

LWV[®] Voter

April 2024

Presidents' Message

Last month, League members Carol Burr and Janet Rechtman met with students in a mandatory government class at Butte College. The subject was the importance of voting along with an introduction to the League. When we asked for a show of hands for how many were registered to vote, about half of the twenty or so folks raised their hands. When we asked how many had actually voted, fewer than five signed yes. When we asked what about government was of interest to them, only two people claimed to have an interest in politics. One class member had a mom who was a member of the League. Otherwise: crickets.

We left them with detailed information about VOTE411 and lots of stories about what they could do to empower voters (themselves, most likely) and defend democracy.

We also left with a strong sense that talking with students is a critically important way for volunteers to advance the League's mission. Liz Griffin's work with government classes in high schools, Corky LeTellier's voter registration outreach to younger voters, and the research and organizing led by our intern Sierra Josfan are a great start. Here are some other ideas:

- Encourage government teachers to educate students about the Brown Act and assign "observer" activities that offer students credit for attending public meetings and reporting on compliance.
- Go online with eligible young people you know and help them register to vote using VOTE411.
- Sign up to register voters at youth-oriented activities like concerts, celebrations on campus, and Thursday night markets.
- Invite a young voter to join you for a League activity, such as the upcoming Annual Meeting or Candidate Forum

If you have any ideas or opportunities to reach out to younger voters, please let us know at lwvbutte@gmail.com. This election year every vote counts!

Janet Rechtman & Satsie Veith, Co-Presidents

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LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF BUTTE COUNTY (CA)

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Save the Date!

LWVBC 2024 Annual Meeting Potluck Dinner Coming Soon

When: Wednesday, May 22, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Where: First Baptist Church, 850 Palmetto Ave., Chico

What: Share potluck goodies, visit with friends, vote on new board members, bylaws changes, and much more!

Message from the Nominating Committee: Opportunities to Serve Still Available!

The Nominating Committee has been working hard, and we have successfully recruited for the two officer vacancies and four of the director positions. However, there are still three openings for directors to have a fully staffed board.

Please consider whether you or someone you know could step up for one of the vacant positions.

A full board would make an enormous difference in our ability to host events and programs, and it is particularly important that we are able to meet the challenges of the 2024 election season—with voter forums, forums on issues, and information about the candidates. The open positions include three positions that are one-year positions and one two-year position.

- A candidate for **Director of the Observer Corps** is needed to complete the second year of a two-year term. There is an active Observer Corps, but we need additional observers, and we need support for the role of observers that the director provides.
- We have not had a **Director of Government** for several years, and as our priorities regarding outreach and redistricting grow increasingly important, we need a director who will establish a Government Committee and set priorities for future programming. This would be a one-year

term, keeping the number of director vacancies the same in alternating years (4 elected to complete terms in 2025, and four elected to complete terms in 2026).

- Similarly, we have not had a **Countywide Liaison Director** for several years, and as we reach out across the county, we need someone to take leadership in this area. This would be a two-year term (again to keep the number of vacancies the same in alternating years.

Position descriptions for these Directors are posted on the website: <https://my.lwv.org/california/butte-county/about>.

Please consider stepping up for one of these important roles. If you want to inquire about any of these roles, please send an email to lwvbutte@gmail.com as soon as possible. One of us will contact you as soon as we hear from you.

—Nominating Committee: Maureen Kirk and Kathy Kaiser, Co-Chairs, Toni Reid and Sandra Flake, Members



Local Agency Alert: Tuscan Water District Is Up and Running

Given the high level of public interest in the formation of the Tuscan Water District, we are informing our members that the TWD board has begun holding meetings. The TWD is a Brown Act agency, meaning that their meetings are open to the public and must be held according to California's open-meeting laws.

Here is a [link to the TWD's website](#), which has information about the time and location of the meetings.

If you are a League member who is interested in being a League Observer of the TWD, please send an email to lwvbutte@gmail.com.

—Satsie Veith

What Did Our League Do for the March Primary? ... Lots!

As listed below, our members and friends turned out with enthusiasm to assist voters and voting during this primary season. Let's hold on to that energy for the General Election just around the corner.

Speed-Dating with the Candidates

On February 11, under the direction of Voter Services VP Claire Greene, our voter services team presented a Candidate Speed-Dating Event at the Masonic Family Center. Candidates participating were Doug Teeter, Julie Threet, Joanna Warrens (Board of Supervisors), Aaron Draper (State Assembly District 3), David Fennell (State Senate District 1), Rose Penelope Yee, Mike Doran (Congress District 1). Members of the public were able to have face-to-face discussions at small tables with each candidate.



Pictured left to right: Aaron Draper (Assembly), Doug Teeter, Joanna Warrens, Julie Threet (Board of Supervisors), Mike Doran (Congress), David Fennell (State Senate), Rose Penelope Yee (Congress).

Helping Voters Cast Their Ballots

This primary, LWVBC members and supporters provided the full staff (except the manager) at the Luna Room Voter Assistance Center (Sol Mexican Grill on north Esplanade) from March 2 to March 5. Not only did this help voters cast their ballots, but also their work earned LWVBC a \$3000 donation from the County Elections Office. We assisted between 100 and 200 voters, mostly on March 5, Election Day.

