



Summer 2023

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

The Voter

Annual Meeting Highlights

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League members at the Annual Meeting

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Stockton Police Chief Stanley McFadden spoke about his year as Police Chief at the LWVSJC Annual Meeting held on June 24, 2023 at Central United Methodist Church. Chief McFadden came to Stockton from San Jose where he had extensive experience in many areas of police work. As a Tracy resident, he is no stranger to the Central Valley. He expressed his appreciation for the community’s deep roots in Stockton which he sees in the ways community members help each other in times of need.



He said his emphasis this past year has been on organizational wellness since a department that is seriously understaffed needs to have healthy staff in order for them to do the best job for Stockton residents. He said he works with an incredible professional staff who are ready to implement changes that will allow them to work more efficiently and effectively for Stockton.

The Chief noted that he would like to expand the School Resource Officer program to have officers serve as role models, not enforcement, in schools where they could initiate help for stu-

dents at risk. He would like to see the media “catch the police doing good things” since many officers volunteer their time in the community, especially in working with youth in sports. Asked what the community could do to help good policing in Stockton, McFadden encouraged residents to be aware of issues in the community and to be alert to what’s happening in Sacramento that could impact local law enforcement.

He thanked the League for the opportunity to interact with community members.

Other Annual Meeting Highlights

PRESIDENT REVIEWS LEAGUE YEAR

League President Kathy Casenave reviewed League activities and accomplishments at the start of the Annual Meeting. She highlighted several:

- Candidate forums held in November 2022 with a broad coalition of community organizations and the technical and panel support of Delta College students
- Legislative interviews with Assemblymembers Heath Flora and Carlos Villapudua
- League testimony before the Board of Supervisors regarding the Voter's Choice Act
- Educational forums on homelessness, child care, and Making Democracy Work

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM ADOPTED

The membership adopted three programs recommended as Issues for Education and Advocacy:

- Post-COVID high school student support
- Land use with an emphasis on air quality and the impact of the growth of warehousing
- Addressing inequities in school facility funding

All three issues impact San Joaquin County directly in some way, so members interested in these topics are encouraged to help plan activities around these topics.



Community Impact Award from Delta College and Commendation from Supervisor Paul Canepa

LOOKING AHEAD

Incoming President Mary Kenefick gave a glimpse of League activities in 2023-2024:

- Voter Service: Candidate forums, high school student voter registration, and strengthening Voter's Edge are on the immediate horizon for the 2024 election cycle.
- Voter's Choice Act: We will continue to monitor activity around the county's consideration of the VCA.
- Advocacy: This year's committee laid the foundation for information and action in the coming year. Members interested in continuing this work, should contact Mary Kenefick.
- Membership: The backbone of a healthy League, membership needs member help in reaching out to potential members and the community at large.
- Finance: Fundraising may be in our future. Looking outside our membership may be the most sustainable plan of action.

Terri Mercer is Newest Helen Pearson Awardee

League 1st Vice President Terri Mercer received this year's Helen Pearson Award for her many and varied contributions to the League this past year. When a task needed to be done, Terri volunteered to do it. She organized this year's Legislative Interviews with our local Assemblymembers and State Senator. She stepped in to be our liaison to the community coalition that planned Candidate Forums for the 2022 General Election. She led the team that planned the Annual Meeting and was a significant support for League president Kathy Casenave throughout the year.



League 2nd Vice President Mary Kenefick presented the award at the Annual Meeting to Terri who was described as someone who volunteers "with her whole League heart."

Terri's work with the Candidate Forums helped earn us the first Community Involvement Award from San Joaquin Delta College's Political Science Department. That award was on display at the Annual Meeting.

Congratulations, Terri!

Power and Possibility: LWVC Convention 2023

LWVC Convention: Notes and Observations

- *Jane Wagner-Tyack, LWVSJC Convention Delegate*

Mary Kenefick and I were our League's delegates to the LWVC Convention held in San Francisco May 19-21, 2023. Here is a summary of some of the Convention's highlights.

Convention Business

Issues for Emphasis

Delegates approved four Issues for Emphasis for 2023-2025:

- **Making Democracy Work in California**, with a focus on election reform, voting rights, expanding the electorate, redistricting, money in politics, and civic education
- **Climate Change/Sustainability**, including a focus on Water
- **Housing and Homelessness**
- **Criminal Justice/Juvenile Justice Reform**, expanding our education and advocacy on policing and criminal justice/juvenile justice reform.

