



# Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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## January Events:

**These are the first events that are sure to get us moving in 2022:**

**Tuesday, January 18, from 1:00-3:00 p.m.  
National Planning Meeting**

Join us in a comfortable setting to discuss what issues we would like to see the National League address in 2022-23. To join this meeting, contact the League at [league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com) with your name and cell number. For more details and information on how to join, please see the article on page 3.

**Friday, January 21, from 12-1 p.m.  
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte and the Roe v Wade Luncheon Committee will be presenting their annual luncheon – virtually**

The speaker will be Professor Michelle Goodwin, Chancellor's Professor at UC Irvine, and an award-winning author. This is guaranteed to be an especially lively and informative event this year. **If you are interested in attending, or have questions, contact them at [events@ppmarmonte.org](mailto:events@ppmarmonte.org) or by phone at 408.823.4935.**

**Saturday, January 22, from 12–2:30 p.m.  
“Mind Games: Understanding the Predator Psychological Methodology”**

The League and AAUW, along with M3 Transformations and Soroptimist International, are jointly sponsoring this forum on child sex trafficking. This event is meant for those who work with teens, or who want to know more about this issue. Dr. Deena Graves, founder of M3 Transformations, who is an award-winning communicator, will be a presenter, along with Derek Williams, a one-time trafficker who has turned his life around and now works to get traffickers, buyers, and victims out of the game. If you wish to join this forum, use this Zoom link: [MindGames Meeting ID: 354 334 8917 Passcode: 472354](#). For audio, find your local number: [audio link](#) .

## January Calendar

**Wednesday, January 12, 2022  
10 a.m.–noon**

**LWVSCC Board Meeting**  
If you wish to attend, contact us at [league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com)

**Tuesday, January 18, 2022  
1:00-3:00 p.m.**

**National Planning Meeting**  
See page 3 for details  
If you wish to attend, contact us at [league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com)

**Friday, January 21, 2022  
Noon-1 p.m.**

**Planned Parenthood Mar Monte  
Roe v Wade Luncheon Committee  
Annual Luncheon Via Zoom**  
Contact: [events@ppmarmonte.org](mailto:events@ppmarmonte.org)  
For access.

**Saturday, January 22, 2022  
Noon-2:30 p.m.**

**“Mind Games: Understanding the Predator  
Psychological Methodology” via Zoom**  
For access, use this link: [MindGames](#)

**Wednesday, January 26, 2022  
6:30-8:00 p.m.**

**“Developing the Pipeline of Diverse Women  
Candidates” (WILDR presentation)**  
See page 4 for details on WILDR forums.  
For information and access, contact [doseamster@gmail.com](mailto:doseamster@gmail.com)

**Reminder:** If you need to pay your 2021-22 membership, us this form: [lwvscs membership form](#). Those who do not rejoin will be removed from the mailing list.

## President's Message



Our Santa Cruz County League of Women Voters worked successfully in coalition with other community groups this fall to sponsor or co-sponsor two highly successful programs. The first, initiated by League member, Dinah Sapia, who served as moderator and

organizer, featured four presenters with direct knowledge of how Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Justice System works: Judge Denine Guy; Tim Newman, who oversees the system; Mark Briscoe, a public defender; and Stoney Brook, an advocate for veterans. The event was attended by 44 participants and co-sponsored by Women Lawyers of Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz County Bar Association, Santa Cruz County Defense Bar, and Santa Cruz County Trial Lawyers. Thank you to Dinah Sapia, Program Vice President Nancy Litvak, Pam Newbury, and Jan Karwin for contributing to the success of this inspiring and informative program that took place on September 30.

