We Look Back with Satisfaction
And Forward in Anticipation

Andrea Schacter, LWVFNMC Program Vice President

With the November 2022 election now behind us, we can feel accomplished in knowing that we, as a League, provided excellent voter resources to our community. We participated in the production of candidate forums, proposition pro/con programs, (both virtual and in-person), and the Voter Information Book (VIB). All those who contributed to these efforts deserve a round of applause for a job well-done.

On November 3, our League members, as well as the general public, attended a Zoom program produced by the Alameda County Council of the LWV entitled, “Roe v Wade—2022 and Beyond”. Panelists Stacy Cross, CEO of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, and Nakia Woods, Project Director of the California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom spoke passionately about the right to choose when and if to bear children. The two women explained how having this right stripped away amounts to giant steps backward in the progress of women. Since the Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision, California has seen a huge number of women come here from other states where abortion has recently been restricted.

Coming up next is our Winter Holiday Gathering. Our program team decided that we would meet in person to celebrate the season and our friendship. Please mark your calendars, to join your League friends:

December 3, 2022
12 noon to 3:00 pm at Artist Walk
3888 Artist Walk Common
Fremont

Boxed lunches and beverages will be provided by Panera
Make your sandwich choice by REGISTERING on the website.
The cost is $15 per boxed lunch. Pay online or at the door.

Face masks are strongly encouraged

Donations for the cold-weather needs of the unhoused in the Safe-Parking Program will be accepted at the door
Thinking ahead to the new year, we are looking forward to jumping right into program planning in 2023—in January. Our members will gather on January 28—a bit early this year—because we need to report our input to LWV California by end of February as they prepare to adopt positions for the next two years. This input is a vital component of grassroots League education and advocacy.

Of particular interest to Bay Area Leagues, the LWV California convention will be held in San Francisco this year at the Hyatt Regency—just a BART ride away. This might give many of us a good opportunity to attend.

**Twitter Suspends League Executive Director!**

On the day before Midterm Election Day, Stephanie Doute, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of California, received a notice that her Twitter account was suspended with no explanation or reason. That’s right. The day before a Midterm Election, she was unable to access a critical platform to monitor and share election information.

In a message to League members, she wrote that because she was provided no explanation, she was left to review the facts. Here is what she said:

- “I did not violate any Twitter policies.
- “I did not post or share anything to justify or necessitate a suspension.
- “I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community. A community that has been experiencing relentless and targeted attacks for no other reason than our existence.
- “I am the Executive Director of an organization with the mission of:
  - Empowering Voters.
  - Defending Democracy.
  - An organization that envisions a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.”

She called upon League members to express their concern for how suspending the League’s State Executive Director silences a source of trustworthy election information. League members responded and mobilized a rapid response, and it worked. Her account was reinstated later that night.

Stephanie says, “Thank you. Trust that we will not let this incident go quietly.”
Our League Publishes Eleventh Voter Information Book

Dennis Godden

This year, as in past election years since 2002, our League published a Voter Information Book (VIB). Over the past two election years, we have increased the number of copies printed and sent to every household in the three cities we serve. Fremont received 80,200 copies, Newark 15,900, and Union City 22,300. The VIB is our way of reminding voters to register to vote and providing information to help them make informed choices, particularly in the local races, which may attract only minimal media attention.

Over the years, candidates have found that publishing the booklet is an excellent way to reach the voter and explain what they will bring to the positions they are running for. At the same time, the VIB is an excellent revenue source to help fund League voter service and program activities.

Here is how the system works. All candidates whose names will appear on the ballot are invited to provide two pages of their material for the book. They pay a fee for whichever book they will appear in—one book for each city in our League area. After our expenses and our fee percentage are taken out of their payment, we refund any amount not used. The system provides wider reach at lower cost for the candidate than an individual mailer. Because this year there were a number of incumbents running unopposed whose names did not appear on the ballot, the books were somewhat smaller in size, yet they still yielded more than $16,000 to fund our future activities. It is a way to both fulfill and sustain our mission.

