

# LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF MONTEREY COUNTY "THE VOTER" NEWSLETTER

"Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy" / March 2026, Volume 98, Number 5

## Wednesday, March 11th, 2026 "Water 101: Who's In Charge of Water Supplies?"

**A**gencies responsible for water supplies and quality will be identified and discussed, with background information provided by **Janet Brennan**. Responses and water project updates will be provided by **George Riley**, Chair of the **Monterey Peninsula Water Management District**; **Gail Morton**, President of the **Marina Coast Water District**, and **Janet Brennan**, Chair of the **Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency**.



George Riley



Gail Morton



Janet Brennan

Speaker **Janet Brennan**, a longtime member of our LWVMC, has extensive professional and volunteer experience in water issues. She led the League's effort to adopt a portfolio approach for the **Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project**, and is **Secretary, Board of Directors, LandWatch**.

Speaker **George Riley**, also a longtime LWVMC member, is on the **MPWMD Board**, and led the

(continued on page 2)

### In-Person Lunch & Learn, Wednesday, March 11th

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

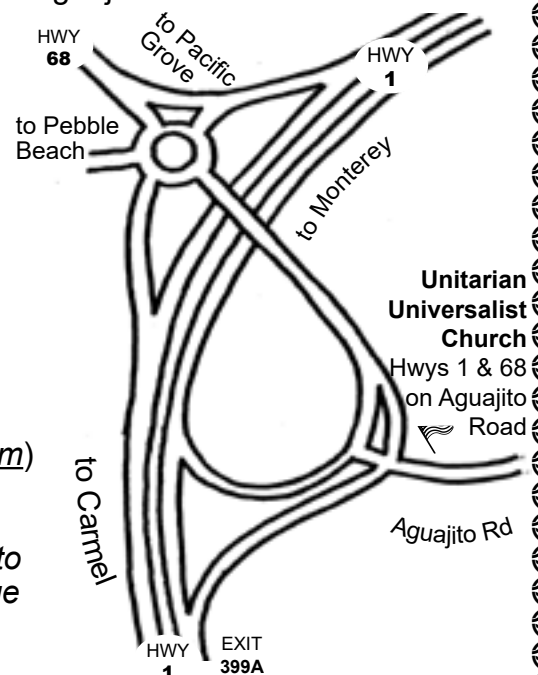
Topic **"Water 101: Who's In Charge  
of Water Supplies?"**

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, March 9th**.

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



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effort to buy out **California American Water**.

Guest Speaker **Gail Morton**, is a practicing **Attorney in Monterey** specializing in **Family Law**.

Morton served as a member of the **Marina City Council** for eight years, is **Marina Coast Water District Board President**, and a member of our **League of Women Voters**.

## ★★★ MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY ★★★

Our LWVMC was represented at the popular **Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration** in **Seaside** on January 19th.

League member **Elizabeth Hall** (second from left below) dropped by to show her



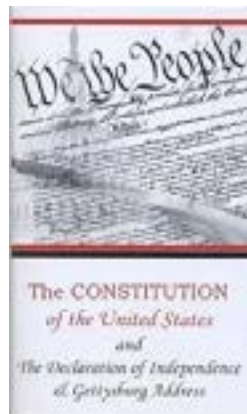
support. We collected names of folks who expressed interest in LWVMC and our mission to defend democracy and empower voters. Among others who also stopped by our League's table was **Soledad's Mayor Anna Velazquez**.



*Kate Edgerton (not pictured), Tama Oliver (far left), and Diane Rowe (far right) staffed the LWVMC table at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration, Seaside.*

Because the event and associated parade were attended by a large number of families,

we were also able to speak to some future voters. And as was appropriate at a celebration of a champion of human rights, interested people were provided a **pocket US Constitution**.



**Tama Oliver**

## ★★★ LWVMC STUDENT VIDEO CONTEST ★★★

The LWVMC High School **Student Video Contest** encouraging registration and voting closed on Thursday, February 26th.



Our contest judges are evaluating the creative submissions, and the **winners will be announced on March 16th**.

All are welcome to join us as we congratulate the winners and present prizes at the **Award Ceremony** on **Tuesday, April 21st, 4:30 PM** at the **Marina Library Community Room**, 190 Seaside Avenue, Marina CA 93933.

