



# The Voter

## The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County

May/June 2008

Jane Person, President

Susan Eveleth, Editor

### Primary Election Set for June 3

By Pat Dunbar

The primary election will soon be here; all registered voters should have received sample ballots and voter information pamphlets from the county and state. Here are a few things to remember:

- If you vote by mail, you may send your ballot by mail, or take it to any polling place on election day.
- You may vote a provisional ballot (to be validated later) at any polling place.
- Voters not registered with a particular political party may request a ballot for the Republican, Democratic or American Independent primary; voters registered with a party will re-

ceive the ballot for that party. There are 2 state ballot measures and 1 county measure to be decided; in addition, there are bond measures for those in Fort Bragg and Leggett school districts. All registered voters may vote on these measures even if not affiliated with any political party.

#### Dates to remember:

- May 19 – last day to register to vote
- May 27 – last day to request a mail-in ballot
- June 3 – mail-in ballots due at Elections Office (or any polling place) by 8 PM.

[www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)

[www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org)

[www.co.mendocino.ca.us](http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us)

Click on Departments,  
County Assessor-  
Clerk-Recorder,  
Elections  
for Vote By  
Mail Ballot Status

Polls will be open from 7AM to 8PM on June 3.

Make sure your voice is heard – don't forget to vote!

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**County Clerk-Recorder**  
**Election Information**  
707 463-4371

### California League of Women Voters Publishes Stand on State Propositions 98 and 99

#### NO ON PROPOSITION 98

This deceptive measure would abolish rent control and harm environmental protection. Californians deserve protection from eminent domain abuse, but Prop 98 goes too far. Its extreme provisions would eliminate rent control and other renter protection laws; that is why wealthy apart-

ment and mobile home park owners have contributed most of the money to qualify Prop 98 for the ballot. Prop 98 also contains language that would make it difficult to protect the environment and regulate land use, growth and development. This hidden agenda would threaten water quality, hurt the environment,

and thwart regulations that protect our neighborhoods.

#### YES ON PROPOSITION 99

Homeowners Protection Act.

This measure is a real eminent domain reform measure that will protect homeowners, without the hidden

agendas and adverse consequences of Prop. 98. Prop. 99 will prohibit the government from using eminent domain to take a home to transfer to another private party. It is supported by a broad coalition of homeowners, business, labor, cities, counties and environmentalists. *Submitted by Barbara Matheson*

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**VOTER STAFF-Barbara Auerbach, Becky Bowen, Charlene McAllister, Jane Person**

## The President's Message

This summer I'm planning to visit a college friend who lives in Greenwich, Connecticut. Like most people outside of California she had only vaguely heard the name "Mendocino" and assumed it was either a suburb of L. A., San Francisco or Eureka, she wasn't sure which. What's it like there? she asked, after telling me that she and her boyfriend were active in several sailing clubs, belonged to a travel club that only visited exotic and obscure places, and went to black tie dinner dances as members of the Darien Cotillion.

How do you explain Mendocino? The best I could come up with on the telephone is that this is a place where people are passionate about ideas, about caring for people, passionate about preservation of natural beauty, and about political and social issues. A place where you could see a group of women on a street corner, dressed in black protesting the Iraq War on the one hand, and see others attending a spaghetti feed to benefit Habitat for Humanity, or Big Brothers/Big Sisters on the other. Then I explained how the coast drove away the offshore drillers in the seventies and declared war against Japan for hunting whales in the sixties. Top that, Darien!

There's no better place to direct one's passion than in the League of Women Voters. We care about voting. An assault on the simple right to vote has already begun in states like Florida, Missouri, and Indiana. Voter registration is one activity our League could take part in again. League members also care about transparency in government bodies; that's what our League Observers look for in the special district meetings they observe. We're in the League as well because we care about issues like sustainability. This is the issue our League will take on next year, and it's huge.

The League's Sustainable Communities Action Policy states that "the term refers to the dynamic among ecological, economic and social systems on a global scale." It can cover government policies, social policies, and natural resources. The concept ties together many League positions and program goals. It's a term with many definitions but one common theme: meeting the today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

At the May Annual Meeting sustainability was the subject of the table talk discussions. The purpose was to come up with a specific and narrow topic relating to the coast that we could study. We also wanted to think about ways we could do so.

Program Chairman Barbara Matheson reports on the results of the table talk discussions in her article. If you would like to be a part of this study or just have some ideas, contact Barbara.

In the meanwhile, have a restful and happy summer. We will meet again in September.

**Jane Person**

# Profiles in League

**By Jane Person, President**

I grew up in Venezuela, speaking Spanish before English. At age 10 I moved to Atlanta, unfortunately losing the Spanish but learning Southern. I graduated from Duke as an English major and received a Masters at Emory University. I spent 38 mostly wonderful years (but some not!) teaching high school English, most of them with the San Diego City Schools.

My loves include murder mysteries, archaeology (especially the Near East and the effect of climate changes on civilizations), ancient history, historical geology, opera, hiking around the Mendocino Coast, and most of all, intelligent conversation. It was for the latter that I joined the League, and being asked to serve as president is what I am most proud of.

