

The Voter THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

September, 2019

Cindy Plank and Nancy Kleiber, Presidents

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

September "Kickoff" meeting ...

State of the School Districts

The Mendocino County League will start its 2019–2020 program year with a "kickoff" meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 6:00 pm at the Caspar Community Center. Co-President Cindy Plank will open the meeting with an overview of the projects our League will be focusing on this fall – see page 2 for a preview.

She will then turn the podium over to Fort Bragg School Superintendent Rebecca Walker and Mendocino School Superintendent Jason Morse for "state of the district" presentations. Afterwards, there will be time available for questions.



Our coastal school district leaders have been "superintending" their respective districts for the past several years, Jason since 2012, and Becky since 2016. Jason studied wildlife biology in Michigan, and worked as a firefighter for the US Forest Service before becoming involved in education.

He worked at an elementary school in Vermont before coming to Mendocino. Becky was born and raised in Southern California and majored in liberal studies at Cal State San Bernardino. She studied math and education at Humboldt State before teaching in Eureka, and then coming to Fort Bragg as a full time math teacher.

They both served as principals before assuming their current positions, Becky for the Fort Bragg High School, and Jason for the Mendocino K–8

School. They each have spouses who live in the area, and also each have two children who attend school on the coast. The coastal school superintendents last addressed the League in September of 2013.



Our future voters are vitally important to our community, and we welcome the opportunity to find out more about the schools that are helping shape their view of the world and build their skills to deal with the future. These students are the population we are targeting with our ongoing Youth Registration Project, and we hope to develop more ways to collaborate with them in service of our community and our democracy.

Please join us at our first gathering of the year, and bring a friend who shares your commitment to the community, or who might want to join the League. Doors will open with coffee at 5:45.

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 through education and advocacy.

Presidents' message ...

The Beginning of a Busy Year

by Cindy Plank

Welcome to the beginning of the new League year! The board has planned an active season of programs, education and advocacy, beginning with the kickoff program focusing on our coastal school districts described on page 1 of this VOTER.

Here are a few things you will hear again when we see you on the 17th (but it's good stuff and worth hearing multiple times):

- LWV is a strong partner with the upcoming Census 2020. Our LWV colleague, Paula Cohen, is the chair of the Mendocino County Complete Count Committee. Did you know that each person counted brings in more than \$2,000 per year to Mendocino County—more than \$20,000 over the 10 year period before the next Census. That's a lot of funding lost for every person that does not get counted in the Census. In addition, the Census count determines the number of representatives we have in government. Share this info where ever you can. It is very important that every person gets counted.
- We will be working on Youth Voter Registration again soon. Consider volunteering in this inspiring
 work, whether you have an hour to spend on preparing voter info packets or a few hours assisting with
 classroom visits
- LWV of Mendocino has joined the team of the LWV of California Climate Change Task Force. Our League's focus with the climate crisis has been linked to the importance of healthy soils and locally grown food, both of which are crucial for the drawdown and storage of carbon. Check out this sweet 2 minute video about easy ways each one of us can help with the climate crisis: https://www.greenamerica.org/climate-victory-gardens. And also check out the California League's Climate Change Task Force website: https://lwvc.org/climate-change-task-force, for more info about what Leagues across California are working on. Join our environment/climate team.
- In connection with the above, and after a recent environment/climate committee recommendation, LWV of Mendocino sent a letter of support for Fort Bragg City Council to designate the City of Fort Bragg as a Garden Friendly Community. Please consider sending your own personal letters of support.

We're looking forward to seeing you all on September 17—please invite a friend to come with you!

LWVMC Schedule of Programs

At right are our planned general meetings for the rest of 2019. Please carefully note the times, since some scheduled for evening (6 PM) in order to accommodate more members of the public and working members. All take place on Tuesdays at the Caspar Community Center

Members are also welcome to attend Board meetings, held at the Fort Bragg Library at 9:30, generally on the final Tuesday of the month. Check our website (mendo.ca.lwv.org/) for any changes.

