



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

March, 2014

Jane Person, President

Charlene McAllister, Editor



Caspar Community Center
Friday, March 21, 2014
5-7 p.m.

Meet & Greet Your Elected Officials

By Barbara Matheson

More than 60 local leaders received invitations to the League of Women Voters 9th Annual Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials at the Caspar Community Center, Friday, March 21, 2014, from 5-7 p.m.

There is no program, no agenda and no speech-making at this event. It is free and open to the public and one of the few opportunities for voters to talk face to face with public officials, including fire, water, recreation and park and school district board members as well as Fort Bragg city council members. This is a chance for voters to meet leaders, get to know them, ask questions and enjoy appetizers and beverages.

Please invite friends and help by bringing a savory potluck appetizer for 10. Setup starts at 4 p.m. and the doors open at 5 p.m.



From Meet & Greet Archives—Top: County Superintendent of Schools Paul Tichinin. Middle: County District Attorney David Eyster with LWV member Charlene McAllister. Bottom: Redwood Community College District Trustee Barbara Rice (left) and fellow LWV member Nancy Kleiber.

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The CR Series
How has College of the Redwoods, Fort Bragg, affected your life or the life of your family? Please send your stories to B. Bowen at casparbeck@comcast.net for our continuing series about the local coastal community college.

Please Hold the Date
Tues, May 13, 2014
LWV Potluck Lunch, Business Meeting, Board Election

LWV Editorial

Mendocino County has faced a number of tough challenges in the last decade. We roll up our sleeves and deal with these challenges one at a time in ways that demonstrate what we hope are the best kind of political participation. The League's annual Meet & Greet is an event where voters can connect personally with people who represent us on issues we care so much about: The hospital; public schools; the recreation and park district; the community college; waste management and recycling; public safety; our land, air, rivers and ocean; sustainable communities; transportation; energy; quality of life and healthcare reform. This event is a voter's chance to put a face to the name on the ballot. We hope to see you again this year at Meet and Greet. Please forward this VOTER newsletter with friends and invite them to come with questions and get some answers.

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Editor's Note: This is the text of LWVMC President Jane Person's address to the Redwoods Community College Board of Trustees at a public hearing Feb. 17 in Fort Bragg in response to a recommendation to suspend operations at the Fort Bragg and Garberville campuses by the fall of this year. Related stories on Pages 3 and 4 of this VOTER.



Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for coming down to our coast to listen to community comments regarding the College of the Redwoods. My name is Jane Person. I am president of the League of Women Voters of Mendocino County.

While the League of Women Voters is non partisan with regard to political parties and candidates, it cares deeply about issues facing voters and it has positions on most of those. It uses these positions to evaluate and comment on ballot measures, legislation, acts by public officials, and the like. One of these positions relates to the California community colleges, and I would like to read it to you.

“Support a statewide community college system with sufficient resources to fulfill its overall goal: to offer all Californians access to a quality higher education. Resources should be stable, accommodate all enrolling students, be fairly distributed among the college districts, and provide opportunities for long-range planning.

“Governance should allow greater authority within the system itself with local districts making key decisions about mission priorities to meet community needs.”

The League, and indeed the community, asks you how we can all work together to best serve the students and the community. This effort will no doubt require a team of leaders from the community college system and the community itself to resolve the Measure Q commitment and tax commitment to another district if Mendocino College is part of the solution, to answer the question about representation of coastal voters (that is, by our current trustee) if our campus changes hands and the CR presence on the coast is dissolved.

Perhaps the most important question is how to fulfill the promise of a good higher education for students here on the Mendocino coast—both current students and those who would like to enroll.

The League of Women Voters would like to see the current situation lead to—not a dissolution, not a divorce—but a transition.

Thank you again for coming.

