

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

"Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy" / January 2025, Volume 97, Number 3

Wednesday, January 8th, 2025

## "Big Sur Land Trust: Projects and Progress"

**B**ig Sur Land Trust is a non-profit organization with a mission to inspire a love of land across generations, conserve our unique Monterey County landscapes, and preserve access to outdoor experiences for all. Its members see a future where natural landscapes, working lands, urban open spaces and healthy communities are cared for by people who share a passion for nature and a deep appreciation for the richness of diverse cultures.



**Jeannette  
Tuitele-Lewis**



Big Sur Land Trust ([bigsurlandtrust.org](http://bigsurlandtrust.org))

was founded in 1978, when a dozen Big Sur residents came together over potluck dinners and coffee to find ways to conserve the lands they

love. Since then, generous donors and partners have helped **conserve over 45,000 acres throughout Monterey County.**

In the past 46 years, its work has not only expanded geographically but in its mission: recognizing relationships between healthy lands, healthy people, and healthy communities. This is

exemplified by large-scale multi-faceted projects such as: the Trust's first urban lands project, **Ensen Community Park**, which brought much needed open space

and a restored wetland to the heart of Salinas; the **Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and**

*continued on page 2*

### In-Person Lunch & Learn, Wednesday, January 8th

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

**11:30 am Doors Open & Registration Begins**

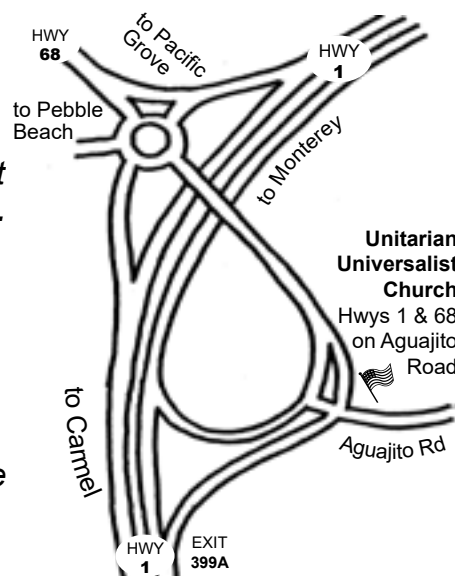
**12 noon Lunch (optional) / 12:30 to 1:30 Presentation**

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

**Reservations for lunch are required**  
and can be made through **Monday, January 6th**

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 January 5th.



**Environmental Enhancement Project**; and most recently the co-management of **Basin Ranch** with the **Esselen Tribe of Monterey County**.

**Guest Speaker, Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis**, is **President and CEO of Big Sur Land Trust**. Under her leadership since 2014, the Trust has doubled its operations, and expanded its programs and partnerships with a greater focus on community-centered, land-based projects with multiple conservation and social benefits.



Prior to this, Jeannette worked for **Sierra Foothill Conservancy** for nine years, serving as **Executive Director** for the last five. During her tenure, the organization reached significant land conservation goals, developed working partnerships with local indigenous tribes, and became **Land Trust Alliance** accredited.

Born in California, Jeannette spent much of her youth between the West Coast and the Pacific

Islands. Upon graduating from the **University of Hawai'i at Manoa** with a degree in **Botany**, she worked in the **American Samoan Islands** for the **Community and Natural Resources Division**, documenting medicinal uses of plants by traditional healers, worked with local farmers, and coordinated restoration works with village chiefs.

Jeannette received a **Master's Degree in Forest Science** from **Oregon State University**, where her studies integrated agro-forestry systems, land tenure, and traditional ecological knowledge. Following graduate school, Jeannette worked as a **Forest Science Technician**, collecting data on carbon storage in old growth forests across the Pacific Northwest.

Jeannette is **Immediate Past Chair, Board of the California Council of Land Trusts**, and on the **National Leadership Council of the Land Trust Alliance**. She also serves on the **Peggy and Jack Baskin Foundation Board**, which supports strategies to reach gender and racial equity.

**Beverly Bean and George Riley**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JANUARY 2025

**T**he **League of Women Voters** is opportunity. The League is a vehicle through which members can contribute to civic life and learn new skills. One of the League's slogans is **"democracy is not a spectator sport."**

The League is a grassroots organization that can have an effect at the local, state, and national levels. A few years ago, I attended a conference under the title **"Future of California Elections."** Representatives from the California League were there. But most of the other participants were from think tanks, legal organizations, government, and academics.

