



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

May, 2020

Cindy Plank and Nancy Kleiber, Presidents

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

This month's meeting ...

Hubs and Routes Project Presentation Moves to Virtual

The presentation by Dr. Jennifer Kreger and Rick Hemmings about Hubs & Routes, originally scheduled in conjunction with the Annual Meeting, will take place on May 12, as originally scheduled.

League members and friends are invited to attend the presentation via Zoom from 6:30 to 7:45 PM. Participation is free, and easy.

Hubs & Routes, officially named "Community Resource Hubs and Alternate Rescue Routes throughout the Mendocino Coast Healthcare District," is a project of the Planning Committee of the MCDH Board. It is being led by Jennifer Kreger and Rick Hemmings.

Formed after the local area's experience during the power shutoffs during the fire emergency in the fall of 2019, the project has identified five overall goals:

Finding: When times are tough and you need something, Hubs & Routes maps will help you find what you need.

Sharing: When you'd like to share what you have, the maps help people find what you're offering.

Care in place: When 911 can't get to all who need help at once, most people can be cared for by

people nearby, since each neighborhood has the necessities of life, including step-by-step instructions for basic care of common medical problems and injuries.

Annual Meeting Postponed

Due to the shelter-in-place rules, the League Board has postponed the Annual Meeting originally scheduled for May 12. The meeting, which includes the approval of the budget, officers, board members, and program emphases for the 2020–21 fiscal year, will now take place online via Zoom at 10 am on Tuesday, June 9. Information about how to take part will be shared in a special June edition of the *Voter*. Although members will not be able to partake of the traditional luncheon at the Caspar Community Center, plans are afoot for communal enjoyment of deviled eggs during the meeting.

Transportation: Those who really need the hospital will be able to get to it, even if Highway One bridges are down.

Climate: We can prepare for and handle disasters in ways that help restore a healthy climate.

The first phase of the project, slated for this year, is to map out community resource hubs and alternate rescue routes within the Healthcare

District. The maps will show the key places that already exist and what they offer (example: Jughandle Creek Farm has meeting spaces, indoor shelters with beds, gas stove, medical supplies, sawdust toilets, and food gardens, but no ham radio and no helipad.) They will also show ways for getting to the hospital or out of unsafe areas when primary roads are not passable (example: if Big River Bridge is not available, people can be ferried

LWW 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.

across Big River using craft from Catch A Canoe.) Phase one also includes making printed versions of these maps for use at hubs, libraries and command centers, and creating online versions which include GPS tracking, so that victims, rescuers and refugees can see their own locations as they move along Routes



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toward Resources.

Jennifer Kreger MD, is a Family Physician at North Coast Family Health Center. She is the Public Health Advisor for Hubs and Routes. She has lived on the Coast for 23 years and has had family in the area since the early 1950's. Rick Hemmings, Mapmaker and Web Designer for Hubs and Routes, is a man of many talents and a long-time Coast dweller. Before the Shelter in Place order, he could often be found working and making friends at Catch a Canoe and Bicycles Too.

To join the meeting, just use the link you will get via email on May 12. Or register in advance using this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUufuCvqjssGtXElv4VzgcbKNEPjq6_dwQR.

Our April meeting ...

Webinar on Schools and Communities First

by Jary Stavelly

On April 14 the Mendocino County League held its first virtual event of the coronavirus era. Helen Hutchison, past California League President and current state board member, hosted a zoom session regarding the Schools and Communities First (SCF) initiative with 20 local League members and friends. She was assisted by Tim Bates, a Fort Bragg resident who has had a long career in a variety of state budget related positions, and who also is working closely with the state groups promoting the measure. The meeting attendees saw a slide show which presented basic information about the measure, and which highlighted the kind of misrepresentations which opponents of it are raising.