September 17, 6 PM only:

Kickoff: Preview of Year's Activities (Co-President Cindy Plank); "State of the Districts," (Superintendents Rebecca Walker and Jason Morse)

October 8, 6 PM only:

Behavioral Health Forum contact: Meg Courtney

November 12, 10 AM:

Program on civics education / 2020 Census contact: Charlene MacAllister



Young Voters to Be Approached Again

The League's Youth Registration Project is gearing up for a new season of visiting Mendocino County Schools, and providing voter registration packets and enthusiasm to its social studies students. The committee held several meetings during the final week of August to select schools to visit and organize visitation teams. The group anticipates encountering extra excitement for voting, with the March 2020 California primary approaching.

In an email, Committee Chair Cindy Plank announced, "Something new and exciting this year is the opportunity to visit Adult School & Citizenship Classes. Loreto Rojas suggested it last spring and we provided pocket constitutions/voter info to 15 coast citizenship students. Yesterday I spoke to Dave Gengoux, Ukiah Adult School instructor, and he is very excited to welcome members of our team to his classes. In order to get the most impact with the most students, Dave suggests visiting on Monday, September 16—it would include several classes during the day. The following day, September 17, also happens to be Constitution Day, sometimes called Citizenship Day."

The Right to Vote Is a Non-partisan Issue

by Carol Czadek

"Among the many issues currently polarizing American politics – abortion, climate change, health care, immigration, gun control – one of the most consequential tends to be one of the least discussed. The American electorate, across the country, is diversifying ethnically and racially at a rapid rate. Progressives, interpreting the shift to mean that, following traditional paths, the new voters will lean Democratic, see a political landscape that is turning blue. Conservatives apparently see the same thing, because in recent years many of them have supported policies, such a voter I.D. laws and voter-roll purges, that have disproportionately affected people of color. The issue has become more pressing with the approach of the 2020 Presidential election" (*Jelani Cobb, The New Yorker, Aug 19, 2019, p. 28.*)

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy. The League is committed to help protect, defend, and encourage active participation in our great democracy. In a non-partisan manner, the League works year-round to combat voter suppression through advocacy, grassroots organizing, legal action, and public education. We actively oppose discriminatory voter I.D. laws, fight against attacks against the voter registration process, and hold lawmakers accountable when they try to institute last minute Election Day barriers.

As the Voter Services chair this year, I will uphold my commitment to the League's non-partisan policy while encouraging participation in the electoral process. Please join us in our efforts to inform and encourage voting here in Mendocino County during this lead-in to the 2020 elections. You can call me at 964-9271, or email carolczadek@gmail.com.



Voter readers interested in the problem of housing on the coast are encouraged to read the detailed article published by the Housing Action Team (H.A.T.) in the August Real Estate Magazine. It is also available on our Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1/. Scroll down past a number of other interesting posts until you find it.

Garden-Friendly Community

In August the League Board voted to send a letter to the Fort Bragg City Council in support of the proposed Garden Friendly Community Resolution which will be considered at its September 9 meeting. This proposal, somewhat modeled on the Bee City designation which Fort Bragg has already undertaken, is designed to encourage more private and community gardening in our area.

The resolution was created by a group of local farmers and their supporters, which formed after the League's two meetings last year about how sustainable agriculture promotes carbon sequestration and, thereby, the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. New League member Matt Drewno has written an article (below) about the resolution, with a link for more information. The Voter can also send out copies of the resolution, and of the supporting documentation which the local group provided to the city. Email your request to voter@mcn.org.

Growing a Peaceful and Abundant Future

by Matt Drewno



The challenges we face are the opportunities we need.

