



League of Women Voters
of Sonoma County

THE VOTER

Volume 28, issue 12

Visit us at www.lwvsonoma.org

Lunch with the League Attendees Try Out New Voting System



On March 27 about 36 League members enjoyed a lovely setting, delicious food, and an enlightening presentation at Charlie's Grill in Windsor. Our Guest Speaker Deva Marie Proto, County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor and Registrar of Voters brought one of the new voting machines and demonstrated the County's new voting system, which was used for the first time this March for the West County Medical Center District vote on the sale of the medical center. Proto said that while the machine is electronic, a paper ballot is printed which is the document which is used for the official count. The election system is very secure and is not connected to the internet. The system was selected from two choices certified by the Secretary of State. The new system will allow periodic updates on vote counts, prior to certification of the final election results.

While about 75% of Sonoma County citizens vote by mail, a significant number still cast their ballots at their local polling place. Districts with less than 250 voters are required to vote by mail. Proto reported that the county is considering a move to an all-mail election, possibly in 2022, with ballots going out to all voters with just 30 "vote centers" around the county.

For more information on the Registrar of Voters or the new voting system go to: <http://vote.sonoma-county.org/>

LWVSC Calendar Coming Events

See our [website](#) for other important election dates and information and links to videos of forums, or go to [Voters Edge](#).

League Orientation and Voter Registration Training: Saturday, April 13th 9:45 – 11:00 at Debbie Mc Kay’s home.

League Booth at Earth Day Celebration: Sat, April 27th at Courthouse Square 11:30–4:00.

LWVCA Convention. Pasadena. Friday, May 31, 2019-Sunday, June 2, 2019

Annual Meeting. Save the Date: Saturday, June 8.

Standing Meetings

Board Meeting: 1st Tuesday, 10-noon.

Advocacy Committee Meeting: 2nd Wednesday, 10:30-noon

Outreach Committee Meeting: 2nd Monday, 2:00-4:00.

Book Club: 3rd Thursday, 10:30-noon.

Voter Service Committee Meeting: 4th Thursday, 10-noon.

LWVSC meetings are held in the third floor Conference Room at the LWVSC office
555 5th Street, Santa Rosa.

LWVSC Board meetings are open to all LWVSC members, and to the public upon
request.

All other meetings are open to all.

Visit our [website](#) for updated calendar information.



President's Message

There is always so much to do and too little time to do it. Yet we manage to accomplish a great deal as League of Women Voters members. As an all-volunteer organization, volunteers are the key to our success. Members can participate in many ways both large and small. Thank you to all the members who have done just one thing to help us fulfill our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy! We need more of you.

I recently filled out a survey sent to local California League presidents. Since then I've been receiving replies from other Leagues and there seems to be a trend in the responses. Membership numbers are up but the number of active members remains the same. And we all need more diversity in our membership. As I've shared some of the comments from other Leagues with our Outreach Committee and Membership Chair, they quickly began acting on some of the suggestions. You may have filled out the Member Survey they created asking for your input. We mostly heard from members who are already active. Then another League shared their success using Survey Monkey. Debbie McKay quickly put one together for us. Watch for it in your inbox! It's important that we hear from you about what interests you in League and how you might help. It can be as little as making a few phone calls to remind members of upcoming programs or as stimulating as being an active member of a committee that does voter education, advocacy or media/outreach. Each of those committees has experienced leaders willing to mentor you. **You** are "the League." We look forward to hearing from you!

Susan Novak, President

County Survey

The Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women has initiated a Voices of Sonoma County Women project that includes live "listening sessions" in which women throughout the county may voice their needs and concerns. They are also asking all Sonoma County women to complete a brief confidential survey. The collective outcome of the project will be presented to the Supervisors in 2020. I encourage all of you to "speak up" and share the CSW survey with your friends and family.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GSRP5V2> English

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/62QYNQF> Spanish

Board Briefs for March 5th

- ✓ The meeting was brought to order at 10:05 with 8 officers present, one officer absent and three other members attending.
- ✓ The Board had voted by email to send a letter to the Santa Rosa City Council requesting climate change be made a Tier 1 priority. It was supported by the council and climate change was assigned to Tier 1.
- ✓ **Voter Service:** The committee will be highlighting opportunities for service on Boards and Commissions on our Facebook page.
- ✓ **Outreach:** Judy Levy will step down as Outreach Chair and be replaced by Debbie McKay. Judy will continue to work on outreach to media.
- ✓ After discussion a motion was made, seconded and approved to publish Los Cien events in The Voter as long as they were in alignment with our program priorities.
- ✓ **At Large report:** Susan Rouder will see if she can persuade SLV to have a shuttle to take residents to the candidates forums, particularly if there is one having to do with Santa Rosa City Council candidates and District One, Sonoma County (Susan Goran) candidates.
- ✓ **President's Report:** Susan Novak has received the first call to the LWVC Convention (May 31-June 2 in Pasadena). Members interested in attending should contact Susan.

