



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

SEPTEMBER, 2012

JANE PERSON, PRESIDENT

CHARLENE MCALLISTER, EDITOR

League Kicks Off 2012-2013 Programs With a Look at State, Local Measures

The new League year opens 10 a.m., Tuesday, September 18, at Fort Bragg's Harbor Lite Lodge where Voter Service Chair JoAn Blackstone will lead a discussion of state propositions 30, 31 and 38.

Proposition 30, an initiative constitutional amendment, temporarily increases personal income tax for some and sales tax which could provide some \$6 billion in revenues a year for K-12 schools and community colleges, according to the legislative analyst's office.

Proposition 38 is an ini-

tiative statute that proposes personal income tax rate increases to provide funds for education and early childhood programs and state debt payments. If both measures pass, the proposition with the most yes votes prevails.

Proposition 31 is a constitutional amendment and statute that proposes budget reform and changes "some aspects of state and local government operations," according to the legislative analyst's office.

If time permits, other measures will be part of the pros and cons discus-



JoAn Blackstone

sion at the September 18 League meeting. Pros and cons of remaining propositions will continue at the October 9 meeting that also will be held at the Harbor Lite Lodge in Fort Bragg. Eleven state measures qualified for the November 6 General Election.

LOCAL LEAGUE PREPARES TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

The LWVMC, along with more than 180 U.S. Leagues, will observe National Voter Registration Day by leading a drive to register local voters in one single day of action by League members

across the country on September 25.

"Elections are free and open to any citizen over the age of 18, but a reservation in the form of voter registration is required."

League President Elizabeth MacNamara said.

To help register local voters, please contact Jane Person at janeperson@hotmail.com or 964-6351.

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Special Edition Outlines California Propositions

Voter Chair JoAn Blackstone reviews state propositions on the November 6 ballot in a special VOTER edition that accompanies this issue. She will continue this discussion in League member meetings on September 18 and October 9. Both meetings begin at 10 a.m. (coffee at 9:30 a.m.) at the Harbor Lite Lodge, Fort Bragg.

**Membership Dues
Are Due for 2012-13
Please See Page 8**

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President's Message: Most people are aware that the League neither supports nor opposes political parties and candidates. But we're often asked, especially around election time, why the League supports a particular ballot measure, is neutral on another, and opposes still another.



In the eyes of some people, the greatest weakness of the League is that it speaks with one voice and thus doesn't immediately jump upon an issue. But the greatest strength of the League is that it does speak with one voice. Otherwise we would long ago have fallen to squabbling among ourselves and probably gone by the wayside.

Here's the process by which the League comes to address a particular issue. First, the League at the national, state or local level conducts a study, a defined process lasting one to three years, during which it undertakes thorough pursuit of facts and details, both positive and negative. Committee members may conduct interviews, read meeting minutes, attend meetings, read through a great deal of material— whatever it takes to be thoroughly conversant with an issue. Then study committee members create consensus questions that are asked of the membership as part of a study kit.

Consensus is the overall decision-making process by which substantial agreement among members is reached on an issue. If members reach consensus, the board forms positions based on that consensus. It is the consensus statement—the statement resulting from the consensus questions—that becomes a “position.” Action can then be taken on the issue; without a position, no action can be taken.

Several years ago a California ballot measure called for withholding legislature salaries if the budget deadline passed without a budget. Since the League holds no position on anybody's salaries the League took no stand— for, against, neutral — on this ballot measure.

At the National Convention this past June several east coast Leagues sought, with the support of many other local Leagues, to push LWVUS to support a constitutional amendment to eliminate corporate personhood. That push failed by 3 votes; thus the Mendocino League cannot go on record as supporting the Mendocino County initiative on the November ballot.

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President's Message continued from Page 2

Occasionally the League takes a neutral position on ballot measures that deal with issues that it has studied. It does so because there are conflicting League positions or because there are aspects to a measure which in the League's judgment makes its support or opposition inappropriate. In this November's ballot the LWVC remains neutral on Propositions 38 (Tax for Education and Early Childhood Programs) and 39 (Tax Treatment for Multistate Business). See LWVC's website for further information: www.ca.lwv.org.

