FALL 2023

Coming Events:
December 7: Holiday Celebration
February 13, 2024: State of the Community Luncheon
March 2: Women's History Month celebration, Gibson House

Board Meetings:
December 12: 1:30pm
January 9, 2024: 1:30pm
February 13: 1:30pm
March 12: 1:30pm

All Board meetings are via Zoom until further notice. Please contact President Karen Urbano at woodlandleague2021@gmail.com if you would like to attend an upcoming Board meeting. We encourage members to attend Board meetings and hope you will not only attend from time to time but also provide feedback about meeting times.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
By Karen Urbano

I send you Holiday Greetings for whatever December holiday you celebrate. Take some deep breaths as you enjoy the holidays because when 2024 gets underway, your League of Women Voters will be VERY busy. Why, you ask? It’s an Election Year! The League is, of course, non-partisan. Our mission is to have informed and active voters able to make their preferred choices and understand their ballots. And, of course, VOTE!

Please consider how you can assist, whether with forums or registering more voters or making sure that all information gets out. This year the League will be using Vote411 to provide information about your ballots. Articles below will give you the details. But please know that we will need all hands on deck for both the March 5 Primary and the 2024 General Election in November! How will you want to step up?

A big thank you to our dedicated board members who continue to do the work that is necessary to fulfill our mission: Carla Cox, Judy Wohlfrom, Lorna Carriveau, Faye Smith-Gee and Janet Ruggiero. Consider how you might be able to lighten their loads.

On a sad note, I want to recognize the very recent passing of one of our newest League members, Penny Smith, wife of Jim Smith. Our deepest condolences go out to Jim and his daughter, Jessica.

Here’s to a better year in 2024.
STATE OF THE COMMUNITY - COMING SOON

At a time when concerns about crime are rising, our League is excited to present how Yolo County is at the forefront of counties in California in developing programs, partnerships and services to reduce recidivism. This will take place at its State of the Community luncheon on February 13, 2024.

The catered luncheon will take place from 11:30am to 1:00pm in the downstairs atrium of Yolo County’s Erwin Meier Administration building at 625 Court Street, Woodland. More information about ticket prices and sponsorship opportunities will be announced soon as well as be available at the League’s website: https://my.lwv.org/california/woodland.

During the luncheon, representatives from the District Attorney, Health and Human Services, Probation, Public Defender, and Sheriff agencies will describe their work collaborating on the Community Corrections Partnership, the governing body responsible for developing and submitting public safety realignment implementation recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Partnership takes an active and collaborative role in reforming existing corrections practices by emphasizing the importance of evidence-based practices and cost-effective strategies.

Cost-effective and productive corrections practices are necessary to the health and safety of our communities. Recidivism, the tendency of someone convicted of a crime to reoffend, is costly to victims and taxpayers. In 2018, Yolo County partnered with the California State Association of Counties on their Results First Initiative to help counties engage in evidence-based policymaking related to their criminal justice programming. In 2020, Yolo County estimated that Its Results First approach would result in $120,000 in total savings for each avoided
Yolo County’s Community Corrections Partnership has been in place since 2011. Its goals are to 1) ensure a safe environment for all residents and visitors by reducing and preventing local crime, 2) hold individuals accountable for their actions and restore victims, and 3) build individual competency, support community reintegration and reduce recidivism.

To learn more about the partnership, click on this link: https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/law-justice/community-corrections-partnership.

CLIMATE AND CONVERSATION

On September 21, Kristen Wraithwall, Yolo County Sustainability Manager, gave an insightful and stirring presentation about the County’s 2030 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan during our League’s "Climate and Conversation" event.

The Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (Plan) is a comprehensive road map identifying opportunities to achieve reductions in Greenhouse Gas emissions, as well as develop comprehensive strategies to respond to the growing effects of climate change on all people, industries and areas of Yolo County.

