

President's Message

Hello all!

It's been a busy month for the LWVHC!

On May 7, eight members volunteered with **Kay Escarda** at the annual Avenue of the Giants marathon, handing out refreshments to runners during the race, which brought in a \$600 donation.

From May 19 through 21, **Michelle Vassel**, **Leslie Leach**, and I attended the League of Women Voters of California State Convention in San Francisco. We had such a fantastic time! The convention was well-organized and efficiently run, and I enjoyed meeting with fellow League members from across the state. The main focus of the convention seemed to be criminal justice reform and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) and the workshops, panels, and caucuses that were offered were incredibly informative.



Jessica Schlachter, Leslie Leach, and Michelle Vassel at the LWV Convention

Our Mission Statement...

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

The first annual meeting since 2019 was a success! We met on May 25th at the Sequoia Conference Center. It was fantastic to see everyone who attended, and I enjoyed the discussions. **Molly Cate** presented the final Behavioral Health Position that resulted from two-year study that was conducted, and she received a standing ovation for her leadership. Again, thank you so much for your hard work on that, Molly.

Judy Bennett was presented with the Outstanding LWVHC Member 2023 Award. She has long been a leader in the LWVHC, but during the COVID crisis, her leadership became even more remarkable. You may read the details on page 4 of this VOTER. Congratulations, Judy.

The board members honored Co-President **Sharolyn Hutton** and me by making a donation to Voters Edge in our names.

Nominations of new board members were approved during the annual meeting, and I'm looking forward to the coming League year!

Jessica Schlachter



Byrd Lochtie, presenting Jessica Schlachter and Sharolyn Hutton with an award at the Annual Meeting.

State of the Community Luncheon

If you weren't there, you missed an incredible event, our 30th State of the Community Luncheon.

Since 1992, the League of Women Voters has hosted an annual luncheon where the chair of the Board of Supervisors, this year Supervisor Steve Madrone, reports on the state of our community. At the luncheon we also honor members of the community for their outstanding service. This year's recipients were Jim Glover, for his work with the Humboldt County Grand Jury and the Human Rights Commission, and the Humboldt County Children's Author Festival. Our keynote speaker was Chairman Joseph James of the Yurok Tribal Community.

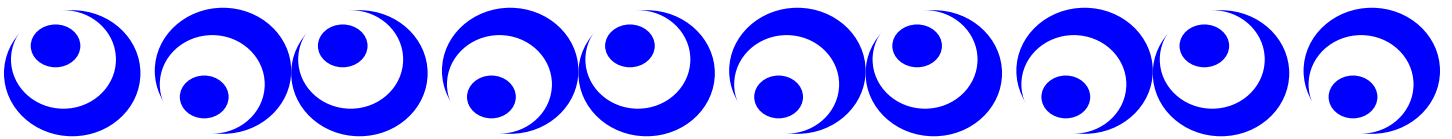
The State of the Community Luncheon is the League's only public fund-raising event. The monies raised, through the efforts of our steering committee, make it possible for the League to continue to provide non-partisan voter education services; public and televised candidate forums, and printed materials such as the Guide to County Government and Facts for Voters, at no cost to the community.

This year we exceeded all our expectations with a net profit of over \$10,000. Our costs increased but we kept our ticket price the same. We are grateful for the generosity of our membership who bought seats for those who couldn't afford them.

As chair of the event, I would like to thank our committee members, **Kay Escarda**, program chair, **Maggie Fleming**, steering committee co-chair, **Nancy Frost**, decorations chair, **Debbie Hartman**, flowers, **Debbe Hartridge**, publicity chair, **Lorey Keele**, publications and awards procurement, **Byrd Lochtie**, awards presentation, and LWVHC Board liaison **Carolyn Prescott**, arrangements, and **Judith Stoffer**, steering committee co-chair.

Once again, we thank all of you for your support of our luncheon and hopefully we will see you next year for our 31st State of the Community Luncheon on April 19, 2024, at the Adorni Center.

Judy Bennett
LWVHC Chair, State of the Community Luncheon



Welcome New and Returning Members

Barbara Hecathorn
Paula Luna
Birgitta Portalupi
Meghan Ryan

Program Notes from the Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting was fruitful in many ways, one being the passages of all of the proposed changes to our fine collection of advocacy positions.

