

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

"Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy" / January 2026, Volume 98, Number 3

Wednesday, January 14th, 2026 "What's Behind the Surge in Renters' Issues?"

Monterey County is currently in the spotlight on renter issues with the **Salinas referendum on renter ordinances** (<https://www.salinas.gov/News/Referendum-of-Ordinance-Repealing-Rent-Related-Ordinances>) and a pending decision before the **Marina City Council** to revoke a decades long **rent control on city owned properties** (<https://tinyurl.com/2s4x5h47>). The County has the highest student homelessness rate in the state at twenty percent.

Renting is increasingly costly. Housing affordability is under constant debate. Victims of "no action" are renters, which has community-wide impacts. State initiatives are controversial.



Our Guest Speakers will be **Ms Esther Malkin** (photo left) and **Ms Susie Shannon** (photo right). Ms Malkin has been a volunteer affordable housing, homelessness prevention advocate for almost a decade in Monterey. She created **Monterey County Renters United** (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/montereycountyrentersunited/>).

(continued on page 2)



In-Person Lunch & Learn, Wednesday, January 14th

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

Topic **"What's Behind the Surge in Renters' Issues?"**

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.**

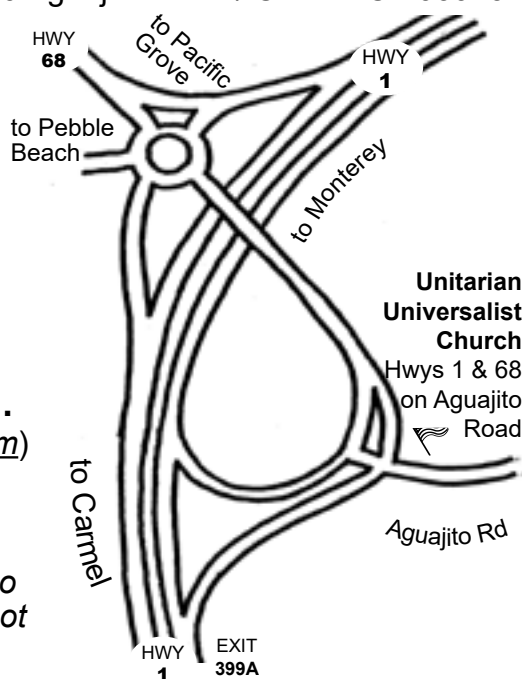
Reservations for lunch are required

and can be made through **Monday, January 12th.**

(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 with a minimum number of attendees, and cannot be cancelled by the League after Sunday, January 11th.



(continued from page 1)

Ms Shannon has been an advocate for the unhoused and low income renters bill since 2005.

Shannon serves on various national, state and local organizations that address low income and

renter issues. She also spearheaded the passage of a statewide bill, **SB 1380**, which placed California on a **"housing first"** model to combat homelessness.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

On December 6th, 2025 **Co-Presidents Dennis Mar and Tama Olver** attended a **Human Rights Day** event sponsored by the **United Nations Association, Monterey Chapter & Bahá'í Faith Community**.

Human Rights Day, celebrated nationally on December 10th, commemorates signing of

the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, an aspirational document approved unanimously by the United Nations with abstentions only by some Soviet Bloc countries, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Yugoslavia.

157 years after ratification of our American Bill of Rights, the world came together in the wake of two world wars to commit to paper what might be possible if nations would fully realize the rights of their citizens. The declaration was intended to be



1948: Eleanor Roosevelt champions Universal Declaration of Human Rights

a foundational document, a global "road map" for dignity and rights, aiming to prevent future atrocities by setting universal standards for freedom, justice, and peace. It has inspired countless laws and movements, even though full realization remains a journey.

If your mindset is to embrace the words as aspiration, rather than

focus on how much longer the journey might take, you may find it inspiring to read the full declaration at: <https://tinyurl.com/LWVMCudhr>.

We need to consider how far we have come since 1948 and what we will lose if we allow democracies to backslide before they right themselves and continue making progress.

Dennis Mar and Tama Olver,
Co-Presidents, LWVMC

WE THANK OUR GREAT POLL WORKERS!

We belatedly send our appreciation to the volunteers who worked at the polls in the **November 4th, 2025 California Statewide Special Election**. From left to right are (*back row*): **Mary Palmer, Cathy Seyferth, Branham Redlin, Sharon Miller, Dennis Mar**, (*seated*): **Carie Broecker, Catherine Crockett**.

Dennis Mar



MONTEREY UN ASSOCIATION HUMAN RIGHTS DAY LUNCHEON

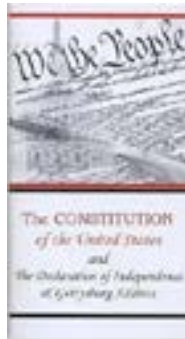
Prior to the December 6th Human Rights Day commemoration sponsored by the Monterey Chapter of the United Nations Association, our co-Presidents **Dennis Mar** and



Tama Olver staffed a table to give participants a chance to learn more

about our LWVMC, pick up a personal copy of a pocket **US Constitution**, and let us know whether they are interested in partnering with us to grow "**National Voter Registration Day**" into a county-wide event. The Day was founded by the **National Association of Secretaries of State** in 2012. Initially, the day was observed on September 25. But in 2014 it was established as the fourth Tuesday of September.

