



# The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

May, 2015

Carol Czadek, President

Charlene McAllister, Editor

*Happy 95th (LWVUS) and 50th (LWVMC)*

## LEAGUE TO LOOK BACK AND MOVE FORWARD AT ANNUAL MAY MEETING, BOARD ELECTION

When President Carol Czadek calls the Annual Business Meeting to order May 12, she will ask members to consider the future of our local organization. Approval of the annual budget is on the agenda as well as a discussion about membership fees and meeting times.

The meeting starts at 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 12, at the Caspar Community Center, and will be followed by a potluck luncheon.

Board directors and officers will be elected and will receive direction from members for future education, programs, emphasis and action.

After the business meeting, members will celebrate national and local League anniversaries.

Carrie Chapman Catt founded the national League in Chicago on Valentine's Day, 1920. Six months later, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified and universal suffrage was a reality.

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County was established in 1965 by Mildred Benioff. Please see Charlene McAllister's story, Page 3.

### *Annual May Meeting Notes from Patricia Marien*

For your luncheon enjoyment, the League will have available the following libations to complement our May 12 Annual Meeting potluck at the Caspar Community Center: Iced tea and lemonade for our potluck, plus a no-sweetener fruited water for our refreshment. We will set up your potluck dishes. Salads, sandwiches, fruits, or other interesting dishes are all welcome.

Dorine Real, pastry goddess of the Westport Hotel pub and restaurant, will be making one of her fine cakes to celebrate the local League's birthday.

We look forward to all your delights and some great brain storming at our luncheon. Early birds who would like to help with morning set up are welcome to come at 9 a.m. Any questions: Call 964-4942.

*After the May LWV meeting, we will take a hiatus. Have a wonderful summer. We'll see you at the kickoff meeting September 15, 2015.*



*League Vice President Dorine Real, serves a cake fresh from her kitchen at the celebration of the national League's 90th anniversary on February 9, 2010. We'll celebrate the 95th anniversary (and another Dorine creation) May 12 at the annual meeting and potluck luncheon at the Caspar Community Center. Memories of the 2010 meeting on p. 4*



PLEASE HOLD THE DATE

**SEPTEMBER 15,  
2015**

**LWVMC's  
KICKOFF MEETING  
OF 2015-2016**

**TIME, PLACE & PROGRAM  
TO BE ANNOUNCED**

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Please visit us on our new facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1>

**President's Message**—As California struggles to address historic low voter turnout, new Secretary of State Alex Padilla sees promise in a new Motor Voter law signed into law last week by Oregon Governor Kate Brown.



“While many states are making it more difficult for citizens to vote, our neighbor to the north offers a better path,” said Secretary Padilla, California’s chief elections official. “I believe the Oregon model makes sense for California.”

“One of the biggest barriers to citizen participation is the voter registration process. A new, enhanced Motor Voter law would strengthen our democracy. It would be a game changer,” said Secretary Padilla. “While Oregon could expand its voter rolls by as much as 300,000 voters through their new enhanced Motor Voter process, California could expand its rolls by millions.”

“There are nearly seven million eligible but unregistered California voters,” Padilla said. According to the Pew Charitable Trusts’ Election Performance Index, California ranked 38th in voter registration in 2012.

“This change may not happen overnight, but if we are serious about increasing voter turnout, we should follow Oregon’s lead and commit ourselves to registering as many California citizens as possible,” Padilla said.

The new Oregon law will register citizens to vote or update their registration when they get or renew a driver’s license. “For all those citizens who want to exercise their voting rights, we should make every effort to facilitate their participation,” Padilla added.

The 20-year-old federal Motor Voter law (National Voter Registration Act) was designed to make voter registration easy and accessible at state DMVs and other designated agencies. Recognizing that California’s DMV falls far short of that goal, last month the LWVC joined in sending a letter to Secretary of State Alex Padilla, urging him to work with the DMV to comply fully with the law.

