



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

March, 2011

Jane Person, President

Charlene McAllister, Editor

LOCAL LEAGUE INVITES VOTERS TO MEET AND GREET ELECTED OFFICIALS AT C.V. STARR CENTER MAR. 18

First District Assembly Member Wes Chesbro was one of the first elected officials to accept an invitation to come meet voters at the C.V. Starr Center Friday, March 18 from 5–7 p.m.

The League's sixth Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials will be in the center's large community meeting room and the public is invited.

Sometimes voters are surprised to learn elected officials include judges, directors of fire districts, cemetery districts and water districts. School board trustees as well as the local representative of the College of the Redwoods (Barbara Rice) Board of Trustees will attend this

annual spring event that aims to give voters a chance to meet officials face to face in an informal setting.

Please help us greet voters and officials by coming a few minutes early. Bring a savory appetizer for the potluck table.

We appreciate the help we get from our League members and look forward to seeing you at this event. To help, please contact Barbara Matheson at 937-5164 or ken@mcn.org

The event is open to the public at no charge. Appetizers will be served along with soft drinks. Wine is generously donated by Member Susan Mitchell and her husband, John.

From the 2010 LWV Meet & Greet Photo Album



Assembly member Wes Chesbro (r), Alan Taeger, Albion Little River Fire District



Fort Bragg Councilmember and former Mayor Doug Hammerstrom



From left: College of the Redwoods Dean Geisce Ly, League Member Shirley Kirkpatrick and Mendocino County Supt. of Schools Paul Tichinin

LWV INVITES PUBLIC TO LOOK AT GOVERNMENT THROUGH NEW EYES AT APRIL 12 PRESENTATION

There is nothing like an old-fashioned radio drama to wake up our imagination, and League programmers picked this medium to present "Inside Amy Goforth" at the April

12, 2011, meeting at 10 a.m. at C.V. Starr Center.

We promise to surprise and delight the audience at this meeting that examines how to participate in local

government.

The public is invited, the performance is free and the program committee promises you will look at local government through new eyes. Bring quarters.

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President's Message—The pain of the spending cuts came a lot closer to home this week with several articles appearing in the papers.



One article reported the House of Representatives' proposed end of funding for public radio and television. I don't know how much money is allotted where, how and to whom, but does that mean no more Nova? No more PBS News Hour? No more "Downton Abby"? Like many, our household tapes Masterpiece Theater, Masterpiece Mysteries and a host of other PBS shows so we won't have to watch "Dancing with Stars" or the dreary sit coms. It's unthinkable to leave the family in Downton Abby after only four episodes, just as World War One is declared and just as the lovely English Edwardian summer vanishes forever amid the horrors of the trenches and the mustard gas.

But there is worse news. State spending cuts may threaten compliance with California's Brown Act and open meeting laws. One of the League's most cherished beliefs is in the transparency of government decisions. State cuts could jeopardize one of the ways transparency is effected: The requirement that government bodies give the public fair notice of meetings. An AP article in the Press Democrat (Feb. 16, 2011) notes that Governor Brown wants to suspend for this year the funding local governments receive for posting public notices.

The background is typically California. In 2004 voters approved Prop 59, a constitutional amendment to give the public access to meetings of government bodies, and to ensure that records of public officials and meetings of public bodies be available for public scrutiny. But this was an unfunded mandate, and so local governments received state money for compliance.

Cutting this funding from the budget is, in effect, suspending the Brown Act. It's doubtful that officials will suddenly plot nefarious doings should the Brown Act be suspended; but clearly cities and counties can't afford the photocopying fees and staff time need for compliance. In just 10 years, claims for these services jumped from a little over a half a million dollars to over 16 million.

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A C T I O N

O R N E R

By Barbara Matheson

During the last several months, our local League joined Leagues from all across the county to urge the Senate to oppose repeal of the Affordable Care Act, oppose the elimination of the Presidential Public Financing System, support the DISCLOSE Act and to immediately ratify the new START Treaty. Letters were sent to both Senators Feinstein and Boxer asking for their vote on these four important is-

sues.

The Affordable Care Act was a major step forward in health care for all. It has already made a difference by improving health care access and coverage for millions of Americans.

The Presidential Public Financing System has served America well since 1976 by allowing candidates to raise the funds needed to wage competitive campaigns.

