

LWV[®] Voter

September 2022

Dear Fellow Leaguers,

Right off the top, some exciting news: **LWVBC has gained 33 new members** since the Annual Meeting, so we are closing in on 150! Congratulations and thanks to all our newest members and to our Membership VP, Marcia Moore! See page 5 for a list of names.

The **Fall Member Coffee** is scheduled for **Saturday, September 24 beginning at 10:30 am**. It will be held at the **First Baptist Church** and is a great opportunity to meet and greet old and new members alike. We are lucky to have Dr. Diana Dwyre, a professor at Chico State, speaking on the core LWV issue of 'money in politics.' See more info on page 6.



Plans are underway for **Candidate Forums in early October**. Many decisions have yet to be made but thank you so much to the members who have volunteered to help out and are making this possible! See more info on page 4

See page 6 for an update on the next program on **Homing in on Homelessness**— via Zoom on October 5 from 5:00-6:30 pm. We will also have a program on **Butte County Water** on November 3—details to come.

Change to 501(c)3: The LWVBC Board has voted to begin the process of changing LWVBC from a 501(c)4 to a 501(c)3, i.e., a tax-exempt organization. Member approval is necessary. Please review the article on page 2 for the reasons behind this move and what will be involved.

More on Redistricting Commissions: On page 7, see Part Two in a series of articles on Independent Redistricting Commissions; this one looks at California's Local Redistricting Commissions.

Thanks—looking forward to seeing you on September 24 at the Fall Coffee!

Sincerely,
Satsie Veith
LWVBC President



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

PO Box 965, Chico, CA 95927
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(530) 895-VOTE (8683)

IMPORTANT ISSUE: TAX STATUS OF OUR LEAGUE

Should LWVBC change from a 501(c)4 to a 501(c)3 organization? At the August 9, 2022 LWVBC Board meeting, Board members voted unanimously to begin the process of changing our tax status to a 501(c)3. **However, our members also must approve of the tax status change.** What follows is a brief explanation of why the Board voted for the change, followed by a more detailed explanation provided by Treasurer Sandra Flake.

Why Do It?

1. **Tax-Deductibility:** Member dues and donations to the LWVBC Tri-Counties checking account will be tax-deductible. Now, only donations to the LWVBC Education Fund (already a 501(c)3 account) are deductible.
2. **Access to LWVEF Funds:** The Education Fund monies will be available to transfer to the Tri-Counties account to cover operating costs when budgeted and needed.

Is there a downside? Not really (beyond jumping through the necessary hoops).

1. **Lobbying:** As a 501(c)3, LWVBC may not spend a “substantial part” of its budget on lobbying, ie, support for *specific legislation*. Since LWVBC now spends \$0 on lobbying, this should not be a problem.
2. **Advocacy:** As a 501(c)3, LWVBC may continue to advocate for changes in policy, short of lobbying, without limitation.
3. **Costs of Transition:** Volunteer time and a few processing fees, eg, about \$600 to the IRS.

Our treasurer, Sandra Flake, has been researching this issue for months. She has closely consulted with an expert who has already assisted several California local Leagues in successfully making this transition.

This is a multi-step process, and our members will be asked for approval on three key changes during the process:

1. To correct an error in the Articles of Incorporation made by the Secretary of State’s office in 1980 – this correction should be made regardless of whether we change our tax status or not.
2. Approve changes to our bylaws to be compatible with a 501(c)3.
3. Approve another change to the Articles to be compatible with a 501(c)3.

Sandra will be available at the Fall Member Coffee on September 24 to discuss the process and answer any questions.



Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Submitted by
Satsie Veith
LWVBC President

Making Transition to §501(c)(3)

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Butte County is recommending that our membership support the transition of our local league from a §501(c)(4) organization to a §501(c)(3) organization.

According to the LWVUS, historically most local leagues have had their tax-exempt status as a §501(c)(4) “social welfare” organization. As a §501(c)(4) organization, neither dues nor contributions made directly to the LWV Butte County are tax deductible. That is part of the reason why we created the Education Fund with the North Valley Community Foundation. Another reason is that we are able to earn revenue in the Education Fund, while our Tri Counties bank account does not provide interest. Donations to the Education Fund are tax deductible, but expenditures from that fund are limited to education and services to the community.