SCF supporters want to promote the key message that, in the more than four decades since the passage of Prop 13, California's school funding has been falling further and further behind other states because corporations haven't been paying their fair share of property taxes. The measure would:

- reclaim \$12B in taxes each year for schools and local communities;

- close property tax loopholes which have allowed big corporations and wealthy investors to avoid reassessment and fair evaluation of properties which they own and have acquired in California;
- protect all homeowners and renters by maintaining Prop 13 tax protections for all residential property;
- support new money for education and vital services necessary for families and communities;
- provide one of the largest tax incentives in a generation to spur new investment in small businesses;
- level the playing field so that businesses who already pay their fair share can compete equitably;
- ensure strict accountability so that the funds generated go directly to students and communities.

The businesses affected by SCF would be commercial/industrial properties worth more than \$3M (combined per owner). All agricultural and residential property is excluded from the measure, so taxes on such property would not change. Mixed use properties which are 75% or more residential are also excluded. The tax money generated by the measure would be divided into two main pots, with 60% going to local communities and 40% going to public education. Of that education money, 89% would go to K–12 schools and 11% to community colleges. Local and transparent control would be given over funding decisions.

The \$4.8B in school funding is expected to provide new funding for librarians, school nurses, counselors, and reduced class sizes, all casualties of California's school spending slide to 48th in the nation in per-pupil spending. The \$7.2B in local community funding is expected to support additional funding for senior services, health clinics, road repair, fire/flood infrastructure, parks, recreation centers, libraries, housing, and homeless services.

88% of all California commercial/industrial properties have a market value of \$3M or less, and would not be affected. More than 3/4 of the new revenue would come from the 6% of such properties worth more than \$5 M. The measure supports smaller businesses by maintaining California's low property tax rates, and by eliminating the state tax on equipment and fixtures, making it easier for smaller entities to compete.

The slide show also illustrated 4 “myths” which SCF opponents are raising, contrasted with 4 “facts”:

*Myth: SCF is the first step in **repealing** Prop 13 and its essential protections for homeowners/businesses.*

Fact: SCF **protects** homeowners, renters and family farms while giving new tax relief to small businesses.

Myth: The \$12B will only go for funding pensions and government, not helping students or communities.

Fact: It will fund schools/local services, with transparency requirements so people know how it's spent.

Myth: With these new taxes on businesses, costs will go up for Californians.

Fact: Costs depend on the market, *not* on how much a corporation pays in property tax.

Myth: SCF will cost jobs and force businesses to close down.

Fact: Most California businesses already pay their fair share; it would affect only a handful of very wealthy corporations exploiting the loophole.

Helen and Tim said that organizers (including our League) have submitted almost double the required number of signatures for the updated version of SCF, and that it is expected to replace last year's version which already qualified. The organizers want to collect stories from Californians, especially essential workers and teachers, about how the measure would affect them and their communities. Learn how at

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1klrvq2d-XerILL6UcwMlxkRZrJdcDRZDkN3vjGsII18/edit>.

The meeting was recorded, and can be accessed at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_5yyQNI5wE&feature=youtu.be.

Good News about Democracy and the Environment

Voter readers may find the *Small Victories* newsletter an interesting and uplifting read while cooped up at home. It can be found at <https://www.celebratesmallvictories.com/archives>.

LWVUS Statement on Stimulus Legislation

by Virginia Kase, National League CEO

The past few weeks have been some of the most difficult many of us have had to face in our lifetimes. Like you, we are worried about our health, our families, the economy, and our elections. We've lost our sense of control over so many aspects of our lives. It's hard not to feel helpless at times. Yet, we take comfort in knowing that our League community is strong, fierce, and resilient. We are also powerful.

