

President's Message

SYNERGY “fr Gk *synergos* working together*”

Synergy is the word that comes to mind when I consider all the LWVHC has been accomplishing. In February alone, the board approved the LWVUS Program, held a second membership meeting on our Housing Position, and conducted a memorial service for Carol Masterson. Additionally, Co-President **Jessica Schlachter** and Government Director **Sharrone Blanck** followed their January interview with Sen. Mark McGuire by interviewing Assemblyman Jim Wood. LWVHC member **Erin Dunn**, Wood’s field representative here, set up the meeting that was attended by members from Humboldt, Mendocino, and Sonoma Leagues. You can read about those interviews on pages 4-5 of this VOTER. The Mental/Behavioral Health team continues to meet and further its work on our study with volunteers from the community joining in.

2021-2022 is the year we are to review, revise if necessary, and update our positions on the Humboldt County Library, Land Use Planning, and Housing issues. The teams responsible for these reviews have provided us with outstanding speakers and information on each of these positions at our membership meetings. You will be able to read and vote on all these positions at our Annual Meeting in May. Hats off to the housing team of **Sylvia Shaw, Bonnie Oliver, and Kay Escarda** who planned both housing meetings.

Now that March is here, we will be gearing up for the primary election. In the last election, forums were conducted on Zoom, then made available on YouTube. Many more people watched the forums on YouTube than actually attended the Zoom forums. Clearly, recording our forums for use on other platforms is an important part of our mission to provide non-partisan information to the public.

Voter’s Edge is an on-line opportunity for candidates to explain why they are running and what they hope to accomplish if elected. This is a service provided to

candidates free of charge that makes it easy for the public to learn about those candidates who participate on Voter’s Edge. Please let your non-League friends know about this.

So, join me in applauding the energy of our board members, who working together have kept our League viable. They are a great model of what synergy is!

**Langensheidt’s New College Merriam-Webster English Dictionary*

Sharolyn Hutton
LWVHC Co-President

Save the Date!

On March 17 starting at 7 p.m., the LWVHC will hold via Zoom our final members’ position review meeting for the 2021-2022 season.

In October, we reviewed our position on **Library Services**. In November and February it was **Housing**. And in January we heard ideas for **Land Use Planning**.

Our March 17 meeting will serve two purposes: (1) to report back on and seek consensus on the final wording of the revised **Land Use Planning** position, and (2) to give an update on progress being made by the behavioral health services study committee.

Save the date and look for an e-blast with the Zoom link around that time.

Join us March 17, 7 p.m.!

Our Mission Statement...

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League Consults with Bear River for the March Election

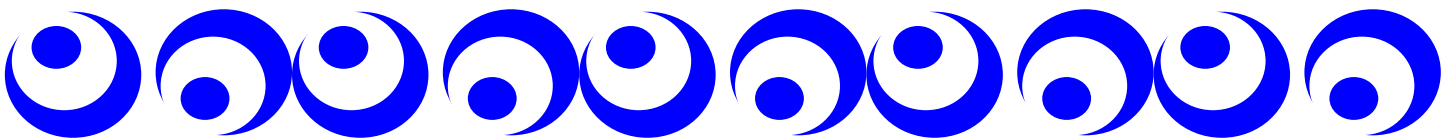
The Bear River Election Committee now has three members, all of whom helped with the mailing preparation on Monday, February 7, 2022. This was to ensure that the election packets went out 45 days before the election, according to the Bear River Election Ordinance.

Election Committee members **Derek Bowman**, **Andy Ashley**, and **Hank Brenard** (all new League members per the decision of the Tribal Council), together with League volunteers **Jessica Schlachter** and **Karen Price**, and Bear River Executive Secretary Brittany Gonzalez put in over four hours of work. They discovered how detailed it is to send a Delivery Confirmation mailing to all Tribal voters! Many thanks to all of these dedicated people who are making sure Bear River voters have a safe, secure and fair election.

You, too, can learn all about this detailed mailing when the Second Notice is mailed out during the week of March 7. I will also be asking for volunteers to observe the election on March 26, 2022, and to count ballots when the polls close at 4 p.m. that day. I will assign two-hour shifts if I get enough volunteers. Please let me know if you are interested.

