



# League of Women Voters Benicia

## VOTER

March 2017

<http://www.lwvbenicia.org>

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization which neither supports nor opposes candidates or political parties. We encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and action.

## Upcoming Events



March 6: Great Decisions, 7-9 pm, Dona Benicia Room, Benicia Library

March 9: Program Event Committee, 1-3, 123 Banbury Way, Benicia

March 13: Great Decisions, 7-9 pm, Dona Benicia Room, Benicia Library

March 14, 15, 16: Women and Leadership Follow-up Sessions, 6:30, Cal Maritime Dining Hall

March 15: LWV Benicia Board Meeting, 7-9, 123 Banbury Way, Benicia

March 20: Great Decisions, 7-9 pm, Dona Benicia Room, Benicia Library

March 27: Great Decisions, 7-9 pm, Dona Benicia Room, Benicia Library

## Women and Leadership Event Success!

### Follow-up events to occur.



On February 22, about 50 women attended the Women and Leadership Event co-sponsored by the AAUW, LWV Benicia, and the California State University Maritime Academy. Attendees were identified by areas of interest: non-profits, business, or politics. Belinda Smith opened the meeting and introduced a representative of the Academy. She welcomed the audience and highlighted the goal to increase female cadet enrollment to 30% by 2020.

A short video, *Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership* preceded presentations by Maria Guevara, Director of Vallejo Together, Deborah Raymond, Chief Operating Officer of Kaiser Permanente Vallejo Medical Center, and Elizabeth Patterson, Mayor of Benicia who spoke about the obstacles and opportunities in their fields. There was a stimulating question-answer period

There will be follow up sessions in the evenings of March 14, 15, and 16, one each for business, nonprofits, and politics at the Maritime Academy Dining Hall. For more information contact [Suzanne@suzanneantone.com](mailto:Suzanne@suzanneantone.com) or visit [www.lwvbenicia.org](http://www.lwvbenicia.org)

## President's Message:

Gayle Vaughan



The League of Women Voters Benicia is busier than ever, at local, state and national level. Not only are we continuing our Great Decision series this month and working with the AAUW about women in leadership training, we will also be gearing up our Voter Services team to offer voter registration in high schools in our area next month. We will be working with the State and National Leagues to promote affordable health care availability, maintain voting rights, and work on housing and homelessness issues. The newly forming Advocacy Action Team will be attending town halls and staying in contact with our legislative representatives to offer our support on the above issues and strive to improve transparent governmental processes.

With all this wonderful activity, it is especially difficult to submit my resignation as President of our local League at this time. Despite my deep interest in the voter and education services provided by the League, and the collegial attitude of the board and committee members, I find myself just too conflicted over the nonpartisan requirements of the President to continue in that position. To maintain the essential nonpartisan stance of our mission statement, the President and the Chair of the Voter Services Committee cannot run or hold elected office, or participate in any political campaign including supporting or fundraising for candidates. This important bylaw has come in direct conflict with my personal need to be more politically engaged. So I am resigning to maintain the integrity of the League of Women Voters.

I will continue to work on the board as a member at large, and as co-chair of the programs/events committee. I anticipate helping to register high schoolers to vote, participating in planning programs, writing for the newsletter, and answering action alerts from both the State and National Leagues.

Serving the League as President has been a pleasure and an honor.

# BAY AREA MONITOR



League of Women Voters  
of the Bay Area Education Fund

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Education Fund publishes the *Bay Area Monitor* six times a year.

The publication covers policies, plans, programs, and legislation that affect quality of life in the Bay Area and beyond.

The *Monitor* is provided to readers for free, both in print and online ([www.bayareamonitor.org](http://www.bayareamonitor.org)).

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### **Our New County Supervisor: Monica Brown**

The LWVC encourages local Leagues to conduct “legislative interviews” with our newly elected legislators, representatives, and elected officials. Here are the results of our interview with Solano County Supervisor Monica E. Brown.



#### *What was your main reason for running for Supervisor?*

The main reason I ran for the Board of Supervisors was because I saw myself as a leader in Solano County. As a member of the Solano Community College Board and a teacher for 39 years, my ties to the community were already strong. I wanted to expand my focus on education by working on behalf of all Solano County residents. I saw county-wide problems such as mental health and homelessness that needed to be addressed. I am a strong advocate who is able to work with these populations who need further services. Additionally, I thought it was important that a woman run for office as I was the only female to declare candidacy in District 2. I think I can be a role model and mentor to other women who would like to pursue political careers.