As we see more and more states expand mail-in voting for primaries and the general election, we must push for preserving in-person voting options as an important way to ensure civil rights protections for communities of color, people with disabilities, Native Americans, and other underrepresented communities. LWVUS is working hard to ensure elections and equality are prioritized as Congress considers COVID relief. The three provisions we ask for are:

- Ensure that \$4 billion in election funding is included to help states to make the remaining primaries and the November general election safe for all to participate. States need this funding to implement the following measures: voter education, online registration, same-day registration, expanded early voting, expanded no-excuse absentee voting, and polling place safety.
- Ensure that all families and individuals receive aid from the government, regardless of their immigration or tax status. This covers health care, stimulus rebates, SNAP funding, worker protections, and access to community health centers.
- Ensure that DC is treated like a state and not a territory in funding distribution.

During this time of so many competing priorities at the federal level, we must unite as one League to call for protection of our elections and equitable support for all people in our country. I'm so glad you're in this fight with us.

National Convention to Be Virtual

by Virginia Kase

Prior to mid-term and presidential elections, we have always come together as an organization to join in fellowship and celebrate our achievements. The LWVUS board and staff have been observing the COVID-19 pandemic closely and considering how it could impact our upcoming 54th LWVUS Convention scheduled for June in Washington, DC. We know many of you have been wondering about the same. We appreciate your messages and offers of support as we've taken the time to consider all options thoughtfully.

While we wanted nothing more than to find a way to hold the convention in person, we believe doing so would be irresponsible. So, with the health and safety of our members as our primary concern, we have decided to transition 2020 Convention to a virtual event. We are still working through all details that a virtual Convention entails, but we can share the following with you:

Business sessions will be held on June 25–27, and we are planning the agenda with consideration towards all time zones. We will host a full plenary and are working closely with our parliamentarian to observe all governance requirements for a virtual space. All requirements around delegates, quorum, and how we conduct our business will remain the same. Detailed instructions will be sent to all delegates ahead of the first plenary session. We will include the Convention Awards as part of this virtual experience (details can be found at <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/2020-convention-awards>).

While it is unfortunate that we cannot gather in person to celebrate our 100th Anniversary and all of the amazing work our Leagues have done over the past two years, we are grateful to have technology available that will allow us to gather virtually. We are dedicated to making this a celebratory and productive experience for all attendees. Registration for the virtual Convention will open in early May, and we will provide further announcements and instructions as we have them.

[Editor's note: while Mendocino County League members Mo Mulheren and Paula Cohen have agreed to continue to serve as our voting delegates to the convention, online attendance will be open to all.]

Legislation on the Environment

Carol Czadek has forwarded this news from the state League's climate change committee. LWVC has taken positions on four new climate-related bills:

AB 1567 (Aguiar-Curry and Mathis) "Organic Waste: Scoping Plan" -- SUPPORT

This bill requires an integrated scoping plan for reducing emissions associated with forestry, agriculture and urban organic waste, providing better coordination across all sectors.

AB 1941 (Gallagher) "California Renewables Portfolio Standard: hydroelectric and nuclear generation and suspension" -- OPPOSE

Would temporarily pause the state's renewable power mandates to provide funds to harden the grid. Although hardening the grid to reduce the risk and impacts of wildfires is imperative, loosening standards to mitigate climate change would slow our progress toward zero carbon.

SB 1052 (Hertzberg) "Water quality: municipal wastewater agencies" -- SUPPORT

This would authorize municipal wastewater agencies to enter into voluntary agreements to improve stormwater management and to treat stormwater as a local water resource.

SB 1323 (Skinner), "Carbon sequestration: state goals: natural and working lands: registry of projects" -- SUPPORT

This bill creates CO2 removal targets for natural and working lands as a step towards identifying the scope and scale of work needed to reach carbon neutrality.

