



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

October, 2015

Carol Czadek, President

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

October meeting

Hospital CEO Will Address League Meeting

Bob Edwards, CEO of the Mendocino Coast District Hospital, will speak at the League's October meeting, 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 13th at the Caspar Community Center. He will present an update on the current state of the hospital, including its financial situation. The Hospital voluntarily filed for bankruptcy protection in October 2012.

Mr. Edwards assumed leadership of the hospital in January of this year, with 25 years of experience in small and medium-sized hospitals. In his career he has achieved recognition for Quality Outcomes, Engaged Employees, and Leadership Effectiveness. His teams have earned placement in Top 100 Critical Access Hospital rankings (out of over 1300 Critical Access Hospitals in the USA) on two different occasions, and The Joint Commission, a hospital accreditation body, has

recognized him as a "Top Performer".

He is married with three children. His oldest recently graduated from the University of Nebraska; the middle child is beginning studies at Long Beach State this year; and his youngest is a senior at Fort Bragg High School.

Mr. Edwards is an outdoorsman who enjoys water sports and fishing, bicycling, gardening, and cattle ranching (and is a certified bovine embryo transfer technician). He is originally from Arkansas, and began his career as a Registered Respiratory Therapist.

As always, the public is welcome at League meetings. Please invite a friend. Coffee, tea, and conversation will be available starting at 9:30.

More Hospital-related news may be found on pages 4 and 5



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.

At the September meeting, Barbara Rice, College of the Redwoods trustee, and Arturo Reyes, president of Mendocino College, showed the collegiality that is making our area's transition between Community College districts possible. See page 6.

Also in this issue: Eleanor Roosevelt (p.2) ♦ City considers downtown services (p.3) ♦ Fort Bragg School District election (p.3) ♦ Hospital news (pp. 4-5) ♦ CR update (p, 6) ♦ Updated calendar (p.7)

President's message
Eleanor Roosevelt

"I've always found that the best workers in a political party frequently are graduates of the League of Women Voters." – Eleanor Roosevelt

At the 95th

Anniversary of Women Getting the

Vote celebration in Mendocino last month, Fiona Ma, a member of the California Board of Equalization, declared that she was supporting Eleanor Roosevelt to be on the \$10 bill. I have done a little research and wholeheartedly agree that Eleanor deserves our consideration for this honor.

Eleanor Roosevelt joined the League of Women Voters in 1921 and helped establish its policy agenda. As the League's Vice President of Legislative Affairs, she lobbied for reforms in Congress and worked tirelessly to strengthen women's role in politics, helping mobilize women voters through the League's nonpartisan training and lobbying work. Even after she resigned as League Vice President in 1924, she remained an active League member, and continued to promote the League's platforms and ideals, including regularly writing for the League of Women Voters of New York's newsletter. She developed a niche as the protector of those most likely to be left on the margins— particularly women, African-Americans, and children.

Eleanor argued, successfully, that at least a small percentage of New Deal programs be directed at women. Though widely respected in her later years, Roosevelt was a controversial First Lady for her outspokenness, particularly her stance on racial issues. She was the first presidential spouse to hold press conferences, write a syndicated newspaper column, and speak at a national



convention. She advocated for expanded roles for women in the workplace, and the civil rights of African Americans and Asian Americans.

After she left the White House in 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt continued to promote women's equality through her work not only with the League, but also with groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).

In December 1945, President Harry S. Truman appointed Eleanor as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, where, in 1947, she became the first chairperson of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Service in the UN reinforced Eleanor's feminism. She regretted the small number of women in international delegations and the apathetic behavior of many of the men for the rights of women and minorities. After she came to understand that "all men are created equal" would be taken literally in many nations, she assisted the women's caucus in drafting gender-neutral language. She delivered a now famous speech in September 1948 to promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (which reads like the Policy Positions of the LWVUS), and received a standing ovation. The Declaration was adopted by the UN on December 10, 1948. She strengthened the League's involvement with the UN and its role as a player and partner in global democracy. She became a fearless international champion of progressive causes and perhaps the most influential American woman of the twentieth century, and traveled constantly at home and abroad, delivering more than 100 speeches a year urging greater opportunities for women, civil rights for black Americans, civil liberties for all Americans, and a foreign policy built on economic rather than military aid to the Third World.

The UN posthumously awarded her one of its first Human Rights Prizes in 1968 in recognition of her work.

