



# The Voter

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

November/December 2013

Jane Person, President

Charlene McAllister, Editor

### LEAGUE TO DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE AT NOVEMBER 12 GENERAL MEETING

*By Jary Stavely*

As you can read in the President's letter of this VOTER, climate change has been in the news and on the screen to a great extent lately.

The climate change program committee would like to send out a special invitation for League members and their friends to attend the membership meeting, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> at the Caspar Community Center. Our program will include a screening of the Quest documentary entitled Heat & Harvest: the Impact of Climate Change on California Agriculture.

Originally aired in Sept. of 2012, this feature includes segments on what is happening to cherries being grown in the Stockton area, changes in central valley salinity levels, and the emergence of new pests due to climate changes.

This half hour presentation will be followed with a talk by local meteorologist and media personality Walt McKeown (a.k.a. Col. Wingnuts), who has information on some geo-engineering projects that allow some hope that disaster is not a certainty. We're

excited to have him address us in person. After this, the committee (Jary Stavely, Dorine Real, Patricia Marien, and Lee Tepper) will review what our state and national Leagues are doing and advocating in regard to climate change. We will conclude our program with a brainstorming session as to what we, as individuals, and as a unit, would like to dedicate ourselves to around this topic. Please be sure to come, and to bring a non-member friend as well, for a stimulating program and discussion.

#### *President's Message*

### Climate Change: Docking Cruise Ships in Idaho

*By Jane Person*

Perhaps the story of Noah's Ark is one of the earliest eco disaster tales. It was a story seen in Sumerian mythology about 2500 BCE as well as in the Old Testament. The moral's the same, too: Misbehave and the gods get their own back.

In the last several decades Hollywood has capitalized on this doomsday scenario. In "Waterworld" (1996), the polar ice caps have melted, flooding the planet

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*Voter Service Chair Carol Czadek moderated LWV forum for MCRPD board candidates October 9, 2013. See story on Page 4.*

**ELECTION DAY  
NOVEMBER 5, 2013  
MENDOCINO COUNTY  
CONSOLIDATED  
DISTRICT ELECTION  
POLLS OPEN  
7 A.M.-8 P.M.**

*Continued from Page 1*

and forcing survivors to travel the seas in search of dry land and drinkable water, with no Mt. Ararat for them to land on. “Day after Tomorrow” (2004) unleashes a massive tidal wave sweeping over New York City and toppling the Statue of Liberty as well as tornadoes, hurricanes and floods. Finally, most of us have seen Al Gore’s Oscar winning film “An Inconvenient Truth” (2006). The moral’s similar to the ark story but with a secular twist: Misuse nature and she gets her own back.

While the extravaganza above is sheer cinema magic (except for Gore’s film), the issues raised by films like these are real enough. Some scientists suggest that by 2030 Glacier National Park may have no glaciers. Predictions are risky, but maybe at some point soon the smart condo owner in Miami Beach will want to sell his beach front condo (if he can find someone who doesn’t read the newspapers).

A very important document came out in late September that considers new elements of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a U.N. sponsored group of scientists that produced the report, set an upper limit on greenhouse gasses and established a target level at which humanity must observe or face dramatic and irreversible climate change. Among its findings:

- “It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warnings since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.” (“extremely likely” has been widely interpreted as 95%)
- “Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth’s surface than any preceding decade since 1850. In the Northern Hemisphere 1983-2012 was likely the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years.”
- “Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentration of greenhouse gases has increased.”
- “Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system. Limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.”

LWVUS has been part of the issue, lobbying hard for measures which lessen the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. Recently President Elizabeth MacNamara sent a letter to members praising the Obama administration’s proposed carbon pollution standard for new power plants. In it she wrote, “Last spring we were proud to help in the effort to garner over 3 million comments to the EPA in support of regulations to cut carbon pollution from power plants.”

In November, LWVMC tackles the topic of climate change. Please come to our meeting November 12 and be a part of this critically important discussion.