It struck me that all these other organizations worked to influence election procedures through court files, legislation, lobbying, white papers,

or mass advertising. The League was the only group there that could do community outreach everywhere in the state by meeting citizens face-to-face.



I would encourage you to get involved in League public policy or voter services, for which the League can prepare you. Take for example, candidate forums: decades ago, I attended my first forum. Though I don't remember the position to be filled, there were multiple candidates and a buzzing crowd. The League moderator **Judy Higginson** was keeping the proceedings on track, but the task required some deftness on her part.

I thought to myself, **"Wow, I could never do that,"** and at that time, thought it was true. But I kept

volunteering for candidate forum jobs: timer, runner, question sorter, and finally moderator. Ironically I found that while the moderator is the most visible role, the question sorter is the most difficult task!

It is gratifying when the League can facilitate forums for offices that don't receive much public attention, such as special districts and school districts. No other civic group has the knowledge, resources, and interest to initiate such forums.

If your interest is more on the public policy side, the best place to start is attending the **Natural Resources Committee**, which meets on Zoom monthly (*see meeting update below*).

Even if the topic is not your primary interest, the value in attending committee meetings is that there will be other attendees with long experience dealing with local governments, environmental impact reports, general plans, and state agencies.

Just by observing, you will learn about the tempo of government, the jargon, and the players. This background will be useful when applied to any other policy area.

For another opportunity, read **Sharon Miller's** article about the **Observer Corps** below. League Observers are a long-standing activity that



had fallen by the wayside. But our recent experience with observing redistricting meetings has reminded us of its usefulness. The first step to these activities follows the title of **Yogi Berra's** book: **"You Can Observe A Lot By Just Watching."** Initially you need to learn the players (such as council or board members, staff, vested interests, public activists) and

the local issues (e.g., Sand City looking forward to getting express bus service to Marina). From there it's like watching reality television, but with stronger purpose than who gets the rose!

**Dennis Mar**

## ★★★ **LWV OBSERVER CORPS** ★★★

**H**ear ye! Hear ye! Your LWV is recruiting volunteers for a resurrected **Observer Corps**. Local media doesn't have the resources to follow the actions of important boards, councils and other jurisdictions, so LWV members are filling in the gaps across the country.

Here's a great opportunity, whether you're new to the League or have been a member for years. By putting in a few hours a month you can help promote government transparency and accountability at the same time as you educate yourself and your fellow Leaguers.

From the County Board of Supervisors to City Councils to School Boards to Airport or Water Boards—what geographic area or issue are you interested in? This is the same model we recently used for monitoring redistricting efforts around the county. For example, I intend to monitor the **Pacific Grove City Council** on setting up district elections and on DEI, and am watching the Board of Supervisors regarding sheriff oversight.

Note that meetings can be monitored in person, via Zoom, by watching post-meeting videos, or by checking out the minutes—your choice!

The role of observers is to **witness, record, and report** back to the rest of our membership.



We don't share personal opinions at these meetings, but flag issues that may stir the LWV Board or President to respond. We will also be **building awareness of the LWV** by identifying ourselves as part of the LWV Observer Corps. Guidelines and

reporting forms will be available in late winter after an initial planning meeting. For more information in the meantime, a great resource is: [https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/lwvef\\_observingyourgovernment.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/lwvef_observingyourgovernment.pdf).

Let me know if you're interested in joining!

**Sharon Miller**





## DONATE TO LWVMC, GET UPLIFTING ARTWORK



**D**onate \$125 or more to our **LWV Monterey County** and get a colorful framed 18" x 24" giclee print of your choice! League member **Pam Bonsper** was going to offer her paintings at our November Lunch & Learn, but there wasn't time to "seal the deal" after the speaker finished.

Choose from the three beautiful images below which reflect values the LWV supports: Friendship, Unity and Togetherness.

Contact Pam at (831) 594-1446 to ensure that your selection is still available and to arrange for pick up/delivery.

