

The Voter

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County

P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg, CA 95437 • (707)937-4952
Carol Ann Falk (707)962-9070

November/December 2007
Susan Eveleth, Editor (707)937-3877

A Reminder from Voter Services

By Pat Dunbar

By the time you receive this newsletter, the November election will be just days away. If you haven't already sent in an absentee ballot, it is still possible to request one until October 30. Otherwise, please plan to go to your polling place on November 6.

Once again, Mendocino County is participating in Smart Voter, the League's online source for information on candidates, polling places, and more. Check out this great website at www.smartvoter.org. A number of candidates for our local elections are using this new resource, which is offered to them free of charge. For these candidates, you will find biographical notes, campaign priorities, pictures, endorsements, and more. All candidates for each office are listed, and the ones who have sent in information are highlighted. Based on your zip code, the site can also show which races will appear on your ballot. Be an informed voter – use Smart Voter!

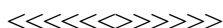
National Immigration Issues

By Barbara Matheson

At the November 13th meeting, the League will focus its attention on national immigration issues. Our local study committee will present material covering such topics as:

- Immigration Policy: Family Reunification
- Federal Immigration Policy: Enforcement Issues
- Effects of Global Interdependence on Migration
- Economic Aspects of Authorized and Unauthorized Immigration
- Immigration and the Economy
- Overview: Federal Policy and Proposed Reforms
- What Motivates Immigration to America?

The meeting will be held at St. Michael's Church in Fort Bragg. Refreshments will be served at 9:30, the meeting will begin at 10 a.m. sharp. Complete study materials, including the consensus questions, are posted on the National League of Women Voters web site at www.lwv.org - click on "Immigration Study."



Reaching Consensus

By Barbara Matheson

Grassroots agreement on positions is one of the League's greatest strengths.

Consensus is the process the League uses to reach member agreement on study issues. Neither a simple majority nor unanimity, it is an overall sense of the group. In other words, consensus results from answers to questions on which members find common ground and agreement. Group discussion that allows an exchange of ideas and opinions is the preferred way to achieve consensus.

The consensus meeting will be held on January 8, 2008.

This meeting will start at 10 a.m. and last until 2 p.m. to allow plenty of time for discussion of this very important issue.

Please bring a sack lunch; the committee will provide dessert and beverage.

We hope all members who attended the first meeting will attend these last two meetings so that we can file a report that truly reflects the consensus of our members.

In this Issue:	
Calendar	8
November Election	1
National Immigration	1
President's Message	2
Board Briefs	2
October Panel	3
Pres. Primaries I	4
Membership	4
Immigration Issues	5
December Meeting	7

2007 - 2008
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

President	Carol Ann Falk 962-9070 carolann@royfalk.com
1st Vice President	Barbara Matheson 937-5164 ken@mcn.org
2nd Vice President	Jane Person 962-6351 janeperson@hotmail.com
Secretary	Babs Levine 937-0629 babs@wildblue.net
Treasurer	Lee Tepper 964-2781 eel@mcn.org

DIRECTORS

Shirley Kirkpatrick	Membership 937-2832 donshirl@mcn.org
Susan Eveleth	VOTER Editor 937-3877 eveleth@mcn.org
Pat Dunbar	Voter Service 937-3409 pdunbar@mcn.org
Susan Mitchell	Director 937-4763 jsmitch@mcn.org
Charlene McAllister	Director 937-4463 charmac@mcn.org
Dorine Real	Director 964-2781 dorine@mcn.org
Emily Collins	Director 937-2435 thecabin@mcn.org

OFF BOARD CHAIRS

Doris Hammer	Budget Committee 937-3312
Betty Smith	Nominating Comm 937-0054

VOTER STAFF

Barbara Auerbach, Charlene McAllister
Jane Person, Dorine Real, and Lee
Tepper

Susan Eveleth	Editor
Mary Willoughby	Publisher



President's Message

As people were leaving our October meeting, I overheard one person say, "that was the best meeting ever" and another say, "I learned so much." Each and every one of our panelists added to our understanding of the local immigration picture. As I sat listening to Ricarda Soria, I was overwhelmed with gratitude for Ricarda's willingness to candidly share her personal story. Every one loves a good story, and hers was a wonderful one starting with her humorous retelling of her first attempt to enter the U.S. and ending with her final achievement of U.S. citizenship.