*Jane Person*

*LAST SPRING WE  
WERE PROUD  
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OF REGULATIONS  
TO CUT  
CARBON POLLUTION  
FROM  
POWER PLANTS.*

*ELIZABETH MACNAMARA,  
PRESIDENT, LWVUS*

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Jane Person

### 2013-2014 LWVMC Calendar

<b>Tuesday, November 12, 2013</b>	<b>General Program Meeting</b> <b>10 a.m. Caspar Community Center</b> <b>Program: Climate Change</b>
Tuesday, January 7, 2014	Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Fort Bragg Library
<b>Tuesday, January 14, 2014</b>	<b>General Program Meeting</b> <b>10 a.m. Caspar Community Center</b> <b>Program: National Program Planning</b>
Tuesday, February 4, 2014	Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Fort Bragg Library
<b>Tuesday, February 11, 2014</b>	<b>General Program Meeting</b> <b>10 a.m. Caspar Community Center</b> <b>Program: Healthcare</b>
<b>Friday, March 21, 2014</b>	<b>Annual Meet and Greet</b> <b>Your Elected Officials</b> <b>5-7 p.m. Caspar Community Center</b>
Tuesday, March 25, 2014	Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Fort Bragg Library
<b>Tuesday, April 8, 2014</b>	<b>General Program Meeting</b> <b>10 a.m. Caspar Community Center</b> <b>Program: To be Announced</b>
<b>Tuesday, May 13, 2014</b>	<b>Annual Luncheon</b> <b>Business Meeting and Potluck</b> <b>Caspar Community Center</b>

*All General Program Meetings are Open to the Public.*

*All Board Meetings are Open to Members.*



*Bob Bushansky*



*Leo Dikinis*



*Bill Hayes*



*Cesar Yanez*

### *LWV Candidate Forum*

## **Candidates Promise to Mend Rifts, Expand Service, Take Ethics Training In Coastal Recreation and Parks Forum at C.V. Starr Community Center**

Four Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District board candidates answered audience questions and made commitments to practice good governance at a public forum October 9 at the C.V. Starr Center, Fort Bragg.

Three directors will be elected November 5. Incumbent candidates are Bill Hayes, of Mendocino, and Cesar Yanez, of Fort Bragg. Challengers are Bob Bushansky, of Fort Bragg, and Leo Dikinis, of Little River. LWV Voter Service Chair Carol Czadek moderated the forum attended by some 50 people.

The coastal recreation and park district stretches from Westport south to the Sonoma County border and east to Comptche. All candidates expressed interest in expanding services beyond the city limits of Fort Bragg where the district is headquartered at the C.V. Starr Center. Candidates also promised to mend the rift with Mendocino residents who recently formed a non-profit corporation to manage the village facility that formerly was the MCRPD headquarters in that community. Each candidate said that rift-mending required personal outreach to Mendocino village residents. "I want to heal this," Bushansky said, "and bridge the gap." Yanez said, "I don't understand why the disconnect happened." Hayes said, "I want to find out what they want, then start talking." Dikinis said, "We need personal communication to build up trust, because the trust is gone."

When asked what would happen when the district's lease agreement with the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens is due for renewal, all candidates said they favored continuing the \$1 per year rental agreement with the Gardens. The district owns the land of the botanical gardens which is managed by a non-profit group. "The Gardens are a true success and we shouldn't mess with it. I like the idea of benign neglect by the district when it comes to the Gardens," Dikinis said. In reference to the "hands-off" district arrangement with the gardens, Yanez said, "Why change something that is working so great?"

All candidates said they were willing to take the state ethics training for elected officials\* and all expressed support of the Ralph M. Brown Act. "The Brown Act is a pain in the butt, but we follow it to a T," Hayes said, "I support it 100 per cent. I see the need for it and I see the good of it," he said. Moderator Czadek passed along an audience complaint about untimely website postings of district agendas and meetings. The most recent MCRPD agenda posted on the website is for a meeting February 11, 2013. The most recent board minutes posted on the website are for a meeting December 12, 2012. Incumbents said the district was understaffed.

Incumbent candidates said they could not discuss details of the district's current Chapter 9 bankruptcy case. "We have a case, good lawyers, and feel positive; we may have a resolution in 6 months," Hayes said. "We have to understand there is very little to be done other than work it out," Dikinis said.

*Continued on Page 5*

\*The district reported in the past that board members are not required to take ethics training because they do not accept any compensation.

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Other budget activity is positive, according to incumbents. In 2012 an agreement was reached with the City of Fort Bragg which took over ownership of the land and buildings at the C.V. Starr Community Center and Sigrid & Harry Spath Aquatic Facility. The MCRPD manages and operates the facility, funded in large part by revenues generated from a 1/2-cent sales tax (Measure A) approved by Fort Bragg voters in March, 2012. This arrangement has enabled the district to set aside funds for “large ticket” future maintenance requirements, such as a need to eventually re-plaster the swimming pools, Hayes said.