Make your donation **online** at <https://my.lwv.org/california/monterey-county/donate>, or **mail check** to: LWVMC Treasurer, 1670 Via Casoli, Monterey CA 93940, specifying "*donation for Bonsper artwork.*" It's a beautiful win-win for everyone!

**Sharon Miller**



*"Because We Need Each Other"*



*"Friendship Bouquet"*



*"Unity"*

### NR COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETING JANUARY 9TH

**S**tart your **New Year 2025** with a resolution to get more involved with our League!

The next **Natural Resources Committee Meeting** will meet **via Zoom, Thursday, January 9th at 12 noon**. We will update, discuss, and plan on the topics of **Climate Action** and also **Water and Land Use**.



No prior attendance necessary. All are welcome to tune in, listen and contribute.

**George Riley**

### VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE PLANNING TO MEET

**W**e've had a much-deserved break following the whirlwind of activities associated with the November election. Now we'd like to hold a **virtual (Zoom) brainstorming meeting** to gather all who are interested in planning voter service or youth outreach projects for 2025.

If you're interested in joining us, and/or have some ideas or suggestions about the topics, let me know. I'll be asking all respondents dates they will be available in January and work out a convenient date and time for the most people.

Send an email or call me.



**Arlene Guest**



## LWVMC MEMBER PROFILE: SANDY HOAG



**S**andy Hoag joined the League of Women Voters Monterey County just two years ago, but she's already taken on the job of our chapter's **Secretary**. *"I've been using the League's information to vote for many years and finally decided to join," she explains. "It made sense to me. I had a realization that I would like to more actively support voting and democracy."*



*great organizations—City Team's Heritage Home, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, School Site Council, Stephens' Ministry, etc. Then I became a **general manager** for a residential design and build firm until we moved here."*

Sandy's husband, **Alec Hoag**, was also a software engineer and they have twin children who are following their parents' career paths.

When she first joined, Sandy says she *"got the opportunity to work with **Shelley Sweet** and **Marianne Gawain** with the **"Your Vote Is Your Voice"** high school art contest. During that time is when my mom broke her hip, so my participation was in and out, but I liked how the League was connecting with high school kids."*

In addition, Sandy reports that she's been attending some **Voter Service** meetings *"to get a better understanding of what the League does. I got to be a poll worker the last two elections and I'd never done that before. Once or twice, I attended the **Natural Resources Committee** because I'm very concerned about climate change."*

*"When **Tama Olver** resigned as President, **Dennis Mar** ended up as President and they asked me to be Secretary. Being Secretary is a great way to learn about an organization and to meet people, especially for me," she adds.*



Before moving to this area, Sandy had a long career as a **software engineer in Silicon Valley**. *"I have a **Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science** and **Math** from **UC Davis** and a **Master's in Engineering Management** from **Santa Clara U**," she says. "I got to work first as a **software engineer** and then as a **software manager** for 16 years at **Hewlett Packard**."*



*"After that, I worked at a startup software company until I stayed home and was a mom for ten years. During that time, I got to volunteer with some*

The daughter, **Becky**, lives with Sandy's parents in Cupertino and works in sustainability for East Palo Alto, doing things like increasing access to EV chargers. The son, **Ryan**, lives in San Jose and works in data analysis.

The Hoags' decision to move to the Monterey Bay area was a few years in the making, Sandy explains. *"When Becky was in high school, she volunteered as a Teen Conservation Leader at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. That had us coming down here every single weekend in the summers and we just loved it. So, when we had the opportunity to move, we moved here, right before the pandemic."*



Still, Sandy spends a lot of time doing that commute, now in reverse. *"A big part of my life right now is that my mom is 94 and my dad is 98, so we spend a lot of time in Cupertino with them," she reports. "The medical system there is really good. My dad has had minor heart attacks, but they've managed to stay in the same house for 60 years."* Sandy also helps her father manage rental properties he owns in the Bay Area.

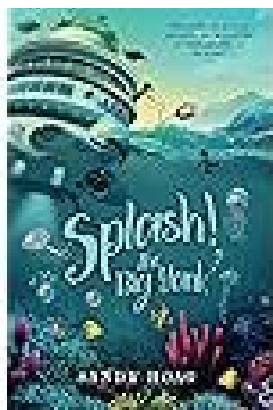
When she's not dealing with family, property management or League matters, Sandy says she and Alec just enjoy living in this area, especially walking their dogs on the beach.

