



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

VOTER



**FREMONT, NEWARK & UNION CITY**

**Summer 2017**

## **JULY BOARD RETREAT BOARD MEETING**

Your board usually does not report back to you on our notes from our retreat, but this year we want to include you, our members, in our plans for the next year. As always, we need your help and input on making our small corner of democracy work.

The discussion on overall strategies and goals for 2017-2018 and discussion on mentorship, membership, and leadership development were held together. One of the issues we focused on was mass incarcerations as an issue to address, including review of the recent State proposition. LWV member Pauline Weaver and DA Nancy O'Malley were suggested as speakers on this topic.

Your board also reached a consensus to create a workshop, or series of workshops, on having "A Voice in your Government", which will include how to serve on Boards and Commissions, how to run for office, and the Brown Act. Castro Valley League may be a resource for our planning.

Strategies for our program this year will include, but are not limited to, meetings with speakers, forums on topics, and field trips.

The overall objectives of our programs are:

- Community Education;
- A greater presence in the communities
- Response to interests of our communities
- Addressing things that are achievable in terms of improvement, change, or advocacy
- Increase membership.



## **KICKOFF MEETING FOR 2017**

The September General meeting will be on what it means to be a Sanctuary City.

Andrea Schacter and Mary Miller will join the Program Vice Presidents, Carolyn Hedgecock and Anu Natarajan in preparing this meeting.

Per usual League practice, we will include all views on this issue.

If you have a suggestion for a speaker or groups that we may want to ask to participate with us, please contact Carolyn, Andrea, Mary or Anu at [program@lwvfnc.org](mailto:program@lwvfnc.org)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### Co-President's Annual Report

It was a pleasure to serve as Co-Presidents for the past two years. We had a terrific, hardworking board and great volunteers. Thank you all!

In the summer of 2016, Pauline Weaver attended the LWVUS convention in Washington, D.C. Later in the summer, we had Philip Ung of the FPPC talk to us and then we enjoyed a tour of the new Warm Springs BART Station. August brought a Moderator Training at Marilyn Singer's in preparation for the busy election season. We sponsored eight candidate forums for Fremont and Union City attended by over 300 people. We also had 1 Regional and 8 State Pro/Con meetings attended by just over 300 voters. There were two Bond Measure Discussions for BART and Alameda County Measure A1. National Voter Registration Day on September 27th at UC and Fremont BART Stations resulted in over 250 Voter Registration Forms being handed out. In addition the Voter service team, led by Sets Amann, registered to vote over 1,100 high school students.

Thanks to a hard-working committee, the Voter Information Booklet was prepared and mailed to almost 53,000 households in Fremont and Union City. Many thanks are owed to our Election Cycle Volunteers: Sets Amann, Kathy Bray, Kay Emanuele, David Fishbaugh, Carolyn Hedgecock, Pat Heer, Jean Holmes, Syeda Inamdar, Miriam Keller, Cathie Kelly, Joanne Landers, Marge Leonard (AAUW), Daniela Leyva, Evelyn LaTorre, Sophia Liu, Rita Manning, Mary Miller, Christina Monkman, Robert Monkman, Madeleine Monkman, Gus Morrison, Merna Morse, Joyce Mueller, Anu Natarajan, Sam Neeman, Shamsa Rafay, Andrea Schacter, Mary Schlab (COR) and friends, Marilyn Singer, John Smith, Sybil Smith, Alex Starr, Peter Starr, Kathy Steel -Sabo, Pauline Weaver and Judy Zlatnik.

We delayed our usual December Program Planning to January, but included a Souper Supper with it. Also in January, we were well represented at the LWVBA-Focus on Housing. It was a very comprehensive and informative program.

In March, we, co-sponsored a Know Your Rights Community Immigration Forum with a number of local groups. It was very successful with over 100 people attending. It gave us great visibility with groups we had not worked with before.

