



# VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

September 2005

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## SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

### League of Women Voters of California Bay Area Regional Training Workshop at Stanford (RE) TOOLING for LEAGUE

**Date:** Saturday, September 10  
**Time:** 9:30 am – 3:00  
**Place:** HYATT Residence, 620 Sand Hill Rd. Stanford  
 (across from Nordstorm's, Stanford Shopping Center)

Registration deadline September 7. Mail registration form (see page 3) with check payable to LWVC for \$25 (morning snack, lunch, materials) to Crownie Billik, 360 Sunkist Lane, Los Altos, CA 94022

### LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale Board of Directors

President	Susan Hough
Secretary	Louise Levy
Treasurer	Roberta Hollimon
Directors	Marilyn Howard
	Jenny Lopresto
	LaVerne Prentice
	Jason Spiller

### ENERGY MEETING

#### How Can California Have a Healthy Electricity System that is Reliable, Fairly Priced and Have Transparency of Operation?

**Date:** Saturday, September 17  
**Time:** 10 am Refreshments  
 10:30 – noon Program  
**Place:** Lida Urbanek's home  
 75 Tuscaloosa, Atherton  
**Speaker:** Sen. Joe Simitian, 11<sup>th</sup> State Senate District

Guests are welcome.  
 RSVP to LWVSSMC office 650-325-5780 by Thursday, Sept. 15

### The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

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### KNOW YOUR BAY AREA DAY

#### Reforming the California Environmental Quality Act How Has It Worked, Does It Need To Be Changed?

**Date:** Saturday, September 24  
**Time:** 9:30 am – 1:00 pm  
**Place:** Fremont Main Library, Fukya Room  
 2400 Stevenson Blvd. Fremont  
**Cost:** \$10 per person

Registration deadline: September 22. Confirm with Tam Hege [tamhege@aol.com](mailto:tamhege@aol.com) or send checks payable to LWVBA to Tam Hege, 80 Florada Ave. Piedmont, CA 94610

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Forgive me for getting personal here, but my birthday is coming, and though I swore it was a summer birthday, every year my father gave me a red leaf to remind me that fall is indeed on the way. He isn't around to give me leaves any more, but now I have other reminders. We have elections coming, dear members! You will read in these pages and other sources that our efforts to add clarity to a complex election process continue. This year we have already scheduled three candidate forums and seven ballot measure talks as I write, a count that will almost certainly be out of date by the time you read this message. Candidate forums will need moderators, timers and flexible helpers to manage questions and questioners. Ballot measure talks require research, scheduling, practice and advertising. I think that this is some of the best work we do. If you can help with these projects, please contact Marilyn Howard at [mjzhactivist@yahoo.com](mailto:mjzhactivist@yahoo.com) and let her know what you can offer. If nothing else, please go to a forum and become a more informed voter, and tell your friends and neighbors that help is available – the ballot does not have to be too complicated for a voter to make intelligent decisions. Refer them to Smart Voter (<http://smartvoter.org/>). Bring them to a forum. Get the word out – it is worth being an informed voter!

Expect more on this subject as election season continues!

*Susan*

### Track the Money

The money is already flowing in this year's Special election campaign. You can start tracking the contributions made to these campaigns through the California Secretary of State's Web site at <http://cal-access.ss.ca.gov/Campaign/>.

### Send Your Email Address to LWVUS

Want to receive the national VOTER online? Want easy access to the national members' site? Let us know and we will send your email address to the national League to enroll you in this new program. See the article on page 5 for more information.

### Tell Your Friends About Smart Voter

Be an ambassador for Smart Voter. You know how valuable it is but we need to tell others in our community about this wonderful nonpartisan election Website. Everyone, from election day panicky voters who have lost their sample ballot to conscientious citizens who want to know all there is to know about ballot measures, can benefit by using Smart Voter. Be sure to tell them to check out <http://smartvoter.org>.

### Board Briefs

At its August meeting, the Board:

- Learned that candidate forums have been planned for Cupertino City Council, Sunnyvale City Council, Cupertino Elementary School Board and Sunnyvale Elementary School Board.
- Heard that seven Pros and Cons presentations have been set.
- Received an update on the campaign to defeat the three initiatives on the Cupertino ballot.

### Looking Back

**25 years ago** members were invited to attend a meeting entitled "The Informed Citizen" and become "...the kind of know-it-all your friends and neighbors think you are because you've joined the League."

