



September 2023

## President's Message

It's September!!!! Kids are back at school. Politicians are back from vacation. And League members are on high alert as we prepare for the upcoming election year. On tap are:

- Primary Election—March 5, 2024
- Candidate events
- Ballot measures
- Quality of Government
- Community concerns (homelessness, water, growth)

League members already volunteer with their membership fees and their votes. This year we also need as many members as can to vote with their feet by volunteering to help with important League activities including:

- Voter registration—we would like to “table” in a variety of settings—a great chance to be out in community and get to know other League members.
- Assisting with candidate forums, pros and cons, and other real-time and virtual educational activities—volunteers welcome guests, moderate panels, and organize content for these signature League events.
- Observing public meetings to ensure compliance with the Brown Act and keep the League in touch with local government (see article about PBID in this newsletter)—observers attend meetings in-person, wearing their League badge, and bearing witness to the power of civic engagement.
- Encouraging friends and family members to support League activities—the more members the more we can advance the League mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.

You can learn more about opportunities to connect with fellow League members in this important work at the League's Fall Coffee (details in this newsletter) and by visiting our Facebook page or by contacting one of us directly at [presidentlwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:presidentlwvbutte@gmail.com).

Thanks in advance for your help.

**Janet Rechtman & Satsie Veith,**  
Co-Presidents

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## Democracy Is Not a Spectator Sport

With elections in the spring and fall, 2024 promises to be a busy year for our League. Over the coming months, League volunteers will register voters, organize educational programs on key issues, observe and report on activities by current elected officials, and, closer to the election, organize opportunities for voters and candidates to share questions and ideas. The key word is **volunteers**. And volunteers are League members who join together to help defend democracy and empower voters.



Volunteer opportunities for your League's include:

- **Board of Directors**—provide leadership and guidance for the League's work in our communities
- **Hospitality**—host and/or bring food to League events like the Voter Forum and member meetings
- **Membership**—maintain your own membership and invite new members to join
- **Observer Corps**—attend and observe public meetings to ensure compliance with the Brown Act and keep up with local government actions
- **Social Media**—post on Facebook, Instagram, and more
- **Voter Registration**—registering voters during community events and in other settings
- **Voter's Edge**—make sure local information is up to date on this important website

- **Voter Services**—Candidate Events, Ballot Measure Presentations, assist the County Office of Elections on Election Day
- **Serve on League Committees**
  - Natural Resources, Climate change, Growth
  - Government
  - Social Policy
- **Your own ideas**—let us know

You can sign up to volunteer in your area(s) of interest at the Fall Coffee. If you're not sure what works best for you, sign up for more information and you will be invited to a conversation (and of course a cuppa) where you can learn more about various opportunities.

Because "democracy is not a spectator sport," your League needs to field the strongest team ever in this upcoming election year. See you at the Coffee and in the game going forward.

—J. Rechtman

## Who's on the Board Now?

- ★ Co-Presidents Janet Rechtman and Satsie Veith, Current Terms: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025.
- ★ Treasurer Sandra Flake, Current Term: July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2024.
- ★ Secretary Carol Holzgrafe, Current Term: July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- ★ 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Voter Services, Claire Greene, Current Term: July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- ★ 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Membership, Marcia Moore, Current Term: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.
- ★ Natural Resources Director Toni Reid, Current Term: July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- ★ Social Policy Director Becky White, Current Term: July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- ★ Observer Corps: Caroline Langen, Current Term: July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

To contact any one of the above board members, please email [lwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:lwvbutte@gmail.com).



## Meet the LWVBC Nominating Committee for 2023–2024

Co-Chairs Maureen Kirk and Kathleen Kaiser and Board Members Sandra Flake (Treasurer) and Toni Reid (Natural Resources).

The Nominating Committee searches for and places into nomination at the Annual Meeting (usually in May) the names of League members who would like to serve in an open board position; the membership then votes on the nominations.

*Finding nominees is an essential but not an easy job!*

If you have a suggestion for the committee to help them in their search, please send an email to [lwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:lwvbutte@gmail.com) and put “Nominating Committee” in the subject line. Please don’t hesitate to let the committee know that you are interested, suggest someone you think may be a good prospect, or simply to request more information.

### CURRENT OPEN BOARD POSITIONS

Want to be more active in the League but not sure how? Please take a look at these open board positions and review the job descriptions—maybe one will call out to you. For more information, please write to [lwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:lwvbutte@gmail.com).

**Click the links below for the full job descriptions.**

The [Communications](#) Director is responsible for the dissemination of accurate and timely publicity about all League activities.

The [Voter Registration](#) Director is responsible for finding opportunities for voter registration outreach and organizing League voter registration efforts.

Director, [Assistant Voter Services](#), assists the 1<sup>st</sup> VP for Voter Services, particularly to develop and maintain up to date information about elections and candidates.

Director, [Government](#) Committee, recruits and leads League members who are interested in learning about government functions—elections, voting rights, redistricting, campaign finance, funding for the public library, etc.—and presents educational programs for the League and the public.

[Countywide Liaison](#) Director spearheads efforts to develop, expand, and deepen League connections throughout Butte County.

**AND A CRUCIAL POSITION—TREASURER—WILL BE OPEN IN JULY 2024.**

The [Treasurer](#) manages League accounts in accordance with law and best practices, makes sure all required financial reports are filed, and keeps the board and League members informed of the League’s financial status.