First, the Program Team brought to the members the three positions reviewed in 2023. A bit of confusion ensued that turned out to be just an error in the formatting of the position on **Funding for Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse**. The first statement in that position was accidentally rendered as if it was being deleted when it was, in fact, a wholly new sentence that should have been highlighted, not struck through. Because the position was passed as presented, the board will address this discrepancy at our next meeting on June 6. And there was one 'copy and paste' error in the formatting of the **Resources and Development of Humboldt Bay** position. After talking through those glitches and hearing a few thoughtful comments from the membership, all three revised positions (the third being **Child Care**) were unanimously adopted.

Next on the agenda was the proposed adoption of our newest Social Policy position, **Behavioral Health Services**. This is the product of nearly two years of study by a community-based committee of both LWVHC members and non-members, all dedicated to producing the most robust and useful position we could. What a joy it was to finally come to the event all that effort was aimed toward, the annual meeting! The members present expressed their appreciation for the work done and enthusiastically, unanimously approved. We now have nineteen positions in our advocacy toolkit.

Rounding out the Program section of the meeting, we adopted the proposed schedule for the review of positions in 2023/2024. We discussed the idea of reviewing two rather than three positions each year, while authorizing the board to review the three slated for review: **Government: The Role of Government in Economic Development in Humboldt County**; **Social Policy: Adult Detention Facilities and Programs in Humboldt County**; **Social Policy: Juvenile Detention Facilities and Programs in Humboldt County**.

The Program Team, **Sylvia Shaw, Leslie Leach** and I, thank all who worked so hard to make the annual meeting the joyful and productive experience it was!

Molly Cate
LWVHC Program Director

Annual Meeting



★ *Judy Bennett: Outstanding LWVHC Member 2023* ★

At the Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 25, the LWVHC Board presented longtime Leaguer **Judy Bennett** with the Outstanding LWVHC Member Award for 2023. I wanted to take this time to explain a bit about the reasons that Judy received this recognition for this particular year.

To be sure, Judy Bennett has a decades-long history of contributions to LWVHC. Since 1989 she has served LWVHC in numerous capacities including LWVHC President, Finance/Initiative and Referendum Director, Finance Chair, and many other Board leadership roles. She has moderated countless candidate forums, been a key organizer for teen vote endeavors, and has hosted multiple, very classy and fun LWVHC events and celebrations at her lovely home in Freshwater. In addition, Judy has served as Chair/Co-Chair and driving force for the State of the Community Luncheon for over 30 years. Judy Bennett is one of the reasons LWVHC has such a positive reputation in our community.

All of these are enough reasons for Judy to be recognized as our LWVHC Outstanding Member this year. However, during the very stressful and unprecedented last three years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Judy Bennett rose to new heights as she embraced the new challenges with gusto and determination that kept LWVHC moving forward. As mentioned earlier, Judy has been a driving force in our very successful State of the Community Luncheon (SOCL), the major fundraising event for LWVHC, for over three decades. In 2019 we had a predictably successful event, and planning began immediately for the next year. Then COVID happened and the world changed for everyone, including LWVHC. The 2020 and 2021 SOCL had to be cancelled, but rather than let the momentum die, Judy Bennett made sure the SOCL Committee kept strategizing and planning ways to keep this important event alive. In 2022, it was finally possible for the 2022 recipients of the SOCL Civic Contribution Award to be honored at a small event. And then, for 2023, Judy and the amazing SOCL committee worked diligently to bring the event back in person. The results were impressive, and while the entire SOCL Committee deserves kudos for all the work that they put in to make the lively and well-attended 2023 event a vibrant success, I think everyone on the Committee would agree that Judy was a key motivator and energizer for the group.

In the middle of all this, Judy also stepped up in the fall of 2022 to be the Chair of the Nominating Committee when the original Chair had to step down. Judy brought her considerable energy and expertise to that somewhat daunting task, and the result was a dynamic slate of officers for the 2023/2024 LWVHC board. Thankfully, Judy herself was just elected to join the LWVHC Board this year, and we are all thrilled!

I could go on and on about the myriad contributions to LWVHC made by Judy Bennett, but I'll stop here by saying: Judy, you make us all look good! Thank you for the energy and focus that you bring to our community and to LWVHC. We love and appreciate you!!!!

Anne Hartline
LWVHC Board Member



Thanks to the Avenue Crew

My thanks to **Sharolyn Hutton, Leslie Leach, Patricia-Anne WinterSun, Darleene Sampson, Rudy Ramp, Vicky Turner, Karen Price and Terry Escarda** for providing another successful aid station at the **Avenue of the Giants Marathon**. This year there were no special events that required medical attention. Hooray. We did get the usual expressions of thanks from the runners for being there to support them with fluids, medical supplies, fruit, and lots of cheers. We also had the help of the Park Ranger who was stationed at our location.