On the June ballot LWVC took a neutral position on Proposition 29, the California Cancer Research Act. The League's reason for doing so follows: "While the League supports the causes underwritten by this measure, we believe that earmarking state revenue for specific expenses reduces the flexibility needed by the legislature in setting budgets to respond to current needs."

The League has not studied the issues contained in Proposition 33 on the November ballot (Auto Insurance Rates), Proposition 35 (Human Trafficking), Proposition 36 (Three Strikes Reform), and Proposition 37 (Genetically Engineered Foods). Thus LWVC makes no recommendations.

So the League's recommendation on a ballot measure is not done lightly. It is the result of exhaustive study, consultation with its members, and much thought. That, I think, is why the voice of the League is so respected.

Jane Person

ACTION BY BARBARA MATHESON

OPERNER

Although the League appears to close down for summer, members continue to work and advocate for legislation important to the League.

At the national level, your League lobbied Senators Feinstein and Boxer on several occasions asking that they support the Disclose Act. This has been a priority for National for many months. However, during the week of July 17, the Senate twice refused to bring this issue to the floor for debate. The League vows to continue its fight for this bill which would amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit foreign influence in federal elections, prohibit government contractors from making election expenditures and establish disclosure requirements to election spending.

At the state level, we signed a petition calling for enactment of AB 1436 allowing for people to register to vote up to and including Election Day. It is estimated that there might be as many as 850,000 potential voters that might take advantage of this bill.

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.

By Susan Mitchell

I had the good fortune recently to spend an hour with Betty Stavely. On August 28th she turned 100! Family and many members of the community gathered August 25 at Jughandle Farmhouse in Caspar to celebrate this wonderful milestone. All three of Betty's sons came as well as grandchildren, great-grandchildren and many family members from across the country.

My conversation with Betty ranged from dangers of clear-cut tree removal to the ratio of males to females at Cornell University (where she was educated during the Great Depression) to the lasting affection she has for the League of Women Voters, an organization she joined in 1952 in Terre Haute, Indiana. "It's the last organization I would willingly give up," she says.

I asked Betty about attending Cornell in the 1930s. She immediately told me the ratio of men to women then was 2.6 men to each woman and in the science department where she studied botany, the ratio was much greater. One class had 100 students—two of them women. She shared a story about being asked to a dance by a young man she was dating. He told her that a fraternity brother had said Betty wasn't allowed to attend their upcoming dance if she got a higher grade on an exam than he. "I got a higher grade AND I went to the dance!"

We talked about the financial

difficulties of attending university during the Depression. She explained many students were forced to drop out because of the expense. After the advent of the WPA they were able to earn 43 cents an hour (up from 20 cents) for extracurricular work. Upon graduation from Cornell, Betty moved to the Connecticut River Valley where she worked as a lab assistant in corn research at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. She said during that time the per acre yield for corn was higher in Connecticut than in Iowa.

The issue of clear cutting came up when I complimented her on the beautiful woodland setting of her Mendocino home. She told me about seeing a picture of the barren hills in China in one of her high school biology textbooks. She was raised in upstate New York, a hilly area with dairy farms. She explained that top soil in that part of the state is very thin. Settlers practiced severe tree-cutting to make cow pastures,



Member Betty Stavely received a certificate of appreciation from the president of Cornell University for her 100th birthday—and a stadium blanket from her alma mater. She immediately broke into a saucy rendition of the university fight song.

so soil was quickly depleted. This was just prior to the Depression. Because farmers were no longer able to make a living from their land, they lost farms for non-payment of taxes to the state. She said the hills of Chenango County were filled with abandoned farms.

At that time a law allowed purchase of land tax-free for a cer-

tain period if the new owner planted trees. Betty thought it a great idea to use the small inheritance she received from her grandmother to buy an acre of land and reforest it. Her parents did not agree.

