



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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REMEMBERING DR DEBORAH TURNER PRESIDENT, LWVUS



Countless people have reached out to share stories about our great president, Dr. Deborah Ann Turner.

LWVUS is compiling these messages on a [memorial page](#), where they hope they'll bring you inspiration and joy in remembering a great life.

"Keep on keeping on."

THE LEAGUE HAS A POSITION ON PROPOSITION 1

Here is a link to the LWVC position:

[League position on Prop 1](#)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The January 27 election update featuring Santa Cruz County Clerk Tricia Webber, which took place at the beautiful Felton Branch library, exceeded my expectations, with numerous questions from the audience handled brilliantly as her talk progressed. We learned a great deal about the job of County Clerk for Elections, how elections are handled in California and locally, projections for the November election, and community outreach efforts. As of January 30, the video of Tricia Webber's talk has been uploaded to YouTube by Pam Newbury, who recorded this program, and you can access it from our website at lwvsc.org/videos. Thank you to Karen Smith and all who helped with refreshments and set up, and to Stephanie Harlan for arranging this program and contacting our co-sponsor, the American Association of University Women. We were fortunate to have good weather that day, which made it easier to hear this excellent speaker.

Our next program took place on Tuesday, January 30, at the home of Sandy Warren, for National Program Planning, with refreshments provided by Sandy, and a thorough review of LWVUS positions that make up the Making Democracy Work focus as well as some lively discussion. All present decided to support continuing the Campaign for Making Democracy Work (which includes Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Redistricting, Money in Politics and Electoral College) as a top priority for the 2024 – 2026 biennium, with a review of major actions taken in this area nationwide during the last two years presented. We also unanimously supported the proposal from LWVC Climate Change Interest Group on climate change as a threat to democracy and asked LWV to push harder for immediate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to preserve civilization.

Sunday morning, two days before we met for National Program Planning, Dr. Deborah Turner, who has done such an outstanding job as LWVUS President, passed away due to a pulmonary embolism, and I spoke in her memory, then observed several moments of silence, before

opening this late January meeting. She will be missed by us and at the upcoming LWV convention, which takes place in Washington D.C. June 27 - June 30 at the Washington Hilton and online. Our local League can be represented by 2 delegates.
----Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

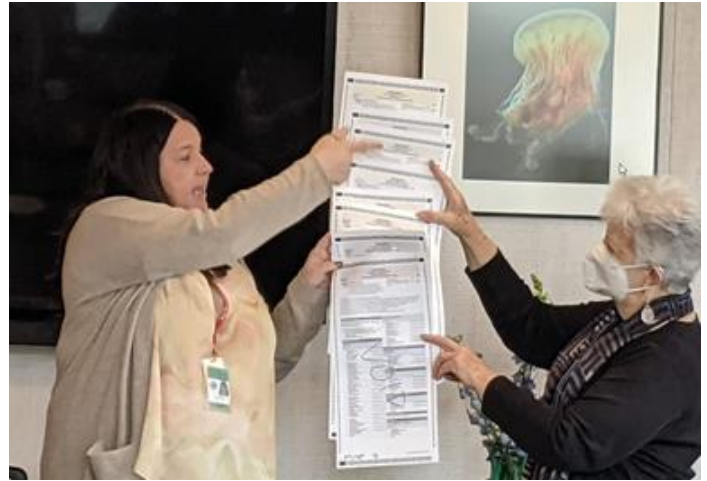
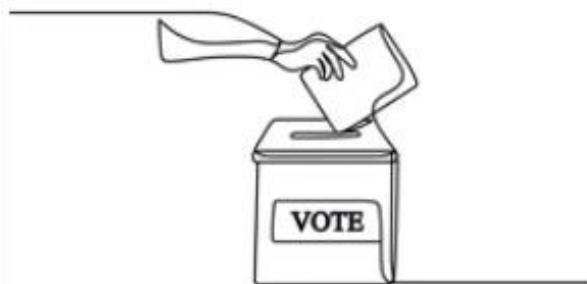
PRESENTATION BY TRICIA WEBBER ON ELECTION PROCESSES AND THE MARCH 5 ELECTION

On Saturday, January 27, our League, along with the American Association of University Women of Santa Cruz County co-sponsored a presentation on election processing by our new County Clerk, Tricia Webber.

We all vote in every election. We have for years. And some of us have even worked the election sites over the years – so we know what’s going on, right?

Well – we do know some of the process, but, as Tricia’s presentation showed us – there’s a lot more to setting up an election than we have ever thought about. And it’s different every year.

Although Tricia is new to the County Clerk position, taking over when Gail Pellerin was elected to the State Assembly in 2022, she is not new to the office. She has worked on the county’s elections since 1997. The first thing she told us was that you can’t do an election the same way twice – each one is different. So, each time, we need to retrain the county election staff and the voters. For example, the presidential primary (on March 5 this year) is the only election in California where party matters.



Tricia Webber and League member Peggy Marketello hold up the eight ballots that will be used in the March 5th election.

There are 8 different ballots for the March 5 primary. This covers the 6 qualified political parties and the No Party Preference (NPP) option. NPP voters can do a crossover to one of three parties, if they choose: the Democratic Party, the American Independent Party, and the Libertarian Party. When they are sent their NPP ballot, they also get information on requesting a different ballot.

One way to easily tell the ballots apart – each one is a different color. Those colors are assigned by the Secretary of State’s Office and are not necessarily the colors you might expect – for instance, this year’s Green Party ballot is---yellow. The Secretary of State’s Office also determines what appears on the ballot for national and statewide races and issues.

