

THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY

Celebrating 50 years of service to our communities

Website: www.LWVSSMC.org Phone: (650) 325-5780 E-mail: info@LWVSSMC.org

APRIL 2009

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OUR LEAGUE \$70!
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NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT



**Two Consensus Meetings To
Learn About The Issue and
Make Your Opinion Known!
(as part of the LWVUS National Study)**

Monday, April 6th • 1-3pm

at Barbara Boles' home , 964 Durlston Road, Redwood City (368-4766)
and

Tuesday, April 7th • 7-9pm

at Kathy Armstrong's home, 732 Laurel Avenue, Menlo Park
cross street = Durham off Willow Rd (321-3623)

Join the National League's Consensus Discussion on the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact! We have scheduled two discussions so that more members can participate in this landmark event. **AFTERNOON:** Monday, April 6 from 1 to 3 pm at the home of Barbara Boles; and **EVENING:** Tuesday, April 7 from 7 to 9 pm at the home of Kathy Armstrong. Members need only attend one meeting.

This Voter includes background information on the NPV Compact from our March VOTER and the Consensus Questions we must answer for the National League. Additional material, including a Pros and Cons table, is available at the National League website: www.lwv.org. Additional background material will be presented at each meeting with an opportunity to have your questions answered. Following that, we will discuss the national consensus questions.

Please read the material to learn more about the issue, then join in the discussion to help us reach consensus on this issue.

Transportation is available. If you need a ride, contact Program Chair ELLEN HOPE at ellenjhope@aol.com or call 839-8647

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Just when you thought things would settle down, we “spring forward” into high gear! The **National Popular Vote Compact discussion** will command our careful consideration. Our thanks to Kathy Armstrong, Barbara Boles and new

member Rob Dickinson for their leadership on this project. This study was approved against the National Board’s wishes at the League’s National Convention last year, the culmination of intense effort by its supporters. What better time than now to really think about the Electoral College and the voting process? *PLEASE PARTICIPATE AND FEEL FREE TO BRING A FRIEND!*

The State League has just published its positions on the upcoming propositions for the May 19 state ballot. As a League member, you’re sure to be asked about them. We’ll get this information out as soon as possible.

Spring is a great time to learn something new and have some fun doing it! Throw off the economic doldrums and get active again with our League!

*Jamie Shepard, Board President
jamieshepard@att.net*

BOARD MEETING BRIEFS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2009:

Announcements: We decided not to participate in the National League’s Climate Change Project due to time limits and a consensus that local cities are already working on this issue. / The Menlo Park City School District seeks candidates for open positions on the Bond Oversight Committee (mass email sent).

Business: The Budget Committee is in the process of preparing next year’s budget. Please notify Barbara Boles if you feel that any item amount needs to be adjusted. Also, it was decided to purchase a \$1,000,000 Directors and Officers Liability policy from AON Associates.

State Convention (May 15-17): We can send five delegates (our President plus four others) to the State League Convention in Long Beach. If you are interested in representing us, contact Jamie

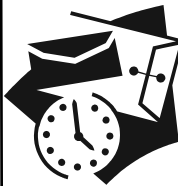
Shepard at 867-0885, or Jamieshepard@att.net.

Voter Service: The League will provide Pros and Cons talks for the May 19 Special Election. There are six ballot measures (1A-1F), all relating to the State Budget agreement. Several speakers will be needed. Training session will be scheduled.

Programs: Two meetings have been scheduled for our National Popular Vote Compact (NPVC) study, April 6, 1-3 pm, and April 7, 7-9 pm. Our Annual Meeting will be held on May 26 at Sultana’s. The speaker will be David Kennedy and a silent auction will be held. Members will be able to sign up for the dinner at the NPVC* meetings, and a sign-up form will be included in the Voter.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 6, 7pm, at Lucile Spurlock’s, 856 Creek Dr, Menlo Park.

*Shirley Desmarais, Board Secretary
sdesmarais@pacbell.net*



Lady, Can You Spare Some Time... to help out in our League office?

Got an hour to spare while you’re downtown in Menlo Park? WE COULD USE SOME HELP! Our current office staffers aim to be in the office about Thursdays, but may miss a week because of other commitments. We need people to stop in earlier in the week (Monday? Tuesday?) to listen to the phone messages, note them on the message pad, answer the questions they can, and direct the others to the proper person. Office staffer also open and distribute the mail, file material that has accumulated and check on office supplies.

All of this can be done in less than an hour, leaving plenty of time within the parking limit to shop TJ’s. Call or email me if you can fit an hour a month into your schedule and we’ll set up a training date. It’s a small time commitment but facilitates the work of our League and allows our public face to reflect the quality of our members and their work.

