

President's Message

The League has been busy working on ways to keep our community informed on local issues that directly affect our community. I would like to thank all of the League members for all their hard work on *Making Democracy Work*. Next Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at the Arcata City Council meeting, the League will be accepting a proclamation for Sunshine Week. This year, Sunshine Week will be March 12-18. If any League members would like to attend, the meeting starts at 6 PM at the Arcata City Hall.

Getting more actively involved within the League is something I want to encourage. As always, we are looking for people from the community to become members: men and women. The age limit to become a member is now 16 years of age, so young people are encouraged to join too. Please notify friends, family, and other members of the community to become a part of the League! Sunshine Week is a great way to promote the importance of understanding our government and how important the *People* are to ensuring a strong government.

Many thanks to **Judy Bennett** and **Becky Simpson** for coordinating and facilitating a very informative and successful panel discussion on Foster Care in Humboldt County. The turnout was amazing! We now have a better understanding of the local Foster Care system and how the state-wide programs will affect our local programs. I also believe that we, the League, have a better foundation to build a stronger position to aid and/or support the county with the challenges they face.

Celeste Ruiz
Interim President



Save the Dates!

Community Participation Fair

**Thursday, March 16, 2017
5:30-7:00 PM**

**Arcata Community Center
321 Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy.
Arcata, CA**

General Plan Update

**Sunday, March 19, 2017
2 PM**

**Wharfinger Building
1 Marina Way
Eureka, CA**

Our Mission Statement...

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

Access Humboldt to be Honored at the April 7 State of the Community Luncheon by Debbe Hartridge

Fifteen years ago, governing groups representing Humboldt County and six local cities joined together to establish Access Humboldt, a non-profit organization that provides four television stations, a radio station, an on-line archive of video productions, as well as training and hands-on education for anyone who wants to be involved in media production. Access Humboldt has a board of directors representing local communities and educational entities including K-12 and higher education and receives major funding from Suddenlink as mandated by the Public Utilities Commission.

By broadcasting the meetings of local governing bodies and allowing people to participate by means of dedicated cable at remote sites, Access Humboldt is a strong force for “making democracy work.” Access Humboldt additionally supports free speech by providing open and easy access for creative and educational efforts by local people. This year, Access Humboldt broadcast more than 500 hours of local programming, including the well-attended panel discussion on mental illness and the criminal justice sys-



*Armeda Reitzel, Board President and
Sean McLaughlin, Executive Director
of Access Humboldt*

tem co-sponsored by the League and NAMI Humboldt (National Alliance on Mental Illness) which may be viewed on Archive.org. (See the January 2017 Voter for a more complete description of Access Humboldt's role and activities in the community.)

LWVHC Supports History Day 2017! by Anne Hartline

Once again, LWVHC has made a positive impact on local students by lending our support to Humboldt County History Day. On February 11, 2017, 480 students from grades 4 through 12 converged on Humboldt State University to compete at History Day, and the LWVHC was there to encourage and support.

Not only were League members present to interview and judge student projects (thank you -- you know who you are!) Board members **Becky Simpson**, **Mary Lou Lowry**, and **Julie Kelly** were on hand to determine which exhibits and posters best met the League's emphasis on voting rights and women's history, in accordance with this year's theme: Taking a Stand in History. As a result, nine students were each given special awards (a \$25 gift certificate to a local bookstore) at the Awards Ceremony later in the day.

The students receiving awards were:

Gwyneth Bise
Kyra Dart
Irene Erickson
Ella Ivan
Kelli Johnston
Natalie Lehman
Alyssa Pedicino
Anna Schroeder
Aquene Tollefson

In addition, Board members will attend a coaching session for Humboldt History Champions in April to determine additional scholarships from LWVHC for students travelling to State History Day in Rocklin, CA. All LWVHC members should feel great pride in our support of local students. Our awards and scholarships are treasured by students!