----Nancy Burrington, Secretary



Voter Service Project

The Voter Service committee is taking advantage of the lull before the storm of the 2020 election cycle with a new project. We are promoting citizen involvement in county commissions. Did you know that there are over ninety commissions, also known as advisory citizen bodies, that report to the Board of Supervisors? Currently there are thirty-four vacancies. These commissions are a vital link between county agencies and the Board and are a way that citizens can help craft policy and set priorities on how money is spent. Commission members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and usually serve for a two-year term. The variety of commissions is broad. They include everything from very focused, geographic issues to broad county-wide mandates. The application process is simple. Go to the [County of Sonoma website](#) and download the application. After completing it, mail it to the County Board of Supervisors.

We will be writing a series of short articles about specific commissions and submitting them to whatever publication is willing to print them. Our goal is to educate readers as to what these commissions do, and to encourage citizens to get involved. If anyone has suggestions or ideas to help with this project, please contact Leona Judson at leonaj@sonic.net.

DECISION COULD SET NATIONWIDE STANDARD FOR REDISTRICTING

The Supreme Court has never struck down a voting district as an unconstitutional gerrymander. On March 26th the Court began hearing cases that might change that. *Rucho vs. LWVNC* and *Rucho v. Common Cause* will be argued alongside of each other. The League of Women Voters works closely with partner organization Common Cause. Both cases include First and Fourteenth Amendment claims and ask the Court to affirm the lower court decision which applied a three-part test in determining that the 2016 maps were unconstitutional partisan gerrymanders. The League of Women Voters of Maryland joined as amicus on the *Benisek v Lamone* case also to be heard by the Supreme Court. Plaintiffs' claims center on the unconstitutionality of Maryland's 6th Congressional District. "The Supreme Court now has a huge opportunity to declare that, once and for all, politicians cannot choose their voter--voters must be free to choose who they want to represent them" (Virginia Kase, LWVUS). The League is hopeful that the Court's decision, expected in June, will create clarity about when the redistricting process is unconstitutional.

In 1812, Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry signed a redistricting bill creating a new voting district specifically designed to favor his party. The district wound and weaved—much like a salamander. A Boston Gazette cartoonist added claws, wings, and fangs, named it “The Gerry-Mander,” and the rest, they say, is history.

Except it's not. More than two centuries later, partisan gerrymandering continues to favor the powerful and well-connected—enabling self-serving politicians on both sides of the aisle to hand-pick their voters, rather than the other way around.

It's simple, really. If we want our government to truly represent all the people, then all our votes have to count. And that's what makes partisan gerrymandering so dangerous. But with the help of dedicated members like you, the League of Women Voters is determined to fight for redistricting reform, and will continue to defend our democracy's promise of “one person, one vote.”

--- *Chris Carson, President LWVUS*

To find out more read Celina Stewart's blog post: [Breaking Down the Partisan Gerrymandering Cases Before the U.S. Supreme Court](#)

Advocacy Committee Report

Most of our March meeting was devoted to the upcoming 2020 census count. Jim Masters, a member of our League and the Center for Community Futures, presented much information on the national plans and the work to be done by the state, and locally, the county and the United Way of the Wine County. The issue about whether there will be a question about citizenship on the census form is still not decided. On other topics, we have ongoing discussions on the state of criminal justice actions in the state and county, a concurrence position on Voter Representation and Election Process (including run-off elections) and the extending of the transportation measure M to be on the 2020 ballot.

--- By Gene Zingarelli

Welcome New Members!

Anthony Bryhan
Dianne and Lee Pierce
Nancy Dougherty

We're so glad you're here!



April 27th Earth Day Celebration

Are you concerned about climate change? In 2019 our local League is making climate change a primary focus. Help us make a difference by volunteering for a couple of hours at the League's booth at the Earth Day Celebration at Courthouse Square in Santa Rosa.

We will be asking Earth Day attendees to sign Input Cards to our supervisors and council members requesting that cities and towns sign up for 100% renewable energy to power local government operations. Please volunteer for a couple of hours at the League's booth from 11:30 am to 4:00 pm. The early shift is 11:30 am – 2:00 pm and the later shift is 2:00 – 4:00 pm.