More than anything, we need solutions that are simple and accessible to everyone, regardless of their income level. We need solutions that are on a feasible scale, and that empower individuals and communities. We need to localize our economies, and to help rebuild the integrity and resilience that once made us strong. The challenges we face are not looming disasters, inevitable and waiting to occur—they are opportunities to adapt and create a better future. And the best solutions are those that are fun and enrich our lives!

Our food system is broken. It is our largest user of water, our largest destroyer of habitat, and our largest cause of species extinction and entire ecosystem collapse. All of these are force-multipliers for climate change. Did you know that more carbon has gone into our atmosphere through mechanized farming practices, than has been contributed through all industry, transportation and fossil fuel use combined? Commodity markets keep people hungry for profit; corporations poison our food and contaminate our environments; and local organic food is priced out of reach for most of our population. Can you live entirely off of purchased local organic food? In times of recession, can you afford it?

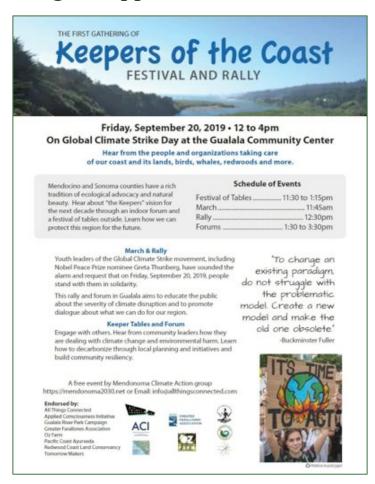
One of the most simple, easy, fun, and exciting ways to overcome these challenges is through growing a garden—it takes the burden off of our land, requires less resources to produce food, and most of all, it is fun. Gardening is therapeutic, educational, increases our local economy, and raises the consciousness of our communities toward an understanding of the importance of life, nature, and organic food. In 1943, at the peak of World War II, almost half of the food consumed in the country was raised in backyard and community gardens. This was part of a program called Victory Gardens for the War. What we need today is a rally cry not to grow food to win the war, but to create Victory Gardens for Peace and Community Resilience!

It has been demonstrated that gardens can use a) 1/3-1/50 of the water, and b) 95% less energy than conventionally grown food, while c) growing soil

60 times faster than naturally occurs, and d) reducing the human impact of agriculture by 50-99% of what it is today (compared to the standard American Diet Footprint). In this way, we can take back the means of production, strengthen our local communities, and become more food secure and healthy, while also restoring desecrated farmland into ecosystems for a functioning and healthy planet. The Garden Friendly Community Resolution is meant to help spread this gardening culture as far and as quickly as possible by working with officials from the top down, while creating opportunities for us all from the bottom up.

The Garden Friendly Community Resolution is an effort designed to bring people together to celebrate the upcoming work of re-localizing our communities and in-sourcing our solutions, so that we become self-reliant and independent as a community. It is a tool communities can use to encourage more gardens and more gardeners. The resolution first states the importance of our gardening culture and then creates a framework to organize and work with our local officials to make resources available to support the effort of encouraging a more local, diverse, thriving and beautiful food system. We encourage you to contact us for an outline of the resolution, a copy of our action plan, and a summary of the potential of gardens to help us achieve a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future. Let's start now! For more information on how gardening can be a solution and for the Garden Friendly Community Resolution, contact info@victorygardensforpeace.com.

League Supports National Climate Strike



An international climate strike has been organized to take place this month. An online call to action says, "Starting September 20, people of all ages in hundreds of countries are walking out of their jobs, homes, and classes to demand real climate action from our elected officials. There is no Planet B. When the earth and communities we love are under attack, we stand up and fight back."

The California League has endorsed participation with the following statement:

"The League of Women Voters of California recognizes that climate change has reached the level of an emergency, and stands with youth in fighting for action in the international climate strike on September 20. 'Youth will be the hardest hit, yet youth do not have a vote in this time of crisis,' said Diz Swift, LWVC Climate Change Program Director. 'Without urgent action on climate, we are risking the future of ourselves and our children. It's time for decisive action. It's time for all hands on deck.'

