



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

"Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy" / April 2024, Volume 96, Number 7

Wednesday, April 10th, 2024

## "Ranked Choice Voting: A Better Election Option?"

**R**anked Choice Voting is a different way to tally voter preferences. It allows second, third and lower choices to be counted as lower ranked candidates are eliminated.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) **depolarizes** (makes campaigns more positive because candidates look for common ground with their opponents instead of mudslinging), **diversifies** (makes our government more representative as more women, people of color, and 3rd party candidates run and win in RCV elections), and **decreases cost while increasing voter participation** (by consolidating two elections into one, eliminating the runoff, thus saving taxpayer money and time).

Candidate	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Avery	●	○	○	○	○
Bernie	○	○	○	○	●
Charlie	○	●	○	○	○
Desmond	○	○	●	○	○
Evelyn	○	○	○	●	○
Faye	○	○	○	○	○



RCV is already being used in general elections in 16 states around the country: **Maine, Alaska, Oregon, Washington, California, Minnesota,** and 10 others. It has been used in **San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley,** and **San Leandro** in local elections since as early as 2004.

Guest speakers **Arash Sayadi** and **Steve Chessin** will explain and answer questions about RCV and how it can change elections, how voters have responded to RCV ballots, how RCV choices are actually tabulated, if voter turnout and campaigning change, and how it impacts fair and diverse representation. *(continued on page 2)*

### How to Attend Our Virtual Meeting

The free **April 10th, 2024 LWVMryCo General Meeting** and presentation described above will use the **Zoom Web Conferencing** platform and **Zoom Chat** for Q&A.

**11:45 am Zoom Check-In / 12 noon Meeting Begins.**

**All current LWVMryCo members** will be sent a link to the Zoom meeting from [lwvmryco@gmail.com](mailto:lwvmryco@gmail.com) on the **Monday before the meeting** (e.g., on **Monday, April 8th** for this month) with instructions on how to join the meeting.

**Not a member?** Non-members can send a message to [LWVMryCo@gmail.com](mailto:LWVMryCo@gmail.com) requesting an invitation to receive the link and instructions. **You can also join by phone:** numbers for audio-only will be provided along with meeting numbers and codes.

**Can't get into the meeting using link/instructions?**

Call **Tama Olver (831) 869-2748**



**Arash Sayadi** has a background in systems thinking. He joined **CalRCV** ([www.calrcv.org](http://www.calrcv.org)) in 2022 and is now an **Executive Board Member and Head of Operations**.

Sayadi runs his own consulting practice, **TalVeo** ([valteotech.com](http://valteotech.com)), which provides IT and Operations Consulting to nonprofit, nonpartisan political reform organizations.



**Steve Chessin**, **President, Californians for Electoral Reform** ([cfer.org](http://cfer.org)), and a software engineer, was the prime mover behind **Santa Clara County's successful 1998 charter amendment**, allowing the use of RCV in county elections. Chessin

has been active with the **LWVC**, and partially responsible for their adoption of the position to support RCV. **George Riley**

★ **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE APRIL 2024** ★

In pop music this is the era of talented megastar **Taylor Swift**, but the song on my soundtrack is fifty years old—in **"Big Yellow Taxi,"** **Joni Mitchell** grieves lost love and environmental degradation: *"Don't it always seem to go, you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone?"*



We've all felt anguish when something we have taken for granted is lost, perhaps irretrievably. For some, the **US Supreme Court Dobbs decision** ([tinyurl/sSCOTUSDobbs](https://tinyurl.com/sSCOTUSDobbs)), and the **embryo-personhood movement in Alabama** ([tinyurl/fetalpersonhoodVox](https://tinyurl.com/fetalpersonhoodVox)) have been "Yellow Taxi moments." Lulled into false security by a belief that rights established by a Supreme Court decision would not be revoked, many Americans failed to appreciate how quickly their reproductive rights could be whisked away.

