

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY August 2023

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

League Holds Annual Meeting Nineteen members attended the Mendocino County League of Women Voters

Annual Meeting on June 17 at the Caspar Community Center. All of the agenda items in the previously circulated Annual Meeting "packet" were approved,

including some leadership changes. Officers for the coming League year will be Charlene McAllister, President; Dorine Real & Jary Stavely, Co-Vice-Presidents; Nancy Severy, Treasurer; and Carole Press, Secretary. Jane Person, Pat Dunbar, Lee Tepper, and Cindy Plank were elected to continue serving as Directors. Subsequently, at the first board meeting of the new year, Nancy Kleiber and Sydney Grange were appointed to continue as Directors, as well. Cindy Plank will take on new responsibilities as Membership Chair, while Carol Czadek and Jim Havlena will continue as off-board chairs of the Nominations and Budget Committees, respectively. During the Suggestions from Members discussion, Peter McNamee reviewed his, and the Grass Roots Institute's interest in working with the League to promote public participation in local government—through voting, through participation in the Local Coastal Program updates, and through working on environmental preservation, among other efforts. George



being recognized by political leaders (What Liberal Elites Don't Know About Rural Americans Can Hurt Us), and interest was expressed in studying this issue further. Healthcare District board members Lee Finney and Jade Tippett shared information about the hospital physical plant. The board is exploring ways to retrofit, estimated to cost \$15-\$20M, while building a new hospital is estimated to cost \$110M. This topic will be a major community concern in the months and years to come. Geri Moriskey reminded us not to forget the importance of the housing crisis. A delicious pot-luck buffet followed, which included a scrumptious cake from the Save the Date!

Reinhardt discussed a recently published article by the noted poet/farmer Wendell Berry concerning how rural values are not

The new League program year will kick off with the traditional Meet & Greet Your Local Officials event on Friday evening, September 22 at the Caspar Community Center. The September *Voter* will have more information on this and other fall events.

September 2-4 Paul Bunyan Days / Labor Day

September 19

Calendar August 13 (Sunday) Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens Chamber music (noon) and mariachi (2:30) concerts August 26 (Saturday) Women's Equality Day

Main Street, Fort Bragg / USA

National Voter Registration Day September 22 (Tuesday) 5:00 PM Caspar Community Center **LWVMC Information** Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials Links

President's message ... Keeping an Eye on Democracy by Charlene McAllister

The summer is rushing by in its usual way and suddenly we are hurtling towards September, and before we know it, 2024 with a primary and a presidential election will be upon us. During a time of confusing information on social media, voters will continue to look to the League as a trusted source of information ("Just the facts, Ma'am"). The Civic Information Handbook can be a great resource for us all, especially during elections.

While the election year is looming there is still much work to be done, locally as well as globally. At the annual meeting, LWVMC adopted

organization by increasing participation." By bringing back the Observer

government meetings available by Zoom, attendance is made easier and

program recommendations that included "Education and public involvement on emerging local issues" and "Strengthening our

Corps we can do both of those things. With more and more local

is important to us all. There are many options to participate in League activities and we welcome all to become involved. In the meantime, we look forward to

members can report back to the board about issues and concerns. Look for more information about how to participate as an official League observer (or send us an email now to info@lwvmendo.org and we will happily sign The Local Coastal Plan is in process and we will be monitoring the progress

seeing you, whether in person or on Zoom at the coming meetings. Mendocino League advocacy

> Board of Supervisors from League President Charlene McAllister opposing an ordinance that would allow local governments to opt out of the state law requiring a short list of supporters and opponents of each local ballot measure to be shown on the ballot. The letter states, "The League supports an informed, active electorate, and we believe that voters should be provided with relevant, accurate and easily understandable information about elections. The League supported the 2021-2022 State Assembly Bill 1416 (AD 1426) to give more information directly to voters and empower them to

