



July 2026

Co-Presidents' Letter

Friends,

Our local league was founded in 1946 as the LWV of Chico. Due to a growing number of Paradise and Oroville members, the name was changed to LWV of Butte County to reflect better the geographic expansion of our members.

That means that this year, the LWV/BC celebrates its eightieth anniversary. In other words, our organization is officially an octogenarian.

Interestingly, the oak tree is a widely accepted symbol of octogenarianism. Here in Butte County, we honor centuries-old Blue Oaks as reminders of our historic past and living symbols of resilience. As the League turns 80, more than ever, we are challenged to bridge between our historic past and the need to be resilient in the face of today's complex challenges.

As an octogenarian, our League has accumulated experience and insight into the power of American voters to shape policy, governance, and human rights. Over twenty presidential elections, we have seen strong and weak leadership at the executive level. At the same time, the constitutional system of checks and balances has provided limits on executive power framed by the social contract created by our forebears. Like the hardy Blue Oak, we have navigated windstorms and wildfires, always with an eye to empowering voters and defending democracy.

In today's world of constant change, our democracy is again being buffeted by winds and threatened by wildfire. And, as octogenarians, we realize that the future belongs to the acorns, sprouts, and saplings in our communities. That is why, for the coming election season, your League will be systematically reaching out to the more than 100,000 folks who have not voted in recent elections. We recognize that many of these voters are younger than the League and may have little knowledge of our mission, history, and positions going forward. With that in mind, we are increasing

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our presence on social media and on campuses and high schools. We will make a concerted effort to engage with parents, youth, and families. Our educational program will focus first on issues that matter “on the ground” here in Butte County.

Your League, like Blue Oaks, is beautiful and likely to live a long, long time. Our hope is the same for our democracy.

Janet Rechtman & Nicole Drummond, Co-Presidents

Observer Corps Report

The LWV Observer Corps reported to League members on May 17, 2026. During the meeting we clarified the purpose of the Brown Act, and we confirmed that there was no antidemocratic behavior that warranted reporting to SIGNALS, which the LWVUS has developed to aid in tracking and documenting incidents. The attending League members were able to ask questions and join in the discussions.

We also clarified our roles as LWV Observers. Observers attend the meetings so we have a presence, but it is not appropriate for Observers to comment or make their opinions known. Also, if we identify any issues of concern, we will take them to the Observer Corps Director who will then present the concerns to the LWV Board.

We are so grateful to have an outstanding group of Observers attending a variety of public agencies such as:

Chico City Council meetings can run quite long. The board meets twice a month. This Observer did raise an issue of concern regarding the recusal of a City Council member. We discussed that if any issues arise, they should be reported to the Observer Corps Director for further action. As of now there is a lawsuit to determine if one of the council members should be recusing herself from voting on downtown issues. The LWV/BC position is that the judicial judgement will make the determination of legality.

The Chico Unified School District Board has two Observers, and this board meets twice a month. They usually have a long and detailed agenda. An ongoing issue continues to be the *Regina vs. CUSD* lawsuit. The public comment portion of the meetings get a lot of speakers addressing the issue. The CUSD is following state law regarding parental rights and student rights to privacy.

The Tuscan Water District is a fairly new agency that collects assessment fees from the property owners within the district. The Observer reported to the LWV members and other Observers the history of the formation of this Board. Their purpose is to develop and construct water projects that will decrease the use of groundwater.

Butte County Board of Education Observer reported that the meetings are well run and positive. The new board president follows meeting protocol.

We also have an Observer at the *Downtown Chico Property-Based Improvement District* (PBID). This a newer special district that addresses the cleaning, hospitality, and safety issues downtown. Observation of the PBID has reported improvements due to ongoing compliance with Brown Act requirements.

Our experienced Observer at the *Butte County Behavioral Health Advisory Board* reports that this is a diligent group of people working in a cooperative and organized fashion. However, the Mental Health Services Coordinator expresses concerns that mental health services funding will change focus from community-based mental health programs to housing, drug abuse treatment, and early intervention services dictated by the state. This is the result of the passing of Proposition 1 in 2024.

The Observer Corps is recruiting: we need more members. We have many more public agencies that need our presence as Observers. Here is a link to the LWV/BC website where you find a list of agencies <https://my.lwv.org/california/buttecounty/observer-corps>.

If you are interested in joining the Observer Corps, I would be happy to meet and discuss the opportunities with you.

