



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

"Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy" / April 2026, Volume 98, Number 6

Wednesday, April 8th, 2026
"Addressing Climate Change Impacts on Wetlands in the Monterey Bay Region"

Our speaker on the subject of impacts of climate change will be **Paige Siegel, NOAA Coastal Resilience Fellow** with the **Central Coast Wetlands Group (CCWG), San Jose State University**. CCWG is an affiliate research group at **Moss Landing Marine Laboratories** focused on the study, preservation and restoration of **Central Coast Wetlands**.



CCWG programs and projects address: climate change, education and outreach, habitat restoration, water quality monitoring and management, wetlands research and assessments, as well as regional planning.

(continued on page 2)



In-Person Lunch & Learn, Wednesday, April 8th

at the **Unitarian Universalist Church** <http://uucmp.org> 490 Aguajito Road / Carmel CA 93923

Topic "Addressing Climate Change Impacts on Wetlands in the Monterey Bay Region"

11:30 am Doors Open & Registration Begins

12 noon Lunch (optional) / 12:30 to 1:30 Presentation

Optional lunch is \$25 per person: grilled salmon, rice, Greek salad, hummus, pita bread, and baklava dessert by **Chef Faris Nimry, International Cuisine of Pacific Grove.**

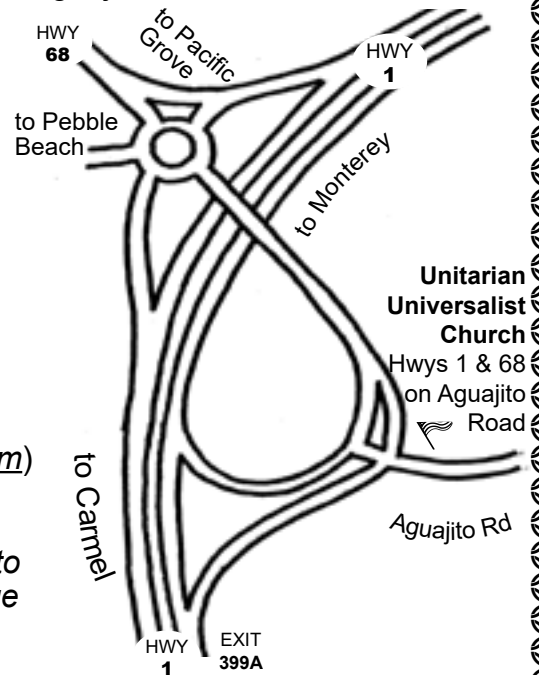
Reservations for lunch are required

and can be made through **Monday, April 6th.**

(Bev Bean: phone 236-1611 or e-mail beverlygb@gmail.com)

Pay at the door for lunch; meeting/presentation is **FREE.**

Reminder to Members: Reservations are a commitment to the caterer and the deadline for cancellation without charge is **Monday at 12 noon (48 hours prior to the event).**



(continued from page 1)

Ms Siegel is an early-career marine scientist dedicated to advancing climate resilience through coastal restoration and long-term ecosystem monitoring. While her current work focuses primarily on wetlands, her experience spans a range of coastal environments, including rocky intertidal zones, kelp forests, and dune systems.



She is currently a **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Resilience Fellow** with the **Central Coast Wetlands Group**

(CCWG). In this role, she supports various climate resilience projects in the Monterey Bay region through planning, implementation, and monitoring.

Outside of work, she loves running half-marathons, biking along Monterey Bay, and camping along California’s Central Coast.

Siegel earned her **Marine Science BS** from **California State University Monterey Bay** in 2023, and earned her **Biology MS** from **East Carolina University** in 2025.

Tama Olver and Bev Bean

★ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ★

I recently found the need to remind myself of the value of recharging my “batteries” so that I would have both wits and energy to keep up the fight in defense of our Constitution and our precious democracy.

There is a lot of individual variation in what to do when it seems that demands are relentless, the road always uphill, and the summit not yet in view.

Some of us recharge through time alone, others through connection with friends and family. Some might meditate and others immerse themselves fully in a project or pastime. I am one of many who find peace of mind and new energy in nature.

Now is an especially nurturing time of year in our beautiful county when new growth, birdsong, and reminders of rejuvenation are all around us.

I walked to **Asilomar** today and sat at one of my favorite spots for a while. I came home feeling ready to write for this issue of the Voter, stay up to date on current events, and bring creative energy to committee work without feeling anxious or overwhelmed.