Following is a summary, provided by the LWVUS, of the differences between subsections §501(c)(3) and (c)(4).

There are only a few significant differences between the two subsections, not all of which have relevance for Leagues considering a change in tax status:

1. A §501(c)(4) organization can support or oppose candidates for elected office and political parties, while a §501(c)(3) organization cannot. However, this difference is irrelevant for League organizations, as our own internal LWV rules prohibit this kind of political activity.
2. There is no limit on the lobbying activities of a §501(c)(4) organization, whereas a §501(c)(3) organization’s lobbying activities cannot constitute a “substantial part” of its overall activities. As further discussed below, the latter limitation should not impact in any way the operations of a typical League which converts to §501(c)(3) status.

3. Contributions and member dues are deductible for donors and members of a §501(c)(3) organization, provided that the contributor/member does not receive anything of value in return and the contribution or dues are not specifically designated for use by the recipient for lobbying expenditures. Neither contributions nor dues are deductible for donors and members of a §501(c)(4) organization.

In summary, conversion to §501(c)(3) status provides a significant tax benefit for donors and members without imposing any practical restrictions or limitations on a League's typical operations.

For the League of Women Voters of Butte County, we see two primary benefits:

1. Donors and members who itemize deductions for tax purposes achieve a tax benefit from donation and member dues. This can include in-kind contributions, such as those that occur when members attend the LWVUS or state League conventions or councils and absorb some or all the cost of attendance.
2. The League of Women Voters will be able to use the current Education fund as its secondary reserve and to transfer funds to the Tri Counties Bank account as they are budgeted and needed. The Tri Counties Bank account will remain the primary reserve on a day-to-day basis.

In both last year's budget and the one for our current fiscal year, we have budgeted use of funds from our Tri Counties Bank account reserve and/or the Education Fund as needed at year-end.

For example, the 2021-22 approved budget included the use of \$4000 from the Education Fund and \$4168 from the checking account reserves for a total of \$8168. Because we came in \$6071 under budget, we used only \$2092 from our checking reserves. We did not use any funds from the Education Fund.

This year's 2022-23 approved budget again includes use of reserves from the Education Fund and/or checking account totaling \$5460. At year end, we determine how much of the reserves are needed and the source. Currently, to use Education funds, we need to apply them directly to expenses as described in our fund agreement. If we become a §501(c)(3) organization, we would be able to use those funds for any expenditures.

Some have asked if a conversion would affect our advocacy, and the short answer, is no. Following is the longer answer from the LWVUS:

With respect to a League's general advocacy activities, where there is no reference to specific legislation or ballot measure and thus no "lobbying," there is no limitation at all under §501(c)(3). "Lobbying" for tax purposes is closer to the League concept of "action" rather than "advocacy." Activities are classified as lobbying if they are related to acts, bills, resolutions, or similar items (a) at the federal, state or local legislative level, or (b) in ballot measures, e.g., a referendum, initiative, constitutional amendment, etc. They must involve communication with a member or employee of a legislative body, or with any other government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of the legislation. It also includes "grass roots" lobbying, or communication with members of the organization or members of the public to urge them to contact their legislator, etc., or to vote for or against a ballot proposition, etc. With respect to ballot measures, communications to voters would qualify as lobbying.

A §501(c)(3) League organization really should elect under §501(h) to measure its lobbying by dollars spent rather than time spent, or else all its members will have to keep detailed time records for all their League work, not just the time for lobbying activities. In the state or local League context, "action" or lobbying normally involves members' time rather than much staff time, and little or no out of pocket expenditures. With the §501(h) election in place, Leagues will almost never realize any restrictions on their activities in the broad field of advocacy/lobbying.

Possible costs of converting are limited.

Clearly there is the time involved to make the changes and carry them through, but it is volunteer time. There may be fees to the IRS as part of the process (\$600).

The LWVUS recommends using the services of a LWVUS consultant, and we are doing so. These services are volunteered at no charge.

Last of all, what are the steps to make this conversion?

We will work with our consultant, Tom Carson, on each step of the process. He has already provided information about item 1 on the following page.



