



# Voter

League of Women Voters of Southwest Santa Clara Valley

March, 2010

P.O. Box 2865, Saratoga, CA 95070-0865

[www.lwv-sw-santaclara-valley.org](http://www.lwv-sw-santaclara-valley.org)

(408) 867-VOTE (8683)

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## Minority Women and Civic Participation

### How can we get more minorities involved in civic activities?

### Panel Members:

## Ruth Ashford Socorro McCord and Mable Yee

### Monday, March 22 – 7:30 PM

Campbell Community Center  
Roosevelt Room  
One West Campbell Avenue, Campbell

See page 3 for more information.

## President's Letter

Recently there was an article in the Mercury News about the city of Campbell, how it's the valley's new hot spot. Businesses are moving to Campbell from San Jose and Los Gatos because it's the place to be. I started thinking about our League and Campbell. We have meetings in Campbell but our observer chair, Patty Weber, says we don't have anyone regularly attending city council meetings. We should. There are bound to be things going on that interest the League. One doesn't have to be a resident of Campbell to be an observer, so if interested, give Patty a call. Patty says Monte Sereno could also use more observers.

Josie Geisen, Terry Cabrinha, and I went to an event put on by the American Leadership Forum as part of their Reviving California Community Dialogue Series. The speaker was Jean Ross who is the executive director of the California Budget Project, a Sacramento-based nonpartisan policy research group. She explained that the state is looking at a 20 billion dollar shortfall and this is not just a one year problem that will soon go away. We will be looking at the problem for years to come. There are possible partial solutions including getting more Federal money, deep cuts or total elimination of some programs and cuts in K-12 education. In addition, there is the possibility of temporary taxes on oil and closing some other tax loopholes. All in all, she did not paint a rosy picture. The problem is great and the solutions are not simple. She did comment that actually, the California budget really is rocket science. We will see what happens, but we do know that the League will be paying attention and do its best to educate the public.

Josie and Terry will be working with other Voter Service Chairs throughout the county to bring us informative and comprehensive Candidates Forums as well as organizing our own Pros & Cons sessions. If this interests you, give them a call and offer to help.

The Membership Committee has begun a new project which Barbara Lea has outlined in this *Voter*. We will keep you posted on the progress of the project.

Ann Roberts, President

### Correction

In the February newsletter, a sentence on page 4 in the *Silicon Valley Collaborative Reform* article read *...voters can come to some satisfying consensus before the two upcoming elections in May and November*. This should have read as *"...elections in June and November"*.

## Board Bytes

Board Meeting of February 3, 2010

- **Fundraiser** – The Fundraiser's date has been set for May 23 from 6:30-9:30PM at Summer Winds Nursery on DeAnza Blvd. The theme is California Dreaming Green. Mark your calendar.
- **Nominations For The Board** – There are several unfilled positions for the 2009-10 board. Contact Marge Bunyard if you are interested in filling one of these positions.
- **Voters Service** – The following forums for upcoming elections are: April 7 at the Los Gatos Council Chambers for the County Board of Supervisors, May 15 at the Campbell Community Center for judges. Additional forums, pros & cons, and voter registration events are in the planning stages.

## High School Poster Contest!

In an effort to reach out to a younger audience and parents, our Membership & Public Relations Committee is sponsoring a High School Poster Contest at Los Gatos, Saratoga, Westmont, and Prospect High Schools. The purpose of the contest is to encourage informed voting, with the following suggested sub topics:

- Women's History Month in March
- 90th Anniversary for the League of Women Voters, founded 1920
- Women's Equality Day, August 26, 1920, 19th Amendment Passed
- 50th Anniversary for SWSC Valley League of Women Voters, founded 1960
- New League Phrase: A History of Change, A Future of Hope

Students have been encouraged to use the national League of Women Voters website which has a wealth of historical material as well as our state and local websites for resource information.

The Committee has been authorized to use Helga Ruby funds to grant three prizes at each participating school. First prize will be \$150, second \$75, third \$50; and the deadline for submitting posters is March 11. Members of the Committee are Jane Ellis, Barbara Lea, Nora Mason, Cherri Nelson, Rita Osman, Karlina Ott, and Ann Roberts. If you have any questions or would like to participate in judging the posters, please contact Barbara Lea at 354-2287 or [barbara.lea@comcast.net](mailto:barbara.lea@comcast.net).