The League stands with youth, supporting the plaintiffs in *Juliana vs. United States*, in which youth claim their constitutional rights to life, liberty and property free from government

endangerment, and to hold the executive branch accountable for its role in failing to limit climate change. The League has filed three *amicus* briefs in support of the plaintiffs."

A rally has been scheduled in Gualala (see the flier above), and Mendocino/Fort Bragg organizers have promised to announce details of their plans in the near future.

Mendocino College Offers One Year of Free Tuition

Mendocino College is proud to offer one year of free tuition to eligible students beginning in the 2019 fall semester. Students who receive the incentive will be benefiting from what is called the Mendocino College Promise. The program is thanks to Assembly Bill 19, which provides funding to California Community Colleges to accomplish district goals and waive fees for first-time students.

"It is critical that we spread the word about how affordable and attainable a college education can be," said Vice President of Student Services Ulises Velasco. "The Mendocino College Promise program will eliminate the financial barriers facing some of our students and allow them to remain in our community as they seek a college degree."

With current costs per unit of \$46, the Mendocino College Promise Grant can save students up to \$1,380 throughout the 19/20 academic year. The Mendocino College Promise is not based on financial need and is available to any first-time college student who completes 15 units in the fall 2019 semester and enrolls in 15 units again in the spring 2020 semester. Once eligible students complete the fall semester and enroll in 15 units for the spring 2020 semester, they will receive a grant that covers their out of pocket enrollment expenses for both the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters.

"The Mendocino College Promise is an investment in our community and will support students as they pursue their academic goals," says Mendocino College Interim Superintendent/President Eileen Cichocki. "Studies show that students who take 15 units per semester have greater success in their classes and complete a degree and/or transfer in two years. The Mendocino College Promise is a win-win for our students and our community as a whole."

"While this program will impact a small number of students at first, our intent is to partner with the Mendocino College Foundation and our community to grow this program," said Vice President Velasco. "Our goal is for every student in our community to receive two years of free education at Mendocino College. We will continue working towards that goal and the Mendocino College Promise is a major first step in that direction."

Women's Equality Day

The state and national leagues celebrated Women's Equality Day on August 26 -- the 99th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment -- by having voter registration activities. We encourage *Voter* readers to read a thoughtful article on the League's relationship to women's suffrage by a League member from South Bend, Indiana:

https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/opinion/viewpoint/viewpoint-celebrating-the-triumph-acknowledging-the-failure-of-th-amendment/article_480c78ef-8a63-533b-86da-48451d38c0cf.html?fbclid=IwAR1U0TJI-

XjRrQxJR9pgTU7jJUePX3pwnm82sCnqiw2TLEAGSP9V7u IHM0

On a lighter note, here is the link to a cute video, School House Rock—Sufferin' Till Suffrage, which they also shared on Facebook:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGHGDO_b_q0&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2pq9ufixyVbdf-hYFNALQXiKagMJHii0JWJnpb0yw-wXav4Ir6z 38deE

Mill Site Discussions

The Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium is presenting another informational meeting about the future of the Georgia-Pacific mill site (see August '19 *Voter*). This one is to be held at Town Hall in Fort Bragg on Thursday, September 12 at 6 PM, and will feature presentations by John Gallo, Leslie Kashiwada, Bill Lemos, and George Reinhardt. On Saturday, September 21, a combined meeting of the City Council and the Planning Commission will take input on the issue. Here is a statement from the Consortium:

The Fort Bragg Headlands comprise a third of our city and its fate is being decided through the current planning process. The Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium provides science and information to help the discussion. We gave a short presentation to City Council and the Planning Commission on March 21st (the first 15 minutes of the video link below), and Mayor Lee invited us

Upcoming Opportunities for Information, Participation, and Action

September 9 (Monday): FB City Council considers Garden Friendly Community resolution/plan