Wraithwall, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard in environmental science and public policy and a Master of Science from Yale in environmental management, has been working hard to gather feedback from throughout Yolo County through an online survey and in-person discussions over the past several months about residents’ concerns. She shared that 95% of the almost 900 survey respondents to date are worried about how climate is impacting their lives through...
wildfires/smoke, drought, heat, flooding, and more.

Fortunately for us, Yolo County is at the forefront of planning for and working toward mitigating the many effects of climate. Wraithwall is working with public agencies and institutions, community-based organizations, businesses and industries, and communities and the public in general throughout Yolo County to chart a path toward achieving a county-wide goal of reaching net-negative carbon emissions by 2030, and ensuring that vulnerable, marginalized, and historically underserved communities are central in the process.

We also wish to thank the audience members who came from Woodland, Davis and the unincorporated areas for their thoughtful and wide-ranging questions. They learned about the challenges of funding climate action-related planning and projects, CalFire’s upgrading of Yolo County’s overall fire risk last year, and more.

Wraithwall, who was enthusiastic and detailed in her responses to all questions, had only one request for the audience: reach out to others and encourage them to share their concerns and insights about how climate is affecting their lives and livelihoods.

Among our League’s goals is to better understand climate action and sustainability efforts in Yolo County. We encourage county residents to learn more about the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan by visiting https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/community-services/climate-action-sustainability/2030-climate-action-adaptation-plan. You can also learn more about the Woodland League’s past positions related to climate at its website https://my.lwv.org/california/woodland.

Finally, the LWVC has a policy on climate related to agriculture entitled Climate Smart Agriculture and Food Action. A summary of the policy that can be found at the bottom of the webpage on this link - https://lwvc.org/climate-smart-agriculture-and-food-action-policy - states “We support promoting policies that mitigate impacts of climate change by adaptation in urban, rural, agricultural, and natural settings; promoting solutions that ease consequences of climate-related hardships to low- and moderate-income households.”
COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OUTREACH

Our League celebrated National Voter Registration Day on September 18 by helping students at Woodland Community College register to vote. As noted by member Jim Smith in his September 20 article published by the Daily Democrat, “Over the past week, members of the Woodland League of Women Voters have been out in public working to get people to register. Several days before Tuesday’s outreach, members of the League were at the Saturday Woodland Farmers Market.” Smith’s article also noted that “the League has worked closely with local high schools and the Yolo County Board of Education to bring voter registration information directly to students.” He quoted League President Karen Urbano as stating “We’re grateful to Woodland Community College for allowing us to provide the same service to their students. Encouraging our youth to be engaged in our democracy is critical to the health of our community and country.”

Additionally, high school students from throughout Yolo County had an opportunity to learn more about how democracy works at the Youth Empowerment Summit (YES!) held on September 29 at the ARC ballroom at UC Davis. Sponsored by the Yolo County Elections Office and many partners including LWV Woodland, “YES! seeks to educate youth about local government, the election process, and the importance of voting and civic engagement.” [https://yolosaysyes.com/](https://yolosaysyes.com/). Attended by more than 100 high school students from around Yolo County, and 20 elected officials from the Board of Supervisors, City Councils, and Boards of Education, the day-long event gave students the opportunity
to talk in person with elected officials about topics that concern them and ways they can become engaged in finding solutions to local issues. For example, students piloted a lesson on tribal sovereignty from the newly developed Yolo County Youth Civics Initiative (https://www.ycoe.org/Divisions/Educational-Services/Teaching-and-Learning/Yolo-County-Youth-Civic-Initiative/index.html), and participated in a mock election.

There was also fun to be had with the UC Davis band playing to greet the students as they arrived on their buses, a raffle for prizes, swag bags with cool souvenirs, pizza for lunch, and a fast-paced walking tour on the UCD campus.

LWV Woodland volunteers Christine Sproul, Lorna Carriveau, Faye Smith-Gee, Maria Lago, and Carla Cox as well as members from the LWV Davis Area were on hand to help prepare materials the day before and to help during the event. It was rewarding to see the engagement of many of the students, particularly during the conversations with local elected officials and to hear their thoughtful comments.