I have just finished reading another incredible true story about a boy from Honduras who rides on the tops of freight trains up through Mexico in search of a mother that he hasn't seen in eleven years. His mother immigrated to the U.S. in order to send money home to provide basic necessities of food, clothing and education for her children left behind in Honduras with her mother. Each year, thousands of children cling to the tops and sides of freight trains as they journey north in search of their parents. The book is entitled Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario. This book grew out of a series of articles she wrote for the Los Angeles Times which, incidentally, won her a Pulitzer Prize for feature writing.

Another book I devoured recently on the topic of immigration is The Devil's Highway by Luis Alberto Urrea. This story was a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. It is a recounting of a "coyote"-led group crossing the inhospitable desert with horrific results. Both of these books offer invaluable additional facts, statistics and information regarding immigration, in addition to their compelling true stories.

For a fun romp on the subject, may I offer The Rain of Gold by Victor Villasenor. Yes, I did spell "rain" correctly. This is an epic story of one Mexican family who migrates to California in the wake of the Mexican Revolution. Part biography, part love story, part folktale (wait 'til you meet his mother) You won't want to put this one down either.

Immigration is a complicated issue and all three of these books add valuable new perspectives.

So now, anyone for a LWV book club?

Board Briefs

51 members have paid their dues as of October 16.

Susan Mitchell and Dorine Real will create a League poster for display at public events we are involved in. It will contain our mission statement and outline benefits of joining the League.

Pat Black has volunteered to be the League Observer for the Mendocino School Board meetings.

Marsha Wharff, Mendocino Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder, retires this December.

Lee Tepper will take pictures at League meetings and events for inclusion in "The Voter."

Immigration Panel Offers Insights, Dispels Myths about Local Effects

By Jane Person

The October 16 League meeting featured a six-member panel on the effects of immigration on local schools, social services, and families. Some panel members came to the area years ago as immigrants themselves.

Ricarda Soria, Owner and Chef of Taqueria Ricarda, came to Fort Bragg on her third border crossing speaking no English. After giving birth in the local hospital with an English only staff, she vowed to learn the language.

Ricarda began working in the fisheries and recalled taunts about her heritage early on. She has since become a US citizen and opened up her own business 13 years ago.

Barbara Goodell, founder of the Anderson Valley Adult School, worked extensively with the Hispanic community. Many Hispanic immigrants came with little formal education and were illiterate in their own language.

Her adult classes have published a highly successful cookbook, "Secrets of Salsa", which not only preserved old family recipes, but taught the writers English communication skills. A documentary has been made of this program, and its success has spurred some of the women to go on to college. Goodell now has a quilting project going, which has exhibited all over California.

Steve Lund, Superintendent of Fort Bragg School District, estimates that the number of Hispanics in the local community is going down due to lack of jobs. That means a declining school enrollment and thus fewer dollars for school programs. Still, about 20% of the students in the District are English Language Learners, and cultural diversity training is now required for a California teaching credential.

One problem the District has, said Lund, is that the No Child Left Behind testing program requires all students, no matter what their language acquisition level, to take the tests in English. A school with a high level of non-fluent students is bound to score low. Other challenges include involving more immigrant parents as leaders, and maintaining programs like migrant education, and after school activities. Still, said Lund, Latinas especially are taking advantage of the educational offerings, particularly advanced classes.

Jan Kurtyka, Mendocino County Social Services, said that many immigrants eligible for social services do not request them. MediCal provides aid for pregnancies and emergency treatment only, so the idea that the undocumented are flooding social services is a myth.

Lucresha Renteria, Mendocino Coast Clinics, said her family has been citizens for generations but was not bilingual and was thus mistaken for being Mexican. She remembered hiding with her fiancé from the INS some years ago because her fiancé was not a legal resident. The INS carted people away from a church event. She sees dual citizenship, now allowed under US law, as an incentive for immigrants to become US citizens since they will not have to relinquish their country of birth.

The Coast Clinics needs bilingual and bicultural interpreters, Renteria said. The close-knit Latino community does not always trust that patient confidentiality will be maintained.

Martha Madrid, Lay Pastor, Los Amigos De Cristo of the First Presbyterian church in Fort Bragg, read some of the problems she's heard from her Hispanic congregation: parents working two jobs, language difficulties, and kids who don't want to be here. She counsels her parishioners to learn to speak and write simple English and US history, stay in the US during the residency application process, and keep the kids in school and studying.

A brief question/answer period followed the panel.

A big thank you to **Patricia Black** who answered the call to be our new observer for the Mendocino School Board. Because of health reasons, Jean Morley has had to retire as observer for the **Mendocino Coast Hospital Board**. We need you to fill this position. This is a job each of us can do. There are training materials available and other observers available for you to talk to get moral support. Please consider this position, no previous experience necessary. Give me, Carol Ann, a call at 962-9070 if this is your calling.