September 12 (Thursday): Headlands Consortium meeting, 6 PM, FB Town Hall

September 17 (Tuesday): LWVMC Kickoff meeting, "School Districts," 6 PM, Caspar Community Center

September 20 (Friday): Climate Strike

September 21 (Saturday): City Council / Planning Commission meeting for public input on Mill Site

September 22 (Sunday): *Fiesta Familiar* Latino heritage celebration, 3-6 PM, Bainbridge Park

September 24 (Tuesday): League Get-Together for Ideas, 6 PM, NCO Conference Room, Ukiah

October 8 (Tuesday): Behavioral Health Forum, 6 PM, Caspar Community Center

October 8 (Tuesday): LWVMC Program Planning meeting, 10 AM, Caspar Community Center

October 17 (Thursday): HAT presentation on Auxiliary Dwelling Units, details TBA

to give an extended presentation later. The evening of the 12th will include that presentation and an opportunity for a structured and civil community discussion. We hope you can come!

Please see our new website, <u>fortbraggheadlandsconsortium.org</u>, for additional context. The video link is http://cityfortbragg.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view id=1&clip id=651.

Behavioral Health Forum Will Ask the Right People

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County will present "A Behavioral Health Forum for Our Community" on Tuesday, October 8 at 6 PM at the Caspar Community Center. Please join us for this important conversation. Learn where we are going with Measure B and with Mental Health Services in our community. Participants will include:

- Dan Gjerde, Mendocino County Supervisor, District 4
- Tammy Moss-Chandler, Director, Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency
- Dr. James Miller, Director, Mendocino County Behavioral Health Services and member, Measure B Committee
- Emily Strachan, Vice Chair, Mendocino County Behavioral Health Board
- Camille Schrader, Chief Financial Officer of Redwood Quality Management
- John Wetzler, former Chair of Mental Health Board and caretaker for an SMI family member



Ukiah Get-Together

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County will host a "Get-Together for Ideas" in Ukiah on Tuesday, September 24 from 6 to 7:30 PM. The location is the NCO Conference Room at 413 North Main Street, Ukiah. The discussion will focus on ways the League can serve the whole County by sponsoring inland events, partnering with other organizations, or in other creative ways.

State Advocacy Updates

Plastic Waste: New California League President Carol Moon Greenberg has called for members to take action to combat the plastic waste crisis. Her message follows:

Every day, single-use packaging and plastic products generate thousands of tons of waste that are wreaking long lasting damage on our health and natural environment. We can no longer afford to wait. Act now and demand that your legislators combat the plastic waste crisis.

Roughly two-thirds of all plastic ever produced has been released into the environment, polluting every street, park, river, coast, and ocean. SB 54 and AB 1080 would alleviate the scourge of plastic by:

Requiring manufacturers to reduce waste and improve the recyclability or compostability of packaging.

Ensuring that all single-use packaging will be reusable, recyclable or compostable after 2030.

Mandating that the most-littered plastic products be made only from recyclable or compostable materials.

Creating incentives to encourage in-state manufacturing using recycled material.

Our dependence on single-use plastics is poisoning our state. Plastic production is a major source of global greenhouse gas emissions, floating plastic "islands" are clogging the oceans, and microplastics are increasingly contaminating our food and drinking water sources. Act now and help us combat the plastic waste crisis

The link for contacting state legislators is https://www.congressweb.com/lwvofca/29/.

Voting Rights for Parolees: The LWVC statement:

It's time to Free the Vote for Californians on parole. Act now, and tell your Assemblymember to vote YES on ACA 6. This constitutional amendment will restore voting rights to people who are working, paying taxes, and raising children in our communities, but have been denied a voice in the policies that shape their lives.

The strength of representative democracy depends on everyone's participation, yet nearly 50,000 Californians on parole cannot vote. The League of Women Voters of California has been fighting for voting rights for 100 years. We are co-sponsoring ACA 6 because the fight is far from over.