The organizers said that 2,000 runners signed up and ALL 2,000 showed up! **Karen Price and Terry Escarda** both had sons in the race, in addition to my grandson, which made it all the more exciting for us. We received a \$600 check for our services which will help our budget recover from the three years that we haven't had a fundraiser.

Again, thank you to the stalwart volunteers who made the day productive and lots of fun. I raise a glass of Gatorade to you all. For sure, it was another great day on the Avenue!

Kay Escarda



L-R: Rudy Ramp, Patricia-Anne WinterSun, Karen Price, Sharolyn Hutton, Darleene Sampson, Leslie Leach, Kay Escarda, Terry Escarda, and Vicky Turner.



A couple of happy runners who brightened up our day.



Tubman-Douglass Freedom Festival

The League of Women Voters of Humboldt County was invited to participate in the Tubman-Douglass Freedom Festival held on March 25, 2023 at the Eureka branch of the Humboldt County Library. This event, sponsored by KEET and Big Brothers Big Sisters, featured a variety of speakers and musicians as well as a documentary film about Harriet Tubman and her work for freedom.

Co-president Sharolyn Hutton spoke about the importance of voting, and how one vote can make a difference. While speaking about the League's litigation against voter suppression in Florida and Texas, she shared a personal anecdote. When she was in the eighth grade, a friend's father had to recite the Preamble to the Constitution backwards before he was permitted to vote. She stated how sad it is that such voter suppression in Alabama some 65 years ago still occurs in a variety of ways across our country.

Hutton urged everyone present to be sure they were registered to vote and then to vote. She shared the various ways LWVHC works to ensure voting rights and invited participants to join the LWVHC.

Several weeks later KEET-TV sent Hutton an unexpected honorarium for fifty dollars. Hutton donated this amount to LWVHC.

Sharolyn Hutton
LWVHC Co-President

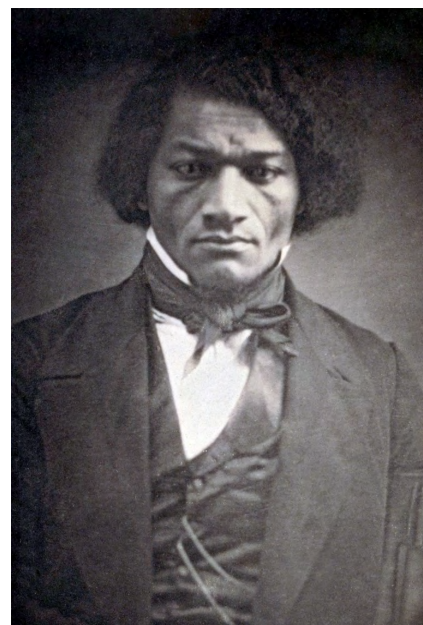


"Slavery is the next thing to hell."

Harriet Tubman to Benjamin Drew, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, 1855.

"Liberty is meaningless where the right to utter one's thoughts and opinions has ceased to exist. That, of all rights, is the dread of tyrants. It is the right which they first of all strike down."

Frederick Douglass



Ranked Choice Voting and Approval Voting

Ranked Choice Voting

Under the California Election Code, ranked-choice voting (RCV) is defined as “a method that allows voters to rank candidates for elected office in order of preference.” Under RCV, a candidate needs a simple majority of the vote (50%+1) to be declared the winner of an election. If no candidate wins a simple majority of the vote, the candidate with the fewest votes would be considered defeated, and would be eliminated. People who voted for that candidate as their first choice would have their votes redistributed to their second choice. The tabulation process would continue as rounds until a candidate receives a majority of the votes to be declared the winner. (Ballotpedia)

In November, 2020, Eureka voters passed Measure C, to enact RCV for elections for public office. It does not affect federal, state, county or district elections, or ballot measures. November 2022 was the first time RCV was used in Eureka. Prior to the 2020 election, Eureka City Attorney Robert N. Black wrote this impartial analysis of RCV:

“RCV is an alternative to the standard methods of conducting municipal elections in California. These are either (a) a primary election followed by a separate run-off election with a 50%+1 winner or (b) a single election with the highest (not necessarily majority) vote-getter being elected. The second was Eureka’s former method of choosing councilmembers and the mayor.