I encourage everyone to take stock of your need for self-care in our complicated, fast-moving world and ratchet your practices up a bit if you see the need.
Tama Olver, Co-President



★★ MARCH 4 DEMOCRACY & "NO KINGS" EVENTS ★★

MARCH 4 DEMOCRACY

On February 28 members of our League attended a "March 4 Democracy" solidarity event in Monterey. The event originated in Washington, DC to mobilize people, support democracy, and confront corruption. Its purpose is to demand a government that works for all of us, rather than for the wealthy few who buy power in back rooms. Monterey was one of many solidarity events held for people unable to travel all the way to Washington. Participants demonstrated and they marched around **El Estero Park**. **Monterey Mayor, Tyler Williamson**, spoke about the inspiration he got from **President Barak Obama** and



the importance of speaking up and showing up when democracy is on the line.



"NO KINGS"

On March 28th, LWVMC tabled in support of our mission to defend democracy. If you attend any future events, please let us know and write an article about your experience. You can learn more and find details for all events at: <https://www.nokings.org>.

Tama Olver

Bev Kreps, Sharon Miller, Tama Olver, and Diane Rowe.
Not pictured but present were Whitney Stewart Gravel and Tamara Harris.

★★★ 2026 LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR JOHN LAIRD ★★★

The second round of **LWV 2026 California Legislative Interviews** was moderated by **Marianne Gawain** on February 10th.



along the Central Coast, and how Southern California now needs to come onboard.

Also present: **Sharon Miller and Diane Rowe, Monterey County; Marlys McPherson and Glenn Silloway, San Luis Obispo County; Barbara Lewis and Lara Triona, Santa Cruz County;** and Senator Laird Aides, **Jordan Montgomery and Isabel Meza.**

Senator Laird answered questions about **legislative priorities, offshore oil and gas leasing, alternative energy, immigration enforcement, and sea level rise.** Key points Laird has long championed were:

1. Regulations that **prevent development of onshore facilities** to support offshore drilling

2. **Safety standards** to prevent a repetition of the fire that occurred in a battery storage facility in Moss Landing.
3. Everyone needs to speak up if aware of **egregious actions by immigration enforcement personnel.** California is prepared to litigate.
4. **Proactive investment in adaptation for climate change,** including sea level rise. While state funding has a role, private and local funding is also needed. Eventually investment support from the federal government will return.
5. Regarding housing, Senator Laird would like to see the **Builders Remedy removed.**
6. Regarding loss of gas tax revenue due to the adoption of electric vehicles, a **road usage tax is under consideration.**

Tama Olver

MEMBER PROFILE: CHRIS NENOFF

Chris Nenoff and her husband Lucas Nenoff joined our League of Women Voters in June 2025. Chris signed up at a League table at one of the many Monterey rallies at Window on the Bay. The current political situation urged her to take action. Of course, there were more threads than one leading her to join. One of the places where she volunteers is with the **Monterey Bay Aquarium** where she met **Tama Olver**, our current LWV Co-President.



Golfing, walking, and volunteering at the Aquarium and **CHOMP** (Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula) take up her time. She is at CHOMP on Mondays for 3 to 6 hours, working with people who come in for outpatient surgeries. She especially feels affinity with patients dealing with macular degeneration. Chris's 88-year-old mother, who lives in Wisconsin, has the same condition so she says it's "like caring for my mother."

Chris was born and raised in Illinois. She earned a degree in **Business Administration** in Texas and subsequently worked for decades in the Bay Area. She worked in **Human Resources** creating programs ensuring companies such as **Safeway** and **Charles Schwab** were embracing the principles of **DEI** (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), convincing them from the perspective of DEI's business benefits.

Chris and Lucas were married in 1993, retired in 2018, and moved to Pacific Grove where they had purchased a house back in 2011, not too far from Lucas's father. Chris found it to be an ideal place as she can walk to the beach or to the PG Golf Course within 10 minutes.

Chris has siblings living in Illinois and Wisconsin, but she says the

Monterey Peninsula is her place to be.

Chris and Lucas have two dogs, 12 and 11 years old. Together they take walks as a family. Chris is full of energy and vitality—she recently returned from a trip to Arizona to visit her nephew and his new baby boy, and is planning a golf trip to Ireland in September. She also plans to **work at the polls again in the 2026 elections**, just as she had done in 2025.