Although Climate Change and Water were not chosen by LWVSJC for our Recommended Program for 2023-2024, as the LWVC Position Director and Legislative Analyst for Water, I am happy to see Water named as an LWVC issue for emphasis. The Water caucus at Convention was well attended: we heard from members around the state about the water issues that are most significant in their regions. The Water Interest Group met separately to plan for future activities and to take advantage of the opportunity to talk face-to-face instead of on Zoom.

Making Democracy Work, the national League program focus, is the main focus for California's biennial program. The League's emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and racial justice is an overarching priority that LWVC intentionally weaves into all its work.

Issues for Emphasis are chosen based on local League recommendations, which are based in turn on local League program planning activities.



Jane Wagner-Tyack and Mary Kenefick at LWVC Convention

Budget

Status of LWVC PMP (per member payment) awaits action from LWVUS on implementation of a unified membership system — one dues model across the country—that would eliminate PMP which has been central to state and national League funding. Details on how this would function in practice have not yet been worked out.

Membership

While membership overall is decreasing, LWVC still has been recognized for some major achievements: LWVC was recognized for its 2020 Youth Get Out the Vote Campaign on Snapchat and TikTok. The League received grant funding to run the project again in

the 2022 election, reaching millions of young voters, including Black and Latino voters.

Lead with kindness and curiosity, not with outrage.
- *Stephanie Doute, LWVC Executive Director*

The information below excerpts salient points from the presentations. To see slides from each of the highlighted programs, check out the LWVC web site on the 2023 Convention:

<https://lwvc.wordpress.com/?emci=c851e25d-ef7b-ed11-9d7a-000d3a9eb913&emdi=ac2370f8-f27b-ed11-9d7a-000d3a9eb913&ceid=4992425>

Presentations, Panel Discussions, Workshops

Building partnerships and multi-racial alliances

- Driving Impact: The Importance of Collaboration, a powerful presentation on felony disenfranchisement. Panelists argued that giving incarcerated people voting rights leads to a sense of power and reduces recidivism.
- Countdown to 2024: Community Outreach for GOTV (Getting Out the Vote) Success. A panel of representatives from San Francisco Rising, an alliance of grassroots organizations led by people of color that “builds the political power of working class communities and communities of color in San Francisco to lead the way for democratic governance that prioritizes racial, economic, and environmental justice.”
- Presentations were also made

LWVC CONVENTION (continued)

by CALPIRG Students at UC Berkeley (California Public Interest Research Group) and CAIR SF Bay Area (Council on American-Islamic Relations).

ALSO AT CONVENTION
- Susan and Bill Loyko

League members Susan and Bill Loyko also attended the LWVC Convention in San Francisco.



They offered several observations for action:

Voter Engagement

UC Berkeley professor Lisa Garcia Bedolla's presentation *Let's Talk Politics: How We Can Transform Our Democracy* included several salient points:

- In 2022, 48% of eligible voters didn't vote and 30% of eligible voters didn't register. Black, Asian American, and Latine voter turnout was lower than White voter turnout.
- Many voters don't know what Congress or their state legislature does and they are intimidated by the voting process.
- We need to talk to voters of color about politics in ways that engage and uplift, fostering hope, trust, and feelings of agency.

UC Davis political science professor Cheryl Boudreau spoke to *The Power and Possibility of an Informed Electorate*:

- An informed electorate is possible, but challenges exist with voters receiving information, trusting it, and applying it effectively
- Different communities identify different sources as knowledgeable and trustworthy
- Uninformed citizens need help identifying donors' political or financial interests and relating those interests to their own

- Share *People First Language Guide*—LWVC Best Practices of Communication with LWVSJC Board and membership
- Promote the League during the annual Giving Tuesday events
- Build on our existing outreach programs to local high schools
- Implement broad use of all social media: TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (X)
- Register voters using an iPad or tablet via the Secretary of State website which has registration forms in 12 languages
- Share LWVC Action Alerts with our membership
- Fundraise with a purpose
- *"It doesn't take a bunch of member volunteers, it takes members with a focus."* What is our focus and how can it help to make our League stronger and more effective?

Reading can seriously damage your ignorance.