Now we risk hearing the screen door slam behind our departing **consensus on the fundamentals of democratic governance**. However distraught we may feel about these critical issues, we must confront the issues, and those who disagree with us, within the framework of non-violent debate and action, fact-based analysis, a search for principled compromise, civic engagement, electoral competition, ballot access, and respect for peaceful transfer of power.

Where significant modification of governmental processes or structures is necessary to achieve

essential ends (e.g., reform of the Electoral College, advocated in the US League's **"Making Democracy Work"** program) reforms must be accomplished by Constitutional means.

As this election year gains momentum, the road forward is made all the rougher by likely incursions of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** into our election cycle. The ever-increasing capacity of AI is a dangerous weapon in the hands of enemies foreign and domestic who would manipulate us. Society must wrestle with ways to reduce the dangers of AI while harnessing its positive potential; whatever structural guardrails we impose, our individual vigilance will always be essential. When we hear a call for urgent action, we must ask: *"Is it sincere and fact-based or fear-mongering, driving us into rash responses?"* Let's live up to the name Homo Sapiens ("wise humans"), using our ability to create and deploy tools, rather than becoming the tools of others, AI or human.

And rather than letting any of our rights and freedoms slip away, let's take stock now of what we have and how we might protect it. I'm so proud to be part of the League, where whether we're fans of Taylor, classic rock, jazz, or classical music, we share a commitment to defending our democratic system and norms. Thank you for joining in this essential work!

**Marianne Gawain**

# CHANGES IN THE MAKE-UP OF PACIFIC GROVE'S CITY COUNCIL

**C**hanges are coming to Pacific Grove! A number of other city councils in Monterey County have already moved from **members elected at-large** to **members elected by district**. Pacific Grove may be unique in that it is at the same time considering downsizing from **six council members to four**.



Pacific Grove City Hall

is significant opportunity to approach the change from the perspective of **"doing the right thing for democracy."**

**Number of City Council Members**  
**Pacific Grove Interim City Manager Robert Perrault** pointed out that the City Charter calls for a six-member City Council, plus the mayor, all elected at-large. In 2022 the Council placed

## Election by District

The **California Voting Right Act**, passed at the height of the **Civil Rights Movement** in 1965, prevents discrimination in all voting processes by racial, ethnic, and minority-language-use criteria. While often invoked to prevent discrimination in the creation of voting districts (gerrymandering), it can also be used through litigation to require entities who elect representatives at-large to move to elections by district.

**LWVMC member Tama Olver** served on two local **Redistricting Commissions** after the **2020 Census** and revealed the value of drawing district lines that might not only **allow underrepresented communities a larger voice**, but also increase the probability of **more diverse representation** among elected officials.



**Measure O** on the ballot to reduce the Council from 6 to 4 members. **The measure failed by 13 votes** (proof positive of the League saying "Your Vote Counts")!

Nearly 90% of California cities have 5-seat city councils (including the mayor). In Monterey County, only Salinas and the much smaller Pacific Grove (population 15,000), have larger councils. Because the City is under a demand letter to move to by-district elections for City Council, Mr. Perrault warns that it might be difficult to find candidates willing to run for City Council with 6 very small districts, resulting in council members being appointed rather than voted in. **Pacific Grove needs to know soon whether to draw maps for four districts or six.**

**LWV of California** is in support of such a move *"... if it can be shown that it could increase representation for traditionally underrepresented communities."* **Helen Hutchison, recent past President LWV**, pointed out that boards that switched from at-large to district elections were on average **10-12 percent more diverse** after the shift.

The city of Pacific Grove has taken the first step toward electing city council members by-district after authorizing the engagement of a demographer to analyze the city's population. While the impetus for their action was a **demand letter from LULAC** (League of United Latin American Citizens), there

At its March 20, 2024, meeting, the City Council directed the City Manager to **place a measure on the November 2024 general election ballot reducing the Council's composition from 6 to 4 members**. Should it pass, it would not be implemented until November 2026.