She's also become the author of the **"Splash"** children's book





series. "I've published three children's books. They're action-adventure stories about ocean conservation," Sandy explains. "I use wonderful learning from being a volunteer at the Aquarium to teach kids about the ocean and climate change. The stories are about a girl and her family who live on a research bubble on the ocean and they're going from Monterey up the West Coast to Alaska. Along the way, they're saving baby seals and doing other things that interest kids."



Her self-published books are written for 8-to-12-year-olds and she's now editing the fourth in the series and writing the fifth.

When asked what she'd like to see in our League chapter's future, Sandy Hoag replied, "I like how Shelley and Marianne have connected with high school and college kids and I would

really like the League to continue that work."

Certainly, our League members can agree with that goal.  
Nancy Baker Jacobs

## FRAMING THE FUTURE OFFICE HOURS

On January 15, 4pm ET, there's an opportunity for League members to ask questions about the current phase of our **Transformation Journey** and our new membership platform, **ChapterSpot**.

LEARN MORE at <https://www.lwv.org/events/framing-future-office-hours>

## LEAGUE POSITIONS & HOW YOU CAN USE THEM

On January 16, 3pm ET, join the **LWVUS Advocacy Team** to review Impact on Issues and learn how you can apply these positions to advocate for change.

Learn more at <https://www.lwv.org/events/league-policy-positions-and-how-you-can-use-them>



## CASTING YOUR BALLOT EVEN AT THE HOSPITAL!



Unfortunately I had a short hospital stay in early November 2024. But while there, I was delighted to get the flyer shown at right, offering me help in casting my ballot.

Fortunately I was home in time to do it myself, but kudos to **Community Hospital** for taking a page out of the League's playbook in "empowering voters and defending democracy!"

Regina Doyle

### Need help voting during your hospital stay?

California law protects the rights of voters who are hospitalized on election day. If you would like to vote by absentee ballot on Tuesday, November 5, Montage Health Foundation volunteers and Auxiliary members are here to help. Please notify your nurse and they will send a volunteer to assist you.

#### GUIDELINES:

- You must **complete** your absentee ballot by **11:30 a.m.** on **Tuesday, November 5**
- You must be a U.S. citizen and resident of Monterey County
- You must already be registered to vote in Monterey County
- You must independently determine how you vote; volunteers will not assist with voting selections.
- You must not have already voted by absentee ballot in the current election; your other absentee ballot will be voided

If you have questions about voting during your hospital stay, please reach out to **Kelly Lepai** at [kelly.lepai@montagehealth.org](mailto:kelly.lepai@montagehealth.org) or (831) 402-5028.



*Not all of our League's letters to elected officials are complaints.  
We also note good governance and leadership where credit is due!*



Matt Gourley, Commissioner / Chair  
Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission  
PO Box 1369  
Salinas, CA 93902



December 17, 2024

Subject: **LAFCO's Outstanding Leadership Role in Preserving Agricultural Land**

Dear Chair Gourley and Members of the Commission:

The **League of Women Voters of Monterey County** commends the **Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission** for its role in **preserving agricultural land in Monterey County**. Based on our long-standing position supporting agricultural preservation, we would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding leadership the LAFCO Board has provided in meeting one of its major objectives.

In October 2024, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Monterey County was honored with the **"Mike Gotch Excellence in Public Service Award" for Agricultural Land Protection** by the California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions (CALAFCO) at its 2024 Annual Conference.

The award recognizes LAFCO's ongoing commitment to preserving agricultural lands while fostering responsible, balanced growth through the adoption of its innovative 2024 Agricultural Preservation Policy Amendment.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to protect one of Monterey County's major resources.

Sincerely,  
**Dennis Mar**  
President LWVMC



## 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**

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.**

## NEW LWV MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM

The League of Women Voters is switching to a new “member portal” for all Leagues across the country. No action by members is needed right now, but here's an overview of what these changes mean for you:

When the system launches this month, you will receive an email to log in to the portal, but **you will not be asked to renew until a year after your most recent renewal** (for many members, the next renewal will be June 30, 2024). You will have the option to sign up to auto-renew annually, and your membership will last a year after your last renewal. Once you have access to the portal, you can update your own information, including contact information.