The DISCLOSE Act

would empower voters by forcing groups bankrolled by anonymous donors to disclose the sources of their funding and their political spending.

The START Treaty calls for regular inspections and timely exchanges of information regarding nuclear arsenals. It would not only reduce the number of deployed nuclear weapons in both the United States and Russia but could also influence other nations to follow suit.

LWVC OPINION AND EDITORIAL

SACRAMENTO—The League of Women Voters of California applauds the balanced approach taken in the Governor's proposed budget. Recent years have shown that California's dire fiscal situation can't be adequately addressed without looking at both the revenue and the expenditure sides of the balance sheet. As the legislature responds and proposals are refined, we encourage everyone involved to approach these difficult discussions thoughtfully and with an open mind.

The proposed cuts are beyond painful—they are excruciating. While we know that expenditures need to be examined, the League is concerned that these cuts will further deteriorate essential safety-net programs as well as other programs throughout the budget.

The proposed extension of the current taxes is appropriate. It's impossible to deal with this size of a deficit without increased revenue. California voters indicated they want services; voters should have a clear choice and a better opportunity to see the consequences of not passing these taxes will be. We hope the legislature agrees that voters should have a chance for an up or down vote on this proposal. The governor's budget includes major restructuring of some government programs to shift responsibility and control for many locally-delivered services to local governments.

We will closely follow the discussion on realignment. One question to be considered is how much money now provided by the state or passed through from the federal government will follow the responsibility. Local governments differ in their ability or willingness to approve local taxes for services, which could mean distinct and perhaps inequitable differences in how well local funding would match local needs in the long run.

"There will be difficult debates to come over the governor's proposals, but at least we are finally facing up to hard reality," said LWVC President Janis Hirohama. "The picture painted by the governor's budget isn't pretty, but it is an honest one."

THE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

By Susan Mitchell and Louis Hough

Our League has seventy-seven members. Sixteen are men, a significant portion of our membership. We became curious about what these men think. What are their perspectives, their views and opinions? To find out we sent them questions and seven replied. Howard Ennes' response was published in a previous VOTER. Here are some replies from the other six.

Question: What brought you to the area and how long have you lived here?

Carl Moore has lived here for 36 years and was drawn by how relatively unspoiled he found the area. Jary Stavely came to the Coast in 1972 to find a teaching job. He chose the area because it resembled Appalachia, where he was a member of the former Teacher Corps. He continued to live here, raise 3 girls, and teach elementary grades in the Mendocino schools until he retired in June, 2009. Winston Bowen has lived here 8 years and came for



Paul Tichinin

the natural beauty. Paul Tichinin came in 1980 to take a job as ROP/vocational training coordinator. Jim Plank made

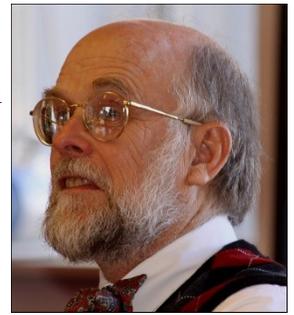
the coast his "getaway" retreat for several years and moved here full time almost 3 years ago. Grail Dawson moved here in the 1970s from Sacramento to be with his daughters. He met Betty Barber and together they've been residents for 32 years.

Question: Why did you join the League?

Carl said he was drawn by people like Mildred Benioff and Fran Peniston and several others back when his work schedule allowed him to attend some meetings. Jary said he joined for several reasons. His mother, Betty Stavely, has been involved since the 1950s and he always believed in the League's good work, reliable analyses and positions in elections. Jary said he was impressed by Carol Ann Falk's representation of the League's position on single-payer health care when she questioned Rep. Mike Thompson about it in a public meeting. Once his wife, Patricia Marien, joined the League he "felt safe in falling in behind her and my mom."

Winston became a member when his wife, Becky, asked him to join. Paul joined because of the

"integrity of the organization and commitment to principles of informed voters."



Jary Stavely

Jim came to a forum on the positions and was impressed with "the factual information and the non-partisan adherence." He knew several members "so it was an easy fit." Grail was aware of the League's goals and its reputation and saw it as a place to learn about local, state and national issues. He said he supports our organization and continues to learn from it.

Question: What do you see as the League's purpose in our community?

Carl said the League should continue to provide balance in political debate. Jary wrote "providing education and applying dispassionate reasoning to the increasingly bizarre and media-driven political issues of our times."