Jade Tippett has recently resigned from the Mendocino Coast Health Care District board for health reasons, so that organization is seeking to appoint a replacement. A recent post declares that it is seeking "a community-minded, solution-oriented, collaborative individual with an interest in health care to join us, who is a registered voter and a resident of the health care district. The current board is particularly interested in participation by members of our growing African American, Latino, and Native American communities. But anyone interested in serving our community by joining the MCHCD Board of Directors is encouraged

to apply. Contact Chair Lee Finney at lfinney@mcdh.org for more information

On June 8, local small-business support organization West Center held a celebration for ten graduates of its 2023 StartUp Mendocino program, one of whom was League board member Sydney Grange. "StartUp Mendocino is a no-

cost program, designed to give local entrepreneurs with great ideas the

opportunity to participate in an intensive training program to spark new thinking about what is possible for their business, their community, and the economy of

On July 17 the GrassRoots Institute (GRI) held a zoom meeting with Mendocino County's State Sen. Mike McGuire for a discussion of the recently adopted state budget, and various legislative initiatives which bear on our region. The hour long

question and answer session in addition to Sen. McGuire's initial presentation. An

session was hosted by 4th District Supervisor Dan Gjerde, and included a

announcement of the meeting circulated by GRI and League member Peter McNamee includes background on the legislator: "Senator McGuire is

\$1.25B for climate change resiliency, \$1.2B to address wildfires, \$2B more to help the homeless. He is proud that California has gone from dead last in the country in per pupil education spending to now rank in the top 10, for the first time in 50 years. The state now has \$37.2B in its rainy day fund, the highest total

Over the next 5 years California will invest \$54B to cut greenhouse gas emissions

improvement is expected to come from the phase out of gas guzzling vehicles by 2035. Oil consumption is to be reduced by 91% by 2045, as well. The state is spending \$1.5B for rural schoolbus electrification, \$10B in electric vehicle

subsidies for poor citizens, and \$15B for public transit improvements. New state

efforts to improve the environment include a 3200 ft. setback from homes,

now contribute \$500M for fire fighting, crucial because a large portion of timberland in the state is federally owned. We now have new cargo planes from the Coast Guard, more helicopters, and more cameras to monitor wildfire activity. Although he respects its ground crews tremendously, Sen. McGuire expressed disdain for the corporate leadership of PG&E, saying that it has put profit before

people for decades. He contrasted its performance with the publicly owned

utilities in Ukiah, Healdsburg, and Santa Clara, which, he said. are 30% cheaper and more effective. Since PG&E's leadership neither can nor will do it, he thinks the state has to force the undergrounding and needed upgrades of transmission

by 85% and air pollution by 60% before 2045. A large portion of this

Mendocino County. Over the course of the program participants [are] introduced to new approaches that address business and financial planning, successful branding and marketing, technology and best practices for e-commerce, time management, and how to pitch your business." Sydney's new business, Syd's Tempeh Company, makes handcrafted tempeh from locally sourced grains and beans to create tasty, sustainable, and healthy staple

foods such as the Quinoa Tempeh Burger.

Senator McGuire's Virtual Visit

and to apply."

State legislator engages with the public

ever.

by Jary Stavely

Congratulations, Sydney

the Majority Leader in the California's State Senate. As such, Senator McGuire has a key role in shaping the California Budget and enacting legislation that impacts all Californians.... As a legislative leader, Senator McGuire has been a champion for children and public schools. He marshaled a successful effort to stop the Trump Administration's offshore oil drilling initiatives, led the charge in the legislature on wildfire prevention & response, and is a leading voice in holding PG&E accountable for triggering catastrophic fires. The Senator is also recognized as a leading legislative voice for action to combat homelessness and build affordable housing in rural California. Most notably, he's spearheaded efforts to build a landmark rail to trail conversion project running from Eureka to the San Francisco Bay." Sen. McGuire opened the meeting by discussing recent changes to the state budget. Recent negotiations have restored some funding in areas he cares about:

schools, and hospitals for new energy projects; and streamlining permit requirements for new alternative energy developments, projects which will create new jobs. He cited local efforts which will improve water supply—storage tanks for the town of Mendocino, desalinization in Fort Bragg, agricultural conservation in Potter Valley, and water re-use in the city of Ukiah. The state workforce to deal with wildfires, Calfire, has expanded from 6000+ to more than 11,000 over the past 3 years, and will grow by another 1000 over the next 3. In a beneficial change from the past administration, national authorities

