



# Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

September 2021

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## Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Justice System

*Alternative Solutions at work in our Criminal Court  
Thursday, September 30  
12:00 – 1:30 via Zoom*

Santa Cruz County's Collaborative Justice System is a collection of courts programs that supports those who have intersected with the criminal justice system due to trauma, mental health issues or substance use disorders. These programs offer a less adversarial path than traditional criminal courts. Collaborating multi-disciplinary teams include Court Staff, Judges, County Mental Health, the Probation Department, the District Attorney's office, the Public Defender's Office, Court Coordinators, local agencies, and community services. Working together, these teams use compassion and accountability to bring about successful resolutions with 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.

### Calendar

#### Collaborative Justice Forum:

Via Zoom  
noon - 1:30 p.m.  
Thursday, September 30  
RSVP at [league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com)

#### Women in Leadership

Via Zoom  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.  
Thursday, October 7  
Register at  
<https://bit.ly/WILVirtual>

#### LWVSCC Board Meeting

10 a.m. – noon  
Wednesday, October 13  
If you wish to attend, contact us at  
[league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com)

#### Get in Touch

If you'd like to ask a question, or let us know why you joined, please feel free to contact us at [league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com)

#### Still need to pay 2021-22 Membership?

Use this link to download the form and mail with a check:  
[lwvsccl membership form](#)

Presenters include:

**Judge Denine Guy** has been involved with the local Collaborative Justice teams for ten years. She now serves in the Behavioral Health Court, which provides support to clients on probation, and in the Juvenile Justice Court.

**Tim Newman** oversees the Collaborative Justice System as the Director of Criminal and Traffic Divisions at the Santa Cruz Superior Court.

**Mark Briscoe** is a Santa Cruz County public defender who helps ensure clients' rights are represented while they transition through these collaborative programs.

**Stoney Brook** helped create the Santa Cruz Veterans' Court and serves as the Veteran Liaison on the County Human Services Commission. He volunteers as an advocate for veterans seeking services such as housing, legal referrals, and suicide prevention.

This event is co-sponsored by the following groups:

Women Lawyers of Santa Cruz County; Santa Cruz County Bar Association; Santa Cruz County Defense Bar; and Santa Cruz County Trial Lawyers.

**To RSVP, send your name and phone number to**

**[league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com) and we will respond with the Zoom link needed to enter this program.** We look forward to seeing you there.

## Women in Leadership Forum

Thursday, October 7  
6:30—8:00 via Zoom



### Thank You to ---

We would like to thank those members who have donated to the League. Their donations will help us tremendously as we bring programs to you – especially when we are once again able to have them in person. So, thanks go to these members: Susan Becker, Rusty Bowman, Kathy Donovan, Dorothy Fry, Eloise Graham, Laura Grossman, Jan Karwin, Robley Levy, Barbara Lewis, Marilyn McCusker, Marcia Minnihan, Marilyn Radisch & Carolyn Lewis, Evelyn Robinson, Dinah Sapia, Candace Walker and Susan & Jon Wittwer. If you'd like to join these members with a donation, there is a donate button on our home page at this link [LWVSCC Home page](#).

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of Santa Cruz County  
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Have you ever considered applying for a position on a local board or commission, or even thought about running for office, but been confused about where to begin? Or would you like to help other women reach their goal of getting elected? If so, this forum is designed for you. You will learn about the governing bodies that make local decisions, and how appointed positions on boards and commissions can lead to elected positions. You will also hear from women who are members of councils and commissions, who will tell you of their experiences. Before the session ends, you will have a chance to discuss with a small group your options for participating and the processes surrounding getting involved.

Panelists will include:

**Yvette Lopez Brooks:** Member of the Capitola City Council, currently serving as mayor.

**Ana Ventura:** Served on the Santa Cruz Planning Commission and the Watsonville City Council. She was then elected mayor of Watsonville and after that ran for a seat in the State Assembly.

**Jenny Sarmiento:** Served on the Watsonville City Planning Commission, then ran for the Watsonville City Council. Currently represents Supervisorial District 4 on the Santa Cruz County Women's Commission.

**Donna Meyers:** Member of the Santa Cruz City Council, currently serving as mayor.

If you find this an interesting and exciting opportunity, please use this link: <https://bit.ly/WILVirtual> to register for access to this Zoom meeting.

### Bylaws Changes

The proposed Bylaws changes, as included in the [Annual Meeting Kit](#) and presented at the Annual Meeting on June 26, 2021, were approved by the members with the following addition of Section 3 to Article XIII:  
*When bylaws changes are made in accordance with Section 2 above, the Board shall notify the members of the changes within one month of local adoption.*

The revised bylaws in their entirety may be viewed at the following link: [LWVSCC Bylaws](#)

Our thanks to Pam Newbury for all her work with the bylaws.