The source of this quote is unknown, but it is nevertheless spot on. If you have a book you'd like to share with League members to expand our horizons while enjoying a good read, send information about the book along with a brief summary and comments on how the book gave you a glimpse of something that expanded your thinking and it will be in a future *Voter*. Send your suggestion to LWVSJC@gmail.com.



Two half-sisters are born into different villages in 18th century Ghana. One is married to an Englishman and stays in Ghana where her children and

grandchildren experience the ongoing impact of British colonialism, while the other sister is captured and sold as a slave bound for America. *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi covers eight generations on both sides of the Atlantic, their trials and triumphs, struggles and survival. The chapters alternate between Africa and America, following one descendent in each of eight generations. Their stories are personal but reflective of their time on each continent. You don't want to leave each character, so captivated are you by their story, but then you move to the next story and are just as captivated. Each story is told with immediacy and sympathy and stunning understanding of time and place. If you haven't read this one, do.

- Colleen Foster

Child Care Forum Shines Spotlight on Issue that Impacts the Community

People think that child care is a woman's issue," said Kay Ruhstaller, CEO of the Family Resource Center and President of the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce. "But child care affects the whole community." This was the theme struck by each of the four speakers at a forum on child care held on May 6, 2023 at the Chavez Library before a sparse audience. Child care impacts children, families, businesses, and the economic well being of the community.

Ruhstaller outlined the services offered by the Family Resource Center but focused on broader related issues. "The pandemic made the scarcity of child care worse," she said, with a 4-5 year wait for care because many workers left the field and new staff can't get hired and trained fast enough. "The workforce pipeline will be an issue for at least the next 2-3 years." Inadequate compensation is one issue that makes it hard to recruit workers. Business losses surpassed \$122 billion because there aren't enough people to get back to work in the field. In his January 2022 speech on the State of the State, Governor Gavin Newsom referred twice to the impact of child care on economics of the state. This is clearly not "just a woman's issue."

These themes were echoed by both Suzanne Coleman, Professor of Early Childhood Education at San Joaquin Delta College and Linda Fermin, Past President of the San Joaquin County Society for Hu-

man Resources Management. Coleman reported that 85% of the students in the ECE programs at Delta are women and that after 5 years, a child care worker can expect to earn between \$26,236-\$33,274 annually, basically a poverty-level wage. Women of Color make up the majority of child care



workers. We need advocacy for better wages, she said. She recommended a video available on YouTube: *A Day without Child Care* to illustrate how the community depends on these workers.

Fermin cited statistics to bring the issue home: 110,000 child care workers left the field during the pandemic and 420,000 child care slots may be permanently lost. Child care is the second largest family expense, after rent. Some businesses are able to offer child care to their employees and have found it a powerful way to attract and retain talent, reduce absenteeism, and increase productivity. Unfortunately, most businesses cannot afford to offer child care.

Connor Sloan, Division Director for Early Childhood Education at the San Joaquin County Office of Education, said that child care is a social justice and equity issue that impacts children's school readiness. The County Office offers two main programs aimed at early

childhood services: Head Start, for children 3-5, and Early Childhood Education which offers center-based care for preschoolers, offering a continuum of learning for the child. Ninety percent of learning happens between the ages of 0-5,

"Education is a form of Magic."

he said, so child care needs to provide a variety of learning opportunities. Caregivers and educators also need learning opportunities to give their best to the children in their care.

The program closed with showing a video from CBS Saturday Morning featuring action taken by the people in Warren, Minnesota, when faced with the prospect of closing their Little Sprouts child care center because costs were rising and there were not enough workers. The town of fewer than 1600 people passed a 1/2 cent sales tax for child care by 15 votes.



Could this be a blueprint for others to follow?

LWVC and LWVUS: League News

LWVC



California's Rapidly Changing Political Environment and the Full Engagement of the State's Electorate is the theme for this LWVC conference that will focus on “building a democracy that is multiracial, LGBTQ+ inclusive, disability inclusive, and where the full electorate is engaged in exercising their power to choose the leadership that will best represent their interests.”

Cost of the conference is \$125. We'll share more information as it becomes available.

