Dear League Members:

It’s nice to see the sun more often over the last few days, but glad we’ve gotten a lot more water this year than last.

Congratulations to Leslie Leach and Elaine Weinreb for organizing the member meeting at the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Office on March 17. John Friedenbach, Executive Director of the Water District gave us a good introduction to local water issues. We learned where community water is obtained, and how it is managed. I was pleased to learn that the amount of water in Ruth Lake that is damned and feeds the Mad River was not reduced during the drought last year. We also learned that the new fish farm to be built on the Samoa peninsula will use some of the extra water that used to be used by local lumber mills.

The League’s annual State of the Community Luncheon will be held on Friday, April 12th at starting at 11:30 AM at the Adorni Center in Eureka. Anne Hartline will be our master of ceremonies and keep us on schedule. Dell’Arte International and Michele McKeegan, a community volunteer, are our honorees this year. In addition, we will hear from Supervisor Rex Bohn and Humboldt Film Commissioner, Cassandra Hasseltine. You can buy tickets online at https://my.lwv.org/california/humboldt-county/state-community-luncheon-tickets, or by sending a check to LWVHC, P. O. Box 3219, Eureka, CA, 95502. I look forward to seeing you there.

Also, come and learn about the League’s Foster Care Study on April 25th at 5:30 PM in the A1AA building at 434 7th Street in Eureka.

All the best for a good month.

Rollin Richmond, President
Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Presentation: An Overview

by Leslie Leach, Natural Resources Director

Ruth Lake filled to capacity every year of the past drought. That’s very good news for customers of the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD). On Sunday, March 17, John Friedenbach, General Manager of the HBMWD gave a comprehensive presentation about the water district. He began with the history, moved to the present, and finished with what the future may bring.

Following are some other positive facts:

- Ruth Lake and the Mad River are the sources of the water managed by the HBMWD.
- That water has a natural filtration system because it passes through 60-90 feet of river bed gravel.
- The HBMWD keeps a percentage of the water for in-stream flow to maintain habitat for fish and other wildlife.

But along with the good news, readers may be interested to know why their water rates went up so much since 2009. It seems logical that if the Louisiana-Pacific and the Simpson lumber mills shut down, there would be more water for domestic use. However, LP and Simpson paid for 75% of the costs of the HBMWD. When those businesses closed, that 75% of costs still needed to be paid, and much of that cost is now covered through increased domestic water rates. If the HBMWD doesn’t “use” all that water, their water rights will go to the state of California.

In the future, some new businesses may purchase some of the extra water: One business is the Nordic AquaFarms/California Marine Investments, LLC. This fish farm is supposed to be completely land-based. The second business is Enviva, a company that produces wood pellets.

If you are interested in knowing more about HBMWD, go to the website https://www.hbmwd.com/.

If you would like to attend the HBMWD’s monthly meetings, they’re held the second Thursday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at 828 Seventh Street in Eureka. The time to pay attention to the precious resource, water, is now.
FOSTER CARE STUDY

Foster Care Consensus Questions

1. What are the options available for recruiting, training, and retaining social work professionals in Humboldt County?
2. What are the readily-available resources to provide ongoing support for birth and resource families in Humboldt County?
3. What are the resource needs, and what/where do gaps exist?
4. What are the mechanisms in place to locate/address resource gaps in a timely manner?
5. What mechanisms exist to develop partnerships and ensure ongoing collaboration within and among our communities?

Background

- In early 2017 the League of Women Voters Humboldt County (LWVHC) held a membership meeting focusing on foster care in Humboldt County. The LWVHC position on foster care had not been updated since 1999. After discussion, a new study was suggested. At the Annual Meeting in May of 2017, League members suggested the Board review the current position and consider implementing a new study.
- At the LWVHC Board Planning Meeting in August of 2017, a League member presented a proposal for a local study into foster care based in part on the June 2017 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury Report which concluded “that the safety net for our children critically needs improvement.”
- After discussion, the League agreed to study the issue. A committee was formed to review the current position.
- The committee began work in September of 2017.

California Statistics

- In California there are 6 placements for every 1000 people
- In Humboldt there are 11 placements for every 1000 people
- In Alameda County there are 4 placements for every 1000 people

Dependent Child

According to California Statute

- Child has suffered or there is a risk that child will suffer serious harm inflicted non-accidentally by parents or guardians
- The child has suffered or there is a risk that child will suffer serious physical harm or illness as a result of parent or guardian to inadequately supervise or protect the child
Foster Care of Children

According to California Statute

- Policy of Legislature that foster care is temporary
- Children have a right to a home free from abuse
- Reunification with natural parent or parents or permanent living arrangement adoption or guardianship
- Moving child from one place to another until maturity should be discontinued

Family Preservation

- Family Preservation has a better record for safety than placements
- Poverty is mistaken as abuse and neglect
- Proper supports added for families can stabilize/support before placement
- Trauma caused to child by removal from home
- May lose ties with siblings, grandparents, aunts and other relatives
- Supporting families make financial sense
- Drug Treatment

Resource Placements

- Safety of Children
- County Financial incentives (increased federal dollars for resource families)
- Drug Abuse
- Take child out of poverty
- Err on the side of child
- More supports available for children and families in resource program than in home.