Barbara Lea

## Minority Women and Civic Participation Speakers

*On Monday, March 22, there will be a special panel presentation, as seen on the cover of this newsletter. Below are brief biographies of the three panel members: Ruth Ashford, Socorro McCord, and Mable Yee.*

### Ruth Ashford

A native of Oklahoma, Ruth has spent the majority of her adult life in Silicon Valley working for three high-tech companies: International Business machines (IBM), Control Data Corporation (CDC), and Hewlett-Packard Corporation (HP). Her interest, aptitude, and educational experiences helped her to succeed in diverse fields, such as programming, technical course design and development, management, public relations, government, and law. Her education includes a B.A. in History (Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma) and a J.D. (Santa Clara University).

Over the years, Ruth's volunteer activities have included Vice Chair of Sunnyvale's Housing and Community Development Commission, Publicity Chair of HP's Minority Student Day, Chair of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women (NCBW), Silicon Valley's Chapter's Advocacy Committee and committee member. This Committee provides training programs for minority girls in science, math, and technology and volunteers in local and national political campaigns.

Retirement has enabled Ruth to devote a substantial amount of time to Rotary International. She is past president of the San Jose East/Evergreen Rotary Club where she continues to serve in numerous ways. Within District 5170, she serves as an Interact District Council Advisor, Youth Protection Trainer, Youth Exchange Regional Contact, and Ambassadorial Scholars and World Peace Committee Member.

### Socorro McCord

Professionally, Socorro was in public school finance and retired from the Los Gatos Saratoga Joint Union High School District as Director of District Fiscal Services. Her parents were immigrants who as naturalized citizens were honored by their right to vote and adamant that their children make the world a better place for all and be involved in the political process. She started volunteering at the Sacred Heart Community Center in San Jose to help coordinate voter education/registration at the parish level. She taught citizenship classes at St. John Vianney parish for about five years.

Consequently, she worked a great deal with the Office of the Registrar of Voters (ROV). She served on

the Voting Rights Advisory Committee (VRAC) from 1995 until 2008. Then the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors created a new Citizens Advisory Commission on Elections.

Currently she is involved in a number of organizations that deal with justice and accountability. She is a Community Peace and Justice Activist.

### Mable Yee

Mable Yee is a technologist, entrepreneur, filmmaker, and activist. She has spent 27 years in high tech, where she managed global brands for Fortune 1000 corporations. She later cofounded and was CEO of several start-ups in networking and consumer marketing. In 2008, she coproduced the documentary, *Engage Her: Getting Minority Women to Lead and Vote*, which was so well received that she launched Engage Her, a national organization that educates and activates multiculturals, with a focus on women and girls, to step up to leadership. Engage Her convenes women's and girls' leadership conferences — the one in 2009 featured Gloria Steinem, Dolores Huerta, and Aileen Hernandez — to work with the next generation of multicultural women leaders.

Mable is a member of the Women's Media Center, [SheSource.org](http://SheSource.org), Senior Advisor to National Association of Asian American Professionals, and a cofounder of the Asian Business League. She is frequently asked to speak about leadership, civic engagement, multicultural issues, and social media. Yee was selected as the 2010 Woman of the Year for California Assembly District 14 and will be honored on March 20th.

This panel discussion will be held at the Campbell Community Center in the Roosevelt Room. The address for the Community Center is One West Campbell Avenue, on the corner of Campbell and Winchester Avenues, in Campbell at 7:30 PM.

Shirley Hill, Programs VP

## Candidate Night

### County Board of Supervisors for District One

District One serves Los Gatos

Wednesday, April 7, 2010 at 7:00 PM

Los Gatos Town Council Chambers

110 E. Main Street, Los Gatos

For further information call 408-354-8516

## Bay Area League Day for In Oakland 2010

The Annual Forum of the Bay Area League of Women Voters of California was held in Oakland on January 30, 2010 and focused on efforts in California to reduce greenhouse gases. The forum was well attended and included an excellent lunch for \$25, also affording an opportunity to share impressions with others. This account is a very subjective one, as I am not an expert in the field.