—Jo Anne Kidd, Observer Corps Director



**Thank
you,
Linda!**

On the left
of this
photo,
celebrat-ing
our newest
board
members,

you can see one of our League’s *Unsung Sheroes*, Linda Lunsford. Kudos to Linda for organizing refreshments and hospitality for League meetings.

Past Presidents Smile: Ain't Retirement Great!!



At the May 30 Annual Meeting, LWV/BC was pleased to honor six past presidents: Betsy Kruger, Carol Burr, Linda MacMichael, Margaret Swick, Satsie Veith, and Debra Barger. Thanks to you all for creating and holding the space needed to empower voters and defend democracy in our communities.

Annual Meeting Recap

People gathered at 10 a.m. for coffee and conversation, and at 10:30 the meeting was called to order by League Co-President Nicole Drummond. The order of business included approval of an amended budget and program priorities, reports from committees, and advisement from members, as will be noted in the formal minutes of the meeting.

Those present celebrated the election by acclamation of the Board of Directors for 2026–27, including:

Title	Name
Co-Presidents	Janet Rechtman & Nicole Drummond
1st VP, Voter Service	Vacant
2nd VP, Membership	Christine Ponce
Secretary	Victoria Houchin
Treasurer	Alexandra Shand
<i>Directors</i>	
Observer Corps	Jo Anne Kidd
Social Policy	Victoria Houchin
Government	Vacant
Countywide Liaison	Brandi Aranguren

Voter Registration Outreach	Vacant
Natural Resources	Corky LeTellier
Communications	Alice Burkhart
Assistant Voter Service	Vacant

Special thanks to Linda Lunsford who organized the food and those who brought food to share, to Debra Barger who is retiring as Nominating Committee Chair, and to Joe Crott, who repeated his role as Parliamentarian.

And extra special thanks to all who attended. See you next year!



Welcome A-Board!

Thanks to the hard work of Nominating Committee members Debra Barger, Jo Anne Kidd, and Linda MacMichael, LWV/BC is pleased to welcome three members to our governing board. They are:

Brandi Aranguren

Brandi Aranguren has worked at California State University, Chico, for nearly 30 years managing grants and contract-funded programs. She holds a B.A. in International Relations and a Master of Public Administration from CSU, Chico. Brandi is committed to voter education and engagement and believes informed voters strengthen our democracy. She also holds an Exercise Science Specialist certification and is interested in supporting midlife women's health in the region after retirement.



Alice Burkart

Alice Burkart has served as an independent educational representative for a wide range of nonprofit and for-profit organizations across Northern and Central California, as well as Nevada, for over 25 years. She



is deeply committed to education and passionate about effectively communicating information and ideas through diverse technologies. Her professional background includes teaching; the development and implementation of teacher training and adult learning programs; writing and producing educational media; marketing for Continuing Education at CSU, Chico and the private sector; and educational curriculum sales. Alice is enthusiastic about collaborating on initiatives that connect women of all voting age groups with accurate, accessible information through the League of Women Voters.

Christine Ponce

Christine Ponce, originally from the Bay Area, has lived in Chico for 25 years. She and her husband are raising their two daughters and feel fortunate to be a part of this community. Christine has worked in government for the past 14 years in accounting and budget roles. She earned her bachelor's in art and master's in public administration at Chico State and has immense Wildcat pride. Christine feels very strongly about a well-informed electorate and high rates of voter participation. She looks forward to learning more about the League of Women Voters and seeking ways to support Butte County voters.



Social Media Analytics, Why They Matter

Social media analytics may sound complicated, but they simply help us understand who is seeing our content and whether we are reaching new audiences.

To see the impact of social media management, let's compare February (before social media management) to May (after more than a month of active management).

In February, your content received **254 views**. More than **80% of those views came from followers**. This means that most people seeing the LWV/BC's content were already familiar with the organization. They were likely current members, supporters, or individuals who had already engaged with you. While it is important to keep these audiences informed and connected, the content was not reaching many new people.

By May, the results looked very different. Our content received **5,266 views**, an increase of more than 5,000 views. Even more important, **only 33% of those views came from followers**. This means that approximately two-thirds of the people viewing our content were not already connected to our organization.

Why is this important?

One of the primary goals of social media is to expand awareness beyond an organization's existing audience. If only current members and followers see our content, growth is limited. When content reaches non-followers, it introduces new people to our mission, programs, events, and opportunities.