1. We need to correct an error in our classification with the California Secretary of State office. Since 1980, the state has classified us as a mutual benefit organization when we are, in actuality, a public benefit corporation. To make the correction, the membership will need to approve an amendment to our Articles of Incorporation in a membership meeting.
2. The member approved change will be sent to the office of the Secretary of State with total recording fees of \$35.
3. Once the amendment is approved by the office of the Secretary of State, we can begin the next step.
4. A conversion will require approval of the membership of both
 - i. changes to the Bylaws that affirm our change in subsection [to a §501(c)(3)], and
 - ii. another amendment to the Articles of Incorporation making the same change.
5. If the membership approves both, and when the amendment to the Articles of Incorporation is approved by the office of the Secretary of State, the LWV of Butte County will need to submit new tax forms reflecting the change in subsection to the IRS.
6. Once the IRS accepts the new forms, the conversion is finished.

I will be at the fall coffee and will be happy to answer any questions. There will also be time to go over the process and have further discussion when we schedule a member meeting to approve correcting the error made in 1980.

*Submitted by Sandra Flake
LWVBC Treasurer*

Update on Candidate Forums: Still Volunteer Opportunities

As the League of Women Voters moves into its **103rd** year of fighting for democracy, we believe a key to empowering citizens is to host non-partisan forums where voters have the opportunity to hear directly from the candidates.

Our Butte County League is committed to sponsoring candidate forums for the upcoming November election to the best of our ability. As an organization of volunteers, the extent to which we can offer forums depends on the extent to which we can staff them. Fifteen volunteers have already stepped forward ...thank you so much! ... but we may need more greeters, timekeepers, question gatherers, sorters, and co- and lead-moderators.

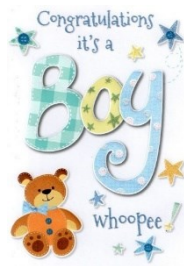
If you have an interest in helping, please contact Linda MacMichael at (530) 520-1506 or email her at lmacmichael@pacbell.net. We will have an orientation session on **Wednesday, August 31 at 10am**. Please contact Linda for more information if you have not yet responded to President Satsie's initial request for volunteers. It is our hope to have in-person forums, but we remain mindful of public health considerations.

Our League calendar leading to the November election:

- ❖ Candidate filing period: July 18 to August 12
- ❖ Extended filing period: August 13 to August 17 (if the incumbent does not file)
- ❖ Certified List of Candidates: September 1
- ❖ Vote-by-mail ballots mailed beginning: October 10
- ❖ We hope to have the candidate forums wrapped up by October 14.

Our Voter Service leader **Claire Greene welcomed Silas**, a healthy 8-lb new voter, earlier this month -- Congratulations!

Since Claire will have her hands full, Carol Burr and Linda MacMichael will be helping her with fall voter service activities.



*Submitted by
Linda MacMichael*

Recorded Webinar Available

If you missed the July 29 **Forests as Natural Climate Solutions** webinar that was presented by the **LWVUS Forests and Wildfire Team**, you can still watch the recording at online.



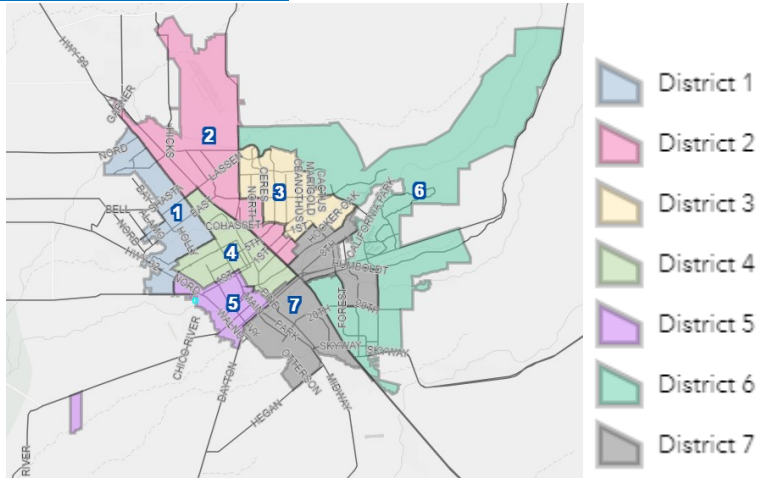
What District Are You In?