## Our Stories and Our History

*A continuing VOTER Feature*



*Carol Ann Falk (right), LWVMC president 2007-2008 hands off to Jane Person, elected president for 2008-2009 at the Annual Meeting May 13, 2008 at Silver's at the Wharf in Fort Bragg.*

**By Carol Ann Falk**

**2nd Vice President**

I was born in San Mateo, California. I graduated from San Francisco State University (back then it was San Francisco State). I taught elementary school for 26 years, all grades except fifth. I especially loved teaching first grade which I did often because the kids would come in September not knowing how to read and leave in June reading. Very rewarding!

I am most proud of crewing on a 40-foot sailboat with seven men racing to Honolulu from Long Beach in the Transpacific Yacht Race, 1981. I was the only woman crew member at a time when no women raced large yachts. Most of the time I would be the only woman out on the race course. Thank goodness things have changed and it is no longer a big deal for women to be out racing any size boat.

## VOTER, LEAGUE GOES ELECTRONIC—AND GREEN

Beginning with the next issue (Aug./Sept.), the VOTER will be coming to you electronically—unless you call 937-3877 and request to continue having it mailed.

**Why are we doing this?** Cost is one of the main reasons. We can add pictures and use color with the electronic version, and not have to pay postage or buy paper. Each issue of the VOTER, sent out by mail, can cost up to \$200, and the price of postage and paper is due to increase. Saving paper also saves trees.

**How will it work?** You will receive a copy of the VOTER in your email. You can read it on your computer, or print it out on your home printer.

**What if I don't have email?** Then be sure to call Susan at 937-3877 and tell her you want to continue to receive your VOTER by mail.

**What if I receive e-mail on the computer at the public library?**

You can still receive a copy by mail. Just make that phone call.

**What if I want it by email, but Susan doesn't have my address?**

Give her a call, or email her at [eveleth@mcn.org](mailto:eveleth@mcn.org)

# LWVC President: The League Provides Unique Services for Informing Voters

## By Jane Person

Janis Hirohama, LWVC president and speaker at the April 19 League meeting and potluck asked, then answered the question, "Is the League Necessary?"

Hirohama began with an historical overview of the League, noting that family and communities were a priority at its founding in 1920 and remain so today. The League was formed in part to help newly enfranchised voters take an active, informed part in the doings of government. Education, a cornerstone, is promoted today through candidate and public forums and Smart Voter.

We're a grass roots organization, she noted. Local leagues study then adopt issues, and the same process is done at the state and national level, often with far reaching consequences. The League even helped establish the Child Labor Laws. Advocacy, a second cornerstone, is effected through lobbying electing offi-

cial and promoting legislation on matters of public policy.

"Voting and democracy are what the League is all about," said Hirohama. Voting gives us a voice, she continued, and helps us keep institutions and elected officials accountable. The League is necessary because its focus is on voting. No other organization can make this claim. It was conceived of by women who did not have this right and therefore understood its importance, said Hirohama. She cited the example of her grandfather who lived in this country 50 years before people of Japanese ancestry were given the right to vote or become a citizen.

The League is necessary also because it empowers; it gives people the knowledge and training to become community leaders. Its mission is to promote active, informed participation.

Finally, like few other organizations, the League offers "spin free information", said Hirohama,

and calm, reasoned discussions in an increasingly shrill and partisan world. The League has a reputation for integrity and non-partisanship, and the stands on issues that it has studied give citizens the chance to make up their own minds. As a result, the League is often chosen to serve on government task forces because it represents the voices of ordinary citizens, she noted.

A question/answer period followed her talk and brought out the following: SB 840, the single payer health care bill, is on the back burner. The League has not sponsored presidential debates since 1994 because of cost and because the non-partisan League format "is not sexy enough" for TV audiences now. At this point there are no plans to study the retention or elimination of the Electoral College.

The audience of 30 or more included several members of the Sonoma County League from Santa Rosa.



Janis Hirohama,  
President, LWVC

*"Voting is power. Nobody else focuses on voting."*

*"We focus on empowering people and we provide training and knowledge to become active members in the community."*

*"We offer spin-free information—sane, calm reasoned discussion based on fact... There is a need and a hunger for this."*

# League Welcomes President Hirohama



Member Barbara Christensen, of Lake County and Fort Bragg.



Carol Ann Falk (r.) and President Hirohama (below)



From left, members Charlene McAllister and Babs Levine greet Janis Hirohama



Visiting Sonoma County LWV members Chlele Gummer (left), Action Chair and Amy Southwick, Elections Chair.



LWVMC Friends Mary and Larry Willoughby



From left, members Lee Tepper, Don Kirkpatrick and Ken Matheson



Members Jean Morley (left) and Geri Anderson

## WILL THERE BE A BROKERED PRESIDENTIAL CONVENTION IN AUGUST?

By Barbara Auerbach

Just when we thought that the presidential convention was simply a thank you blast for delegates from the political parties, we get a Hillary and an Obama. Before the 1960s the conventions actually were held to select the presidential nominee, the vice presidential nominee, and the party platform.