Presidential Primaries in California (Part I)

By Barbara E. Auerbach

The purpose and the importance of presidential primaries is to afford voters the opportunity to indicate which candidates they want to support at the National Conventions. In the past, party bosses met in smoke filled back rooms and decided the party's candidates. Progressive Era reformers pushed through the concept of primaries with the intention that the populist opinion be counted.

California, one of the states with the most delegates going to the National Conventions, has moved the presidential primaries from June 2008 to February 5, 2008. This change in primary dates will give California, the most populous state, more of a voice in which candidates make it to the National Conventions.

Usually the candidates have gone through the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primaries, where candidates with smaller coffers have an opportunity to be seen and heard and be propelled to bigger races. Other candidates, by the time they get to California in June, would have withdrawn from the race due to under funding. Now with the presidential primaries moved to February 5, 2008, the voters in California may have a real opportunity to choose the candidates going to the National Conventions.

On the other hand, it may be too soon to be optimistic about California's voice in the selection of candidates. Other states are following suit and will also be holding their presidential primaries on the same day. A super Tuesday primary on February 5, 2008, would stretch candidates resources too thin. Only the candidates with the best financing are likely to be visible in campaigns in 7 to 14 states either au pied, or by television advertisements.

It is still important for Californians to go to the polls on February 5, 2008, because California has the largest population, and numbers will make a difference. If you are a voter who has declined to state an affiliation with a political party, you may still participate in the primaries as stated by SB 28.

According to California Secretary of State - Election and Voter information for the Presidential Primaries:

“Political parties have until 135 days prior to an election to provide a written notice to the Secretary of State indicating the adoption of a rule allowing “decline to state” voters to vote the ballot of that individual party. The deadline for

the February 5, 2008 Presidential Primary Election was September 23, 2007.”

Only two parties, the Democratic Party and the American Independent Party, have provided the notice allowing “decline to state” voters to vote the ballot of that individual party.

“Decline to state” voters must request the ballot of a political party (only one of those two stated above) at the time of the presidential primaries. Otherwise you will be given a nonpartisan ballot.

Absentee and mail-in voters will be notified of this choice prior to the due date of their mail-in ballot.

The League of Women Voters in their voter service role wishes to remind you that:

- 1. Being registered with a political party will make a difference when you vote in a primary election.**
- 2. Persons who registered in a political party can vote for candidates of another political party only if they reregister in the other party by the deadline which is 15 days before election day.**

The series will continue in the next issue of The Voter

We Welcome the Following New League Members:

Patricia Marienn originally from Michigan, then Arcada, is now living in Fort Bragg. A retired sales representative, she is now active in our community such as working at the Botanical Gardens and Senior Center.

Irene Malone moved to Fort Bragg from San Francisco. She is an active Spanish/English translator and is especially interested in health care and immigration.

Patricia O'Reilly is a retired High School teacher who moved to Fort Bragg from San Francisco and has lived here for two and a half years.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

One of the nice things about living in a small town is that you actually see and speak to people who read the Voter. However, you only receive verbal letters to the editor because of these encounters. The following are some comments that were verbally conveyed to me en passant:

This comment took exception to a summary of a LWV Committee study that suggested that immigrants were not taking jobs away from native born workers. The study implied that immigrant workers were needed to pick up the slack now that baby boomers were retiring, and that unauthorized immigrants were not taking jobs away from Americans.

The person objecting to some statements in the study implied that many programming and other professional jobs were going to people in foreign countries like India and the Philippines. I pondered this and then realized that perhaps some people were equating the loss of jobs due to outsourcing to jobs in America going to immigrants.

Outsourcing has become a big economical savings for corporations who send high-tech jobs overseas. It is not only high-tech jobs, but medical doctors, architects, and accountants that are being sought in places like India and the Philippines. Outsourced workers, like migrant manual workers, get paid a very small percentage of the fee that American workers would receive. This remains a real problem for working people in America but has very little to do with immigration, inasmuch as the outsourced jobs go to citizens of other countries.

Another Voter reader referred me to an Article written by Alejandro Portes that recently appeared in The American Prospect, October 2007, volume 18, number 10. The article, The Fence to Nowhere, gives us excellent insight into the issues of unauthorized immigration and proposes a bilateral labor management program between the Mexican government and the United States that would allow “the circular pattern of labor migration by creating conditions and incentives for return to Mexico.”

Portes points out that migrant manual workers do not take American jobs away. He cites an instance about a harvest in North Carolina where “the annual harvest requires about 150,000 agricultural workers. In a recent year, 6,000 openings were reserved for U.S. workers at \$9.02 per hour. A total of 120 applied, 25 showed up to work on the first day, and none finished the harvest.”

