



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

March, 2017

Cindy Plank and Nancy Kleiber, Presidents

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

Don't Miss our Spring Meetings

Our local League will start the spring season with the annual Meet and Greet event, a chance for the public to meet and chat with our elected officials. Many officials have already accepted our invitation, including both coastal County supervisors and our State assemblyman. This is always a popular event, not least because of the savory finger food provided by you, the members (and the complimentary wine). The event starts at 5:00 on St. Patrick's Day, so you will be able to attend and still be on time for your corned-beef dinner. Please come, bring hors d'oeuvres, and invite your neighbors.

Our meeting on **Tuesday, April 11th at 9:30**, at the Caspar Community Center, will feature a presentation by Ann Cole (of Mendocino Land Trust) about our public lands and how to protect them from exploitation. This will be a good starting point for getting involved in the Environment topic of

our local program (*see articles starting on p. 2*).

On **Tuesday, May 9th** we will hold our Annual Meeting with an election of directors and approval of the budget and positions and priorities for our 2017-18 season. We will also hear a presentation from Supervisor Dan Gjerde and Camille Schraeder of Redwood

Community Services on mental health. The meeting will start at 10:00 am and will include a potluck lunch. Look for details in next month's *Voter*.

You are cordially invited to
Meet and Greet
Our Elected Officials
Friday, March 17th, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.



LWV 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.

President's message

Your Invitation to Be Active

by Cindy Plank

If you were at our January 10 membership meeting, you would have seen it was very stormy outside, and very pleasant and lively inside. Twenty-two people turned out to sort through many of the issues that are going on nationally right now which will doubtless affect our small community in some or many ways. We had some great conversations in our endeavor to zero in on what issues we as a local League should focus on for the remainder of this year through June 2018.

The first and clearest message from the group was that people want—need—to ACT. During our conversations, we not only determined our main focus areas, based on our local situations and perceived urgencies, but we also developed an action plan for each. We also realized that each area of focus needed at least one passionate advocate around whom a working group could coalesce, so we recruited contact people to keep the conversation alive.

We continue to present monthly programs tied to our areas of emphasis – see page 4 for a review of the February meeting on health care. We urge you to learn along with us as we integrate national, state and local information that affects our community. This year we are planning to go beyond learning, and we are already taking action, such as our participation in the Women's March (*see p. 8*).

A goal of the Organization Building topic is to get every member to participate in at least one action area. So as we all learn and act, consider what your own passions are and in what way you can join in. You may find that it helps to be active during this challenging political climate.



LWVMC Issues for Emphasis and Action Plan 2017-18

This plan is preliminary, pending approval at the annual meeting, but we have already begun to act on it.

IMMIGRATION:

Educate ourselves and the public on issues including:

- What resources exist in our county to assist undocumented immigrants in becoming citizens?
- What is the potential impact on our county if those individuals are deported?
- What is the existing process for deportation?
- What is the current law regarding sanctuary for undocumented immigrants?

Establish and extend coalitions and partnerships with existing immigration advocates (e.g. Safe Passage, Latino Coalition)

ENVIRONMENT:

Identify and publicize what Federal lands located in Mendocino County may be in jeopardy of sale or development by the incoming administration

Monitor proposed legislation in order to advocate to oppose and resist legislation that would sell or commercialize Federal lands

Learn the potential for offshore oil drilling and what safeguards currently exist

(continued next page)

AN IDEA TO CONSIDER ...

More action ideas are popping up as we explore our issue areas. Here's one related to immigration (*See the article on p. 5*): In order to encourage a greater number of registered voters, should our local community establish a fund to assist with citizenship application fees for those who don't qualify for a fee waiver? Give us your thoughts at Voter@mcn.org.

(from previous page)

Lay the groundwork for cooperative action with potential partners (Audubon Society, Mendocino Land Trust, Noyo Center, Native Plant Society, Sierra Club)

Provide grassroots support to the State of California's leadership in combatting climate change, particularly its support of alternative energy

Support initiatives in Mendocino County to combat climate change

HEALTH CARE:

Monitor changes in funding for health care and hold open forums to keep the public informed

Gather input from local healthcare consumers and providers (MCDH, clinics, Adventist Health) about what works and what doesn't about ACA and local healthcare in general. (We are starting on this with our February informational meeting)

Monitor conflicts of interest with contracted employees serving on the MCDH Board

Partner with Leadership Mendocino as to possibility of attending meeting(s) pertaining to health care

MENTAL HEALTH:

Study: with the failure of the recent Mendocino county mental health ballot measure, what options are available to deal with the issues?

