

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF MONTEREY COUNTY "THE VOTER" NEWSLETTER

Celebrating the Merger of LWVMP & LWVSV since 2013 / April 2021, Volume 93, Number 7

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

"Supervisor Wendy Root Askew: My First 100 Days"

Wendy Root Askew was sworn into office on January 5, 2021, as the newest **County Supervisor for District 4**, replacing **Jane Parker**, who had served three terms over 12 years. Askew had to win twice in 2020—first be in the top two in the Primary in March, and then win in the General Election in November. ***It was by far the most expensive county supervisorial election campaign on the Central Coast, topping \$1.4 million between the two candidates.***



The Fourth District includes **Del Rey Oaks, Marina, Sand City, Seaside**, a portion of **southwest Salinas**, and unincorporated portions of **Marina, Seaside, Salinas**, and the **former Fort Ord**.

Askew's very first job in January was to **Chair the Board of Supervisors**, consistent with a rotation plan. There is no better baptism by fire than to have the gavel for your first meeting, manage the details of the agenda, and referee the dialogue of the veterans!

Askew's policy priorities as Supervisor include social equity, healthcare access, high-quality healthcare services, water, mass transit, increased accountability and customer service, housing, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. *(continued on page 2)*

How to Attend Our Virtual Meetings

The free **April LWVMryCo General Meeting** and presentation will be conducted over the **Zoom Web Conferencing** platform, and will use **Zoom Chat** for Questions & Answers.

11:45 am Zoom Check-In / 12 noon Meeting Begins

All current LWVMryCo members will be sent a link to the Zoom meeting via [LWVMryCo] on the **Monday before the meeting** (i.e., on Monday, April 12th for this month) with instructions on how to join the meeting.

Not a member? All LWVMryCo General Meetings are open to the public at no cost. Non-members can send a message to LWVMryCo@gmail.com requesting an invitation to also receive the link and instructions.

You can even join these meetings using a conventional telephone.
Phone numbers for audio-only will be provided along with meeting numbers and codes.

Prior to her election, Askew was **Policy Analyst to Supervisor Jane Parker** (2008-2020). She also previously owned a small **agriculture business**.

From 2016-2020, Askew served as a **Monterey Peninsula Unified School District Board Trustee**, championing safe and healthy schools, access to technology, and quality teachers.



Askew is a fourth generation Monterey County resident, daughter of an educator, and comes from three generations of military veterans.

She currently resides in Marina with her young son and architect husband.

George Riley,
Natural Resources Committee Chair

★ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE APRIL 2021 ★

Our Board does a good job finding timely, relevant, informative speakers to address our member's and our communities concerns and interests as well as answering challenging questions."

As I listened and watched **Dr. Raphael Payan** address our group via **ZOOM** on March 10th, it dawned on me that we were listening to our own carefully selected, thoughtful, reasoning, "talking head," and it seemed very empowering somehow.

We all watch more "talking heads" of the sort who pontificate a biased opinion, creed, ideology, or set of beliefs without critically analyzing the context and substance of what they are saying than is comfortable, but we have little control over such speakers.



Yes, we can always change the channel and we know pretty well what type of "head" will appear on which news station. On the **LWVMryCo Lunch & Learn 'station'** you can be assured the month's head will be timely and interesting, carefully selected to match our non-partisan concerns and interests.

Take a look at the roster of these past few speakers so far:

Just in time for voting to begin, in **September 2020** we heard from the **County Registrar of Voters, Claudio Valenzuela**, the person in charge of the whole elections event.

In **October**, in time to help us better understand the ballot issues we were about to be asked to approve or deny, we had our own **Helen Hutchison, immediate past President LWV CA Education Fund**, come to inform us how the LWV stood on many of the issues.

In **November** we brought in **Mike Clancy, Citizens Climate Lobby, Monterey**, who explained why, to many, climate change remains an unproven theory.

In **January** of this year newly reelected **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** addressed, among other things, health and housing problems faced by our fieldworker populations.

Then in **February, Dave Stoldt, General Manager Water Management District**, explained the current status of the many moving parts that comprise our water supply and wastewater treatment operations. He also addressed the future of those systems in light of the proposal to purchase the water supply system from its reluctant owner.

Last month **Dr. Rafael Payan, Executive Director, Monterey Park District**, spoke, giving an interesting and encouraging talk on the status of the six-plus Regional Parks, the recent addition of the Joyce Stevens parcel on the north face of Jacks Peak, and the process to tie everything together with trails beyond the District.

This month our newest **County Supervisor, Wendy Root Askew** will share her experiences from her first one hundred days in office.