To sign up for a tabling shift email Debbie McKay at tabling@lwvsonomacounty.org

We hope to see you there!

Membership

Please consider how you can help further the League mission, *Make Democracy Work*.

It can be as simple as writing a letter to the Editor or attending your City Council Meetings to advocate for an issue of interest. Join the Advocacy Committee or Voter Service Committee. How about getting to know other League members by helping the Outreach Committee table at Earth Day? Maybe you have suggestions for programs the League could host. We welcome you input!

Contact: membership@lwvsonoma.org

Outreach Committee Quarterly Highlights

- A three-person subcommittee of the Outreach Committee is working on a civics curriculum for presentation in our local high schools. Once the presentation is ready for testing, we will pilot it in one or two high schools this spring. We hope to do a bigger launch in the fall. We will schedule a meeting with volunteers after we have piloted the presentation.

- We had a booth at the Women's March in January and at the Los Cien February Luncheon. Our next event will be the Earth Day celebration in April. During the upcoming summer we will be at the Santa Rosa Wednesday Night Market for three nights. Watch for specific dates in the May edition of The Voter.
- As part of the League's focus on Diversity and Inclusion, we continue to work with Los Cien. Their members will be volunteering at our booth at future events this year. We are also working together on Climate Change by encouraging local cities and towns to adopt 100% renewable energy to power their buildings and services, which will decrease greenhouse gas emissions.
- From January 1st to March 31st the Facebook Subcommittee increased the number of League Facebook Page followers to over 400. Our most popular post was viewed by over 4,000 people.
- Committee members have begun planning for the National Voter Registration Week during the last week of September and are currently identifying sites to do voter registration. If you have a suggested site or would like to volunteer that week, please send an email to outreach@lwvsonoma.org.
- The next meeting of the Outreach Committee is Monday, April 8th at 2:00 pm at the League 3rd floor conference room. Come join us.

Training Opportunity

Come learn more about our local League of Women Voters and how to register people to vote. In about 90 minutes you will learn about the issues we are working on this year, the history of the League, how to register voters and our voter education program.

Date: Saturday, April 13th

Time: 9:45am - 11:30am PST

Location: Debbie Mc Kay's home (specific address will be provided to those who sign up.)

For April 13th Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0945a4ae2aa3f49-learn1>

Or you can send an email to tabling@lwvsonoma.org

April 2019 Housing Update

The following are highlights of some of the collaborations between local agriculture and business organizations to increase housing stock in Sonoma county; as well as partnerships between the construction industry and the Sonoma County Office of Education to increase the number of people going into the construction trade.

Agriculture:

At the Feb 19, 2019 Sonoma Business Journal's forum on Housing in Sonoma County, Karissa Kruse President of the Sonoma Wine Growers, stated that local grape farmers have been working on workforce housing since 2016. Sonoma County has a labor crisis in our Ag industry. The federal H2A program allows workers from other countries to come to work in agriculture in the United States for up to 10

months. Farmers who want to use this program are required to provide housing for these employees. About 1,100 beds currently exist, with 150 added in the past 6 months. Twenty-five percent of these H2A workers are women. Currently 30% of growers provide some kind of worker housing, often on their own land. They want to do more, so in 2017 the growers set up a Housing Recovery fund and raised \$1 million, to date. Many of their employees were impacted by the 2017 wildfires and 280 families have been helped so far. They hope to continue to build additional housing for employees.

Local Businesses:

The Santa Rosa Metro Chamber has pulled together a round-table of local employers to discuss how employers can support housing development. The Chamber's housing policy states in part, "Our housing crisis is the greatest threat to our long-term economic and cultural success. The Chamber will advocate for incentives and opportunities that create more housing at all levels and organize the private sector to support new housing development in all market levels. We applaud recent progress in streamlining of the local permitting process to encourage housing development. We support similar improvements to the entitlement process to gain process consistency and create needed certainty for developers throughout the city and in priority development areas. We support incentives for in-fill and affordable housing."

Peter Rumble, CEO of the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, reported at the recent Los Cien Luncheon on housing equity that the Santa Rosa Chamber is launching a local housing trust which already has financial commitments of \$5 million to provide low-cost financing for local housing projects for all income levels. The chamber hopes the housing trust will continue to grow with donations and other funding.

Construction Industry:

As was stated in the League's 2017 report on Affordable Housing/Homelessness, there is a shortage of trained construction workers in Sonoma County. Several organizations are working diligently to change that. New training programs have begun which will train the next generation of home builders.

