

March 2026 VOTER

A Community Conversation on New Technology and Democracy



AI: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly Thursday, March 19 | 1:00 p.m.

Online Program
Presented by:

 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF WEST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF DIABLO VALLEY



IN THIS ISSUE:

[President's Letter](#)

For Your Calendar:

- [Member Orientation](#), March 10 & March 21
- [League Monthly Lunch](#), March 11

- AI: A [Community Conversation Webinar](#), **March 19**
- [Saturday Coffee Social](#), **March 28**

[Action Update](#) and **Rally Dates for March**

[Voter Service: Voter Registration](#), **volunteers needed!**

[Board and Off-Board Openings](#) -- **for you!**

[Civil Grand Jury Opportunity](#) -- **for you!**

Other League Information:

- [Board Briefs](#) from February Meeting
- [Membership Updates and Information](#)
- [List of Monthly Board and Social Meetings](#)
- [LWVDV Board List](#)

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

President's Letter

League Leaders and Members:



We had a successful **LWVDV Program Planning meeting** on Saturday, February 21st. After a discussion, members agreed that we should continue our current **priorities** of Making Democracy Work, Immigration Support, and Youth

Engagement, with more clear and emphatic language. The board will work on this and present the final version for a vote at the Annual Meeting in May or June.

Thank you to all who participated!

I also want to share an excerpt from a recent message from **Dianna Wynn, our LWVUS President**. LWVUS is really out in front in the fight for democracy!

On February 14, the League of Women Voters marked 106 years of organizing, resisting, and defending democracy! This anniversary was a moment to pause, reflect, and recommit ourselves to the work ahead. Our mission has never been easy, but it has also never been more important.

*If you'd like to hear more about where we're headed, **you can watch my full 2026 State of the League Address** on [our YouTube channel](#). Thank you for being part of this community and for standing with us in this work.*



We welcome new members Deanna Geddie, Erin Bloom, and Stephanie McFarland!

Mary Schreiber
LWVDV President

FOR YOUR CALENDAR



Member Orientations for March

LWVDV Membership will be holding two New/Prospective Member Orientations in March on **Tuesday, March 10, 7-8:15 pm via Zoom** and **Saturday March 21, 9:30-10:45 am (hybrid)** at the **Walnut Creek Library** in 2nd floor meeting room **& via Zoom**.

Please RSVP to membership@lwvdv.org to receive the Zoom link. We welcome you to join our orientation to learn more about the League and how you can get involved!



Lunch with the League, March 11th!

JOIN US for our monthly no-host lunch on **Wednesday, March 11th, at 11:30** at WiseGirl Restaurant, 1932 Oak Park Blvd, Pleasant

Hill – our new location for these events! **JOIN US** for lunch, catch up with old friends and meet new ones!

New members, prospective members, long-time members, friends -- all are welcome! *(To make lunch payments easier, please bring cash or checks, or plan to use Venmo.)* Free parking is available in the parking lot, including behind the buildings, and on the street.

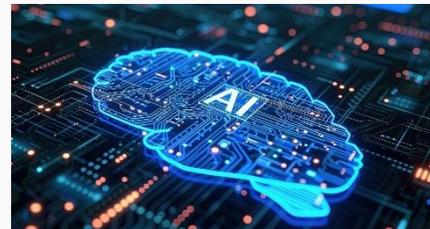
PLEASE RSVP! Please email Janet Hoy at janet@lwvdv.org to let her know you're coming so that we can plan seating.

AI: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

Join a Community Conversations webinar about artificial intelligence on **Thursday, March 19, from 1 pm to 2:30 pm**. Titled “AI: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly,” this practical, no-nonsense webinar will cover **how artificial intelligence is already shaping education, government, work, and civic life**.

Participants will receive a grounded discussion of AI, including clear explanations and real examples of:

- The good: real gains in efficiency, access, and problem-solving
- The bad: bias, job disruption, data misuse, and uneven benefits
- The ugly: deepfakes, misinformation, surveillance, and erosion of public trust



Speakers include **Dr. David Evan Harris**, a Chancellor’s Public Scholar at UC Berkeley and a continuing lecturer at the Haas School of Business. Dr. Harris will be interviewed by **Professor Nolan Higdon**. Dr. Higdon is a founding member of the Critical Media Literacy Conference of the Americas, [Project Censored](#) National Judge, author, and lecturer at Diablo Valley College and at University of California, Santa Cruz.

[Register here](#)

Information on how to access the Zoom webinar will be sent to your email address 24 hours before the program.

The webinar will have simultaneous Spanish interpretation and the Library will provide closed captioning. This program will be recorded and uploaded to the Library's YouTube and the LWVDV YouTube channels after the event. For special accommodations, please contact the Library with 72 hours' notice.