And finally, at our **May 12th Membership Meeting** (the last one, we hope, that will be presented in the confining, literally "talking head" frame of ZOOM), we will have authors **Kathryn McKenzie** and **Glenn Church** coming to speak. In their book **"Humbled: How California's Monterey Bay Escaped Industrial Ruin,"** they detail how, back in the 60's, the Monterey Bay

escaped ruin. It was one of the first battles of the modern environmental movement spearheaded by a small group of committed citizens who challenged and prevailed against **Humble Oil's plan for an oil refinery at Moss Landing.**

How about having this group of highly qualified commentators, on very local current events, coming to you at your desk, for a lunch discussion, head to head? I would say we are tuned to an outstanding station!

Howard Fosler

★★★ LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW 2021: ★★★ SENATOR JOHN LAIRD

The LWVMryCo completed its interviews of all four state legislators who represent **Monterey County** by speaking with **State Senator John Laird** (17th District) in February. The interview was conducted on behalf of the **LWV of California** who prepared the policy questions.

Participating were Leagues from **Santa Cruz, San Jose/Santa Clara, San Luis Obispo, and Monterey.** Representing our League were **Howard Fosler, Dennis Mar, and Karen Paull.**

Land Use & Climate Change "What are the most important considerations in the effort to reach a net drawdown of greenhouse gases from non-urban lands?"

Senator Laird supports **preservation of agricultural and natural lands** by focusing development in urban areas. The 2011-2014 drought unfortunately left forests plagued with dead trees which are fire hazards and carbon emitters. Since the majority of forested land is controlled by federal and private interests, dealing with this problem is complicated.

Housing & Homelessness "What can be done to reform exclusionary single-family zoning to allow more available affordable housing?"



Senator Laird described the **re-zoning to permit higher housing density** as a "thermo-nuclear" issue in local communities. Having served in local city government, he understands the complexities. He favors allowing four-plexes under certain conditions in R-1 (single family dwelling) zones.

COVID-19 Economic Recovery

"What should be done to ensure that recovery programs are equitable and meet the needs of the most impacted?"

Regarding assistance to schools for re-opening, Senator Laird favors **money distribution by a Local Control Funding Formula** rather than requiring an application process. He is concerned that school administrations with more resources could apply more quickly and receive money sooner than school districts with fewer management resources. He would like to see **foster children, special needs students, homeless children, and disadvantaged students get priority** when schools reopen.

Personal Priorities "What are your personal legislative priorities?"

Senator Laird would like to see a 10-year plan with **committed funding for forest management and controlled burns.** Major fires are a threat.

Dennis Mar, Voter Services Co-Director



LWVMC MEMBER PROFILE: MYRLEEN FISHER



Myrleen Fisher has been a member of LWVMryCo for more than five years and she'll be joining the Board as a **Member at Large** for 2021-22.



included some ranching activities and learning to fly. It was an adventurous time."

Myrleen also serves on the **Board of Public Water Now** and she's proud of that group's success in getting **Measure J** passed. *"We spent about \$150,000 publicizing our stand, while CalAm spent nearly half a million,"* she says. Following the earlier defeat of **Measure O**, Myrleen explains, *"People began to understand that private water companies are concerned for their investors primarily, and for their customers only secondarily. So we managed to win Measure J by about 55 to 45 percent of the vote."*

Born in **Salinas**, Myrleen went to **Hartnell College** and then on to **UC Berkeley** and **UCSF**, training for her long nursing career. *"When I began my work, it was in **pediatrics** at **San Francisco General** and then I went on to **public health nursing** in **Santa Clara County**,"* she says. After a year of travel and exploration, she became a **school nurse** for the **Monterey Peninsula Unified School District**, working one school term at each of four different schools—**Manzanita**, **Patton**, **La Mesa** and **Monte Vista**—while enjoying Peninsula living.



However, the summer break led to a temporary **King City** position in health education for a special project that brought **health care to migrant farm workers**. *"Temporary" became four years of learning to speak Spanish and **training Home Health Aides**, people from the community, to become health educators,"* Myrleen explains. *"Also, my life there*



Following her stint in King City, Myrleen was recruited to work in research for **ALZA Corp.**, a pharmaceutical company in **Palo Alto** that didn't invent new drugs. *"We were 'teaching old drugs new tricks,'"* she says. *"Our research aim was to develop ways to deliver proven, but problematic, medications to the body at a measured rate to avoid the usual side-effects, utilizing new methods, such as skin patches and other novel devices. Examples are transdermal patches for tobacco cessation, motion sickness and pain control, as well as implants for cancer treatment. I worked on studies submitted to the FDA for approval of devices that provided continuous medication to the eye (glaucoma and trachoma) and on an IUD to deliver progesterone to the uterus."*