## President's Message



In 2020, we looked back and celebrated the courage of the suffragists who fought long and hard to extend the right to vote to women nationwide when the 19th amendment to our Constitution was finally ratified as Tennessee became the 36th state needed for passage in August of 1920. The founders of the League of Women Voters, meeting in

convention on February 14 of that same year, were an integral part of this fight, displaying both courage and endurance. These same traits were in full display at our June 2021 California state convention when state and local leaders committed to the challenge of the LWVUS goal of Making Democracy Work, which includes fighting voter suppression attempts and ensuring that the right to vote is honored. Our national leaders have displayed grace under pressure and courage in support of voting rights, with CEO Virginia Kase Solomon joining the Congressional protestors in the Black Caucus this summer and being arrested with them when action was not taken in the Senate on the Voting Rights bill, and LWVUS President Deborah Turner and our national Board of Directors providing clarity amidst national turbulence.

As in our early years, League members are helping lead the way for social change and government action as needed. At our recent state convention, with 62 Leagues represented, delegates throughout California met and chose the following areas for emphasis this coming year: (1) Making Democracy Work in California; (2) Climate Change and Sustainability, including a Focus on Water Resources; (3) Housing and Homelessness; Criminal Justice Reform. All these issues involve both education and advocacy. I was joined as a Santa Cruz County delegate by Marilyn McCusker and Lydia Nogales Parker, with many local members also attending workshops and being able to observe the plenary sessions. In addition to the workshops, I found the talk by LWVUS President Deborah Turner on

Sunday morning June 13 to be a convention highlight. Dr. Turner, whose medical specialty is oncological gynecology, noted that the League is part of 35 lawsuits throughout the U.S. and addressed a key question as the League of Women Voters begins its second century: How do we continue as a nonpartisan organization in a hyper partisan time? She noted our work is issue related, with positions derived from our members. Supporting registering voters and accurately counting ballots are not partisan. We have never compromised our values and support legislation that expands voting rights.

We need and value your support to continue the important work of the League of Women Voters. If you haven't done so already, please renew your membership during the month of September. I want to thank those members who have either renewed by check, or online at our [lwvsc.org](http://lwvsc.org) web site, and also give a special thank you for the many additional donations. Membership information is available in the Join section of our local web site, which is useful for both renewals and new memberships and donations. Thank you to Jan Karwin for keeping our website attractive and current, with newsletters, election information, and many other features for you to access.

**Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC**

### **LWVSCC 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

On June 26, the 56<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the LWVSCC was held via Zoom, due to continuing pandemic concerns. We successfully completed all the chapter's business.

The Board was elected as nominated, including several new officers and directors. Continuing Board members include Barbara Lewis, President; Nancy Litvak, Program Chair, now 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President as well; and Lydia Nogales Parker, moving from Membership Chair to Secretary. New members include Laura Grossman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Membership Chair; Geri McGillicuddy, Treasurer, and Marilyn Radisch, Editor of the VOTER newsletter. The Voter Service Chair position remains open. The budget was approved as presented.

The following programs were approved for the next fiscal year: Local government responses to climate change and sea level rise, a farmworker reality tour, Behavioral Health Court – the county's programs for mental health and drug addiction, and a local government guest speaker.

## **New VOTER Editor**

Hi! My name is Marilyn and I'm the new editor of the VOTER. I have big shoes to fill, as Pam has done a fabulous job creating and editing the VOTER over the past ten years. My thanks to her for her support, both now and in the future.

As a way of introducing myself, I'd like to tell you why I joined the League of Women Voters. In the early 1970's. I was just out of college, trying to establish a career in teaching. In my spare time, I did some volunteer work in partisan politics.

Working in party headquarters, we would often get people asking for our recommendations, not for candidates, but for the many propositions that regularly appeared on the ballot. Not knowing how to respond, I asked a more experienced colleague for her advice. She told me to direct people to the information provided by the League. She explained that the League always did a careful study of each proposition before explaining and then making recommendations. So, I not only gave this recommendation to others, but I also started to use the League's information myself when headed to the voting booth. After many years of following the League's lead, I now share the information with my friends, often having lively discussions—in person and on Zoom—with our ballots in our hands. It feels so good to have a way to cut through the confusion and the hype and really understand the issues.

Now that you know why I support the League, we'd like to hear your story as well. Are you with us to support voting rights? To learn about local policies? To participate in helping others understand the issues we face? If you'd like to share, please contact us at [league080@gmail.com](mailto:league080@gmail.com) and we'll share your story in an upcoming issue.

**Marilyn Radisch**, *VOTER Editor*

## **Senator John Laird**

*Annual Meeting Presentation*

After the completion of chapter business at our annual meeting, State Senator (and LWVSCC member) John Laird was asked to address the meeting. The title of his talk was "California Coming Out of the Pandemic – what Challenges Do We Face?" He began by talking of some of the difficulties the legislature faced during the pandemic: 33

senators working with no friends or family around, not even a chaplain on the floor and then having to work alone in their individual offices. The situation also led to the Senator being assigned to many committees, including Education, both Appropriations and the Joint Audit Committee (an unusual combination), as well as the Rules Committee, Judiciary, Labor, and Natural Resources, which he ended up chairing, as the designated chair was sheltering in place at home. His offices were never fully staffed and the three district offices have only been reopened for a few weeks.