#### *What were the main obstacles to your campaign?*

One of the main obstacles I faced was getting my name out to people in such a large district-encompassing voters from Benicia, Cordelia, Green Valley, parts of Vallejo and Fairfield. Besides utilizing social media and placing ads on TV, I walked many, many precincts taking lots of time and literature. All of these outreach strategies, took money and local campaign fundraising is always difficult. I was fortunate that I was able to rely on close friends, strong supporters, and was able borrow money from my tax shelters to finance my campaign, even though my personal finances were then impacted.

#### *Both Social Services and County Education Services, especially Special Ed, have service delivery issues. How do you propose to improve them?*

The way to improve these programs is to fully fund them. If a program is mandated, the institution, whether state or federal, must pay for them. The problem of delivery is often related to issues between the service provider, government and customer. If the government creates too many restrictions, it can prevent the social service delivery system from functioning properly. This can result in an expanding population of “underserved” individuals. As a County Supervisor, I can increase attention on program quality improvement and delivery of effective services. We also need better collaboration between funders, regulators and service providers.

*(continued on next page)*

*At our voter’s forum you mentioned that the homeless problem needed to be addressed. How do you plan to help the homeless?*

The problem of homelessness is an issue that is a focus of mine one that the Board of Supervisors has already begun to address. One problem is that there is no county-wide plan to reduce and serve the homeless population even though neighboring counties have received grants for this. However, the County cannot solve the problem on its own. We need the cities to help. Everyone must share the cost and responsibilities to take care of those who need our assistance. Recently I participated in a “homeless count” which is designed to help determine the number of homeless in the County. I have met with non-profit service providers to discuss their needs in serving the homeless. I am also looking into whether we can provide storage lockers and cell phone charging stations for those who need them.

*Mental Health services are vital to the health of our citizens. How can the county improve its outreach?*

Mental health is an issue that overlaps with homelessness. One of the ideas I have is to sit down with all of our medical providers to see what insurance is available to enable everyone to have insurance to help defray the cost of providing services. We need to look at the delivery systems to ensure we are not duplicating services. We also need to work with our elected officials at the state and federal issues for more funding.

*Solano is a diverse county, not only by its demographics, but also by land use: agriculture, industry, wetlands, subdivisions, and cities. How will you (and the county) work to insure that each of these will have a consistent and abundant source of clean, quality water?*

Consistent and abundant sources of clean, quality water is a priority for Solano County. Because of our diverse land use, water becomes a complicated yet high priority issue. Protecting and enhancing the Delta’s agricultural landscape is key to economic development. Further, protecting and restoring the Delta’s ecosystem is crucial to our environment and preserving wetlands. Clean quality water for subdivisions and cities means working with municipal, state and federal agencies to ensure adherence to regulations such as the Clean Water Act. We must also work locally with the Solano County Water Agency and city water departments to ensure testing and reporting are done regularly on our tap water. We are fortunate that Supervisor Skip Thomson is on the Delta Protection Commission and Benicia Mayor Elizabeth Patterson was appointed to the Delta Conservancy. Both are strong advocates for clean, quality water and *conservation. Further, following the state mandate of bringing Yolo and Solano County together to make sure our ground water is managed, I believe we are on the right track to ensuring we have clean water.*

Feb 17<sup>th</sup> was our **12<sup>th</sup> Annual “Meet Your Local Officials”** at the Commandant’s, attended by approximately 75 people. Carter at the Commandant’s, as usual, did a fantastic job of not only providing wonderful food and drink, but brought a quality of graciousness and welcome to all. His staff, William (Mr. Everywhere) Laura, (the gracious greeter) and Dan (the poet-bartender) were all on hand to see that everyone had every need met. The Commandant’s is an excellent venue for this event.

We were glad to see three out of four Council members Hughes, Campbell and Young and, of course, our stalwart and congenial Mayor Patterson. In addition, we had first time attendees, Monica Brown, County Supervisor and Lisette Estelle Henderson, County School Superintendent, both of whom said that it was a big treat to be able to speak with constituents one on one.

The City staff took time on Friday night to represent Benicia, including Fire and Police chiefs, and many of the department managers. The delicious food was from Elvarita’s on First Street (delicious baby burritos and guacamole, meatballs and tacos), gorgeous sandwiches from J&O’s Deli and eye-popping desserts from LeParis Artisan Gourmet Café (that chocolate cake was the best I have tasted in a long time).