Conversations are now taking place that the LWVC hopes will avoid the need for litigation. LWVC has pledged to work toward making voter registration in California a simple, automated process while protecting those who do not wish to or are ineligible to register. I predict that the League will support an enhanced Motor Voter process.

*Carol Czadek*

## FIRST PRESIDENT RECOUNTS HISTORY OF LWVMC

**Publisher's Note:** *Charlene McAllister served as LWVMC president from 1989-1991 when the local organization gained League status. She also served on the LWV California Board of Directors.*

*By Charlene McAllister*—In 1965, shortly after Mildred Benioff moved to the Mendocino Coast, she brought together a group of like-minded women and formed a Member-at-Large unit of the League of Women Voters of California. This group of 20-25 women met faithfully twice a month in member's homes. They participated in studies and followed the political happenings on the Mendocino Coast. An MAL Unit operates under the direction of the state League, which sets the requirements for these groups. Unlike a local League, they do not have a vote at Conventions and do not develop local positions. It was these two issues that convinced the leadership to apply for local League status. Having already done a "Know Your Community" book (the first one was put together in 1981), we were ahead of the game and the process went smoothly. In 1989, 24 years after it began, the Mendocino Coast League of Women Voters became an official League with all the rights and responsibilities that come with that role. Many of the women who had been chairs of the MAL stepped up to take on the role of President as well as other leadership roles. Names that are forever familiar to us are Mildred Benioff, Priscilla Comen, Emily Collins, Betty Stavelly.

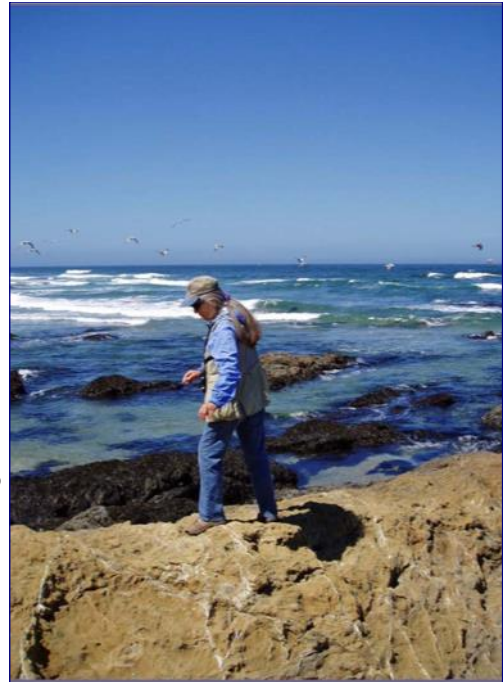
With the new role, came new responsibilities and need for funds so in 1992, the first Garden Tour was held, bringing in needed monies for such events as candidates forums, and for buying pros and



*Susan Eveleth, VOTER Editor after her service as LWVMC Co-President 2001-2002, 2003-2004, and President 2002-2003.*

cons and other Voters Service materials. In 1995, we expanded to include all of Mendocino County in the hope that we could revitalize the members in the Ukiah area. In 1998 the Second Edition of "Know Your County" was produced. In addition to our well known candidates forums and programs on Pros and Cons, League members served on the county redistricting committee, participated in the budget process and supported school and hospital bond measures. Local League members have served on the State Board, been Management Training advisors and worked on statewide League initiatives. We have stepped out to work in coalitions in both Action and Voters Service. We participated in a Healthy Communities project and studied Special Districts.

If we pick our birth date as 1965, we are now approaching the ripe old age of 50. Members have passed on, moved away and joined over these years but what has remained consistent is our commitment to the principles of the League of Women Voters. We can stand proud and give ourselves a big hand. We honor all who have served so faithfully on the board and on committees—and those who volunteered to lead.