In the morning session, Redesigning Communities to Reduce Greenhouse Gases, six different speakers addressed issues surrounding SB 375, a bill passed in the fall of 2008. The goal of this bill is to help achieve reduction in CO2 emissions specified in the State's historic AB 32, *The Global Warming Solutions Act* of 2006, which sets specific targets for reductions to be met by 2020 and 2050. One of the many goals specified in AB 32 is to also reduce the number of miles we drive and SB 375 encourages local communities to plan housing and other development so as to reduce sprawl, shorten commutes, and facilitate the use of public transportation.

Although the basic concept is clear, implementation of the bill will be complex—good regional planning is essential to energy conservation. There are a number of elements involving a variety of state, regional, and local planning entities. It's not clear how planning standards set by the state are going to be reconciled with existing or proposed local standards. Some think the bill has the potential to create a bureaucratic nightmare, others think it is a tremendously important breakthrough taking more than a piecemeal approach to urban planning for the first time.

Five of six speakers represented various governmental agencies; the sixth was from the nonprofit organization

Greenbelt Alliance, a pioneer in working with cities to achieve the concept of smart growth. All speakers supported SB 375, but acknowledged complexities and uncertainties such as how it will operate. In my opinion presentations were less than illuminating. After the forum, I attempted to read more on SB 375 realizing how complex and confusing it is, feeling more sympathetic to the speakers in trying to present its issues in very short time frames. Actual texts of the presentations will be available on the Bay Area LWV web site [www.lwvbayarea.org](http://www.lwvbayarea.org).

The afternoon program entitled Success Stories, seemed more inspirational. There were reports from the governments of three cities (Berkeley, San Francisco, and San Jose) and one county (Sonoma County) of programs succeeding in reducing greenhouse gases while reducing costs and creating new jobs. The San Jose and Sonoma County reports were particularly more specific and interesting.

The program in San Jose is called Green Vision and has the goal of reducing per capita energy use 50% by 2022. Currently 67% of the city's waste is being converted to energy; the future goal is 95% or more! At the same time they hope to create 25,000 new "clean" jobs. The city has committed to no new outward growth, emphasizing instead cooperation with local neighborhoods and infill of underutilized areas. A long standing proposal for development in the mid Coyote Valley south of San Jose has been removed from consideration until 2040.

Sonoma County presented their Sonoma County Energy Independence Program, SCEIP. The county loans funds at a 7% rate to businesses and individuals for energy savings projects such as installing solar panels,



Speakers From San Jose.



Morning Panel

## Bay Area League Day for In Oakland 2010 (Cont.)

improving insulation, and increasing water efficiency. 900 new jobs have been created, and the program has the potential to be self-sustaining. Programs similar to this are cropping up all over California with help from California FIRST, AB 811, a new law that allows municipalities to develop financing for energy savings in buildings via loans that are repaid with temporarily increased property taxes.

Overall I came away inspired not only by the successful programs that are underway, but by the number of smart people trying to address climate change at all governmental levels. I was also sobered by the complexities, including the number of potentially conflicting and overlapping governmental organizations involved. I can see how these efforts make natural

targets for enemies of "big government". But it seems to me that it's only through governmental efforts that change is likely to occur. It has been pointed out that China is way ahead of us in "green" programs, partly because their more totalitarian government can order people to do what the government says. Part of the confusion and complexity of SB 375 is that it attempts to reach state standards by working collaboratively with local governments rather than enforcing new state rules from above. California is bravely pioneering in the area of reducing carbon emissions. Let us hope that our innovative spirit and efforts at collaboration will succeed and will inspire other states to follow us.

Mariquita West, SWSCV LWV Member

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® 90 Years and Counting



Dear friend,

I am so incredibly honored to be president of the League of Women Voters as we commemorate our 90th Anniversary this Sunday, February 14. We've got a lot to be proud of! Help us celebrate by signing our birthday card and by forwarding this email to your friends so they can send the League a birthday message as well. You can also share your message on our Facebook wall.

