The League of women voters® of mendocino county

April 2023

Paula Cohen and Dorine Real, Co-Presidents

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The Mill Site: an Update

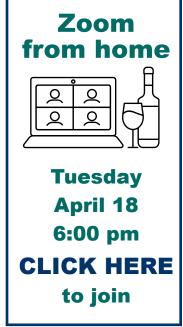
largest community.

April meeting ...

"The Mill Site: an Update" is the topic for the League's next membership meeting on April 18, via Zoom, beginning at 6 p.m. The event will feature four local presenters with knowledge about the history, ecology, planning rules, and legal status of this area located in the heart of Mendocino County's second

League member George Reinhardt will speak about the background of the site since the mill closure. George is a "Citizen Scientist" who, immediately after his arrival in Fort Bragg, became involved in the community effort to get greater transparency around the mill site closing, the toxins on site, and the site's future. He was a co-founder of NHUDG—Noyo Headlands Unified Design Group, which has advocated for environmental restoration of the Headlands, including creek daylighting and wildlife corridors, and the possible economic benefits it could bring.

Professional scientist Leslie Kashiwada will speak about the habitats on the headlands, and the current status, including its fragility, of the berm in place between the ocean and the former pond area, which is currently subject to oversight by the state Department of Toxic Substance Control. Leslie has a PhD in Biological Oceanography from Scripps Institute of Oceanography and has taught at San Diego State University and MiraCosta College. She worked part time at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife after moving to Fort Bragg, retiring in 2022. She is a member of the Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium, a local science based group focusing on restoration of significant portions of the Headlands.



League member Peter McNamee will speak on the Local Coastal Program. Peter is retired from over 30 years of professional public service in state and local government. He holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard and has worked in the administrations of five governors and advised them on policy and program initiatives. His government experience also includes trial court management for the State Supreme Court's Administrative Office of the Courts, and assisting delivery of Medicaid services at the Department of Health Services. Since his retirement he has focused on civic affairs in Mendocino County.

Fort Bragg resident Jim Larson will speak about the litigation involving the mill site. Some lawsuits are still in court, so the presentation here will be brief and factual only. Jim is a graduate of Fort Bragg High, U.C. Berkeley, and the U.C. Berkeley School of Law. He is a retired attorney, having practiced law for 52 years in Mendocino County. He was the legal counsel for the Noyo Harbor District for 30 years and has served as Councilor, President, and Chair of the Board of Directors of Save the Redwoods League in San Francisco. Founded by lumber baron Charles Russell Johnson in 1885, the Union Lumber Company mill on the Noyo headlands employed about 2000 workers in its heyday. The Georgia-Pacific Corporation acquired it in 1972. For generations the mill provided good jobs and a steady income for the town—kids could graduate from high school on Friday, and begin work at the mill on Monday, earning good pay. In 2002, however, the mill shut down, owing, according to the LA Times, to "a dwindling number of large trees, depressed prices, and the emergence of synthetic alternatives to redwoods." Georgia-Pacific then abandoned the site.

The site covers 425 acres of coastal bluffs spanning the entire town from the mouth of the Novo River to Glass Beach, and since the mill closure, city officials and others have worked on plans for the site, with extensive community input. The League has partnered with the Noyo Headlands Working Group, a special interest group under the umbrella of the GrassRoots Institute, to present this discussion of what has been happening at the mill site in recent years. Please note that this League presentation is not a debate about plans for the mill site or who should carry them out.



Photo courtesy of GRI

The Grass Roots Institute (GRI) is a non-profit organization founded in 2015, which studies, promotes, and works to carry out progressive solutions for the common good. The Institute researches and educates the public about political, environmental and economic problems our communities face. To further its goals, GRI has formed work groups to focus on many of these issues: Climate Crisis, Noyo Headlands Mill Site, Housing and Ag Land Trusts, Mendocino County Vision, Candidates and Elections, Water, Forests, Invasive Plants. The Climate Crisis group created a successful campaign to get the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors to commit \$2 million to climate change mitigation.