Larry Gerston also proved to be a very popular speaker with his analysis of the November elections. In April we learned about the of Impact of Sprawl in the Bay Area by a very knowledgeable speaker from Greenbelt Alliance. At our last meeting in May, Ann Ravel, a former Federal Election Commissioner and a former Fair Political Practices Commissioner, emphasized the importance of civic education and civic engagement.

It was an interesting, informative and very busy year. Thanks to all of those who made it a success.

Pauline Weaver

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PO Box 3218 Fremont, CA 94539  
Office: 3375 Country Drive, Fremont  
510-794-5783  
[www.lwvfnuc.org](http://www.lwvfnuc.org)

Editor Alex Starr  
Layout Design: Jane Mueller,  
Well Chosen Words

## League Observers

*From Alex Starr, Action Group Chair*

One of the hallmarks of League activities is assigning League members to observe elected agencies, councils, commissions, and boards. The observer is tasked with listening carefully, taking notes, and reporting back to their local or regional League about what transpires in these meetings. They look for adherence to open government laws, how agendas are described and followed, how actions taken might reflect on League positions and goals. Our League observers are an extension of the League into our community. Often League reports lead to action taken by their League in the form of testimony or written communication. I want to thank our current observers Marilyn Singer, Sets Amann and Miriam Keller for their dedication. Please note that an observer can either attend a meeting in person or watch it via streaming video or the archived video on the web.

Our newest observer, Gayle Tupper, volunteered to observe both the Alameda County Water District for our League and also the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Board for LWV Bay Area. As a recent retiree from EBMUD, she applied her years of experience in areas she knew well. She received guidelines for observing and an introduction to ACWD from our long time observer of that agency Marilyn Singer. Below are excerpts from her first two reports. I hope you enjoy reading them so much that you will consider becoming our next volunteer observer for a local agency.

### An excerpt from ACWD observer notes:

*There were several noteworthy items from the meeting. The meeting topics did not clearly follow the agenda, so some items in my notes do not have an agenda reference. In particular, I want to call attention to the two items below:*

- *Increase Board of Directors compensation per meeting and number of meetings per month to be compensated. There will be a public hearing about this proposed compensation increase at the next ACWD board meeting on August 10. No information was given about outreach to communicate this proposed change, other than to have it as an agenda item.*
- *Splitting the service charge from the regular ACWD bill and putting it on property taxes. This has obviously been a subject of prior discussion, and I do not have the background on that information. The Board did not discuss the reason*

*for proposing this change, but it is significant, as it would remove a significant part of the overall charges from the regular billing, so customers might not be as aware of their overall ACWD charges. The legal status of the proposed change is being investigated, as is possible need for legislative action to enable the change. This will be discussed at the Strategic Planning meeting on September 7, 2017. I will be out of state at that time and cannot attend that meeting. This topic may have very significant implications regarding transparency of ACWD fees.*

### An excerpt from SFBRWQB observer notes:

*Meeting notices for the year are on the RWQCB website, and the agenda was available when checked 7-10-17.*

*RWQCB Member Attendance. Chair Terry Young, Vice Chair Jim McGrath, William Kissinger, Steve Lefkotis, Cecilia Ogbu, Jayne Battey. Absent: Newsha Ajami, Approximately 35 people were in the audience, plus staff at desk.*

*The board followed the posted agenda. The board requires that all who testify for any items take an oath that their statements are accurate.*

*There were four uncontested items. Board members had several comments and questions regarding these items. Staff responded to the questions. There was also a brief discussion about waters of the State (regulated under the Porter-Cologne Act) being distinct from the federal waters of the US (commonly referred to as WOTUS). The uncontested items were:*

- *North San Mateo County Sanitation District, WWTP, and collection system NPDES Permit reissuance*
- *General Waste Discharge Requirements for dry dock operations NPDES permit reissuance*
- *Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District – Stream Maintenance Program. Issuance of WDR and Water Quality Certification*
- *Eden Shores Associates, Commercial Retail Project, Hayward. Issuance of WDR*

*The roll call vote was unanimous to approve/adopt all uncontested items in a single vote.*

# Summer Reading List

*From Your Editor, Alex Starr*

This Summer my wish for you is a time filled with your usual passion for **Making Democracy Work** along with some free time to enjoy the riches of some terrific ‘Summer Reads’. I have collected some recommendations from various sources, from Ann Ravel whose recommendations are on the more serious side to fun mystery series for ‘beach’ reading. If you have other books you want to share with our members, please email me. This list will go on our web site so all can enjoy these ‘Summer Reads’.