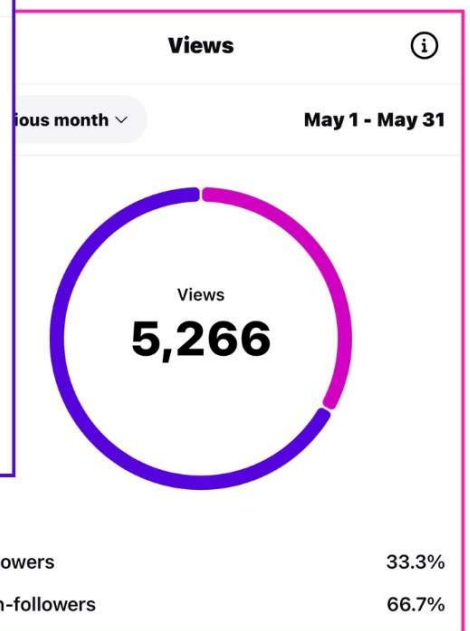
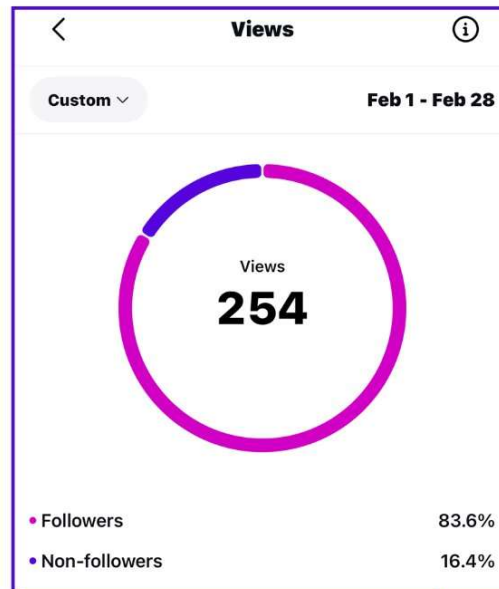
The May analytics show that our content is reaching people who may have never heard of our organization before. These individuals represent potential members, volunteers, and community partners. They are discovering our organization through social media and becoming aware of what we offer.

This type of growth is especially important when trying to connect with younger audiences. Many people today discover organizations, causes, and communities through social media platforms. A strong online presence helps ensure that we remain visible and relevant to future generations.

The increase in views, combined with the significant growth in non-follower reach, demonstrates that our social media strategy is working. Rather than speaking only to people who already know us, we are successfully expanding our message to a broader audience. This increased visibility creates opportunities for growth, engagement, and long-term sustainability for the organization.

The key takeaway is simple: in February, most of our audience already knew who we were. By May, thousands of new people were being introduced to our organization through social media.

—Bella Carcamo, Social Media Consultant



Committee Reports

Voter registration is upon us!

We will be setting up a virtual reality class in early August for those interested in becoming registrars or would like a refresher. Then the fun begins as we travel to various venues including colleges, libraries, retirement communities to spread the word and remind voters of the important upcoming November election!

For the upcoming election season, we are also organizing a task force whose goal is to bring **L**oads **O**f **V**oters **E**verywhere to the polls in November. Write presidentlwvbutte@gmail.com if you are interested in being part of this effort.

—Corky LeTellier

Natural Resources

The Natural Resources committee has been actively considering possible areas of interest. Suggestions include AI databases and their impact on communities and the need in the north state for water recharge, following up on the panel discussion last January. Please contact Corky LeTellier with any ideas or comments. Thank you.

—Corky LeTellier

Social Policy

Our Criminal Justice Committee heard a presentation by Ron Reed and Ron Hansen regarding the current public defense layout in Butte County and how they believed a Public Defender's Office would be a better alternative. Under the current consortium the County pays ten part-time attorneys a yearly fee to represent a certain number of cases. While both thought the system had worked well, they thought a Public Defender's Office would provide holistic representation. Ron Hansen provided a lot of statistics from counties that had converted to this system and were pleased with the results of lower crime rates and lower cost to taxpayers. We think this is a very important topic and would like to schedule a meeting to present information to both League members and the public. The meeting would be scheduled during the upcoming year.

—Victoria Houchin

The Mita Markland Award



Left to right: Carol Burr, Toni Reid, and Linda MacMichael present the award to Satsie Veith.

In December 2003, the Board of LWV/BC launched an award in the name of longtime League member Mita Markland, who had recently passed and was well-known and admired for advancing the mission of the League, particularly in the area of juvenile justice. We launched this award with the intent to continuously honor League members who have given similarly of their time and energy to issues and causes of importance to the League and our community.