See County Election webpage on November 8 Election [here](#).

City of Chico Council Districts

- ❖ Districts 2, 3, 4 and 6 are up for election this year.
- ❖ Districts 1, 5, and 7 will vote in 2024.

Interactive District Map



Oroville City Council Districts

Districts A, B, and F, and the at-large mayor are up for election this year; C, D, and E vote in two years. See Oroville Council District Maps [here](#).

Chico Unified School Board Trustee Areas

Trustee Areas 1, 4, and 5 are electing board members this year; 2, 3, and 6 will vote in 2024. Find your CUSD Trustee Area [here](#).

Butte County Board of Supervisors

Districts 2 and 3 races were decided on June 7. Districts 1, 4, and 5 will be up for election in 2024. Find your district [here](#).

Wondering Who's Running for What in Butte County?

Here's the Butte County Election's Office [latest \(not yet certified\) list](#).

*Submitted by
LWVBC President Satsie Veith*

friends and neighbors about joining. And I will tell you, the responses you get can really make your day.

Clearly, external circumstances, like the recent Supreme Court decision, encroachments on rights to vote, confusion over voting rules and districts, are motivating many of us as individuals to want to band together to do what we can to preserve what our foremothers (and fathers) accomplished on our behalf. I believe an appreciation for all the League has done and continues to do to empower voters is a major reason for the enthusiastic response. For many, it is a realization of the power of people working together to maintain our democracy and move forward.

Here is a list of all our new members since July 1. If you know any of them, feel free to give them a personal welcome and encourage them to come to the Fall Membership Coffee on September 24. Plan to introduce yourself at the Coffee to at least one member you don't know. Share your enthusiasm, why you are a member, and what you are looking forward to in the future with our League. There is always plenty to do and it's a great place to share your (possibly hidden) talents.

Welcome to new members:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| ❖ Michael Abruzzo | ❖ LaDona Knigge |
| ❖ Saffron Aguiar | ❖ Debra Larson |
| ❖ James Anderson | ❖ Janet Leslie |
| ❖ Daria Booth | ❖ Mary (Corky) LeTellier |
| ❖ Janet Brown | ❖ Kate McCarthy |
| ❖ Jeanne Christopherson | ❖ Kendall Moalem |
| ❖ Brenda Crotts | ❖ Ann Nikolai |
| ❖ Joseph Crotts | ❖ Rich Obers |
| ❖ Dennis Deromedi | ❖ Jane Quan-Bell |
| ❖ Eddi Deromedi | ❖ Alan Rellafor |
| ❖ Linda Dunbaugh | ❖ Anne Stephens |
| ❖ Lynn Haskell | ❖ Brooks Thorlaksson |
| ❖ Warren Haskell | ❖ Leanne Ulvang |
| ❖ David Hassenzahl | ❖ David Welch |
| ❖ Hilary Hassenzahl | ❖ Suzette Welch |
| ❖ Maggie Hill | ❖ Virginia Wolf |
| ❖ Leslie Howard | |

Annual Dues Notice

Dues for 2023 are payable starting in September. Dues are \$75 for an individual and \$125 for a household. If you joined the League as a new member after May 1, 2022, you are paid up through 2023!

How to Pay Dues

[Online](#) or mail a check made out to LWV OF BUTTE COUNTY to League of Women Voters of Butte County, P.O. Box 965, Chico, CA 95927. You also may pay your membership fee (even with a credit card) at our Fall Coffee. Get it out of the way!

*Submitted by
Membership VP Marcia Moore*

Membership Message

As our League's new Membership VP, it gives me great pleasure to welcome 33 new members. Apparently, this number of new members in such a short time may be some sort of record. It has been inspiring to me to hear the passion in some of your voices as you say things like "I've been waiting for this call" and, "Of course, I've often thought of joining, but until you called, hadn't decided to do anything." I would like to encourage all of us, old and new members alike, to consider that many people may be in that category and talk with your



Homing in on Homelessness – The Path from Crisis to Care



Homing in on Homelessness Webinar 2 of 3 The Path from Crisis to Care will be October 5, 2022 5-6:30 PM

Exploring Some Solutions

Chico State Professors Jacque Chase and LaDona Knigge determined that **37,198 adult-aged individuals were displaced by the Camp Fire alone**. The majority of these climate refugees remained within 3-miles of Chico despite the longstanding shortage of affordable housing in the area.