Seek other avenues to institute training in most effective/least violent police methods

Form alliances and coalitions with the Sheriff's established task force and other local groups

Consider how the issues of homelessness and mental illness intersect

In addition to the above public-issue topics, we agreed that we needed to continue our work in two key areas of traditional League activity:

DEMOCRACY

Continue to provide traditional voter services including registration, election information, and forums

Follow LWVUS' project, "Making Democracy Work," and selectively participate

Work with LWVC to make their publication A Guide to California Government available to local groups

Offer education about democratic values and practices, including civil discourse, perhaps partnering with public school civics teachers and others

Speak out on human and civil rights violations at every level

Challenge speech and actions that derogate the dignity and equality of any individual or group

ORGANIZATION BUILDING

Look for ways to make League membership affordable to more people

Look for ways to make meetings more accessible, including trying other meeting times and formats

Specifically try to remove barriers to membership for primary-Spanish-speaking and young people.

Publicise the fact that membership is open to 16-year-olds and non-citizens

Form relationships with other organizations in order to act together on projects that fit our program and League's principles, thus extending the power of our actions and also introducing our League to new potential members

Develop richer, more varied, more timely communications. While still relying on the monthly *Voter*, develop our use of the Facebook page, e-mail updates to action teams, and perhaps more

Work toward getting every member to participate in at least one action area

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Hospital Leaders Speak at League Meeting

by Jary Stavely

The current condition of the Mendocino Coast District Hospital was the topic at the LWVMC general meeting at the Caspar Community Center on Valentine's Day. Hospital Board Chair Steve Lund and CEO Bob Edwards presented results from recent customer satisfaction surveys, as well as information on the need for more revenue to avoid a second bankruptcy, and to prepare for requirements for seismic safety that require replacement or extensive renovation of the physical facility by 2030.

Both gentlemen presented statistics from the past year about the hospital and its associated programs.

- MCDH is the largest employer on the coast, with a staff of 312 and a monthly payroll and payment to physicians of over \$2M.
- It is busier than most Critical Access hospitals (those with up to 25 beds).
- Last year was the first non-deficit year in the past nine.
- 80% of patients don't cover the full cost of their care (and California ranks 49th out of 50 in its level of Medicaid payments).
- Last year 73,400 hospital visits were made, 70,000 of which were by local residents.
- More than 30,000 visits were made to the Family Health Care Clinic.
- 10,500 visits were made to the Emergency Room.
- The cost of service at the ER last year was more than \$12.8M, while its reimbursements were less than \$11.1M, leaving a shortfall of \$1.75M.
- The obstetrics unit lost \$828K last year, and is projected to lose another \$900K this year.
- Insurance and Medicare never pay 100% of cost, and in all, \$51M in charges were not reimbursed.
- Only three out of twenty or more departments brought in more revenue than they cost.
- Patient satisfaction rose last year from 55% approval to 70%, with improvement in every area except the time between appearance at the emergency room and hospital admission.

The 304 minute ER admission average, although fair in comparison to national norms, is not acceptable to the hospital authorities; it is hoped that a new walk-in clinic at the Family Health Center will improve the conditions in the ER.

Board Chair Lund pointed out the need for new revenue and support from the community in order to avoid a second (usually fatal) bankruptcy. The hospital facility, built in 1971, does not meet seismic standards required to be in place by 2030. Planning and building a replacement, or even restructuring the present facility, were it to prove feasible, will cost far more than the current budget can provide. The facility even needs \$4.1M in upgrades outside of the earthquake requirements.

The Board is studying three options for augmenting the budget and ensuring the future existence of the hospital: 1) a parcel tax; 2) a bond measure; 3) a change in official designation to a 'Rural Non-Profit Critical Access Hospital' from a 'District Critical Access Hospital.' Options 1 and 2 both would require a 2/3 majority to be approved by the voters, and neither now has the necessary support, according to the recent survey. The bond measure might be considered fairer than the parcel tax, as the tax would vary according to the property assessment. The change in official hospital "structure" represented by the third option could increase the level of reimbursement which the hospital is entitled to, and would also need to be approved by the voters, but only by a simple majority.

Mr. Edwards and Mr. Lund hope that the League will support their efforts to increase revenue, once its studies are complete on what is the best way to proceed. Mr. Lund stated that how to proceed with obstetrics on the coast is being studied, and that they hope to find a solution satisfactory to the community.

In answer to questions from the audience, they stated they can't tell what will happen to the budget picture if the Affordable Care Act is changed or repealed. CEO Edwards pointed out, however, that people having insurance is better than people not having it. He expressed disappointment at the county mental health facility missing approval from the voters. Currently, mental health cases brought to the ER often require that patients be held for up to 72 hours, occupying ER beds, so they can be isolated from the public.