Finally, we will be counting ballots for the Wiyot Tribal Election on Saturday, April 2, 2022. This is a short session on Table Bluff, and I will need two volunteers to work with me there. Again, please let me know if you would like to help.

Byrd Lochtie,
LWVHC Election Service Director



Behavioral Health Study Update

The LWVHC Behavioral Health Services study committee got the new year underway with monthly meetings on January 25 and February 16. In January, we sketched out a potential timeline for our remaining meetings:

Research reports and summaries, guest speakers through May or June
Assessing whether meeting over the summer is feasible

In the fall, assessing data collected, finishing up reports, creating the consensus statements that build the new Behavioral Health Services position so it can be presented to the LWVHC board of directors by December 2022.

If needed, we can stretch that timeline into the first couple of months of 2023. This aligns well with the needs of LWVHC, with time between January and March 2023 to hold a member meeting presenting the proposed Behavioral Health Services position, glean member input and seek their consensus on a draft position to be presented to the LWVHC board of directors for approval. If approved at the April board meeting, the new position goes into the Annual Meeting Kit and is presented to the League members for their deciding vote at the Annual Membership Meeting in May 2023.

Also, at the January meeting we decided to invite our first guest speaker for our March meeting and discussed who to ask. We agreed that selecting a set date/time for our monthly meetings would be beneficial. All committee members will be contacted by email to choose that set time. Then, we heard two reports:

Wendy Ring started looking at recent Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) reports and will focus on their 2015-2016 report on the Behavioral Health Board, and the most recent one on mental health and the correctional facility plus the

Behavioral Health Study Update continued

follow-up reports about county agencies' compliance with CGJ recommendations. **Molly Cate** gave a report on the wonderful four-day virtual conference she attended in mid-November on native youth mental health and wellness hosted by Two Feathers Native American Family Services in partnership with Stanford Medicine Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Our February 16 meeting was the first one on our newly chosen date and time, the third Wednesday of each month from 6 to 7 p.m. Having a regular meeting date will facilitate inviting guest speakers and holding panels. Most of our meeting was a discussion about possible guests to invite and topics to pursue. **Debbe Hartridge** presented a summary of the recommendations from the book *Insane Consequences*.

Our next meeting is March 16.

Molly Cate
LWVHC Program Director

Voter's Edge: A Great Source of Information

Voter's Edge is a comprehensive nonpartisan online guide to federal, state, and local elections. Its origin is Maplight's Voter's Edge (founded 2005) which conducts nonpartisan research and collects data on campaign contributions, politicians, industries, and companies. The data collected shows patterns of influence on the political process. In 2014, Maplight joined forces with the LWVC Education Fund to create the Voter's Edge California. The major objective of this joint project is to provide transparency in the electoral process at the federal, state, and local levels.

This online guide provides abundant information to voters. On Voter's Edge, voters can:

- Access their full, personalized ballot by entering their address.
- Get in-depth information on candidates, measures, and who supports them.
- See candidate biographies, top priorities, photos, policy videos, endorsements, and detailed information about who funds their campaigns.
- Read neutral summaries of ballot measures, see the latest news on the measures, and find out who supports and opposes them.
- Check where, when, and how to vote, including information on their local polling locations.
- Keep track of their choices to make voting easier.
- Share information about the election with friends and family.

If you haven't yet explored Voter's Edge, I highly recommend that you do. It is a treasure trove for nonpartisan information on candidates and elections. The link is: <https://votersedge.org/page/about-voters-edge>.

Maggie Augustine
LWVHC Voter Service Director

Resources - websites:

- <https://votersedge.org/page/about-voters-edge>
- <https://votersedge.org/ca>
- <https://www.maplight.org/>
- <https://decode.org/about-us/>
- <https://knightfoundation.org/articles/how-maplight-expanding-voters-edge-empower-americans-during-2016-elections-and-beyond/>



Legislative Interview Summaries

According to the League of Women Voters of California, “Legislative interviews are a powerful tool: increasing League visibility, gathering information, and raising awareness among California’s state representatives about our interest in policies they are considering.”