Natural Climate Solutions: The Role of Agriculture and Carbon Capture in the Transition

The League's Climate Committee invites *Voter* readers with an interest in carbon sequestration to attend a Deep Dive webinar being held by the group Climate XChange on May 13 from noon to 1:00 PDT. Their announcement continues:

U.S. forests store the equivalent of 52 years' worth of the country's carbon emissions, and even in today's highly partisan political climate, conserving our forests, planting more trees, and improving agricultural practices are initiatives with bipartisan support. But how exactly can policy effectively incentivize farmers and landowners to reforest their lands and improve their management? Just as carbon pollution

pricing can serve as a market signal for businesses and individuals to choose cleaner energy, agricultural incentives can promote regenerative agriculture and carbon sequestration through land and crop management. Join us for our May Deep Dive webinar, where we will explore how agriculture can be a key part of climate change mitigation, and how we can harness the power of nature to achieve critical climate goals.

The link for registering: <https://climate-xchange.org/event/natural-climate-solutions-the-role-of-agriculture-and-carbon-capture-in-the-transition/>.



Getting Inspired Online: Upholding Democracy in the Pandemic

by Cindy Plank

The YWCA held a virtual town hall on April 23, to discuss voting rights, census participation and racial justice amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Meg Courtney and Cindy Plank attended. Cindy's response follows.

The national non-partisan YWCA Town Hall (LWV was one of the partners) yesterday was so inspiring, while also being straight up about the challenges so many people face in our country. The color of my skin gives me privileges, and my circumstances allow me to safely shelter at home. But there is systemic and structural racism that members of many communities across our nation face on a regular basis, and it's now even more obvious with the effects of Covid-19. Racism is here in our community also, even if many of us haven't recognized it, and we need to stand up against it.

Some quotes from presenters:

- Issues rise and fall on our ability to give voice to our communities.
- This is not a go-it-alone thing. Partnerships and allies are crucial. When all women come together we win.
- In crisis there is opportunity. In the past 40 days we recognize needs are not being met.
- 12 million young voters are eligible to vote for the first time. Baby Boomers are in the minority.
- We are made for this moment. And we will seize this moment.
- Thunderbolts don't happen without the groundwork. (An example is the decades of fight for women's right to vote—and the 1918 flu pandemic took place during that fight)
- This virus has laid bare all of the inequities — let's recover from the virus a way that's fair for every person.

There was a “When We All Vote” breakout right after, which provided these highlights:

- One fifth of eligible voters are still not registered.
- During the 2016 presidential election only 64% of eligible voters registered to vote. And 65% of black voters were registered to vote but only 55% turned up at the polls.
- In 2018, we saw the largest turnout of young people in decades for a midterm election. Unfortunately, two thirds of young people still didn't cast a ballot.

And this encouragement:

- Safe voting is essential while engaging in democracy. Take the pledge to fight for fair and safe elections:
<https://www.whenweallvote.org/safevoting/>.
- Each of us is the best person to talk with family, friends and individuals we interact with about voting. When unregistered votes are engaged by person they trust, their likelihood of registering and turning out to vote increases dramatically. A good way to start a conversation: “When did you last update your voter registration?”

We need to:

- Get voters registered
- Educate voters—provide access to resources
- Get voters ready to turn out for the election.

No need to miss it ...

League's Virtual Garden Tour

The Mendocino County League of Women Voters' only annual fundraiser continues, this year in competition with many other virtual events! Look for your invitation via the U.S. Postal Service during May. In their letter, Co-Presidents Nancy Kleiber and Cindy Plank “wish all of you sunny skies, bountiful gardens, and good health.” And they provide links to these virtual gardens.

<https://youtu.be/rjWx2WNXFF4>

<https://youtu.be/aV0Ryaw0hGc>

<https://youtu.be/BtZ0dcUzGX8>

Mendocino County Census Update

by Paula Cohen

So far Mendocino County has had a 40% response rate, compared to 55% statewide. The areas which include Fort Bragg and Ukiah have a high rate, while others, including Little River and the coast southward, and the north county are much lower. Boonville is catching up. If you know anyone who lives in the lower rate areas, please give them a call to encourage participation, and to talk up census response in their communities. In-person house-to-house contacting has been postponed until after June 1, and the Census deadline has been pushed back until October. If you have ideas about helping to promote responses, please email or call me, pcohen@mcn.org, 937-1914. Some tips for responding to the Census can be found below.