Lucile Spurlock, 323-5358, caspurlock@aol.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: MAY 26 = ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting is Tuesday evening, May 26, at Sultana Restaurant in Menlo Park. Our speaker is Stanford History Professor David M. Kennedy. Noted for integrating economic and cultural analysis with social and political history in his writing and teaching, Dr. Kennedy will speak on 'Are we heading for The Great Depression 2.0?' Dr. Kennedy won the Pulitzer Prize for *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945*, a particularly timely book recently read and discussed by our book group.

An excellent dinner and the business meeting will follow Dr. Kennedy's talk. The cost of dinner is \$35 and guests are welcome. The business meeting will begin at 7:30. You may attend the meeting only free of charge. Watch for details in your May *Voter*.

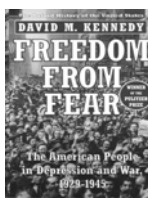
Lucile Spurlock 323-5358 caspurlock@aol.com

NEWS FROM New Voices

A team of four of our highly motivated and skilled junior class students from the Menlo-Atherton High School Computer Academy are shooting a short documentary video to enter in the Mid-Peninsula Media Center's Environmental Film Festival. They started with the question, "Why is water in parts of East Palo Alto not safe to drink?" Using video cameras furnished by a grant from the Cable Co-op Legacy fund to film in the field, they now have great footage of water testing that brings attention to drinking water quality issues in EPA. Our students are also using new media platforms to raise and discuss their neighborhood concerns and ideas in virtual roundtables – their own local versions of social networking where they can explore their own issues and share ideas. With the help of League and community volunteers, students will be working on other neighborhood investigative reporting projects.

More mentors are needed. To learn more about this mutually enriching opportunity, email our NEW VOICES Coordinator Anne-Marie Reynolds at amcreynolds@gmail.com. She can also send you links to view videos from this year's productions.

OUR LEAGUE BOOK GROUP



We will complete our discussion of *Freedom from Fear* at our meeting on Thursday, April 16, (3rd Thursday) at 7:30 pm at the home of Lucile Spurlock, 856 Creek Drive, Menlo Park.

Judy Orttung 234-9837 jorttung@att.net

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Address correction:

Barbara Bettes

2 Newell Court, #2108 Palo Alto, 94303

New email address:

Joanne Bruggemann

joannebrugg@att.net

Welcome to our new members:

Deborah Bergstrom catwolf@stanford.edu

371 Cerrito Ave, RWC, 94061

Cathy Bradford

1280 Veterans Blvd., #418, RWC 94063

Marianne Brems 851-7638

11 Franciscan Ridge, PV 94028

Denise Brosseau 631-1305

62 Pelican Lane, RWC 94065

Rob Dickenson 365-6025

1184 Ruby St, RWC 94061

Diane Grobman

1315 Trinity Dr, MP 94025

Jane Mitchell

224 Oakhurst Place, MP 94025

Joan W. Parker 851-3435

280 Mapache, PV 94028

Joan H. Steintal 328-2809

772 Cotton St, MP 94025

Joanne Wells 324-0987

1101 Cotton St, MP 94025

Boris & Marilyn Wolper

660 Woodside Dr, Woodside 94062

Jean Zukin

244 Park Lane, Atherton. 94027



NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT

Get Ready To Make Your Voice Heard!

The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result. Start by reading the very informative series of background articles that the National League has put together on this issue. Go to www.LWVC.org. Under the "For Members" pull-down menu in the blue bar, click "Projects and Programs"; then select "National Popular Vote Compact Study" in the right sidebar.

What Does the NPV Compact Mean!

If approved, the "National Popular Vote Compact" would assure that the person who receives the largest popular vote, nationwide, would be the President of the United States. The Compact would give this result without the need to have 3/4ths of the states approve an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact. The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College (EC), and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president. The NPV Compact proposal uses the mechanism of the EC. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State elections officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential candi-

date who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's EC votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues and recounts.

Let's Talk About It

Please attend one of these discussions to help us reach consensus on this important topic:

- **Monday, April 6 from 1 to 3 pm at the home of Barbara Boles, 964 Durlston Rd, Redwood City (368-4766)**
- **Tuesday, April 7 at the home of Kathy Armstrong, 732 Laurel Ave (cross street Durham off Willow Rd), Menlo Park (321-3623)**



PLEASE BE GREEN and bring this information with you to the meeting.

Consensus Questions from LWV-US

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

- 1 Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.**
 - a.** Action to alter a basic element of the Constitutional framework, which is achievable by amendment to the Constitution, should be accomplished by amendment to the Constitution.
 - b.** Action by states through a compact process is an acceptable way to alter the method for electing the President and Vice-President.
 - c.** The group could not reach consensus.