Education, Advocacy, Action

League Action On a Local Community College Issue

Editor's Note: When the LWV Mendocino County takes action on a local issue, that action often comes as a response to an immediate crisis—in the case of College of the Redwoods, a recommendation to suspend classes at the Fort Bragg and Garberville campuses by this fall. League action at every level is based on positions formed after years of discussion, study and votes by members. Here is background on how we used our state position on the California Community College System to take action in this case. The source is an updated paper on the California LWV action policies and positions

http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/docs/lwvc_positions.pdf

Action policies and positions have roots in the League's study and consensus process and serve as the basis for action or advocacy. A League position is established after members study an issue and achieve consensus on policies and practices that would best serve the public interest. The League acts only within its positions. If members have not studied and come to consensus on an issue, the League has no position and therefore does not have a stand on that issue.

A vertical position is a position arrived at through a national, state or inter-League organization (ILO) study that has been approved for use at other levels of the League without prior permission. If a local League wants to use a position locally that is not vertical, the local League should first contact a member of the LWVC board of directors.

In this case The our local League board of directors decided to take action based on the following vertical positions listed under the state League's update on the California Community College system:

2. Support using the goal of providing access to higher education to all who may benefit as a prime criterion for evaluating the community college system

5. Support local determination of mission priorities for the district, within system-wide definitions of missions, guidelines and accountability standards

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.

2013-2014 LWVMC Calendar

Tuesday, March 18, 2014	Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Fort Bragg Library
Friday, March 21, 2014	Annual Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials 5-7 p.m. Caspar Community Center
Tuesday, April 8, 2014	General Program Meeting 10 a.m. Caspar Community Center Program: Water
Tuesday, May 13, 2014	Annual Luncheon Business Meeting and Potluck Caspar Community Center

*All League program meetings are open to the public at no charge
(donations gladly accepted)*

All League Board meetings are open to members.

College of the Redwoods Board Considers Future of Fort Bragg Campus

Editor's Note: This is one in a series of stories about local Community Colleges. Barbara Matheson, Jane Person, Charlene McAllister, and Becky Bowen contributed to this article. The state League's position in brief on the California Community College System is in the President's column on Page 2 of this VOTER.

In January, College of the Redwoods announced three of the four remaining full-time faculty positions at the Fort Bragg campus would be eliminated by fall, 2014. Only one fulltime faculty member would be retained—Laura Mays, director of the school's Fine Woodworking program which is located in Fort Bragg, but not on the school's campus. The Fine Woodworking program often is described as a "money maker" for the school because its reputation attracts international and out-of-state students.

At a League meeting in Caspar last May, college president Kathryn Smith said enrollment at the Fort Bragg campus (except for the Fine Woodworking program) has significantly decreased. She said there were dire budget problems that affected every campus in the district, bond ratings were in jeopardy, there were uncollectable student debts, the system was desperate for cash and the district had to either increase revenue (an unlikely possibility) or cut expenses. The Fort Bragg campus dean's job was eliminated by June, 2013, along with several staff positions, including the director of student financial aid.

At the League's September, 2013, kickoff meeting, superintendents of both coastal unified school districts described dwindling local high school connections with the Fort Bragg CR campus, where student services were either discontinued or replaced by on-line choices. Fifteen graduates in a class of 107 at Fort Bragg High School last year enrolled at the Fort Bragg CR campus. Two Mendocino High School graduates enrolled at the Fort Bragg CR campus. Mendocino Unified School District Supt. Jason Morse said the "effect of closing CR (Fort Bragg campus) would be minimal for Mendocino High School students."

Then on February 4, 2014, came President Smith's recommendation to the board that operations at the Fort Bragg and Garberville campuses be suspended indefinitely by the fall of 2014. Trustees agreed to hold a public hearing on February 17 in Fort Bragg. Action on the recommendation is expected at the March 4, 2014, trustee meeting on the Eureka campus.

In the meantime, Trustee Barbara Rice, who represents the Mendocino coastal district, has coordinated meetings with local leaders to examine options that would allow the Fort Bragg campus to remain open under an understanding with the Mendocino-Lake Community College District, based in Ukiah. This could be considered the first step in a community college district reorganization that would dissolve the campus affiliation with College of the Redwoods and bring the coastal campus into the Mendocino-Lake Community College District.