**15 years ago** the Great Decisions Discussion group having finished its sessions on the 1990 Great Decisions topics, decided to study the U.S. Constitution.

### Membership News

Welcome new member Dorothy Stow.

Thank you for renewing your membership: Veronica Alvarez, Beatrice Arrowsmith, Pat Boyle, Hobart Davis, Fran Grabau, Jack Hasling, Jim and Pat Jackson, Amin Kees, Bev and Rick Olsen, Margaret Quillinan, Carol Stanek, Christine Wallis, and Leonard Williams.

Thank you for including a donation with your renewal: Gladys Garabedian, Jenny Lopresto, and Mavis Smith.

Thank you to Jack Walker for contributing to the Community Appeal.

We sadly report that long-time member Ann Murray has passed away. She joined the League in 1973.

## REDISTRICTING—Where We Stand

In 1987 and 1988, the League of Women Voters conducted an extensive study of the redistricting process in California. We immediately applied our resulting position in support of Proposition 119, an unsuccessful attempt to establish an independent commission to draw district lines in California. The next two redistricting plans drawn by the state legislature (in 1991 and 2001) either were rejected by the courts or were widely criticized as being fundamentally flawed. Today we find ourselves in the middle of a sustained public debate on the future of redistricting in California, a debate that will continue for some time.

What does the League have to say about the way California should redistrict? In brief, we support a redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation in the state legislature and in the House of Representatives, with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny of the process. And we support redistricting by a bipartisan commission rather than by the legislature.

The standards on which a redistricting plan should be based, regardless of who has responsibility for redistricting, should include (1) substantially equal population, (2) geographic contiguity and (3) protection of the voting strength of a racial or linguistic minority from dilution.

To the extent possible, these standards should also include respect for legal boundaries of cities and counties, and preservation and protection of “communities of interest.” On the other hand, the standards should not consider the protection of incumbents or the preferential treatment of any political party.

The League places a good deal of emphasis on the importance of the structure of the redistricting process. It is clear that members feel that how redistricting is done is even more important than who does it. League positions on opportunities for citizen participation in government

decision making, the need for adequate notice of proposed actions and the need for open meetings are all crucial to member understanding of what constitutes a fair redistricting process.

The League believes that the redistricting process should include (1) specific time lines for the steps leading to adoption of the redistricting plan, (2) public hearings on the proposed plan, (3) an automatic nonjudicial backup procedure in the event of deadlock and (4) a requirement that any redistricting plan drawn by the legislature be adopted by more than a simple majority vote.

Members prefer redistricting by a commission over redistricting by the legislature. Balance, however, is considered important and commission members should reflect California's diversity of population and varied geography, as well as a balance of economic, social and partisan interests. Members conclude that a redistricting commission would make fair and effective representation a more likely outcome than the decisions of legislators, whose self-interests seem to dominate over their concern for fairness and the common good. Given only two practical choices—legislature or commission—the choice of a commission reflected member's dissatisfaction with the legislature's previous redistricting performance as much as enthusiasm for a commission per se.

The questions of who should redistrict California and how such redistricting lines should be drawn are complex. All the criteria involve difficult and controversial definitions and decisions. The League position does not promise panaceas or quick fixes. Rather, it represents a thoughtful reflection on a complex political process and offers balanced suggestions for a road map to navigate the difficult journey.

# LEAGUE OPPOSES CUPERTINO INITIATIVES

The LWV has a well-established reputation for voter service and for its nonpartisan stance, neither supporting nor opposing candidates for public office or political parties. The League is less well known for its ability to support or oppose ballot measures that appear at election time.

League does not take an election position lightly. Any such action is based upon one or more "positions" which have resulted from past studies in which all members have had the opportunity to participate. Such studies usually take several months, or years, and the resulting "positions" are approved at our annual meetings and/or conventions before being used to support or oppose ballot measures.

Occasionally, an opportunity arises for us to use our positions in order to act. This process has resulted in a decision by the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale to oppose three initiatives that will appear on the November 2005, ballot in Cupertino. Those initiatives, which would amend the General Plan, place limits on height, density, and setbacks for new construction.

A committee of five local League members has studied the initiatives in depth and has found League positions to oppose them, based on our positions on sustainable communities, housing, land use, state and local finance, education, and our belief in representative government.