**Marianne Gawain, Sandy Hoag, Shelley Sweet**



## SALINAS VALLEY VOTER REGISTRATION PROJECTS UNDERWAY!



**T**he Monterey County Elections Department led a vigorous Zoom training session on February 13th for 15 individuals, at the request of League members. Most of these dedicated people will participate in forthcoming League tabling initiative for **Voter Registration in the Salinas Valley** or support **Voter Registration in Salinas Unified School District High Schools** (<https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/elections/get-involved/student-poll-worker-program>).



Initiative led by League members **Jane Meade-Roberts** and **Heather Visscher**. Regular tabling events at Farmers Market locations and at **Hartnell College's** main and satellite campuses will be supported by 14 volunteers in teams of two, currently scheduling through March, April and May. Most teams are responsible for one or two events.

We hope that our recurring presence will make it easier for young people and their families living in these communities to register to vote, encourage others to register and vote by being visible reminders through these activities. **We welcome additional volunteers**, for as little as a single three-hour session once a month, or more frequent participation at any one of the eight locations we have initially identified. **We expect to continue this Initiative through to the November mid-term election.**

Among the usual elements of the Elections Department training sessions, there were good discussions about: **registering youth**, either online or via paper; registering people enrolled in the **Safe at Home Program** ([www.sos.ca.gov/registries/safe-home](http://www.sos.ca.gov/registries/safe-home)) and becoming aware of their need for extra protections; registering **persons without physical home addresses**; as well as a range of other voter registration topics.

This month we'll also see the launch of the **"Defend Democracy" Salinas Valley Voter Registration**

You can join in these dynamic activities by contacting **Heather** ([Heather.Visscher@gmail.com](mailto:Heather.Visscher@gmail.com)) or **Jane** ([Sandbox202@gmail.com](mailto:Sandbox202@gmail.com)). We'll be happy to find a spot for you on our developing team!



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**T**he League of Women Voters US acted swiftly to condemn statements on **nationalizing elections**. See **"League of Women Voters Condemns President Trump's Call to 'Nationalize' Elections"** using the QR code at right, or go to <https://tinyurl.com/3tterdmc>.



For us who believe deeply that the integrity of elections is fundamental to the survival of our democracy, Trump's statements are beyond alarming. Along with many other members of LWVMC, we have volunteered to work at the polls on Election Day. Over the years, we have seen first-hand the commitment of the **Monterey County Elections Department** to a free, fair, and transparent process, and seen the care that

the Registrar and elections staff take in preparing poll workers to serve voters in inclusive, respectful, and supportive ways. We know that voting matters and helping people vote can be educational and very, very satisfying. **Claims that elections are broadly corrupt are unsupported by evidence.** Such claims are blatant attempts to undermine our democracy and must be called out for the politically-motivated tactics that they are.

Your membership demonstrates your commitment to defending our democracy and provides support to continue our critically important work, especially in these extraordinary times.

**Dennis Mar and Tama Olver,**  
Co-Presidents LWVMC



# LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW: ASSEMBLYMEMBER DAWN ADDIS

Annually, LWVMC participates in interviewing California legislators who represent constituents in Monterey County to gather information for LWV California's advocacy work. On January 20th members of our chapter participated with members from **LWV Santa Cruz County** and **LWV San Luis Obispo County** in an interview with **Dawn Addis, Assemblymember District 30, Central Coast**, organized and moderated by the SLO League.

Assemblymember Addis responded to questions about legislative priorities, safety for immigrant communities, funding shortfalls for education, and safety of green-energy battery storage facilities.

Highlights of her comments were: While California is a donor state, contributing more financially to the federal government than we take, **the Trump administration has attacked federal funding for programs in California**. The state is responding with lawsuits seeking relief. At the same time, discussions have begun to address a significant budget shortfall for the state.

Assemblymember Addis has introduced legislation to **close loopholes related to proposals for offshore drilling in California** and legislation to address the **threat of a third-term presidency**

**by making it a felony** for a party to nominate a candidate for President or Vice President **in violation of the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution**.

Addis clarified that the **Central Coast Caucus**, of which she is a member, is prioritizing environmental and economic issues affecting the Central Coast.

Regarding safety for immigrant communities, she has introduced legislation **ending qualified immunity for ICE agents who deny medical care to detainees**. Other legislation would **prevent local law enforcement from "moonlighting" with ICE**.

While there is much that needs to be done, Addis also noted progress in legislation to improve **safety in construction of battery storage facilities**, and to **make up budget shortfalls in education** created directly or indirectly by policies of the current administration.