We were a co-sponsor with the Santa Cruz Women's Commission the following week for the Women in Leadership Forum, which took place on Thursday, October 7, in the evening via Zoom. We were invited to co-sponsor this event by League member and former Santa Cruz County Clerk, Gail Pellerin, who served as moderator and worked on the program with many other women, including new League member, Dorian Seamster. The 76 participants who came on the Zoom call were interested in learning more about how we can have more women and more diversity in leadership in Santa Cruz County. I found the breakout session near the end, which featured networking, to be a highlight of the program. The four panelists were lively and enthusiastic as they shared how their community experiences led to interest in seeking elective office. I enjoyed the short talks given by Yvette Brooks, member of the Capitola City Council, currently serving as mayor; Ana Ventura, who served on the Santa Cruz Planning Commission and the

Watsonville City Council, then elected as mayor of Watsonville; Jenny Sarmiento, who served on the Watsonville City Planning Commission and currently is on the Santa Cruz County Women's Commission; and Donna Meyers, member of the Santa Cruz City Council, currently serving as mayor.

I gave a talk during the evening about our local League of Women Voters, focusing on my favorite LWVSCC programs featuring women leaders discussing the challenges they faced seeking elective office, as well as the benefits of being involved in the community and helping shape public policy. Jillian Ritter spoke on behalf of the Women's Commission, the other co-sponsor, providing information for forum participants. At the forum, we learned that study after study confirms that diverse teams make better decisions. The United States ranks consistently lower than other nations in terms of women's representation and participation.

Additional programs on the topic of increasing diversity and women's representation in our democracy will be happening in 2022. If interested in staying informed, you can email Dorian Seamster, whose current email address is [doseamster@gmail.com](mailto:doseamster@gmail.com). Note the change from the email listed in the local roster sent in October, which reflects the email submitted in August when Dorian joined our League. Most of our current board of directors have expressed an interest in continuing to network on this topic and potentially co-sponsor some more programs in 2022.

On Saturday, January 22, we will be co-sponsoring a program with the American Association of University Women and Soroptimist International of Capitola-By-the-Sea called Mind Games: Understanding the Predator Psychological Methodology. If available from noon-2:30 p.m. and concerned with the human trafficking of our youth, I encourage you to participate via Zoom, with more detail to follow.

--Barbara Lewis, President LWV

### **In Memoriam: Marcia Minnihan**

Sadly, longtime League member Marcia Minnihan passed away in November. Our President, Barbara Lewis, knew her well and remembers her fondly: "Marcia's contribution to our League of Women

Voters were major. She participated enthusiastically in our legislative interviews, served as treasurer and secretary, did check at programs, chaired the nominating and budget committees, did audits, and participated in the LWVUS study of the Role of the Federal Government in Education, which is where we first met, when she showed up early at my home. Having received a BA degree in English, Marcia pursued this early interest in the arts, after retiring from a career in banking, by writing poetry, attending plays, participating in the AAUW Readers Theater play reading group, and discussing books she regularly checked out from the library. She also loved traveling and sharing stories of her travel adventures. Knowing Marcia Minnihan was a pleasure, so her passing is sad news.”

Jan Karwin also misses Marcia’s involvement with the League: “I was deeply saddened to learn of Marcia’s passing. She was a dedicated League member, always willing to volunteer when a job needed doing. Her professional banking experience was especially appreciated when she served as League Treasurer and her willingness to mentor those who followed in her footsteps. We will deeply miss her.”

Marcia was clearly a major asset to the League and a friend to many. She is greatly missed.

## **Hundreds Participate in Our Largest Voting Rights Action of 2021**

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, and again on the 17th, League members from across the country convened in Washington, DC to demand that President Biden do all he can to support federal voting rights legislation. They marched under the banner—No More Excuses---in an attempt to bring attention to the protection of voting rights. We are working hard to get President Biden to lean on the Senate to move the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) forward for debate.

The action on November 3 was [led by youth activists](#) and featured speeches from Martin Luther King III and his daughter Yolanda King. The action on the 17th was [our largest in a series of five actions](#) this fall.

In addition to capturing White House attention, these acts invigorated activists, leading to thousands of letters being sent to President Biden and Vice President Harris and hundreds of thousands of engagements over social media.