Thank you so much to each of you who contributed your time:

Laura Clausen, Lisa Cooperman, Dawn Dawson, Roxanne Ferry, Sandra Flake, Helen Gesick, Leslie Howard, Kim Kurnizki, Kendall Moalem, Toni Reid, Kathy Sweet, Satsie Veith

Ballot Collection

As part of our contract with Butte County Elections, LWVBC members and supporters spread out across the County on the evening of Election Day to collect ballots from drop boxes and bring them back to the Hall of Records to be counted.

Thanks so much to all of you!

These LWVBC members and friends helped out (maybe more I don't know about):

Alexandra Shand, Linda Lunsford, Justin Anderson, Bill Kurnizki, Carol Holzgrafe, Mary Huntsinger, George Palmer. —Satsie Veith

Voter Registration Outreach

Visibility was the watchword for our Voter Registration events leading up to the March primary. We were encouraged to help voters at the Senior facilities—Oakmont was the one that agreed to have us. Satsie and I updated 10 registrations there. Other venues were the Chico, Oroville, and Paradise libraries, the South Chico Community Center and CHAT. Warmly welcomed by all!

A big thanks to all who attended our two registration update/trainings, to *Debra Barger* for leading them, and to the members who volunteered to staff VR tables, talk with voters, and sign-up new voters: *Jenny Blevins, Lisa Cooperman, Linda Dunbaugh, Liz Griffin, Patty & Bill Haley, Andy Holcombe, Mary Huntsinger, Marvey Mueller, Grace Marvin, Jane Quon-Bell, Satsie Veith.*

Plus, our intern, *Sierra Josfan*, handed out Voter Registration forms on the CSU campus, another place we hope to expand services in the fall. Also thank you very much!

Looking Forward: We are looking at becoming part of the Thursday Night Market and other venues in September so all of you who attended the Voter Registration trainings will have more opportunities to increase voting for the General Election.

—Corky LeTellier, Director, Voter Registration

Why Don't More Young People Vote??

Our Intern Sierra Josfan has discovered at least one of the problems.

In recent years, an alarming sentiment has echoed among 18–24-year-old voters: “Who cares, our votes don't matter, both candidates are insufficient.” This prevailing perception has sparked my curiosity, leading to qualitative and hands-on research aimed at debunking these misconceptions and understanding the barriers stopping young adults' engagement in the electoral process.

The common thread uncovered in my interactions with young voters is a genuine desire to participate in elections and to learn more about the candidates.

However, a significant obstacle lies in the lack of an “easy” way to access important and truthful information. Many expressed frustrations with the overwhelming nature of political information and the lack of user-friendly platforms to navigate through the complexities of the elections and different voting options. Finding that the young adults that do vote often choose to remain silent about their choices, driven by fear or hesitation to share their political stance openly.

Recognizing the need for accessible information, it becomes clear that organizations like the League of Women Voters can play a pivotal role. By actively addressing the information gap and using user-friendly platforms, such organizations can empower young voters with the knowledge they seek.

In conclusion, although young voters tend to be indifferent, it's actually rooted in a genuine desire for accessible, factual information, and a fear of judgment, or hostility from voters with different opinions. By breaking down these barriers, organizations like the League of Women Voters can light a spark of enthusiasm for civic engagement among the youth, ensuring more informed and active candidates for the future.

—Sierra Josfan, CSU Student and LWVBC Intern



What the League Means to Us?

Spring is now fully upon us, bursting with new life and new opportunities. And it is a great time to take stock, think about pursuing ideals, and review our activities. I'm thinking about what do I get out of, and what can I put into our League. Years ago, a Harvard student mentor on my exchange program to Germany shared with our group his grandmother's philosophy that I like to pass on: “we get out of an experience according to what we put into it.” Along those lines, I'd like to share some thoughts of other League members on their reasons for League membership on the California League website:

I am a League Member because I want to show low-income communities of color, immigrants, and particularly little brown girls that Democracy looks like them. We are redesigning systems to be more inclusive, responsive, and participatory for all. — Alejandra Ramirez Zarate

I am a League member because I want to support the work the League does to ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. The League is a trusted voice in my community and by being an active volunteer, I help educate voters about issues that matter to them (and to me)! As a bonus, I get to hang out with other League members who are some of the most dedicated, smart, and cool people I know. —Lorrel Plimier

I am a League member because I get to be part of discovering local solutions for the issues that my community faces, and the education and advocacy that allows those solutions to take root. My actions and engagement with the League give me agency. — Ashley Raveche

Perhaps we all might spend a few minutes thinking about what the League means to us, our community, and our nation, and how women like us, working together, have made significant, positive changes in protecting our democracy and promoting and advancing equity for all people. And as we consider, it may prompt us to invite others to join us. Our League really is a remarkable organization, and it's important to share with people we care about.

