

## August 2024 VOTER



Aaaannnnndddd here we go! Get ready for everything with the information in this issue.

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The PDF of this issue is available on the [website](#).

## President's Message

League Leaders and Members:

I hope everyone is having a nice summer.

Your LWVDV Board and Leadership met for our **annual retreat** on July 25. Everyone is busy and working toward the League's mission of Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy.

Our **new Board members** have stepped up. Carolyn Bowden is co-chair of the Civil Discourse Team with Melanie Speir. Ana Pan is Voter Services co-chair with Shawn Gilbert; she is assisting Martha Goralka with forums. Anna Honda is working with the Mis/Disinformation Team. Welcome, and thanks to all!



Several of us attended the **LWVUS Biannual Convention** remotely in June. I was impressed by the quality and diversity of leadership and staff at the national level. They are currently working on the [One Person One Vote](#) campaign, electing the president by the popular vote instead of the Electoral College.

There is more on the LWVUS website about the convention [here](#). The plenary sessions were lively and kept the parliamentarian busy.

This was my first LWVUS convention and I learned a lot about how things work at the national level and have a better understanding of how "The League Speaks with One Voice".

Yours in League,

Mary Schreiber

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## Time to Volunteer for Candidate Forums!

Kicking off the month of August, Voter Services leaders have scheduled a **second moderator training session** on Tuesday, August 6, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Walnut Creek Library at 6 pm.

Currently, the team is scheduling dates for Candidate Forums with partner groups like PTA, AAUW, etc. As we solidify the calendar, the team will be **reaching out to members for help** with timing, distributing question cards, and sorting. If you are interested in helping at any of these forums, please email [voter.services@lwvdv.org](mailto:voter.services@lwvdv.org)

***Stay tuned for information about upcoming voter registration opportunities.***



### Lunch with the League!

Join us for our monthly no-host lunch on **Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 am** at Bar Camino, 1470 North Broadway, Walnut Creek. There's easy and affordable parking across the street at the library parking lot.

Please let Janet Hoy know you're coming -- you can email her at [janet@lwvdv.org](mailto:janet@lwvdv.org).

These lunches have been really fun, with some new friends joining us. We're looking forward to seeing everyone!

**LWVDV Mis/Disinformation Presentation  
Lafayette Public Library, Homework Center  
August 22nd, 6:30 - 7:45 pm**

## Voter Services

### **Out and About in the Community:**

June was busy with a variety of activities. The **Summer Exploration Stations** in Partnership with the CC County Library was a success. **BIG** applause to Joanne Supersad, Carol Boyd, Marion Morris, Susan Johnson, Linda Whitmore (LWVWCC), and Shawn Gilbert for giving our lovable puppet friends voices. It was a lot of fun sharing information about peregrines and their return to Mt. Diablo and then helping young ones experience the act of voting on a one-question ballot related to the peregrine information.



More **BIG** applause goes to the County Elections Office for lending an official rolling ballot box to the League so the kids could place their completed ballots into a real voting box. The County also provided fun “Future Voter” stickers for the little ones after they voted. The stickers were a big hit.

*The Chavez and Ogbebor families at the El Sobrante Library with our puppet friends, Perry the Peregrine and Barkley the dog, and Linda Whitmore of our sister League in West County.*

The Elections Office invited LWVDV to participate in the Candidate Workshops at the end of June. The focus of the workshops is to educate anyone considering running for an elected office. LWVDV presented information about VOTE411.org to those in attendance at the Lafayette and Antioch workshops.

During the last week of June, St. Mary’s College held its first NEW Leadership Conference, hosted by the Women’s and Gender Studies Department. Conference leaders invited the LWVDV to the conference breakfast and Diane Bianchi and Shawn Gilbert attended this amazing gathering. Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, the keynote speaker, spoke about her journey to becoming a community leader and ultimately being elected to the Assembly.

### **Youth Vote – videos and a virtual Town Hall:**

Check out the creative GOTV and VOTE411.org TikTok-style videos that are now on the LWVDV [Facebook](#) page and are being pushed out on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#) through the energetic work of McKenna Ingram, a St. Mary’s College senior. McKenna is our summer intern through a partnership with the college’s communication professor, Jason Jakaitis.

Recently, LWVDV and the County Elections Office set off on a new collaborative journey designed to explore a common goal: engaging more young adults in the election process. Thanks to the ideas of our intern, McKenna Ingram, and Carondelet student and LWVDV member Karlina Meyer, the team is in the process of developing a plan to livestream a Youth Town Hall focusing on informing young adults about all things to do with voting. Stay tuned for more information.

*Shawn Gilbert, Voter Services Co-Chair*

## Turn Up for One Person, One Vote!

**"Worth a listen. It will get you fired up!"** (*Anne Granlund, LWVDV past President*)



Thousands of supporters tuned in to watch the [LWVUS panel on the Electoral College](#). It featured an all-women panel of experts and was

moderated by Celina Stewart, Chief Counsel for LWVUS.