Continued on Page 5

2 Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Because a compact has never before been used to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the chance that it might set a precedent for the future leads to the conclusion that it is better that the League continue to work for an amendment to the Constitution to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College.
- b. Despite the novelty of the use of the compact approach to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the League should support the NPV Compact as a way of achieving an important goal.
- c. The group could not reach consensus

CONGRESSIONAL CONSENT

3 Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is not of sufficient concern to block the implementation of the plan.
- b. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is sufficient to conclude that the plan should not be implemented without obtaining such consent.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

ENFORCEMENT

4 Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The NPV Compact contains sufficient enforcement provisions to assure smooth operation of the plan.
- b. Although it is not possible to determine whether the enforcement provisions will be sufficient to assure smooth operation of the plan, the plan should be passed anyway
- c. Enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concerns.

- d. The lack of adequate enforcement provisions is sufficient to conclude that the NPV is not a viable plan.
- e. The group could not reach consensus.

UNIFORMITY

5 Which statements reflect the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The uniformity of voting systems is more important to American democracy than the possibility that the NPV Compact can be adopted.
- b. The NPV Compact is more important than uniformity of voting systems because it would succeed in achieving the popular election of the President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

POPULAR ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

6 Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. It is more important to achieve the goal of national popular election of the President than it is to achieve the goal of abolition of the electoral college.
- b. It is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College than it is to achieve the goal of popular election of the President by alternative methods, such as the NPV Compact.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

ACHIEVABILITY

7 Which statements reflect the views of the group?

- a. The NPV Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and the need for action by so many states.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

- b. A constitutional amendment to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College will continue to have problems being passed.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO TRY YOUR HAND AT THE SPEAKERS BUREAU: Pros & Cons Presentations for CA State Special Election May 19



Enjoy public speaking with small to medium-sized groups? Enjoy learning about both sides of an issue? Ever think that you might be interested, but didn't want to commit to learning a dozen or

more ballot issues at once? Well, this is the opportunity for you! Try being on our Speakers Bureau and see if you enjoy it! In April and May, our LWV Speakers Bureau will once again spring into action to help voters understand the six measures on the upcoming May 19 state-wide special election.

We will learn about the issues together on Tuesday, April 14, then go out in pairs to share the pros and cons with local civic and social groups. We're always in demand, and always find an appreciative audience. Ready to sign up or want to learn more? Or would you like to have a speaker come present the pros and cons to your group? Contact **Kathy Armstrong (321-3623, karmstro@conncoll.edu)**, our Voter Service Director and Speakers Bureau Coordinator.

COUNTY LEAGUE NEWS

COUNTY LEAGUE DAY ACTIONS

The following County Positions were read, discussed and voted on at County League Day, February 21, 2009:

- **Community College in San Mateo County** – No discussion. Retain the position.
- **Corrections System** – After some discussion, it was agreed to retain the position.
- **County Charter** – There was a lot of discussion about updating or rewording the portion about filling vacancies. A committee, consisting of Judy Orttung, Gina Papan, Jackie Jacobberger and Renée Kaseff, was asked to think about how to handle this issue and to give their suggestion to the two San Mateo Leagues for approval at

their annual meetings and to possibly be recommended at the next County League Day in 2010. It was agreed to retain the position.

- **County Government** – No discussion. Retain the position.
- **Health Care Delivery in San Mateo County** – No discussion. Retain the position.
- **Homeless in San Mateo County** – After some discussion about what the position covered, it was agreed to retain the position.
- **Housing** – After discussion about the wording of the support statement as it appeared in the handout at the meeting, it was agreed to retain the position with the wording used by LWV South San Mateo County.
- **Land Use Policies and Procedures** – No discussion. Retain the position.
- **San Mateo County Library** – After some discussion about city and county libraries and their relationship with the Peninsula Library System, it was agreed to retain the position.
- **Special Districts** – No discussion. Retain the position.
- **Transportation** – There was discussion about updating the position to include ferries, since the LWV Bay Area position included ferries under the Regional Transportation Agency. It was suggested that the minutes of the past Annual Meeting be checked to see if the third support statement about mass transit to the San Francisco International Airport had been deleted. It was agreed that there would be no update and that we would retain the position.

It was recommended and agreed that the following be **Areas for Emphasis: Housing; Transportation; State and Local Financial Issues**

LEAGUE INFO ONLINE

South San Mateo County:
www.LWVSSMC.org

LWV Bay Area: www.LWVBayArea.org

LWV CA: www.CA.LWV.org

LWVUS: www.LWV.org

STATE LEAGUE NEWS

State Convention, Long Beach

Friday, May 15 - Sunday, May 17, 2009 - three days of fun and policy at the LWVC Convention 2009! **Want to represent our League and learn a lot about the League at Convention? New Board members are encouraged to attend!** Contact Jamie Shepard (867-0885 jamieshepard@att.net)

The LWVC Recommends...

