



# The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

November 2008

Jane Person, President

## MEMBERS SET TO EXPLORE GREEN POSSIBILITIES AT LWV ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCH DECEMBER 9

*By Barbara Matheson*

The League will return to the topic of Sustainability at its December Holiday Luncheon meeting on December 9 at Silver's at the Wharf. Please see Page 3 for luncheon reservation information. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. with coffee and announcements.



Guest speaker, Fort Bragg City Planner Virginia O'Rourke, will begin the meeting with a brief presentation and slide show to

introduce the topic for the day. During the course of the meeting, members, by brainstorming ideas with fellow tablemates, will ultimately reach agreement on

one thing (which Ms. O'Rourke refers to as a contract) they can do to help reduce greenhouse gasses. Each group will then share their agreed-upon idea (contract) with the whole group.

Not only will we learn more about sustainability, but we will each leave this meeting with one practical commitment (our contract) to help the earth and create a healthy environment for future generations. This is a good meeting to which to bring a friend.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE                        | 2 |
| HOLIDAY LUNCH RESERVATION FORM             | 3 |
| SPECIAL DISTRICTS INTRODUCTION             | 4 |
| SUSTAINABILITY 101: MOTHER'S CLOTHESLINE   | 5 |
| LEAGUE CALENDAR OF EVENTS                  | 6 |
| PHOTO ALBUM                                | 7 |
| LWV JANUARY BOOK SELECTION, LEAGUE UPDATES | 8 |



*College of the Redwoods sustainable agriculture students in Prof. T. Sholars' winter semester 2006 class tend campus vegetable garden. Heidi Kraut plants elephant garlic (left) and cultivates lettuce (right).*



2008-2009

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**President’s Message**

At first glance—well, okay, maybe after two or three glances—the topic of Special Districts might not sound as exciting as, say, off-shore drilling or abolishing the Electoral College. So why is League devoting a whole meeting (Nov. 11) to this topic?



As much as advocating for issues like voting rights, the League also educates on issues. Almost all of us fall into the purview of one or more special districts--fire, water, sewer, recreation and parks, to name a few. That fact was driven home last summer when fires threatened forests around the Elk area, and our volunteer firefighters spent exhausting days battling flames. At a recent event I sat next to Sam Levine (Babs’s husband) who showed me the back of his T-shirt listing the four fires he fought as a volunteer fireman for the Little River Fire Department.

These special districts are run by people who volunteer their time to run for the Board. They aren’t hired or part of Civil Service as they were in the metropolitan areas many of us came from. Therefore as citizens, we need to know what these people are doing. Our LWV Special Districts Study Committee has spent hours attending these meetings; reading agendas, minutes, financial statements and bylaws; viewing videos; and talking with boards of directors.

The information the committee has gathered will be presented to the membership and will contribute to the formation of our public positions. Becky Bowen, a committee member, has noted that “...similar local past studies have led to league program positions supporting special districts, effective county budgets, improved library services, and mandatory recycling.” They have also supported the financial viability of the Mendocino Healthcare District and sustainable communities.

*Continued on page 7*

## December 9<sup>th</sup> Holiday Luncheon at Silver's at the Wharf – Noyo Fishing Village

**ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED— The lunch is \$15** and includes entrée, dessert, coffee, tea, tax and gratuity. Please cut out this reservation form and send it to Susan Mitchell by Friday, Dec. 5, 2008. **Be sure to check your lunch choice.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrée choice:     Clam Chowder Bread Boulle     Fish and Chips

Silverburger     Bay Shrimp Alfredo     Half Caesar Salad w/chicken

Send to: **Susan Mitchell**  
**6028 N. Hwy. One**  
**Little River CA 95456**

**Please print this page out of the VOTER and send it to Susan Mitchell**

## League of Women Voters Committee Set to Deliver Two-Year Study Report On Coastal Special Districts

*By Charlene McAllister*

Like hula hoops, martinis and freeways, special districts became an art form in California. Special districts first arose in California to meet the water needs of farmers in the San Joaquin Valley. Frustrated by an inconsistent water supply and widely varying prices, farmers in Stanislaus County organized the Turlock Irrigation district under the Wright Act of 1887. The Wright Act allowed a majority of residents in an area to form a public entity for water delivery, and to finance its operation through bond sales. The Turlock Irrigation District made it possible for San Joaquin Valley farmers to intensify and diversify their agricultural activities.