Sponsors include the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, the League of Women Voters of West Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa County Library and Contra Costa TV. Contact programs@lwvdv.org for more information.



LWVDV Saturday Coffee Social

Please join us for the next LWVDV Saturday Coffee Social on **Saturday, March 28th, at 9:30 am at Panera Bread in Walnut Creek (744 Bancroft Rd in the Countrywood Shopping Center).**

This is the date for the No Kings Rally, so we plan to meet and have coffee, then break early to have plenty of time to attend the protest. (It will be a great way to gather/coordinate with other LWVDV members). NOTE: If the No Kings rally starts at an unusually early time we will reschedule the coffee.

If possible, please RSVP to membership@lwvdv.org so we can save enough space for everyone Or just feel free to show up - we welcome everyone, and encourage you to bring a friend or two!

ONGOING ACTIVITIES -- GET INVOLVED!

ACTION

Unite & Rise 8.5 has BIG plans for 2026!

Unite and Rise has made a commitment to action for the coming months. We are planning **three League-sponsored activities a month.**

The **third Tuesday of the month** we will be observers for the Immigration Court; the March date is **Tuesday, March 17**.

Rallies will be on the **second and fourth Saturdays**. In March there will be a rally on **Saturday March 14**, and the **NO KINGS RALLY (the next BIG ONE)** on **Saturday March 28th**. All rallies are with our national partner, Indivisible Re-Sisters, here in Contra Costa County.

We will also be working with Commit to Democracy to host **postcard-writing parties to help Get Out the Vote**, focusing on younger voters and parts of the county with low levels of voting. In Contra Costa County, over 90% of eligible voters are registered to vote, but only 56% turn out to vote. OUCH! We will be focusing on registered voters who have not been voting.



So, lots of opportunities for you to jump in and TAKE ACTION. These events are FUN and PRODUCTIVE and CONNECTING -- **AND VITAL TO SUSTAIN OUR DEMOCRACY!**

Please join us!

Contact Janet Hoy (janet@lwvdv.org) or Sue Brandy (brandylcsw@gmail.com) or Anna Honda (anna@lwvdv.org) for more information.

VOTER SERVICES

Things to Think About as We Celebrate Women's History Month...

The **freedom to vote** is under attack in a number of ways at the federal level and at the state level in numerous states across the nation. Take a moment to read about the ever-changing SAVE ACT from the [Brennan Center for Justice](#).

Also, here's a little fun reading: [Did Superman Advocate Respecting Diversity in the 1950s?](#) (Snopes.com)

Out and About in the Community

League members have completed four weeks of partnering with the Contra Costa & Solano County Food Bank. Members have spoken to more than 250

people about voting and Vote411. (Photo: Kathy Gallagher in her LWV apron with Bryan Espinosa)

There are **still a few openings for March and early April**. If you can work any of the following dates please let Ana or Shawn know at voterservices@lwvdv.org :

- March 20, 1:00-2:30 pm in Antioch
- April 2, 8:30-10:00 am in Concord

We also need an additional person for Voter Registration at St. Mary's College, Wednesday, March 18, 12-1:30 pm.
St. Mary's College, 1928 St. Mary's Rd. Moraga
LWVDV Leads: ana@lwvdv.org & shawn@lwvdv.org



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

LWVDV Leadership Opportunities *We want YOU to talk with us!*

The Nominating Committee's goal is to strengthen LWVDV by identifying members (or non-members willing to join LWVDV) to present as a slate for a vote at the Annual Meeting. We will have conversations with interested people, then develop the slate. (Members of the Nominating Committee are Ashley Coates, Karen Dolder, Susan Hildreth, Brooke Schwartz, and Valerie Ventre-Hutton.)

Board-level and off-board roles we need to fill, starting in July, include the following:

Off Board:

- **Bookkeeper** (assists Treasurer, uses Quickbooks Online)
- **Tech Administrator** (administers LWVDV's Google for Nonprofits Drive, Zoom account, A/V, tech training)
- **Nominating Committee** (3 slots)

On Board*



- **At Large Board Member** (participates in meetings and helps as needed)
- **Treasurer** (disbursements; government filings; reports; member of Finance Committee; uses Quickbooks Online)
- **Co-Vice Presidents** (administrative assistance to President team)

**Board members use Google for Nonprofits and meet monthly. LWVDV's Board of Directors includes 4 Officer Positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary) plus additional board directors (limit 20). Elected Board members serve two-year terms, and appointed board members serve one-year terms.*

If you might be interested in any of these roles and want to learn more, email NC@lwvdv.org. We are scheduling conversations in March and April.

Want to Make Local Government Work Better? Apply to the Civil Grand Jury!