*Charlene McAllister, Virgin Creek Beach, Mackerricher State Park—March, 2010.*



*From left: Mary Willoughby, former VOTER publisher; local League founder and president 1996-1998 Mildred Benioff; current League Board member Pat Dunbar; Helen Herbert, LWVMC President 1991-1993 and Co-President 2001-2002 and 2003-2004. Photograph taken at the Do-Gooders fundraiser for the Fort Bragg Food Bank at the Little River Inn, December 6, 2011. VOTER staff photo*

*Memories  
From  
LWVMC Anniversary  
Celebration  
February 9, 2010  
Looking Back  
at 90 Years  
Of League Action*



*Ken Matheson, representing the 70's*



*Barbara Matheson, representing the 80's*



*JoAn Blackstone, representing the 40's*



*Jane Person, representing the 60's*



*Meg Courtney, representing the 20's*



*Doris Hammer, representing the 30's*



## LWV URGES HOUSE TO PASS LEGISLATION TO STOP SUPER PACS

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 16, 2015—LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara today called for legislation that would close loopholes that allow coordination between political candidates and Super Political Action Committees.

In a letter to Representatives, MacNamara wrote, “The League of Women Voters strongly urges you to cosponsor and support HR 425, the “Stop Super PAC—Candidate Coordination Act” introduced by Rep. David Price (D-NC) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).”

MacNamara wrote, “Virtually every presidential campaign in 2012 worked with dedicated Super PACS that pumped unlimited funds into those campaigns. In 2014, the practice continued with some 100 campaigns involving Senate and House candidates. And 2016 promises to be worse, with many, if not most, candidates exploiting this loophole.”

“We urge you to strengthen coordination rules to stop Super PACS, including individual-candidate Super PACs, from evading the law. For example, the following should be treated as coordinated: Super PACs established at the suggestion of a candidate or agent; those managed or advised by close associates; those where a candidate or agent is involved in fundraising; or those where a candidate or campaign discusses the campaign with the Super PAC or an outside spending group.”

Super PACs currently evade the law that is intended to block huge, corrupting campaign contributions to candidates, she said. “We ask that you work to establish real-world, common-sense definitions of corruption in order to close this massive loophole.”

## *LWVC Shifts Focus of Money in Politics Action In 2015 to CAL-Access Information for Public*

The LWVC 2015 priority for work to reform money in politics will focus on CAL-Access, a state government program that makes major political funding sources public.

League officials said one example of this focus would be participation by the LWVC in a work sponsored by California Forward and the Sunlight Foundation to make recommendations about campaign funding reform to the Secretary of State. California Forward and the Sunlight Foundation are non-partisan reform groups with missions to make state government work.

The League will continue to evaluate money in politics bills introduced in the legislature, but the focus will be on gathering funding disclosure information and to shining a light on secret funding sources.

In the 2013-2014 legislative session, several noteworthy Money in Politics proposals were introduced, including bills sponsored by the LWVC. In 2014, bills were introduced specifically in response to the scandals involving legislators accused of bribery and other acts involving financial dealings.

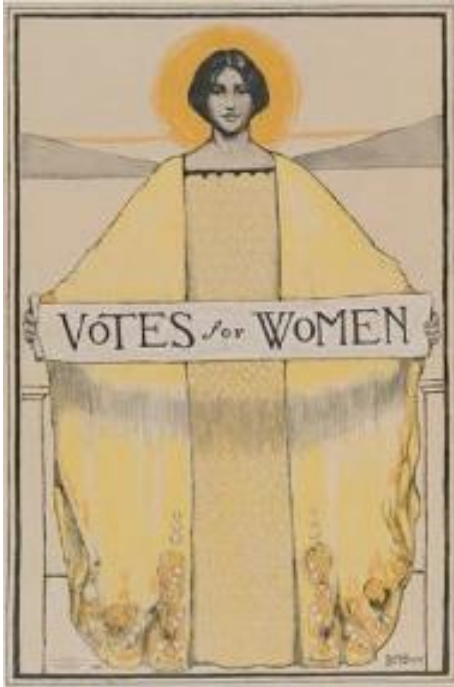
A major victory was the enactment of SB 2, a bill supported by the League that requires disclosure of the true source of “dark money” campaign contributions from organizations that are not generally required to reveal their donors. However, there were also some setbacks when the governor vetoed several money in politics bills supported by the League. The inability to reach a 2/3 vote in each legislative house led to the defeat of SB 52 (the California Disclose Act).