With all that on her calendar, Chris is still considering *more* involvement with our League!

Sylvia Shih

Monterey County Sheriff TRUTH Act Report Meeting April 14



On the afternoon of Tuesday, April 14 (*time to be determined*), **Sheriff Tina Nieto** will continue her report on the Sheriff TRUTH Act in the **Board of Supervisors Chambers, Salinas**.

You have an opportunity to comment on cooperation with ICE, civilian oversight, and other concerns by attending this meeting **in person**, on **Zoom**, or by **mailing a letter to the Board of Supervisors** in advance.

Our League is part of a coalition working for enhanced transparency in the Sheriff's Department. Further details of the April 14 agenda item will be circulated as they emerge. Contact: **Sharon Miller** bmcclane@redshift.com for more information.

★ MEMBERS GETTING ACTIVELY INVOLVED ★

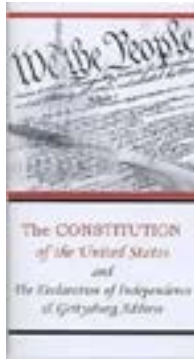
This ongoing column spotlights stories from two of our new active members, **Diane Rowe** and **Pamela Looney** who joined our League just a month ago. They illustrate why and how new and returning members become more involved and active: the committees they joined and the actions they've taken are examples of members who care deeply about issues, don't waste any time getting involved, and have had experiences they want to share.



Diane Rowe

*"Since becoming a member of LWVMC, I've been encouraged by **Pam Bonsper** and **Tama Olver** to join a committee. I decided that **Defending Democracy** and **Legislative Interviews** interested me. So at the first opportunity, I volunteered to join in on an interview with **Senator John***

Laird. I have a lot to learn, and this proved a perfect opportunity to view how these interviews were organized. To my surprise, I was even allowed to ask a question of Senator Laird!



*Due to my involvement, I'm learning more about the **California Values Act, 411**, and most importantly, through the League, I'm refreshing myself on the **US Constitution**.*

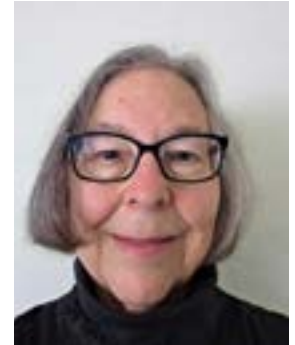
*What got me in the door in the first place was the Lunch & Learn topic on the **Tarpy Flats/Olmstead Road Development** discussion that was held in September 2025. The energy I experienced was so electric that I couldn't resist and decided then and there to join the League.*



*I attended my very first protest at **Window on the Bay, Monterey** and helped out at the LWVMC's table at **Oldemeyer Center, Seaside** for the **Martin Luther King Memorial** event. As there's so much work to be done, I have to be careful to budget my time. If one is not careful, you can be busy 24/7!"*

Pamela Looney

*"At the suggestion of LWVMC Membership co-chairs, I attended the **March Board Meeting at Marilyn Maxner's** home. I wanted to meet members and learn about the work of the various committees.*



During the meeting, the Board Members gave reports on their various committees, and I thought about each one, trying to decide which to join. I felt at liberty to engage in the topics and discussions, and before the meeting was over, I had joined, not one, but three committees!

***Vote 411** definitely struck me as very important, especially at this very crucial time in our country.*



*I joined **Pam** and **Shelley** on the **Membership Committee** to greet people as they arrived at the **Lunch and Learn** events.*

*I also joined the **Budget Committee** as it resonated with my interests and abilities.*



*Oh, and by the way, I also hope to help with **voter registration** and **work at the polls!**"*



*Interviews by **Shelley Sweet** and **Pam Bonsper***



At our March 19th committee meeting we had a presentation from **Laura Solorio**, active in many progressive causes locally. She was president of **Protect Monterey County**, the group that successfully got **Measure Z** passed in 2016.

Laura advocated to **Assemblymember Dawn Addis, D-Morro Bay**, and testified in front of an Assembly committee on Addis' **AB 3233**. The bill, signed into law in 2024, gave local city and county governments the ability to ban, limit or regulate oil and gas projects.

Solorio is now heading up an effort to prepare an ordinance requiring **capping of oil wells in South County**. They leak toxics as well as methane. The Committee made a recommendation to have a general meeting in the fall on the topic.