Youth Voter Movement: Teen Volunteers Write Postcards to First-Time Voters

Coverage leading up to the election this month focused quite a bit of attention on younger voters. Local youth took an active role in protecting our democracy. Teen volunteers worked on the postcard writing campaign for first-time teen voters. They wrote more than 500 postcards with encouraging messages and reminders to vote and mailed them all out on Saturday, October 22.

Thank you to postcard volunteers:

Students: Fatima Khawaja, Sara Faiyaz, Aditya Anand, Hawa Nagshband, Jovita Camacho, and Amanda Hallas; Adults: Valerie Stewart, Cheryl Bough, Sandy Movehed, Lisa Hallas, Colleen Perez, Gayle Tupper, and Caprice Carattini.
State League to Hold Webinar on Solutions to Housing and Homelessness

The League of Women Voters of California invites you to attend a webinar this month focusing on housing and homelessness issues throughout the state. Please share this events with your networks and join us on November 30th at 5:00 pm (Pacific Time)!

Solutions to Housing & Homelessness Problems from Around the State

Registration: https://bit.ly/HHProblemsCA

Date: November 30, 2022

Time: 5-6 pm (PT)

Description: League members and the public are invited to join us for this webinar to learn more about how housing and homelessness issues are being addressed throughout California. If you're interested in the work being done in other parts of the state and how it could be used to address housing issues in your region, join us to hear some insight from some of the leading experts in the field.

Panelists:

Pedro Galvao, Deputy Director for Legislation at the California Department of Housing & Community Development

Ryan Finnigan, Senior Research Associate with the Terner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley

Report from the LWVFNUC Board

Sam Neeman, Administrative Vice President

Pros & Cons Team:

Thanks for the team’s excellent work goes to team members: Sets Amann, Randy Fewel, Evelyn LaTorre, Rita Manning, Sam Neeman, Angelina Reyes, Andrea Schacter, and Ray Sun. The team members either supported, researched, or presented this year’s ballot measure Pros and Cons.

Results: Nine in-person presentations reaching approximately 250 members of our community; either LWVFNUC Pros & Cons or Easy Voter Guides were handed out at each presentation.

Online presentation: Sixty-eight people attended via Facebook Live. Interestingly, only about 1/3 of the audience watched the entire feed. For next election season, we should consider which online methods are most effective.

LWVFNUC Website:

The Diablo Valley/St. Mary’s College short State Pros & Cons were posted, reaching a low of 125 people for Proposition 31 (Flavored Tobacco) to a high of 421 for Proposition 1 (Reproductive Rights). We
received a thank you card from the LWV Diablo Valley for our contribution of $300, helping defray the estimated $2000 cost of producing the videos.

We also posted our 2022 Pros & Cons (including Measures D & Z) Zoom video and reached 54 people.

**Donation Received:**

Three team members and Miriam Keller attended the Sisters of the Holy Family Pros & Cons presentation, at which they honored Miriam Keller for her years of service to the League and our community. LWVFNUC received a donation of $150 from the Sisters in appreciation of the work we do.

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**President’s Message**

*By Angelina Reyes*

**The months before the election** were quite busy for our League. It seemed as if our daily lives became “Election Tasks First” at the start of our day. Our non-partisan efforts to mobilize the voters in our communities became part of our daily lives. We experienced and learned so much from this election. We are grateful for an amazing group of Leaguers who dedicated many hours to our Voter Services efforts to study and present the propositions and measures on our ballots, set up candidates’ forums, deliver election materials, receive training on how to moderate, and learn Zoom responsibilities. There were arduous and incredible efforts by the Voter Information Book (VIB) team to publish on time.

These tasks took hours. Though performed by a small group, they benefited the entire membership and many voters. Those who participated heard or read what they needed to make educated choices. Some of us wished we could have done more if we had more volunteers. Each of the volunteers believes in upholding democracy. They have a passion for community service. We encourage members to get involved with these many activities, participate, and assist our Board of Directors in making decisions on future programs.