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Luncheon Committee

Judy Bennett, Chair

Deborah Downs

Kay Escarda

Nancy Frost

Debbe Hartridge

Sharolyn Hutton

Kathy Johanson

Nancy Kay

Lorey Keele

Byrd Lochtic

Judith Stoffer

Cordially invites you to the
26th Annual State of the Community Luncheon
to honor

Marianne Pennekamp
Community Volunteer

and

Access Humboldt
Local Voices through Community Media

Master of Ceremonies – Judy Bennett,
The League of Women Voters of Humboldt County

State of the Community Remarks – Virginia Bass, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Keynote Speaker – Julie Fulkerson,
Community Leader

Friday, April 7, 2017

11:30 Seating
12:00 – 1:30 Luncheon and Program
Adorni Center

Please detach and send with your check

My check is enclosed to support the 2017 State of the Community Luncheon:

- ☐ A \$45 contribution entitles a **League member** to one luncheon seat.
- ☐ I wish to support The League of Women Voters and have my name printed in the program. Please reserve _____ ticket(s) at \$65 per person.
- ☐ I am unable to attend the luncheon, but I wish to support The League of Women Voters with a contribution of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

**Checks must be received in advance. Please make checks payable to
The League of Women Voters of Humboldt County**

**Mail checks to 4835 Dickson Drive, Eureka, CA 95503
(707) 442-2729**

Contributions to the LWVHC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

The League Works Locally with The Wiyot Tribe by Byrd Lochtie

In 2016, members of the Wiyot General Council indicated that they wanted to be able to cast Absentee Ballots if they lived a great distance from Loleta or were unable to attend the Annual Meeting for some other reason. The only way to accomplish that would be with a Constitutional Amendment. In April 2016, the Tribal Council formed a Constitution Committee of six members to meet with the Tribal Administrator to work on the proposed amendment. Members are Fawn Lopez, Hazel James, Theodore Hernandez, Linda Lange, Betty Owen-Mead, and Vincent DiMarzo, as well as the Tribal Administrator, Michelle Vassel.

The committee met many times during 2016, discussing how to make it possible to have Absentee Ballots. Some disputes arose, and the members of the committee wanted clarification of some issues. They requested help from the League of Women Voters of Humboldt County, and the Tribal Council signed an MOU with the League, that then provided a consultant to work with the Constitution Committee.

I have been working since October with the Committee, which sought input from the attorney and from the Tribal Council. On April 1, 2017, at the Tribal General Meeting, the Constitution Committee will present to the membership Constitutional Amend-



Members of the Wiyot Tribal Constitutional Committee left to right: Fawn Lopez, Hazel James, Linda Lange, Tribal Administrator, Michelle Vassel, and Committee member Betty Owen-Mead meet with **Byrd Lochtie**.

ments that they believe provide for Absentee Ballots for those who truly need them and that will strengthen the Constitution and the Tribe. They hope that the membership will understand what they are presenting and will pass the amendments that are on the ballot that day.

Board Briefs

by Patricia-Anne WinterSun

In February, your board

- moved to accept and send the results of our Program Planning meeting to LWVC;
- approved \$250 for LWVC Convention sponsorship, to be held in Sacramento in early June;
- and decided to continue consulting with the Wiyot Tribe of Table Bluff through their election on April 1, 2017.

Welcome New
Members!



Lora Canzoneri

Deborah Eiers

Elan Firpo

Edith Jessup

Andrea Warner

The Strange Story of the General Plan Update by Elaine Weinreb

Our local League is once again reviewing the complicated nature of the Humboldt County General Plan Update. Please join us on Sunday, March 19th, at 2 PM, at the Wharfinger Building, 1 Marina Way, Eureka. The League is hosting a panel to discuss all the complexities of this perplexing but vital aspect of our county government.

The following article provides information about the Humboldt County General Plan Update.

"We the people of Humboldt County recognize and acknowledge our total dependence upon the land and accept our obligation to use the land in a manner which will sustain and benefit man and all other living things."

(Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, August 27, 1972)

Sounds utopian, right? Who could possibly disagree with such a statement? But for the past thirty or forty years, depending on when you start counting, the county has been riven by fierce disagreement on just what this means, and how to bring it about.

Welcome to the General Plan Update.

State law requires that every county and incorporated city create a General Plan that determines how land will be used. Where should development occur? What lands should be left in a natural state? Where should new roads and sewer mains be located? How are we to deal with the ever-increasing demand for better communication facilities? How do we simultaneously protect our natural resources and encourage economic development? How do we ensure that there is enough housing for all the people who want to live here?

As the Supervisors said in 1984:

"There is a fixed amount of land area within Humboldt County. There are competing uses for this land....The competitive uses may or may not be compatible... These uses have different relative economic, social and aesthetic values to the community."

While very broad in scope, the General Plan gets specific in details, and therein is the source of conflict. Land use categories get translated into zoning ordinances, which determine everything from what kind of business you can operate in your neighborhood to how far away your neighbor's house must be from yours.

General Plan legislation has been evolving for decades, beginning in the 1930's. (They were called "Master Plans" then.) But in 1970, the state passed legislation creating a state planning agency, known as the Office of Planning and Research. This agency was to bring consistency and clarity to the General Plan process. Three years later this agency issued its first guidelines, specifying what each plan had to include and how each of the three main players -- the public, the Board of Supervisors (or the City Council), and the Planning Commission were to interact. The ideal was a system of checks and balances, not unlike the ones which underlie our state and federal governments.

Once the Plan has been written, it must pass the rigorous test of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It is then certified by the state. From that point forth, no development in the county can be approved unless it is in compliance with the Plan or an amendment is obtained.

Each county and city has a Planning Commission, a group of seven citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors or City Council to study planning issues in depth, and make recommendations to the governing board. The Planning Commission is required to hold public hearings where citizens can express their concerns. Hundreds, if not thousands, of such hearings have been held over the past few decades.

The Planning Commission is different from the Planning Department which consists of paid professionals who are experts in the various legal aspects of planning. Supervisors and Commissioners rely on the knowledge of the staff, but cannot allow them to make policy decisions.

Each Supervisor gets to appoint one Planning Commissioner, and two are appointed at-large. Therefore, the political views of the Supervisors are reflected in the make-up of the Planning Commission, and when the make-up of the Board changes, usually the make-up of the Planning Commission changes as well.

Humboldt County was slow to start its General Plan, and the LWVHC finally filed a lawsuit against the County in 1980, to get the process underway. The issue dragged through the courts for three years, but by 1984, the first General Plan had been written, subsequently known as the Framework Plan. That Plan encompassed dozens of smaller "Area Plans" created by individual communities.

The Office of Planning and Research recognized that communities continually change, and that a plan which was written in 1985 might well be obsolete twenty years later. So it recommended that the General Plan be updated every twenty years. The one exception is the Housing Element of the Plan, which has to be updated every five years.

The current General Plan Update process began in 2003 with numerous public hearings and surveys. But the County has had a very difficult time reaching any sort of consensus, or even a simple majority opinion, which sometimes was reversed when the political make-up of the Board of Supervisors changed, and with it, the membership of the Planning Commission.

It would take a far longer article than this one to review all the twists and turns, the gridlocks and course reversals that have plagued the Planning Commission, the Supervisors, and the public. So come and hear a panel of experts discuss the General Plan Update -- why it stalled and where it is going.

*Sources: County of Humboldt's website humboldtgov.org
State of California's Office of Planning and Research website
opr.ca.gov/docs/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf*

League Hosts Panelists for Information about Foster Care

by Judy Bennett

Foster Care is changing. This is what we learned on Thursday, February 16 from our Foster Care panel. The biggest change is legislation which began January 1, 2017 that put the administration of all Foster Care directly in the hands of the county rather than the state.