Notes for Completing the 2020 Census

If you receive the paper invitation in the mail: You should receive a paper form mailed to your residence address after April 16. There will be a 12-digit Census ID number in a box about half way down the first page. You can mail in the paper form OR if you prefer, use the number to respond by phone or online. As a result of the COVID-19 virus many people may prefer to answer online via their computer or to call the number listed below.

If you DON'T get a form in the mail (or lost it): You will not be able to request a paper form, but you can still participate online or by telephone.

Online: use your computer or cellphone and go to my2020census.gov and enter your 12 digit Census ID number. Once you enter the ID number you will have access to the 9 questions. If you don't have an ID number, look for the link that says, "If you do not have a Census ID, click here."

Telephone: Call **1-844-330-2020** for English or **1-844-468-2020** for Spanish. There is a menu but when you get to #5 ("another reason for your call"), just stay on the line. Next you will hear another Menu. The first choice is 'Frequently Asked Questions,' followed by "To speak to a representative press '0'". This will get you to a live person who will ask the census questions. West Coast telephone hours are 4 AM – 11 PM.

If there are more than 10 people in your household: If you will need to report more than 10 people in the household at one address, you will need to respond via the telephone option. The staff has the ability to add more responses.

If you get a form for a vacant address: If the home was not your principal residence as of April 1, 2020, such as a vacation home or a vacant house, it is important for you to report this using the website. When you access my2020census.gov using the code for that address, you will be asked if it is a principal residence. If the answer is NO, there will be follow-up questions - please answer them. If you **don't** get a form for your unoccupied/vacation residence, you need not do anything.

If you do not respond in one of the above listed ways, a 2020 Census worker will come to the address listed on the invitation letter to speak with you or leave a census form.

These notes were updated on April 28, 2020. Please call Paula Cohen with any questions: 707-937-1914.

Revised Nominations for LWVMC Board

Because of the complications and delays surrounding Sharon Gilligan's upcoming surgery to re-implant her hip, she has asked to be removed from the slate for re-election to the League Board at our Annual Meeting. Although she needs to remain in Palo Alto for another possibly six months, she promises to continue to be with us in spirit, and through collaboration on our projects and articles.

The new nominations will be:

Elected Directors: Pat Dunbar, Carol Czadek, Meg Courtney, Jary Stavely

Appointed Director: Paula Cohen (LWVMC by-laws permit the Board to appoint up to 3 directors)

California League Statement ...

Public Meetings During Health Crisis

Some governments—cities, counties, school districts, special districts, as well as the state agencies—in California are either reducing or completely suspending transparency rules. We understand that governments have limited resources, and that the current crisis means their already thin resources are stretched even more thinly. However, League principles, state law, and the California Supreme Court support the need for governmental transparency. “The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government ... requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen’s right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.” The California Government Code section 6250 states that access to information is “a fundamental and necessary right of every person in this state.” Further, the California Supreme Court has held that “[o]penness in government is essential to the functioning of a democracy.”

The LWVC urges local Leagues to monitor their local governments, and push back if their government attempts to suspend transparency rules. Public access to meetings and to information about government business is just as crucial in times of crisis as in any other time. Government must remain functional in these times, and the people have the right to know about how that government is operating – how it is wielding power.

Delayed responses to requests for public records may be inevitable. However these requests should not be totally ignored. Government is obliged to take reasonable measures to make its records available to the public. Leagues should urge all reasonable measures be taken to ensure that governments continue to provide information to the public and the press. Governments should not be allowed to take advantage of the opportunity that this crisis provides to make major decisions without public input if these decisions can reasonably be postponed.

[Editor’s note— Our County Board of Supervisors has been prioritizing transparency. We have not seen any problems in the County or Fort Bragg. If you observe something, let us know: voter@mcn.org.]