> homeless will have been built by 2026. Thirty to 40% of the 146K people currently in need are expected to remain on the street rather than move into newly provided units. Sen. McGuire stressed the need for such new housing to have 24/7 addiction/mental health counseling services on site. To that end, the state has been rolling out a new program called Care Court in urban areas, which would give judges more latitude to establish conservatorship for those with mental health problems (to mandate care and control in a locked facility for example), plus after care housing. There will be a meeting this fall to plan for implementation of Care Court in northwestern California. Sen. McGuire concluded his opening report with brief remarks about schools, gun control, and reproductive rights. He cited new legislation giving tuition assistance and loan forgiveness to CSU students pursuing mental health careers, if they dedicate 4 years of service to a public school district. He emphasized that California's gun control laws have led to a 37% decrease in gun deaths compared

to the national average, and a 55% decrease since the 1990's, due to its ban on assault weapons. He feels that the number of justices on the Supreme Court

should be increased so that Calif. gun control could not be overturned. The recent referendum has permanently guaranteed reproductive rights in our state. Since the

public park access to Soldier Bay. Third District Supervisor John Haschak wondered how Mendocino County could gain direct benefit from the coming wind energy development on Humboldt Bay. Amy Winn of WCPB (a professional planning services organization) asked to work with the senator's team to create and expand coastal water and sewer districts in order to provide the infrastructure required for new housing developments. Sen. McGuire was informative, supportive, and responsive to each request, promising prompt followup to each question. He also informed Coastal Democrats leader Karen Bowers that he is, indeed, considering a run for Insurance Commissioner in 2026, when he his termlimited out of the State Senate, but committed himself to give his utmost to his constituents until then. A video recording of the event is available; readers may well appreciate the personal perspective which it provides. Mariachi Concert Double bill with outdoor chamber music The Symphony of the Redwoods is sponsoring two Latin-themed concerts to be

held on Sunday, August 13 at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens. The

coastal Latino Coalition is preparing to help host the events, which will take place at 12 noon—a piano and strings quartet, and at 2:30—a mariachi ensemble. The

From the California League Convention Repository Our 69th Biennial Convention took place (in-person) May 19-21, 2023. League members from across the state gathered to take care of League business and learn about the work of other Leagues and how the state League supports them. Topics covered included Fair Redistricting, Engaging Young Voters, Building Stronger Local Leagues, DE&I, Getting Out the Vote in 2024, and more. Attendees had the opportunity to meet other League leaders from around California and share ideas

and subsequent decision to require hand counting for all future elections. Shasta County's precipitous moves place their elections at risk and diminish the public's trust in elections. Now there is the threat that these costly and destabilizing actions will be repeated in other California counties. AB 398 (Pellerin) would streamline the process by which elections officials provide a voter with a replacement ballot, increasing the speed and convenience of the transaction and making it possible to make the request online – an innovation that keeps pace with modern technology and improves access for everyone. From the National Desk Support ERA More than 100 years after some women gained the right to vote, people in the

> United States are still not constitutionally guaranteed equality on the basis of sex. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) will update the US Constitution to protect the equality of rights under the law regardless of sex. The ERA has met all ratification requirements, and now we are urging Congress to act to ensure that the ERA is published. Joint resolutions have been introduced in both chambers of

> > ERA is part of the Constitution!