Even with all this, the Senator does have twelve bills moving through the Senate. One deals with ongoing fire and fire prevention. Another addresses the EDD and calls for future recession planning that is updated regularly. Because of a lack of planning, EDD has not responded to the inquiries of at least 800,000 Californians. Laird's office has one staff member dedicated solely to this problem. Another bill is a little more fun – it addresses the need for gender neutrality in many of the states' departmental manuals. It began because we now have the first female commissioner of the California Highway Patrol, but their manual only refers to 'he' in this position. When he drafted this bill, both CalFire and the California Conservation Corps asked to be included. When the National Guard also spoke up, it got to be a little too big – another bill is needed for the National Guard.

And what's happening with COVID? When the vaccination rollout began, it became clear that not enough vaccines were reaching disadvantaged communities. John worked to solve this problem on the Central Coast. San Luis Obispo County had a different problem, though. Under the color-coded guidelines the Governor's office put in place, restrictions were more stringent when there were fewer ICU beds available. Unfortunately, SLO was included with LA county, so had to deal with stricter restrictions, even when they had plenty of beds available. In January, the Governor proposed reopening schools and John got busy working on proposals to provide money for underserved schools.

One process was simplified this year, due to COVID – the Assembly and Senate agreed to the budget without having to go to a conference committee. This is an excellent budget year for education in California: because of \$25 billion in unanticipated reserves and federal stimulus money,



the state has the biggest reserves in history. So, all levels of education, from K-12 through college, received a 5% raise over the money they had received before the pandemic. Additionally, childcare programs received a 15% raise and \$100,000 was added to Cal Grant funding, as a step toward debt-free college. We are also funding agriculture extensions and farm advisors for the UC agricultural programs. \$14 million went to the city of Santa Cruz for homeless support. \$3 million of that amount is designated for general services and \$11 million for housing. This will provide Santa Cruz with resources for a year so they can figure out how to move forward. John has been working with Assemblymember Mark Stone on this funding.

In the area of climate change, a bill introduced to control fracking didn't pass the legislature – there was too much in this one bill. A fire prevention bill is being worked on that will address forest management and proscribed burns and will set a five- or ten-year plan in place, along with a way to measure progress. Looking toward the future we must determine how to reach our goals. The Governor has set a goal of maintaining 30% of our land and ocean front and a goal of having five million electric vehicles in the state by 2030. We need to work on how we are going to accomplish these goals.

The Senator addressed a few other issues in answer to questions from League members. One issue related to two Senate bills – SB 314 and SB 389 – that would make changes to alcohol consumption laws. Both bills are moving forward but will wait until the pandemic is over. When asked how, specifically, Santa Cruz would address the homeless issue, the Senator acknowledged that Santa Cruz has a higher homeless rate than some of our urban areas. Smaller areas don't always get recognized, but money is coming to help solve the issues. Part of the problem is that the city and the county don't always coordinate and the money in the past has gone to the county.

When asked about the Governor's Master Plan on Aging, Laird pointed out that we have a disproportionate number of older folks, and we need to match services to those numbers. He pointed out that 50% of people with HIV are now over 50, which is why he authored SB258, the HIV and Aging Act, which ensures that seniors with HIV are included in

the definition of "greatest social need". On the issue of solar energy, there was a question regarding PG&E's proposal to change reimbursements for people who have installed solar in their homes. There was a bill that became a flashpoint for this, presenting the idea that it was mostly the wealthy who benefitted from this. However, they made decisions based on existing law, and their investments should be protected. Also, the solar industry has said that middle income people are getting more involved in solar.

UCSC's effect on the local community, especially as it relates to housing, was also discussed. Can the state help the campuses develop more of their own housing? UCSC currently houses 50% of its students on campus, but over the next 20 years wants to grow to a population of 27,000 students. They have committed to housing all new students on campus. Currently, dorm rooms do not count as part of the regional housing allocation the state is considering. If that were to change, there would have to be some affordable units and UCSC, unlike other UC campuses, charges all on-campus residents the same, regardless of which dorm they live in. Also, the Governor proposed a \$4 billion bill to support housing for community college students, and then tried to repurpose it for all higher education levels-- but the total allocation was then cut to \$2 billion.

A final topic addressed progress on the 2014 sustainable groundwater act. Local water agencies have been meeting and must come up with a plan soon that will ensure sustainability--where no more water is pulled out of the groundwater basin than will be replenished. Agencies will have to develop new sources of water, find a way to cut usage, or do both. The bill was passed when we were in a fourth year of drought, and over pumping by farmers was causing subsidence in the San Joaquin Valley. Other examples are in San Luis Obispo County, where the growth of wineries has depleted the water supply, and in Monterey County, where they have been told they must take less water from the Carmel River, and much of the water they do get comes from San Luis Obispo County. The Senator then pointed out that California is the last of the western states to pass groundwater protection laws – even Texas has us beat on this issue.