On January 27, 2022, **Sharrone Blanck** and I joined with the Marin, Mendocino, and Sonoma County Leagues to interview State Senator Mike McGuire, with notes taken by Debbie McKay, of LWV Sonoma County. On February 4, 2022, **Sharrone Blanck, Sharolyn Hutton** and I joined with the Mendocino and Sonoma County Leagues to interview State Assemblyman Jim Wood, with notes taken by me. Below is the summary of the interviews.

Question 1: Redistricting Changes in Advance of 2031

What changes, if any, would you support for the next redistricting cycle in 2031?

McGuire: The state Senate has just begun a debrief of the statewide process for redistricting the legislative seats, and McGuire expects that many more city and town councils will be moving to district based elections in the future. He finds that district elections are beneficial in many ways, including giving a voice to groups who have not always been represented in at-large elections. He stressed that a one-size-fits all approach will most likely not work and supports flexibility.

Wood: Wood stressed that gerrymandering is less of an issue here in California than it is in some states, and said that the redistricting of special districts would happen on a local level.

Question 2: Climate Change, Water, and Equity

What do you see as ways California can help these communities while dealing with the water effects of climate change upon the state? How do we move toward equity and sustainability? Please tell us about both proposed and potential legislation and funding sources.

McGuire: McGuire reported that the Senate will be proposing the most significant legislation ever proposed on climate change issues. There is a Climate Action Committee that is preparing a series of recommendations. For the last month and a half, committee members have been meeting with stakeholders, including social justice groups, environmental justice groups, and environmental groups for input and ideas. He expects there will be 12 to 15 bills introduced by the committee, which will focus on the following areas: energy grid improvements, ending the state’s reliance on fossil fuels, career training, the phasing out of the selling of new gas- and diesel-powered vehicles by 2035, a \$120 billion expansion of the solar tax credit, a program to make used electric vehicles available to lower income residents at a reasonable cost, and funding to reduce emissions from large trucks transporting goods in and out of ports.

Wood: Wood emphasized that the needs of the North Coast are different from those of the rest of the state, so it is vital that rural areas are properly represented and aren’t left out of discussions. Communities of color and lower socioeconomic communities are most at risk for the adverse effects of climate change, and he is dedicated to making sure that those communities are acknowledged.

Question 3: California’s Children and Youth Mental Health Emergency

What more needs to be done to address the mental health needs of California’s children and youth? Do you anticipate proposing or supporting any legislation to confront the growing problem?

McGuire: McGuire listed mental health services for students among his top priorities. Historically, the North Coast has the highest rate of ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) in the state, and the past few years of wildfires, floods, COVID, and distanced learning has only made it worse. The state has committed \$2.5 million in hopes of recruiting 10,000 additional school counselors by reimbursing the tuition of those who agree

Legislative Interview Summaries continued

to serve as a school counselor for three years after graduation. The state is considering additional spending on mental health professionals in order to meet needs.

Wood: Wood feels that the \$4.4 billion that is currently allocated to address the youth mental health crisis isn't enough to solve the problem, and one of the biggest challenges is that the workforce needs to be expanded in order to meet the needs of communities. Humboldt County in particular has the highest number of ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) per capita, which is twice the state average. Wood stressed that he's willing to "go to bat" for his constituents, so please contact his office with any needs and/or problems.

Question 4: Personal Priorities of Legislator

What other major issues do you think the legislature must deal with in 2022? What are your personal priorities?

McGuire: In regard to the Senate, McGuire listed addressing climate change, housing (especially affordable housing), and childcare as top priorities. In regard to personal priorities, he said that many of his priorities are aligned with those of the Senate, including addressing climate change, housing those facing homelessness, and affordable housing. He is also focused on raising the minimum wage and making both education and healthcare more accessible and affordable.

State Senator Mike McGuire: 1036 5th St., Suite D, Eureka, CA 95501 Phone: 707-445-6508

Wood: Healthcare! Quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare is vital. While AB1400 (Guaranteed Health Care for All) didn't advance, Wood would like to see it kept on the front burner. In a recent poll, 86% of people in California ranked the cost of healthcare as "important" or "extremely important," so it's a topic that many people seem to be in favor of.