In 2022, the League will be sponsoring the New Citizens Registration Grants to state and local leagues to provide voter registration activities, in a nonpartisan manner, at naturalization ceremonies. The LWV Education Fund funded grants to Leagues undertaking voter registration activities at high schools, community colleges, technical or vocational schools.

**Do you want to be active in voter support activities from your home? Go to [LWV.org](http://LWV.org) to find ways you can be active in Santa Cruz County, in California, or on the national level.** Let us raise our voices together so that 2022 will be a year of voter registration activity and voting participation.

--Nancy Litvak, Program VP

## **National Planning Meeting Tuesday, January 18, 1-3 p.m.**

We are fortunate to belong to an organization that works on three levels: local, state, and national. Join us for the opportunity to discuss the various issues on which we would like the National level to act during the 2022-2023 year. Background information on currently held positions by the League on many issues in which you may be interested can be found online at: <https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/LWV-impact-2020.pdf>.

Some local League chapters would consider this discussion a staid meeting. In Santa Cruz, though, the National Planning meeting is more of a social gathering. We certainly talk seriously and carefully about many important matters, but we do so in a comfortable home with a breathtaking view of the ocean. Our marvelous hostess, Lifetime Member Sandy Warren, is an excellent baker and helps us all feel cozy no matter how cold it is in January.

Our meeting is open to members only and you must show evidence, on your phone or with your actual vaccination card, that you are fully vaccinated, including a booster shot. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to our email account,

including your name and cell phone number to: [league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com). You will receive a confirmation reply.

--Nancy Litvak, Program Chair

## **Update on Women In Leadership for Diverse Representation (WILDR)**

Following up on their very successful forum last October, WILDR has planned a series of workshops in 2022 to help women who are considering involvement in the public sphere. They are planning four to five on-line workshops with panel presentations, and in-person networking options after the presentations, if possible. They also want to make mentorship opportunities possible. Making this a reality will require the help of many people, so, if you are interested in one of the following forums, please contact Dorian Seamster at [doseamster@gmail.com](mailto:doseamster@gmail.com) to volunteer. Your help will be welcomed! These are the forums that are currently scheduled:

**Developing the Pipeline of Diverse Women Candidates. Wednesday, January 26, 6:30-8:00 p.m.** What positions are – or will be – open and what considerations are important when you are deciding about running? How can you support another who is running with campaign, fundraising and endorsements?

**How to Build a Campaign: Thursday, March 3, 6:30-8:00 p.m.** What steps must you take? How do you create and develop a winning team? How do you develop a winning message and address diversity issues – not to mention fundraising?

**City Councils: Thursday, May 12, 6:30-8:00 p.m.** Hear from those who have served or are serving on a city council about what they do and why it is important. Also hear about election timing for each city.

**School Boards: Thursday, July 7, 6:30-8:00 p.m.** Hear from people who have served and are serving about what school boards do and why it is important.

You will also learn about timing of elections for each board and how to start a campaign.

**Commissions/groups: Thursday, September 8, 6:30-8:00 p.m.** Discover what commissions exist and what their power and influence are. Find out how to get on a commission, how to address barriers to becoming a member and how to build power once you are on a commission or in a group.

They are also interested in building a **support group for those are elected or are running for office**. If you wish to participate, contact Dorian Seamster at [doseamster@gmail.com](mailto:doseamster@gmail.com).

## **Collaborative Justice Forum**

On Thursday, September 30, 2021, the League of Women Voters, along with cosponsors the Santa Cruz County Bar Association, the Santa Cruz Women Lawyers, the Santa Cruz Trial Lawyers Association, and the Santa Cruz Defense Bar, presented a forum entitled “**Santa Cruz Collaborative Justice, Alternative Solutions at Work in our Criminal Court System,**” organized by League member and local attorney, Dinah Sapia. This Forum was a timely response to the question of police training and criminal justice reform, recently highlighted by national discourse and national protests.

