek, and Mary Kneip (chair).

**PROGRAMS:** In addition to the monthly discussion series on National League priorities (Tax Policy on January 22), the Board discussed other events that are in the planning stage, including a possible fundraising event in April and tentative dates and venues for our Annual Meeting in May.

**NEXT MEETING: Monday, February 2, 7pm, at Lucile Spurlock's, 856 Creek Dr, Menlo Park.**

*Kathy Armstrong, Acting Board Secretary*  
[karmstro@conncoll.edu](mailto:karmstro@conncoll.edu)

### BOOK PURCHASES AT KEPLER'S BENEFIT OUR LEAGUE ALL YEAR!

Kepler's Bookstore donates 10% of your purchases in store and online to our local League year-round - just ask! There are two easy ways to secure this donation and support our League.

**If you shop at Kepler's Bookstore,** tell the salesperson at checkout that you would like your Community donation to go to the **League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County** (be specific - other Leagues participate too) and Kepler's will donate 10% of the sale to us **OR**

**Want to shop Kepler's online?** Go to our **website ([www.LWVSSMC.org](http://www.LWVSSMC.org))**. Click on the Kepler's logo on our home page, which links you to their site to shop. 10% of your online purchases will be donated automatically to our League. ☺

# NATIONAL ISSUE #2

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**SOURCE:** OpenLettertothePresident.pdf at [www.LWVUS.org](http://www.LWVUS.org), October 2008 issue of National VOTER. Related information provided by the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force (No. 3 in series of 5): "Water: Let's Use This Precious Resource Wisely"

### WHAT WE MUST DO:

We can protect our communities and the world from the effects of global climate change. But we must act now—before it's too late. We must reduce global warming *right now* by capping harmful pollution. At the same time, we must aggressively begin cutting "greenhouse emissions"—achieving reductions of 80 percent or more by 2050, based on 1990 levels—by shifting quickly to cleaner technologies in every sector of our economy.

Cities, states and individuals already are taking bold and innovative steps to reduce global warming pollution. Their work is a reminder that protecting the climate can yield an array of benefits for America—limiting our dependence on oil from other countries, reducing air pollution, spurring new industries and jobs, and protecting pristine places from drilling and mining. To reinforce and expand on those efforts, the United States must step up to the plate with policies to reduce global warming pollution nationally and globally.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Global climate change poses a major threat to public health, the environment, and U.S. and world economies. We already face increasingly severe heat waves and droughts, intensifying hurricanes and floods, disappearing glaciers, and more wildfires. If left unchecked, the effects could be catastrophic: millions of people displaced as rising sea levels flood coastal areas; many regions devastated by reduced crop yields and shortages of drinking water; human health threatened by malaria and other diseases; and numerous plant and animal species at risk of extinction.

### Climate change is happening now.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, the decade from 1998 to 2007 was the warmest on record. In addition, 2007 ranked among the

warmest seven years since record-keeping began in the mid-1800s. The other six warmest years all fell within the 1998–2007 period. Warmer temperatures already are having alarming effects. Summer sea ice is disappearing in the Arctic; mountain glaciers are retreating around the world; many species of plants and animals are responding to earlier spring warming; and climate change is taking some species to the brink of extinction. Recent increases in the strength of tropical hurricanes have been linked to a rise in ocean temperatures caused by global warming.

### Climate change is caused by human activity.

There is no longer any doubt about it: Human activities are the primary causes of global climate change. Burning fossil fuels—chiefly coal and oil—in our power plants, cars and trucks, and elsewhere produces carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which works like a blanket to trap the sun's heat in the Earth's atmosphere, creating an enhanced greenhouse effect. Other human sources of greenhouse gases (GHGs) include deforestation, agriculture and industrial processes. In its latest *Greenhouse Gas Bulletin*, the World Meteorological Organization states that average global concentrations of the three main GHGs—carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide—reached new highs in 2006. Compared to pre-industrial levels, CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere have surged by 36%. Scientists say current levels of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> are unprecedented in human history.

