



# League of Women Voters Benicia

## VOTER



August 2016

<http://www.lwvbenicia.org>

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and action.

### Upcoming Calendar

**July 30, Saturday, 10am-2pm, Board Retreat**

**TBD, Vallejo Youth Forum on City Council and Mayor**

**Sept. 29, Thursday, 6:30—8:30pm, Benicia Meet and Greet Candidates for City Council and Mayor**

**Sept. 15, Thursday, 4-8 pm, Farmer's Market Voter Registration**

**Sept. 22, Thursday, 4-8pm, Farmer's Market Voter Registration**

**Oct. 17, Monday, 6-8:45 pm, Benicia City Library LWVB Regional Candidates Forum**

**Nov. 5, Saturday morning, Open Government Local Candidates Forum**

**Nov. 8, General Election Day**

### Get Ready to Go to the Farmer's Market!

Once again the LWV Benicia will be registering people to vote at the Benicia Farmer's Market. We will be out on First Street on **Thursdays, September 15 and 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Please contact Susan Neuhaus if you can help out for an hour or two between 4 and 8 pm on those days. This is the most basic work of the League.





## President's Message

The LWV Benicia continues to be engaged with the community right through summer, and once again I was proud and honored to represent the League. This time it was by being in the Benicia Torchlight Parade on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our entry began with the LWV Benicia banner proudly carried by Pat Pepin and Harvey Rifkin. Next came the car driven by Pete Vaughan and carrying Jim Kirckhoffer and me. We had patriotic marching music playing for the ladies walking and waving VOTE signs: Judy Potter, Malin Coleridge, Peggy Lipper, and Jane Keene. The large and enthusiastic crowd cheered repeatedly for us and our message.

The summer is heating up and so is the League. We're busy planning multiple candidate forums for Vallejo, Benicia, and Solano County for the late summer and early fall. Voter's Edge is getting election information put together and youth programs are starting to take off. Voter registration at the Farmer's Market resumes in September. As you can see Voter Services is working overtime, for sure, and we could certainly use your help even if you can only volunteer for an hour!

The board will have met by the time you receive this and among other things we have changed some bylaws to meet recently adapted LWV US standards: members will no longer be required to be citizens or 18 years of age. This opens the way for youth Leagues to form in high schools and community colleges.

Last year at this time the League was planning on how to grow and expand both our service area and our membership. We have been successful on both counts, having participated in events in both Vallejo and Fairfield. We have held monthly educational events that were attended by folks from Napa, American Canyon, Concord, Fairfield, Vallejo, and of course, Benicia. Just this last month we added some new members and developed a growing list of people who are interested in joining our group from all over South Solano County. You might say we are on a roll! Congratulations and thank you to all the hard working members of our board and committees for making this happen.

Sincerely,

Gayle Vaughan

## Voter Services Committee

The summer is over at least for the political process in an election year. We are in the midst of the Republican convention while I write this update and by the time you read this we will have also seen the Democratic convention. The League of Women Voters Services Committee is also ramping up for a busy fall.

We have been asking your input on what questions we should be posing to our city council and mayoral candidates of our local members in Vallejo, Benicia and Fairfield to use on Votersedge.com. Voter's Edge marries the League's powerful coverage of election contests, candidates, and ballot measures with MapLight's deep expertise in campaign finance, public data, and technology. This is our first year using Voter's Edge so please help get the word out. In the coming months leading up to the election you will see articles and promotional materials at our events.



### Schools

The California Education Code designates the last two full weeks in April and September to be High School Voter Education Weeks. National Voter Registration Day is September 27<sup>th</sup> this year so our committee is hoping to leverage those dates and the relationships we began building in the spring with High Schools in Fairfield, Vallejo and Benicia to engage students in the election process and register Voters.

### Fall Election Forum

This year we are going to try something different. Our Voter Forum will be on the evening of **Monday October 17<sup>th</sup>**. AAUW will again be partnering with the league. The location is still being finalized. This election we are inviting candidates from a broader geographic field. Most have confirmed and so the fun begins.

County Supervisors District 2: Monica Brown and Mike Iakimedes

State Assembly District 14: Tim Grayson and Mae Torlakson

State Senate District 3: Bill Dodd and Mariko Yamada

US House of Representatives District 5: Carlos Santamaria and Mike Thompson



### Meet and Greet

We are in the beginning planning stages of organizing a meet and greet event for our Benicia City council and Mayoral candidates on **Thursday, Sept. 29, 6:30—8:30 PM** in the Benicia City Library.



As you know these events are a great community service and a lot of fun but also require a lot of work so we will be counting on your help. Please contact me Susan Neuhaus @ [lwneuhaus@gmail.com](mailto:lwneuhaus@gmail.com) to let us know your preferences.