Following the development of districts such as the Turlock Irrigation District, new water district formation shifted away from rural agricultural lands toward water-deficient communities in urban areas. In the early 1900s, water districts were primarily located in northern and central California. After 1950, they spread to Southern California to satisfy the suburbs' growing demand for water.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, special districts increased dramatically in both number and scope. The prosperity that followed World War II increased the demand for public services of all kinds and, consequently, special districts. Special districts became a popular way to meet these incremental needs because, unlike complex municipal bureaucracies, special districts were flexible and provided services quickly and efficiently.

The decade after World War II saw an expansion in district activities for fire protection, sanitation, and water supply. Mosquito abatement districts, though first formed in 1915, multiplied to combat diseases inadvertently imported by returning soldiers. Hospital districts arose in 1945 because of a statewide shortage of hospital beds. Population growth in unincorporated areas spurred the development of recreation and park districts. Created to address individual service needs, special districts grew to encompass multiple needs as well. The Municipal Utility District Act of 1921 allowed special districts to diversify and address multiple needs ranging from water, power, transportation, and telephone service, as well as "all things necessary and convenient".

From "*What's So Special About Special Districts? A Citizen's Guide to Special Districts in California*" 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Kimia Mizany and April Manatt

Do you live within the boundaries of a special district? Do you know what that district does? Do you know who sits on the board? Come to the League meeting on November 11, from 10 a.m.—noon at St. Michael's Church in Fort Bragg and learn about some of the diverse districts here on the Mendocino Coast.

# SUSTAINABILITY 101\*

**W**hen Ron and I decided to have a solar panel system installed at the house, we had to start with determining our average electricity use in order to see how many panels would be needed. The next step was to have an “energy audit” for PG&E. What a surprise we had when we found out just how many of those pricey KWH’s we used.

Intrigued, we bought a small tester that we could plug our appliances into and see how much electricity they used. That led to buying a new coffee pot with a thermos. It also led us to think seriously about our use of electricity. About this time I took over paying my mother’s bills, including her electric bills. She too, has an electric

stove and an electric dryer, but while my hot water is heated with propane, hers is electric. Sure, she lives alone, but what, I wondered, was the significant difference. Hmm, no computers, two TV’s, no stereo system- and she certainly didn’t leave a lot of

remains damp, a quick few minutes in the dryer is all it takes to “finish it off”.

Many of us live in areas where an old fashioned clothes line would be offensive to our neighbors making it difficult to practice this energy efficient method of clothes drying.

But after pondering the problem, I realized that the area between my house and the fence separating my property from the neighbors offered me a location, that

while not in the bright sun, did have privacy and winds. So I hung my three lines from the eaves to the fence using regular coated clothes line and hooks so that they could be taken down when not in use. Now I can both enjoy the smell of linens hanging in the fresh air and know that I’m reducing my carbon footprint by a little toe or two.



*“Remember the smell of linen drying in the sunshine? That’s the smell of my mother’s linens.”*

lights on in the house. A visit to her home later reminded me one of her secrets. She hangs her laundry on a clothes line.

Remember the smell of linen drying in the sunshine? That’s the smell of my mother’s linens. She lives north of here where there is less sunshine, but she always puts her laundry out to dry. If the laundry

## Calendar of Events 2008

### **Tuesday, November 11, 2008 General Meeting: Special Districts 10 a.m.-noon**

Location: St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg

Board of Directors Meeting: 12:30 -3 p.m. (board members bring sack lunch)

### **Tuesday, December 9, 2008 General Meeting: 10 a.m. followed by**

#### **Holiday Luncheon and small group discussion in afternoon**

Location: Silver's At the Wharf (see page 3 for reservation form)

Topic: The Greening of the League of Women Voters

Guest Speaker: Virginia O'Rourke

Note: No Board of Directors Meeting in December

## Please Save These Dates for 2009

### **Tuesday, January 13, 2009 General Meeting: Sustainability 9:30 a.m.— noon**

Location: St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg

Topic: Discussion of *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver,  
panel discussion by community garden organizers

Board of Directors Meeting 12:30-3 p.m. (board members bring sack lunch)

### **Tuesday, February 10, 2009 General Meeting: LWV Observer Reports 9:30 a.m.**

Location: St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg

### **Tuesday, February 17, 2009 Board of Directors Meeting 9:30 a.m.—noon**

### **Friday, March 13, 2009 Fourth Annual Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials, 5-7 p.m.—St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg**