[Check it out](#) to hear what panelists had to say about:

- what makes a healthy democracy;
- how the fight for fair representation is connected to the 2024 federal election; and
- how we can take meaningful action.

The [fight for fair representation](#) is more than just a battle for a new system — it is a crucial step towards saving our democracy.

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### TWO September Community Conversations: "Roadmap to Voting" and "Pros & Cons"

***Put these two webinars on your calendar now!  
Registration information will be available in the  
September Voter and on our website soon.***





## **Your Roadmap to Voting 2024**

**Thursday, September 19, 4:00 p.m.**

Your Roadmap to Voting 2024 will introduce voters to important information about preparing themselves for the November 5, 2024 election. The Elections Office will showcase the security measures they have employed to improve election integrity and community outreach. Tools like the League's VOTE411.org will be introduced to help voters become more informed about candidates and issues. In addition, the panelists will explain the responsibilities of elected officials and how their offices, especially local ones, impact us.

Representatives from the Contra Costa County Elections Office and Sharon Stone from VOTE411.org will bring their expertise on voting to this webinar. Demnulus Johnson will be our moderator.

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## **Get the Lowdown on the 2024 California Propositions**

**Thursday, September 26th, 4:00 p.m.**

Confused about the California ballot propositions? Want to quickly learn about them in depth and through a nonpartisan lens? Every election cycle the League of Women Voters presents Pros and Cons information, based on research, about the propositions, as well as information about major funding sources supporting or opposing them. Janet Hoy and Sue Brandy, LWVDV, will moderate this important webinar as well as answer your questions about the upcoming ballot propositions.

### **Breaking News! Pros & Cons In-Person Event**

**DATE:** Monday September 30

**TIME:** 7:00-8:30pm

**LOCATION:** Pleasant Hill Community Center  
320 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill CA

***Watch for your Eventbrite invitation!***

## **Soul Boxes Show Impact of Gun Violence**

Soul Boxes! Hundreds of thousands of little 3X3 origami boxes have been created across the country. Each one carries the name of a gunfire victim or a person impacted by gun violence, and an image or a message of protest or hope. LWVDV member **Lisa Dell'Anno has brought the Soul Box project\* to Contra Costa County.** A single panel of 392 boxes is currently on display at the Bedford Gallery from July until September 15. During August, there will be



eight individual panels at the Orinda Library, a total of 784 boxes. And yes, Lisa has facilitated enough boxes just in this area to have two powerful exhibits at the same time, illustrating the staggering number of victims of gun violence, defense, accidents, and suicides.

Lisa Dell'Anno is a retired engineer, grandmother of two boys, and an advocate for gun safety. "The news about gun violence is just appalling," explains Lisa. [According to the CDC](#), in 2022 there were more than 48,000 firearm-related deaths in the United States, an average of about 132 people each day. Over half of firearm-related deaths were suicides;

more than four out of 10 were firearm homicides. **Firearm injuries were the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1-19.**

Lisa believes that Americans shouldn't have to worry about school shootings and random shootings at shopping centers. A lot can be done to tighten up loopholes in gun purchases, banning AK-type weapons with large capacity magazines, and prohibiting un-registered ghost guns.



Lisa volunteers for three organizations: Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, LWVDV, and the Soul Box Project. Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America is a national grassroots movement of Americans fighting for public safety measures to protect against gun violence. The League is non-partisan; it advocates for legislation using its position on gun safety.

Volunteering for the Soul Box Project was a natural evolution for Lisa once she saw the power of visual arts to bring awareness of the gun violence epidemic. Hearing about statistics is one thing-- it might go in one ear and out the other. Lisa knew that seeing a big display of handmade decorated boxes, like the one at the Orinda Library -- which will represent 6 days of firearm deaths in America -- has a greater impact, maybe enough to change people's minds about the acceptability of a prevalent gun culture.

Anyone can make a soul box and send it in to be part of the Soul Box Project. **You can join Lisa on Saturday, August 3, from 2:30-4:30 pm at the Art Gallery in Orinda Library to make and decorate a soul box.**

*\*The Soul Box Project was founded by Portland artist Leslie Lee in October 2017 after the mass shooting in Las Vegas. To watch a video about Leslie Lee and the Soul Box Project, click this link: <https://vimeo.com/322383733>*

*Sue Brandy, LWVDV Gun Violence Team*

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## Lafayette Sales Tax Measure on November Ballot

Everyone is on a budget – even cities.

In June, the City of Lafayette staff underscored an upcoming problem with their budget. The bottom line? **Anticipated expenses will exceed income. Oops.**

### **How can this be?**

You would think any city where median homes sell for \$2 million would collect plenty of revenue from property taxes. Lafayette is such a city, but surprise! Lafayette is facing an impending shortfall of about 10% of their annual budget!

### **Where does Lafayette’s money come from?**

As with most cities, most of the income comes from property taxes and sales taxes. For example, on a home assessed at \$2 million, Contra Costa County collects a property tax of 1% which equals \$20,000. From that \$20,000, the County gives \$1,320 (6.66%) to Lafayette. Only Moraga and Hercules rank below Lafayette in the property tax revenue they receive.