When asked if the city of Fort Bragg had tried to “micro-manage” the C.V. Starr Center, Bushansky said, “I thought there might be an adversarial relationship between the district and city, but I see positive cooperation.” Yanez said, “We have to trust each other,” referring to the relationship between the special district and the City of Fort Bragg.

In response to a question about innovative activities, Bushansky suggested new programs be put into community centers along the coast and said there was a need for more senior programs. Hayes, Dikinis and Yanez said they would ask the public what it wanted.

In answer to a question about the cost of the Kudos for Kids program, Yanez said the district does not make money on the program and depends on help from other sources to help pay for the \$75 materials fee.

Incumbents said the district had an interest in the use of the old recreation hall at City Hall in Fort Bragg, specifically for basketball clinics and social functions, but no long term arrangement had been made with the city.

One question was directed to all candidates: Given the “divorce” from the Mendocino Community Center and underservice to areas outside Fort Bragg, why not just dissolve the special district and concentrate on what goes on in Fort Bragg? Yanez said, “We should do what we’re doing now and expand, branch out to Elk, Manchester, Gualala. We could also be co-sponsors to events in other areas.”

Dikinis said, “The Starr Center is truly a gem of the North Coast; the problems are behind it; it is now self-sufficient and this will allow the district to serve the coast. The Botanical Gardens is the other gem. The cost of dissolving the district through LAFCO is more expensive than operating the district.”

“I sit on the strategic planning committee and we are looking at where we are going,” Hayes said. “We are looking at allowing people access to things to do in small towns on the coast. We need organizers in each town to talk to friends involved—so everybody can participate in everything from fishing clubs to kite-flying clubs—so everybody is being enriched,” he said.

“This special district should be intertwined with the recreational life of everybody in this district from Gualala to Comptche. The programs should benefit everybody,” Bushansky said.

Bushansky, a New York native, moved to Mendocino in 1994. He is retired from the restaurant and food retail business. He has served on the Botanical Gardens Board and currently is treasurer of the Mendocino Coast Redwood Senior Center board. Other volunteer work includes help with Project Sanctuary (crisis counselor), local marine mammal rescues, and the Mendocino Film Festival.

Dikinis grew up in Sonoma County and studied at Sonoma State University. His business background is in banking, forest products, and the wine industry. He served on the 2011-2012 County Grand Jury.

Hayes, a contractor, has served three years on the MCRPD board and said he became interested in the board because he “loved to see what the MCRPD does with local children.” He lives on the Comptche-Ukiah road.

Yanez has served on the MCRPD board since 1998. He is a self-employed painting contractor. “We have a treasure to oversee. We want it to work like a well-oiled machine and we want to drop prices down,” he said.

*Know Your County***Special Districts: What are they? Why are They Special?***By Sharon Gilligan*

To paraphrase a booklet from the California Special Districts Association, special districts became an art form in the state like hula hoops and freeways. The first special district, the Turlock Irrigation District, was created in 1887 to form a public entity for water delivery and finance the operation through bond sales. Its creation allowed San Joaquin farmers to increase and diversify agricultural activities.

A special district is a separate local government that delivers a focused public service to a defined area. Examples include fire protection, pest abatement, and libraries.

Depending on how you count them California has either approximately 4800 special districts or close to 3400. The smaller number excludes regulatory agencies because they are not service districts and non-profit corporations as they are not governments.

There are two kinds of special districts: Independent districts have separate boards of directors either elected by voters in the designated area or appointed to serve for a fixed term and dependent districts governed by existing legislative bodies such as a board of supervisors. Some are considered enterprise districts because they run like a business. Hospital districts are enterprise districts because they provide services to individuals and charge room fees paid by the patient and not by the district's other residents. Non-enterprise districts provide services like fire protection which don't lend themselves to fees. These are largely funded by property taxes.

Special districts have many of the same governing powers as cities and counties. They can enter into contracts, hire employees, and acquire real property by purchase or eminent domain. They can impose taxes, issue debt and levy assessments. They have corporate power and tax power, but rarely police power. Corporate power might include constructing public works projects or providing recreation services. Taxing power allows them to raise money to pay for the work. Police power would include zoning, business licenses or setting speed limits. An exception might be banning liquor in a park district's picnic area.

