



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

MAY-JUNE 2012

JANE PERSON, PRESIDENT

CHARLENE MCALLISTER, EDITOR

PRIMARY ELECTION IS ALL ABOUT WHAT'S NEW

Perhaps the biggest question about the California June 5 primary election ballot is: What's not new?

Take the Mendocino County ballot for example: New districts, new candidates, and a new "top two" or "open primary" election system.

Except for U.S. President and county central committee offices, former partisan offices are now "voter nominated offices." What was referred to as "political party affiliation" is now

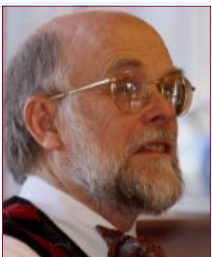
"political party preference."

Here's why: On June 8, 2010, California voters approved Proposition 14 which created a top two or open primary election system. Under this Top Two Candidates Open Primary Act, all candidates, regardless of party preference, appear on a single primary election ballot and voters can cast a ballot for any candidate. The top two vote-getters (NOT the top vote-getter from each qualified political party) move to the general election.

Candidates for voter-nominated office, must indicate their party preference or lack of party preference on the primary and general election ballots. Political parties no longer formally nominate candidates for voter-nominated offices. So a candidate who finished in the top two at the Primary Election and advances to the General Election is not the official nominee of any party for the office. This means two candidates from the same party may face a run-off against each other in November.

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LWVMC Continues Mother's Day Celebrations



Jary Stavely

Consider this: Most League members' mothers were born before the passage of the 19th Amendment. Most were students or young parents during the Depression. All of them voted, and while we may not know how they voted, they cared—and they went to the ballot boxes. We salute them in this issue. Betty Stavely celebrates her 100th birthday this August and so does everybody in her family—including her son Jary, who, like his mother, is an active member of the Mendocino County League of Women Voters.



Betty Stavely

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Save the Date
Our League Year
Kicks Off
Tuesday,
September 18, 2012
At
The Harbor Lite
Lodge
Fort Bragg, CA

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Mendocino County voters also will elect officials from new districts, created last year by the state Citizens Redistricting Commission. New Congressional, Assembly, State Senate and Board of Equalization district maps were drawn based on population and community of interests. Until 2011, districts were formed by elected officials. The commission was created by Proposition 20 (called the Voters First Act by supporters) and approved by California voters November 2, 2010.

In federal races, the vote for President is a partisan primary—primary election business as usual.

There are 24 candidates for U.S. Senate seat currently held by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), including six Democrats, 14 Republicans, 2 Peace and Freedom, 1 Libertarian and 1 American Independent candidate.

Mendocino County now is in the 2nd Congressional District (all of Del Norte, Humboldt, Marin, Mendocino and Trinity Counties and coastal Sonoma County); the 2nd Senate District (all of Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino and Trinity Counties and coastal Sonoma County) and the 2nd Assembly District (all of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity Counties and coastal Sonoma County).

Twelve candidates appear on the ballot for the 2nd U.S. Congressional District. For candidate responses to League questions and comments about Mendocino County, please click on our VOTER special election edition at http://www.mendo.ca.lwvnet.org/files/voter_may_2012_election_extra.pdf

Mendocino County voters also will vote for Second District Assembly member in a primary race where Democrat incumbent Wes Chesbro is running against two Democrats (Tom Lynch, a small businessman from Guerneville; and Firenza Xuan Pini, a “student, entrepreneur, rancher” from Hayfork, CA) and Green Party candidate Pamela Elizondo, of Laytonville, an environmental healing consultant.

First District Mendocino County Supervisor Incumbent Carre Brown, is unopposed. Second District Supervisor John McCowen is running against Andrea Longoria, a substance abuse counselor from Ukiah. Fourth District Supervisor Kendall Smith announced some weeks ago she will not run again. Fort Bragg Council Member Dan Gjerde is the only candidate on the ballot for 4th District Supervisor. He is opposed by Rex Gressett, of Fort Bragg, a write-in candidate.

Two state propositions on the ballot—Proposition 28, an initiative constitutional amendment, requires majority approval and puts new state legislative term limits in place. Proposition 29, an initiative statute, requires majority approval and places an additional tax on cigarettes for cancer research.