In May, 1975, North Coast Mendocino County voters approved annexation to the Redwoods Community College District. Del Norte County joined the district in July, 1978, and the district service areas since that time have been Humboldt County, coastal Mendocino County, Del Norte County and a portion of Trinity County.

The California Education Code contains specific requirements for reorganization of community college district boundaries that cross county boundaries. This redistricting is a lengthy process that includes agreement between affected districts and counties, study and recommendation of the pertinent county committee (in this case, the Mendocino County Board of Education), and approval by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges after study and recommendation of changes in revenue sources and property tax distributions. Additional procedural requirements are contained in the California Election Code.



CR President Smith at LWV May 13 meeting at Caspar Community Center

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In California, 2.4 million students are enrolled in 112 community colleges. It is the largest system of higher education in the United States. There are 72 community college districts. Redwoods Community College Districts has one college—College of the Redwoods—with locations in Eureka (main campus), Fort Bragg, Crescent City, Hoopa and Garberville. Total district enrollment is approximately 7,600. Full Time Equivalent enrollment at the Fort Bragg CR campus this year is about 175. Last year was 250 and the year before was 300.

Mendocino-Lake Community College District has one college—Mendocino College—with locations in Ukiah, Lakeport, Willits and Point Arena (a field station with a coastal terrace and tidal study area). Total enrollment is approximately 5,000.

The governing boards of both districts have 7 trustees, who are elected.



On February 17 at Fort Bragg's Town Hall, more than 300 members of the coastal Mendocino County community attended a public hearing about closure of the Fort Bragg and Garberville campuses of College of the Redwoods. The college district's board of trustees heard testimony and announced a vote on the decision would be taken at the March 4 board meeting on the main campus in Eureka, CA. Here are some images from the hearing.



ACTION

BY BARBARA MATHESON

O President Jane Person sent the following letter in January to California Senators Boxer and Feinstein and Rep. Jared Huffman:

R The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County fully supports the introduction of the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 by Representatives James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), John Conyers (D-MI), Bobby Scott (D-VA), John Lewis (D-GA), and Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT).

E The Voting Rights Act (VRA) is a critical component to protecting the fundamental right to vote for all Americans and stopping discrimination in our elections. This legislation will modernize the VRA and better protect all voters against discrimination at the ballot box. I urge you to pass this common sense legislation to repair and restore the VRA this year. This bipartisan effort is a necessary step to ensure that the electoral process is free, fair and accessible.

R

A Note from Action Chair Barbara Matheson:

We had a great turnout at our January National Program Planning meeting. Following a lively discussion, the group decided to retain all current positions. To the national League, we recommended the following positions as Issues for Emphasis: Voting Rights, Campaign Finance and Immigration. We also voted to support a proposed new study put forth by three leagues in Ohio. According to the Cuyahoga Area, Cleveland Area, and Shaker Heights Leagues, "the need for such a study is grounded in recent election reporting and research which shows that most state and federal legislative district lines have been drawn in ways that exaggerate political homogeneity, resulting in non-representative, skewed legislatures and unaccountable safe seats." Our members wholeheartedly supported this finding and is urging the National Board to recommend this as a new study at the convention in June.

Gubernatorial Primary Election Day Set for June 3, 2014

Mendocino County residents will vote for candidates for eight offices and three superior court judge positions in the Gubernatorial Primary Election June 3, 2014. Candidates have until March 7 to file for the following offices: Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder (incumbent is Susan Ranochak); Auditor-Controller (incumbent is Meredith Ford); District Attorney (incumbent is David Eyster); Sheriff-Coroner (incumbent is Tom Allman); Superintendent of Schools (incumbent is Paul Tichinin); Treasurer-Tax Collector (incumbent is Shari Schapmire); Third District Supervisor (incumbent is John Pinches); Fifth District Supervisor (incumbent is Dan Hamburg); Superior Court Department 2 (incumbent is Jeanine B. Nadel); Superior Court Department 3 (incumbent is John A. Behnke) and Superior Court Judge Department 7 (incumbent is David A. Riemenschneider).