Millions of Americans forget all about the registration deadlines on an election year and aren't able to vote. This day is about making sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to vote. Interest in registering voters is



significant, and we now have six organizations that might become partners as we plan for **September 15, 2026**.

Honoring Veterans

On November 11th, **Sandy Hoag, Bev Kreps** and **Tama Olver** attended a demonstration in support of veterans and recognizing **Veterans Day, 2025**.



Though smaller than recent demonstrations at **Window on the Bay Park in Monterey**, participation was no less enthusiastic. National goals for rallies across the county highlighted a stand for the Constitution and opposition to actions of the current administration that have affected veterans' benefits.

With the holiday season behind us, the **Defending Democracy Committee** will begin organizing for the coming year. If you are interested in participating and have not already been contacted, please email tamaolver96@gmail.com.

Dennis Mar and Tama Olver,
Co-Presidents, LWVMC

STUDENT VIDEO CONTEST: ★★★ "READY, SET, VOTE!" ★★★ & "VOTING IS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION"

January 12th marks the official start of our LWVMC Student Video Contest! Students are invited to submit a one-minute video on the theme "**Ready, Set, Vote!**" (encouraging young people to register/vote) or "**Voting is Democracy in Action**" (encouraging all voters to vote). Entries will be judged in March and the winners will be awarded cash prizes in April.



The committee (**Sandy Hoag, Marianne Gawain** and **Shelley Sweet**) has emailed all high schools and alternative education groups in Monterey County with contest overview, rules, and registration information, and to stimulate high school students' engagement. Hard-copies with flyers will also be mailed out soon and contest information will be posted on our website. **Final submissions are due midnight, Thursday, February 26th.**

If you would like to help or post flyers for the contest, please contact one of the committee members. We are excited to see and share the video creations of our Monterey County high-school students!

Sandy Hoag



Dr. Juliet Christian-Smith,
Deputy Director Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, Sacramento CA 95814



RE: **Letter of Support for Relief from Condition 2 of the Cease and Desist
Order WR 2016-0016**

Dear Dr. Christian-Smith:

On behalf of the **League of Women Voters of Monterey County**, we respectfully request the **State Water Board** to modify the **Cease and Desist Order (CDO)** to allow the Monterey Peninsula to increase its much-needed housing requirements and experience modest economic development.

The **Pure Water Monterey** project, which came online in 2021, coupled with the Monterey Peninsula's longstanding commitment to water-wise conservation strategies for both commercial and residential water consumption, has resulted in **California American Water** (Cal-Am) not exceeding the legal amount of water available from the Carmel River for the past four years. With the addition of the Pure Water Monterey Expansion project coming online, there is no threat of Cal-Am exceeding legal limits in the foreseeable future. This was confirmed by the **California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)** in a decision adopted on August 14th, 2025.

The current moratorium on new connections was put in place by the CPUC in response to the **2009 Order WR 2009-0060** by the State Board. This restriction on setting any new water meters in the service area could be lifted if the State Board were able to rescind Condition 2 of the CDO. Our communities and vested stakeholders are eager to start fulfilling the **Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)** in order to have more affordable housing options for local workforce employees.

Working to align business and housing interests for the benefit of our members is a win for all communities on the Monterey Peninsula. The members of the League of Women Voters of Monterey County encourage you and the State Water Board members to modify the Cease-and-Desist Order to allow our area the opportunity to have some independence in developing projects that work for our residents and businesses.

Sincerely,

Tama Olver,
Co-President, League of Women Voters of Monterey County

LWVUS joined a sign-on letter to the President opposing the Administration's anti-humanitarian and anti-immigration policies following the shooting of National Guard members in DC.

For the complete letter go to: <https://tinyurl.com/hnxp9d9k>

December 9, 2025

President Donald J. Trump

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW, Washington, DC 20500



Dear President Trump:

We, the undersigned 130 national, state, and local legal services; humanitarian, human, civil, economic development, labor rights, faith-based, and veteran organizations, write to address the administration's actions in the days since the violent attack that occurred in Washington, DC on November 26. We grieve for the families impacted by this unimaginable tragedy and call for justice and accountability for the victims. While doing so, we also strongly urge you to immediately reverse course and fully restore our nation's humanitarian and immigration programs, free from discriminatory or hateful policies and rhetoric.

We are outraged by ... policies and actions announced over the last week—indefinitely halting all asylum applications, suspending visa issuances and immigration applications for Afghans (including our allies who assisted the US mission and whose lives are threatened as a result), threatening to "permanently end" immigration from "Third World Countries"—are not public safety measures. Rather, they are appalling and bigoted attempts to use this tragedy as a pretext to end lawful immigration and humanitarian pathways.

The policies and rhetoric employed by this administration not only leave people in extreme danger abroad but also harm longtime residents and mixed status families in the United States ... Putting these families in unnecessary limbo is cruel and destabilizing for them and their communities. Dehumanizing rhetoric has no place in our government and places Americans in danger.