## RECOMMENDED BY ANN RAVEL

### **Dark Money**

By Jane Mayer

New Yorker staff writer Mayer describes the conservative ascendancy. The book is written in straightforward and largely unemotional prose, but it reads as if conceived in quiet anger. It documents the personal story of the Koch brothers and others who support their conservative goals.

### **Losing Our Way**

By Bob Herbert

Former NY Times Op Ed writer

“This book is a brave call to action — not simply to put people back to work, but also to link that work to the necessary interests of an egalitarian society. This means investing in what we’ve catastrophically undervalued: our bridges and highways and tunnels, our public schools, our fellow citizens.” *Comments from NY Times Sunday book review*

### **The Great Suppression**

By Zachary Roth

Voting Rights, Corporate Cash, and the Conservative Assault on Democracy

“A troubling overview of the many ways in which conservatives have worked to restrict voting, hamper campaign finance reform, and gerrymander Congress in the hope of undermining democracy.” *Description from Kirkus Review*

### **Hope in the Dark**

By Rebecca Solnit

A Progressive cheerleader argues that things are not as bad as they seem for the Left.

### **Broken Trust**

By Stephen Griffin

“Understanding the decline of trust in government and repairs needed to a broken political and constitutional system. Griffin argues that understanding the decline of trust in government requires investigating the historical circumstances of the last several decades as well as the constitutional experience of the states. In particular, he examines “hybrid democracy,” the form of constitutionalism prevailing in California and other western states that combines Madisonian-style representative government with direct democracy.” *Comments from Amazon*

## **'Its Even Worse than it Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With The New Politics of Extremism'**

By Mann and Ornstein

"The authors emphasize the deterioration of the American political culture, corrupted by money and embittered by partisanship, affecting not just Congress but also, they argue persuasively, the Supreme Court. This spoiled culture has encouraged the cynicism of voters, now a serious impediment to political reforms." *Comments from Washington Post Review*

## **A Republic No More: Big Government and the Rise of American Political Corruption**

By Jay Cost

"The author premises that the Constitution's checks and balances have broken down because the institutions created in 1787 cannot exercise responsibly the powers of our sprawling, immense twenty-first century government.

The result is the triumph of special interests over the common interest. James Madison called this factionalism. We know it as political corruption." *From a Goodreads review*

## **BIOGRAPHY**

### **Madame President - The Extraordinary Journey of Ellen Johnson**

By Helene Cooper

A penetrating history of Liberia and the story of Ellen Johnson, who became the first woman elected president of an African nation.

### **Robert Lowell**

Setting the River on Fire

By Kay Redfield Jamison (Knopf)

There are no half measures to Kay Redfield Jamison's medico-biographical study of poet Robert Lowell. It is impassioned, intellectually thrilling and often beautifully written.

## **HISTORY**

### **Jefferson**

Architect of American Liberty

By John B. Boles (Basic)

Perhaps the finest one-volume biography of an American president.

### **The Blood of Emmett Till**

By Timothy B. Tyson (Simon & Schuster)

Tyson clears away the myths that have accumulated over the decades and restores the immediacy of this quintessentially American tragedy.

### **Killers of the Flower Moon - The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI**

By David Grann (Doubleday)

For present-day Osage communities, the events related in "Killers of the Flower Moon" are not last century's news but yesterday's. Many members of the tribe still wonder what exactly happened to their relatives.

## SCIENCE/HISTORY

### **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**

By Rebecca Skloot

A real-life detective story probes deeply into racial and ethical issues in medicine. A book that is science, social history and a page turner. Balanced and non-judgmental.