The Committee also considered two **Builders Remedy Projects**. The **Val Verde Project** received a recommendation for denial from the **Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee**

because it is in the flood plain. Drainage and sewage issues were identified as major issues for the 90 unit project on the air strip in Carmel Valley.

We were also alerted to **watch for AI data center projects** being proposed in the county. They have very high energy and water demands.

Finally, the Committee received an **update on water issues.** Janet Brennan

"RENTERS AS VOTERS" COMMITTEE



Volunteers from our League along with recruits from rental neighborhoods, anti-Trump, activist, political, and other groups are generally angry about the dismantling of our democratic norms and infrastructure.

All are welcome to join the new **"LWVMC Renters as Voters Committee"** (see *Project Proposal in March 2026 "The Voter," page 5*). I am forever the optimist, and still have with some energy for a good cause!

George Riley

★★★ **LWVMC HIGH SCHOOL VIDEO CONTEST WINNERS** ★★★

Drumroll please! We are delighted to announce the two Grand Prize winners of the **LWVMC High School Student Video Contest**.

In the category **"Ready, Set, Vote!"** aimed at encouraging youth registration and voting, **Aaliyah Pedraza** and her team from **Greenfield High School** won the grand prize for their video, **"The Plastics Learn Politics."**



In the category **"Voting is Democracy in Action,"** encouraging registration and

voting in the general population, **Alice Uchida-Dohrmann** from **Salinas High School**

won the Grand Prize for her video, **"I Vote."** Each Grand Prize winner (or team) will receive \$200.

Award ceremony dates and locations will be announced in the next several weeks. Both prize-winning one-minute videos will be shown at the Annual Membership meeting in May and featured on the League's website.

Marianne Gawain, Sandy Hoag, Shelley Sweet

★ VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE ★

The Voter Service Committee will be meeting every two weeks until the **June 2nd Primary**. Our next **online Zoom meetings** are **Wednesday April 1st** and **April 15th**, from 12 noon to 1 pm.

At our last meeting we discussed the schedule, venues and logistical challenges of having multiple voter registration events every week—good "problems" to have!

The **registration focus on youth** continues, most recently at four **Hartnell Community College** campuses, and at the **March 21st City of Salinas "See Our Youth Summit 2026"** (www.salinas.gov/Residents/



Natalie Lujan-Silva, LWVMC member at "See Our Youth Summit 2026" City of Salinas Event



All are welcome!

Recreation-and-Parks/Neighborhood-Services/2026-Salinas-See-Our-Youth-Summit). **Voter Registration** was discussed along with topics including Job Preparedness, Life After High School, and Mental Fitness.

At our next meeting we will be gearing up to organize a **Candidate Forum for the County Supervisor**

District 2 race. If you would like to head that up or help in any way, please come to the April 1st meeting, or contact me (arleneguest@gmail.com).

The Zoom link for the meeting will be sent to all members and their guests.

Arlene Guest

LETTER TO THE MONTEREY COUNTY HERALD "WHITE ADVANTAGE"



I was pleased to learn that **Ben Jealous** was one of the three leaders chosen to write the funeral program honoring **The Reverend Jesse Jackson's** courage and his strategy to build coalitions. The **Rainbow Coalition** of the 80s brought people together to recognize common needs and be part of common solutions.

Ben talks about the power of language. His father, Fred Jealous, recommended replacing the phrase "white privilege" with "white advantage" because in the first case whites who were raised with few

resources felt like their family's suffering was being erased. White advantage does not deny hardship. *"It does not pretend white communities have been spared deindustrialization, opioid addiction or rising suicide rates. It simply names a measurable tilt in the system."*

Jackson understood that "the system" was set up in a skewed fashion. That's why white applicants with criminal records can receive more callbacks than black applicants with clean ones. *"The Rainbow Coalition was never about denying white suffering. It was about refusing to let racism weaponize it. Racism keeps working people from coming together in the interest of all our children and grandchildren."*

An McDowell, Monterey (LWVMC Member)
Letter to the Herald Editor, March 3rd, 2026

CALL TO DEFEAT VOTER ID INITIATIVE

A growing coalition of civil rights and community organizations including the LWVCA, oppose a proposed **voter ID initiative** that would impose sweeping restrictions on how **Californians cast their ballots** and harm communities that already face obstacles to voting. The initiative is similar to the "**Save America Act**" (HR 7296) which **Arlene Guest** highlighted in the March **LWVMC Voter** (page 8).

