



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

October, 2019

Cindy Plank and Nancy Kleiber, Presidents

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

October meeting

Mental Health Forum Rescheduled

The League meeting originally scheduled for October 8 will now take place at 6 pm on October 29 at the Caspar Community Center. Coastal Supervisors Dan Gjerde and Ted Williams will join John Wetzler and others to discuss mental health services in our county. The panel will also talk about the Measure B Committee. An upcoming flier will provide more information about this important mental health forum. Mark the new date on your calendars.

Climate Strike Brings People Out

by Jary Stavely

Over 1000 people turned out along the respective Main Streets of Fort Bragg and Mendocino to honor the youth Climate Strike held on September 20. The international action was organized in anticipation of the UN meetings being held the next week.

The lines of participants in Fort Bragg stretched from the Company Store near Redwood Ave. along both sides of Main St. past the intersection of Laurel St. half way up the block towards Pine St. Most of the demonstrators held signs, some of which solicited honks from the drivers-by. One car was blazoned with, "We're Missing Our Lessons So We Can Teach You One." The air was filled with a hubbub of sounds including chants, drumming, and car horns, and later it contained drones documenting the turnout.

A smattering of high school students were mixed into the rows of mostly older people in Fort Bragg. The group was joined by a class of elementary students from Montessori Del Mar, who added enthusiastic yells and dancing to the scene. Photos from Mendocino suggest a larger proportion of students turned out down there. Some of the older participants were heard expressing relief that no marching was to take place. League members Sharon Gilligan, Roberta Brockschmidt, Jane Person, Irene Malone, George Reinhardt, Patricia Marien, Linda Jupiter, Meg Courtney, Jary Stavely, and Carol Czadek could be spotted in the Fort Bragg contingent. More on the strike, including Carol's photos, can be found on page 8.

Hospital Schedules Town Halls

The MCDH has announced a series of meetings this month to give information about its possible affiliation with Adventist Health/Stone Point Health.

- October 7, 6:00 pm : Elk, Greenwood Community Center
- October 8, 6:00 pm: Albion, Pacific Union College Field Station
- October 14, 1:00 pm: Fort Bragg Senior Center
- October 14, 6:00 pm: Comptche, Chapel of the Redwoods
- October 16, 6:00 pm : Mendocino, Hill House Inn
- October 17, 6:00 pm : Westport Community Center
- October 21, 6:00 pm : Fort Bragg Town Hall
- October 22, 6:00 pm: Caspar Community Center
- October 24, 6:00 pm: Fort Bragg, Cotton Auditorium

Contact Gayl Moon at 961-4610 for further information.

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.

President's message ...

From Advocacy to Backstop

By Nancy Kleiber

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization. We take our non-partisanship seriously. Many of you may not be aware that the League's ground rules prohibit some key officers of the League from supporting, endorsing, or contributing to any candidate or political party. As Co-President, not only may I not put my money where my mouth is, but I may not open my mouth to support any candidate for political office. At first, in an election year, I felt this was an infringement on my First Amendment rights. But as I am receiving multiple, daily fund solicitations from candidates across the political spectrum, I find it a relief, a guilt-free advantage, to be able to tell them all, "No thank you."

Of course, being non-partisan doesn't mean that we can abrogate our responsibility to examine and hold candidates accountable for their records, to scrutinize their position on issues—to get past the alluring campaign promises and standings in popularity polls. We will continue to present candidate forums to give you an opportunity to question and to listen.

While the League is non-partisan, we are not apolitical. Through a long process of consensus, our organization finds common ground on the most fundamental issues facing our country, adopts, and then aggressively applies those positions. As a political organization, we have the advantage of being both progressive and conservative, of appealing to both ideological leanings. We are out on the cutting edge when it comes to the expansion of voting rights, election reform, social justice, environmental protections, and yet tenaciously stubborn on unfettered government spending or infringements on individual liberty. On any attempts to roll back hard-won legislation we are a stalwart backstop. "Backstop" in my youth referred to the structure behind home plate that protected the public from wild pitches, foul balls, and thrown bats. Today, I've seen the word pop up in the proposed Brexit protocols, and in the recently passed SB1, to cement federal environmental protections into California law.

A good example of the League's ability to set and work towards a common goal is our position on healthcare reform. In 1990, the LWVUS undertook a two-year study of the funding and delivery of health



care in the United States. Upon completion of the study, the League announced its initial healthcare position in April, 1992, and the final position one year later. So, after a two-year study and another year of consensus building, we came out with a position supporting a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes, commonly known as the "single payer" approach. Wow, you can bet that that made the headlines. But, knowing full well that "politics is the art of the possible, the attainable" (Otto von Bismarck), our adopted position also supported an employer-based system that provided universal access to health care as an important step toward a national health insurance plan that would provide "a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost to all U.S. residents."