Proud recipients of the 2023 Democracy Works award display their certificates (left to right): Autumn Lathe-Renault, Davis Media Access president; Craig Blomburg, Davis Media Access board member; Kate Laddish, Democracy Winters co-founder; Karen Urbano, Woodland League president; and Diana Dedoshka, Davis Media Access studio manager.

**DEMOCRACY WORKS - GREAT**

The Democracy Works award began in 2006 to recognize individuals...
and organizations in Woodland that promote democracy. This year our League solicited nominations from throughout Yolo County, as reflected in the recipients, Davis Media Access and Democracy Winters. The nomination criteria included encouraging equal representation, promoting free and fair elections, expanding voter education and rights, advocating legislation that promotes democracy and communities, or taking grassroots political action.

The award ceremony took place on October 20. Davis Media Access board member Craig Blomberg noted that the date was particularly apt this year since October 20 was also Community Media Day, part of Free Speech Week.

Davis Media Access received the award in part because for the past 35 years it has been regularly producing programming featuring local political candidates. As noted by League member Jim Smith in his article about the event published by the Daily Democrat on October 22: “One of its more popular products is ‘Meet the Candidates,’ which includes recording and distributing candidate forums and offering pro-and-con statements on ballot measures.”

Democracy Winters was founded in 2017 and is comprised of a nonpartisan network of Winters-based volunteers working to promote constitutional freedoms through community outreach and engagement in local, state and national politics. Its representative, Kate Laddish, stated that the group meets regularly with government officials and staff to promote “peaceful activism” through electoral integrity, ethics in government, constitutional checks and balances as well as preserving civil liberties and evidence-based policy decisions.

When asked what they thought makes Yolo County special, Autumn Lathe-Renault, president of Davis Media Access, stated that she felt the County “honors the roots of our people, including the farm workers and surrounding communities.” She added that “when something comes up, the people come together and work collaboratively to solve the issue.” Kate Laddish, co-founder of Democracy Winters, stated, “It’s the 'Yolo Way'. Our willingness to work together and find innovative solutions.” She provided the example of how quickly various organizations worked together to provide COVID-19 vaccines throughout Yolo County.

Davis Media Access and Democracy Winters also received certificates of appreciation from state Congressman Mike Thompson.
Finally, we wish to thank the several members of our League who baked delicious, bite-sized desserts which everyone enjoyed along with their iced tea and lemonade. A delightful accompaniment to a very positive evening.

**CANDIDATE FORUMS JUST AROUND THE CORNER**

The 2024 election year will be a busy one, and you will want to be involved! We expect to be hosting several forums in late January or early February, some in partnership with LWV Davis Area, and will need our members to step up.

Do you like to organize events? Greet people at the door? Develop questions for the candidates? Your participation is needed and welcome! Please contact Carla Cox at **cco@cal.net** to join the team.

**BALLOT INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS**

The League of Women Voters is known and respected for its history of providing unbiased election information to voters. This year, the League of Women Voters California Education Fund will be switching from the Voter’s Edge voter resource platform it has used for the past six years to VOTE411. Like Voter’s Edge, this website ([https://www.vote411.org/](https://www.vote411.org/)) lets voters enter their home address to find their ballot, with information about candidates and ballot measures specific to where they live. Yolo County candidates will all be invited to submit information so voters can learn their priorities, experience and where they stand on issues in our community.

Be sure to tell your friends, family, and colleagues about VOTE411 and encourage candidates to participate.
Our thanks to Marie Baldiserri, our LWVC Local League Coach, for presenting the “New (& Not-So-New) Member Orientation” on September 26 and 28.

The presentation was co-hosted by Karen Urbano and attended by several new and longer-term League members, including at least one Davis Area League member. All were welcome!