In 1974 Betty came to California with the Toledo, Ohio, delegation to the League of Women Voters National Convention. By this time she had served on several local and state League boards as chairman, Board Trainer and State Organizing Committees. While the delegation attended the convention (that coincidentally voted for the admission of men to the League), Betty took the bus to Mendocino County to see about relocating on the West Coast.

Her husband, a biochemist, had died the previous year so she came to visit her youngest son, Jary, now our League's membership chair. He helped her find the acre of woodland in Mendocino where she lives today. She said it was the very first piece of property shown to her. It was early spring. She immediately fell in love with the trees and wildflowers and has lived on "this wooded lot" since 1975, "longer than I've ever lived anywhere. I always thought I would live in upstate New York, but I left after graduation from Cornell and never returned."

One of the delegates to the 1974 LWV convention told Betty after the admittance of men to the League that the name should be changed to League of Unified

Voters—LUV. She said her husband was very supportive of her League work and wished there was a similar organization for men. She said she has always found the League members to be interesting and intelligent. In the early days, she said the League was started by housewives. Besides having to find babysitters for meetings they had more time than many of today's young women who work full time. As a result, they met more often and had more discussion groups. She said one of the best things she learned from these discussions was every issue was neither black nor white but multiple shades of grey.

She sees many similarities between the 1930s and today's political situation. As she said "my views on government are NOT nonpartisan." Despite somewhat limited mobility, she loves attending League meetings and thinks our league is working well "with good brains." Protecting natural resources is at the top of her list of important League positions. She also mentioned how odd it is that Mendocino Village is not incorporated, that the townships are governed by the Board of Supervisors 65 miles away. In Indiana for example, the county seat for each county could not be located farther than a half day's drive by horse and buggy. She thought perhaps breaking up

Mendocino County (an idea raised periodically) into coastal and inland counties a good idea as the interests of the two geographical and economic areas are so divergent.

When asked how she stayed so active and independent she said she receives wonderful help from her son, two daughter-in-laws, Judy and Patricia, Meals-on-Wheels and Kate Dougherty who comes twice a week to water Betty's flowers. She lives on her own and until a short stay in the hospital recently was very mobile with her walker. She is hoping to get back to using it very soon. She plays bridge several times a week and is an avid knitter. She is working on a pair of socks for the newest great grandchild back east. One of her daughters-in-law said Betty's warm socks were her best defense against New England winters.

We all wish Betty a very Happy 100th Birthday. She is a true inspiration not only for her longevity but for her intelligence, her timely insight to current events and positive outlook. We are fortunate she is a member our League.



Staff writer Susan Mitchell and Betty Stavely at Betty's 100th Birthday Celebration on August 25 in Caspar, CA

Revising the Constitution of the United States—A Review

By *Barbara Auerbach*

The first ten amendments came quickly. Some amendments never happen.

The **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)**, designed to guarantee equal rights for women, was introduced in Congress in 1923. It did not pass both houses of Congress until 1972. It then went to the state legislatures for ratification. By June 30, 1982, it failed to be ratified by three fourths of the states. The amendment expired without being adopted.

The Original Constitution

1. Establishes and defines the powers of Congress, the legislative branch. Congress is divided into two houses: The House of Representatives, in which each state is represented according to its population and the Senate, in which each state has two senators.
2. Establishes the presidency.
3. Establishes the court system, including the Supreme Court and other courts that Congress establishes.
4. Says that each state must give "full faith and credit" to the laws of other states.
5. Explains how to amend the Constitution.
6. Establishes the Constitution as the "supreme law of the land."
7. Says that if nine of the 13 states ratify the Constitution, it will take effect.

The Amendments to the Constitution

The passage of first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, was a promise made to opponents of the constitution who feared it would give too much power to a central government at the expense of individual liberties.

1. Establishes freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petitioning the government.
2. Establishes right of states to have militias and to "keep and bear arms." The right of individual citizens to "keep and bear arms" is not mentioned in the Constitution.
3. The government cannot quarter any soldier in a person's house during peacetime without the owner's permission and in wartime except in a manner prescribed by law.
4. Freedom from "unreasonable searches and seizures."