The speakers also graciously answered many other questions from the attentive audience.

Immigration topic

Latino Coalition Hosts Informational Meeting

by Cindy Plank

Immigration is one of the issues our local League decided to focus on during our January 10th planning meeting. The Latino Coalition held a meeting the following week at Safe Passage with three panel members to discuss immigration and answer questions from the community. Several League members attended. The panel included Fort Bragg Police Chief Fabian Lizarraga, immigration attorney Grady Gauthier, and local ESL & Citizenship instructor Anne Thomas.

Chief Lizarraga told the audience that no one should be asked about their citizenship status. He said there was a time during the 1980's when immigration officials came to the Fort Bragg area and conducted a "sweep" which resulted in a few deportations, but he assured the audience that should not be happening currently, and that if Immigration did come to Fort Bragg and ask the police department for assistance, he would tell them politely but firmly, "No." He also informed everyone that any immigration official would be required to have a warrant for a specific individual and advised the audience to contact the police should someone knock on their door and claim to be from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Chief Lizarraga reported that the Fort Bragg City Council had adopted a resolution on January 9th affirming the city's commitment to non-discrimination and its support for immigrants in our community.

Grady Gauthier discussed deportation and citizenship issues. He said individuals who have not committed a crime should not be concerned about deportation. And should an individual find him or herself caught up in the deportation process, it can be stopped, with the help of a qualified attorney. He said that if an individual has lived in the U.S. for at least 10 years, has not been involved with a crime, and can prove that another family member (spouse, parent or child) who is a citizen would suffer if that individual were deported, the process to get legal papers can be pursued. He said that the federal government and DEA can still do raids involving marijuana, regardless of state law, and deportation cannot be fought for a person who is not in compliance with federal marijuana law.

On another note, an individual can be sponsored by his or her own child who is a citizen and is over the

age of 21 years. Another sponsorship called a 2451 is still good if it took place prior to April 30, 2001.

Gauthier explained DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Arrivals need to have been between June 15, 2007, and June 15, 2012. He also described a "U" visa that can be applied for if an individual is a victim of a crime and assists the police department. Or if an individual is the victim of human trafficking or domestic violence at the hands of a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, that individual can sponsor him or herself with a green card. But the best way to become a citizen, Mr. Gauthier explained, is to marry a U.S. citizen.

Asked about the risk of applying for a driver license, he said he didn't think it would be a concern, especially in California. But he said that to be cautious, he wouldn't advise using that form of ID when traveling by air, since it includes non-citizen status, and said it would be better to use their country of origin passport. He said the most common checkpoints are San Diego and other border towns, and the best advice for not accidentally getting caught up in a deportation cycle would be to carry copies of documents that prove they have been living in the U.S. for a long time.

As to whether there are local funds available to assist with attorney fees associated with deportation issues, Mr. Gauthier said that Santa Rosa Catholic Charities has limited funds available through an application process.

Anne Thomas described the many steps involved for citizenship. She teaches citizenship classes, which are provided free of charge through the Fort Bragg Unified School District. Anne reported there were 8 million people in the U.S. this past year who were qualified, but who didn't follow through with citizenship, and therefore didn't vote. In response to questions, she said the citizenship application costs \$725, but if a person is under 150% of the poverty level, a fee waiver is available. She thought many potential new citizens didn't follow through due to the cost of the application. She said there is an English language requirement, but it can be waived under certain conditions.

There is so much to learn about this important issue that concerns many of our community members.

Sheriff Won't Intervene in Mental Health Crises

by Jary Stavely

According to an article by Glenda Anderson in the Press-Democrat on February 5th, Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman has told the Supervisors and the mental health advisory board that he will stop sending deputies to nonviolent emergency mental health calls. As he told a League forum last fall about November's mental health initiative, having deputies respond to such crises is a poor use of law enforcement resources. Calling police to a mental health situation can result in the incarceration of people who need psychiatric help instead of jail time, and may trigger a crime, such as resisting arrest, that otherwise would not have occurred. He stated that he

has been meeting with the county's contractor for mental health crisis intervention, Redwood Community Services, to discuss the issue and develop possible solutions.

The article also reports that RCS is already involved in the vast majority of mental health evaluations without assistance from law enforcement, but that it is willing to work with the sheriff to make further changes. The sheriff wants to make sure that the dispatchers who receive calls in which no weapons are involved and no one is in danger, transfer them directly to the mental health crisis hotline.