When there are more than two candidates for one seat, RCV allows voters to rank candidates for that seat in order of preference when marking their ballots. Only one candidate can represent each of the voter’s first, second, or third, etc., choices. Functionally, when electing a single candidate using RCV – as in a race for mayor or ward representative with more than two candidates – all first choices are initially tallied. If any candidate receives a majority of the first choices, that candidate is elected. If no candidate receives a majority, the “instant run-off” process is triggered. The candidate receiving the fewest first choices is eliminated, and the voters for that eliminated candidate now have their second choices counted. The ballots are again tallied and the process continues until one candidate wins a majority.

RCV is also called “instant runoff” because it allows a majority winner to be determined in just one election. It is a substitute both for a separate runoff election and for a method in which a contest with more than two competitors can be won with the highest vote-getter having less than a majority.” (This is sometimes known as “First Past The Post” or FPTP voting, where the candidate with a plurality wins.)

Currently two states (Alaska and Maine) use RCV, and Hawaii has adopted but not yet implemented RCV. Fifteen states have some jurisdictions that have adopted or implemented RCV in local elections.

Support for RCV

1. “Ranked choice voting ensures that candidates with the most votes and broadest support win, so voters get what they want. Candidates who are opposed by a majority of voters can never win ranked choice voting elections. Ranked choice voting levels the playing field for all candidates and encourages candidates to take their case directly to [the voter] with a focus on the issues. Candidates are encouraged to seek second choice rankings from voters whose favorite candidate is somebody else. You are less likely to rank as your second choice a candidate who has issued personal attacks against your favorite candidate.” (Committee for Ranked Choice Voting)

2. “In a ranked choice election, the only way to waste your vote is to actually vote against a candidate. As long as the candidate you like least doesn’t reach the 50 percent threshold, they won’t win. So only positive votes matter. Ranked choice voting effectively allows voters to vote their actual preferences instead of having to vote strategically. This would have a meaningful impact on elections and governing. It would empower independent and third-party candidates by eliminating the ‘wasted vote’ argument. (Greg Orman, 2016, Real Clear

Ranked Choice Voting and Approval Voting (continued)

Politics)

3. RCV “can foster the development of legislative bodies that better represent the diversity of their constituencies. All states and all congressional elections currently use winner-take-all rules that elevate district lines over voters. Legislatures elected by winner-take-all are characterized by distortions in partisan representation, entrenchment of incumbents in safe seats, regional polarization, and low representation of women and racial and ethnic minorities. When combined with multi-winner districts electing at least three members, ranked choice voting helps to make elections fairer and more reflective in every district. This ends the cycle of gerrymandering, and creates competitive elections in which every vote really counts.” (FairVote)

Opposition to RCV

1. RCV is “more complicated for voters to understand, at least until they get used to it. In addition, some say there may be value in having an actual final round of campaigning between two candidates. That way, voters can see the top two finishers directly battling each other for public support. These drawbacks have come into sharpest relief when second-place or even third-place finishers in the first round ended up winning the election.” (Louis Jacobson, 2013, Governing)

2. “There is ... little reason to believe that RCV will promote legislative moderation -- or new campaign tactics -- at the federal level, because it usually produces outcomes similar to what one would expect from a standard plurality system. In the 2013 Australian federal election, 90 percent of constituencies elected the candidate with the most first-preference votes, which suggests that choice ranking had little effect on the outcome. (Simon Waxman, 2016, Democracy)

3. “RCV runs counter to the democratic process. RCV proponents dislike [other types of] primaries, because fringe candidates can win, producing an unhappy choice in the general election. That sounds like the position of philosopher-kings who really don’t trust democracy and certainly want to see the end of political parties. If there’s something wrong with [other types of] primaries, find a way to get more people to vote. But don’t manipulate their voting. ... If we want decisions guaranteed to be made by a majority, then a runoff is a better idea, because it allows voters to make a clear choice rather than the muddled, computer-run outcome of ranked-choice voting.” (Gordon Weil, 2015, CentralMaine.com)

In summary, RCV is a voting system that allows for voters to rank their choices. If your first-choice vote cannot help your candidate win, your vote counts for your next choice. Your backup vote only comes into play if your first choice has been eliminated as having the fewest first choice votes. If any candidate receives more than half of first choice votes (50% +1) they win. If no candidate achieves a majority, an instant runoff ensues. The candidate with the fewest first choice votes is eliminated. Voters who picked that candidate as number one will have their votes count for their next choice. This process continues until there is a majority winner. (FairVote)

Approval Voting

Approval Voting is a newer (and therefore less tried) form of voting. It has been used in two U.S. cities to date (Fargo, ND, in 2020 and St. Louis, Mo., in 2021). In Approval Voting the voter can vote for as many candidates as they “approve” of. The ballot would read something like: “Vote for all the names you approve of.” That candidate with the most “approvals” wins. There is no majority criterion for a candidate to win. (FairVote)