This year the Republican Party convention will most likely be business as usual. The nominee by a process of winner-take-all in the primaries, John McCain, will step up to the podium with his choice of a running mate. The platform will be announced after a series of give and take sessions at the convention, and the balloons will be released. End of story.

Not so for the Democrats. Hillary's primary wins and her decision to march forward may well place the Democrats back into 1924. At that convention the Democrats cast 103 ballots and finally nominated John W. Davis.

A "dark horse" candidate James K. Polk, was nominated in 1844 due to a deadlock in the balloting. He wasn't even nominated until the eighth ballot, and then became the presidential nominee on the ninth ballot.

In the 1800s there were caucuses consisting of members of Congress who met to select their party's nominee. They were all men who were considered to be elitists. They did not necessarily represent the entire party. However, these men were the most knowledgeable po-

litical leaders from all over the nation.

In many states, because there was only one party, the party leaders didn't always agree with the congressional delegation. Finally in 1831 the Anti-Mason Party was the first party to hold a national convention. They were the first party to introduce nominating conventions. This of course took party business out of the hands of the Congress.

Eventually, in 1908, due to a Progressive reform movement, the Republicans introduced the use of primary elections to choose a presidential nominee. Not all states held primaries. Nor did the primaries stop the party bosses from telling their delegates how to vote. Candidates had to prove to the party bosses that they could be elected. John F. Kennedy did just that in the 1960 presidential race. He entered seven primaries while Hubert Humphrey entered only five of the sixteen primaries. John F. Kennedy prevailed in the primaries and became the party nominee.

The conventions led to other reforms as well. In 1964 the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenged the seating of delegates at the convention. It led to a resolution that in the future no delegations would be seated from states where the right to vote was denied because of race. The 1968 convention in Chicago was interrupted by a large number of supporters of anti-war Senator Eugene McCarthy. The convention refused to entertain McCarthy as a nominee, and supported the incumbent vice president

Hubert Humphrey, who did not participate in a single primary.

A riot ensued which was televised by the media. The nation viewed an angry mob both inside and outside the convention building being squelched by zealous police. The fiasco of the 1968 Democratic convention led to nationwide primaries which became a new method for choosing delegates and limiting the clout of the party bosses.

Why a brokered Democratic convention? There will be 3,253 pledged delegates not counting delegates from Michigan and Florida. These states would have had 313 pledged delegates and 54 unpledged delegates. The 3,253 pledged delegates are committed to vote for a particular candidate chosen by primary voters and by caucus participants. That is, they are committed to vote for that candidate on the first round of balloting at the convention. They are no longer committed to vote for that candidate on subsequent ballots.

There are also 793 - 795 unpledged delegates. We have come to know them as super-delegates. The number may change slightly by the time of the convention.. Super-delegates consist of federal office holders, governors, and other high-ranking party officials. A candidate needs a majority of pledged and super-delegates which comes to approximately 2,025 votes to win the presidential nomination. The super-delegates are not committed to vote according to the voice of the people but may vote for the candidate that at the general election in November 2008.— *Continued on page 7*

## College of the Redwoods Scholarship Recognizes Board Members Shirley Kirkpatrick, Emily Collins

Iлона Anderson, received the first College of the Redwoods scholarship awarded to recognize the League of Women Voters of Mendocino County at an awards ceremony on the campus April 24.

Ms. Anderson plans to attend Humboldt State University next fall. Her goal is to work as a sign language translator.

The \$100 scholarship was funded by an anonymous donor to

honor league members Shirley Kirkpatrick and Emily Collins who recently retired from many years on the league board. Marcia Williams, of the college scholarship office, presented the award.



**Iлона Anderson**



**League Member Betty Smith** (right) receives proclamation from County Supervisor, fellow League Member and Daughter Kendall Smith at the County Board of Supervisors meeting in Fort Bragg April 8. Mrs. Smith taught early childhood care at College of the Redwoods and has been an active advocate for young children for the past 28 years. She helped found the Mendocino Coast Child Abuse Prevention Council and was one of the first members of FIRST 5 Mendocino. Fellow FIRST 5 Mendocino Commission members are shown with her at the ceremony which recognized her on her retirement from the Commission.

### *A Brokered Presidential Convention? Continued from page 6*

We may be headed for a brokered convention if the delegate count continues to be close between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Many party policies and regulations are likely to be reconsidered should this occur at the Democratic Party Convention in Denver in August 2008. Among those policies and regulations to be considered are: the rules that led Florida and Michigan to be stripped of their delegates, and rethinking the role of super-delegates. Perhaps even the demise of national conventions with more focus on state primaries.

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The League of Women Voters  
Of Mendocino County  
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**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:*

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P.O. Box 1128,  
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Individual membership: \$45 per year. Two-person household: \$70 per year

\_\_\_ Membership Dues—Payable to LWVMC

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