In 2010, after nearly two decades of education and advocacy, the League celebrated a measure of success when the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was enacted and signed. Most of this succeeding decade has been focused on our backstop role in repelling efforts to repeal or diminish the ACA.

With an eye to the 2020 elections, both national and local, we should brush up on League positions, not only on health care, but also on the broad range of issues facing us, so that we can judge all candidates in a political, but non-partisan way. To view our national positions in full, go to:

<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/LWV%202018-20%20Impact%20on%20Issues.pdf>.

September meeting

Our Coastal School Districts

by Sharon Gilligan

The League's kickoff meeting on September 17 (Constitution Day) featured the superintendents of the two school districts on the north Mendocino coast. They combined to present the "state of our schools," the high school students of which are the targets of the League's recurring Youth Voter Registration Project.

Fort Bragg's Rebecca (Becky) Walker oversees a district of 1800 students with an ethnic breakdown of 46% Caucasian, 44% Hispanic, and 10% Other. Within those numbers 72% are classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 25% are English learners. Because more than half of family incomes (based on eligibility for free or reduced price lunches) are classified as poverty level, all students get a free lunch and breakfast. Kindergarten through grade five classes get breakfast in their classrooms. The District has 258 employees.

The District's goals, formulated to reflect the particular needs and desires of the community it serves, include:

- Providing college and career readiness, meaning college prep for those wanting it and vocational experiences for those not on track for college; the career readiness goal includes offering classes in culinary and industrial arts, as well as agriculture science and mechanics.
- Closing the achievement gap
- Improving the school culture to sustain a positive outlook for students and staff

To illustrate the challenges facing teachers and staff, Becky showed a timeline of the technological advances in communication over the last 25 years, beginning with the first online services (Prodigy and CompuServe) in 1990, through introduction of the iMac in 1998, the iPod in 2002 (when most of the 2020 class was born), to 2006 when Nintendo released Wii (and the 8th grade students were born), all the way to current tech advances of drone product delivery. These rapid changes illustrate the need to give students skills to handle the unforeseen changes of the future, and carry with them significant problems involving impatience, bullying, and loss of privacy—some of the effects of technological change which our schools must address.

In addition to a core curriculum, Fort Bragg Unified offers multiple art and music programs. The District is proud of its cooperation with Mendocino College to offer concurrent enrollment in classes that include Psychology, Philosophy, Art History, Speech, Spanish and Western Civilization for 11th and 12th graders, giving students a running start on their future.

Jason Morse, superintendent of Mendocino Unified, has been in his position since 2012, heading up a district of approximately 530 students. That number includes 79 students from the Fort Bragg district, 17 from Point Arena and eight from Anderson Valley. Also 22 students from the Mendocino district are enrolled in Fort Bragg schools. Since Mendocino is a "District of Choice," its funding is determined by the amount of property tax collected, instead of by enrollment numbers (ADA), as in Fort Bragg. Sixty MUSD students are children of District employees.

The District has 113 employees, of which nineteen are graduates who returned to the area. It runs student-operated radio station KAKX on campus, owns internet provider MCN, and provides facilities for community organizations—an example is the Mendocino Writers Conference, which blankets the K-8 campus for several days every August.

One of the District accomplishments Jason is most proud of is its in-house mental health services, which include a full-time social worker to help solve problems. Jason said he canvassed Mendocino merchants for their feelings about the high school's open campus and found that most actually enjoyed having the students in town during the lunch hour.

MUSD is considering embarking on a campaign for a \$26 million bond measure to replace the high school, which was built in 1948 and is woefully inadequate for current technological needs and seismic requirements. Bids for designing the project have been put out, and the best offer was from QKA Architects, the same company that worked on the K-8 renovation 11 years ago. Partner Mark Quattrocchi is a graduate of Mendocino schools. The bond measure would be significantly larger than any the District has attempted in the past, and would need 55% voter approval. Jason and the MUSD board are trying to determine whether to place the measure on the March 2020 ballot.

Mill Site Under Discussion

by Jary Stavelly

Future development on the former Fort Bragg mill site was the topic of two meetings held at Town Hall last month. At the first meeting, held on September 12, members of the Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium [see August '19 *Voter*] shared their goals for what should happen on the property. During the second meeting, a joint Fort Bragg City Council/Planning Commission meeting held on September 21, the owners of two parcels recently sold by Georgia-Pacific shared plans for their newly acquired portions of the property. Any future development is subject to zoning approval by the City.

Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium Presentation

Members of the Consortium consider their organization to be a resource for science-based decisions on what happens to the mill site. Although they prefer slow, cautious planning that preserves wildlife and allows natural creek and wetland areas, they opened their meeting with the declaration that they see no reason not to proceed with development on the parts of the property which are secure from toxins and which do not impact the sensitive habitats which ought to be restored.