The state primary election will be for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Controller, Treasurer, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, members of the California Board of Equalization, state Senators from even-numbered districts (which includes incumbent Noreen Evans' 2nd senatorial district), Assembly members from each of the 80 assembly districts and Superintendent of Public Instruction. The election also includes U.S. Representatives from each of the 53 California Congressional districts.

Healthcare Administrators Say Affordable Healthcare Act Can Lead to Healthcare Reform **League Members Get A Dose of Affordable Healthcare Facts**

League of Women Voters of Mendocino County Position in Brief on the Mendocino Health Care District: Support for measures that increase financial viability of the hospital and district, promote services that meet the needs of the community and improve community relations. The district should be encouraged to advocate for better healthcare in the community it serves.

There is more than one way to look at the new national Affordable Healthcare Law—including the view from clinics and hospitals in rural America.

Paula Cohen, Executive Director of Mendocino Coast Clinics, and Mendocino Coast District Hospital CEO/CFO Wayne Allen said affordable healthcare can stimulate a change in the way we go about business of healing and health. Cohen and Allen led a discussion about the new law at the February 11, 2014, League meeting.

“We are entitled to have hospitals and facilities to take care of our needs,” Cohen said in reference to the status of healthcare in rural communities like the Mendocino Coast. The district hospital and clinics look at what the Affordable Healthcare Act will mean and ponder these facts:

- In a population 1.2 million in the northern quarter of California (including Mendocino County), some 180,000 people currently do not have any health insurance. Seven million Californians have no healthcare coverage.
- 50 per cent of the local population has some form of chronic illness.
- 61.5 per cent of the doctors at Mendocino Coast District Hospital are over 65 years old.

It doesn't take long to realize an increase in demand for treatment from a group of aging physicians is a train wreck in the making, Allen said. “So our hospital has to transform and reform. The system has to be skinny-ed down.”

Both speakers said there was an urgent need to conduct community forums to talk about a new way of doing healthcare business; both indicated insurance companies need to be here for those talks. The next task involves a mindset transformation that takes hospitals and clinics out of the rescue business and into preventive care that comes with all the ramifications to hospital billing as well as how patients get care. Here are signs of the future in the way we manage healthcare, according to Cohen and Allen:

- A new look at the way we live our lives and the way we die. According to Medicare, the cost of the last six months of life for an elderly patient can easily be from \$400,000-\$600,000. Advanced healthcare directives will become part of healthcare planning.
- Patients in the future will live in a patient-centered home where a primary care team will provide care from a doctor, nurse practitioner, medical assistant and referral manager—so a patient will do healthcare business on the phone and on the internet—and won't be always be required to visit a doctor's office for help.
- Rural hospitals and clinics will form partnerships with larger facilities, and medical costs often will be “bundled.” One typical model for bundled care would be a lump sum paid to a provider for across-the-board treatment of a patient (so separate billings would not go out for each separate treatment).
- Fee for service reimbursements will become a practice of the past and a shift of income for critical access hospital (like the Mendocino Coast District Hospital) will reward the hospital for reducing re-admittance to the hospital after a patient is treated and discharged.

The goal at every level is to practice good health, one that citizens and government can afford. Now, with a large aging population and escalating costs of doing medical business, the U.S. spends more per individual for healthcare for patients 55 and older than any other country in the world—and the life expectancy of Americans is not any better.

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 _____
 Donation _____

Name/Names: _____

Address _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail: _____

Please make checks payable to: **LWV Mendocino County**
 And mail to: **LWVMC**
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 (707) 463-4371**

**Status of the bills in Congress
www.thomas.loc.gov**

www.smartvoter.org/ca/state/

Sources of Information about Money in Politics

www.moneyoutvotersin.org

<http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Candidates/>

<http://www.fppc.ca.gov/index.php?id=14>

<http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Measures/list.aspx?session=2011>

http://ca.lwv.org/sites/ca.lwv.org/files/Campaign%20Finance%20FACTS_1.pdf

<http://www.fec.gov/finance/disclosure/srssea.shtml>