U.S. League President Deborah Turner began a lengthy reflection on June 22. "One year ago today, the US Supreme Court took away our right to bodily

The Supreme Court of the US (SCOTUS) upheld a ruling in Allen v. Milligan stating that Alabama must create a second majority Black congressional district in

In doing so, SCOTUS defended every American's right to equal representation. "Today the Supreme Court affirmed the rights of Black voters in Alabama to elect the leaders of their choice," said Kathy Jones, president of the LWV of Alabama.

SCOTUS also affirmed our democratic system of checks and balances in *Moore v*.

autonomy. The ruling in *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization* will go down in history as one of the most impactful decisions in our nation's history. As a former gynecologic oncologist, I know firsthand how this will impact not only the billions of Americans who can become pregnant, but also their families, communities, and nation. Reflecting on all of this, I decided to write a three-part blog series about the impact of *Dobbs* and other anti-abortion legislation. This first part will focus on the physiological and medical ramifications of the ruling. Upcoming posts will focus on its socioemotional impact and how it's tied to the

One Year after the Dobbs Decision

fight for voting rights." Part One is online now.

compliance with Section 2 of the *Voting Rights Act*.

Court Checks on State Legislatures

Alabama Redistricting

Congress that will both affirm that the ERA is a valid part

ratification time limit. In April 2023, the Senate brought

threshold to overcome a filibuster. We will keep pushing

to gain support for this resolution in both chambers of

Congress, but we need YOUR help. Inequality hurts

everyone. Urge Congress to act now to assert that the

of the Constitution and address the question of a

this resolution to the floor. A bipartisan majority of

senators supported it but failed to reach the 60-vote

free rein to determine the rules for elections in their states." Access to Voting in Mississippi A federal court has granted a request by the League of Women Voters of Mississippi, Disability Rights Mississippi, and three Mississippi voters to block SB 2358—a newly implemented state law that significantly diminishes access to the ballot for Mississippians who need assistance with voting. Under the court's order, Mississippi voters who need assistance due to disability, blindness, or inability to read or write may select a person of their choice to assist them with delivering or returning their absentee mail-in ballot. The court ruled SB 2358

New Mexico's Supreme Court determined that claims of partisan gerrymandering can be reviewed by state courts. This differs from the current US Supreme Court doctrine that federal courts cannot decide constitutional challenges to partisan gerrymanders. "Yesterday's decision is a victory for voters who believe the courts can—and must—protect voters' constitutional rights," stated Hannah Burling, co-

president of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico.

In June Diz Swift and Mary O'Kicki of the LWV Climate Interest Group published a blog about the importance of food waste, and some solutions:

"Over one-third of the food produced in the US is never consumed—it is wasted. Food waste means all resources to grow the food are also wasted—energy, labor, water, and fertilizers. The energy loss alone is enough to power 50 million homes annually. Most of that discarded food finds its way into a landfill, where it is buried under piles of garbage. The amount is not trivial: food waste accounts for about 25% of materials sent to landfills. In the landfill, the food decomposes, releasing methane, a potent greenhouse gas and major contributor to climate change. Landfills are responsible for a whopping 15% of US methane emissions. The gas emissions don't end there; in some cases, the waste is then burned, releasing carbon dioxide. Although not as potent as methane, carbon dioxide is another prominent greenhouse gas. And despite all this wasted food and the complications it brings, approximately 35 million people in the US are still food

Food Waste

Land Acknowledgement

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.

insecure." The blog continues with solutions.