Bill Lemos, who has experience investigating and documenting ecosystems in Big River State Park and local offshore marine areas, discussed economic aspects of development on the Fort Bragg headlands. He pointed out how the encompassing nature of the new coastal trail provides an opportunity to employ volunteers and scientists in learning more about the biology of the site, something which, he said, happened at Big River. More jobs might also be generated at a modern sawmill which could be developed on a different site with better access to water, through a swap of lands with the County. He stressed how the historical approach to logging represented an "extractive" mindset that needs to be replaced with emphasis on restoration and conservation.

Leslie Kashiwada, a scientist with the Department of Fish & Game, has documented many of the plants and animals now living on the mill site. From her perspective it is essential that open space be planned for from the beginning—not, as has happened before, be the portion that is left over after everything else has been planned and developed. The mill site contains three types of habitat: marine estuary, riparian, and coastal prairie, and it is contiguous with

the Pudding Creek watershed. The variety of habitat, combined with access to the open space to the north, allows for a wide variety of vegetation and animals to live in the area. She emphasized the need, in the Consortium's view, for a wildlife corridor to be maintained which would allow animals to forage through an uninterrupted swath connecting the trees across from Safeway to the headlands by Glass Beach and Pudding Creek. The City's draft zoning map of several years ago would break the site up into small fragments which lack "ecological integrity."

George Reinhardt discussed the ramifications of the impending collapse of the artificial berm now in place north and west of Pond 8, below the City's sewage treatment plant. He told the audience that an estuary was coming (that ocean water was destined to inundate that low area) in the next few years, no matter what was done. This is an area which is still subject to the state Department of Toxic Substance Control rulings, and which G-P cannot sell at this time. Its plan for "armoring" the coastline is no longer legal. In Reinhart's view, this area holds great potential for the future. In combination with daylighting Alder and Maple Creeks, he envisions the restoration of the estuary there as a kind of environmental theme park—a "Nature Reclaims Man's Mistakes" park that could become a model for the rest of the country, as the remains of the mill operation become converted to a natural area. He showed pictures of a similar process which has taken place on Alcatraz Island. "Fort Bragg could become a center for environmental healing," he said, especially in conjunction with carbon sequestration farming and bee preservation activity already underway.

John Gallo concluded the presentation with a review of what is needed in the planning process. He suggested that buildout analysis of the city's plan shows that it would take 50 years to accomplish, and would likely lead to haphazard development, such as successive buildings destroying the views of earlier ones, as happened on Todd's Point. His organization, the Conservation Biology Institute, is making an online mapping tool available to those who plan mill site development. He said that there was a consensus around the 2014 plan, and he hopes that planning can now proceed in an efficient, forward-thinking, sustainable way which incorporates resilience, self-reliance, and adaptability into mill site development.

The Consortium's website is
<https://www.fortbraggheadlandsconsortium.org/>.

City Council/Planning Commission Meeting

The owners of Harvest Market have purchased 15 acres of the mill site in the region of the old Georgia-Pacific tree nursery. The property basically covers the pad of the old nursery and the existing wooded area, but development would only take place on the seven acres nearest to Cypress St. as there are restrictions on the riparian portion of it. Jennifer Bosma, co-operator Harvest, and consultant Amy Wynn told the council members and commissioners that they propose to build a new supermarket on the property, with the possible inclusion of a small commercial area and 48 housing units. Although very preliminary in nature, the plans would need to include a parking lot for anticipated customers. Details of traffic access and flow have not yet been developed.

The owners of the Skunk Train purchased seventy acres on the north end of the mill site—all the area from the rail yards behind the Company Store out to the city's coastal trail property, and north to Elm St. Company representatives Mike Hart and Robert Pinoli described extensive cleanup they have already conducted on the property to remove broken concrete, scrap metal and even Himalayan blackberries, so that what the land looks like can now be viewed more easily. Architect Burt Miller described detailed plans which his company has developed with input from the City's 2016 proposed plan, the Sherwood Band of Pomo, and even the Consortium. Their proposal includes a tourist destination behind the company store, a hotel/condominium west of that towards the coastal trail, a new railroad depot and restaurant on the north end next to Glass Beach, and a rail line that would run from the existing tracks west and then north along the trail to terminate at Glass Beach. It also includes 300 new housing units, some of which would be "affordable" in keeping with the City's plan, along the eastern portion of the property bordering West St., as well as a broad expanse of open space, between the train tracks and the new housing.

Comments afterwards from council members, commissioners, and the public mainly praised the proposed plans for restricting automobile use, and for incorporating housing and open space. Most objections centered around how the Skunk Train proposal could restrict the possible wildlife corridor by creating "pinch points" at the proposed hotel on

the south and at the new depot on the north. There was some discussion about what effect the new railroad spur could have on wildlife. The owners suggested that the trains would have minimal impact due to their infrequency, their slow speed, and the fact that they would not run at night.