Although special districts are not part of state government they must submit annual financial reports (audits by the county auditor or a CPA) to the State Controller and must follow all state laws pertaining to public meetings, record keeping and elections.

On the Mendocino Coast, two of the most prominent and active special districts are the Hospital district and the Recreation and Park district. Thanks to a concerted grass-roots effort the initiative to form the hospital district was put on the ballot in January, 1967, and the 25-bed hospital was dedicated June 26, 1971.

The MCRPD was formed in 1973 and originally encompassed 20 square miles around the Fort Bragg Unified School District. In 1982 the service area was extended to include the Mendocino Unified School District, and the Point Arena community requested annexation of its school district area in 1989. The South Coast inclusion followed soon after. In 2008, the balance of the FBUSD district was included to take services up to Westport.

Ironically, both of these districts are currently facing serious the financial challenges of bankruptcy filings due to decreases in funding and the fiscal crisis that devastated many government programs five years ago. The League of Women Voters will closely follow what happens to these valuable community resources.

## *Profiles in League*

### *Sharon Gilligan*

*By Susan Mitchell*

You have to love a woman who signs her email messages with this quotation:

*"I don't measure America by its achievement, but by its potential." Shirley Chisholm, United States Representative 1968-1983, Unbought and Unbossed.*

Sharon grew up in Chicago and graduated from Northeastern Illinois University when it was still called Chicago Teachers' College, North. She was a longtime National Organization for Women activist who served at the Illinois state and Chicago levels. She marched on Washington, D.C., and demonstrated in other states that passed anti-women laws.

After spending her life in Chicago, she and her partner, Roberta Brockschmidt, moved to Fort Bragg twenty-four years ago this month. They have been together 39 years and were finally able to legalize that relationship this year.

Sharon and Roberta joined the Mendocino County LWV because they believe in so many of the league goals: Voting rights, fair pay and clean elections. The Citizens United decision on campaign financing by the Supreme Court was a major impetus for becoming active again.

She feels the most pressing problems facing the nation today are the stagnation of opportunity to move up financially, the shrinking of the middle class, and the ever-growing gap between the wealthiest 2% and the rest of us. Sharon believes the best hope for the future is education of the next generation but is troubled by the "knowledge gap" and the "climate-change deniers" trying to force unscientific textbooks into the curricula.



*Sharon Gilligan (left) and Roberta Brockschmidt in Mendocino County's courtyard wedding garden.*

In the early 90's, three of Sharon's books were published: "Faces of Love" is a romance novel; "Danger in High Places" and "Danger! - Cross Currents" are mysteries featuring a sleuth photographer named Alix Nicholson. Besides writing, she enjoys cooking and reading recipes for fun and possible experimentation.

#### **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**

## LWV Gun Control Position

**League Looks at State of Gun Control in State of California**

*Editor's Note: The national League adopted a position on gun control in 1990: Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety. In the aftermath of Sandy Hook, Aurora, Tucson and the Navy Yard in Washington D.C., our staff voted to take a look at how the state of California approaches gun control.*

**By B. E. Auerbach**

Gun laws and the right to bear arms can be vexing issues, especially in California.

The right to keep and bear arms evolved from the English Bill of Rights of 1689, enacted by Parliament. The act includes language that protects the right of Protestants from disarmament by the Crown. This document states: "That the Subjects which are Protestants may have Arms for their Defence suitable to their Conditions and as allowed by Law." (1688 c.2 1 Will. and Mar. Sess. 2)

One of the issues the bill resolved was the king's authority to disarm his subjects after King James II (a Catholic) attempted to disarm many Protestants. In America, colonial governments sustained the right to keep and bear arms in order to organize a militia, form a system of law enforcement, repel invasion and suppress slave revolts.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution upholds the right of people to keep and bear arms. The portion of the Bill of Rights pertaining to the right to bear arms states: "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the People to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

How far can the state of California infringe upon the people of the state to restrict the right to keep and bear arms? The California Supreme Court adheres to the right to restrictive guns laws stating that the California Constitution does not explicitly grant private citizens the right to bear arms. On the other hand, the United States Supreme Court established the Second Amendment applies to all states and that position was reiterated in two recent cases: *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008) found that the Second Amendment to the Constitution gave private citizens the right to bear arms and *McDonald v. Chicago*, 561 U.S. 3025 (2010), determined that the right of an individual to "keep and bear arms" (protected by the Second Amendment) is incorporated by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and applies to the states.