In this issue ... Mill Site Update Meeting: theChallenge Sustainable Gardens Celebration Online Referrals Available 24/7 Fort Bragg LCP Update Young People at STEAM Fair County Climate Report Happening Here California League Convention National League Links Calendar LWVMC Information Links

Click an entry to jump to the article.

President's message ...

Calendar

Zoom

- April 18 (Tuesday) 6:00 pm
- General meeting: Fort Bragg Mill Site Update, Jane PersonMay 16 (Tuesday)6:00Zoom
- General meeting:Transparency and ParticipationMay 19-21 (Friday-Sunday)San Francisco
- LWVMC Convention
- June 17 (Saturday) noon Caspar Community Center LWVMC Annual Meeting

The public is welcome at these LWVMC events, both live and virtual. Please invite your friends and neighbors. Our Zoom meetings all use the same link, so copy it if you wish.

Meeting: the Challenge

by Dorine Real

Long before Covid, our League had been struggling with the problem of meetings. Our old custom of holding meetings on Tuesday mornings had made the League inaccessible to more and more people, and we knew that we needed to attract and accommodate members with jobs. We began to experiment with holding evening meetings, sometimes even having the same program at two different times. Some of our most regular attendees found evening meetings challenging, especially in winter when darkness and bad weather can make a long trip even longer.

Then came Zoom, and suddenly meetings were convenient. Attendance was larger and more diverse. Our programs were available to non-members. But something was missing: the sense of "getting together" was practically gone. Even though my husband makes great coffee, it was just not the same as chatting over coffee with friends. And Zoom is a great way to meet new ideas, but new people not so much.

American society as a whole seems to be worried that we are coming apart. Fear, hatred, and contempt sometimes seem to be getting the upper hand over the old civic virtues of trust, empathy, and respect. Without a meeting of hearts it is impossible to achieve a meeting of minds. Science and intuition suggest that face-to-face interaction is a necessary first step. So practicing the arts of in-person gathering and discussion would count as a basic and important civic exercise.

What meeting arrangements (times, places, media) work for you? What makes a meeting accessible, interesting, enjoyable? How can a meeting deliver what you

want from League? Please take the attached survey—there are a few specific questions, but your comments are most important. Thank you.

Celebrate and support

Sustainable Gardens and Farms Posted on the Mendocino Announce List:

Noyo Food Forest's 14th Annual Earth Day Festival will be held Saturday, April 22 from 12-4 pm at The Learning Garden on the Fort Bragg High School campus at 300 Dana Street. This year's festival will include a plant sale, a farmers panel, artisan crafts, mural painting, community nonprofits, delicious food, live music, and our famous bicycle-powered smoothies—all with a focus on regenerative gardening/farming and cultivating community.



Local nonprofit organizations will host information tables, many with fun projects for kids of all ages, and vendors will offer earth-friendly, handcrafted wares. Gardening workshops will include topics such as Growing Succulents and Seed Sovereignty, and local farmers from Mist Farms, Wavelength, and Noyo Food Forest will speak on an educational panel. In addition, this year's local commemoration will feature a land acknowledgement ceremony.

Food offerings include: Taqueria Los Primos, Noyo Food Forest's famous Smoothie Bike Bar, a dessert table from Engel & Völkers, plus bagels and pretzels from Hard Head Bread. Live music all afternoon by 2nd Hand Grass, Keeter Stewart, and Lavender Grace and the Honey Hive Ensemble. The event will be MC'd by Dred Scott.

Earth Day was founded in 1970 as a "national teach-in on the environment," and is now an international celebration. Our multicultural, multi-generational event brings people and organizations from all across our community to celebrate the earth. The Earth Day Festival has been the signature benefit event for Noyo Food Forest since it was founded in 2006. This year's community sponsors include Mendocino Solar Service and Harvest Market.

This event is open to all, no entrance fee, adult donations encouraged. Please observe school campus rules: no dogs, no alcohol or drugs, and no smoking. More information at noyofoodforest.org.