Winston said, "educating voters, encouraging voters, encouraging

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qualified people to run for office.” Paul responded, “To be a balanced, insightful and transparent voice of and for democracy.” Jim wrote, “Providing factual unbiased information to assist voters to make informed decisions.”

Grail thought the League should educate the community about local, state and national issues and lobby for those issues that are important to our local community.



Grail Dawson

Question: Has your involvement in the League changed your view of local politics or politicians or the political system in general?

Most said their points of view had not been changed. Grail said some of his views had changed. He said he believes local politicians are good communicators and will work for the community’s goals. He has been impressed with their representation in our local political system.

Paul responded, “During the

last 16 years “I have been an elected official and I am proud to be a member of the League of Women Voters of Mendocino County.”

Question: What have you learned from the League?

Jary learned that it is important to follow the money behind political campaigns. Jim agreed and added that you need to follow the money, do research, decide and then vote. Winston said he has learned about individual candidates and through reading the VOTER has become better informed about special districts.

Paul learned that being an advocate for democracy and openness in government is an on-going task. Grail learned that women are concerned about important issues and are hardworking activists. He has learned a lot of specific information from the League which has helped form his opinions. “League recommendations for ballot measures have been a great help to develop my position,” he said.

Question: What would you like to teach the League?

Jary said he thinks we need to find a way to reach and involve

younger people. Winston would like to see the League have more influence, perhaps a monthly column in the newspaper or posting the VOTER on The Mendocino Community Network site. Jim said he will work on becoming better informed before he answers the question. Paul responded, “To stay committed to their principals at all costs. Keep up the good work.”



Jim Plank

Question: Are there any issues especially important to you that you think the League should study or take action on?

Some of the issues the gentlemen mentioned were: Health care and campaign finance reform, becoming more bilingual, encouraging qualified candidates to run, changing the restrictive nature of term limits and the requirement of a 2/3 vote for taxes or fees, supporting increased regulations of the “Wall Street Gang,” and taking a stronger position against the increasing “vitriol.....and blatant lies put forth by some people in the public forum.”

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Calendar

- Friday, March 18, 2011— Annual Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials**
5-7 p.m. C.V. Starr Community Center—large meeting room
300 S. Lincoln Street, Fort Bragg
Open to the Public, No Charge
Appetizers and wine
Please bring your potluck appetizers to the center at 4:45 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 12, 2011—How to be a Participant in Local Government**
“Inside Amy Goforth—An Old-fashioned One-Act Radio Play”
Please bring quarters
10 a.m. C.V. Starr Community Center, 300 S. Lincoln St., Fort Bragg
(9:30 a.m. coffee)
- Tuesday, May 10, 2011—Annual Meeting**
Hill House, Mendocino Village
Time To Be Announced (Meeting Kit will be distributed April 1, 2011)

LWVC Convention Set For May 13 In Ventura

LWVUS President Elizabeth MacNamara will speak at the state convention the weekend of May 13, 2011 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Ventura, CA.

Our League will send two voting delegates. However, attendance is open to all League members. Our members are encouraged to attend and observe the action.

For information on hotel, discounts, registration, speakers and workshops, visit the LWVC homepage at www.ca.lwv.org and click on State Convention May 2011.



From the Field Guide: The First Steps To Lobbying at any Government Level

Effective lobbying of your representative, at any level of government can be done by making an appointment with the representative or his/her staffer; by writing a letter; making a phone call; or sending an email. You can also plan to meet with them at public events (such as the League's Meet and Greet). Whichever method you choose, keep in mind that these are busy folks who hear from many of their constituents. The first thing you should do is introduce yourself and tell them where you live. You may also want to give a brief description of what you do or what organization you may be representing. Make it known that you appreciate them and especially their tough job. Make your point or cause known clearly and directly without attacking people, but instead attacking tactics. Support your argument with facts, written material and fact sheets whenever possible. Provide them a reason to use your information or to use your help and lastly, give them an exit. Be brief, be explicit and above all, be civil.

President's Message Continued from Page 2

Two state laws deal with the public's right to attend meetings: The Brown Act (1953) covers local jurisdictions. The LWV Mendocino conducted a Brown Act training seminar in Ft. Bragg in April, 2009 when the League was studying Special Districts. The second applicable state law is The Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (1967), which covers state agencies.