The LWVC Board has taken positions on the May ballot measures for the May 19 election. A press statement was issued in mid-March, and the website www.CA.LWVC.org has the "LWVC Recommends" flyer. An "In Depth" and an "Action Guide" will be available as well as the "Easy Voter Guide". Check our SmartVoter.org website for information online.

The LWVC has special information both on the website and also will issue Special Election News between now and the election. These will help local Leagues prepare for this challenge within this very short time frame. This election was called at the end of February, and the May 19 date was chosen so as to coincide with a Los Angeles municipal election. The early date was also desired in order to resolve state budget issues sooner rather than later, issues that were placed on the ballot as part of the budget agreements of September-February.

*Linda Craig, Advocacy Director
League of Women Voters of California
322-6914 lcraig@lwvc.org*

NATIONAL LEAGUE NEWS

LWVUS Joins Broad-based Coalition Outlining Principles for Effective and Efficient Climate Legislation

In a March 9, 2009 press release excerpted here, the LWVUS and 52 coalition partners responded to President Obama's call to "re-power America" and cap global warming pollution by establishing principles for effective, efficient, and equitable

global warming legislation. The coalition endorsing the National Call to Action on Global Warming is building support for President Obama's plan to tackle global warming by reaching out to groups and individuals across the country. The coalition's call to action includes the following principles:

- Establish science-based pollution reduction targets, including reducing U.S. emissions by 25% below 1990 levels by 2020, that are periodically updated as science evolves;
- Auction all pollution allowances and devote the proceeds to helping the nation shift to clean energy and addressing impacts on consumers, workers, vulnerable communities, and natural resources;
- Ensure strong rules for any carbon "offsets" so that our efforts to reduce pollution are effective.

Because burning fossil fuels is responsible for more than 80% of total U.S. global warming emissions, America must dramatically change the way it uses and produces energy to sufficiently reduce emissions. However daunting, these challenges also present great opportunities. "Unleashing American ingenuity designing a clean energy future will create jobs, reduce our dependence on oil, and galvanize the made-in-America technologies that will be needed to accelerate emission reductions by nations around the world," said Kristen Sheeran, program manager for Economics for Equity and the Environment Network.

Mary Wilson, LWVUS President/Chair voiced the League's support and pledged to push Capitol Hill. "Washington must hear from all of us - clean energy entrepreneurs, mayors and local officials, and most of all from parents and grandparents who are alarmed about their children's future. We are eager to work with congressional leadership and the administration on this landmark legislation." In response, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid have said they are committed to developing legislation this year.

The complete text of the National Call to Action on Global Warming is posted under "Global Climate Change" on the LWVUS website: www.lwv.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS on THE CALENDAR

APRIL

6 Mon	1-3pm	TIMELY TOPICS: NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT Discussion at Barbara Boles' home, 964 Durlston Road, Redwood City (368-4766) <i>See page 1</i>
6 Mon	7pm	LWVSSMC Board Meeting at Lucile Spurlock's home, 856 Creek Dr, Menlo Park (323-5358)
7 Tues	7-9pm	TIMELY TOPICS: NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT Discussion at Kathy Armstrong's home, 732 Laurel Avenue, Menlo Park <i>cross street = Durham off Willow Rd</i> (321-3623) <i>See page 1</i>
14 Tues	5-7pm	SPEAKERS BUREAU TRAINING on the State Propositions for May Election at Kathy Armstrong's home, 732 Laurel Avenue, Menlo Park <i>cross street = Durham off Willow Rd</i> (321-3623) <i>See page 6</i>
16 Thurs	7:30pm	BOOK GROUP: <u>Freedom from Fear</u> by David Kennedy. Location: Lucile Spurlock's home, 856 Creek Drive, Menlo Park. 323-5358 Info: Judy Orttung (234-9837, jorttung@att.net) <i>See page 3</i>
24 Fri	8:30 am - 1pm	FORUM: "Making Public Schools Work" , presented by Santa Clara County LWVs. LOCATION: <i>Synopsis</i> , Bldg, #2, 455 N Mary Ave, Sunnyvale. CONTACT: LWV Palo Alto - Nancy Rogers (321-0270)

MAY

4 Mon	7pm	LWVSSMC Board Meeting at Lucile Spurlock's home, 856 Creek Dr, Menlo Park (323-5358)
15 Fri - 17 Sun		STATE LEAGUE CONVENTION , Long Beach, CA <i>See page 7 for details</i>
21 Thurs	7:30pm	BOOK GROUP: <u>The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban</u> by Sarah Chayes. Location: Luise Maier's home, 101 Alma St, #502, Palo Alto 324-0168
26 Tues	6pm	ANNUAL MEETING at Sultana Restaurant, Menlo Park, with guest speaker DAVID KENNEDY. Annual Meeting Kit and dinner details will be announced in the May VOTER

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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)