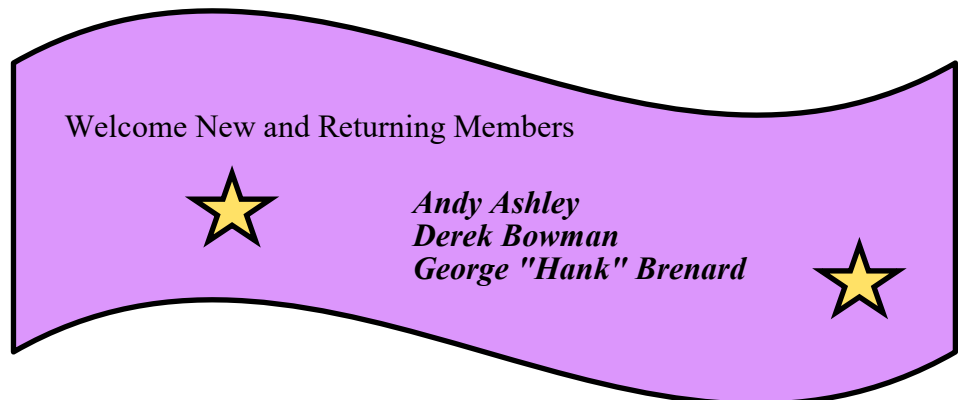
In addition, Wood also spoke of the importance of affordable housing, though he stressed that he is not a housing expert and frequently defers to more knowledgeable colleagues on the topic. Bills were pushed through the legislature last year regarding accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and the streamlining of the process to build new housing. Housing costs are astronomical, as is the cost of building supplies, which in turn has created issues of homelessness and a lack of housing throughout the state.

Optional Question 5: Local Issues/Follow-Up Questions

Wood: Regarding his statement asking people to contact him with any needs: please reach out to his local offices. Regarding low wage jobs: it's a statewide issue, and living wages are incredibly important. Regarding infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations: By 2035, new gas- and diesel-powered vehicles will not be sold in California, and Wood is concerned that the rural counties that he represents won't necessarily have adequate charging stations/infrastructure by then.

Assemblyman Jim Wood: 1036 5th St., Suite D, Eureka, CA 95501. Phone: (707) 445-7014

Jessica Schlachter
LWVHC Co-President



LWVHC Voices Heard

On February 1, the board of directors of the LWVHC held an abbreviated monthly meeting so that we could invite members to join us on Zoom at 7 p.m. to discuss and find consensus on the proposed U.S. League of Women Voters Program for 2022-2024 and to add any additional topics we thought national League should add. We have one vote on the national program and the deadline to submit our vote is March 1, 2022.

Noting that this is a critical time for our democracy, the League of Women Voters continues to call for a free, fair and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters. To do this the national League is proposing they continue their “Campaign for Making Democracy Work.” The components of this campaign are voting rights, improving elections, challenging money in politics, and fair redistricting. Between July and October 2021, the League filed five cases challenging anti-voter laws around the country, three cases to further redistricting reform, two money in politics cases, and more than a dozen cases dealing with other critical issues relating to voter protection and access.

Voting Rights: The 2020 election led to the League’s busiest litigation year with 77 cases filed in 37 states, all to increase voter access. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court removed key protections of the 1965 *Voting Rights Act*. Since then, a surge of anti-voter bills have swept through the United States with 33 such laws being enacted in 19 states in 2021 alone. To fight back, LWVUS has consistently lobbied in support of the *For the People Act* and the *Freedom to Vote Act* as well as the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* and has submitted many legal challenges.

Here are a few disturbing images from current anti-voter laws. PBS Newshour interviewed a 95-year-old World War Two veteran in Texas who has never failed to vote, yet this year he has twice been denied a ballot. The Texas law penalizes county election officials with a mandatory six-month jail sentence and up to a \$10,000 fine for providing what had been normal voter services, such as call-backs to answer voter registration questions. The Georgia law, challenged by LWVUS, LWV Georgia, the NAACP, Latino Fund and the Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe, directly targets people of color, especially African-American voters, with restricted access to absentee ballots and drop boxes and new ID requirements.