Presenters were Judge Denine Guy, who now serves on the Behavioral Health Court and Juvenile Justice Court; Tim Newman, Director of Criminal and Traffic Divisions at the Santa Cruz Superior Court; Mark Briscoe, a Santa Cruz County Public Defender and Stoney Brook, who helped create the Santa Cruz Veterans’ Court and serves as the Veteran Liaison on the County Human Services Commission, as well as volunteering as a veterans’ advocate.

The Santa Cruz County Collaborative Justice System is a system of courts programs that support those people who have intersected with the criminal justice system due to trauma, mental health issues, or substance abuse disorders. It was heartening to hear that Santa Cruz County is at the forefront of establishing a collaborative, client-based solution that addresses more issues than just the criminal complaint. These collaborative multi-disciplinary teams use compassion and accountability to bring

about the following goals: 1.) reduce recidivism, 2.) empower clients to turn their lives around, 3.) increase public safety, and 4.) lower the number of people incarcerated.

Thank you to Dinah Sapia, Judge Denine Guy, Tim Newman, Mark Briscoe, and Stoney Brook. Your hard work and dedication are greatly appreciated.

--Submitted by Lydia Parker

## **A Conversation with Ryan Coonerty**

On November 13, a group of League members gathered virtually for a talk with Supervisor Ryan Coonerty about dealing with the catastrophes of the last couple of years. This talk could have been entitled “Governing in a Time of Trauma, Chaos and Disaster.”

Speaking about the pandemic, Coonerty emphasized that trust is especially important when counties are trying to set health rules. The County was concerned about supporting both those in jails and those in nursing homes. Strategies set by cities and the county had to fit together to work—so conversations about health care were being held all over the county—especially since they were left alone by the federal government and sometimes by the state in the early days.

Civil disobedience did happen and Dr. Newell, the County’s health officer, did have to put up with threats. Then the killing of George Floyd brought racial issues into the discussion. They also had to determine how to keep teachers, firefighters, and farmworkers safe, so they could continue to do their jobs.

The CZU fire made things even more complicated – how do you safely evacuate half of the county during a pandemic? Luckily, individuals and businesses stepped up to help the evacuees. The feds did not help with the fire, and there were 648 other fires in the west, also fighting for resources. A Bureau of Land Management fire crew saved Davenport, building a firebreak from Highway 1 at Wilder Ranch to Highway 9, also managing to save UCSC and Santa Cruz’s upper west side. The County and these agencies built a level of trust that will help in addressing future crises. The County realized that it needs a full-time staff to handle crisis

management and build for resiliency. We now have that office.

Coonerty then offered some thoughts on redistricting. Santa Cruz and Watsonville are both undercounted. The mayor of Scotts Valley proposed reuniting the city under one supervisor, thereby keeping a community of interest together. Coonerty voted against this because the maps were not clear, but the proposed redistricting passed the Board 4 to 1 in a preliminary vote. Another issue that was to face the Board addressed the area of Apple Hills, between Aptos and Watsonville, where they also want to keep a community of interest together.

In answer to a question about the State’s response to the pandemic, Coonerty commented that the State really is underfunded in health care. The Office of Emergency Services is overwhelmed because of a lack of staff – that is a big part of why they changed their approach a number of times.

Another question was—what are the expectations for help from the federal government when fighting wildfires? Coonerty explained that you usually expect a call from FEMA, but that took longer than usual. Also, you expect to get calls from government officials from the White House on down. We received no contact from the White House. We also had fewer firefighters than usual, due both to COVID and to the fact that fires in other states also took resources away. Cal Fire was given some more money that year, but not as much as it needed.

How do we find the funding that we need? They are hoping that an initiative on next November’s ballot will help with funding. In the area of homelessness, Santa Cruz County housed more homeless per capita than any other county in the State, but we do not have enough resources to help everyone. We need resources to help with both mental health and housing. There is a countywide program that supports safe parking, mainly in Church lots where the churches provide both bathroom and trash support. That does cost a couple of million a year.

When asked what he would do over if he could, Coonerty responded that more planning and preparation upfront makes it easier to respond to a crisis. Hopefully, that is a direction both the County and the State will move towards..