It's not too late to renew your membership in LWVMC. A convenient form is on p. 7

City Council Discusses Downtown Social Services Ban

by Jane Person & Jary Stavely

It was standing room only at the September 14th Fort Bragg City Council meeting, where a discussion of the proposed ballot measure to ban social services in the downtown area was the principal agenda item.

The City Council had put the item on the agenda in order to allow themselves and the public an opportunity to discuss whether the Council itself should vote to put the measure on the ballot. A previous attempt to garner signatures for this purpose failed by a one vote margin.

City Attorney Amanda Zutler began the discussion by outlining potential problems should the measure pass. The measure was termed “problematic.” She said court challenges were certain to ensue and the measure stood likely to be held unenforceable and discriminatory according to State and Federal laws. The retroactive portion of the measure, she said, was not only unenforceable but unlawful. Permits cannot be made retroactive. It was stated that the special election for the ballot measure will cost the city \$50,000.

If the measure passed, the Council could file a lawsuit asking the courts to decide the issue, or it could decline to enforce the retroactive permit language. Conflict would occur either way, and the City would be liable for legal fees for these challenges. Counsel also said that the City Council could not vote at this meeting to put the measure on the ballot, since prior approval through the California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA) would be needed.

Speakers on both sides of the argument presented their views, although one speaker said that the group behind the measure, Concerned Citizens of Fort Bragg, boycotted the meeting. Speakers for the measure said the intent was not to discriminate against the homeless or those with disabilities, and that they resented being labeled as bigots. They said also that the location, Old Coast Hotel, was the issue and the decision to use the Hotel was not given enough time for public input. Other speakers criticized the Hospitality House itself.

Speakers against the measure said that compassion for others is what makes this town special, and the measure denies that. Others said that the location of the Hospitality House in the downtown area allows clients to be a part of the vibrant community. Still others said that the measure is sweeping—banning all social services in the downtown area—and would affect services other than just Hospitality House.

The City Council subsequently voted unanimously not to put the proposed measure on the ballot, due to the legal and procedural problems, and also because of support for various service agencies already located in the downtown area. According to ballot proponents, the required signatures are sure to be submitted, and the referendum will be held, regardless of the Council vote.

Seven or eight League members were present at the meeting.

November Fort Bragg School Board Race

Fort Bragg Unified School District residents are eligible to vote in a Consolidated District Election to be held on November 3rd. Two Board positions are to be filled. Ryan Perkins, incumbent, is on the ballot but, according to the *Advocate-News* on September 24th, no longer wishes to serve. Kathy

Babcock, local business owner and school district parent, and Cynthia Audo, former speech and language teacher in the District, are the other two candidates on the ballot. They participated in a League candidates’ forum at Redwood School on October 1st.

*Viewpoint***Hospital Board Emergency Meeting on Contracts***by Sharon Gilligan*

As an interested party in the contract issues at North Coast Family Health Center, I attended an emergency meeting of the Mendocino Coast District Hospital Board on August 17 with about two dozen other patients and community members. We arrived at 4:00 p.m., but the board was scheduled for a closed session and the public meeting did not start until 6:00 p.m. However, no one attending for the public comment left in the interim. Four board members, Dr. Rohr, Dr. Glusker, Mr. Hogan and Ms. Bruning, were in attendance; Mr. Birdsell was absent.

Although the issue of physician contracts, or more specifically, the handling of Dr. Diane Harris' contract, was not on the agenda, almost all of the public comment portion was taken up by Dr. Harris' patients and supporters objecting to the termination of her contract and the various and contradictory reasons given for her departure. Dr. Harris also spoke of her dealings with the CEO of the hospital and the North Coast Family Health Care administrator.

The initial problem seemed to be that a schedule for contract renewal at the NCFHC had not been made, and four physicians were presented with new boilerplate contracts on short notice. One, Dr. Kirkman, signed the contract promptly, but three others requested more time to review the terms. Dr. Kreger and Dr. Cottle were granted 60-day extensions, but the same was not offered to Dr. Harris.