Portes admits that many employers prefer immigrants to native-born workers to perform menial jobs because the rate of pay is low, and the employers can pass the savings on to consumers who keep the businesses going. But it has been shown that the success of these businesses generate “spin-off effects in the form of better-paid clerical, administrative, and government service jobs that are attractive to native-born workers.”

Portes believes that “acknowledging and managing the cyclical flow of migrant workers would achieve far better results for both countries.”

His bilateral labor management program allows adult Mexicans, with clean records, a permit to cross the border for a fee of \$3,000 provided there is a certifiable job. Portes’s premise is that the majority of adult immigrants coming to work in America would still return to their country at the end of the work cycle if incentives and conditions were in place.

Continued on the next page

Continued from previous page

The incentives include return of half the entry fee plus all the Social Security taxes deducted from their paychecks. Mexico among other things would have to “respect the tax-free status of returned migrant’s lump sum payments and creating credit programs that match the investment of these funds in productive enterprises”

There are several other points to the bilateral labor management program that Portes proposes. All of the points are well taken and I encourage anyone interested in immigration issues to read his article in its entirety.

Reporter-in-the-open
Barbara e. Auerbach

Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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 advocacy.

Membership Statement

Know the issues, join the conversation, join the League of Women Voters. Eighty-five years ago it was for women. **Now it's for everyone!**

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters!

Membership is open to all men and women of voting age interested in a better government and more responsible, knowledgeable voters.

Mail this application and dues to:

*League of Women's Voters of Mendocino County
P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg, CA 95437*

Individual membership: \$45 per year two person household: \$70 per year

- Membership Dues - Payable to LWVMC
 Donation - Payable to LWVMC

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

Dr. Glenn Langer to Address League in December

By Barbara Matheson

Dr. Glenn Langer will be the guest speaker at the League's meeting/luncheon on December 11 at the Hill House Inn in Mendocino. Please see Jane Person's notice, below, for luncheon reservation information. The meeting will start at 10:15 with coffee and announcements. Dr. Langer will be introduced at about 10:45, lunch will be served at noon.

Dr. Langer will discuss his Partnership Scholars Program which is designed to make disadvantaged youth in the public school system competitive for entry into four-year universities with scholarship aid.

Currently there are 25 scholars attending schools in Mendocino and Fort Bragg. In addition, there are over 250 more in other schools in California. Throughout the years, many League members, school staff, and community people have served as mentors in this valuable program.

Dr. Langer has been recognized in several articles for his foresight in starting the Partnership Scholars Program. Most recently he received a special commendation and award from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for "his extraordinary service and his life-changing generosity toward the students and their families in his Partnership Scholars Program."

December 11th Holiday Luncheon To Be at The Hill House

The Hill House has raised its price to \$20. **Advance Reservations are Required!** You are welcome to come to the meeting only. The social hour begins at 10:15, but if you wish to stay for lunch at noon (please, please do!), you must have already paid. I must call in the number for each entrée on December 4.

Cut out the bottom of this article and send it Jane Person with your check for \$20, made out to LWVMC. **Be sure to check your lunch choice.** Price includes entrée, dessert, coffee, tea, tax and gratuity. Sparkling conversation with tablemates is free.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Entrée choice: Pasta Primavera Fish Veracruz Cobb Salad

Send to: Jane Person
 17450 Redwood Springs Drive
 Ft. Bragg, CA 95437

Questions: Call Jane at 964-6351

**The League of Women Voters
of Mendocino County
P. O. Box 1128
Fort Bragg, CA 95437**

**Make reservations
for Holiday
Luncheon**

Calendar of Events

November 6 **Consolidated Districts Election** 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Location: Your designated Precinct or Absentee Ballot
VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

November 13 **General Meeting: National Immigration Study** 10 a.m.
Location: St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg
Board Meeting 12:30 p.m.

December 11 **General Meeting and Holiday Luncheon** 10:15 a.m.
Location: Hill House Inn, Mendocino
Speaker: Dr. Glenn Langer 10:45 a.m.
Luncheon (See article for menu and reservations) noon

January 8 **General Meeting** 10:15 a.m.
Location: St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg
Program: Immigration - Discussion and Consensus
*This meeting will go until 2 p.m.
Please bring sack lunch. Dessert and Coffee will be provided.*

NOVEMBER 2007

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

DECEMBER 2007

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Websites of Interest

LWVMC www.mendo.ca.lwvnet.org
Smart Voter www.smartvoter.org