State League Prepares for November Election

“The League of Women Voters of California has fought for voting rights and to remove barriers to civic participation for 100 years. The challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic are unique but not insurmountable. For the last few weeks the League has been collaborating daily with the Secretary of State’s office, elections officials, and other good government and civil rights groups to develop plans that will ensure California voters are able to make their voices heard, safely and equitably, in November’s election.” So begins the California League’s website announcing its efforts to ensure equitable participation in the voting this fall. For the list of “recommendations geared toward maintaining the integrity of our democracy, fostering the voting rights of historically underrepresented communities, and designing a safe, healthy election for all eligible Californians,” go to: [https://lwvc.org/sites/default/files/downloads/Advocates’ Recommendations for California’s November 2020 Elections.pdf](https://lwvc.org/sites/default/files/downloads/Advocates%20Recommendations%20for%20California%20November%20Elections.pdf)

Female National Leaders in the News

Forbes magazine published an article on April 13 entitled, “*What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders.*” It explores what has happened in the countries of Germany, Taiwan, New Zealand, Finland, Norway, and Denmark. It can be found at:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/avivahwittenbergcox/2020/04/13/what-do-countries-with-the-best-coronavirus-reponses-have-in-common-women-leaders/>

Mendocino County Victory Gardens for Peace

by Matt Drewno

In Mendocino County, we have around 88,000 mouths to feed 3 times each day -- that's 264,000 meals daily! Last year, prior to the pandemic, 1 out of every 4 people on the coast in Fort Bragg used the food bank; inland in Ukiah, the food bank reported a 23% increase in usage; 26% of the children in our county experienced food insecurity during the year. Locally, we struggle to make sure everyone has access to food, but did you know that only about 1-3% of the food grown in Mendocino County stays in Mendocino County? How will this pandemic and the economic challenges to come change food security? How can we become more resilient in this trying moment?

During World Wars I and II Victory Gardens not only increased our food security, but also gave citizens a sense of pride in acting as a part of the solution—gardening made them realize they could *do* something to help. Today the resurgence of the Victory Garden movement is about peace, rather than war. It is about reclaiming that part of ourselves that loves to work with nature, and to experience the nurturing of life which gives back and nurtures you. It is about realizing our power. A recent study showed Americans contribute between 4 and 8 tons of carbon into the atmosphere each year, through their diets alone—to grow your food means that you can keep that carbon where it belongs, in the ground!

What better way to celebrate and create peace than in the garden and sharing food with neighbors? The Victory Gardens for Peace Initiative is a project of Ecology Action, an organization that for the past 50 years has worked with individuals in over 150 countries demonstrating the power of small-scale, sustainable gardening through the development of the Bio-intensive Method of Agriculture.

Last year we initiated a study which demonstrated that within a few years Fort Bragg could grow all of its calories for 7,000 people within its own city limits on land that is already in lawn and not including the toxic mill site. If we were to attempt to feed Fort Bragg locally with commercial farms, we would have to clear-cut a swath of forest one mile wide all the way to Willits and this would require an additional 47-95 million gallons of water. Wouldn't you rather grow a garden?



In 1943, when Victory Gardens were at their peak, there were over 20 million Victory Gardens accounting for 44% of the food consumed in the US. We believe this can be done again, and will—it's just a matter of being proactive and resilient or waiting until it is too late. We can do it. *¡Si se puede!*

With the pandemic shutting down the global and local economies, and the beauty and vitality of spring in full bloom, what better time to start a garden? Gardens help nutrition, ease depression, increase healthy immune systems, enhance education, lower incidence of violence and bring a sense

of wholeness, peace and beauty into our lives. They remind us that we are all connected and that a beautiful and abundant future lies right in our backyards. Start a Victory Garden for Peace today! Learn more at

<https://victorygardensforpeace.com/vgfp-growing-guide/>