At this year's Annual Meeting, past Mita Markland award recipients Carol Burr, Toni Reid, and Linda MacMichael presented the Mita Markland Award to Satsie Veith, in recognition of her consistent and effective service to the League of Women Voters and in advancement of our mission over a period of years. Satsie has served in a number of roles, including president, co-president, and, currently, chair of the Nominating Committee. More important, she is a quiet and steady support for new and longtime members as they navigate the power and potential of the League's nonpartisan policy and advocacy positions.

Kudos to all our Mita Markland award winners! Thank you for all you do to empower voters and defend democracy in our League of Women Voters.

Up Close: Nonpartisanship

Note: This is the first in a series of articles highlighting how League policies and positions play out in real life.

At our annual membership meeting, the LWV/Butte County affirmed the League's nonpartisan policy with no changes. This policy stipulates that the League of Women Voters "shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate."

This policy of nonpartisanship has always been a source of strength for the LWV and is the cornerstone of our voter service efforts. Candidates are willing to appear on our platforms and to give us material for our Voters Guides because they have confidence that they will be treated fairly and that the material will not be used for partisan purposes. This same reputation accounts for the confidence placed in our material by other organizations, by newspapers, and by interested citizens.

In the current political climate, public appreciation of the League's nonpartisan policy has deteriorated. Instead, in campaigns and on social media, candidates and "influencers" allege that the League is partisan in its politics. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Your League stands firm in refusing to endorse candidates, parties, and the positions they espouse.

The League's purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues. It urges all its members to become fully informed about candidates and issues. And, it encourages all members, except its directors and those members who represent the LWV before the public, to work actively in the party of their choice. **With these exceptions League members may seek an active role in the nomination of candidates for public office, run for office, stimulate public discussion of candidates and their views during the campaign, urge citizen commitment to parties and candidates by means of political contributions, and in general, take part in the political activities of their choice.**

The League's nonpartisan position directly addresses the challenges inherent in partisan politics. With a focus on issues rather than personalities, nonpartisanship encourages voters to think first about what matters most to them and, next, learning which candidates are most aligned with what matters most to

them. The question is how best to learn about the positions these candidates hold and the implications of those positions for us as individuals, for communities, and for the state as a whole. How do people escape the echo chambers that dominate today's media landscape? How do voters find blue sky answers when so many clouds are blowing past and obscuring the view?

Interestingly, the traditional sources of information have been very cloudy in this election season: the state's Official Voter Information Guide, for example, does not include several leading candidates for governor. Similarly, many candidates failed to complete their profiles on nonpartisan websites such as the County Elections Office and the League of Women Voters' Vote 411 website. With all the election disinformation on traditional, social, and dead trees media, the League of Women Voters offers some ways to get through to what matters:

- Verify before you share. Consider the source, check the date, and cross-check information across outlets.
- Question the content. Read past the headline, especially if it's emotionally charged.
- Share accurate information. Take a minute to set the record straight with people you know. DO NOT share bad information, even as a joke.
- Report inaccurate information to social media platforms, group administrators, and election officials.
- If someone you know is sharing bad info, message them privately and ask them "wassup?"

Taking a nonpartisan approach and getting to know all of the serious candidates will take work. And that's a good thing, because, in doing so, you can make your vote count on issues you care about rather than on some platform created by hucksters, professional influencers, and web trolls.

—Janet Rechtman





League of Women Voters of Butte County

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<https://my.lwv.org/california/butte-county/donate>

★ **Renew Your Membership**

★ **Donate**

★ **Recruit New Members**

★ **Volunteer for Board Positions**

2025–26 LWVBC Board Members

Nicole Drummond	Co-President
Janet Rechtman	Co-President
Lisa Cooperman	1st VP - Voter Service
Marcia Moore	2nd VP - Membership
Alexandra Shand	Treasurer
Victoria Houchin	Secretary
Corky LeTellier	Director Natural Resources
Victoria Houchin	Social Policy Director

League of Women Voter of Butte County's Mission

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person 16 years or older, male or female, may become a League member.

LWVBC Board meetings are the 2nd Tuesday each month at 5:30 p.m. at the League Office. All League members are welcome to attend and participate.

To contact a Board member, please send your email to presidentlwvbutte@gmail.com, or you may call 530-895-VOTE (8683) to leave a message. Please be sure to provide your name, contact information, and a brief description of what you need.