When the board responded to the public comments, it became clear that the two physicians on the panel were in favor of satisfying the patients at the meeting. Dr. Glusker proposed a motion to extend Dr. Harris' contract despite the fact that by this time the contract had expired. His

motion was seconded by Dr. Rohr. Board Chair Sean Hogan and the local attorney for the hospital, Mr. Ruprecht, were reluctant to agree to this, as possibly a violation of the Stark Law that might expose the hospital to fines or other penalties. After considerable discussion, the interim Chief Financial Officer made contact with the national law firm representing MCDH and explained the legal question. He returned to report that extending the contract within six months of the termination would not be a violation of the law. Some heated exchanges occurred between Mr. Hogan and Doug Hammerstrom, Dr. Harris' husband, who rose to defend her when her statements were questioned. When it came time to vote, Dr. Glusker and Dr. Rohr supported the motion, Ms. Bruning abstained and, initially, Mr. Hogan also abstained as he felt he could not be objective at that time. After further consideration, he withdrew his vote and recused himself, which allowed the vote to pass two to one. Members of the public then offered additional suggestions to increase the extension period to 90 days because of the time lost after expiration of the existing contract, and to stipulate that someone other than the CEO and administrator participate in the negotiations.

Many of us left with a sense that we need to be more conversant with the operations of the Hospital and decisions involving this vital resource, and demonstrate how much we care for its survival. As one of the attendees stated, "The loss of our hospital is unacceptable on so many scores. The age demographic and isolation of our two communities requires a medical facility with full-time doctors."

This meeting was also reported in the Fort Bragg Advocate-News on August 20.

Hospital Foundation Donates to Lake County*by Charlene McAllister*

The Mendocino Coast Hospital Foundation/Winesong is donating the \$3,000 raised from Auction Lot #47, "Lake County Rising", to Lake County fire disaster relief.

In addition, all surplus water, blankets, and other supplies of any use have been given to Lake County residents who found themselves on our coast and unable to return home.

Dr. Rohr Discusses Hospital Issues at Public Meeting

by Sharon Gilligan

A meeting was held on September 9th at the Fort Bragg Library to hear a presentation from Dr. Rohr on the financial situation of Mendocino Coast District Hospital. He began with an explanation of the challenges faced by rural hospitals. There are 2000 rural hospitals in the U.S. and 1350 are critical access facilities of 25 beds or less, as we are.

Rural demographics trend to an older patient population with more chronic diseases and a higher percentage of patients served by Medicare or Medicaid. Twenty-three percent of the nation's population resides in rural areas, but only ten percent of doctors are located there. A high percentage of MCDH's income derives from government-provided coverage, which pays less than private insurance and is subject to increased record-keeping and claim-filing.

The hospital encounters high fixed costs because there is a need to provide the same quality care with the same up-to-date equipment as an urban facility. Patient volume is lower, so there is no economy of scale. A piece of equipment may cost the same for us as for a city hospital, but we may use it five times in a week while the city hospital might use it fifty times.

Dr. Rohr cited a recent event when the government allowed for private hospitals to be paid for veterans' care in order to alleviate the VA backlog. In California, the "Blues" (Blue Cross and Blue Shield), the insurers tasked with administering the program, implemented programs detrimental to our hospital's participation. Local Veterans' groups lobbied Representative Jim Wood, which resulted in a reversal in the plans.

Dr. Rohr reported that "business" is holding steady over the past year in surgery, outpatient

care, and admissions. Total expenses and current liabilities are still trending upward, but more slowly than in the past. MCDH still has a large long-term debt and a large deferred maintenance obligation of \$7.4 million, and this will be hard to manage due to the District's poor credit rating. The Hospital remains committed to providing obstetrical services because of concern about "babies crowning over the hill" on the way to Willits. Almost all of the Hospital's OB admissions are covered through Medicaid.

We were reminded that our hospital is the largest employer in the area, with 200 full-time employees and 34 part-time. The MCDH Board is meeting with all department managers to grow their business and to empower supervisors to be invested in that growth. The Board considers the Hospital's number one provider need to be for a cardiologist, with an oncologist and pulmonary specialist close behind.

Perhaps the most startling information to come out of this meeting is that the Hospital's structures will need to be replaced by 2030. The current main building is not upgradeable due to asbestos underlayment and other outdated features. Even the new radiology building needs to be replaced because it was built and licensed as a temporary structure.

The League of Women Voters
of Mendocino County

P.O. Box 1128 Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 937-4952

www.mendo.ca.lwvnet.org

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

September Meeting

Mendocino College President Gives Overview Of Local Campus Shift from CR to Mendocino College

by Becky Bowen

The historic transfer of the Fort Bragg College of the Redwoods campus to Mendocino-Lake Community College District is on schedule to be complete in 2017, Mendocino College President Arturo Reyes told members at the September 9th League of Women Voters meeting.