Central County City	Allocation from 1% County Property Tax
Lafayette	6.66%
Concord	10.48%
Martinez	14.95%
Moraga	5.69%
Orinda	7.37%
Walnut Creek	9.40%

From Lafayette’s sales tax of 8.75%, the city receives 1%, or 1 penny for every dollar spent. Lafayette’s sales tax is the lowest in the surrounding area.



City	Sales Tax
Lafayette	8.75%
Concord	9.75%
Martinez	9.75%
Moraga	9.75%
Orinda	9.75%
Walnut Creek	9.25%

On July 22, 2024, the **Council approved a resolution that will put a measure on the November 5, 2024, ballot to add a half-cent to the current sales tax rate.** If voters approve this increase, Lafayette will receive 1.5 cents for every taxable dollar spent in Lafayette. This additional 1/2 cent tax will add about \$2.4 million to Lafayette’s budget and enable the City to maintain its current services (but not fund any new projects). It will sunset after seven years.

Many of our cities face similar dilemmas - how to be fiscally responsible when revenue does not cover expenses. Over the past five years, Lafayette’s insurance costs have gone up 180%, and paving/road repair costs increased by 35%. During that time, Lafayette’s revenue increased only 23%.

**If Lafayette voters do not approve this increased sales tax,** the city will be forced to decide which services to defer or cut. Is pothole repair more important than park and trail maintenance? Should traffic calming needs be funded before community center roof replacement? How important is the public art program? What is the best way to allocate money? Should the city ask every department to cut their budget by 10%? Should specific programs be defunded? A budget is a continual financial compromise.

*Carol Murota, LWVDV, Lafayette resident*

## Board Briefs for June 2024



At its meeting on June 13, the Board:

- Discussed plans for attendance at LWVUS and LWV Bay Area conventions later in the month.
- Reviewed the successful Mis/Disinformation event in Walnut Creek.

- Learned about the St. Mary's College intern, McKenna Ingram, who will be helping distribute the youth voting videos.
- Heard that the office lease has been renewed for another three years.

*The Board held its retreat in July.*

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## **Membership Updates and Information**

**Welcome new members Loretta Altshuler, Joy Addiego, Tom Farr, Elizabeth Howell, Anna Riley, Mona Rusk, and Brooke Schwartz!**

**If you have an August membership anniversary, watch for your renewal reminder. We need you, so please renew!**

### **Membership: Join Us or Renew!**

Sign up [online](#) or send a check to the address at the end of this Voter.

***Membership is not based on the ability to pay.*** To request dues assistance, please email [membership@lwvdv.org](mailto:membership@lwvdv.org), or call the League office at (925) 283-2235 and request a callback from the Membership Chair. *If you have been a League member for 50 years or more, you are a **Life Member**. Life Members do not pay dues. Contact Membership Chair Cathleen Kirk ([membership@lwvdv.org](mailto:membership@lwvdv.org)) to upgrade your status!*

\$80 Individual Membership  
\$120 Family Membership (2 members)  
\$40 Additional Family Membership  
\$10 Student Membership

*(LWVDV is a 501(c)3 organization. Dues and donations to LWVDV are tax-deductible. Tax ID number supplied on request -- call the LWVDV office at 925-283-2235.)*

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*Image credits: 2024 election, tumisu on Pixabay; Bar Camino, restaurant website; El Sobrante Library group, Shawn Gilbert, LWVDV; Save the Date, dorothe on Pixabay; Soul Boxes, Lisa Dell'Anno; Board Briefs, Vertical Response.*

## CALENDAR of MONTHLY MEETINGS

Board meetings are hybrid meetings at the LWVDV office or via Zoom.\* Luncheons are at Bar Camino in Walnut Creek.

<b>Thursday, August 8, 10:00 am</b>	<b>Board Meeting</b>
<b>Wednesday, August 14, 11:30 am</b>	<b>Luncheon</b>
<b>Wednesday, September 11, 11:30 am</b>	<b>Luncheon</b>
<b>Thursday, September 12, 10:00 am</b>	<b>Board Meeting</b>

\*To participate in a Zoom meeting, leave a message with your email address on our [email](#) or on the office phone (925-283-2235) and the meeting link will be sent to you.

### LWVDV Board Members (through June):

[Mary Schreiber](#), *President*

[Kathy Gallagher](#), *Vice President/Observer Corps*

[Karen Dolder](#), *Secretary, Office Manager*

[Paul Derksen](#), *Treasurer*

[Diane Bianchi](#), *Community Conversations Co-Chair*

[Cathleen Kirk](#), *Membership Chair*

[Shawn Gilbert](#), *Voter Services Co-Chair*

[Ana Pan](#), *Voter Services Co-Chair*

[Melanie Speir](#), *Civic Engagement Chair*

[Anne Granlund](#), *At Large Board Member*

[Carolyn Bowden](#), *At Large Board Member*

[Anna Honda](#), *At Large Board Member*

### **The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley Voter**

Editor: Leslie Stewart

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Current/past issues are posted on our [website](#).

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