5. Protection from double jeopardy, self incrimination, private property taken without just compensation
6. Right to a "speedy and public trial by an impartial jury." Right to a lawyer at a trial.
7. Right to jury trial in civil suits.
8. Protection from excessive bail and "cruel and unusual punishments."
9. Provision that the enumeration of certain rights in the Constitution does not imply that there are not other rights.
10. Powers not given to the United States and not prohibited to the states, are reserved to the states or to the people.
11. An amendment clarifying the judicial power of the United States.
12. The system of electing the president through the Electoral College is revised. The system adopted in this amendment in 1804 is still in use today.
13. Abolishes slavery. It was enacted during the Civil War.
14. This amendment was enacted in 1868. It has several provisions; the most important ones are: It makes all people who were born or naturalized in the US citizens. The main effect is to make former slaves citizens. It guarantees the right to vote to all male citizens aged 21 or more (except for former rebels). The main purpose was to give the vote to former slaves. This provision was not enforced in the South until 1965. It also says that any state may not deny to any person under its jurisdiction "the equal protection of the laws." This provision was later used to apply the guarantees of the Bill of Rights to the states. Before this amendment, the guarantees were applied only to the national government.
15. Gives citizens the right to vote regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The goal of this amendment was to give former slaves the right to vote; it is more explicit than the 14th Amendment. It was not enforced in the South until 1965.
16. Gives the national government the right to establish

an income tax. Before this amendment, a national income tax was illegal.

17. Changes the way senators are elected. Before this amendment, senators were elected by state legislatures. Since this amendment was enacted in 1913, senators have been elected directly by the people, the same as members of the House of Representatives.

18. Establishes prohibition: The sale and consumption of virtually all alcoholic beverages are outlawed.

19. Gives women the right to vote in national and state elections.

20. Changes the day of the beginning of the president's term from March 4 to January 20 and Congress's term from March 4 to January 3. The main effect is to end the Congressional session that had formerly met between January and March, which had included many representatives and senators who had not been re-elected the previous November.

21. Abolishes prohibition.

22. Prohibits any person from being elected president more than twice (the two-term limit).

23. Gives three electoral votes to Washington, D.C. Before this amendment, the citizens of Washington, D.C., could not vote for president. (They still do not have any representatives or senators in Congress, although they do have one non-voting delegate in the House of Representatives.)

24. Outlaws the poll tax. Before this amendment was enacted in 1964, many states charged a fee (a poll tax) to vote.

25. Changes presidential succession. Before this amendment was enacted in 1967, when a president died, the vice-president took his office, but there was no longer a vice president. With the enactment of this amendment, the new president can appoint a vice president. There are also provisions for presidential disability.

26. Gives the vote to all citizens 18 years old or older.

27. Provides that no congressional pay raise may take effect until one congressional election shall have intervened.

The Process for Amending the Constitution of the United States

There are two methods: The United States Congress can pass a bill setting out a proposed amendment by a vote of two thirds of the members present provided there exists a quorum in each body. The amendments become effective only after being ratified by three fourths of the states.

Or a constitutional convention can be convened by a vote of two thirds of the state legislatures, which will propose one or more amendments. These amendments must be ratified by three fourths of the states. This method has never been tested.

Presidents Power

In 1798, the Supreme Court, in the case of *Hollingsworth v. Virginia*, held that the President has no veto rights to a proposed amendment, nor is it necessary for an amendment to come before the President for signature.

The Last Concept

The power of the people is a concept discussed in the book, *The Constitution: A Biography*, by Akhil Reed Amar. It is a concept by James Wilson, one of the framers of the Constitution: "...the people may change the constitution whenever and however they please. This is a right of which no positive institution can ever deprive them."

In November, eligible voters of Mendocino County will have the ability to say yea or nay to Measure F which instructs our state and federal representatives to begin drafting an amendment to the Constitution that removes the status of persons with human rights from corporations. The amendment will also reverse the Supreme Court decision in the *Citizens United v. the Federal Elections Commission*.