Support of Legislation

The League is proudly supporting SB 2, authored by Senator Portantino. SB 2 would ensure that loaded and concealed weapons are not allowed in certain places in California, including parks, playgrounds, libraries, sports stadiums, hospitals, and concert arenas. It would prohibit guns from being brought into polling places, voting centers or other locations where votes are being cast or ballots are being returned or counted, or the streets or sidewalks immediately adjacent to any of these places.

Informed citizens are democracy's best defense.

- Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law

LWVUS

Rethinking League membership dues

At the 2022 LWVUS Convention, delegates voted to amend the LWVUS bylaws to adopt a unified membership system—one dues model across the country—and eliminate per members payments (PMPs). The objective is to “eliminate financial barriers to participation, create an equitable division of dues between levels of League, and overall simplify mechanics of joining the League.”

Members nationwide, including here in San Joaquin County, have expressed concern about loss of autonomy under this new system. LWVUS answers that local and state Leagues “will maintain their local decision-making authority and will have less administrative burden to deal with, thus freeing their leaders and membership to have time to engage in the ‘real’ work of the League: empowering voters and defending democracy.”

How will this actually work? Stay tuned.

For details on the *Structure Transformation Plan*, go to the *national League web site*: <https://www.lwv.org/structure>

LWVSJC in Action

Between the Annual Meeting and the League year Kickoff, our League has often taken a hiatus. Not so this year.

Voter Service

Voter Service Chair Suzy Daveluy and new member Alane Dashner met with Lodi educators to discuss high school voter registration events to be held in the fall.

The League will also participate in a Civics Event for teachers focusing on how to get young people engaged in voting, the foundation of our democracy. The event will be held on September 15th, at the San Joaquin County Office of Education.

Election Advisory Committee

LWVSJC President Mary Kenefick spoke before the County's Election Advisory Committee in favor of expanding voter access. Other speakers invited to make presentations focused on the opportunities for fraud if the current system is altered. The Ad Hoc VCA committee will consider whether to counter such arguments before the Board of Supervisors in September.

Warehousing in Tracy

At the Annual Meeting, members chose Land Use with an emphasis on warehousing impacts as an Issue for Education and Advocacy. Mary Kenefick and Margo Praus have been actively following developments in this area. They attended a Tracy City Council meeting on August 15th where the City of Tracy chose to continue the warehousing discussion rather than implementing mitigation requirements that many said were insufficient.

LWVSJC CALENDAR: 2023-2024

September 19	National Voter Registration Day
September 30	Kickoff Meeting
October 21	Membership activity (TBD)
November 18	Membership activity (TBD)
December 9	Holiday Gathering
December-February	Legislative Interviews
February 3	Program Planning Meeting
February	Candidate Forums
February 15	Susan B. Anthony Dinner
February 24	Stockton Women's Collaborative/Black History lunch
March 5	Primary Election
March 16	Membership activity (TBD)
April 13	Membership activity (TBD)
May 18	Membership activity (TBD)
June 1	Annual Meeting
June 27-30	LWVUS Convention/ Washington, D.C.

Calendar of Board Meetings

September 19	Board Meeting
October 17	Board/ Ed Fund
	Board Meeting
November 21	Board Meeting
December 19	Board Meeting
January 16	Board Meeting
	(instead of 1/15 - MLK Day)
February 20	Board Meeting
	(instead of 2/19 - Presidents' Day)
March 18	Board Meeting
April 15	Board Meeting
May 20	Board/ Ed Fund
	Board Meeting
June 17	Board Meeting

Board meetings are the 3rd Monday of the month, except as noted above.

Members are welcome to attend Board meetings. If you wish to attend Board meetings, please contact Jane Wagner-Tyack: janetyack@mac.com for the Zoom link to the meetings.

2023-2024 LWVSJC Board of Directors

Officers

Mary Kenefick, President
Terri Mercer, 1st Vice President
Suzy Daveluy, 2nd Vice President
Colleen Foster, Secretary
Bill Loyko, Treasurer

Directors

Kathy Casenave
Mary Ann Cox-Martin
Ronda Sanders
Daphne Shaw
Patricia Voss
Jane Wagner-Tyack
Cate White

Standing Committees

Advocacy
Communication
Finance: Bill Loyko
Membership: Susan Loyko
Nominating: Margo Praus
Helen Pearson Award:
Christeen Ferree
Voter Service: Suzy Daveluy

Webmaster: Walt White

Voter Editor: Colleen Foster

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.