### Climate change will get worse.

In the absence of substantial reductions in worldwide emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other GHGs, climate change will accelerate in the decades to come. The Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects that global temperatures will increase between 2.0° and 11.5° F by 2100. Sea levels will rise by 1–1.5 feet or more. In addition, there's a 90% or greater chance that the world will see more extreme weather, heat waves and heavy precipitation events, more droughts and more intense hurricanes. Developing countries, which lack the resources needed to protect their residents and their economies, will be among the hardest hit by the effects of catastrophic climate change.

**Continued on page 5**

### **WHAT'S IN IT FOR US:**

Everyone on Earth is affected by climate change in multiple ways:

#### **Climate change affects our health and safety.**

Heat waves and extreme temperatures pose obvious health risks to all people, especially the elderly and those living in poverty. Scientists also say climate change will accelerate the spread of infectious disease and pose serious threats to food and water supplies, while increasing the threat to humans from wildfires, hurricanes and other severe-weather events.

#### **Climate change affects our security.**

A June 2008 report by the National Intelligence Council documented how increased temperatures, changes in rainfall, rising sea levels and other changes could threaten US security in the next 20 years. Among the potential problems: political instability, mass movements of refugees, and conflicts over water and other resources. Addressing climate change in a serious way also will reduce the United States' reliance on oil from unstable regions of the world.

#### **Climate change affects our wallets.**

Numerous studies have shown that the costs of *not* addressing climate change (from increased emergency room admissions to food and crop losses, lost infrastructure, and increased storm and flood cleanup) will be considerably higher than the costs of reducing emissions. Plus: addressing climate change will create a wealth of *new* economic opportunities as businesses develop alternative energy technologies and new ways of reducing emissions.

### **WHERE WE ARE NOW:**

The need for strong action to protect the climate is obvious—but opponents still stand in the way of national and international solutions. Despite entering the White House in 2001 with a pledge to regulate CO2 emissions, President Bush regularly blocked actions that could yield real reductions in those emissions over time.

The White House's most recent obstructive move: a denial of California's plan to impose stricter standards on vehicle emissions. President Bush also consistently blocked strong international action on climate change, rejecting the Kyoto Protocol

(which set emission targets for the United States and other developed countries for 2012) and opposing efforts to design an effective post-Kyoto agreement.

While the Bush administration stood squarely against decisive action, Congress debated a number of measures aimed at starting the United States on a course to lower emissions. The comprehensive approach receiving the most support to date, known as "cap and trade," seeks to cap overall U.S. emissions at a level that will decrease over time, while allowing companies and industries to trade emission allowances so reductions can be achieved as cost-effectively as possible.

Luckily, states and cities have not waited for federal leadership. Many states have been working together on regional capand trade initiatives, while simultaneously setting out to reduce emissions within their borders. Mayors and other city officials across the country also have launched local climate initiatives.

### **AGENDA FOR THE NEW PRESIDENT:**

Scientists say the time for strong action to protect the climate is now. To avoid the worst effects of climate change, we have to begin reducing U.S. and international emissions. This means that the new President must:

- Take action to reduce U.S. emissions by at least 20% by 2020 from 2005 levels, and by at least 80% by 2050 from 1990 levels. Advances in scientific knowledge may indicate a need for quicker and greater reductions.
- Sign a cap-and-trade law with proceeds from the auction of emission allowances supporting the transition to renewable energy technologies and other climate priorities.
- Support international negotiations on a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol including binding commitments for the United States and other developed countries, as well as developing countries.
- Support other measures to reduce U.S. GHG emissions, from increased fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks to promising alternative energy technologies.

**JOIN THE DISCUSSION: Thursday, Feb 12, 1-3pm at Kathy Armstrong's home, 732 Laurel Ave, Menlo Park**

## BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY



### **WATER: THE NEW CALIFORNIA GOLD**

**WHEN:** Saturday, January 31, from 9 am to 2 pm  
**WHERE:** MetroCenter Auditorium, 101 8<sup>th</sup> Street (at Oak) in Oakland  
**COST BEFORE JAN 23:** \$25 includes registration, continental breakfast and lunch (\$20 no food)  
**AFTER JAN 23:** \$30

This year's program deals with **Water: California's New Gold**. As all Bay Area communities face some sort of water rationing, water issues have become more urgent than ever. The League of Women Voters invites everyone to participate in this most timely discussion. Speakers from state and regional agencies will focus on the problems posed by the demise of a healthy Delta system: Can our Delta fisheries be restored while most water passing through the Delta goes to agriculture? How does crop choices affect water use? Should water meters should be required of all water users?