March League Meeting

Online Referrals Available 24/7

to service providers and individuals

At a Zoom meeting on March 21, a dozen League members and friends heard Brandy Maxwell, Recruitment and Training Coordinator for CASA of Mendocino & Lake County, describe a new resource for families in our area called 24/7 Help. Although sponsored by Brandy's organization (CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates, "a non-profit organization that recruits, trains and supports volunteers to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom and other settings"), this new website is open to any individual, family, or organization that wishes to use it. It is scheduled to launch for full use on April 1 on the internet, and as an app on both Apple and Android smartphones. The resource is designed to fill information gaps and cover emergencies that families face when their CASA volunteer is not available, but CASA affiliation is not required. Special attention, including the provision of slang keywords, has been given to ensure that everyone, even the homeless, will find no barriers to its use. The website itself [https://www.247help.org] gives a succinct description of the service it provides:

24/7HELP is a community information and referral service that helps Mendocino and Lake County residents. We operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, every day of the year. We help individuals and families find resources that are available to them locally and provide connections to critical services that improve and save lives.

It opens with two prominent search fields which allow the user to quickly locate the kind of help they need. Resources in 33 different categories, from "Adoption" through "Veteran," continue to be added over time, and numbered 2,180 a week before the official launch. The site is designed to easily send information on desired resources via email or text to the provider, or to the family directly. This is only the second such resource to be created in the country; the first in California, and the most comprehensive overall. Brandy is available via email for information and suggestions. Participants at the zoom session were able to provide feedback about several features of the beta version, including about how to present the optional login field. She also welcomes those interested in becoming CASA volunteers. CASA of Mendocino and Lake County can be contacted by phone at (707) 961-6148, and (707) 972-1546. The League thanks member Gary Levenson-Palmer for bringing this valuable resource to its attention.

Fort Bragg's LCP Update

A preview of the process

by Jary Stavely

Fort Bragg Special Projects Manager Sarah McCormick gave a report on the city's effort to update its Local Coastal Program at a zoom event held by the Grass Roots Institute Mendocino Vision Working Group on March 2. The agreement for funding the update, previously approved by the Coastal Commission, is expected to finalized by the beginning of April, when the project will properly get underway, and money can be spent. Sarah said the first outcome expected from the process will be a detailed Community Engagement Plan, which will include personal interviews; pop-up events at regular community events such as breakfasts, farmers markets, and board meetings; and formal workshops. This document will function as a "charter" for the update, since it will be a guide for how the community will be involved in what is supposed to serve it. This phase of the process will identify stakeholders and develop a timeline, as well as provide for the expected community input.

The second expected outcome will be a Noyo Harbor Blue Economy Visioning, Resiliency, and Implementation Plan, which will include "comprehensive baseline information about the existing environmental, physical, and economic conditions of the Noyo Harbor, in order to prepare for [the] changing climate, and position the harbor for blue economy investment." It is expected to include details about expected sea level rise and its effects; an inventory of current infrastructure, conditions, and inter-relationships in the harbor; a water quality assessment; and a forecast of possible future economic possibilities, in terms both of continuing current activities, and of rolling out new initiatives (the blue economy vision). This will identify "next actionable steps" that can be followed. The Harbor District's Community Sustainability Plan will be an important foundation for this analysis.

The culminating outcome will be the Local Coastal Program Amendment. In Sarah's view, the city and Mendocino County will be helping each other with their respective Amendments. The county's sea level rise vulnerability assessment will contribute to the amendment for the city's LCP, which includes the Noyo Headlands, while the city's efforts about the harbor will "inform the county's LCP update related to land use classifications within the Fishing Village designation."