Local measures on the county ballot include Measure D (Ukiah voters only) which requires majority approval to make the City Treasurer of Ukiah an appointed position. Measure E is a special tax for fire protection and prevention which would commence July 1, 2012, in the Brooktrails Township Community Services District. Two-thirds voter approval is required and only voters in this subdivision northwest of Willits vote on this measure.

ACTION

BY BARBARA MATHESON

O We support Proposition 28 on the June 5 ballot—the Legislative Term Limits Reform Act. This simple reform will help make our legislature more accountable and effective. The current limits on how many terms an individual can serve in the legislature would be replaced by a 12-year limit on the total number of years one could serve—whether in the Assembly, the Senate, or a combination of the two.

R

N

E

R We have taken a neutral position on Proposition 29 on the June 5 ballot—the California Cancer Research Act. This measure would add a one-dollar per pack tax on cigarettes sold in California, with proceeds to be used for cancer and other smoking-related health issues, anti-smoking campaigns, and law enforcement. While the League supports the causes underwritten by this measure, we believe that earmarking state revenue for specific expenses reduces the flexibility needed by the legislature in setting budgets to respond to current needs.



Barbara Matheson's mother, Mary Ratzlaff Matoza (see Page 5)

LEAGUE MEMBERS REACH CONSENSUS ON PRIVATIZATION STUDY

By Barbara Matheson

Some 30 League members met April 10, at the Caspar Community Center to discuss and reach consensus on the National Privatization Study. During the morning session, committee members Jane Person, Charlene McAllister, and Barbara Auerbach presented the definition, history, and examples of privatization. They also covered the attributes of the public and private sectors and the job of government.

During lunch, members met in small groups. Each group was given a scenario of privatizing a governmental agency such as libraries, parks, health care, jails, and schools. At the end of

lunch, each group reported results (hoped-for outcomes, governmental oversight needed, possible cost savings, and economic impacts to the community).

Committee member Barbara Matheson led the members through six consensus questions. In general, members agreed there had been too much privatization of government functions, services and assets in the past decade. They strongly agreed that core government services and functions important to well-being of the people should remain with the government. Members agreed that developing criteria to apply when making decisions to transfer government ser-

vices, assets and functions to the private sector was essential. They felt privatization is not appropriate under certain circumstances:

- When governments are unwilling to oversee private contracts
- When privatizing threatens national security and risks personal or security data
- When the private entity's goals and purposes are not compatible with public well-being
- When the private entity is not transparent

In conclusion, League members stated all privatization efforts should be regulated and the regulatory process

should include:

- Clear and measurable goals
- A feasibility study
- Adherence to all laws regarding public contracts
- Performance evaluations
- Provisions for transferring services back to the government or another contractor in the event of inadequate performance
- Enforcement

Our consensus votes, along with those of other Leagues has been forwarded to the national committee. They will present the recommended new position on privatization at the national convention in Washington D.C., in June.



Honoring Our Mothers

As fate—and luck—would have it, a politician’s mother had everything to do with the suffragist movement and as we continue to honor our own mothers during the month of May, we recognize Febb King Ensminger Burn (“Mrs. J. L. Burn” in history books) who lived in Niota, McMinn County, TN, according to the 1920 federal census. She was 45 and a widow. Here is the letter she wrote to her son, Tennessee Assembly Member Harry Thomas Burn on the eve of the historic vote that ratified the 19th Amendment:

“Dear Son: Hurrah and vote for suffrage! Don't keep them in doubt! I notice some of the speeches against. They were bitter. I have been watching to see how you stood, but have not noticed anything yet. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put the ‘rat’ in ratification. Your mother.”

If Febb K. Burn voted for the first time in a presidential election in 1924, she would have had a choice between Republican Calvin Coolidge, Democrat John W. Davis or Progressive Party candidate (liberal Democrat who bolted the party) Robert M. LaFollette.

Photo: findagrave.com



Katharine DeWitt Hall (11/25/94-1/7/89) shown here at graduation from Columbia Teacher's College in 1919, didn't discuss her votes for president. "I still don't know, says daughter Doris Hammer, "except that my parents supported Wendell Willkie."

The rest is history. Son Harry, 24, a Republican, voted in favor of women’s suffrage (switching his previous vote against the amendment). He said later he carried his mother’s letter in his suit pocket that day. When he broke the 48/48 tie in the state assembly and voted aye, Tennessee became the 36th and last state required to ratify. The date was August 18, 1920.