Ninety years ago, Carrie Chapman Catt first proposed a League of Women Voters to "finish the fight" and work to end all discrimination against women. And so the League of Women Voters was founded on Valentine's Day in 1920, six months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

Today, we remain a grassroots organization with more than 150,000 members and supporters and 850 Leagues throughout all 50 states. Though the

League is known widely for our voter education efforts, we've also brought our expertise to critical issues such as health care reform, global climate change and many others.

As we enter into a new year, we know that the League will continue to do what it has been trusted to do for more than 90 years:

- Discuss the important issues
- Ask the difficult questions
- Demand accountability from our government

And every one of our critical 2010 initiatives will give citizens a greater voice – in the upcoming census, the 2010 elections, the next round of redistricting and more.

The League of Women Voters is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement, and this year, on our 90th Anniversary, we hope you will stand with us in this work.

Do you have a birthday wish you want to share with the League? Please send it today or share it on our Facebook wall.

Thank you again for your continued support and for making our 90th Anniversary so special.

Sincerely,  
Mary G. Wilson, President, LWVUS

P.S. Over the last 90 years, the League of Women Voters has truly left its footprint on American history, and our democracy is stronger for it.

## California Dreamin' Green

Our enthusiastic fund raising committee is hard at work planning an exciting event for Sunday, May 23 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at the Summer Winds Nursery. The event will be a benefit for our Education Fund and will be called California Dreamin' Green.

There will be demonstrations and information about native and drought-resistant plants, attracting birds, bees, and butterflies to your garden and environmental or integrated pest management.

There will be a chance to talk one on one with nursery staff as well as enjoy tasty appetizers. There will be door prizes, a silent auction and special benefit raffle items and wine, punch, music and conversation

You can help make the event a success. First, reserve the date on your calendar. Second, ask merchants or restaurants you patronize to donate a gift certificate, merchandise or bottles of wine to the SWSCV League of Women Voters for prizes.

Please call Zina Lou Dyer at (408) 356-2445 for details and to get the receipt that needs to be given to donors. Zina Lou can also give you suggestions of merchants who have supported us previously. There will be more information about this fund raising event in future editions of the *Voter*.

Sharon Kelkenberg, Fund Raising Co-chair

## Can We Save Our Oceans?

A public lecture series sponsored by the Saratoga Foothill Club features speakers Packard and Caldwell to speak on Tuesday, March 23 at 7:30 PM.

Julie Packard, Executive Director of the Monterey Aquarium and Meg Caldwell, Executive Director of the Center for Ocean Solutions will address the challenging question "Can We Save Our Oceans?"

Julie Packard has overseen the growth of the Aquarium's conservation education and inspiring this mission since 1984. She serves on many boards that promote conservation as well as being part of the Pew and Joint Oceans Commission. Meg Caldwell directs the Environmental and Natural Resources Law and Policy Program at Stanford University and serves on the California Coastal Commission.

General Admission is \$10 and located at 20399 Park Place, Saratoga behind the Saratoga Fire Station off Saratoga Avenue. Email Marlene Duffin for more information at [Marlduffin@aol.com](mailto:Marlduffin@aol.com)

## School Board Report

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint High School District Board met in on Los Gatos Tuesday, Feb 9 and was heavily attended by the high school teachers. There was the first public exploration of the 2010-11 budget, which expects a loss of \$3 million. This is also the amount needed to be cut from the budget.

Evin Rogers, District Teacher's Association President, presented proposed an interesting voluntary adjustment. He announced that the teachers had voluntarily agreed to no step increases or salary raises for the coming year.

The English teachers, however, asked that the Board make every effort to keep the English classes at a 20 class size if at all possible. It was found that the students had really benefited with from this.

Los Gatos is implementing flexible scheduling, such as Saratoga has been doing for several years. And, students, parents, and teachers are very impressed with the extra tutoring help which has resulted in increased student performance.

The administrators are taking pay reductions and the Board will consider dipping into a portion of the reserve to meet the budget reduction. Because the district is a basic-aid district, the State will not be providing any extra money. The forecast is even more grim for the following next two years.

Marge Bunyard, Observer

## More Garden, Less Water

Water conservation can be beautiful! Visit local gardens featuring drought-tolerant native plants on Sunday, April 18, 2010, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Sign up for this self-guided tour at <http://www.goingnativegardentour.org>.