Sandra Flake has done a wonderful job as Treasurer for three years, but she will be stepping down when her current two-year term ends on June 30, 2024. Sandra promises to work with the new Treasurer to make the transition as easy as possible.

Again, if you have a suggestion for any of the above positions, and that includes yourself, please send an email to [lwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:lwvbutte@gmail.com) with “Nominating Committee” in the subject line.

—S. Veith

## What’s the State League Doing? News from League of Women Voters of California

### LWVC Opposes Constitutional Convention

LWVC recently issued an [Action Alert](#) in opposition to a CA Senate Joint Resolution ([SJR 7](#)) calling for a constitutional convention to limit gun ownership rights. The resolution responds to [Governor Newsom’s push](#) for an amendment to the US Constitution.

CA League President Chris Carson says,

Opening a Constitutional Convention puts every right, civil liberty, and the underlying value of our country at risk. There are no limits or guardrails to what can be changed during a Constitutional Convention and it opens the door to well-funded special interests buying access to change the Constitution to serve their purposes.

### Action Alert on Local Redistricting Legislation

Another LWVC [Action Alert](#) supports two bills now under consideration in the California State Senate that would impact how redistricting is done at the local level: AB 764 (Bryan & Cervantes) and AB 1248 (Bryan & Allen).



## More on Redistricting: Fair Maps Report

This July, LWVC and Common Cause published a report evaluating the performance of the independent 2020 Citizen's Redistricting Commission and making recommendations for improvements.

One key finding of this report is that institutional design matters. The California Citizens Redistricting Commission process, by design, is massively more participatory, inclusive, and transparent than redistricting conducted by state legislatures. This leads to outcomes that empower communities of interest and that reduce the direct influence of political actors. Further, when the 2020 commission faced hurdles, the constitutional, statutory, and regulatory framework for California's independent redistricting process helped the commission successfully navigate those hurdles.

—From Executive Summary, Fair Maps Report

See [press release](#) here.

See [full report](#) here.

## LWVBC Observer Corps Takes Action on Brown Act Violation

Throughout our history, the League of Women Voters has been an active champion of openness in government and the existence of California's Brown Act guarantees the public's right to attend and participate in local government. Basic requirements of the Brown Act include that meetings must be noticed in advance, include only business described in the agenda, and be completely accessible to the public. The LWVBC Observer Corps, an essential component in helping ensure local government transparency, played an important role in Brown Act compliance recently with The Downtown Chico Property-Based Improvement District (PBID). You might not be familiar with the PBID, but if you shop, dine, or do business in downtown Chico, you may have seen the bright lime green vests of the PBID-contracted Ambassadors who provide services to the downtown district, most recently providing assistance on the use of the new parking kiosks.

The [Chico PBID](#) is an assessment district designed to improve the environment and patron experience of downtown Chico through cleaning, hospitality, and safety services. Most downtown Chico property owners voted in 2017 to approve the formation of the

business district, which is funded by property assessments under CA SHC Code Sections 36600 etc., 1994. The PBID, administered by a Board of Directors, is subject to the Brown Act.

Observation of the PBID had been problematic during the pandemic due to a number of factors which had not been fully resolved post-pandemic. Debra Barger, as LWVBC Observer for the Chico PBID, reported that Board activities were out of compliance with the Brown Act via her report to the annual Observer Corps meeting in May 2023. While more complete postings of agendas were made by the PBID, a properly noticed regular meeting schedule was still missing. Several more requests from both Debra and President Satsie Veith to be added to a mailing list for PBID meeting agendas had no response.

Co-President Janet Rechtman along with Observer Corps Director Caroline Aldrich-Langen joined Debra and Satsie in a meeting to review our understanding of the Brown Act requirements. We confirmed that the PBID additionally had failed to post agendas containing a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting; instead, PBID had listed only "New Business" and "Other Business" with no further description for their July meeting.

We agreed on a course of action to provide written notice of Brown Act violations to all Chico PBID Board Members care of the Clerk for the City of Chico and each of us reviewed the draft correspondence signed by the co-presidents and Observer Corps Director. Our notice of Brown Act violations was delivered August 18.

We are pleased to report that LWVBC received a response from the Chico PBID August 19 responding to each point made by LWVBC and specifying actions to be taken to comply with the Brown Act. Agendas for the upcoming PBID meeting in September have been emailed as promised to our League Observer and president with appropriate agenda descriptions on the business to be conducted.

The LWVBC Observer Corps is proud to be "Protecting Your Right to Know." If you wish to learn more about becoming an Observer for LWVBC, please email [lwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:lwvbutte@gmail.com). Your email will be forwarded to Caroline.

Debra Barger, Observer for Chico PBID  
Caroline Aldrich Langen, Director, Observer Corps







League of Women Voters of Butte County

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

★ **Renew Your Membership**

★ **Recruit New Members**

★ **Donate**

★ **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
Becky White	Director Social Policy
Caroline Langen	Director Observer Corps
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Communications
<i>Vacant</i>	Director County Liaison
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Assistant Voter Service
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Government
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Voter Registration

#### **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](mailto:lwvbutte@gmail.com). Your message will be forwarded to the appropriate board member as needed.