The interview was moderated by **Joanne Schultz, LWVSLO**. Participants (*below left to right*): **Leslie Brown, Lisa Christensen, LWVSLO; Sandy Hoag, Tama Olver, Micki Welsh, LWVMC; and Barbara Lewis, Dorothy Fry, Laura Grossman LWVSCC.**  
**Tama Olver**



# RENTERS AS VOTERS: PROPOSED PILOT PROJECT

The goal of a “**Renters as Voters**” pilot project is to increase voter turnout among people who rent the place in which they live.

**Why target renters?** Renter rights are a growing current issue in several cities; renters have a history of poor voter turnout; renters fear retaliation if they are too politically outspoken and/or organized; and renters typically feel they have “*little time to spend on politics.*”

**We propose to promote and educate the value of mail-in ballots with this pilot project for the June Primary.** This can be done by selecting several precincts with apartment complexes for focused voter outreach, and afterwards determine if the effort increased voter turnout.

The renter-tenant population is a pawn in the increasing discussions about housing affordability. **The major voices are the “ownership class,”** focused on economic discussions by landlords, realtors, and builders.

Numerous additional issues fall into the topic of affordable housing: housing supply, types and sizes of units, Regional Housing Needs Allocations targets in urban jurisdictions ([www.hcd.ca.gov/rhna](http://www.hcd.ca.gov/rhna)), zoning, balanced communities, fewer options for individuals and young families, the unsheltered and homeless, climate change, costs, and who pays.

**The pawns here are renters** who generally do not participate in public dialogues, as explained above---others speak for them. **Low voter turnout of renters is an important weakness in our voter-based democracy.**

Renters and their low to moderate incomes are linked to many other issues: the high cost of housing, commuting causing traffic congestion,



fighting greenhouse gas emissions affecting climate change, the pathways to homelessness, state legislation for infill housing, and relentless public debate. As well, decisions are often made above the heads of renters. Without better public policy and financial actions, the dilemmas of affordability and the fallout within all our communities will continue.

**Another factor in continuing low-turnout is that our workforce of young adults, and young families will not be part of our communities.** We are already losing the sense of balanced neighborhoods by the lack of affordable housing.

Furthermore, renters face serious hardship from inflation and moderate wages. Renters are emerging as a permanent group likely never being able to accumulate downpayments sufficient to afford purchasing. And currently it is a **low priority target group** as many voter lists screen them out because they have poor voting records, are often shown as voting once or twice in the last five elections, or worse.

I propose that the renter voter “bloc” can be reached with a little more effort by noting that: **the concentration of voters in apartment complexes present positive considerations**, such as less walking for face-to-face education. “Gated” facilities force campaigning via social media/mailers, but the strategy can stress the ease of mail-in ballots.

To organize a pilot project on **Renter Voter Turnout** in the June Primary. I propose to select a few apartment complexes, within a few precincts, in cities with increased public awareness of renter issues: **Salinas, Marina, and Monterey.** We will recruit a few volunteers to personally contact some “frequent voters” (persons who have voted in at least three of the last five elections), contact some  
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"infrequent voters" (persons who have voted in two of the last five elections), and organize meetings to discuss voting. In the event of **persons fearing contact with ICE** (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement), we could serve as "ballot carriers" so individuals do not need to go public in any way.

However, I am forever the optimist, with some energy for a good cause. **George T. Riley**

### ❧BREAKING NEWS❧



Congratulations League Member  
**Marianne Gawain** on her appointment as  
**Monterey Peninsula Water Management  
Board Director Division 5**

## "HOUSING CRISIS" VIDEOS

**House of 8**, a video company our League worked with a few years ago, sent a 10-minute video to me about the "**Monterey Bay Economic Partnership**" (<https://www.youtube.com/@mbep4093>), which supports employer-led workforce housing built by companies like **Tanimura & Antle**, **Avila Construction**, and the **Pebble Beach Company**



([mbep.biz/initiatives](https://mbep.biz/initiatives)). **Howard Fosler** (former LWVMC President and current League Member) was impressed by **Tanimura and Antle's** workforce housing, which is included in this video. If you don't know about MBEP, the video "**Who Is Addressing the Housing Crisis in Monterey Bay?**" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZF48vPDgaE>) will give you an introduction. They seem like they are doing some good things about our County's housing crisis.  
**Marianne Gawain**