## Get Active!



Democracy is not a spectator sport! Not only do we need to vote, but League members are desperately needed to help out with a host of small and large tasks to help the League function as it should. At the Board Retreat we will be organizing work teams and committees. Think about how you could help out:

- Join the Nominating Committee to select officers for next year
- Join the Program Committee to help develop our educational events
- Register people to vote
- Attend and participate in the forums
- Help run a forum
- Call interested people to encourage them to join the League or attend functions
- Write articles and letters to the editor about League functions
- Bring cookies or other refreshments to a meeting or forum
- Help set up and or clean up for an event
- Make coffee for a meeting or forum

Contact Gayle Vaughan at [vonwindgayle@gmail.com](mailto:vonwindgayle@gmail.com) to sign up.

## League Helps with Election

Thanks to her experience and hard work, member Belinda Smith has once again arranged for the LWV Benicia to run the Crockett Community Foundation Election. This involves producing a forum in late November, as well as collecting, counting, and recording the votes received by mail. We have done this every two years for quite a while now with the help of 8-10 members, it runs smoothly and puts money in our coffers.

## \$\$\$\$New Funding Mechanism\$\$\$\$

The LWV California has offered a new pilot program to local leagues for fundraising. After review, our board has decided to opt into the new plan. In September, the LWV CA will be mailing out donation requests. They will collect the money and it will be distributed to the state or local league as the donator indicates. There is no cost to our League, we only have to agree to allow the State to use our membership list (which they already have). We will not be asking non-members who may be interested in League work to donate at this time. So watch your mail for your invitation to support the LWV Benicia during this critical election time.

# Reflections on the State of Women

By: Wylecia Wiggs Harris 06/15/2016

Yesterday, along with the League's president Elisabeth MacNamara, and some senior League of Women Voters staff, I attended the [United State of Women Summit](#) hosted by the White House. Attendance was high, but nice weather and good attitudes by fellow attendees resulted in an inspiring atmosphere, even while waiting an hour to clear security. The event, which highlighted the White House's [initiatives on women and girls](#), was a star studded event with political heavy weights such as President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Representative and former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Attorney General Loretta Lynch as well as Hollywood elites, including Oprah, Mariska Hargitay, Kerry Washington, Patricia Arquette, and national business leaders like Warren Buffett and Dina Habib gracing the stage.



Yet, for me these weren't the most memorable or impressive parts of the Summit. By far, the speaker that I have raved about the most, was 11 year old social entrepreneur Mikaila Ulmer, founder and CEO of [Me & the Bees Lemonade](#). Being 11 is a distant memory and I can't begin to fathom what would have been on my mind at that age. However, it is fair to assume that I wasn't thinking about economic security, entrepreneurship, power and engagement. Mikaila was confident, commanding and clear. She understands her mission, product and how to pivot on message as needed. Not only does Mikaila possess business acumen, she's also taking a

stand and a making a difference. [Bees are critical to our environment and food supply, yet their very existence is at risk.](#)

I was also struck by the diversity of the audience. The attendees, who were predominately female, were younger, more diverse and socially conscious than most of the meetings I have attended in years. The room represented the rising electorate that we both want and need to help carry out the League's work.



As each plenary and workshop speaker presented, I was reminded of the importance of the vote and our work. The strides discussed during the Summit could easily be derailed or forward motion lost if voters fail to remain vigilant to ensure candidates remain focused on issues important to them. Leveraging the power of the vote to create a more perfect democracy remains critically important both from an issues and candidate perspective.

Finally, as I thought about the name of the Summit – United State of Women, I couldn't help but think how 96 years of Making Democracy Work® laid the groundwork for this successful event. Without the right to vote and helping to equip women to exercise their vote, as well as the push to provide women with the skills and education necessary to pursue elected office and other leadership positions, it is possible that the progress on key issues like economic empowerment, civic and social engagement and women leadership may have continued to lag even longer.

We know there is still work needed to ensure a representative democracy and our voice, which seems silent in some of the current national conversation about the state of women needs to be revitalized. It was an honor to be counted among the 5,000 attendees at the Summit. It is my hope that moving forward, the White House and others will understand and acknowledge that the League continues to be an important voice to engage in the dialogue of how best to leverage the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

## Working together with Youth

Thanks to the hard work of Peggy Lipper, Gayle Vaughan, and the Voter Services Committee, the LWV Benicia is collaborating with Club Stride and Vallejo Together for the purposes of producing a youth-run forum about the Vallejo Candidates for Major and City Council. This is the first youth forum of its kind in Vallejo for more than a decade, states Maria Guevara from Vallejo Together, which has been working with the candidates to arrange their participation.

Rhonda Renfro and Latalya Parrish from Club Stride are working with the student Leadership group to interview each of the candidates for Mayor as well as the people running for City Council prior to the forum. The League will be responsible for training the students on forum procedures and offering administrative assistance as well as providing cookies for the event. We will also be present at the forum helping to register people to vote. We are all very excited to help young people learn about and participate in our local political processes. Date and location of the forum are undetermined at this time.



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Newsletter submissions:  
due by 20th of the month  
Susan Street, [sustreet@pacbell.net](mailto:sustreet@pacbell.net)

League business only  
What where, when why in first paragraph  
200 words or less  
Please use WORD; Calibri 12 pt is preferred.  
No colored backgrounds or fancy font

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