Districting and redistricting are issues that never die, and the LWVMC will continue to watch and weigh in as appropriate in this, and other, instances. More information, including opportunities to **attend PG City Council meetings via Zoom** or to view **videos of past meetings**, can be found on their website: [cityofpacificgrove.org](http://cityofpacificgrove.org).

**Tama Olver and Sharon Miller**



# NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

March 14th Discussion Topic Summaries:

**O**ur Guest Presenter in March was **Leora Tanjuatco Ross, National Organizing Director, YIMBY Action** ([yimbyaction.org](http://yimbyaction.org)). YIMBY (“**Yes In My Back Yard**”), is a national network of local groups, advocating government for change toward affordable, inclusive, sustainable housing. YIMBY aims to **undo discriminatory housing policies, and fight poverty and homelessness**. Their strategies are to: legalize housing, fund affordable housing, increase housing stability, streamline permitting, and expand incentives. We discussed ways to counter the demographic mismatch between income extremes in the sector and possible solutions in our area.



Leora Tanjuatco Ross



The first result was to **propose a letter from the LWVMC to the County urging affordable housing action that may not be CEQA compliant** (streamline permitting). The purpose is to create an expedited process in easing up some requirements. A draft is in progress, and will be presented to the Board.

## Upcoming NR Committee Meetings

The next **Thursday, 12 Noon, Zoom meetings** will be held **April 11th / May 9th / June 13th / and July 11th**. There will be **no meeting in August**. Meetings resume again on **September 12th**.

George Riley

## MARCH 5TH POLLWORKERS

**L** league volunteers staffed two **Presidential Primary** polling places: **Cabrillo Family Resource Center, Seaside** and **Old Town Hall, Del Rey Oaks**. **Inspector Pam Stewart** had a challenging time at Cabrillo—**three precincts** voted there, so pollworkers had to keep track of **three voter rosters** and **24 different ballots!** **Inspector Dennis Mar** had an easier time in Del Rey Oaks—only a single precinct voted there.

*Thank You League Volunteers:* **Beth Benoit, Janet Brennan, Betsy Buchalter, Carol Kaplan, Kay Cline, Catherine Crockett, Fatima Dias, Maryellen Dick, Hetty Eddy, Robert Evans, Patricia Fletcher, Elaine Gehrman, Alice Ann Glenn, Whitney Gravel, Tamara Harris, Anne Herendeen, Sandy Hoag, Carol Kaplan, Marilyn Maxner, An McDowell, Lucy Moore, Shelley Sweet, Rosemary Wells, and Kathleen Wojtkowski.**

The League was joined by colleagues from **AAUW** (American Association of University Women), so also *Thank You:* **Deborah Biller, Nona Childress, Betsy Couch, Marilyn Erickson, Andrea Madsen, and Deborah & Peter Stern.**

Dennis Mar

## LWVMC YOUTUBE "VIEWS"

**I**t's great to see the latest statistics on the number of “views” **LWVMC presentations and forums YouTube** channel are getting. Our December 14, 2023 **“Candidates Forum for the 5th District Supervisor”** and the **“Short-Term Rentals”** presentation of February 14, 2024, account for the strongest viewing statistics on YouTube this month.

With 156 total views accounting for 1,382 minutes watched, clearly many people are tuning in only briefly. Collectively, though, that 1,382 minutes comes to nearly 24 hours of viewing time!

If you haven't yet done so, go to our  **YouTube** website ([LWVMryCo.org](http://LWVMryCo.org)), click on the **“Videos”** tab, and you'll find all our recent presentations.\* If you're a “YouTuber,” you can follow our League's channel there. If you're on **Facebook**, you'll find us on that platform thanks to **Olivia Mandilk.**

Debby Majors-Degnan

*\*Except March 8, 2023 “Restorative Justice,” which was not taped due to privacy concerns.*



# LWVMC MEMBER PROFILE: GAIL MORTON



**M**arina Coast Water District Board President and former Marina City Councilmember Gail Morton joined our League of Women Voters chapter in 2012. She attends as many League meetings as possible while working as an attorney at **Monterey Family Law**, and she rarely misses a monthly meeting of the **Natural Resources Committee** with **George Riley**.