The Civil Grand Jury is **not** a courtroom jury. Instead of listening to a trial and deliberating, the nineteen members of the Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) are officers of the Court and spend a year actively investigating and reporting on the work of local government with the goal of improving governmental accountability and transparency. **The CGJ performs a watchdog function** by examining city and county governments and special districts to ensure their duties are lawfully and efficiently conducted. The CGJ then reports to the community and press. Investigations may be initiated in response to letters from citizens, newspaper articles, and personal knowledge



Four things make Civil Grand Jury service unique:

- Civil Grand Juries are supervised by the Superior Court, but **jurors make all their own rules** within the Penal Code. Nobody tells them what to do or how to do it.
- **Their work is strictly confidential by law.** Grand Jurors speak only through their official reports, and nobody knows what the jury is investigating until the reports are published.

- **Agencies that receive recommendations are required to respond** to them in writing. If they aren't going to follow jury recommendations, they have to explain why not.
- **Jurors spend their time looking into virtually every aspect of local government**, including the county departments, local city councils, and special districts responsible for delivering a variety of public services ranging from schools to fire protection, hospitals, water districts and transportation agencies.

Civil Grand Jury service is interesting and rewarding work. **Contra Costa County is now accepting applications until April 3, 2026** for the fiscal year 2026-27 term. Go to <https://www.cc-courts.org/civil/grand-jury.aspx> for more information.

Anne Granlund, Board Member, LWVDV, and past Civil Grand Juror

Board Briefs for February 2026

At its meeting on February 12, the Board discussed the following reports and plans:



- Finance Committee progress, including process changes and plans for new budget.
 - Youth Council activities, including plans for youth-focused voter outreach using a \$750 grant from LWVUS.
 - Youth Council coordination and structure.
 - Youth Voter Grant application and process.
 - Program Planning meeting on February 21st.
 - Delegate selection for LWVUS Convention in June.
-

Membership Updates and Information

We welcome new members Deanna Geddie, Erin Bloom, and Stephanie McFarland!

Thank you to our Renewing Members!

We very much appreciate our continuing members. With more members, our voice is stronger.

Membership: Join Us or Renew!

Sign up online by going to our [website](#) and using the Join page (*preferred*), or send a check made out to LWVUS to the LWVDV address at the end of this Voter (*only if you have no other option*). **If you have an upcoming membership anniversary, please check the [Join page on the website](#) for instructions on how to renew with the new system. We need you, so please renew!**

New/interested member orientations will be held on the same days/times each month moving forward. To attend, please send an email to membership@lwvdv.org to RSVP and request Zoom link. The days/times for orientations are as follows:

- 2nd Tuesday 7-8pm via Zoom only
- 3rd Saturday 9:30-10:30am hybrid (Zoom & in-person at the Walnut Creek Library, Prologue Coffee & Tea)



Membership is not based on the ability to pay. You select the dues amount when you join or renew. 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@lwvdv.org to upgrade

your status!

Suggested dues: \$75 Individual Membership (\$20 minimum)

(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.)

Image credits: Community Conversation, Contra Costa Library; Dianna Wynn, LWVUS; conversation, Tim Gouw on Unsplash; Wise Girl, website; AI brain, Brian Penny on Pixabay; coffee, LWVDV on Canva; LWV banner, voter registration, LWVDV; meeting room, Morguefile; Contra Costa Courthouse, Flickr, Creative Commons License BY-NC-ND 2.0; online meeting, Vertical Response; INFO sign, Anne Nygard on Unsplash

CALENDAR of MONTHLY MEETINGS

Action-Advocacy and Membership meetings are on Zoom*. Board meetings are hybrid meetings at the LWVDV office or via Zoom. Luncheons are at WiseGirl in Pleasant Hill.

Tuesday, March 3, 5-6:30 pm
Wednesday, March 11, 11:30 am

Membership Team
Luncheon

Thursday, March 12, 10:00 am
Monday, March 16, 3 pm
Tuesday, April 7, 5-6:30 pm
Wednesday, April 8, 11:30 am
Thursday, April 9, 10:00 am
Monday, April 20, 3 pm

Board Meeting
Action-Advocacy
Membership Team
Luncheon
Board Meeting
Action-Advocacy

***To participate in a Zoom meeting, send your email address to lwvdv@lwvdv.org or call (925-283-2235) and leave your email address and the name of the meeting. We will send you the meeting link.**

LWVDV Board Members (through June 2026):

[Mary Schreiber](#), *President*

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

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

[Paul Derksen](#), *Treasurer*

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

[Anna Honda](#), *Action-Advocacy Co-Chair*

[Audra Ruthruff](#), *Membership Chair*

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

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

[Janet Hoy](#), *Civic Engagement Chair*

[Kathryn Wilder](#), *At-Large Board Member*

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

[Brooke Schwartz](#), *At-Large Board Member*

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

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