Several important points came out during a question and answer session following Sarah's presentation. In response to a question regarding the LCP update on the Noyo Headlands itself, Sarah seemed to suggest that the city was waiting for the current property owner, Mendocino Railway, to develop any plans for zoning changes, having provided to it all the community-based planning input which had been developed before the property changed hands. She also indicated that the county's separate Sea Level Rise (SLR) Assessment study would provide enough information about the mill site area for the LCP Amendment, without using additional Coastal Commission funding. Any future development applications will require adaptations to account for SLR. In an aside, Sarah mentioned that CalTrans is applying for a grant which could facilitate circulation in the north harbor area, and which could lead to improved connectivity to the coastal trail. The person who will act as the public contact for the project will be identified during the development of the Community Engagement Plan, but Sarah agreed (and volunteered Anna as well) to be available to GRI on a monthly basis to give informal progress reports.

The program was recorded, and can be watched in its entirety at the GRI Mendocino Vision website, where there is also a recording of their December meeting about the county's LCP update.

My Encounters with Some Interesting Young People by Morning Nichols

Somehow or another I found myself driving on Hwy. 20 at 8:30 in the morning (!) to a Science Fair being held at Mendocino College in Ukiah, on Saturday, March 18. To be fair, I *had* agreed ahead of time to accompany my friend Cindy Plank there. When we arrived, we found science exhibits done by high school kids from around Mendocino County displayed in the gymnasium for the 37th annual Science & Engineering Fair & S.T.E.A.M. Expo, put on by the Mendocino County Office of Education. There were a number of different groups on hand, including us, representing the League of Women Voters.



Photo: Cindy Plank

Our table was set up with the other groups on the circle facing the gym, and across the walkway from a booth that supplied children with paint and paper to create pictures. The center of the circle was a cement patio, filled with a number of young kids occupied with giant pieces of cardboard from broken boxes, as they created buildings, kid containers, and the like. They also supplied loud pop music for all to hear.

We set up our table with bright tablecloths, covered with all of our wonderful signs and materials to educate and encourage voting. We had many people come up to our table and talk with us, some for quite a long time about what young people can do before they are old enough to vote, and what and when they can expect to vote in a real election. We had packets that Cindy and other League members had made, that each contained a pencil, a candy, a "vote" button and the the US Constitution in pocket size booklet form. The kids were very interested in this swag, as well as in a container filled with Hershey's chocolate kisses—it was like honey to the bees.

We explained voting registration to those kids (of all ages, as they were likely siblings to the high schoolers who were displaying their science projects), and to parents. We let them know that they would be able to register once they became 16, and that they could vote at age 18. This made them very happy to think about, although

some kids were too young to even imagine the possibility. It seemed that the kids who were at 11 or older were most interested, of course, as they were the closest to being able to actually vote. Some of them were amazed that they got to vote for whomever they wanted! We encouraged and reminded them that they would have to do a little research to see who exactly they would choose. For some of them, it would be 6 to 8 years before they would have a chance to vote or register, but it was really gratifying to see their interest, to help them understand what was involved, and to encourage them to be a part of our democracy.

We enjoyed these conversations, reminding the young ones that they would be the ones to step up and guide our country, and asking them, "Are you sure you want the older people like us, to make decisions for you?" and, "Don't you want to vote to make decisions for *your* generation, and not be at the mercy of older people?" We told them, "It's important! You need to vote!" We gave them the swag, looked in those young, thoughtful eyes, wished them well, and then another group would come along to fill the gap. There were also parents who were very interested in the League, and signed up to be on the mailing list, or even to be a new member. Overall, we connected, felt well received, and were happy with how things transpired. The time went very quickly and before we knew it, it was 3 o'clock in the afternoon and we wrapped things up and drove back to Fort Bragg, feeling satisfied with our successful day.

County Climate Report

In mid March, Eileen Mitro of Climate Action Mendocino provided this summary of county actions, and other news:

The Great Redwood Trail will be extended south of [Ukiah] to Plant Road. Dozens of mature trees were slated to be removed, but a small group of concerned citizens and one City Council member questioned the plan. Now a new plan is in the works that keeps the trees in place.