CR Trustee Barbara Rice, who currently represents the coastal district, introduced Reyes.

The process of ownership transition is complex and involves approval of county boards of education in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties, submission of a petition to the state Community College Board of Governors, and voter approval. The Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools has indicated support of the transfer of the Fort Bragg facility from College of the Redwoods (headquartered in Humboldt County) to Mendocino-Lake Community College District.

California League

Our Legislative Wins and Losses

The legislative session ended with significant victories and some disappointments. The Legislature sent 30 League-supported bills to Governor Brown's desk; he has until October 11 to sign or veto them. View the online Bill Status Report (www.lwvc.org/act-now/bill-status-report) for detailed information.

Voter registration, voting rights, election administration reform -- More than half of the League-supported bills on the Governor's desk advance voting rights and election administration, including measures to improve the vote-by-mail process, enhance language accessibility and plain language in election materials, and protect the voting rights of minority communities.

AB 1461, the New Motor Voter Program, would reduce barriers to participation by automating voter registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles. We urge the Governor to sign AB 1461 and to issue a statement to ensure that streamlined

If the Mendocino County Board of Education approves, the proposed transition will appear on the November, 2016, ballot. It also is possible for the County Superintendent of Schools to propose a waiver that would not require a vote.

Of particular interest to the League is how the Mendocino-Lake Community College district will include representation of the north Mendocino coast on the reconfigured board. The mandated number of board trustees is seven, who currently are elected from Willits, Ukiah, Redwood Valley, Hopland, Potter Valley, Lakeport, and Kelseyville. Reyes explained that the addition of the coastal area to the community college district raises the question of redrawing district lines, which is dictated by the state education code.

registration at the DMV will be implemented before the 2016 elections!

Groundbreaking climate change bill SB 350 weakened

We fought hard to pass two major climate change bills, SB 350 (de León and Leno) and SB 32 (Pavley), which drew some of the strongest fire of the session as they attempted to build on California's landmark greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) law. The oil industry spent millions to oppose SB 350's requirement of a 50 percent reduction in petroleum use for transportation by 2030, and in the end that provision was removed from the bill. Even with that setback, SB 350—as it awaits the Governor's signature—is an enormously important bill. SB 32, which would have expanded the AB 32 GHG reduction targets, fell victim to attacks on the Air Resources Board's authority and was shelved until next year.

LWVMC Meeting Calendar, *Updated*

Changed entries are underlined

MEMBER MEETINGS

Below are the dates, topics, and presenters for the rest of the year’s meetings. The public is invited to attend all member meetings at no charge. Meetings are scheduled on Tuesdays, except as noted. Refreshments at 9:30 a.m., program at 10:00. All will be held at the Caspar Community Center.

October 13th ♦ Mendocino Coast District Hospital, moderator Babs Levine

November 10th ♦ Marijuana, moderator Nancy Kleiber

January 12th ♦ LWV National Positions, moderators Barbara Matheson and Carol Czadek

February 9th ♦ The County Prison, speaker Sheriff Tom Allman

March 18th ♦ Meet and Greet, stewards Jary Stavely and Patricia Marien

April 12th ♦ Effect of State Regulations on Local Water Systems, moderator Pat Dunbar

May 10th ♦ LWV Mendocino Annual Meeting, President Carol Czadek presiding

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board meets at 9:30 a.m. in the Community Room of the Fort Bragg Library, except as noted.

Meetings are on Tuesdays, except as noted. All members are welcome. Meeting dates are **November 3rd** (at the home of Cindy Plank); **December 8th**; **January 26th**; **March 1st**; **March 29th**; **April 26th**; **June 14th** (11 a.m. at the Westport Hotel).

Renew Your Membership

Although we recently have had to increase our dues, membership in The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County continues to be 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. Dues for 2015-2016 cover the period between September 2015 and September 2016.

Please consider joining at one of these levels:

- Susan B. Anthony Individual Membership ... \$60
- Amelia Bloomer Two-member Household Membership ... \$90
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership ... \$100
- Carrie Chapman Catt Membership ... \$250 or more _____
- Donation ... _____

Name/Names: _____

Address _____

City: _____ State ____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail: _____

Please make checks payable to: LWV Mendocino County

And mail to: LWVMC P.O. Box 1128 Fort Bragg, CA 95437