Parole's purpose is to help people reintegrate into the community. Civic engagement is a critical part of that process, and has also been found to reduce recidivism.

Disenfranchising people on parole is a legacy of Jim Crow laws, and disproportionately locks Black and Brown Californians out of the voting booth.

California needs to catch up with 16 states and the District of Columbia which restore voting rights once people are no longer incarcerated. And also with Maine and Vermont which never take voting rights away from those in prison or on parole.

Our democracy thrives when it is fair and inclusive. Stripping the right to vote from formerly incarcerated people is a form of voter suppression, and does not reflect our values. Take action: tell your Assemblymenber to support ACA 6.

The link is https://www.congressweb.com/lwvofca/27/

From the National Office

Fair Maps Campaign: The U.S. League has scheduled an online Town Hall to launch a new effort to combat gerrymandering. In June, the Supreme Court ruled that partisan gerrymandering is a political question because no fair test exists for courts to determine when partisan gerrymandering has gone too far. That means all federal courts will be hands-off even when redistricting intentionally decreases the voting power of voters based on their political party.



Because redistricting has long been a priority issue of the League, and a signature part of our Campaign for Making Democracy work, we cannot sit back and wait for the court to change. We do not have to rely on the Supreme Court to solve partisan gerrymandering. There are other paths to creating fair maps nationwide – and the League of Women Voters is the organization best positioned to accomplish this.

We are launching a 50-state campaign called the People Powered Fair Maps Campaign. All members are invited to tune into our town hall on Wednesday, September 4th at 3pm.

The national board has authorized half a million dollars to launch this campaign, and every state League will receive some of that funding through grants. This work will look different in each state, and the campaign will be unveiled to all members at the online event. Members are encouraged to register now for this League-wide announcement. A recording of the town hall will be made available for those who are unable to attend on September 4th.

The link to register is: https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/9102504223989902859

Jail time for mistakenly casting a ballot? In July, the League of Women Voters of Texas filed an *amicus* brief in *Mason-Hobbs v, Texas*, arguing that genuine confusion around voter eligibility does not violate Texas state law. The brief was filed in support of Ms. Mason-Hobbs, a returning citizen who believed she was eligible to vote after previously being released from prison, but whose voting status was complicated by the fact that she was still on federal supervised release. Her provisional ballot in the 2016 presidential election was ultimately denied, and her vote did not count.

Mason-Hobbs was sentenced to five years in jail for voting. In recent elections, we have seen more participation of returning citizens than ever before, yet some states have not met that momentum with education and clarity about when returning citizens are eligible to participate. This case is an example of a citizen who was obviously unclear about an ambiguous state law and was penalized for her honest confusion. *Mason-Hobbs v. Texas* is expected to be heard by late summer.

It's time for an Equal Rights Amendment. Despite the significant advances that have been made in recent decades, women continue to face discrimination on the basis of sex. The symptoms of this systemic discrimination are clear in the ongoing fights against unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, and limited access to comprehensive healthcare. It is not enough to treat the symptoms; we must address the root cause of inequality by amending the Constitution and passing the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). In July, LWV sent two letters to Congress, expressing our support for concurrent joint resolutions that would remove the timeline for ratification of the ERA. As an organization born out the fight to guarantee women the right to vote, we believe final ratification of the ERA is needed to ensure equal rights for all regardless of sex or gender. As a country, we are on the cusp of a victory. You'll be hearing more from us as we continue to fight for this long-awaited amendment.

Progress is a part of our DNA: This inspiring article about young LWV members was posted to LWVC Facebook & website, reposted to our LWVMC Facebook:https://www.lwv.org/sheisme

LWVMC
marched in
the Paul
Bunyan
parade with
Mendocino
Complete
Count to
promote
participation
in the coming
Census.
Photo, Linda
Jupiter.





Fort Bragg's own Paul Bunyan helps Voter Service chair Carol Czadek get out the message: Your Vote Matters!