UN Releases Update on Efforts to Control Global Warming The GRI Climate Crisis Group would like to make sure that everyone has access to the UN Climate Change Report Findings Summary released on March 20. A BBC article about the document begins: "UN chief Antonio Guterres says a major new report on climate change is a 'survival guide for humanity.'

Clean energy and technology can be exploited to avoid the growing climate disaster, the report says. But at a meeting in Switzerland to agree [on] their findings, climate scientists warned a key global temperature goal will likely be missed. Their report lays out how rapid cuts to fossil fuels can avert the worst effects of climate change."

The Ukiah City Council voted to establish an *ad hoc* committee to begin the process of writing a Climate Action Plan to put all of the climate actions of the General Plan and Climate Emergency Resolution into timelines with departments responsible for accomplishing those goals and baselines to measure them.

The City of Ft. Bragg is installing four charging stations and buying four EV pickups for the Ft. Bragg Police Department. They are also working toward installing more solar on city buildings.

The City of Point Arena has opted for 100% Evergreen power through Sonoma Clean Power for all City power needs.

The City of Willits is in the process of installing a new roof on City Hall and following that will be considering solar on that roof and other City buildings as funds become available. Mendocino County is installing solar on the Willits Public Library.

Mendocino County and the City of Ukiah have opted to streamline the permitting process for solar installers.

The Mendocino Council of Governments is seeking input for the siting of 25 new EV charging stations along the Highway 101 corridor around Hopland, Ukiah and Redwood Valley. Please take MCOG's short survey (6 questions) on where these EV charging stations should be installed? You can only add one link each time you take the survey, so if you want to add more links, just do it again.

And, once again the Rooftop Solar issue is surfacing. The Center for Biological Diversity is appealing the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) decision to reduce solar credits. Here are some suggestions for several actions: Give a public comment to the CPUC telling them to reverse their decision of March 16—Here are Instructions. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper supporting the appeal of the CPUC decision—for tips on your letter, here is the Appeal Toolkit prepared by the Center for Biological Diversity. Support the appeal on social media—the Appeal Toolkit has lots of sample posts you can use. Email the CPUC in support of reversing the NEM3 decision—the Appeal Toolkit has sample language you can use.

Happening Here

Job Opportunity at Mendocino College Coast Center The Mendocino College Coast Center wants to hire a Biology/Chemistry technician for the Coast Center in Fort Bragg. The notice states that an A.A. or A.S. degree "is currently listed as a preferred qualification, so current community college students would qualify, or other students who have some college science classes. The direct link to the application is here. This position is currently 50% 10 months, but comes with full benefits. We hope to increase the percentage as we show proof of concept."

Renewal-of-Water Event at Fortunate Farm

On March 25 the local indigenous food production group, Xa Kako Dile, held a Renewal of Water event at Fortunate Farm in Caspar with the Mendocino County Herb Guild. A Facebook post from the Herb Guild states, "We are happy to be in collaboration with them! Our coastal chapter has partnered to help support seasonal herbal remedy shares that will be locally distributed to indigenous families."

According to its website, "Xa Kako Dile is an Indigenous women-led and -directed nonprofit organization on ancestral Pomo land in Northern California. Our focus is on uplifting and empowering Indigenous communities through farming using traditional ecological knowledge (TEK); offering healing retreats for Indigenous women to conserve cultural traditions and language; providing education for the community on food sovereignty, herbal medicine, acorn and seaweed harvesting and other TEK practices; and providing gathering spaces for trainings, ceremonies and a living laboratory to support local tribes."

Scholarship Party Coming Up

The League's sister organization, the Latino Coalition, will hold a party on May 4 at which the scholarship winners for the 2023–24 academic year will be announced. Plans for the event include a fundraising raffle, music, food, and public outreach. The organizers also feel that the party will provide local asylum families an opportunity to connect with the people and resources around them. The John Diederich Center conference room on Dana St. in Ft. Bragg has been

reserved. A flyer with more details is being created—look for it in the May *Voter*. **Civil Discourse Exercises**

Cindy Plank has alerted us that the League is an ally of the Listen First Coalition, a group of over 400 organizations bringing Americans together across differences to transform division and contempt into connection and understanding. Listen First is sponsoring the "Political Courage Challenge," a month-long series of once-a-weekday micro-exercises "to help exercise and build up community tolerance and courage—within yourself, your political in-group, in your crosspartisan relationships, and in your broader community." Get much more information and register online.