The Keynote speaker will **State Senator Lois Wolk**, who has been involved in water issues throughout her career in local and state government.

Other speakers include **A.G. Kawamura**, California Secretary of Food and Agriculture; **Christina Swanson**, Executive Director, Bay Institute; **Heather Cooley**, Research Associate, Pacific Institute; **Raymond Seed**, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, UC Berkeley; **Katherine Kelly**, California Department of Water Resources; and **Kathleen Van Velsor**, Project Director for Water and Land Use Studies, Association of Bay Area Governments.

**More information and registration forms are available at [www.lwvbayarea.org](http://www.lwvbayarea.org) . For more information, call (510) 839-1608, or email to [editor@bayreamonitor.org](mailto:editor@bayreamonitor.org)**

## **ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE?**

Learn all about the process at an informative workshop by "CALIFORNIA WOMEN LEAD", educating and encouraging women to seek public office. Co-sponsored by LWV-NCSMC, Peninsula Library & San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women.

**WHEN:** Thursday, Jan 29 4:30 - 6:30pm  
**WHERE:** Canada College, 4200 Farm Hill Rd, just off Interstate 280, Redwood City  
**MORE INFO:** Ruth Nagler, LWVNCSMC 650 356-2128



## STATE LEAGUE NEWS

### **LWVC Convention, Long Beach**

**Friday, May 15 - Sunday, May 17, 2009** is when it all comes together in Long Beach for three days of fun and policy at the LWVC Convention 2009! The Long Beach LWV has been hard at work preparing a warm welcome to California League members. We have a lot of business to take care of but will have a lot of fun doing it. **Want to represent our League and learn a lot about the League at Convention? Contact Jamie Shepard (867-0885 / [jamieshepard@att.net](mailto:jamieshepard@att.net))**

*Linda Craig, Advocacy Director, LWV of California*  
[lcraig@lwvc.org](mailto:lcraig@lwvc.org) / 650 322-6914

### **BEYOND PARTISANSHIP: American Citizens' Summit**

February 11-15, 2009 in Denver, Colorado:  
*"Everyone who is interested in reducing the partisan divide, interested in restoring a relationship between government and the American people, and who want to be part of a new kind of public conversation that moves beyond polarization by applying proven methods of facilitated dialogue, deliberation and conflict resolution, is encouraged to attend the American Citizens' Summit in Denver. For more information:*

***[www.Transpartisan.net](http://www.Transpartisan.net)***  
***Advertisement - not an official LWV event***

## NATIONAL LEAGUE NEWS

### NEW NATIONAL STUDY ON NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

*The following is an article from the LWWUS regarding a new national League study as to whether the LWWUS should support the "National Popular Vote Compact" as a way to assure that the President of the United States is the person who receives the largest popular vote, nationwide. The Compact would give this result without the need to have 3/4ths of the states approve an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.*

#### **Support for the National Popular Vote Compact:**

Because the League already supports direct election of the president, arguments against the Electoral College (EC) are not included in the material supporting the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact).

**Constitutional Issues:** The NPV Compact is a way to assure that every person's vote counts equally and that the person receiving the most votes is the winner of the presidency. The same result would be achieved by constitutional amendment but the U.S. Constitution is difficult to amend. The NPV Compact is a viable way to attain the same goal as amending the Constitution to eliminate the EC. The NPV Compact is a compact between states—a method of concerted state action that has long been sanctioned by the Constitution and the courts. A constitutional amendment is not needed to effectuate the NPV Compact because states already have the right to implement changes in how electors are appointed.

**Evaluating Fairness:** A candidate can be elected president by receiving the most electoral votes, even though he or she did not receive the most popular votes. This is not a result voters expect or desire. As election campaigns are now waged, major emphasis and resources are concentrated in key EC battleground states because that is where elections are won or lost. The NPV Compact would eliminate the emphasis on battleground states and would be more apt to assure campaign strategies that appeal to a broad spectrum of the electorate which would foster greater voter participation.

The argument that the plan would negatively impact states' rights is countered by poll results showing that most voters want their individual

vote to count, rather than allotting them to electors representing the state as a whole.