According to the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knoxville, TN, Burn said, “My mother was a college woman, a student of national and international affairs who took an interest in all public issues. She could not vote....On that roll call, confronted with the fact that I was going to go on record for time and eternity on the merits of the question, I had to vote for ratification.”

Febb Ensminger Burn died in McMinn County, Tennessee, at age 71 on June 18, 1945. Her son, Harry, died at the age of 81 after suffering a heart attack at the family farm in McMinn County in 1977.



Val Muchowski's mother (above) Marie Elizabeth Zuzze Wesel (11/25/25-11/25/77) was born in Jamestown, NY. "This picture was taken in Tucson, AZ, where she met my dad when they were in college." Val was born in Tucson. "She was a staunch Democrat and probably her last vote was for Jimmy Carter."

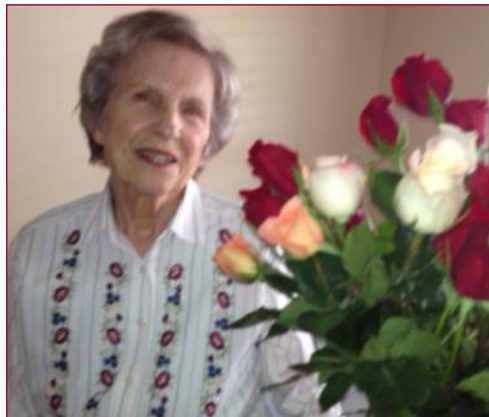
Voting for President: What Our Mothers Told Us And What They Didn't Tell Us

Becky Bowen's mother (right), Madonna Trail Romine, born 1913, in Kaufman County, TX, was a lifelong Democrat and Republican. "I think she voted for Roosevelt and Truman, but I'm guessing after that," Becky says. "She simply wouldn't tell me, but I'm pretty sure she voted for Eisenhower." She died in 1997, in San Antonio, TX.



Barbara Matheson's mother, Mary Ratzlaff Matoza (right), was born in Salina, KS, in 1909. "She was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat," Barbara says. These pictures were taken at the Matheson's wedding, July 19, 1958.

Ken Matheson's mother, Edith Peterson Matheson (below) was born in Port Chicago, CA, in 1911. "She was always a Democrat and voted a Democratic ticket until her oldest son convinced her Goldwater was the man," says Ken, who is not the oldest son.



Susan Mitchell's mother, Gloria Anderson Guinn, is shown above recovering from cancer surgery in April. She was born in 1924, in Ponca City, OK. "She has been and continues to be a lifelong and active Democrat," says Susan.

"She was a Republican her whole life and always voted for a Republican president," says Winston Bowen. His mother, Margaret Pabst Bowen (7/28/15-11/18/98) was born in Chicago shortly before her family moved to Beverly Hills.



Members Take a Crack at Design for Programs And Put Local League Positions to Good Use

By Charlene McAllister and Becky Bowen

League members picked up the thread of local positions at the annual May meeting and began to weave ideas into a design for programs, emphasis and action during the upcoming 2012-2013 year that begins September 18.

Members met in small groups at the post-meeting luncheon May 8, brainstormed and submitted ideas to the new Board.

Table Talk notes make it clear League members regard local positions as serious goals. And they aim to reach those goals through action, education and example. For more than 20 years, the local League has turned to local positions to kindle political action or education about healthcare, public libraries and transportation, county budgets, special districts, natural resources and sustainability. Perhaps the best example is the League's active support of Measure A (County Library Special Transaction and Use Tax) on the Nov. 8, 2011, ballot that passed with 75.66 per cent of the county-wide vote.

However, notes from the annual meeting's Table Talk indicate members are as eager to learn as they are to advocate. Members want to keep informed about local community business—particularly development of Georgia Pacific's former mill site in the city of Fort Bragg and the unfolding dilemma of proposed closure of eight State Parks in the County. Most Table Talk groups listed Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing and Community Development Director Marie Jones as desirable speakers. An update on community colleges also appeared on Table Talk notes and the requested speaker was College of the Redwoods Trustee Barbara Rice.

Other Table Talk suggestions:

- A program that examines state influences on community college curricula, introduces the new College of the Redwoods president, and looks at college efforts to increase enrollment—especially of younger students.
- A public school representative who can speak to what is happening in vocational education.
- Re-study of the role of Mendocino Coast Health District in providing county healthcare services. Suggested speakers were Chief Executive Officer Ray Hino or Board Planning Director Buz Graham.
- A new study on: "How Does County Government Work?"