NATIONAL LEAGUE DELEGATES NARROWLY DEFEAT “CORPORATE PERSONHOOD” STUDY, ADOPT NEW SENTENCING POLICY AND AGRICULTURE POSITION UPDATE AT CONVENTION

By Barbara Matheson

The LWVUS held its 50th biennial national convention in Washington, D.C. June 9 –12, 2012. During the four-day gathering, more than 600 delegates from Leagues around the country came together to celebrate the organization’s accomplishments on campaign finance reform, the environment and election reform—and to set the program and adopt a budget for the coming two years.

Delegates voted to retain all current positions on Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. They adopted through concurrence with the District of Columbia’s position, a new position on Sentencing Policy. After much discussion and heavy lobbying by several Leagues, they voted to restudy and update our 1988 position on Agriculture.

In a surprise move, the motion to consider a not-recommended study of the impacts of corporate personhood and the premise that money equals speech was defeated (on a card vote) by 3 votes: 280-283.

Delegates heard from a number of speakers, including Attorney Eric General Holder who told the delegates: “I urge you—regardless of the opposition you face—to stay true, and remain fiercely committed, to the principles that have always guided the League of Women Voters and that can ensure that the 21st will be another American century.”

On the final day of the convention, delegates adopted a budget for the coming two years that raises the per-member-payment from \$30 to \$31. They also reelected president Elisabeth MacNamara. In her acceptance speech she said “We are all in League together to make our community a better place; we are all in League to make our democracy safe by making it available to all; and we are all in League together in our faith in knowledge as power and education as the only way to make gains that will last.”

LWV Fall Calendar 2012

Tuesday, September 18—2012-2013 League Kickoff Meeting

9:30 a.m. light brunch

Harbor Lite Lodge, Fort Bragg

10 a.m. Pros & Cons State Measures

Tuesday, October 2—Board of Directors Meeting

9:30 a.m.

Fort Bragg Library Meeting Room

Tuesday, October 9—Pros & Cons State Measures

9:30 a.m. coffee

Harbor Lite Lodge, Fort Bragg

10 a.m. meeting

Tuesday, November 13—Topic to be Announced

9:30 a.m. coffee

Caspar Community Center

10 a.m. meeting

No Meeting in December — Happy Holidays

*All League meetings are open to the public at no charge
All Board Meetings are open to League Members*

Coastal Commission Plans September Caspar Meeting

League Members are encouraged to attend a public meeting of the California Coastal Commission September 12-14, at the Caspar Community Center.

Public expression is at 9 a.m. each meeting morning and topics that may be addressed are issues involving State Parks proposals to install “Iron Rangers” to collect parking fees at the Mendocino Headlands, Big River, and the Lake Cleone parking area of MacKerricher State Park. The agenda is available at:

www.coastal.ca.gov

Other items to be considered include the planning process for future development of the Georgia Pacific Property in Fort Bragg, CA.

September 1, 2012

Dear Member,

Now is the time to renew your membership. I'm sending this reminder so that we can achieve our goal of 100 percent membership renewal. Every member, active or not, is important to the League. You and the League have a lot in common: Concerns about critical issues, involvement in our community and a desire to make a difference.

As you know, our dues support the national, state and local League. Our dues are now \$55.00 per individual and \$80.00 per household. For a \$55.00 membership, \$23.00 goes to California State League and \$31.00 goes to the National League. This leaves \$1.00 for our local League, per member. In addition to our regular and household memberships, we are pleased to include two additional levels of membership for you to consider when you make your renewal. Each membership is named after a woman of the past who chose to make a difference.

Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Amelia Bloomer was the first woman to own, operate and edit a newspaper, *The Lily*, which promoted women's rights issues.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton founded the National Woman Suffrage Association and served as the first president.

Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters. "Winning the vote is only an opening wedge—learning to use it is a bigger task."

Thank you for remaining a member of a committed group of women and men who are working to make a difference in the future of our country.

Sincerely,

Jary Stavelly

Membership Chair

Membership Renewal:

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 _____

Phone _____ E-mail: _____

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

And mail to: **LWVMC**

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