In analyzing roughly 2000 calls for assistance with housing to Butte 211, Peter Hansen, GIS specialist in Chico State's Department of Geography and Planning, found that nearly 75% of callers identified as renters who still required some very basic assistance (shelter, food, money), and many still don't have any case management at the time of filling in the form.



How can a community respond to so many calls for help?

In the second of three webinars on the topic of homelessness, we will explore some solutions to this complex and large-scale problem. In partnership with OLLI, LWVBC will present proven models of innovative programs and services that can assist and empower people in their search for accessible, affordable, secure places to call home.



Please send any questions you have to Dr. Janet Rechtman, OLLI member and chair of the LWVBC Social Policy Committee, at drjr@uga.edu. The questions will be asked and responded to during the webinar.

Session 1 of this three-part series presented an overview of the homelessness in Chico and Butte County.

Here is the link for those who would like to review the first session: <https://csuchico.box.com/s/2af0vhuhc4wxr6mk2a4xr0xbqnm8diy>.

Submitted by
Director Social Policy Janet Rechtman



Tuscan Water District Special Election in September

This will be a landowner-voter election. Landowners within the proposed district boundaries will vote yes/no on whether the Tuscan Water District (TWD) shall be formed and will select nine (9) people to serve on the TWD Board of Directors (from a slate of 11 candidates).



Votes will be weighted based on acreage owned, i.e., 1 acre = 1 vote.

- ❖ Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on August 31.
- ❖ Election day is September 20.
- ❖ [Official list of candidates](#) for the TWD Board
- ❖ [LAFCO's Analysis](#)
- ❖ Butte County Elections Office [webpage on the election](#).

Submitted by
LWVBC President Satsie Veith

Fall Member Coffee

Saturday
Sept. 24
10am



First Baptist
Church
850 Palmetto
Ave., Chico

During the Fall Coffee, the featured presentation will be by Diana Dwyre, Professor of Political Science at Chico State. Her topic will be on "[Campaign Finance in the U.S.: Why We Have the System We Have.](#)"

In addition to our guest speaker, we will hear from Treasurer Sandra Flake on the proposed transition of our League to a 501(c)(3) organization (see more information earlier in this Voter), updates on the revived Observer Corp, the nascent Criminal Justice committee, and election activities.



The Coffee is a great chance for existing members to meet some of our newest members, and for new members to learn why they made the right decision to join our League.

Submitted by
LWVBC President Satie Veith

Independent Redistricting Commissions

Why are Independent Redistricting Commissions Important to Democracy?

“**Gerrymandering** happens when the election district boundaries are drawn in a way that gives a particular set of people - like a political party or racial group - an unfair political advantage over another. The League of Women Voters opposes gerrymandering.

Democracy depends on voters having the opportunity to choose their representatives. When elected officials redraw the lines of their own districts, they get to design their own territory and choose who their voters are. This distorts representative democracy. It can lead to manipulation of various types. Racially discriminatory manipulation weakens the voting strength of targeted minority communities. Partisan manipulation favors one political party over another. The League of Women Voters believes that to be fair, districts should be drawn in a transparent manner by **politically independent special commissions** that use unbiased criteria to help keep communities intact and to ensure that everyone is equally represented.”

From LWVC [Fair Maps California Local Redistricting Kit](#).

California (CA) Independent Redistricting Commissions Part II: Local Redistricting Commissions

In the last Voter, we looked at the CA Citizens’ Redistricting Commission (CRC), which draws district maps for Congress, the CA State legislature, and the Board of Equalization.

When the [CA Fair Maps Act became law in 2019](#), it established that local redistricting -- for boards of supervisors, city councils, school boards, etc. – must follow many of the same rules and guidelines required of the CRC. It also [authorized](#), but did not require, certain local legislative bodies to create [advisory, hybrid, or independent commissions](#) to draw the lines or assist in drawing the lines. (Legislation to require independent commissions in counties above a certain population has so far [failed to become law](#).)