This was in the mid-to-late 1970's and into the 1980's, Myrleen says. *"Our work was avant-garde at the time. After ALZA was bought by **Johnson & Johnson**, I worked in research for a couple of other pharmaceutical companies. I was in Palo Alto for almost 30 years."*

During that time, Myrleen says she married at age 50, but she was widowed a mere five years later. That loss, along with the fact that her mother and brother were still living in Salinas, led her to retire from the pharmaceutical industry and move to **Carmel Valley**. After living in her "up valley" home by the river for 20 years, Myrleen sold it about 4 years ago and moved

to **Hacienda Carmel**. *"I love living in this area," she says, "and I just wish I'd moved here sooner. The nicest part is what's all around it—being able to go to parks and beaches and get out and walk."*

Myrleen's walks used to include her beloved dog, **Matti**, but she died last April, at age 15. *"She was a star of the stage here," Myrleen proudly reports. "About seven or eight years ago, there was a production of 'Annie' at the Forest Theater. Matti was one of the two dogs who played Sandy in twelve performances each, so I became a 'stage mom'. Great fun!"*

Another of Myrleen's passions is playing the ukulele and she's belonged to the **Monterey Ukulele Club** for the past 11 years. *"We're still going, trying to do it through Zoom every Sunday. We can't actually play together on Zoom, however."*



It's definitely not like it is when we've got 25 or 30 people playing and singing together in person." She also takes art lessons through the **Pacific Grove Adult Education Program**.

Myrleen greatly appreciates being a member of the League of Women Voters, adding, *"I've always relied on their wisdom for voting recommendations."*

Asked what she'd like to see in the League's future, Myrleen Fisher answered, *"We need to help students to think more critically about what they're reading and hearing, to avoid believing conspiracy theories. I read about this and I don't like to think young minds are being poisoned. We really need to work to keep democracy alive."*

Keeping democracy alive is certainly one worthy goal that we all are working to achieve.
Nancy Baker Jacobs

★★★ **LWVC CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM GROUP** ★★★ **EXPLORES BEST-PRACTICES IN POLICING**

Carolina Goodman, **LWVC Criminal Justice Reform Committee Co-Chair**, urged attendance of Committee members at a thought-provoking lecture by **Maria Maki Haberfeld, Professor of Police Science, John Jay College (CUNY)** on **"Best Practices in Policing."** I attended as a Member of the **LWVC Criminal Justice Reform GoogleGroup** and provide a summary here:

Police are necessary because there are bad people who victimize their own communities, and sometimes we have to do something about it right now.

Professionals where lives are in danger (i.e., doctors, pilots, and police officers) **should be selected based on skill, not on race, culture, or religion.** For example, the NYPD is a very diverse force, with 70-80 percent minority

officers, but tensions with the communities they serve are still strong.

The first thing to go under de-funding police would most likely be crucial training and equipment. This would undercut the goal of better trained, if perhaps fewer, officers. Social workers and mental health professionals can help some, but not all, lawbreakers.



Officers should be recruited no sooner than the age of 25, sent through two to three years of criminal justice education, THEN hired to the force on a probationary basis. People in their early 20s are not emotionally

or intellectually mature enough to be police officers. An academic degree is required in the world's best police forces—Finland, Norway, Germany—where higher education is free or inexpensive.

Police officers need better communication skills rather than more target practice. They may fire their guns only once or twice in their careers, but are called upon to communicate clearly on a daily basis. This would cut down on the propensity to adopt a military option in tense situations.

Ability and strength are not as important as education and emotional/intellectual development. Martial arts training would lessen the need for using guns.

There should be no second chances for police officers who exhibit bias. Conduct unbecoming an officer should be grounds for firing. Any officer who doesn't report such conduct should also be fired, thus ending the "code of silence."

People with criminal records should not become police officers. They might make excellent social workers, but shouldn't be making instantaneous life and death decisions.

The 18,000 different police departments in the US should be more centralized. This would lead to a better recruitment pool and mobility so that people with particular skills and training (anti-gang, anti-drug, anti-cybercrime, etc.) can go to where they are needed.

Well-trained Chiefs and Commissioners should be able to make decisions on where and how to police. Politicians don't always represent the interests of all the people.

In addition to the above Best Practices in Policing debate, you may also want to follow the pros and cons discussions emerging over the "**George Floyd Justice in Policing Act**" that passed the House in March 2021 (www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7120/text).