## ★★★ MULTI-YEAR PLAN TO PROTECT AND INCREASE WATER SUPPLY ★★★

**A**s reported by **Alicia Alvarez**, Associate Producer, KSBW News ([www.ksbw.com/article/california-launches-protect-increase-water-supply/70498951](http://www.ksbw.com/article/california-launches-protect-increase-water-supply/70498951)), the formal launch of **California Water Plan 2028** has been announced. It is a multi-year effort modernizing water planning in response to water reliability challenges. Its supply target is a **nine million acre-feet of state water supply by 2040**. The target was chosen because it represents the amount of water supply the state could lose as climate change reduces snowpack and increases drought. It is roughly equal to **two Shasta Reservoirs**.

The launch begins the first phase of work under **Senate Bill 72**, authored by **Senator Anna Caballero**, who represents **Senate District 14**, which covers a major portion of **Fresno**,



**Madera** and **Merced** counties. That bill mandates modernization of the California Water Plan by improving data and setting measurable supply targets. The **Department of Water Resources** will convene an advisory committee to create workplans to fulfill the required 2028 and 2033 updates.

The work for the California Water Plan 2028 will focus on three main objectives: **collecting statewide datasets and creating planning models, creating local targets for long-term water supply, and creating strategies with nature-based solutions** as its primary focuses.

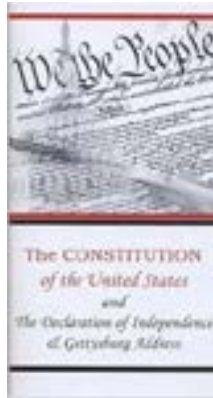
The California Department of Water Resources launched a website for the project available to the public at <https://www.californiawaterplan.com>.

Submitted by **Sharon Miller**



## ★ MEMBERS GETTING INVOLVED ★

**S**o, you've joined the **Monterey County League of Women's Voters**. Maybe a friend suggested you join; maybe you were at a **Lunch and Learn** presentation that ignited a desire to join, or you were at an event where LWV members were giving out "pocket Constitutions" and answering many of your questions. Your questions were answered, you agreed with the LWV mission, you shared the common desire to defend democracy, and ... you joined. And not only did you join, but you **joined a working committee**.



has been tabling at events, and serving as a League poll worker. She continues to come to Lunch and Learn events and is currently designing a new Yard sign for the League. She says, *"I love meeting the interesting people at the League and I'm getting to know what the Leagues does and doesn't do. I'm learning as I go."*

We'll share stories of active members every month. Stay tuned, and if you would like us to tell your story, please let us know!

**Shelley Sweet and Pam Bonsper**

As co-chairs of the **Membership Committee**, we want to share stories about members joining committees and getting actively involved:

**Kate Egerton** who spoke to me at the **Seaside Oldemeyer Center** in January said, *"I joined about a year ago. I've known about the League of Women Voters for a long time but hadn't had availability to attend meetings and help with issues. But after the 2024 election, I met a lot of League members through training as a Monterey County election volunteer. I helped staff polling places*



*which inspired me to get connected with the local group. I've joined a couple of committees*

*and am excited to start working on projects. So, I'm here now tabling at the **Martin Luther King** event to let people know about League projects and passing out pocket Constitutions, which is great. I'm looking forward to working on the **Vote 411** project later in the Spring."*

**Elizabeth Hall** from Salinas has been a member for eight months. She saw information about the League on a **Peace & Justice Center** calendar, came to a **Lunch and Learn** meeting, attended a League committee and a board meeting, and is now a member of the **Defending Democracy Committee**. She



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

~**Kathleen Balke**~

*Monterey*

~**Deborah Evans**~

*Carmel Valley*

~**Pamela Looney**~

*Pacific Grove*

~**Murtaza Mogri**~

*Carmel*

~**Louise Morris**~

*Salinas*

~**Diane Rowe**~

*Seaside*

## 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**  
LWVmryco@gmail.com

# TEACHING & LEARNING THE IMPORTANCE OF VOTING

*This article was submitted in October 2025, "misplaced" until now, but still relevant.  
Apologies to Marianne and thank you for actively encouraging the youth vote!*

All **California State University Monterey Bay** students must fulfill a service-learning requirement reflective of the university's core values emphasizing **social justice, social responsibility, and community-building**. Our League was invited by service-learning instructor **Nancy Garcia** to speak to her students about the importance of voting. I had the pleasure of representing the LWVMC in two of Ms Garcia's classes on October 21, 2025.