After the 2020 Census, four CA counties used types of independent commissions to draw new supervisor districts:

- ❖ [San Diego](#): 14 citizen applicants were chosen for a bi-partisan commission, held public hearings, and [settled on a final map](#).
- ❖ [Los Angeles](#): a 14 member citizens’ commission [drew the new supervisor district lines](#).
- ❖ [Santa Barbara](#): an 11 member citizens’ commission [voted unanimously to adopt a new map](#).
- ❖ [San Francisco](#): a Redistricting Task Force of 9 members appointed by the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and Elections Commission, had some difficulty, but [produced a new map over-deadline in April 2022](#).

In addition to the four independent commissions, 22 of CA’s 58 counties used *advisory commissions* to assist the Board of Supervisors. The committees/commissions had differing duties, ranging from holding public meetings and gathering data to drawing maps. But in all cases, the final decision on the new map was left in the hands of the Supervisors. (See [Staff Report](#) to Butte County Board of Supervisors, Agenda, April 12, 2022.)

The Butte County Board of Supervisors did not use a commission; instead the Board hired a consulting firm which conducted outreach and prepared draft maps. Members of the public and supervisors also submitted maps. On Dec. 14, 2021, a map was [approved on a 3-2 vote](#) amid charges and denials of partisan gerrymandering, a practice forbidden under the CA Fair Maps Act.

In several CA municipalities, including those listed here, independent commissions drew the city council districts: [Berkeley](#), [Chula Vista](#), [Escondido](#), [Long Beach](#), [Martinez](#), [Modesto](#), [Oakland](#), [Roseville](#), [Sacramento](#), [San Diego](#), [Santa Barbara](#).

More On Redistricting....

[How Local Independent Commissions are Changing](#)

[California Redistricting](#), CalMatters, Oct. 26, 2021. “[The Fair Maps Act] has created a tool for local communities to demand their rightful place in the process,” [Johnathan Mehta Stein of Common Cause] told CalMatters. “Generally speaking, independent commissions pretty consistently take community input seriously and do the work of hearing from the public in a robust way.”

[What You Need to Know About Redistricting in the City of](#)

[Sacramento](#), CapRadio, Nov. 11, 2021. “Oftentimes people say that governments don’t listen to them and they’re not in a position of power,” [Community Engagement Manager Lynette] Hall said. “Now the power is completely in the hands of the community. The council members have no impact on the decisions that the Sacramento Independent Redistricting Commission makes.”

[Escondido Approves New Electoral Map](#), Coast News Group, March 25, 2022. “Several public outreach meetings were held beginning earlier in January to gather community input regarding the redistricting process. Several different visualizations of maps were introduced throughout this time, and the one that received the most approval was Map Visualization 2E [the map eventually approved as final].”

[Redistricting: Independent Commission Overview](#), Staff Report to the Butte County Board of Supervisors, April 12, 2022. [Common Cause Local Government Redistricting Toolkit](#) [LWVC Education Fund Fair Maps CA Local Redistricting Toolkit](#).

Submitted by
LWVBC President Satie Veith



League of Women Voters of Butte County
P.O. Box 965
Chico, CA 95927



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

- **Renew Your Membership**
- **Donate**
- **Recruit New Members**
- **Volunteer for Board Positions**

2022-23 LWVBC Board Members

Satsie Veith	President
Claire Greene	1st VP - Voter Service
Marcia Moore	2nd VP - Membership
Sandra Flake	Treasurer
Mahalley Allen	Secretary
Toni Reid	Director Natural Resources
Patty Haley	Director Voter Registration
Janet Rechtman	Director Social Policy
Caroline Langen	Director Observer Corps
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Communications
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Countywide Liaison
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Assistant Voter Service
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Government

League of Women Voter of Butte County's Mission

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a non-partisan 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 Tuesdays each month at 5:30 pm. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings will be held via Zoom. All League members are welcome to attend and participate. Please reach out to President Veith for meeting Zoom credentials if you wish to join our meetings.

To contact a Board member, you may email them at their email (linked to their name on the left) 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.