Improving Elections: The National League continues to step up its focus on increasing voter education and registration for all ages and ethnicities, especially with its one-stop-shop for voter information, “Vote 411.” LWVUS supports the following to improve elections: online voter registration, mail-in voting, automatic voter registration, multilingual voting resources, extended polling hours, early voting, extended registration deadlines, expanded polling locations, eliminating ballot notary and witness signature requirements, eliminating or relaxing ID requirements, plus adding more protections for in-person voting.

Money in Politics: The 2010 U.S. Supreme Court “Citizens United” decision opened the floodgates for big money to swamp our elections, allowing corporations, Super PACs with obscure sources of donations and ‘dark money’ with no source given at all to have an unbalanced influence on state and national elections. This has damaged the principle of “one-person, one-vote” and is a huge barrier for Americans wishing to run for public office but lacking significant financial resources.

Redistricting: Again, recent U.S. Supreme Court action has threatened our cherished democracy. In 2019, **the Supreme Court ruled that there is no fair way to determine whether gerrymandering has gone too far** in any state. As a result, federal courts will be hands-off in the redistricting process even when new district lines are drawn to intentionally decrease people’s voting power based on racial demographics or political party. The national League also supports statehood for the minimally enfranchised residents of the District of Columbia.

You can access more information about each of these areas right from the first page of the nicely re-designed LWVUS website: <https://www.lwv.org/>.

LWVHC Voices Heard continued

Everyone present at our Feb. 1 meeting fully supported the continuation of the “Campaign for Making Democracy Work” as the national League program for 2022 through 2024. No other topics were requested for inclusion. There was a stated emphasis on supporting community education efforts on the elements of the “Campaign” at all levels of League activity and support for statehood for the District of Columbia.

Molly Cate
LWVHC Program Director

Second Housing Position Review Meeting Summary

LWVHC members and friends attending the second housing membership meeting of the program year on Zoom gained a glimpse of the myriad housing projects and ordinances on the horizon in Humboldt. Topics ranged from tiny villages and parking lot shelters among solutions for the unhoused, and from sea level rise threats to increased opportunities for homeowners to do more housing options on their properties via accessory dwellings and subdivisions. Our guests were Michelle Nielsen, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning, Humboldt County, Cristin Kenyon, Planner, City of Eureka and Kristen Raymond, Housing Technician, City of Eureka. They all impressed us with the energy being put forth to take advantage of new legislation, funding, and public interest. Our participation was encouraged, and our questions were addressed.

Following our speakers, the Housing Committee members walked members in attendance through our current LWVHC Housing Position adopted ten years ago. The Committee made recommendations for consolidation of statements, clarifications, and changing the action words on policies that had been implemented to support the new policies. Members concurred with Committee recommendations. The Committee will meet in early March to incorporate the updates and present the revised Housing Position to the Board. Finally, it will be placed in the Annual Meeting Kit for presentation to the LWVHC members.

Thank you to members and our many resource contributors.

Sylvia Shaw
LWVHC Social Policy Director
Bonnie Oliver, LWVHC Member
Kay Escarda, LWVHC Member

California Water Use

Everything about climate change seems dire: droughts, fires, floods, and severe storms cause death and destruction. But there is always room for hope. And although people may rightly say that hope is not an action plan, there are positive steps we can take to reduce some of the problems caused by climate change.

On Saturday, February 12, as a member of the LWVHC and a member of the LWVC Water Committee, I attended a webinar, California Water: Over Promised. Over Delivered. Solutions? Presented by the League of Women Voters of Santa Clara Valley. The speaker, Felicia Marcus J.D. is currently the Landreth Visiting Fellow at Stanford University’s Water in the West Program, former chair of the California Water Board, former Regional Administrator of the U.S. EPA Region IX, and previous chair of the Los Angeles Department of Public Works (where she managed wastewater, water and solid waste recycling, and stormwater management). Felicia Marcus participated in and spoke at recent conferences like the United Nations Glasgow Climate Change Conference (COP26) and UNESCO Megacities Conference in Paris. She has years of water expertise at the federal, state, and local level. Her message in a nutshell is yes, we have serious problems regard-

California Water Use continued

ing water use in California, but it is possible to resolve these problems. She provided a number of solutions.