## MEMOIR

### **Option B - Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy**

By Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant (Knopf)

Sandberg, whose husband died in 2015, illustrates with heartbreaking honesty that nothing can inoculate you against the pain of grief.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FAMOUS AUTHORS - from NYTimes article

### From Louise Erdrich

‘**The Song Poet**’ by Kao Kalia Yang “The exquisite story of Kao Kalia Yang’s father, village life, war life, refugee life, then a St. Paul housing project; America’s secret war in Laos; and a people’s history as sung by Bee Yang and remembered in fascinating and poetic detail by his daughter.”

### From Judy Bloom

‘**I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark**’ by Debbie Levy, illustrated by Elizabeth Baddeley

### From Jonathan Lethem

‘**Broken River,**’ by J. Robert Lennon

It’s a tense, surprising thriller, with perverse overtones of the Coen brothers variety, but containing an enigmatic narrative device, a kind of ‘haunting of the point-of-view’ – one which proves, as ever, that the novel can do things nothing but the novel can do. I’m almost ready to reread it.”

### From Ann Patchett

‘**Chemistry**’ by Weike Wang and ‘**The Leavers**’ by Lisa Ko “These debut novels couldn’t be more different, but they each tell the story of a first-generation Chinese-American whose life turns in directions I never saw coming. ‘Chemistry’ appears to be a romantic comedy (it’s funny, it’s romantic), but it just gets deeper and darker and richer by the page. ‘The Leavers’ is a gritty and painful story of immigration in which the American dream is constantly re-examined alongside the Chinese dream.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LEAGUE MEMBERS

### **Becoming Nicole - The transformation of an American Family**

by Amy Ellis Nutt - *recommended by Marilyn Singer*

The inspiring true story of a transgender girl, her identical twin brother, and an ordinary American family’s extraordinary journey to understand, nurture, and celebrate the uniqueness in us all, from the Pulitzer Prize-winning science reporter for The Washington Post

### **The Trouble with Reality: A Ruminant on Moral Panic in Our Time**

by Brooke Gladstone - *recommended by Ann Crosbie*

Reality. It used to seem so simple—reality just was, like the weather. Why question it, let alone disagree about it? And then came the assault, an unending stream of “fake news,” “alternative facts,” and lies disguised as truths that is overwhelming our notions of reality. Now we can’t even agree on what a fact is, let alone what is real. How on earth did we get here?

**Al Franken - Giant of the Senate**

by Al Franken - *recommended by Ann Crosbie and Alex Starr*

A candid personal memoir of a comedian turned Senator. An unabashed Progressive rises above simple satire and becomes a thoughtful, hard working (and sometimes funny) Senator.

**Whistlestop**

by John Dickerson - *recommended by Kathy Bray*

*Face the Nation* moderator John Dickerson takes the reader on a ride through Presidential campaign history re-telling some stories and relating forgotten stories about the sometimes bruising trip to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

**Major Pettigrew's Last Stand and The Summer Before the War**

by Helen Simon - *recommended by Kathy Bray*

*Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* examines the growing friendship/relationship between a retired British Major and his neighbor, a Pakistani shopkeeper.

Set in 1914 England *The Summer Before the War* is a story about nontraditional romantic relationships, class snobbery and the everybody-knows-everybody complications of living in a small community. *From Washington Post Review*

**Cutting for Stone** - *recommended by Kathy Bray*

by Abraham Verghese

Twin brothers of Indian/English heritage, growing up in Ethiopia, move from Ethiopia to New York and back, share a tale of love, betrayal, medicine and ordinary miracles. *From Amazon review*

**Exit West** - *recommended by Donna Olsen*

by Moshin Hamid

As featured in the Skimm, on Late Night with Seth Meyers, Fresh Air, PBS Newshour, the cover of the New York Times Book Review, and more, an astonishingly visionary love story that imagines the forces that drive ordinary people from their homes into the uncertain embrace of new lands. *From Amazon review*

**Japanese Lover** - *recommended by Donna Olsen*

by Isabel Allende

From New York Times bestselling author Isabel Allende, “a magical and sweeping” (Publishers Weekly, starred review) love story and multigenerational epic that stretches from San Francisco in the present-day to Poland and the United States during World War II.