Jenny Farrell, Executive Director, League of Women Voters California said: *"This voter ID measure is not about protecting voters; it is about importing the current federal administration's election lies and intimidation tactics into California."*



California's elections are already secure. Elections officials verify voter identity at every stage of the process — at registration, at check-in, and during ballot processing. Public trust in elections is built by making elections accessible and rules clear and stable — not by adding new hoops for eligible voters.

lwvc.org/voting-rights-groups-launch-campaign-defeat-voter-id-ballot-initiative/

GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

All LWVMC members should look for an email with the subject line: "**Government Committee Report for March 2026**" This new compilation of what's happening on local boards and councils regarding LWV priorities is up to date as of the beginning of April.

If you don't receive the Report, contact me. You can also email me if you would like to **submit an item to be included in the next Government Committee Report.**
Sharon Miller, Social Policy Co-Chair

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

☞Diaian Hennington☞

Monterey

☞Rebecca Lindor☞

Monterey

☞Marlene Martin☞

Carmel

☞Susan Schiavane☞

Seaside

☞MaryLee Sunseri☞

Monterey

☞Lisbeath Visscher ☞

Marina

New Members Are Always Welcome!

Bring a friend to the next In-Person General Meeting, or watch a Zoom Presentation online together!

☞Change of Address?☞

Send your contact updates to me.

☞Donate to our General or Scholarship Fund, or Give a Friend a Gift Membership!☞

Contact: Dennis Mar

☞Send Member Updates/Queries to:☞

Dennis Mar DennisRMar3@yahoo.com

Bring along friends or family who might benefit from joining our League, to **In-Person Lunch & Learn presentation**, or invite them to attend a **virtual Zoom meeting** with you!

☞Membership Renewal Notices☞

Members will receive renewal notices directly from LWVUS: respond online.

☞Florence Curlee Scholarships☞

are available to pay membership fees.

Contact: Janet Brennan,

JOIN OUR LEAGUE OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

www.LWVmryco.org

Any person age 16 or older may be a member of the League of Women Voters Monterey County
No set yearly dues: Suggested level \$75 / minimum \$20 (suggested for students)

Everyone is an individual member:

No household memberships (e.g., two members sharing one mailing address)
For household members, if each individual pays \$50, total is similar to former household rate.

Dues for new or renewing members by credit card or e-mail:

Create or access your existing account on the national LWV database

1. Go to www.LWVmryco.org / 2. Scroll down and click on the yellow button on the left side, Join/Renew/Profile/PROFILE / 3. Follow the page prompts

Dues by check via US Mail:

Write a check payable to: LWVUS / Mail to: LWVMC, PO Box 1995, Monterey, CA 93942-1995

Questions? Contact Dennis Mar at: LWVmryco@gmail.com

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Government / Observer Corps

Sharon Miller (831) 601-0403

Legislative Interviews

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shelleysweet@sbcglobal.net

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LWVMryCo The VOTER

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LWVMryCo Calendar 2026



APRIL

Voter Service Committee Zoom Meeting
 Wednesday, April 1, Noon - 1pm
 contact: **Arlene Guest**

Board Zoom Meeting
Monday, April 6th, 11:30am - 1pm
 contact: **Dennis Mar**

LWVMC General In-Person Meeting
Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 12 noon
"Addressing Climate Change Impacts on Wetlands in the Monterey Bay Region"
Paige Siegel, NOAA,
Central Coast Wetlands Group
 contacts: **Tama Olver, Beverly Bean**

Voter Service Committee Zoom Meeting
 Wednesday, April 15, Noon - 1pm
 contact: **Arlene Guest**

MAY

Board Zoom Meeting
Monday, May 4th, 11:30am - 1pm
 contact: **Dennis Mar**

LWVMC Annual In-Person Meeting
Wednesday, May 13th, 11:30 - 1pm
Unitarian Universalist Church
"Lobbying Your Elected Officials: The Receiving End"
 Guest Speakers:
Mary Adams, Monterey County Supervisor
 and **Gail Morton, Monterey Family Law**
 contact: **Dennis Mar**

JUNE / JULY / AUGUST

SUMMER BREAK begins: **No Board, or General In-Person Meetings**
 Starting September 2026 The LWVMC Voter Newsletter will be available **ONLINE ONLY**