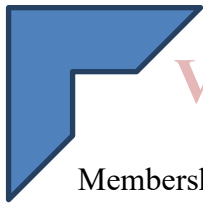
The "North Bay Construction Corps" (NBCC) is a program founded and supported by the Career Technical Education Foundation, North Coast Builders Exchange and Sonoma County Office of Education. The mission of the program is to train the next generation of construction workers. NBCC is an after-school, 5-month basic construction training program for seniors in their last semester of high school. Classes are taught by local contractors and construction managers. Participants are introduced to a variety of trades and earn certifications in Forklift and Scissor Lift Operation, Personal Protective Equipment and CPR/First Aid. Successful students earn 3 units of college credit.

For more information go to <http://ncbeonline.com/nbcc/>.

The Sonoma County offices of California Human Development is offering training in demolition, repair, renovation and reconstruction. The Sonoma Lake & Mendocino Counties Building & Construction Trades Council offers a Pre-Apprenticeship training program that will prepares participants to enter the construction field, through a state certified joint apprenticeship training program.

For more information on these programs go to <https://sonomawib.org/careers-in-the-building-and-trades/>.

----- By Debbie McKay



Volunteer Corner

Membership Committee - we're looking for members interested in finding ways to promote the League and keep our members engaged. We would like to plan and organize interesting activities such as get-togethers, outings, and speakers for our membership. If interested, please contact Gayle Peterson at 707-539-3794 or gpeterson3794@sbcglobal.net

ON THE WEB: Women's History Month

Explore some interesting women on Facebook: [16 Women Scientists](#)

A young woman who resisted bus segregation before Rosa Parks: [Claudette Colvin](#)

And the Notorious RBG: [11 Books & Films About the Indomitable Ruth Bader Ginsburg](#)

Book Club Reads

April 16--Moderated by Sukey Robb-Wilder

Eager: the surprising, secret life of beavers and why they matter

by Ben Goldfarb, 286 pages, 2017

This diverting volume sings the praises of beavers, who, though targets of a multi-century massacre and besieged by urban sprawl, still manage to flourish not only in Walmart parking lots, but in stormwater ponds, golf course water hazards, and even in downtown Martinez CA. Goldfarb, an environmental journalist, makes the case that beavers are a keystone species vital for ensuring healthy ecosystems; yet, their notoriety as a nuisance species is hard to overcome.

May 16--Moderated by Nancy Burrington

The Browns of California, by Miriam Pawel, 480 pages, 2018

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Pawel (The Crusades of Cesar Chavez) continues to explore the California political landscape with this well-written and deeply researched dual biography of the late Pat Brown, the state's governor from 1959 to 1967, and his son Jerry Brown, who was governor from 1975 to 1983 and reelected in 2011. The backdrop for all of this is the rich history of California, illuminated with small historical details that are a testament to Pawel's research.

The 2019 Reading list is online at <http://www.lwvsonoma.org/files/bookgroup2019.pdf>

Please join us.

LWVSC

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Connect with the League



LWVSC www.lwvsonoma.org
www.facebook.com/lwvsonomacounty

LWV of Bay Area <http://www.lwvbayarea.org>

LWV of California www.ca.lwv.org

LWV of the United States www.lwv.org
<https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters>

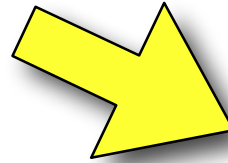
Voter's Edge <http://votersedge.org/en/ca>

Addresses of Members Only websites are in the front of the LWVSC directory.

Remember to sign up for email alerts and newsletters when you visit these websites.



*Become a Member of the
LWV of Sonoma County*



or

**Make a
DONATION**

Fill out the form below and mail it to us at:

League of Women Voters Sonoma County
555 5th Street, Suite 300 O
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

Name _____
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Memberships Levels

<i>Susan B. Anthony</i> Individual Membership	\$65
<i>Student/ Limited Income</i> Individual Membership	\$40
<i>Amelia Bloomer</i> Household Membership	\$100
<i>Elizabeth Cady Stanton</i> Membership	\$100
<i>Carrie Chapman Catt</i> Membership	\$200 or more

**Membership dues and donations
are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law**

Please circle any topics you are interested in knowing more about.

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Voter Registration | Candidate Forums | Transportation |
| Housing/Homelessness | Climate Change | Immigration |
| Newsletter | Website Management | Local Governance |

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. We do, however, take action on selected government issues in the public interest.

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