**My Life on the Road** - *recommended by Donna Olsen*

by Gloria Steinem

My Life on the Road is the moving, funny, and profound story of Gloria’s growth and also the growth of a revolutionary movement for equality—and the story of how surprising encounters on the road shaped both. *From Amazon review*

**BEACH READING**

**Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race Hardcover – September 6, 2016**

by Margot Lee Shetterly

“The phenomenal true story of the black female mathematicians at NASA at the leading edge of the feminist and civil rights movement, whose calculations helped fuel some of America’s greatest achievements in space—a powerful, revelatory contribution that is as essential to our understanding of race, discrimination, and achievement in modern America as *Between the World and Me* and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*.” *Comments from Amazon*

***The Perfect Horse: The Daring U.S. Mission to Rescue the Priceless Stallions Kidnapped by the Nazis***

By Elizabeth Letts

The remarkable story of the rescue of the horses of the Spanish Riding School by U.S. Army colonel Hank Reed. Stolen by Hitler and hidden behind their lines, in the closing moments of WWII, Col Reed persuades his commander, Gen George Patton, to allow him to rescue these priceless purebreds. A compelling story for animal lovers and WWII affectionados.

**MYSTERIES AND THRILLERS**

***Not a Sound***

By Heather Gudenkauf (Park Row)

Two years after losing her hearing, a nurse discovers the corpse of a co-worker in the woods near her Minnesota cabin — and realizes her life is in jeopardy.

***Mr. Churchill's Secretary***

***Princess Elizabeth's Spy***

***His Majesty's Hope***

***The Prime Minister's Secret Agent***

***Mrs. Roosevelt's Confidante***

by Susan Elia MacNeal

With a seamless blend of mystery, real-life historical figures, and World War II drama, this award-winning, New York Times bestselling series features a whip-smart secretary who defies expectations to become England's most daring spy.

“London, 1940. Winston Churchill has just been sworn in, war rages across the Channel, and the threat of a Blitz looms larger by the day. But none of this deters Maggie Hope. She graduated at the top of her college class and possesses all the skills of the finest minds in British intelligence, but her gender qualifies her only to be the newest typist at No. 10 Downing Street. Her indefatigable spirit and remarkable gifts for code breaking, though, rival those of even the highest men in government, and Maggie finds that working for the prime minister affords her a level of clearance she could never have imagined—and opportunities she will not let pass.” *Review from Amazon*

**ROYAL SPYNESS SERIES**

by Rhys Bowen

***Her Royal Spyness***

***A Royal Pain***

***Royal Flush***

***Royal Blood***

***Naughty in Nice***

***The Twelve Clues of Christmas***

***Heirs and Graces***

***Queen of Hearts***

***Malice at the Palace***

***Crowned and Dangerous***

***On Her Majesty's Frightfully Secret Service***

A funny, sexy Royal Spyness mystery series about a penniless minor royal in 1930s Britain (34th in line to the throne), making her way in the Great Depression. The author has received many awards for her mysteries. Born in Britain she now lives in California and Arizona.

ALL MEETINGS ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSIBLE

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**Mission**

The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**Diversity Policy**

LWVFNUC affirms its commitment to reflect the diversity of our communities in our membership and actions. We believe diverse views are important for responsible decision making and seek to work with all people and groups who reflect our community diversity.

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**Join the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TODAY!**

Any person, man or woman, who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League may join. To be a voting member, one must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen. Members under 18, or non-citizens, are welcome as non-voting Associate Members. Dues include membership in LWVFNUC, Bay Area League, and the California and National Leagues. Financial support for dues is available through our scholarship program. Contact Evelyn La Torre, Membership Chair, for information.

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