Born in **Santa Clara**, Gail became a practicing attorney in 1978 and moved to our area in 1999. *“My parents had bought a vacation home here,”* she recalls. Visiting here convinced her that this would be an excellent place to raise her daughter. *“I was a single mother with a three-year-old, practicing law full time. Moving here turned out to be a blessing.”*

**Mackenzie MortonBoone**, Gail's daughter, just served as **Campaign Manager** for **Kate Daniels'** election as **Monterey County Supervisor** to replace retiring **Mary Adams**. Gail says, *“Probably the thing I'm proudest of is that I raised a very competent, caring, invested woman.”*

In addition to her law practice, Gail's passion has been protecting our natural environment with smart



planning. In 2008, after being contacted by horse owners, she successfully fought to save the **Marina Equestrian Center** as a public park.

Thereafter she became one of the founders of **Fort Ord Recreation Users** to defeat the County's plan for **Monterey Salinas Transit** to build its facilities in an oak woodland in the former Fort Ord. Eighteen thousand signatures on the **2011 Whispering Oaks Referendum Petition** convinced County

Supervisors to rescind their approval. The land is now open space. The Marina Equestrian Center and Whispering Oaks are integral to the open space corridor between the **Fort Ord Dunes State Park** and the **Fort Ord National Monument**, and led to the **Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway (FORTAG)**.



Gail served on the **Marina City Council** from 2012 to 2020 and represented Marina on the **Fort Ord Reuse Authority Board (FORA)**. In 2017, she made a presentation titled, *“What's Up at FORA?”* at the March LWVMC luncheon. In *The Voter*, **Janet Brennan** described Gail as *“a strong advocate for transparency and informed leadership, responsible fiscal policies, true enforcement of the Reuse Plan through FORA's consistency determinations, the Regional Urban Design Guidelines, removal of blight and...FORTAG.”*



As part of Gail's efforts to preserve our beautiful environment, she reports that, as a **Marina Councilmember**, she *“was involved in the shutting down of the **Cemex sand mining operation**, responsible for the loss of five feet of beach annually. With the California Coastal Commission and State Lands Commission, the city negotiated the closure of the mine and preservation of this Marina coast as open space. I'm very proud of how effective we were as a small city. The outcomes of our efforts are much broader than just the City of Marina.”*



*(continued on page 6)*

When asked what she would like to see the League do in the future, Gail said she appreciates the League's efforts to inform people on issues that should be important. "We need both informed voters and activists," she said. "The Natural Resources Committee is important—it involves multiple jurisdictions and they all bring significance and perspective. That's critical for us in developing regional solutions."



Certainly, League members can appreciate Gail Morton's lifelong efforts to improve our natural environment.

Nancy Baker Jacobs

## MAY 8TH: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

We will meet and lunch in person at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Note the early start time!



**11:15 Registration opens**, allowing time to socialize and view the art from our HS Student Art Contest (details below). **11:45 sharp Business starts.** **12:15 Buffet lunch opens.** Shortly thereafter, we will have a presentation, introduced by **Marilyn Maxner**, on "*The Monterey County Civil Grand Jury.*"

Marianne Gawain

## ☆☆☆ LWVMC ART CONTEST WINNERS ☆☆☆

The Art Contest Committee sent out a call for entries for a poster entitled: "*Your Voice Is Your Vote*"—and then we held our collective breath. Would students and their teachers rise to this challenge? They did with abundant creativity and thoughtful reflection on the importance of voting. We received 69 submissions from students grades 9 through 12 from ten schools throughout Monterey County. Special thanks go out to two art teachers, **Kaitlin Emmons, North Salinas High School** and **Gerard Martin, York School, Monterey**, who encouraged students to submit posters.