Our panel consisted of Jody Bechtel from Environmental Alternatives, a Foster Care Agency; Deb Engs and Michele Stevens of Humboldt County Social Services; Krissy Mora, a foster/adoptive parent, of Headstart; Angela Sundberg, of Trinidad Rancheria Social Services; and Roger Golec of Humboldt County Office of Education. They relayed to us their personal and professional involvement with Foster Care. Panelists told us of new regulations, new framework, lack of funding, lack of foster families, and inadequate numbers of social workers, yet there were success stories.

We learned that there are 317 children in Foster Care in Humboldt County today. Of those, 40 percent are Native American children. They told us about Assembly Bill 403 that revises the foster parent training requirements imposed by the California Community Care Facilities Act. AB 403 also provides for reclassification of treatment facilities. Finally, the bill calls for the transition from the use of group homes to the use of short term residential treatment centers for children in foster care due to the large failure rate of children placed in group homes.

Leaguers attending were asked to determine whether our existing position is relevant. It was a resounding NO. So, a new Foster Care study may be in our future. Until then, the LWVHC board will attempt to improve and correct our current position.

Our audience of 37 attendees, 24 of them Leaguers and the balance guests, included a *Times Standard* reporter who wrote an article about the event for the Friday morning paper, including a picture of our panel.

The League of Women Voters: Then and Now by Judy Bennett

In our continuing efforts to educate and inform our members about the League of Women Voters, the board thought a little history of the League might be interesting. The following information is taken from our "Meaning of Membership" booklet given to all new members. For some of us, it's been a long time since we were new members and have forgotten much of this. So take a little jaunt down memory lane and learn a little more about our wonderful organization.

How we began

In her address to the National American Woman Suffrage Association's (NAWSA) 50th convention in St. Louis, Missouri in 1919, President Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the creation of a "league of women voters to finish the fight and aid in the reconstruction of the nation" after World War I. A League of Women Voters was formed within NAWSA, composed of the organizations in the states where woman suffrage had already been attained.

The next year, on February 14, 1920 - six months before the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified - the League was formally organized in Chicago as the National League of Women Voters. The organization that helped women become voters was transformed into one to help them, and all other citizens, become well-informed voters.

What we have done
(continued on p. 7)

National

The work of the League has kept pace with the changing times. In the beginning, the League worked hard to improve the legal status of women and the welfare of children. It also worked to extend the merit system in the federal civil service, to improve the Food and Drug Act and other legislation protecting the consumer, and to support several measures later embodied in the Social Security Act. It championed the reorganization of Congress and civilian control of atomic energy.

The League has been devoted to the principle of international cooperation for over 30 years. It has consistently supported the United Nations, the Trade Agreements Program, the Mutual Security Program, technical assistance, and economic development.

State

The League of Women Voters of California was established in 1921. In the 1920s, the League focused its attention on state laws concerning the welfare of women and children. In the 1930s, major efforts addressed maintenance of public school standards, relief programs, and taxation.

Subsequently, the League has supported the merit system for government personnel, establishment of permanent child care centers, improved legislative procedures and effective mental health legislation. It supports improved administration and financing of public education, revision of the State Constitution, and a statewide master plan for water resources development.

Local

Local Leagues spearhead improvements in the structure and efficiency of city and county government. They work on such issues as public schools, housing, health services, juvenile justice, tax reforms, council-manager charters and community planning.

Over the last decade, the LWVHC has studied and formed positions on topics such as the Grand Jury, Mental Health, Humboldt Bay, Solid Waste, Election Systems, and Education. Additionally, our League has spoken before various governmental agencies on issues including the Multiple Assistance Center, the County General Plan, the railroad, redistricting, beach and dunes plan, school testing, and Headwaters Forest Reserve.

We have worked with students and faculty in schools and partnered with service organizations and other non-profits on a variety of projects. KEET-TV, the Humboldt County Elections Department, Humboldt County Office of Education and the LWVHC collaborated on an exciting project, TEEN VOTE 2000, where high school students voted at actual polling places throughout the county.