The local chapter of California Native Plant Society organizes this event. From their web site: "The goals of the tour are to demonstrate reduced water use, reduced chemical and pesticide use, improved habitat, and the unique aesthetic appeal of gardens designed with California native plants. "

The goals above align with the county position on water resources, which includes "Education of professionals and the public regarding conservation landscaping." <http://www.lwv-sw-santaclara-valley.org/copositions.html>

Sharon Snyder, Web site Co-chair

# "Do Nothing, Not an Option" Congress Must Act Quickly in Aftermath of Citizens United Decision

*The following article was taken from the National LWV web site. It is a press release dated 02/03/2010.*

Washington, D.C. – The League of Women Voters testified before the Committee on House Administration in a hearing entitled Defining the Future of Campaign Finance in an Age of Supreme Court Activism. At the U.S. congressional hearing, Mary G. Wilson, the national League president, told committee members that they must pass legislation governing corporate and union spending quickly, in order for it to take effect for the 2010 elections.

“The Court’s majority decision in Citizens United v. FEC was fundamentally wrong and a tragic mistake. But this is the decision of the Court,” said Wilson. “Congress needs to respond now, recognizing its own authority and responsibility to uphold the Constitution. Fair and clean elections, determined by the votes of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy.”

“The Court’s decision in Citizens United upends basic campaign finance law that has been in place for a century. It changes the foundation on which decades of congressional enactments on money in elections are built. Such a fundamental change requires a strong response from Congress and the Executive.”

The League supports numerous concepts moving forward in this post-Citizens United context; however,

Wilson stressed the urgency in doing something now. “After Citizens United, we urgently need enhanced disclosure. This is the most basic step toward protecting the role of the voter in making decisions in elections,” stated Wilson. “It is now possible for corporations to secretly provide funds that another corporation uses to intervene in an election through independent expenditures. This is not acceptable. The League of Women Voters supports strong disclosure requirements for both those who receive election funds and those who provide such funds.”

“After providing enhanced disclosure, the next most important step for Congress is to do no further harm. A decision as far-reaching in its implications as Citizens United will provoke a number of proposals that, we believe, could make our election system and government processes even worse,” Wilson argued. “We need fair elections, not greater involvement of big money in elections and government. Each of these steps—such as altering contribution limits to candidates and PACs or allowing corporation and unions to once again donate huge sums to political parties—would increase corruption or the appearance of corruption and further distort our political processes.”

Wilson pointed to a number of other proposals – from new controls on foreign corporations to public financing – that Congress should consider in seeking to block corruption of American democracy.

## Join the League of Women Voters

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Elected Official:  Appointed Official

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City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone, Evening: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Southwest Santa Clara Valley  
 PO Box 2865  
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	Jul–Jun 1 year	Jan–Jul 6 months
__ Individual	\$70.00	\$35.00
-- Household	\$105.00	\$52.50
-- Student	\$30.00	\$15.00

Membership year is from 7/1 – 6/30.

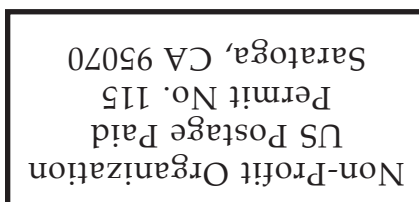
Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund are deductible to the extent allowed by law. Joining at the local level makes you a member at all levels: County, Bay Area, State, and National. Please address questions regarding membership to Jane Ellis at [jce218@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jce218@sbcglobal.net), 408 374-0741, or 408 867-VOTE (8683).

## Calendar

- March 3 Wednesday 9:30 AM Board Meeting, Saratoga Fire Station**
- March 11 Thursday 12 Noon Clip n' Come — Bring salad/food and clipping to share at Dale Hill's home  
150 Robin Way, Los Gatos Ph 356-7679.  
Please let hostess know if you will be coming.**
- March 22 Monday 7:30 PM Minority Women and Civic Participation  
See cover and page 3 for more information**

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League neither supports nor opposes political candidates and parties, but does take action on issues. League membership is open to all women and men who are U.S. Citizens and of voting age.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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