Here's the link to our website to pass on to those you invite: <https://my.lwv.org/california/butte-county/join>

—Marcia Moore, Membership VP

LWVBC 2024 Program Survey Responses

As part of the biennial LWVUS Program Survey, we sent our members an email survey asking for their ideas about the LWVUS program. We received 41 anonymous responses, as follows:

All 41 respondents said YES to continuing the Campaign to Make Democracy Work (which includes Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Redistricting, Money in Politics, and the Electoral College).

Sixteen respondents included a total of 18 additional program ideas, described below in their own words, and organized under Natural Resources, Social Policy, and Government.

Summary of Survey Responses

Here is a brief summary of the responses; all the responses in full are printed below.

Climate Change. 8 responses: Emphasis on engaging and educating the public on the effects of climate change and strategies for reversing climate change, with particular attention on water issues.

Housing/homelessness. 5 responses. Emphasis on understanding causes of homelessness, best ways to address it (e.g. decriminalization, housing first) with focus on local efforts.

Other mentions: Ranked Choice Voting, Gerrymandering, Prison Policy, Reproductive Rights, Civics Education

Our Response to LWVUS

In addition to reporting our members' support for the Campaign to Make Democracy Work, we were able to suggest one additional program emphasis. Because of the strong support for climate change issues from our members, we sent this to LWVUS:

“Our league members support further LWVUS efforts to engage & educate the public on effects of climate change & strategies to combat them, with a particular emphasis on water.”

Of course, the board will also take these responses into consideration when planning our own programs here in Butte County.

The Responses in Full

Natural Resources (8)

- To engage the population in the critical importance of climate change should be part of our mission.
- Recommend education and activities regarding climate change and water use and policy. Future life on earth demands action on these matters.
- Climate change and the need for safe, accessible drinking water for all residents of the US.
- Serious loss or devastation of natural resources can make other issues irrelevant.
- More stuff about climate change.
- Educate our area about the California State Climate goals and how they can be achieved. Along with that would be info on how our area is being affected, balanced by some of the good work that is being done. I find that most people I talk with don't have clue re: goals, deterrents, and achievements.
- Strategies for reversing climate changes.
- To continue the research and the sharing of that on natural resources with the focus on water.

Social Policy (8)

Housing (5):

- The housing concerns here in Chico.
- Solving the housing crisis. Understanding the root causes of homelessness & how governments can help insure a secure home for everyone.
- Homelessness is tied to income inequality, mental health, affordable housing, and immigration, three threats that keep people from engaging in democracy or lead them to anti-government behavior.
- The League's mission would be advanced by addressing our most pressing social policy that has led to our deadly and yet preventable shelter crisis. The strategy of the City of Chico to address our Shelter Crisis has been sweeps, two shelters and a chaotic camp. Their plan has been underway for 33 months. During that time this “strategy” has cost us \$7 million, and during that time 70 citizens have died outside or homeless. This death rate is accelerating, and it is unprecedented in my experience in Chico since

1972. The research says there will be more people unsheltered next year! This is a call to ethics and to action! To ignore a crisis of this magnitude undercuts the League's relevance on social issues.

- Decriminalizing “homelessness,” and a federal, state, and local housing first policy.

Reproductive Rights (1): Reproductive choice covers far more than abortion, as we are seeing with Alabama. It's a matter of who chooses health care. So many of the men making these laws have no idea of women's reproductive function.

Criminal Justice (1): The effectiveness of the current practices of arresting and releasing almost immediately while closing empty prisons in California.

Education (1): More civics education not only in the

schools but also for adults.

Government (2)

- Ranked choice voting would allow voters to express a preference outside of the current 2-party system without causing an unintended denial of their basic policy preference by electing a person diametrically opposed to their values or additional policy views.
- The League is crucial for voter information. Including gerrymandering and how it impacts elections. The League should focus more on that at the local level.

—Satsie Veith

Some Thoughts on Government by the People

Democracy requires both discipline and hard work. It is not easy for individuals to govern themselves. . . . It is one thing to gain freedom, but no one can give you the right to self-government. This you must earn for yourself by long discipline.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Bad officials are elected by good citizens who don't vote.

- George Jean Nathan

The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter.

- Dwight D. Eisenhower



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**

2023–24 LWVBC Board Members

Satsie Veith	Co-President
Janet Rechtman	Co-President
Claire Greene	1st VP - Voter Service
Marcia Moore	2nd VP - Membership
Sandra Flake	Treasurer
Carol Holzgrafe	Secretary
Toni Reid	Director Natural Resources
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Social Policy
Caroline Langen	Director Observer Corps
Corky LeTellier	Director Voter Registration
<i>Vacant</i>	Director County Liaison
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Assistant Voter Service
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Government
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Communications

League of Women Voters of Butte County’s Mission and Board Meetings

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to take 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, regardless of gender, age, or citizenship status, may become a League member; you must be at least 16 to vote on League issues.

LWVBC Board meetings are typically on the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm on Zoom. All League members are welcome to attend. The Zoom link is posted on the Calendar page of the LWVBC website prior to the meeting.

To contact a Board member, please send an email to lwvbutte@gmail.com. Your message will be forwarded to the appropriate board member as needed.