Each of the initiatives states that the amendment "... shall supersede any contrary provision to the general plan and any ordinance now in effect, or ever adopted in the future, except that voters may directly repeal or alter this amendment in an election." This would remove a large part of our city government's role in future development decisions and would place the responsibility directly upon voters to make judgments each time a project requires special consideration. Rarely does an individual resident have the time or expertise to access all the information that is available plus the ability to make good land-use decisions based on that information. That is why we have representative government, embodied locally by a City Council.

All levels of League, national, state, and local, have strong positions supporting affordable housing. The City of Cupertino requires that 15% of the units in new housing developments be below market rate in price. The initiative's restriction of 15 units per acre will discourage developers from building new housing in Cupertino thus cutting off the supply of affordable housing for service workers, such as teachers, firefighters, etc.

The League believes that sustainable development depends on the integration of social, economic, and environmental goals. Restricting heights of new buildings to 35 feet and requiring a setback from the curb of 35 feet will impair Cupertino's ability to encourage retail development which supports the city's economy.

## Regional Training Workshop Registration Form

LWV \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

League job/portfolio \_\_\_\_\_

Mail registration form with check payable to LWVC for \$25 (morning snack, lunch, materials) to:

Crownie Billik, 360 Sunkist Lane, Los Altos, CA 94022

On site/late registration \$30

For information email [crownie@billik.com](mailto:crownie@billik.com) phone 650-948-0936

## LEAGUE NEWS

**National** – The League of Women Voters of Ohio joined the League of Women Voters of Toledo-Lucas County and a dozen individual plaintiffs in suing Ohio’s governor and the secretary of state for 30 years of dysfunctional election administration.

**State** – LWVC has joined the American Civil Liberties Union—Northern California, Physicians for Social Responsibility and the California Library Association in advocating thoughtful reconsideration of the Patriot Act.

**Bay Area** – LWVBA reports that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission adopted a groundbreaking Transit Oriented Development Policy that requires areas around new transit stations to meet certain development thresholds if the transit improvements are to be funded. This was a result of many years of effort by the LWVBA and other organizations that encouraged MTC to take specific land use plans in eight station areas.

### League Internet Sites

LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale

[www.cs.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.cs.ca.lwvnet.org)

LWV Santa Clara County

[www.scc.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.scc.ca.lwvnet.org)

LWV Bay Area

[www.lwvba-ca.org](http://www.lwvba-ca.org)

Bay Area Monitor

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

LWV California

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

Members [www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly](http://www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly)

LWV United States

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

Members: Type:

LWV

password:

Carrie Catt

## MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL TO MEMBERS ON EMAIL ADDRESSES AND THE NEW LEAGUE WEB SITE

We are excited that after months of planning and hard work, the new LWVUS Web site is nearly complete. In addition to a brand new design, the site has a content management system that makes it much more user-friendly and easier to find the information you want. All of these exciting developments are going to be available in the very near future.

Another new feature relates to online security. Although most of the information on the new LWVUS site will be available to the public, there is some information which needs to be limited to members. This is particularly true of our member-donor database. To keep that and other internal League documents (like budget and program planning documents) secure and accessible only by members, we have worked with experts in the field to develop a login procedure for our members’ section. Key to this procedure is the use of your own email address as your personal identifier. Therefore, the LWVUS urges all Leagues to work with you as members to make sure we have your current email address, so that access to the new members-only information on the Web site is not delayed. By the way - the LWVUS NEVER sells or trades member email addresses, so you can be confident that this information will not be shared.

To make it easy for our members to remember passwords and log into member information there, we've set it up like most other Web sites where your email address is your user name and you set your own password.

**If the members’ email address is in our database**, they can log in and that process will generate a security key that will be immediately emailed to them to use to complete the log in process.

**If their email address is not in our database**, they will be prompted to submit additional information in order to verify their identity and help ensure the information is accurate and the security and privacy of information is retained for all members. Once confirmed, they will receive their security code via email and can log in and access their own profile page, where they will also be able to set their own password

### Help Make Government Work Join the League of Women Voters

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check to LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale, P.O. Box 2923, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

\_\_\_\_ \$50 Individual member

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

\_\_\_\_ \$75 Two members in a household

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks made out to LWVCS are not tax deductible.