So the League will turn its attention to efforts of CAL-Access lobbying disclosure system as a basic step toward transparency and public awareness needed for any regulations of campaign fundraising and spending to work.

CAL-Access information is found at the Secretary of State’s website which provides financial information supplied by state candidates, donors, lobbyists, and others. All information is public on the Secretary of State’s website at <http://cal-access.ss.ca.gov/default.aspx>. It gives everyone easy access to top contributor lists, the FPPC Online toolkit for new candidates and other resources such as lobbyist and placement agent ethics training. Another source of information is the Fair Political Practices Commission, the state organization that leads efforts to disclose funding sources for candidates as well as support or opposition to ballot measures.

### MISSION STATEMENT

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, A NON-PARTISAN  
POLITICAL ORGANIZATION,  
ENCOURAGES INFORMED AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION  
IN GOVERNMENT, STRIVES TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING  
OF MAJOR PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES, AND INFLUENCES PUBLIC POLICY  
THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.**



*You are cordially invited to attend a celebration of the anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment:*

- ◆ *Saturday, August 22, 2015*
- ◆ *2-4 p.m.*
- ◆ *Kelley House Museum Lawn, Mendocino Village*
- ◆ *Sponsored by Mendocino Women's Political Caucus and the League of Women Voters of Mendocino County*
- ◆ *Music by the Mendocino Coast Women's Choir*
- ◆ *Poetry, speeches, and personal histories*

*Val Muchowski, member of the Mendocino Women's Political Caucus and LWVMC, organized this celebration in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010. We hope to see you there and look forward to our 100th anniversary in 2020.*

## ***When Voting History is Family History***

***Editor's Note: Who was the first woman to vote for President in your family? What's her story? Please let us know.***

***By Becky Bowen—*** I am 100% sure my grandmother voted for president in 1920, the first such federal election after passage of the 19th Amendment.

She chose between two major candidates, both Ohio newspapermen: Republican Warren Harding and Democrat James M. Cox. It was Texas and it was 1920, and she was married to the retired sheriff of Bosque County, so I have a very good idea of who she voted for.

The Texas suffragist movement had roots in the state constitutional convention of 1868, first in a series of defeats until women won the right to vote in primary elections in 1917 (primary suffrage did not require a state constitutional amendment). When Gov. William P. Hobby signed suffrage legislation for primary elections, some 386,000 Texas women registered to vote in 17 days for the state primary of July, 1918.

But an effort to amend the state constitution to provide voting rights to women in all elections was defeated by 25,000 votes in May, 1919, probably because women were not allowed to vote for state constitutional amendments. However, a month later, the federal suffrage amendment was approved in a special legislative session and Texas became the 9th state to ratify.

Women had the right to vote in all 48 states in 1920. Harding won by a landside (60.3% of the popular vote). Cox won in only 11 states, all of them in the South. Back in Bosque County, grandma cast her first vote for Vice President for Franklin D. Roosevelt, Cox's running mate. Her last vote for president was for Harry S. Truman, who had been Franklin D. Roosevelt's running mate.

Gov. Hobby left office in 1921, and eventually took over as president of the Houston Post Company. His first wife died in 1929. In 1931, he married Oveta Culp Hobby, who served as president of the Texas LWV from 1931-1932. She went on to serve as the first director of the Women's Army Corps and the first U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (appointed by Dwight D. Eisenhower). She died in Houston in 1995 at the age of 90.

***Sources: "Woman Suffrage," A. Elizabeth Taylor, Texas State Historical Association, Handbook of Texas Online; Wikipedia—U.S. Presidential Election, 1920***

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

**Status of the bills in Congress**  
[www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov)

[www.mendo.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.mendo.ca.lwvnet.org)

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

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