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County wishes to honor the land we are on

Links Rural perspective: https://ifp.nyu.edu/2023/news/what-liberal-elites-dont-know-about-rural-americans-can-

Business startup: https://www.westcenter.org/programs/startup-mendo-2023/ Mike McGuire: https://vimeo.com/846842327?share=copy

Dobbs decision there has been a 30% increase in women seeking help from out of state. Viewers raised a number of interesting issues during the ensuing question/answer period. Eileen Mitro of Climate Action Mendocino was concerned about an amendment to AB 205 which raised the fixed charge PG&E can assess on certain customers. Coastal resident Hannah Leigh-Bull requested followup on expanding the definition of disadvantaged communities eligible for housing funds from SB 535. Doug Hammerstrom of Fort Bragg sought help for an "estuarial approach" to repairing the toxic contamination on the Noyo Headlands which would lead to

> concerts are free (with Gardens admission), with light snacks and beverages available. The symphony's website states that, for the first concert, "Elena Casanova on piano will bring her friends; Rachelle Berthelsen-Davis, violin; Beth Heid, viola and Gwyneth Davis, cello to the Mendocino Coast. Together they will perform works by G. Fauré, W.A. Mozart, and J. Brahms, including lighter works perfectly fitted for a mid-day concert in the Gardens. Elena Casanova, a native of Cuba, is a pianist whose musical training included study at the Alejandro Music Conservatory in Havana, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She graduated with a B.Mus. in piano performance from the University of Redlands in California. Although she enjoys performing the traditional repertoire as a soloist and is an accompanist for recitals and music productions, her major preoccupation and passion is in promoting the music of her native country. She is a frequent performer, known for her impeccable playing of Cuban, classical, and jazz The afternoon concert will feature a mariachi band of 25 young people: "Led by music instructor José Soto, the LBC Mariachi Ensemble is composed of up to thirty students, ages 10-17 coming from Santa Rosa and Cloverdale. Established in 2017, these talented students are focused on musicianship, technical skills, and stage presence while celebrating the culture of Mariachi. They have participated in master classes with professional musician Jeff Nevin and his Mariachi Champana as well as award-winning Voces de Jalisco. They have performed on the main stage at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts to a full theater,

> performed at Fiesta de Independencia for over 4,000 people and have participated in numerous concerts throughout Sonoma County including the Sesquicentennial

Celebration at Courthouse Square in 2018."

and best practices. And speakers provided unique expertise that really informed the work of the League and inspired our members. The materials from the speakers, caucuses, and workshops are now posted on our LWVC Convention website and they will be available there until July 1, 2024. Legislative Advocacy We have co-sponsored several important bills this legislative session. Check out our Bill Status Report to see all bills on which we're taking action. A few highlights are: ACA 4 (Bryan), the Free the Vote Act, would place a measure on the ballot and allow voters to decide if California should amend the state's Constitution to restore voting rights to Californians serving sentences in prison, allowing them to fully participate in our democracy. SCA 1 (Newman) would place a measure on the ballot to ensure that recall elections for statewide and legislative offices in California are democratic, fair, and free from political manipulation. AB 764 (Bryan) and AB 1248 (Bryan & Allen) would help ensure that local jurisdictions adopt electoral maps that result in fair representation for all Californians. Election Procedures (more advocacy) AB 969 (Pellerin) would prohibit manual vote counts in contests with more than 1,000 eligible registered voters unless certain conditions are met. This bill would also ensure that a transition plan with a replacement contract for a certified system is in place, if a jurisdiction were to terminate an existing voting system contract. The bill is in response to the Shasta County Board of Supervisors' recent vote to remove their Dominion electronic voting system without an adequate replacement

> *Harper*, rejecting the dangerous "Independent State Legislature Theory" (ISLT). LWVUS and Leagues from all 50 states and DC previously filed an amicus brief focusing on the massive implications of ISLT for elections and democracy. Per League CEO Virginia Kase Solomón, "Today's decision is a major victory for our democracy because it rejects the dangerous idea that state legislatures have violated Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the state cannot use that law to punish individuals who provide assistance to such voters. The order will apply to the current primary election and the upcoming general election in November. Partisan Gerrymandering

Contact LWVMC By mail: P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg CA 95437 By email: voter@mcn.org Message phone: (707) 937-4952 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

Civic Information Handbook: https://citap.pubpub.org/pub/zypjuy9b/release/1 Health Care District: https://www.mchcd.org/files/274b81ed9/TAB+2+Vacancy+Flier.pdf