This year the California League convention is being held in San Francisco, a month earlier than customary, from May 19 to the 21. The Mendocino League is entitled to three delegates, and would like to help more members attend as observers. Please contact Cindy Plank if you might be able to take advantage of this closest-to-home convention opportunity.

The convention workbook will be posted on the LWVC website by April 18. The workbook has the proposed items that will be discussed and voted on at convention, such as the slate of nominees to the Board, the budget, and the proposed program. It will be helpful to review the Proposed Order of Business (also in the workbook) to see when things will be presented, debated, and voted on.

And there is so much more besides the voting! Our sister local Leagues will be sharing their dedication to democracy and passion for addressing community issues with workshops and caucuses on a wide range of topics. Both new and seasoned League members will find plenty to entertain and inspire them.

National League Links

In March, the U.S. League published three blog articles on important topics for *Voter* readers:

2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA has a long history of champions who aimed to achieve "equality of rights under the law" for people of all sexes in our Constitution. In honor of the proposal's 100th anniversary, the blog takes a look back at their work, how the ERA progressed, and where we are in the fight for equality.

There is a detailed analysis of how state legislation since the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision is further undermining individual rights, and is threatening the structure of our democracy.

And finally, the League's UN Observer Corps has written an examination of digital inequality experienced by women and girls.

Land Acknowledgement

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County wishes to honor the land we are on and its native peoples. We want to offer recognition and respect; to counter the "doctrine of discovery" with the true story of the people who were already here; to support larger truthtelling and reconciliation efforts; and to remind ourselves that colonization is still happening. We acknowledge that the land where we live and work is un-ceded territory of indigenous peoples since time began. We are surrounded by the traditional, ancestral territory and current homeland of many indigenous nations.

Contact LWVMC

By mail: P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg CA 95437 By email: voter@mcn.org Our website: lwvmendo.org Our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1

LWV 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

Noyo Headlands:

Links

Creek daylighting: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/how-daylighting-buried-waterways-is-revitalizing-cities-across-america-180981793/

NHUDG: http://www.noyoheadlands.org

Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium: https://www.fortbraggheadlandsconsortium.org

Documents of legal proceedings: https://savenoyoheadlands.org

GRI Noyo Headlands Working Group: grassroots-institute.org/noyo

Economic opportunities: https://www.wri.org/insights/restoration-one-most-overlooked-opportunitieseconomic-growth

24/7 Help: www.247help.org

Fort Bragg LCP update presentation: https://www.grassroots-institute.org/vision

MCOG charger survey: <u>https://arcg.is/11i4080</u>

UN climate report: https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

CPUC solar ruling: https://savecaliforniasolar.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?

u=4161a4d9a13e459864a79e966&id=60157f80ea&e=c0952332d8; toolkit: https://docs.google.com/ document/d/1WMLUe_JVW5dax33o-zk3-nD8iE8LDT2M4mCPu0Aqzpw/

College lab job: https://www.schooljobs.com/careers/mendocinoedu/jobs/3942614/laboratory-technician-

Xa Kako Dile: www.xakakodile.org; herb guild on Facebook: facebook.com/MendocinoCountyHerbGuild/ Civil repair exercises : https://findingthewayout.startswith.us/

LWVC convention workbook: lwvc.wordpress.com

ERA centennial:lwv.org/blog/100-years-equal-rights-amendment

biology-chemistry-50?pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs

Dobbs and democracy: https://www.lwv.org/blog/abortion-legislation-democracy-issue

Digital inequality: lwv.org/blog/international-womens-day-creating-safe-digital-space-women

League Links

LWVMC website: https://my.lwv.org/california/mendocino-county LWVMC Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1/