Results for the various races in this election may or may not be certified by the time you read this report. The Secretaries of State and Registrars of Voters strive to complete the various procedures that will ensure that all qualified ballots are counted. To do this they must review the conditional or provisional ballots that qualify to be counted.

In California, our ballot included the race for Secretary of State, and no doubt the incumbent worked to maintain the integrity of this midterm election. We received weekly reports and informational links to various resources, in partnership with the LWV California and according to LWVUS policies.

The Alameda County Council, which represents six Leagues, shared resources as some district races for the state and county overlapped. Candidates’ forums were conducted by several Leagues and co-sponsored. This collaboration provided a stronger and more successful forum and strengthened relationships among the six Leagues.
The LWVC provided several non-partisan elections resources. It maintains the webpage, Voter’s Edge, which is a nonpartisan, comprehensive online information guide. Members handed out bookmarks with that website wherever possible. Our League’s Voter Information Service team contacted local candidates to remind them to utilize Voter’s Edge so our voters could learn more about them. The six Leagues in Alameda County are to be commended as over 75% of our candidates used it. Many voters rely on Voter’s Edge California to make their choices.

There was online access to the Easy Voter Guide in various languages. The California League also provided links for the Pros and Cons and the Voters’ Bill of Rights. A total of 119,000 voters accessed Voters’ Edge. An excellent resource was the informative email list of League presidents used to discuss and respond to a variety of questions related to this election.

The California League worked with the Secretary of State to provide a link that listed various rumors (mis- and/or dis-information). One of those rumors was: “Does using a Sharpie to mark your ballot invalidate your vote?” The answer is no. If voters felt fear or intimidation at the polls, they could contact the proper authorities, either by phone or internet link and receive protection. Information regarding discounted Lyft rides to polling stations was also provided. All these efforts were conducted to remove barriers to voting and close the participation gap. Despite these measures, only 22 percent of the total registered voters in Alameda County voted. We still have more work ahead of us to mobilize our voters for the Presidential Election in 2024. Join us to study, address, and revise our experiences and review our processes and procedures to improve service to our communities.

Public Statement Released by Alameda County Council of the League

The League of Women Voters has been fighting for women’s rights for over 100 years. In 1983 the League of Women Voters of the United States stated in their position on reproductive rights: “public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.” When the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, a woman's right to decide, reverted from national protection to the protection of the individual states. Kansas was the first of many states, including California, to bring abortion to the 2022 ballot.

On Tuesday, August 2, 2022, the voters of Kansas reaffirmed their belief that medical decisions are a matter of privacy and should remain between patients and their doctors. Women’s organizations and their allies worked tirelessly to ensure the voters of Kansas understood the referendum and cast an educated vote. Among those organizations was the League of Women Voters of Kansas. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the local and state members who worked alongside so many to defeat this State Amendment.

The Alameda County Council of the League of Women Voters will work alongside its local and state Leagues to continue the fight for a woman’s right to choose. Please follow your local League for updates on future presentations and how you can join us in the fight for reproductive rights.
The League was surprised to discover among the mail in our office a most unusual letter. It was from Eleanor Bernstein, who had recently moved to Fremont and had been a League member most of her life. She wanted to find out about the League in Fremont.

It turned out that she resides with her cat Madilyn at Aegis Living, so I made an appointment and paid a visit. I took along an orchid and a catnip toy, and we had a nice hour-and-a-half meeting. I took her the Voter and Voter Information Booklet and told her about the Youth Voter program.

Eleanor could not recall exactly how long she had been a League member, but she first joined at 26 and she is now 93. She was in the League in Washington, DC. We concluded that she qualified for 50+ year membership status.

Though her son is out here, she is not yet very familiar with Fremont. She was thinking our office was closer to her. She gets around in a wheelchair and was hoping someone could wheel her to our office. I told her we are conducting meetings mostly on Zoom now, but she does not have a computer.”

She is now a member of LWVFNUC. I send her hard copies of our publications, and I have been back to visit her another time. She is very nice. She keeps up on things with the radio and continues to be interested in what the League does.