The LWVHC has presented candidate forums on KEET-TV and in the community for elections including school board and community service districts, city councils, the Board of Supervisors, and various county offices and other legislative positions. We have helped citizens register to vote and provided information about the League in our booths at various summer fairs, and have participated in naturalization ceremonies welcoming new citizens. For statewide elections, we have distributed, free of charge, LWV California printed election materials.

We initiated our annual State of the Community Luncheon to enhance visibility of our League and bring together community leaders to recognize excellence in Humboldt County. We have honored individuals and groups for their efforts in areas including education, the arts, cultural diversity and civic participation.

What we do

League activities are divided into two distinct areas: Program, which consists of Study and Action, and Voter Service/Citizen Education. League program is based on member study and agreement on selected issues and involves action in support of or opposition to specific measures. Voter Service and Citizen Education are designed to provide citizens with unbiased, factual information as a basis for reaching their own decisions. Study/Action and Voter Service activities are handled separately and by different people.

Become a Member!

Membership in the League of Women Voters, the most respected and effective grassroots organization in the country, is open to men and women aged 16 and up.

Our members make a visible difference by serving as community leaders using their experience to create positive, lasting change in our communities.

Membership dues and donations to the LWVHC are not tax-deductible. Donations to the LWVHC-Education Fund, through the Humboldt Area Foundation, are tax-deductible.

Annual Dues are due each year on July 1.

Visit www.LWVHC.org or mail the form below!

Yes! I want to join the League of Women Voters of Humboldt County and become a voice for citizens and a force for change. I am enclosing for my annual membership:

- ☐ \$60 Individual membership
- ☐ \$90 Household membership
- ☐ \$60 Associate membership
- ☐ Please accept my donation of _____
- ☐ Please send me more information
- ☐ I am interested in becoming a board member

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

Please make checks payable to LWVHC, P.O. Box 3219, Eureka, CA 95502.

The League of Women Voters of Humboldt County

434 7th Street, Eureka, CA 95501
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www.lwvhc.org vote@lwvhc.org
(707) 444-9252

Who's Who in Your League Board**ADMINISTRATION**

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Director Anne Hartline
Director Nancy Kay
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Poll Workers Fundraiser Carolyn Otis
State of the Community Luncheon (SOCL)
Committee Chair Judy Bennett

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Access Humboldt Rep. Elaine Weinreb
Publicity Andrea Enyedi
Social Media ... Kathy Johanson and Celeste Ruiz

Website Kathy Johanson
VOTER Publication Leslie Leach
VOTER Circulation Carolyn Otis

VOTER SERVICE

Voter Service Director Becky Simpson
Candidate Forums Carol Masterson



Find Us on Facebook!



P.O. Box 3219
Eureka, CA 95502

To:

Get Involved!

We all have a unique set of skills to contribute and limited time to afford. Working together we become a viable force for change. Call or email today to say you want to participate.

Visit www.lwvhc.org or call (707) 444-9252.

Our Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Humboldt County recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. Not only shall there be no barriers to membership and participation in the LWVHC on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, economic status, nor political affiliation, but also the LWVHC will actively seek to reflect the diversity of the community in its membership, board and programs.

Making Democracy Work!

LWVHC Calendar

Tue., March 7 5:30 PM	Board Meeting League Office 434 7th St., Eureka
Thurs. Mar. 16 5:30-7 PM	Community Participation Fair Arcata Community Center 321 Martin Luther King Pkwy Arcata
Sun., Mar. 19 2 PM	General Plan Update Wharfinger Building 1 Marina Way, Eureka
Fri. Apr. 7 Doors open At 11:30 AM	State of the Community Luncheon Adorni Center 1011 Waterfront Drive Eureka
Thurs., Apr. 27 5:30 PM	General Plan Update Panel Part 2 Sequoia Conference Center 901 Myrtle Avenue, Eureka