And the League came through with volunteers for greeting the visitors (thank you, Peggy and Phyllis); Niles and Donna staffed the League table and made sure that everyone in the room had their nametag on; Judy Potter took over when Niles had to leave; Niles did a super job on the nametags.....and we netted, I believe, almost \$200 in donations!

People mentioned that they looked forward to this event and I think it does a lot for our relationship with the City and our visibility with the town. Thank you for twelve great MYLO’s. It is always a pleasure to be part of it.



*Susan Street*

Visit our new MEMBERS ONLY  
WEBSITE:

[http://  
members.lwvbenicia.org](http://members.lwvbenicia.org)



## Representative Thompson's Town Hall on the ACA

As part of the LWV US action plan to increase local League involvement at the national level, the LWV Benicia had an observer at the Town Hall in Vallejo last month, sponsored by Mike Thompson from the U.S. House of Representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possible repeal of the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare). Over 250 people turned out to listen.



Thompson, who is on the House Ways and Means Committee, emphatically stated that the discussion of the repeal of ACA for the last 7 years should not be viewed as “political, but about the lives of 7 million people” who will be effected by the change. He went on to explain that the ACA originally started because of the health care crisis. “In District 1 alone out of pocket costs for patients were about \$50 million per year. If ACA is repealed millions will lose their insurance and lose jobs.” Thompson felt that the two most important aspects of the ACA are the elimination of the pre-existing conditions clause and allowing kids to stay on their parents’ insurance policies until they are 26. He stressed that it was “not appropriate to do away with it.”

Newly elected State Senator, Bill Dodd also spoke in favor of keeping ACA. The State version, called Covered California, gets federal premium subsidies of around \$1.2 million yearly. However, with loss of insurance and jobs related to insurance California could lose up to \$20 billion, he stated.

Other speakers included Frances Pruitt, a cancer survivor who greatly benefited from the ACA in his care. He was followed by Jane Garcia of La Clinica de La Raza, which served 16,000 patients in Vallejo last year who were enrolled in ACA through Covered California and/or Medicare. A representative from Covered California also spoke, explaining the state rates, and how the system works to offer 5 different insurance company plans in Solano County, with 26,000 or more signing up this year. She was followed by Julie Bates from the AARP which is fighting not only for the ACA, but for continuation of Social Security and Medicare.

After a 40 minute question and answer session with the audience, including several statements from Touro University med students in lab coats, Thompson summed up by stating that the ACA allows affordable health care, reduces drug cost, supports women’s right to choose, and promotes the general public health. Rep. Thompson has a bill in the House to improve ACA by adjusting subsidies according to the cost of living in different areas. He closed the meeting by asking for attendees to take action by calling or sending post cards to Senators Harris and Feinstein. “Write or call members of Congress, use Facebook, write letters to the editor. Let them know how important the ACA is to you.”

The LWV US is actively lobbying to stop the repeal of the ACA until a new, improved plan is created first.



[Read about our resurgence](#)  
[Find out more about us](#)

Happy Birthday to Us!

Happy 97th birthday to the League of Women Voters! Grassroots advocates and educators for almost 100 years! Help us celebrate:

[Join us!](#)  
[Donate in honor of a loved one!](#)

## Magnify Our Voice!

Ready to roll up your sleeves and do the education and organizing work to safeguard democracy? [We welcome you!](#) Membership is open to men and women, citizens and non-citizens over 16 years old.

[Join the League](#), and you become a member at the local, state and national level. We'll get your membership dues and information to the local level right away so you can get engaged where and how you choose!

[More about membership.](#)



## Register for A Capitol Connection

[REGISTER NOW for our Convention: A Capitol Connection](#), this June 2-4 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel.

Early bird rates end April 15! Don't miss Lobby Day, Innovating for Democracy Dinner, the Paddlewheel & Pulitzer dinner as well as amazing speakers, workshops and networking!



## Her Vote Counts - Update

We are proud and inspired by our former IREX Fellow Facia Boyenoh Harris. Her work to expand democracy in Liberia is changing lives.

Congratulations on registering your FIRST voters!

Meet Andrea Banto, first time voter pictured at left. She got registered through the Her Vote Counts Program. In her words, "Its like a dream come true".

Follow "[Her Vote Counts](#)" on Facebook!

Do you have a local election coming?



## Local Elections are Coming!

Visit Voter's Edge California and find out about your local elections today!

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Follow us on Twitter: @cavotes

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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.  
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