Needs

- The HSU social work program emphasizes rural/indigenous populations, but they need a strong recruiting strategy with respect to tribal governments.
- DHHS/CWS has training available and there is information at the national level through Native American sources but need it at the local level.
- Retention: Not very robust/high staff turnover rates at both county and tribal government level. When asked why staff are leaving the profession, they cite stress, high demands, lack of support.
- Maintain family’s stability
- Communications
- Access to the Humboldt County Child Welfare System (CWS) needs a single-entry portal
- Coordination with Native Americans
- Increase state funding for compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act
- Implementation of tracking system for child custody cases of Native Americans (consent decree)
Needs Continued…

- Compliance with child abuse reporting laws
- Respite care for birth families and resource family
- Support systems for birth and resource families
- More Robust Partnerships and Collaborations
- More mechanisms to identify needs and gaps in service
- Identify, support and implement comprehensive services to preserve families

- Homebuilder Model
- Homemaker Services
- Childcare
  - Appropriate mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Housing support

Gaps in Service

- Retaining and recruiting social work professionals in Humboldt County
- Finding and training resource families
- More resources for resource families and birth families
- Training for therapeutic resource families or training for birth families
- Resources for LGBT children
- Services and programs to support youth aging out of the system
- Resources for Native American to address specific needs of Native American birth and resource families:
  - The Indian Child Welfare Act created mandates for which inadequate funds were allocated for legal counsel
- mental health services
- Remediation for sex trafficking
- Direct outreach between tribal government and County Government
  - On-site
  - Clear process
  - On-going

Mechanism to Identify Gaps/Needs

- Information Nights
- Support Groups
- Outreach
- Forgotten initiative
- Family Resource Center

Partnerships and Collaborations

- Humboldt State University and College of Redwoods for Social workers and interns
- Foster Parents Association
- Family Resource Center
- California Foster Youth Education Task Force
Resources

California’s Children 2017 (online resource: www cwla org)
California Code: Welfare and Institutional Code (WIC) Article 6 Dependent Children, Article 13.5 Foster Care of Children

California Evidenced Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare: Homebuilders Program (http: www cebc4cw org/program/homebuilders/detailed)

County, state reach settlement agreement over child welfare (Department of Health and Human Services posted February 15, 2018)


Interview of Virginia Bass Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Interview of Melanie Gensaw, Director, Department of Social Services, Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria (BRBRR)

Interview of Alison Phongsavath, Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services/Child Welfare Services (DHHS/CWS)

Interview of Steve Volow of CASA of Humboldt County


The Science of Neglect (Center on the Developing Child: Harvard University, Dec.2012)

There’s one thing that’s plentiful in Humboldt County foster care: Excuses (Times Standard, 9/2/2017, Wexlar)

Understanding the Child Welfare System in California: A Primer for Service Providers and Policy Makers (California Center for Research on Women and Families, 2009)

While Everyone Slept, Congress Did Something Extraordinary for Vulnerable Children (The Intercept, Feb. 11,2018: Chavez and Grim)
FOLLOW US — WE HAVE SEVERAL WAYS!!

WEBSITE = lwvhc.org

FACEBOOK = League of Women Voters Humboldt County

TWITTER = @LWVHumboldt

Renew Now or Help Someone Become a LWVHHC Member!

Membership in the League of Women Voters, the most respected and effective grassroots organization in the country, is open to men and women of all ages. Our members make a visible difference by serving as community leaders using their experience to create positive, lasting change in our communities.

Membership dues and donations to the LWVHC are not tax-deductible.

Donations to the LWVHC-Education Fund, through the Humboldt Area Foundation, are tax deductible.

Annual Dues are due each year on July 1st

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

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

Yes! I want to join the League of Women Voters of Humboldt County and become a voice for citizens and a force for change.

I also want to gift a membership!

Name ____________Phone ____________

I am enclosing for my annual membership renewal:

Name ____________________________________________
Address __________________________City/State/Zip ____________
Phone ___________________________e-mail __________________________

Join Now!
LWVHC Calendar

- **Board Meeting**  
  Tuesday, 4/9/2019  
  530pm

- **State of the Community Luncheon (SOCL)**  
  Adorni Center, Eureka  
  Friday, 4/12/19  
  Noon

- **Foster Care Study**  
  A1AA 434 7th Street, Eureka  
  Thursday, 4/25/19  
  530pm

- **Foster Care Consensus Meeting**  
  A1AA 434 7th St, Eureka  
  Sunday, 4/28/19  
  2pm