Our League has added almost a dozen new members over the past few months, so we took advantage of Marie’s earlier offer to facilitate a presentation she’s given numerous times to her and other Leagues about the history, terminology, and policies of the State and National Leagues. Attendees asked insightful questions leading to healthy discussions about such things as the League’s nonpartisanship policy, Local versus State League positions, and action and advocacy.

If you’d like to learn more about the League, please visit the National League website at https://www.lwv.org/. The California State League’s website is https://lwvc.org/. Both have lots of information!

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EVELIA GENERA: A REMEMBRANCE

We were saddened by the recent passing of long-time member, Evelia
Genera. She is remembered warmly by her League friends.

League past president Meg Stallard shared that “Evelia was a terrific high school principal (and teacher)! She was kind, thoughtful, and always had a smile for the students because she cared about each of them. What a great role model for students, parents and staff.” We are still using the training materials Evelia created for our high school voter registration efforts in Woodland.

Since joining our League in 2012, Evelia served as co-treasurer, co-president, local studies member, high school voter registration coordinator, and as an official observer to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. She also assisted with events, annual meetings and membership.

Evelia wrote about her League experience for the Fall 2021 issue of THE VOTER. Her special memory about the League was supporting other members in areas that “include[d] climate change and Woodland’s master plan. I have also spoken on behalf of the Woodland League at City Council meetings on issues impacting our community.”

She was “most proud of the League’s high school voter registration project, which I have worked on since 2016. During that time, Woodland League volunteers presented our national League of Women Voters’ curriculum to every Government and Economics classroom in Woodland’s comprehensive schools. This would not have been possible had it not been for the support of our WJUSD Government/Economics teachers. An average of 300 voter applications were submitted to the Yolo County Elections office each year. That’s approximately 1,800 applications. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic this project came to a halt in 2020.”

Christine Shewmarker remembers first connecting with Evelia several years ago when Evelia joined the second climate study, focusing on water and climate. They continued to communicate on environmental issues, within and without the League. The photo below shows Evelia and Christine collecting signatures at a non-League event in 2018 for SB 100, which was endorsed by the LWVCA.
League president, Karen Urbano, added, “I was privileged to take part in the well-organized high school voter registration efforts that Evelia directed. She was always a cheerful and enthusiastic leader in whatever task she set her mind to for the League.”

MENTAL HEALTH STUDY UPDATE
By Janet Ruggiero

The Mental Health Study Committee has been meeting monthly since August. At our first meeting we mainly discussed what information on mental health issues is most pertinent to our study and the resources we need to better inform the committee and then the League. Our committee is comprised of members from both the Woodland and Davis Leagues, which is extremely important because this study is a county-wide study.

At our monthly meeting in September, we heard a report from committee member Valerie Olson on the recently adopted County 2023-2026 three-year plan for the Mental Health Services Act. Her review was quite extensive and raised questions about issues of funding, both public and private sources; services for the older adult and Hispanic populations; and a focus on dual diagnosis (mental health and substance abuse) which appears to be where the Governor is heading with new legislation he has now signed. (You can view a copy of the MHSA Plan at this link: Plan.) We also discussed the relevant pieces of SB 326 and AB 531 which will now be on the March Ballot as California
Proposition 1, the Behavioral Health Services Program and Bond Measure.

The October meeting produced a report from committee members Faye Smith-Gee and Carla Cox following their interview with Jen Boschee-Danzer, Executive Director of NAMI Yolo County. NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness for Yolo County. (A copy of notes from their meeting is available at this link: NAMI meeting.) Some of the common issues and trends arising from the complexity of mental health programs were discussed by the committee, including: public and private funding (diminished/limitations of insurance for mental health services); lack of housing and crisis support to serve immediate needs; youth mental health needs; services to non-English speaking groups; and lack of/retention of staffing. We also reviewed the LWVUS position on Health Services, which includes a section on Behavioral Health and reads as follows:

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:** The League supports:

- Behavioral health as the nationally accepted term that includes both mental illness and substance use disorder.
- Access for all people to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services.
- Behavioral health care that is integrated with, and achieves parity with, physical health care.
- Early and affordable behavioral health diagnosis and treatment for children and youth from early childhood through adolescence.
- Early and appropriate diagnosis and treatment for children and adolescents that is family-focused and community-based.
- Access to safe and stable housing for people with behavioral health challenges, including those who are chronically homeless.
- Effective re-entry planning and follow-up for people released from both behavioral health hospitalization and the criminal justice system.
- Problem-solving or specialty courts, including mental health and drug courts, in all judicial districts to provide needed treatment and avoid inappropriate entry into the criminal justice system.
- Health education - from early childhood throughout life - that integrates all aspects of social, emotional, and physical health and wellness.
- Efforts to decrease the stigmatization of, and normalize, behavioral health problems and care.
During our meeting on November 28, we discussed co-hosting a forum with the Davis League on Prop 1, which will focus on the pro’s and con’s of the measure and educate voters on the proposition. This forum is expected to be held in either mid-January or early February, which more information to be provided soon.

If you would like to be involved in this study group, please contact Janet Ruggiero at jmruggiero@sbcglobal.net so I can include you in the zoom invitation to future meetings.

COUNTYWIDE LEAGUE UPDATE
By Lorna Carriveau

Our thanks to Woodland League members Carol Souza Cole, Karen Urbano and Rosemary Yoshikawa for stepping up to help create the Countywide League committee to further explore creating a League of Women Voters of Yolo County. Also joining the committee are Stephanie Degraff-Hung, Michelle Famula, Judy Higgerson, and Nikki Neff from the Davis Area League.

The committee held its first meeting on October 31 in Woodland. We discussed the reasoning behind exploring a countywide League, the history of the Davis and Woodland Leagues, and resources available. We are also in the process of developing a survey to be sent to all Woodland and Davis members for feedback. We are fortunate to have two excellent resources – our League Coach, Marie Baldiserri, and the Davis League’s Coach, Jacqui Canfield – who continue to provide advice based on experience and state and national requirements.

Consolidating into one League to serve our city and the county will give us an opportunity to strengthen League leadership and grow membership by coming together as a single, unified League organization. This effort seeks to explore resource efficiencies and create operational synergies, growing our capacity to better fulfill our voter service mission and serve our many Yolo County communities.
Our committee looks forward to sharing the results of the survey with League members when it is completed this winter. Please feel free to contact Lorna Carriveau at carriveaul@att.net if you would like to know more about the committee and its work.

INTERESTS AND ADVOCACY

The League of Women Voters at the local, state and national levels conducts studies, arrives at positions and, if warranted, will advocate on behalf of those positions. From time to time, members share resources, including PowerPoint slides or website links, that may provide background information or updates on activities related to League positions.

Laura Caruso-Kofoid recently attended a webinar from the LWVUS Advocacy and Litigation Team entitled “Looking Back at the 2022 Supreme Court Term”. The presentation covers specific litigation before the Supreme Court in which the LWVUS had filed amicus briefs. Click on this link – 2022 Supreme Court Term PowerPoint – to review the presentation.

Many of you attended our League’s Summer Solstice Event on June 21 which featured a presentation by Mindy Romero, Ph.D., the founder and director of the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID), formerly known as the California Civic Engagement Project, which is part of the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy and based in Sacramento. The CID is a leading nonpartisan research center focused on elections, voting behaviors, and electoral and political participation. The CID publishes a monthly newsletter entitled “Engage!”. Their October 2023 newsletter included a report entitled “The Voters Choice Act: Impact Analysis and Recommendations”. Click on this link – VCA Report – to learn more. You can learn more about the CID and sign up for its newsletters at https://cid.usc.edu/.

Our thanks to everyone who strives to keep themselves and our members and communities informed.
OUR LEAGUE HISTORY

SUNFLOWERS AND SUFFRAGE

Sunflowers are a beloved crop in Yolo County. Visityolo.com even has a web page devoted to knowing when and where to view sunflowers – The Ultimate Guide to Viewing Sunflowers in Yolo County.