Bay Area League Board Briefs

Roma Dawson, LWVBA President

Save-the-Date: LWV Bay Area Annual Education Day is scheduled for March 4, 2023. Topic is not yet finalized. Want to participate in planning? Please send suggestions that interest your local League to LWVBA@gmail.com.

Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan: The president has proposed to the board that we support the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments' (MTC/ABAG) Transit Transformation Action Plan and closely follow its progress. Seamless Bay Area along with six other groups recently issued a one-year report card on the Action Plan.

Regional Ballot Measures: There are two potential ballot measures being considered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/ Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG) for the 2024 General Election. LWV Bay Area board is tracking the development of both measures. When specific language is formulated, the board will vote whether to support, oppose or take no position.
The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) has voted to take steps leading to a regional ballot measure to fund affordable housing. Five pilot programs are underway with funding from the state budget. More information on BAHFA is available on the MTC web page.

MTC is also considering a regional transportation ballot measure as a result of its Blue-Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force. No vote has yet been taken to move forward. More information on the work of the task force is available on the MTC web page.

Recent LWV Bay Area Board Activities:

**Seamless Transit Principles** – The board voted unanimously to sign onto the Seamless Transit Principles already supported by almost 2,000 organizations and individuals. League positions on climate change, land use, housing and, most importantly, equity are the foundation for our support.

In May, the LWV Bay Area board asked the LWVC Legislation Committee to support SB 917 Becker. It was supported by LWVC and unfortunately, died in Assembly Appropriations at the last minute. It will be updated and re-introduced by Senator Becker in the next legislative session. Click here for article.


**Communications Plan and Monitor Retreat** – The board is exploring how to “add value” to local Leagues and County Councils within the nine-county Bay Area. As a part of that work, Communications Director, Sheri Thomas is leading a team to create a Communications Strategy and Work-plan. A retreat is planned to discuss the future of The Monitor and Monitor Notes. She is reactivating the LWV Bay Area Slack channel to facilitate communication among our members. Email lwvbayarea@gmail.com if you want to be added to Slack channel or are interested in joining communications outreach planning.

**Community Conversations** – The board voted to change the name to avoid confusion with LWV Diablo Valley and several other organizations that use Community Conversations. The most recent event was on engaging young voters and best practices for encouraging them to vote. The video is posted on our website. We are planning a program with Senator Josh Becker. [https://my.lwv.org/california/bay-area](https://my.lwv.org/california/bay-area)

**Study of Regional Government and Planning Position** – This committee will recommend an update to the LWV Bay Area position on regional government and planning. Email Kathleen Cha, kaauw16@gmail.com for more information. The committee will begin its work next month. As part of our LWV Bay Area Biennial Convention 2022, members approved the study update. The committee’s recommendation will be presented for consideration during our next Convention in June 2024.
Notes from the Administrative V.P.

- Reminder: please be sure to book our office meetings as far in advance as possible.
- In anticipation of returning to in-person Board meetings, I have booked the Conference Room (garage) for the third Thursday evenings of the month from January through May 2023.
- I am looking for someone to be responsible for checking the League phone voicemail.

Dates to Remember

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>State League Webinar on Housing and Homelessness</td>
<td>5-6-PM</td>
<td>Registration: <a href="https://bit.ly/HHProblemsCA">https://bit.ly/HHProblemsCA</a></td>
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<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>Holiday Lunch <em>in person</em></td>
<td>Noon to 3 PM</td>
<td>At Artist Walk. Please register on the League website <a href="http://lwfnc.org">lwfnc.org</a></td>
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<td>Dec. 15</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>Zoom: To attend, contact Angelina Reyes for link <a href="mailto:president@lwfnc.org">president@lwfnc.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Legislative interviews</td>
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<td>Dates and times to be determined. Contact Setsuko Amann.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>Board Meeting <em>in person</em></td>
<td>6-8 PM</td>
<td>Conference Room at League office bldg. 3375 Country Dr., Fremont</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>State League Program Planning</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Details will be sent to members in early January</td>
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