The sponsor of **HR 7120, Representative Karen Bass**, said, "*A profession where you have the power to kill should be a profession that requires highly trained officers who are accountable to the public.*"

The Bill has received support from some of the nation's leading civil rights organizations as it **bans chokeholds, ends racial and religious profiling, establishes a national database of police misconduct, prohibits certain "no-knock" warrants, and changes "qualified immunity,"** lowering the bar for plaintiffs to sue officers for alleged civil rights violations.



However, the "**Movement for Black Lives**" (<https://m4bl.org>), opposes the Bill, arguing that **it doesn't address the root causes of Black Americans dying at the hands of police.** Instead it demands new, comprehensive legislation to confront disinvestment, mass incarceration and systemic racism.

These are dynamic and compelling arguments, directly related to many of the League of Women Voters Social and Government policy positions. Our work has only just begun.

Sharon Miller, LWVMryCo Voter Services
Co-Director/LWVC Criminal Justice Reform
GoogleGroups Member

VOTER SERVICE DIRECTOR WANTED FOR SALINAS VALLEY!



Speaking of Equity and Justice...

*we need **stronger outreach to Salinas Valley voters!** It's a **part-time** but **crucial** job organizing candidate and Pro & Con forums, and encouraging citizens to register and vote! Mentoring provided. Contact **Howard Fosler**, LWVMryCo@gmail.com*

STOP ASIAN HATE

The League of Women Voters of California condemns all xenophobic and hateful acts targeting **Asian American and Pacific Islander** (AAPI) communities. The tragic murders in Atlanta in March punctuate an increase in anti-Asian violence and hate seen across the country. Systemic racism and white supremacy in the US are not bound by state or city lines—they are everywhere. **Anti-Asian hate crimes within California have been on the rise.**

It is the responsibility of allies everywhere to vocally denounce hate, violence, and xenophobia and actively work to dismantle the systems of racism and white supremacy that have perpetuated these attitudes and actions in our country.

The **League of Women Voters of the United States** stated, *"We are committed to listening to and amplifying AAPI voices and educating ourselves on the historic and ongoing systemic racism that plagues this country so that we can be better allies. We urge our followers to do the same, and to call on elected and appointed officials at all levels of government to demonstrate their commitment to keeping ALL communities safe."*

Stephanie Doute, Certified Associate Executive,
Executive Director LWVC
(lwvc.org/news/stop-asian-hate)

★ **COMING SOON TO** ★
<https://my.lwv.org/california/monterey-county/luncheon-videos>
Video Slideshow: "Creating Healthy Communities & Natural Landscapes through Coalitions,"

Dr. Rafael Payan, Executive Director
Monterey Regional Park District

Bob Evans, Website Coordinator

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★ THE FORMERLY-CONVICTED SHOULD GET TO VOTE ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

With the **For the People Act** passing in the House in March, it's now up to the Senate to get the Act past the finish line. What's at stake? **Automatic voter registration**, an **end to racial and partisan gerrymandering**, and **ethics reform** in a legislative package that will add up to the biggest expansion to voting rights since the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**.

But few are talking about the criminal justice impacts of this package—like how it would **restore voting rights to the over two million American citizens with prior felony convictions**. Keeping those with prior convictions away from the ballot box has its roots in the **Jim Crow era**, when states actively tried to keep Black men from voting. As with gerrymandering, felony disenfranchisement laws allow partisan minorities to maintain their majority legislative power on the local, state, and federal levels.



Formerly-convicted individuals get counted in the census, hold jobs, raise families, and contribute to their communities—why shouldn't they have a voice in their representative government?

This reality is fundamentally incompatible with the fair democracy that the League of Women Voters are fighting for, and why it's so important to pass the **For the People Act** (www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1/text).

Maddie Schumacher
Legislative & Policy Specialist
for Justice Reform, LWVUS
(www.lwv.org/blog/formerly-convicted-should-get-vote-heres-how-senate-can-make-it-happen)

★ FIRST CALL TO STATE CONVENTION 2021 ★

WHAT: The *68th State Convention* of the League of Women Voters of California

WHEN: Friday, *June 11* - Sunday, *June 13*, 2021 (*plenary sessions 10:00am - 4pm, Sat & Sun; workshops/special events Tues -Thurs*)

WHERE: Zoom Virtual Teleconference



WHO: *Open to everyone* to encourage all members to attend and the public to come learn about the League.