- A program that looks at violence against women in the county. Suggested speakers from Safe Passage or Project Sanctuary.
- A program to explore alternative transportation in the county—without using public transportation.
- Candidate Forums and Proposition Pros/Cons prior to the November General Election. Members suggested we look at new ways to conduct forums—including an invitation for high school and college student participation. Table Talk notes say: "Let the students ask questions to candidates."

Members at many tables expressed a desire for the League to reach out to young people and members of the Hispanic community—including a follow-up on last year's "Looking for Local Leaders" panel discussion ("Do the same thing—but with 30-something local leaders, especially from the Hispanic community"). That Table Talk note also said it was "time to put the Mendocino League on Facebook" and time to translate at least one page of each VOTER into Spanish.

Almost every table included a request to put a local spin on campaign finance and corporate personhood debates as well as concern about how national immigration laws impact the local Hispanic community and efforts by members of that community to enter a path toward citizenship.

Members at one table challenged the League to approach the sustainability position in an innovative way: Consider sustainability in a broader context that embraces economic, cultural, and ecological sustainability. Consider the reality that government actions effect sustainability of the community in fundamental ways—from clean water to clean air to carbon footprint reduction to protection of wildlife to trash management. Members at the table felt these issues could be examined in several public lecture programs with speakers on every subject from county wineries that practice sustainable viticulture to the effects of climate change on everything from our wild weather to our wildlife. Members at this table felt strongly that a strong sustainability position embraces the goal of better lives for future generations through political as well as personal action—and example.

One member suggested that with respect to this idea, we could think big and start small—by considering a League award to the city of Fort Bragg and the County of Mendocino for their stance on the use of plastic shopping bags.

Eye on Elections

Multiple Choice LWV Candidate Forum Quiz

Submitted from the archives of Charlene McAllister

You are the League's moderator for a debate between two candidates for Congress. You've gone over the rules with both candidates by mail, the time has come and the cameras are ready to roll. Candidate A is in place and ready. Supporters of Candidate B have taken up all the front row seats. Candidate B is yet to show. It's now 5 minutes past the slotted time.

Do you:

- A. Announce that Candidate A will go ahead and take questions?**
- B. Announce that Candidate A will make his opening statement and then the event is over?**
- C. Thank everyone for attending and tell them the debate is cancelled?**

You have chosen B and as Candidate A is making his opening statement, Candidate B enters the room loudly proclaiming he was given the wrong time. He comes to the podium and berates the League for misinforming him.

Do you:

- A. Clarify that the League gave him the correct information and if he wishes to participate, he needs to settle down and go by the rules?**
- B. Tell him that the event has started and since he is late, he must sit in the audience?**
- C. Pick up a pitcher of ice water and pour it on his head?**

During the ensuing debate (assuming you chose to let it continue), Candidate B constantly interrupts Candidate A, not following the rules. His followers are also being unruly and interrupting.

Do you:

- A. Remind Candidate B of the rules and tell him that if he and his supporters don't choose to follow them the debate will end?**
- B. End the debate immediately and apologize to the crowd?**
- C. Pick up a pitcher of ice water and pour it on his head? (In the event you already did this, borrow the one from Candidate A).**

Candidate B, despite bad press and behavior, wins the election and you are scheduled to go to his office for a legislative interview.

Do you:

- A. Make an appointment, ask your questions and write up your report?**
- B. Remind him you were the moderator of a debate and ask him to behave himself this time?**
- C. Take a pitcher of ice water with you?**



“While I can't say who Mom voted for, she was born Lydia Jennie Grossi in Eureka, CA, in 1915. When she was nine years old she went to live with her aunt and uncle in Washington DC. He worked as a cook at the White House. She recalled meeting Calvin Coolidge and attending egg rolls on the lawn at Easter. She never missed working the polls at election time in Crescent City until she had to give up driving. While she was registered as a Democrat all her life, she never confided her choices for President (I suspect she voted for Reagan and just didn't want me to know).” Charlene McAllister shared a picture of her mom's wooden shoes, worn every Saturday night to her Crescent City dancing club.

Heartfelt thanks to Members who helped distribute the California League's Easy Voter Guide for the June Election to libraries, stores, community centers and all points north and south in Mendocino County: Covelo-Becky Bowen; Willits-Val Muchowski; Ukiah-JoAn Blackstone; North County-Patricia Marien and Jary Stavely; South County-Betty Barber; Fort Bragg-Jane Person.