Sunflowers are not unique to Yolo County, of course, although we’re very proud of ours. According to Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Woman Suffrage Movement (Robert P.J. Cooney, Jr., 2005, p. 57): “In 1887 Kansas, which had passed school suffrage in 1861, became the first state to approve municipal suffrage for women, recognizing their right to vote in local elections. Alice Stone Blackwell called it ‘the first large victory’ the cause had won in nearly 20 years. Unfortunately, however, few states followed Kansas’ lead. It was during this campaign that suffragists made the sunflower, Kansas’ state flower, their chosen emblem and yellow their official color.”

California, whose state flower is the California Poppy (just as beautiful and yellow as the sunflower), ratified the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote on November 1, 1919, a little over four months after Kansas ratified the amendment.

STATE/NATIONAL LEAGUE
AND COMMUNITY NEWS

STATE NEWS

ADVOCACY

Implementing Voting Rights Restoration: The LWVC is continuing to work with a coalition of partners and the Secretary of State’s Office to designate the Division of Parole Operations as a National Voter
Registration Act agency. This would make voter registration more accessible to people who are on probation or parole and were granted voting rights with the passage of Proposition 17 in 2020.

Adding A Question to DMV Registration Process: The LWVC also is advocating for the DMV to add a single optional question to the registration process related to race and ethnicity. Collecting this information would better identify the specific challenges to building a more inclusive democracy and greatly expand its understanding of voter turnout, voting methods preferences, and potential obstacles to participation within communities of color in different parts of California. The need for the data is further explained in this Op-Ed by CalMatters: Op-Ed.

**NATIONAL NEWS**

**PROTECTING OUR DEMOCRACY ACT**

On August 16, the League of Women Voters United State (LWVUS) sent a memo to members of Congress urging them to support S. Con. Res. 13/H. Con. Res. 56, which was introduced on July 13, 2023. This concurrent (Senate and House) resolution recognizes the disproportionate impact of the human-caused climate crisis on the health, economic opportunities, and fundamental rights of children in the U.S. and acknowledges the need for the executive branch to develop a national, comprehensive, science-based, and just climate recovery plan. Click on this link – Memo – to read the LWVUS memo, and on this link – Resolution – to learn more and track the progress of the resolution.
WOODLAND LEAGUE WEBSITE – MEMBERS’ ONLY ACCESS

Below are instructions for league members to set up their “Members Only” site on our league website: https://my.lwv.org/california/woodland. NOTE: Before starting this process, if you have more than one email account, be sure that you use the one you gave the league when you became a member.

Use this link - https://my.lwv.org/user/password - to reach the page that allows you to request a password. You will enter your own email address in the box as directed. As directed, “answer” the robot, then click in the yellow box at the bottom that says “e-mail new password”.

You will be sent an email message from My League Online. So, go to your own email In Box and follow the link/instructions from the email message there which will include further instructions, including:

- Click on the link.
- Fill out your new password as prompted. Your password must be at least 10 characters long and should combine both lower- and upper-case letters and characters.
- Fill in as much information in your profile as you would like on the profile.
- “Answer” the robot.
- Click SAVE.

This process has now logged you onto the league website; another name for the website you may occasionally see or read is MyLO. Make sure that you remember/store your password to the website. You will now have access to the “Members Only” section of our website. Click on the Members Only name in the upper right-hand corner of our home page, and you will be able to access the league’s Membership Roster, current
WOODLAND LEAGUE BOARD

OFFICERS
- President: Karen Urbano
- Vice President: Judy Wohlfrom
- Secretary: Faye Smith-Gee
- Treasurer: Carla Cox

DIRECTORS
- Voter Services/Registration: Vacant
- Communications - THE VOTER/Publicity/Social Media: Lorna Carriveau
- Communications - Website Management: Vacant
- Studies/Positions: Janet Ruggiero

COMMITTEES
- Finance: Judy Simas, Chair
- Nomination: Laura Caruso-Kofoid, Chair

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