WHY: To inspire/empower Californians to increase *active, informed participation in civic life*, and meet passionate people across the state who are *making democracy work!*

DETAILS: *\$75 per person for Delegates* (full participation, voting, workshop, caucus access) *\$25 per person for nonvoting attendees* (observe plenaries, workshops, caucuses). Go to: <http://lwvc.wordpress.com>.

★ LWVMRYCO ★ 94TH ANNUAL MEETING CALL COMING!

WATCH for the CALL
to our
May Annual Meeting
by separate mailing.
SAVE THE DATE:
MAY 12TH!



Join the League of Women Voters of Monterey County



Renew Your Membership Early!

You can renew your membership now
(and perhaps add a donation)
for the coming program year
(July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022).

Use the form below, or at <http://lwvmryco.org>.

Timely responses are appreciated as they help keep our local chapter strong.

New Members Wanted!

Any person of voting age, male or female, may be a member of the League.

Use the form below or contact:
LWVMC Membership Director
Mail to LWVMryCo PO Box 1995
Monterey, CA 93942
Checks payable to LWVMC

Membership Levels

- ☐ \$250+ Carrie Chapman Catt
- ☐ \$200 Sojourner Truth
- ☐ \$150 Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- ☐ \$100 Susan B. Anthony
- ☐ \$ 95 Household (2 persons, 1 address)
- ☐ \$ 65 Single membership

Name(s)

Address

City

State

Zip Code

Phone

e-mail

- ☐ Send e-mail reminders for luncheons
- ☐ Call to remind me of luncheons
- ☐ Scholarship requested

Membership dues & contributions to LWVMryCo are not tax deductible, nor are donations to the Florence Curlee Scholarship Fund. However, donations to the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund (LWVCEF) are tax deductible.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

~New Address~

Jane and Tim Sanders
631 Sinex Avenue, Apt M-102
Pacific Grove CA 93950-4250

~New e-Mail Addresses~

Judi Lehman **Talma Taormina**
judi.lehman67@gmail.com *talma2@comcast.net*

~Please send updates to~
Janet Brennan, Membership Director

LWVMC WEBMASTER WANTED

to maintain our website:
<http://lwvmryco.org>



Duties: Update calendar, post
official letters, monthly videos
and newsletter.

Time: 2 hrs per month.

On-the-job guidance as needed.

Contact: Bob Evans,
Retiring Website Coordinator,
BobEvans13@me.com

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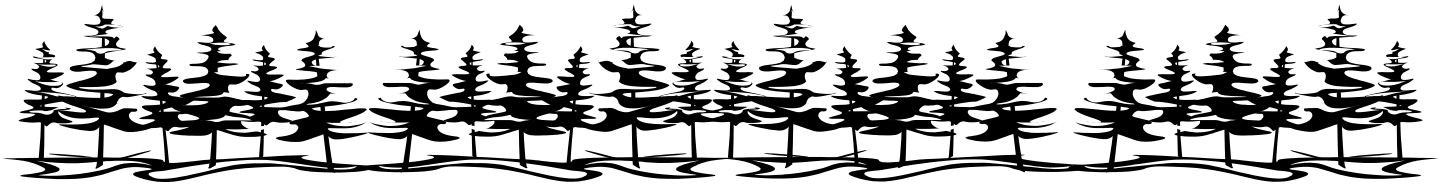


LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
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LWVMryCo Calendar 2021



APRIL

LWVMC Board Meeting
Zoom Online

Monday, 5th April, 1:30pm

contact: LWVMryco@gmail.com to request
[LWVMryCo] meeting phone number and code

Natural Resources Committee Meeting
Zoom Online

Thursday, 8th April, 12 noon

contact: George Riley,
GeorgeTRiley@gmail.com
to request meeting phone number and code

LWVMC General Meeting
Zoom Online

Wednesday, 14th April, 11:45am

"Wendy Root Askew: First 100 Days"
Monterey County Supervisor, District 4

Other Committee Meetings
POSTPONED until further notice.

MAY

LWVMC Board Meeting
Zoom Online

Monday, 3rd May, 1:30pm

contact: LWVMryco@gmail.com to request
[LWVMryCo] meeting phone number and code

**LWVMC Board Meeting &
94th Annual Meeting**
Wednesday, 12th May, 11:45
Guest Speakers: Kathy McKenzie & Glenn
Church, authors of "Humbled: How California's
Monterey Bay Escaped Industrial Ruin"

JUNE / JULY / AUGUST
**SUMMER BREAK: No General,
Board, Committee Meetings, or Voter**

JUNE

**68th State Convention of the
League of Women Voters of California**
Friday, June 11 - Sunday, June 13, 2021
(see details page 8)