Stories We Continue to Follow at the National, State, Local Levels

Citizens United v. FEC

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Two years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court issued the *Citizens United v. FEC* decision and the reaction from the LWVUS was instant and predictable: The system is corrupted, League President Elisabeth MacNamara told the Senate Rules Committee during hearings at the end of March. “Secret funding in elections is an anathema in a democracy,” MacNamara told the committee. She spoke in support of S.2219, the Disclose Act of 2012.

The act requires disclosure by outside groups of large campaign contributions and expenditures—those more than \$10,000—and includes a “stand-by-your-ad” rule for political ads. One of the act’s many changes in disclosure requires groups to certify their spending is not coordinated with candidates and covers transfers of money so that actual sources of funds spent to influence federal elections will be public information.

The bill is sponsored by 43 Senate members, including both California senators. Sen. Feinstein is a majority member of the Rules Committee.

The Disclose Act is at the core of the national League’s current strategy to challenge *Citizens United*. Other League action in 2012 included collection of more than 27,000 signatures on a petition to the President demanding appointment of five new commissioners to the Federal Elections Commission. More than ten organizations “gathered” signatures for the electrically-submitted petition that urged the President to “clean up” what is described as an ineffective do-nothing commission. So far, there is no response from the White House to the petition.

Legal action also is part of the League’s strategy to challenge the court decision. Last week, in connection with a Montana case, the LWVUS was included in a friend of the court brief filed at the U.S. Supreme Court that challenges a part of the *Citizens United* decision and (among other points) disputes that part of the decision that states current disclosure laws prevent corruption. Discussion about league action is anticipated by many members when the LWVUS convention convenes June 8 in Washington, D.C.

Citizens Redistricting Commission Maps of California Assembly, Senate, Congressional Districts

SACRAMENTO—In October, 2011, the California Supreme Court, in a unanimous 7-0 decision, upheld the Citizens Redistricting Commission State Senate maps for use in upcoming elections. In the meantime, the Secretary of State announced a referendum challenging the state senate maps qualified for the November 2012, General Election. “To avoid uncertainty about which maps should be used in 2012 elections,” the California Supreme Court ruled that for the June 5 Primary Election and November 6 General Election, maps certified by the Redistricting Commission on August 15, 2011, will be used.

Voting Rights of Californians Sentenced Under Realignment

SAN FRANCISCO—Three organizations, including the LWVC filled suit in the First District Court of Appeal on March 7, asking the court to clarify voting rights of more than 85,000 Californians sentenced for low-level, non-violent offenses under the state’s realignment of prisoners confined in county jails. The suit asks for clarification of these voting rights before the October 22 registration deadline. Petitioners are LWVC, All of Us or None, and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

Write-in Candidate for Mendocino County 4th District Supervisor Election June 5, 2012

UKIAH—On May 7, 2012, County Clerk Susan M. Ranochak announced Fort Bragg resident Rex Gressett qualified as a write-in candidate for 4th District Supervisor. Mr. Gressett’s name will not appear on the official June 5 ballot (but it does appear as a write-in candidate on the county website candidate list). Requirements for qualification are the same for all supervisor candidates. To qualify as a supervisor candidate, one must be an elector of the district and a resident of that district for 30 days prior to the close of the filing deadline. Only write-in votes for qualified candidates count, according to Ranochak. Write-in candidates need 20 good signatures to qualify. Since sample ballots were mailed April 26, the only candidate’s name that appears on the official ballot is Dan Gjerde, Fort Bragg City Council member. If a candidate receives 50 per cent of the vote for this supervisor’s race, he wins.

Membership in The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County is a bargain and a statement. You will be saying that you are committed to the ballot as a means for change and for providing non-biased information to voters. The issues your League follows are those that affect every resident's family and community. Get involved in the League of Women Voters. Dues for the 2012-2013 League year are due September 18, 2012.

Please consider joining at one of these levels:

Susan B. Anthony Individual Membership \$55 _____

Amelia Bloomer Two-member Household Membership \$80 _____

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership \$100_____

Carrie Chapman Catt Membership \$250 or more _____

Donation _____

Please send me more information:

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www.smartvoter.org

Mendocino County Election Office
(707) 463-4371

To check status of mailed-in ballot, visit:
www.co.mendocino.ca.us/acr/cgi-bin/absentee.pl

Library of Congress
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