Hospitality House Still in the News

by Jary Stavely

Complaints involving the Hospitality House on McPherson St. and its associated Hospitality Center at the old Coast Hotel on Franklin Street in Fort Bragg were discussed at a City Council meeting on February 13th. Readers who remember the controversy surrounding the November election's

Measure U, or who are concerned about issues of homelessness and mental health in our area, may want to read the [thorough report](#) on the meeting written by Chris Calder of the *Fort Bragg Advocate-News* on February 16th.

California Organizations Team Up to Promote Voter Registration

by Jane Person

At a time when many states are trying to limit voter registration and even voting itself, California is doing just the opposite. The LWVC is an active member of the Future of California Elections (FoCE), a coalition working on modernization of California elections. FOCE includes civil rights advocates, election reform advocates, and elections officials. Other group members include the ACLU of California, CALPIRG, California Common Cause, California Association of Clerks and Election Officials, Rock the Vote and various other organizations allied with Latinos, disability rights advocates, Asian Americans, and others.

FOCE has engaged in projects such as working with state agencies, collaborating locally and regionally with election administrators, conducting original research, developing voter education materials, and

building local partnerships, to name a few.

Some 2016 accomplishments (full list at <http://futureofcaelections.org/2016-accomplishments/>):

1. Increasing student voter participation through a MOU involving the UC and Cal state systems, community colleges and the Secretary of State
2. Expanding the online voter registration system
3. Improving voter information guides
4. Assisting voters with specific needs

Some 2017 priorities (full list at <http://futureofcaelections.org/2017-priorities/>):

1. Improving access to voter registration
2. Improving Californians' voting experience
3. Improving the election administration system

Opinion

News in These Times

by Sharon Gilligan

Journalism is printing what someone else does not want printed. Everything else is public relations.
-- George Orwell

I saw this offered as a meme on Facebook, but verified the attribution to Orwell on the Goodreads quotations site. We have so many sources for accessing news in 2017, and only a few ways to determine what is true and what is made up. Some articles are linked to Facebook posts or promoted on Twitter from established sources like the Washington Post, Newsweek or Mother Jones, and we can reasonably trust that someone or, more likely, several someones, researched the information presented, checked it with multiple sources, and, probably, verified the reliability of those sources. Other entities offering news or calling people to action may not be so scrupulous.

It is clear that the media is under attack. Facts are denied or trivialized by people who know that the reporting is accurate. There was even an assertion that there was such a thing as "alternative facts".

Twenty-four hour cycles of news on television and

cable outlets, and the availability of free web sources for news, have cut into the profits of print journalism, resulting in severe staff cutbacks at a time when we need more news gatherers and researchers. For it is print journalists who have brought to light some of the most explosive and deeply buried secrets of such powerful organizations as the Nixon White House and the Catholic Church. Many print organizations now have internet components, too.

I admit to being addicted to Facebook, and read many of the links sent by friends. Recently I clicked on a story from the Washington Post. I got a pop-up notice saying I was entitled to get three articles a month, and I had reached that limit. A short time later, I got an offer to subscribe at \$99 for the digital version, and I passed. When I received a second offer to subscribe at \$39, that seemed very reasonable, so I signed up. Now I get a daily email with links to their top stories.

If you have a favorite source you rely on for news, please continue to support it with your subscription, whether in hard copy or online version. We need to encourage a strong, independent, and active print journalism community to monitor assaults on our freedoms, and lend our voices to those defending their right to print the truth.

Membership Changes ...

We regret that Renate and Glenn Langer have transferred their League membership to Santa Cruz, where they are relocating. We will miss them. However, Sue Smith of Mendocino, Jenny Heckerth of Fort Bragg (and MAPA), and Ann Cole of Comptche (and the Mendocino Land Trust) have joined. Please welcome and congratulate them on becoming League members.



Thanks to this cheerful anonymous cleanup crew and others like them who make our events possible. Member participation is what makes the League strong – and fun!



Readers of the *VOTER* are encouraged to read about (and 'like') our Mendocino County League on Facebook. The site is <http://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1/>
You don't even have to sign up in order to see what is posted there.

We Were There

Over 2,500 coastal citizens participated locally in the national Women's March held on January 21st. Marchers gathered at Town Hall in Fort Bragg, and wound three blocks south on Main St., one block east on Oak St., three blocks north on Franklin St., four blocks east on Laurel St., and then two blocks south on Corry where the procession ended with a program inside Eagles Hall. At least 11 League members participated, including Becky Bowen and Patricia Marien, who filed these photos with the VOTER.



Clockwise from top: Irene Malone in the fashion-forward Pussy Hat; a future member, we hope; Linda Banta believes in science; assembling in front of Town Hall; Co-President Nancy Kleiber shows the League colors.