After speaking about the League's history—including a reminder that women were never "given" the right to vote but fought hard for it—the students broke into small discussion groups and were asked to identify some compelling reasons for voting. They were asked to think of an argument *against* voting and to try to rebut it. When the groups came together again to share their ideas, students uniformly expressed appreciation for the importance of voting, and in particular, showed an understanding of the significance of local elections in affecting matters close to their lives.

After discussing the "whys" of voting, we reviewed **how to register and vote**. Although registration for the November special election had just closed, I alerted them to "conditional voting," California's term for same-day registration and voting, and about some reliable resources for voter education, including **Vote411**, **CalMatters**, and **Ballotpedia**.

Ms Garcia proved an excellent role model for her students when she related that she had sat down with her parents and other family members who are not regular voters and shown them how to complete their ballots, while at the same time respecting the privacy of their voting choices.

I then presented the **LWVMC's Proposition 50 Pro & Cons** slide show as developed by **MaryEllen Dick** and **Dennis Mar**. I got several good questions and came away with the impression that the presentation had increased students' interest in Prop 50. Many thanks to **Ms Garcia** for inviting the League and to her students for being a thoughtful audience.

**Marianne Gawain**

## ★ WATCH OUT FOR THE "SAVE ACT" ★

The **SAVE America Act** (HR 7296) was **approved in the House** and is **now waiting on a Senate vote** to pass the controversial voter ID bill. Aimed at keeping non-citizens from registering to vote with more far-reaching impacts for voters with new ID requirements ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, it requires that to register, citizens need a passport, birth certificate, military ID with proof of birthplace, or naturalization documents.



was introduced, with even stricter provisions such as requiring mail-in ballots be received by Election Day and **requiring states share their voter data with the Department of Homeland Security**. But, **it's already illegal for noncitizens to register and vote in state or federal elections** ([www.lwv.org/save-act](http://www.lwv.org/save-act)). **Snopes** ([snopes.com](http://snopes.com)) has repeatedly debunked claims of noncitizen voting and says that **credible estimates of noncitizen voting are as low as 0.0001%**.

Citizens who changed their names since birth would also need documentation. Photo IDs would be required (*not* including **California REAL IDs**). Confusing matters, a third iteration of the bill, "Make Elections Great Again Act" (HR 4798)

If, by the time you read this the bill passed completely, the League urges you to **voice your opposition to the bill with Congress** through the form at [www.lwv.org/save-act](http://www.lwv.org/save-act).

**Arlene Guest**



# JOIN OUR LEAGUE OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

[www.LWVmryco.org](http://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](mailto:LWVmryco@gmail.com)

## **Board of Directors** **League of Women Voters of Monterey County**

### ★ **Officers** **Co-Presidents** Dennis Mar

Tama Olver

**Vice President**  
Shelley Sweet

**Secretary**  
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**Treasurer**  
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**Defending Democracy**  
Tama Olver

**Government / Observer Corps**  
Sharon Miller

**Legislative Interviews**  
Tama Olver

**Membership Recruiting  
& Onboarding Co-Chairs**  
Pam Bonsper

Shelley Sweet

**Nominating Committee (seasonal)**  
Tama Olver

**Natural Resources**  
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**Social Policy Co-Chairs**  
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**Vote 411 Coordinator**  
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## **LWVMryCo The VOTER**

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**LWVMryCo Calendar 2026**



**MARCH**

Board In Person Meeting  
*Monday, March 2nd, 11:30am - 1pm*  
*Marilyn Maxner's Home*  
contact: **Dennis Mar**

LWVMC General In-Person Meeting  
*Wednesday, March 11th, 12 noon*  
*"Water 101: Who's in Charge  
of Water Supplies?"*  
contacts: **George Riley, Janet Brennan**

Natural Resources Committee  
Zoom Meeting  
*"Water Planning Overview"*  
*Thursday, March 19th, 11:30am*

**APRIL**

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

LWVMC General In-Person? Zoom?  
Meeting  
*Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 12 noon*  
*"Climate Change"*  
**Elkhorn Slough Foundation**  
contacts: **Tama Oliver, Beverly Bean.**

**MAY**

Annual In-Person Meeting  
*Wednesday, May 13, 2026*  
*"Lobbying Civic Leaders"*  
contact: **Dennis Mar**

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