When it comes time to renew, you will receive an email reminder two months prior to your renewal date. **Dues will no longer be a fixed rate but will be pay-what-you-can.** The recommended amount for all members across the country will be \$75, but members can pay any amount with a minimum \$20, including the current dues rate.

Under the current system, our LWV Monterey County pays a fixed rate per member to LWV California and to LWVUS. Under the new system, a percentage of dues will go to State and National Leagues and the rest to Local Leagues. **When**



**you renew, you can make an additional contribution directly to LWV of Monterey County if you wish.**

There will still be an option to renew by check for members who don't use the Internet. Members who can access the portal are encouraged to renew online.

We will keep you informed as we have new and relevant information. Please contact me with any questions.

**Janet Brennan, Membership Chair**



# DID YOU MISS A GENERAL MEETING?

Find them all online at [tinyurl.com/LWVMCVideos](http://tinyurl.com/LWVMCVideos)



## "Our Polarized Politics"

Steven W. Hughes, PhD

(11/13/24)



## "Ranked Choice Voting"

Arash Sayadi & Steve Chessin

(4/10/24)



## Sep 11, 2024 - The State

of Our Local Media

(11/11/24)



## "The Equal Rights Amendment:

The Heart of Alice Paul"

Zoe Nicholson (1/10/24)



## "Monterey Civil

Grand Jury"

Marilyn Maxner (5/8/24)



## "Progress in Addressing

Seawater Intrusion and

Managing Overdraft" (10/11/23)



## Board of Directors

## League of Women Voters of Monterey County



### ★ Officers

#### President

Dennis Mar

#### Vice President

Shelley Sweet

#### Secretary

Sandy Hoag

#### Treasurer

Marilyn Maxner

### ★ Policy Portfolios

#### Government

Sharon Miller

#### LWV Action

Janet Brennan

#### Natural Resources

Janet Brennan

#### Social Policy

Beverly Kreps

### ★ League Activities

#### Membership

Janet Brennan

#### Publicity

Beverly Bean

#### Luncheons

Beverly Bean

#### "The Voter" Editor

Regina Doyle

#### Voter Service

Pamela Stewart

Arlene Guest

### ★ Members-At-Large

Marianne Gawain

Tama Olver

### ★ Off-Board

#### LWV California

Jackie Jacobberger

#### Natural Resources

George Riley

#### Nominating Committee

(Elected)

Robert Evans (2024-26)

Linda Gin (2023-25)

Marjory Kay (2024-26)

(Appointed)

Marianne Gawain

Beverly Kreps

#### VOTE411

Arlene Guest

#### Videographers

Joe Asling

JHAsling@comcast.net

#### "The Voter" Biographer

Nancy Baker Jacobs

#### Website Coordinator

Debby Majors-Degnan

## LWVMryCo The VOTER

Published monthly except June/July/Aug/Dec Send articles & updates to Regina Doyle



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'  
OF MONTEREY COUNTY  
"THE VOTER" NEWSLETTER

PO Box 1995 Monterey CA 93942  
(831) 648-8683

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S.POSTAGE PAID  
Monterey, CA  
Permit No. 115

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



★ **LWVMryCo Calendar 2025** ★



**JANUARY**

**LWVMC**

**Board Zoom Meeting**  
*Monday, January 6th, 11:30am*  
contact: Dennis Mar

**LWVMC In-Person General Meeting**  
*Wednesday, January 8th, 12 noon*  
**"Big Sur Land Trust:  
Projects and Progress"**

**Guest Presenter: Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis,**  
**President/CEO Big Sur Land Trust.**  
contact: **Beverly Bean**  
(for details see front page)

**Natural Resources Committee Meeting**

**FEBRUARY**

**Board Zoom Meeting**  
*Monday, February 10th 11:30am*  
contact: Dennis Mar

**LWVMC Zoom General Meeting**  
*Wednesday, February 12th, 12 noon*  
**Speaker and Subject TBA**

**Natural Resources Committee Meeting**  
*Thursday, February 13th, 12 noon*  
contact: **George Riley**  
(for details see page 4)

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

★ **Voter Service Committee Zoom Meeting in January - date TBA** ★  
(for details see page 4) contact: **Arlene Guest**