Support for Approval Voting

1. Supporters say that: Approval voting should increase voter participation.

Ranked Choice Voting and Approval Voting (continued)

2. Approval voting should prevent minor-party candidates from being spoilers.
3. Approval voting should reduce negative campaigning. (Steven Brams and Dudley R. Herschbach)
4. Approval voting should choose centrist candidates with broad appeal rather than polarizing candidates who appeal only to the majority. (Wikipedia)
5. Any voting method is subject to tactical voting with more than two candidates (Center for Election Science)

Opposition to Approval Voting

1. In Approval voting, there is no guarantee that the winner will have the support of at least one half the voters.
2. Votes for a backup choice can harm your first choice in approval voting (unlike in RCV). With no way for the voter to express preferences, a vote for a second choice counts as much as for a first, which might create incentives to vote for only one candidate.
3. Strategic voting, as opposed to Sincere voting may increase with Approval Voting. “Strategic voting, also called tactical voting, sophisticated voting or insincere voting, occurs in voting systems when a voter votes for another candidate or party than their sincere preference to prevent an undesirable outcome.” (Wikipedia)
4. It can result in the defeat of a candidate who would win an absolute majority in a plurality election and can allow a candidate to win who might not win any support in a plurality election. (Wikipedia)

In summary, Approval voting ballots show a list of the options of candidates running. It lets each voter indicate support for one or more candidates. Final tallies show how many votes each candidate received, and the winner is the candidate with the most support. (Wikipedia)

League of Women Voters Position

The LWVUS adopted a position on Electoral Systems at their June 2020 National Convention. The position does not name either Ranked Choice Voting or Approval voting by name. Instead, the position states, “Support [for] electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable and enhance representation for all voters.”

At least one state LWV chapter, Maryland, has advocated for RCV in their jurisdiction, and one MD municipality is currently using RCV.

Karen Price
LWVHC Government Director

Renew Now or Help Someone Become a LWVHC Member!

Membership in the League of Women Voters, the most respected and effective grassroots organization in the country, is open to men and women of all ages. Our members make a visible difference by serving as community leaders using their experience to create positive, lasting change in our communities.

Membership dues and donations to the LWVHC are not tax-deductible.

Donations to the LWVHC-Education Fund, through the Humboldt Area Foundation, are tax deductible.

Annual Dues are due each year on July 1st

Visit www.LWVHC.org or mail the form below!

Please make checks payable to LWVHC, P.O. Box 3219, Eureka, CA 95502.

Yes! I want to join the League of Women Voters of Humboldt County and become a voice for citizens and a force for change.

_____ \$75 Single Membership

_____ \$115 Family Membership
(2 in same household)

_____ I also want to gift a membership!

Name _____ Phone _____

I am enclosing for my annual membership renewal:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____



The League of Women Voters of Humboldt County

627 3rd Street, Eureka, CA 95501
P.O. Box 3219, Eureka, CA 95502
www.lwvhc.org
leaguehumboldt@lwvhc.org

(707) 444-9252

Who's Who in Your 2022-2023 League Board

- Co-Presidents.....Sharolyn Hutton/
Jessica Schlachter
- Vice President.....Molly Cate
- Secretary.....Vacant
- Treasurer.....Michelle Vassel
- Program Director..... Molly Cate
- Natural Resources Director.....Leslie Leach
- Social Policy Directors.....Molly Cate/
Sylvia Shaw
- Government Director.....Karen Price
- Fairs Director.....Becky Simpson
- Access Humboldt Liaison.....Molly Cate
- Election Service Director.....Byrd Lochtie
- Forum Directors..... Vacant
- Voter Service Director.....Vacant
- Membership Director.....Becky Simpson
- Social Media Chair.....Jessica Schlachter
- VOTER Co-Editors....Dave Rosso/Leslie Leach
- Community Education Directors.....Karen Price
- Communications Director.....Vacant
- Traditional Media Chair.....Jessica Schlachter





P.O. Box 3219
Eureka, CA 95502

To:

Get Involved!

We all have a unique set of skills to contribute and limited time to afford. Working together we become a viable force for change. Call or email today to say you want to participate.

Visit www.lwvhc.org or call (707) 444-9252.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity

LWVHC Calendar

Tuesday, June 6 6:30 p.m.	LWVHC Board Meeting Zoom
LWVHC Webpage	Any Time!
LWCHC Twitter	Any Time!
LWCHC Instagram	Any Time!