It's now an open question if local governments still need to follow the law. Dan Carrig, legislative director with the California League of Cities, notes that beleaguered local governments may have to do what they can to remain efficient.

Also reported in a local story is that Apple gazillionaire Steve Jobs also has these budget-cutting, heart-wrenching decisions. He's downsizing his residence. Recently he won permission to demolish a sprawling Spanish style mansion he purchased years ago in order to build a smaller home on the site. Wow. Even the super rich (well, one of them, anyway) have to cut back. Still, I'll bet "smaller" doesn't have the same meaning to him as to most of us. And there's probably no pain involved either. ***Jane Person***

The Gentlemen of the League of Women Voters *continued from page 5*

Question: Do you have any interesting insights into the politics on the coast?

One person noted that he could detect a lack of cooperation, not unique to the coast, but seemingly exaggerated here. Another said there seems to be a sense of entitlement of many local citizens for services that are not logical for the rural, remote nature of our communities.

Question: Does the name of the organization bother you?

All agreed the name was not an issue. Jary said, "I think the name is important, because women think and talk somewhat differently from men, and the LWV provides a unique perspective as a 'women's voice' so to speak."

Winston said he liked the name because of the League's important place in the history of our nation and would not like to see it change.

Jim responded that LWV is an institution and he wouldn't want to see it changed even if it sounds gender specific.



Winston Bowen with CR Trustee Barbara Rice at the LWV 2010 Meet And Greet Your Elected Officials Event in Fort Bragg

Our survey suggests that, whether male or female, our League members seem to think pretty much the same when it comes to issues of importance.

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.

Coalition Honors Women's History Month With Gala, Awards for Community Service

California Senator Noreen Evans will speak at the annual history gala Sunday, March 6, 2011, at 12:30 p.m. at the Ukiah Saturday Afternoon Clubhouse.

Sponsors of the event are The American Association of University Women, Soroptimist International of Yokayo Sunrise, the Ukiah Saturday Afternoon Club and the national Women's Political Caucus of Mendocino County.

Selected to be honored for service to the community are Ann Kilkenny, community activist and owner of the Mendocino Book Company; Los hilos de la vida/The Threads of Life, established by Molly Johnson Martinez and Susan Kerr in 2005 and Dr. Beba Frey, matriarch of Frey Vineyards, who will be honored for service in the field of family planning and her work with the Family Planning Division of Public Health.

Awards for Women of Courage and Conviction will be given to Lynn Meadows and Dr. Laura Wedderburn for work in Haiti.

Tickets are \$10 at the Mendocino Book Company. For information, call Val Muchowski at 895-3543.

UPDATE ON REDISTRICTING

The activities of the California's first Citizens Redistricting Commission are being closely watched by many, including LWVC. The State League is forming a state-wide Observer Corps and Media Watch project. The commission will hold meetings over the next seven months around the state and League members are urged to observe the meetings in person or as it is streamed live on the internet. LWVC will hold a webinar training on March 3, 2011, for interested League members. Even if you don't "attend" training, you can keep up with what is happening by going to

<http://www.cavotes.org/> or
<http://www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov/>

Here on a local level, your board has contacted the County Board of Supervisors to request an appointment of two League members to the committee who will be recommending re-drawing supervisorial district lines for Mendocino County. LWVMC Member Val Muchowski has agreed to be one of the two representatives from the League.

If any of you are interested in participating in this process, contact Jane Person

janeperson@hotmail.com.



Remembering Juanita Bullard's Years of Service to Our League

Wheeler Munroe (center), pictured here with Ann Bullard (left) and Ann's partner Laura Rodriguez, received the 2010 Juanita Bullard Memorial Scholarship at College of the Redwoods.

Wheeler, a graduate of the college's Fine Woodworking program, now is pursuing a transfer to a four-year university for a degree in business with a possible minor in plant sciences. The scholarship is funded by anonymous donors in honor of Juanita Bullard's service to the League of Women Voters. Juanita's daughter, Ann, is a Santa Rosa land surveyor.

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.

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 _____

Donation _____

Please send me more information:

Name/Names: _____

Address _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____

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

And mail to: LWVMC

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Meeting Coverage
www.mendocoasttv.org**

**U.S. Census Interactive Map Widget
<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>**