### **Tuesday, March 17, 2009 Board of Directors Meeting 9:30 a.m.—noon**

#### **Final Reports for Annual Meeting Due**

### **Tuesday, April 14, 2009 General Meeting: National Study 9:30 a.m.—noon**

Location: St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg

Topic: National Popular Vote Compact—discussion and consensus

Board of Directors Meeting: 12: 30-3p.m. (board members bring sack lunch)

### **Tuesday, May 12, 2009 ANNUAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON –location and time to be announced**

### **Tuesday, June 2, 2009: Old/New Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.—1 p.m.**

Location: St. Michael's Church, Fort Bragg—Potluck Lunch



*Voter Services Team Pat Dunbar (left) and JoAn Blackstone.*



*League moderator and newspaper publisher Sharon DiMauro (center) at Hospital District Board of Trustees Candidate Forum October 30, 2008 with candidates Patricia Jauregui-Darland and Dr. William Rohr.*



*President Jane Person opens up Pros and Cons discussion October 14, 2008. Carol Ann Falk (above) collected audience questions.*

League Members served on election boards during the 2008 General Elections, conducted voter registration drives, held public Pro and Con State Proposition discussions and sponsored a candidate forum night at the Mendocino Coast District Hospital.

### MISSION STATEMENT

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, A NON-PARTISAN 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.**

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2*

Unlike some studies, these are very close to home. One thing committee members have remarked upon is that the mere presence of a member, wearing the League badge, has made districts pay a little closer attention to the agenda or to Brown Act requirements. Our reputation as an impartial watchdog precedes us.

Come to our November 11 meeting and hear what this hardworking committee has to report. I'll bet that at least once you'll say to yourself, "Wow, I didn't know that."

And don't miss the League Holiday luncheon on December 9 at Silver's At the Wharf. *Jane Person*

## Looking Forward To A New Year, A New Outlook, And A New Book

By Barbara Matheson

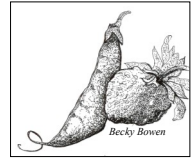
*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle – A Year of Food Life* is written by Barbara Kingsolver, author of many wonderful books such as *The Bean Trees*, *Pigs in Heaven*, and *The Poisonwood Bible*, to name a few. To quote Kingsolver, “This is the story...of how our family was changed by our first year of deliberately eating food produced from the same place where we worked, went to school,

loved our neighbors, drank the water, and breathed the air.” According to the *Boston Sunday Globe*, “This book will change your life.... Perhaps never before has (food) been written about so passionately.”

In keeping with the League’s umbrella theme of “Sustainability” for this year, we are asking members to read this book. We will discuss it at our general

meeting in January. It can be purchased from our local bookstores and on amazon.com. A local book club (Blue Stockings) just finished reading it, so if you know someone in that club perhaps you can borrow a copy.

At the meeting, we also will hear from community garden organizers and managers, including Susan Lightfoot, Noyo Food For-



Please mark your calendars, save the date for our January 13, 2009 meeting and start reading

*Animal,  
Vegetable,  
Miracle—A Year  
Of Food Life*

### League of Women Voters Of California®

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

Governor Schwarzenegger has vetoed **Sen. Kuehl’s SB 840**, the League-supported bill proposing comprehensive single payer health care coverage for California. Assembly member Mark Leno, who is expected to be elected to the State Senate, will reintroduce the bill in the 2009-2010 legislative session. The League continues to support the bill, and local League members Richard and Pat Karch have worked tirelessly toward its passage.

### League of Women Voters Of the United States Update From *The National Voter*

The League worked hard for the passage of **The State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)**, which the President twice vetoed and which was ultimately extended into 2009. The League will revisit this issue.

The League is continuing its lobbying efforts to move the **DC Landmark Voting Rights Act** to a Senate vote. This bill would give full voting representation in Congress, which, according to a national poll conducted by KRC Research, 82% of Americans support.

In August the League called for a ten-year moratorium on **new construction of coal-fired electric power plants**. The League carefully examined many facets of energy policy before taking its stand. The rationale, in part, is that coal is the single largest source of global warming in the United States, with power plants responsible for 33% of CO2 emissions.



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

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

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

**[www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org)**

**Library of Congress—Legislation Status  
[www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov)**

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

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

**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 to 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.**

**\$50 One Year individual membership, \$75 two-person household membership**

**Please send me more information:**

**Name/**

**Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_**

**City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please make checks payable to: League of Women Voters of Mendocino County  
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