California gun laws are among the strictest in the nation. An individual wishing to own a firearm must obtain a Handgun Safety Certificate by passing a 25-question true/false, multiple choice written test. There are exemptions. Handguns sold by dealers must be "California legal" by being listed on the state's roster of handguns certified for sale. Private sales of firearms must be transacted through a licensed dealer. All firearm sales are recorded by the state, and have a ten-day waiting period. Enforcement of gun laws varies in California from urban areas to rural jurisdictions. Rural areas enforce the same firearms laws primarily by prosecuting those who demonstrate malicious intent.

Those semi-automatic firearms that the state classifies as assault weapons, .50 Browning Machine Gun rifles, and magazines that can hold more than ten rounds of ammunition may not be sold in California. In 2005 San Francisco voters enacted Proposition H, a ban on the manufacture, sale, transfer or distribution of firearms or ammunition in San Francisco, as well as a ban on the possession of handguns within the city by San Francisco residents (excepting peace officers, security guards and the like). By 2006, however, a California court struck Proposition H, and later in 2008 a California appellate court upheld that court decision. Today there are several Bills pending in California that further restrict the right to keep and bear arms. Many of them may not pass because of the earlier rulings in the cases of the *District of Columbia v. Heller*, and *McDonald v. Chicago*. For a complete listing of guns laws in California, please see the website for the California Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms.



## The Fate of Gun Control Bills Supported by LWVC Sent to the Governor in 2013

**AB 180:** Assembly Member Rob Bonta (D-Oakland)

**Key Provisions:** Would authorize City of Oakland to enact regulation applicable only to Oakland residents more restrictive than state law regulating registration or licensing of commercially manufactured firearms.

**Vetoed:** October 11, 2013

**Governor's Message:** The State of California has among the strictest gun laws in the country. Allowing individual cities to enact their own more restrictive firearms regulations will sow confusion and uncertainty. I am mindful of the challenges the City of Oakland faces in addressing gun violence, but this is not the right solution.

**SB 140:** Sen. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco)

**Key Provisions:** Provides funding (\$24 million) for California Department of Justice to enforce state's Armed Prohibited Persons System which identifies weapons that are in hands of people whose criminal backgrounds or behaviors prevent them from legally possessing guns.

**Approved:** May 1, 2013

**SB 374:** Sen. Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) Senate President pro Tem

**Key Provisions:** Would classify a semiautomatic center fire rifle as an assault rifle if it does not have a fixed magazine that will accept no more than 10 rounds.

**Vetoed:** October 11, 2013

**Governor's Message:** The State of California already has some of the strictest gun laws in the country, including bans on military-style assault rifles and high-capacity ammunition magazines. While the author's intent is to strengthen these restrictions, this bill goes much further by banning any semiautomatic rifle with a detachable magazine. This ban covers low-capacity rifles that are commonly used for hunting, firearms training, and marksmanship practice, as well as some historical and collectible firearms. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of current gun owners would have to register their rifles as assault weapons and would be banned from selling or transferring them in the future. Today, I signed a number of bills that strengthen California's gun laws, including AB 48, which closes a loophole in the existing ban on dangerous high-capacity magazines. I also signed AB 1131 and SB 127, which restrict the ability of mentally unstable people to purchase or possess guns. I don't believe that this bill's blanket ban on semi-automatic rifles would reduce criminal activity or enhance public safety enough to warrant this infringement on gun owners' rights.

**SB 567:** Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara)

**Key Provisions:** Revises definition of a shotgun to delete the requirement that it be fired from the shoulder, and would clarify that the projectile may be fired through either a rifled bore or a smooth bore.

**Vetoed:** October 11, 2013

**Governor's Message:** Current law defines assault weapon to include any shotgun with a revolving cylinder. In modifying the definition of shotgun to include certain rifles with a revolving cylinder that can fire both shotgun and rifle cartridges, this bill bans a small group of specialty rifles with no identified impact on public safety. I am not convinced that this amendment is necessary or justified at this time.

**SB 683:** Sen. Marty Block (D-San Diego)

**Key Provisions:** Prohibits purchase or receipt of any firearm without a valid firearm safety certificate.

**Approved:** October 11, 2013

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

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 2013-2014 cover the period between September, 2013 and September, 2014.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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