Have you wondered how the names of candidates are sorted on the ballot, just to keep it fair? The alphabet is revised, also by the Secretary of State’s Office. If you look closely at this year’s list of Senate candidates, you’ll notice that R comes before G and Z before V, O before E – and it goes on like this, not only for the first letter of a person’s name, but for all letters – after all it is a new alphabet the Elections Office is working with. What makes this even more interesting is that each county in the state has a different alphabet, so that candidates are in

different orders in different counties – just to make it fairer for all candidates across the state.

There are two Senate races on this ballot – one for the full term beginning in 2025, and one to finish out the remainder of Dianne Feinstein's current term. There are 20 people running for the full-term Senate seat on this ballot – and the top two vote getters will be on the November ballot. What makes this tricky is getting all 20 names in one column. If that isn't done, it leads to an overvote, where a voter chooses one name from each column, and an overvote eliminates that voter's vote for the office. So what do we do? – we make the instructions smaller. And to make the Senate race more interesting, 7 of those 20 people are also running to fill out the remainder of Senator Feinstein's current term. The winner will be chosen on November 5 to fill out the term that ends at the end of the year.

There is only one statewide proposition on the March ballot – but there will be 15 or 16 on the November ballot, thanks to Senate Bill 202, passed in 2011, which restricted initiatives to general elections only. Because of the large number on the November ballot, Tricia's office is already trying to design that ballot to handle them all.

February 5th is the mailing date for ballots, but they will be put in the mail on the weekend just before that date. Your last chance to get a ballot by mail is if you register or re-register by February 19. You can still register or change your registration after that, but you will have to vote in person.

If you want to get your ballot returned before Election Day what are your options? Drop boxes to accept ballots will be open beginning February 5th, 29 days prior to Election Day. Voting Centers will also be open beginning on February 5th and continuing through Election Day. Santa Cruz County transitioned from precincts to Voting Centers in 2020. When we were using precincts, there were 160 of them, each with its own ballot, and you had to vote in your assigned precinct, or vote provisionally.

Now we have a maximum of 22 voting centers, and anyone registered in Santa Cruz County can vote at any of those voting centers on the proper ballot.

For the March 5th election, two voting centers will be open on February 5th; that number will increase to 5 on February 24th, then to 18 on March 2nd and 22 on Election Day, March 5th. Your choices are to vote by mail (or drop box), or, if you prefer, vote in person at any Voting Center in the county. This change to Voting Centers has dropped the number of provisional votes in the county from around 20,000 when we had individual precincts, to only about 5,000 with the voting centers.

VoteMobile will also be active starting on February 8th. It will be at two or three locations each day. The Election Office uses it to reach senior centers, hospitals, farmer's markets, homeless camps, and canneries. They also do outreach in jail facilities.

Tricia then answered several questions about her job and about voting in Santa Cruz County:

How did she get started doing election work?

She initially went to work for Yosemite – but then the park flooded. She connected with a male friend whose mom offered her a job in elections. She took it, later tried to leave and teach school, but had a child and kept going back. In 2006, the County split off the Assessor and Tax Collector roles into a separate office and asked her to help with the reorganization. She never left, but she's still teaching – now it's voters she's teaching – and she loves her work.

Non-partisan offices and partisan offices are handled differently. In the case of partisan offices (except for the President), the top two vote getters go to the general election, even if there are only 2 and one gets only one vote. In the case of non-partisan offices, if someone gets 50% + 1 vote, it's over. This means there can be three types of primary votes on one ballot – the Presidential vote that will choose our state electors, the Senate vote that will send two candidates forward to the general election, no

matter how it works out, and the non-partisan vote that could select the winner in the primary election if one person gets at least one vote over 50%.

Have you gone to high schools and colleges to get students registered?

It's hard to get into high schools. Only two of the high schools in the county allow them access. Tricia has a strategic goal of getting into four schools by 2025. She has helped Watsonville high run its school body elections.

They also do registration tables at Cabrillo, as well as set up a four-day voting location at UCSC.

Why aren't you done with elections on the day after Election Day?

They must account for every ballot. They must review 1% of the ballots cast – but it is closer to 20% because of the different ballots. We must review all write-ins, whether certified or not. (A write-in candidate needs 25 support signatures to be certified.) And they must review same-day registrations. It takes time to solve provisional voting issues, as well as verifying submitted vote by mail ballots (all signatures are verified), as well as double checking all the work that went into the election.

What support is there for disabled voters?

We have signature guides for the visually impaired, and a setup for curbside voting.

Any recent changes to voting laws?

A county board of supervisors can no longer cancel a voting system contract unless a new system has been planned – and cannot do a hand count (unless there is a very small number of voters). Siskiyou County tried this in the past.

What about the safety of poll workers?

By law there can be no uniforms at the polling places. We are placing more people at each location and have our rovers and office

personnel check in more often. The office is also trained in identifying suspicious mail.

Can we watch you work?

Our office is open to observers any time that we are working.

If you'd like to see Tricia's entire presentation, you can use this link: lwvsc.org/videos.

CLIMATE CHANGE NOTES FROM LWVC

As Barbara mentioned in the President's Message, at the National Program Planning Meeting that was held on January 30, the work on climate change and climate justice that is being done by LWVC was unanimously supported. Here is a statement from LWVC that outlines their stance on climate change.

Climate Change is an emergency. The League of Women Voters has recognized the urgency and is working across the U.S. at grassroots and state levels. The League supports climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations.

The **California Climate Interest Group (CCIG)** is a coalition of League members across California who are working on climate action. As a member of the CCIG you can take climate action at the level that works for you, even if your local League does not have climate change as a priority. The CCIG steering team sends periodic notifications on climate change issues, events, and actions. We share our work to make the whole much better than the parts.

If you are interested, use the link below to find out what local leagues throughout the state are focused on when it comes to climate change:

<https://lwvc.org/california-climate-interest-group/>