LWVCconvention: https://click.everyaction.com/k/64439029/410060733/-1360588547 LWVC advocacy: https://click.everyaction.com/k/64439033/410060737/995795247; https:// click.everyaction.com/k/64439034/410060738/-1091060544; https://click.everyaction.com/k/ 64439035/410060740/-1091060544; https://click.everyaction.com/k/ 64439036/410060741/-1091060544; https://click.everyaction.com/k/ 64439037/410060742/-1091060544; Election procedures: https://click.everyaction.com/k/66064918/415229910/-808159498; https:// click.everyaction.com/k/66064921/415229911/-1874120179 ERA: https://www.lwv.org/take-action/tell-congress-equality-belongs-constitution Impact of *Dobbs*: https://www.lwv.org/blog/one-year-after-dobbs-medical-impact-anti-abortion-laws Alabama redistricting: https://default.salsalabs.org/Tede0afea-02cf-42ae-8fa5ec6af966aaa5/34be5bff-59c8-45df-bf3a-672b9216f0c7 Moore v. Harper: https://default.salsalabs.org/T8a155769-6d2b-4176-abc7-276a1535947f/ 34be5bff-59c8-45df-bf3a-672b9216f0c7 Mississippi voting rights: order:https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/ abbreviated_order_enjoining_senate_bill_2358.pdf; press release: https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/

Westport Hotel kitchen. In this issue ... **Annual Meeting** President's Message **Ballot Information** Health Care District Vacancy Congratulations, Sydney Senator McGuire Visit

Mariachi Concert California League National League

closely. The Mendocino Coast is an asset for our entire county, and its protection

Ballot Information Voters should know who sponsors local issues Local League board members have endorsed a letter to the Mendocino County make better informed choices. AD 1416 was passed into law as Section 9170 of the California Elections Code 2.

"Educated and informed voters are the key to our democracy. A list of support and opposition on the ballot will provide Mendocino County voters with accessible and concise, yet salient information that can help them make more informed decisions." Health Care District Vacancy

lines throughout the region. The senator reported that Mendocino County has received \$33M over the past 3 years to deal with the disgrace of homelessness. He deplored the fact that the fastest growing sectors of the unhoused are women with children, and women over the age of 65, and vowed that the state will do better. Statistics show that 80% of the homeless were Calif. residents before they lost permanent homes, debunking the idea that people living in the streets have come from out of state to receive supposed advantages in services. A total of 55K new units for the

Music in the Gardens

Women's Inequality Day

Throughout August, LWV will uplift our second

annual Women's Inequality Day campaign. This

year's efforts will use digital content to promote

a petition to Congress demanding federal voting

reproductive rights, and the addition of the Equal

rights legislation, the restoration of our

Rights Amendment to the Constitution.

hurt-us/

Mariachi: https://symphonyoftheredwoods.org/summer-concerts.php

press-releases/federal-court-blocks-implementation-mississippis-new-voting-law 34be5bff-59c8-45df-bf3a-672b9216f0c7 it-matters-what-we-can-do

Gerrymandering: https://default.salsalabs.org/T6810dc90-8244-4905-9a7d-2b6b27ac969f/ Food waste: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/from-farm-to-kitchen-the-environmentalimpacts-of-u.s.-food-waste 508-tagged.pdf; https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhousegases#methane; https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/from-farm-to-kitchen-theenvironmental-impacts-of-u.s.-food-waste 508-tagged.pdf; https://www.lwv.org/blog/food-waste-why-Women's Inequality Day: https://default.salsalabs.org/Ta34d0245-da2c-440a-ada8-e13f3a8b9ffb/ 34be5bff-59c8-45df-bf3a-672b9216f0c7; https://default.salsalabs.org/T79c24b00-c3f4-40d3-802ae5442d078eff/34be5bff-59c8-45df-bf3a-672b9216f0c7 (petition)