Adopt more nature-based plans for water use in our state. On the Northcoast, we already have a nature-based plan for water use-the Arcata Wastewater Treatment Facility. This facility famously uses the Arcata Marsh for wastewater treatment. The system, dedicated in 1981 is aging; however, in 2021, upgrades were made to the system to ensure its continued use. But for so many people, the Arcata Marsh is a place to get out and enjoy the beauty and abundance of wildlife. A more recent nature-based is the White Slough Tidal Restoration Project at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, “a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and many other statewide agencies.... The project helps to bolster the viability of local farms, protect local animal species and to reduce the risk of flooding for U.S. Highway 101 according to John Heil, deputy assistant regional director for external affairs in the Pacific Southwest for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”¹ Next year, four dams on the Klamath River, (Iron Gate, Copco 1, Copco 2, and JC Boyle) are scheduled to be removed opening up fish passage to over 400 miles of potential spawning and rearing habitat. There are many other nature-based plans throughout California. Most of them are termed multi-benefit solutions some of which are to promote wise use of water, clean water, fish and wildlife protection, and public safety to name a few.

Recognize access to potable water as a human right, not a privilege.

Practice sustainability by living (using water) within our means.

Learn to be resilient by expecting the unexpected. For example, we cannot prevent, control, or ever cover every contingency of severe weather events; instead, we need to learn how to come back from them quickly, plan for ways to recover.

Promote adaptation over mitigation. Mitigation has received more attention than adaptation, but adaptation is easier for most people.

Try to take a wholistic approach to water. Felecia spoke of the story of the blind men and the elephant. Because each of the blind men could only know a small part of the elephant, they couldn't agree on what it was. Knowing where our water comes from, not just the name on the water bill, and where it goes helps us to see the whole elephant.

Become comfortable with complexity.

Become more and more adept at using recycled water.

If you are interested in sources of information for water use in California, here are three worth looking at:

LWVC California Water Resources <https://lwvc.org/issues/california-water-resources>

Maven's Notebook <https://mavensnotebook.com/>

California Trout <https://caltrout.org/>

Leslie Leach

LWVHC Natural Resources Director

1 *Times Standard*, “Restoration Project Enhances Critical Habitat Diversity,” p.A2, Feb/ 9, 2022

Renew Now or Help Someone Become a LWVHC 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.

_____ \$75 Single Membership

_____ \$115 Family Membership
(2 in same household)

_____ 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 _____



The League of Women Voters of Humboldt County

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P.O. Box 3219, Eureka, CA 95502
www.lwvhc.org vote@lwvhc.org
(707) 444-9252

Who's Who in Your 2021-2022 League Board

- Co-Presidents.....Sharolyn Hutton/
Jessica Schlachter
- Vice President.....Molly Cate
- Secretary.....Anne Hartline
- Treasurer.....Nancy Kay
- Program Director.....Molly Cate
- Natural Resources Director.....Leslie Leach
- Social Policy Directors.....Molly Cate/
Amy Moffat/Sylvia Shaw
- Government Directors.....Sharrone Blanck/
Karen Price
- Fairs Director.....Becky Simpson
- Access Humboldt Liaison.....Molly Cate
- Election Service Director.....Byrd Lochtie
- Interim Forum Director.....Ann Diehl
- Voter Service Director.....Maggie Augustine
- Membership Director.....Becky Simpson
- Social Media Chair.....Jessica Schlachter
- VOTER Co-Editors....Dave Rosso/Leslie Leach
- Community Education Directors.....Nancy Kay/
Amy Moffat
- Communications Director.....Deborah Downs
- Traditional Media Chair.....Jessica Schlachter
- Director.....Eddie Morgan





P.O. Box 3219
Eureka, CA 95502

To:

Get Involved!

We all have a unique set of skills to contribute and limited time to afford. Working together we become a viable force for change. Call or email today to say you want to participate.
Visit www.lwvhc.org or call (707) 444-9252.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity

LWVHC Calendar

Tuesday, March 1 6 p.m.	Board Meeting
Thursday, March 17 7 p.m.	Membership Meeting
LWVHC Webpage	Any Time!
LWCHC Twitter	Any Time!
LWCHC Instagram	Any Time!