Collective punishment and vilification of Afghans, Somalis, refugees, asylum seekers, or immigrants writ large is not sound national security policy, and it does not bring justice to the grieving families ... Conversely, welcoming people who have been persecuted serves critical national security interests, advances geopolitical stability, and bolsters democratic principles. We have a compelling national interest in ensuring efficient, fair, and robust processes that do not leave forcibly displaced populations trapped in hopeless circumstances. Xenophobic rhetoric, bigotry, and discriminatory policies have no place in America. By every metric, newcomers enrich and benefit American communities and make our country stronger—economically, culturally, and spiritually—as small business owners, tax contributors, and job creators ... Hate must not beget hate, and violence must not beget violence. We urge you to respond to what a strong majority of Americans want – a fair humanitarian and immigration program. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely, (*List of LWVUS Signatories at <https://tinyurl.com/hnxp9d9k>*)



LWVMC MEMBER PROFILE: DIANE ROWE, IN HER OWN WORDS



"The Little Engine That Can," that's Diane Rowe! A power packed lady who tackles the highest hill and comes down the other side with more power than before. Pam Bonsper



development and support for 39 years.

Bruce and I are very proud of the fact that we homeschooled our sons. Our eldest is a software engineer working in Amsterdam and our youngest is a successful full-time musician living on the Monterey Peninsula. In our "empty nest" we took in rescue birds (parakeets, cockatiels and parrots). We had up to two dozen birds but are now down

I was born in Monterey, as was my father. We lived in **Oak Grove** where we walked to school, the grocery store, cleaners, etc. In the 50's and 60's life was a lot quieter. We lived in a duplex

built by my Father and Uncle near my Nana's house, until we moved to **Casanova Oak Knoll** where I lived until I went to college.



I always wanted to be a schoolteacher, but after teaching one year in San Francisco, decided it was not for me. I learned to play the piano, loved ballet, and modern and jazz dance. I moved back to Monterey and lived with my best friend in **Del Monte Beach**.

I worked in various departments for the **City of Monterey** before working as **Department Secretary, Parks and Recreation** for eight years. In 1984 I traveled by tandem bicycle from Rome to Amsterdam with my husband, **Bruce**. It changed my life—I quit my job and we started a ticketing business. We segued into business software

to one---a Red Headed Mexican Amazon named Zoe.

Seeing that our democracy was in trouble, we became more interested in government. We met the late **Janice O'Brien**, a prominent member of the League of Women Voters Monterey County. We heard about their **"Lunch and Learn"** meeting about the **Tarpy Flats Development**. As supporters of **LandWatch**, we met more people we knew at the meeting, and made more local connections and friends, such as **Beverly** and **Steve Bean**, **Bill Leone**, **Lucretia Butler**, **Star Reiersen** and **Marilyn Maxner**. We figured we were in the right place.



I'm not on any League Committee yet, but am interested in **Legislative Interviews** and **Defending Democracy**. **Diane Rowe**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

~Susan Courrejou~
Salinas

~Jane Meade-Roberts~
Salinas

~Victoria Rossman~
Carmel

We hope all of you will join us
at our next League **"Lunch & Learn"**
Wednesday, January 14th!
Dennis Mar

~Florence Curlee Scholarships~
are available to pay membership fees.
Contact: **Dennis Mar**,
DennisRMar3@yahoo.com

Membership dues & contributions to
LWVMryCo are not tax deductible,
nor are donations to the Florence Curlee
Scholarship Fund

Donations to League of Women Voters of
California Local Impact Fund (LWVCLIF)
(formerly LWVC Education Fund)
are tax deductible with donations
payable to LWVCEF

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. On the left-side menu, click on ****NEW** JOIN/RENEW/PROFILE** / 3. Follow prompts (you will receive access directions by e-mail)

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 or DennisRMar3@yahoo.com

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LWVMryCo The VOTER

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LWVMryCo Calendar 2026



JANUARY

Board Zoom Meeting
Monday, January 5th, 11:30am - 1pm
contact: **Dennis Mar**

LWVMC General In-Person Meeting
Wednesday, January 14th, 12 noon
**"What's behind the Surge
in Renters' Issues"**
**Guest Speakers: Esther Malkin &
Susan Shannon**
(see front page)

**Natural Resources Committee
Zoom Meeting**
Thursday, January 15th, 11:30am
contact: **Janet Brennan**

FEBRUARY

LWVMC Program Planning Zoom Meeting
Monday, February 2nd
10:30am - 11:30am
Board Zoom Meeting
11:30am - 1pm
contact: **Dennis Mar**

LWVMC General In-Person Meeting
Wednesday, February 11th, 12 noon
**"Strengthening Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion in Today's Changing World"**
**Guest Speaker: Jacinto Salazar III, Director,
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism, and
Accessibility, Monterey Peninsula College**
contacts: **Pam Bonsper, Shelley Sweet**

**Natural Resources Committee
Zoom Meeting**

*We are a nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights,
and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy.*