GRAND PRIZE art: **Diego Suarez**

Nine Merit Awards (\$75 each) went to: **Cindy Alcaraz and Jovany Razo, Soledad**; **Zoey McNeil, Lily Gill, and Samuel Clarke, Monterey**; **Cesar Escobar, Jaime Isidro Vega Mendez, and Diana Sanchez, Salinas**; and **Sophia Kemmerly, Carmel.**

A varied selection of posters, including the two grand prize winners, are now on display at seven public libraries: **Cesar Chavez and El Gabilan, Salinas**; **Harrison Memorial, Carmel**; **John Steinbeck, Salinas**; **King City Public**; **Monterey Public**; **Soledad Branch**; and also at the **Peace and Justice Center, Seaside.**

The contest was juried by: **Jisella Duarte, Artist/Librarian, Salinas**; **Stacey Gregory, Artist** (whose recent show inspired the contest); with a third vote from the **League Contest Committee**. All jurors agreed that this was a tough job, as many posters were worthy of special recognition. **Grand prizes** (\$200 each) were awarded to **Diego Suarez, York School** for his hand-painted poster, and to **Jasmin Saldana, North Salinas High** for her digital work.



GRAND PRIZE art: **Jasmin Saldana**

We appreciate the assistance, collaboration, and excitement that the display sites have shown in promoting the contest and showing the student artist's work.

We also encourage you to visit a site and see the incredible results between now and April 24. Many of the art posters will also be on display at our **Annual Meeting on May 8th** (details above).

Shelley Sweet





## Call for New Board and Committee Members!



Your Nominating Committee is on the lookout for new people. **Open positions:**

**Secretary** - Take notes at Zoom Board meetings, provide final copy for the record.

**Government** - Organize a committee to focus on investigating issues of local interest under League purview.

**Member-at-Large** - Attend Zoom Board meetings, join in decision-making, help investigate issues.

Or, join an existing Committee (*Voter Service, Natural Resources, etc.*), or create and lead a new one! Contact:

**Arlene Guest, Pam Stewart, Dennis Mar, Linda Gin, or Nancy Baker Jacobs**

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

🎉 **Welcome New Member!** 🎉  
**Jillian Wilson**

### 🎉 **New Members 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: **Janet Brennan**  
[brennan\\_janet@comcast.net](mailto:brennan_janet@comcast.net)  
(831) 659-2090



**Join the League of Women Voters of Monterey County**



### **FREE STUDENT MEMBERSHIP**

Students may join LWVMryCo via the website without paying membership fees.

### **New Members Welcome!**

*Any person age 16 or older may be a member.*

Use the form below or contact:

*LWVMC Membership Director*

*Mail to LWVMryCo PO Box 1995*

*Monterey, CA 93942*

*Checks payable to LWVMC or online with credit card or PayPal*

### **Membership Levels**

- \$250+ **Carrie Chapman Catt**
- \$200 **Sojourner Truth**
- \$150 **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**
- \$100 **Susan B. Anthony**
- \$ 95 **Household (2 persons, 1 address)**
- \$ 65 **Single membership**
- (free) **Student (16-24 years, enrolled in a diploma or degree program)**

Name(s)

Address

City

State

Zip Code

Phone

e-mail

*Please do NOT publish my address, phone number or email in The Voter newsletter*

### 🎉 **Florence Curlee Scholarships** 🎉

are available to pay household or single membership fees. Contact:

**Janet Brennan, [Brennan\\_Janet@comcast.net](mailto:Brennan_Janet@comcast.net)**

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

*However, donations to the League of Women Voters of California Local Impact Fund (LWVCLIF)*

*(formerly LWVC Education Fund)*

*are tax deductible, but please continue to make the donations payable to LWVCEF.*



# BE ONE OF OUR DELEGATES AT THE 2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION, WASHINGTON DC



The National Convention 2024 will take place June 27-June 30  
at the Washington Hilton.