Any claim that the NPV Compact is an unprecedented disregard for the U.S. Constitution ignores the reality that voting rights have been changed through state action many times. Women's suffrage, for example, was instituted by twenty states before passage of the constitutional amendment that made the right universal.

**Mechanical Considerations:** Those opposed to the NPV Compact cite mechanical issues that might lead the NPV to fail, but the Compact includes provisions that address issues of enforcement, winning levels and recounts.

**Other Issues:** The Voting Rights Act and the NPV Compact are in harmony, assuring equality of votes throughout the United States.

**League Issues:** Opponents say that the NPV Compact conflicts with the League's support of uniform voting standards. Supporters of the Compact advocate its passage in all states, which would result in uniform voting standards. It is true that the NPV Compact could be in effect for an interlude when not all states had signed on to it. The same could be demonstrated for other laws, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that uniform voting standards are not now in effect. The NPV Compact could help assure that every vote would be counted equally.

Further, implementation of a method which assures direct election of the president by popular vote is in keeping with the League's long-held position.

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***NOTE: No local consensus meetings are planned. Learn more about the National Popular Voter Compact Study at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)***

### **LEAGUE INFO ONLINE**

South San Mateo County:

[www.LWVSSMC.org](http://www.LWVSSMC.org)

LWV Bay Area: [www.LWVBayArea.org](http://www.LWVBayArea.org)

LWV CA: [www.CA.LWV.org](http://www.CA.LWV.org)

LWVUS: [www.LWV.org](http://www.LWV.org)

# UPCOMING EVENTS on THE CALENDAR

## JANUARY

22 Thurs	1-3pm	<b>NATIONAL ISSUES DISCUSSION #1: "Tax Policy and Income Inequality"</b> at Barbara Boles home, 964 Durlston Rd, Redwood City. 650 368-4766
29 Thurs	4:30 - 6:30pm	<b>WORKSHOP by "CALIFORNIA WOMEN LEAD"</b> , educating and encouraging women to seek public office. Co-sponsored by LWV-NCSMC, Peninsula Library & San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women. <b>Location:</b> Canada College, 4200 Farm Hill Rd, Redwood City. <b>Info:</b> Ruth Nagler 650 356-2128
31 Sat	9am - 2pm	<b>BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY "Water: California's New Gold"</b> Registration 9am, program 9:30am Location: MetroCenter Auditorium, 101 Eighth St, Oakland (see page 6)

## FEBRUARY

2 Mon	7pm	<b>LWVSSMC Board Meeting</b> at Lucile Spurlock's home, 856 Creek Dr, Menlo Park
12 Thurs	1-3pm	<b>NATIONAL ISSUES DISCUSSION #2: "Climate Change"</b> at Kathy Armstrong's home, 732 Laurel Ave, Menlo Park. 650 321-3623 (see pages 2, 4-5)
19 Thurs	7:30pm	<b>BOOK GROUP: Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945</b> by David M. Kennedy <b>Location:</b> Joanne Bruggemann's home, 3 Lido Circle, Redwood Shores 650 593-3242
21 Sat	9am - 1pm	<b>COUNTY LEAGUE DAY "Sustainability: Making a Green Difference"</b> , hosted by the North/Central LWV. <b>Location:</b> Sustainable Center of South San Francisco, 1 Chestnut Ave, South San Francisco

## MARCH

2 Mon	7pm	<b>LWVSSMC Board Meeting</b> at Lucile Spurlock's home, 856 Creek Dr, Menlo Park
19 Thurs	7:30pm	<b>BOOK GROUP: The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afganistan After the Taliban</b> by Sarah Chayes. <b>Location:</b> Luise Maier's home, 101 Alma St, #502, Palo Alto 650 324-0168

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### JOIN A LEAGUE OF YOUR OWN : League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County

Please add my name to the membership rolls of the League of Women Voters and begin my membership today. Annual dues \$75. Make your check payable to LWVSSMC. Joining at the local level makes you a member at all levels: County, Bay Area, State, and National.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home or Cell

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form and your \$75 check to: LWV of South San Mateo County, 713 Santa Cruz Avenue, Suite 9, Menlo Park, CA 94025. (Note: Membership dues are not tax deductible)