In-person and virtual delegates will have opportunities to participate in the **Convention Plenary** and vote on the League's **2024 – 2026 Program, Budget, LWVUS Board of Directors and Nominating Committee, bylaws and amendments.** Other activities include a **pre-Convention Lobby Day** on Thursday (27th), a **reception and dinner** on Saturday night (29th) showcasing local DC culture, and a **variety of breakout sessions.**

Our **LWVMC** can offer **funding to partially offset costs of travel and attendance.** For further information on this, or for personal details on the Convention experience, advice and encouragement, contact: **Marilyn Maxner, Marianne Gawain, or Dennis Mar.**

**Registration** is now open for in-person and virtual attendance at [tinyurl.com/LWVUSconvention](https://tinyurl.com/LWVUSconvention).



## League of Women Voters of Monterey County



Office Mariposa Hall, 801 Lighthouse Avenue (corner of Irving), New Monterey CA 93940

### ★ Officers

#### President

Marianne Gawain

#### Vice President

Tama Olver

#### Secretary

Dennis Mar

#### Treasurer

Marilyn Maxner

### ★ Policy Portfolios

#### Government

(vacant)

#### LWV Action

Janet Brennan

#### Natural Resources

Beverly Bean, Co-Chair

#### Social Policy

Bev Kreps

### ★ League Activities

#### Membership

Janet Brennan

#### Publicity / Luncheons

Beverly Bean

#### "The Voter" Editor

Regina Doyle

#### Voter Service

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Jeanne Turner

### ★ Members At-Large

#### Whitney Gravel

Olivia Mandilk

Sharon Miller

Shelley Sweet

### ★ Off-Board

#### LWV California

Jackie Jacobberger

#### Natural Resources

George Riley,  
Off Board Co-Chair

#### Nominating Committee

Nancy Baker Jacobs (2022-24)

Arlene Guest (2022-24)

Linda Gin (2023-25)

Dennis Mar

Pamela Stewart

#### Facebook/VOTE411

Olivia Mandilk

#### VOTE 411 Coordinator

Arlene Guest

#### Videographer

Joe Asling

#### "The Voter" Biographer

Nancy Baker Jacobs

#### Website Coordinator

Debby Majors-Degnan

### LWVMryCo The VOTER

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OF MONTEREY COUNTY  
"THE VOTER" NEWSLETTER**

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***LWVMryCo Calendar 2024***



**APRIL**

**Board Zoom Meeting**  
*Monday, April 1st, 11:30am*  
contact: Marianne Gawain

**General Zoom Meeting**  
*Wednesday, April 10th, 12 noon*  
**"Ranked Choice Voting"**  
contact: George Riley

**Natural Resources Committee  
Zoom Meeting**  
*Thursday, April 11th, 12 noon*  
contact: George Riley

**MAY**

**Board Zoom Meeting**  
*Monday, May 6th, 11:30am*  
contact: Marianne Gawain

**In-Person Annual Membership Meeting**  
*Wednesday, May 8th, 12 noon*  
**"Monterey County Grand Jury"**  
**Presenter: Marilyn Maxner**  
*LWV Art Contest posters to be Displayed*  
contact: Marianne Gawain

**Natural Resources Committee  
Zoom Meeting**  
*Thursday, May 9th, 12 noon*  
contact: George Riley

**JUNE / JULY / AUGUST  
SUMMER BREAK**

**No Board, General, or Committee Meetings (except NR see below), or Voter Newsletter**

**Natural Resources Committee Zoom Meetings**  
*Thursday, June 13th and Thursday, July 11th, 12 noon. No August Meeting.*  
**Resume September 12, 12 noon** contact: George Riley

**LWVUS 2024 Convention: Washington DC, June 27 to 30, in person and online**  
contact: [www.lwv.org/events/2024-national-convention](http://www.lwv.org/events/2024-national-convention)