A more complete account of the Saturday meeting by Chris Calder may be found in the Advocate-News for September 26: <https://www.advocate-news.com/2019/09/26/mill-site-owners-present-plans/>.

Every Voter Counts!



League members were busy at a variety of locations in recognition of National Voter Registration Day, September 24. League member Marylynn Henes organized volunteers at the Fort Bragg and Mendocino post offices; Paula Cohen, Meg Courtney, and Jane Person tabled at the Fiesta Familiar (on the 22nd); Cindy Plank and Charlene McAllister worked at Mendocino College in Ukiah; Jim Mastin joined County Clerk Katrina

Bartolomie at the Ukiah Farmers' Market. Altogether, they report registering 19 people, including one new citizen, and sending home 34 additional registration forms.



Petaluma Valley Hospital Needs a Dose of Medicine

VOTER readers who are interested in the fate of the Mendocino Coast District Hospital may be interested in the following opinion piece about a similar situation. This editorial is from the Petaluma Argus-Courier:

If Petaluma Valley Hospital was a patient, it would be quarantined in the intensive care unit.

Petaluma's only acute care facility, with the city's only emergency room, is ailing, the product of several compounding events that have left the hospital in poor health.

The latest symptom is a case of mold discovered in several non-patient hospital rooms ("Mold found in hospital rooms," Aug. 24). This forced the labor and delivery unit to close for two weeks while the problem was addressed.

But the mold issue may just be a symptom of a bigger problem, one that has kept the nearly 40-year-old hospital in limbo for several years.

St. Joseph Health has operated the hospital for more than 20 years, and for the most part has done a commendable job as the caretaker of the publicly owned facility. However, the company's lease expired in 2017, and it has been running things on an interim basis ever since.

Without a long-term lease, St. Joseph has no incentive to make significant investments in the hospital's future. If you were renting a house on a month-to-month basis, would you plant a garden knowing that your landlord could end the arrangement at any time?

Probably not.

The landlord in this case is the Petaluma Health Care District, which owns the hospital.

The district would like to negotiate a long-term lease deal, and it would like St. Joseph to be a part of the hospital's future, but its hands are tied by the state attorney general's office.

The attorney general is currently deciding whether to allow a partnership between St. Joseph and Adventist Health that would create a new Northern California health care company.

The process, which already has taken more than a year, appears to be wrapping up with a decision expected next month.

We are hopeful that the attorney general expeditiously approves the deal, at which point serious negotiations can begin for a long-term lease agreement with the new company. The sooner an agreement is in place, the sooner the new company can begin making investments to bring the hospital back to the high standards this community is used to.

One more complication is the contentious nature of contract negotiations between the Petaluma nurses' union and St. Joseph. Talks have stalled over provisions that nurses say would allow for dangerously low staffing levels.

After more than 30 meetings between the union and St. Joseph, the two sides seem to be at an impasse. We hope that a mediator can come in and help the two sides see eye to eye, and that they can work out a contract that keeps patients and employees safe.

We want the nurses to be happy with their employer.

Ultimately, the next lease agreement will have to be approved by voters, likely on the 2020 ballot. If nurses are still unhappy by then, they could use their influence to sway voters to reject the deal.

At that point, the Petaluma Health Care District would be forced to again start the whole process over. Meanwhile, without a long-term care plan, the hospital would remain on life support.

The Voter is Your Voice

LWVMC's *Voter* is our way of staying in touch as an organization, encouraging each other's good work and inviting participation in projects. Please use our email address, voter@mcn.org, to submit material you think would interest fellow members. Write an article, tip us off to relevant news or an educational resource, share photos of your democracy-supporting activities. The *Voter* staff can also post your items on the League's Facebook page.

October, 2019

Dear Members,

Every year at this time we begin a new program year, and we also solicit your annual dues. Please take a minute to mail your dues, or mark your calendar to bring them along to our next meeting. The more dues we collect at this time, the less we will spend on postage for having to ask later on.

The full amount of your regular dues—\$60.00 for an individual membership or \$90.00 for a 2-member household—is passed on to the U.S. and California Leagues to support their laudable efforts towards making democracy work and preserving our world. So, in addition to our regular and household memberships, we are pleased to include additional levels of contribution for you to consider when you make your renewal. These fund the activities of our local League. Each membership level is named after a woman of the past who chose to make a difference:

- Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
- Amelia Bloomer was the first woman to own, operate and edit a newspaper, *The Lily*, which promoted women’s rights issues.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton founded the National Woman Suffrage Association and served as its first president.
- Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters: "Winning the vote is only an opening wedge —learning to use it is a bigger task."

Another individual who chose to make a difference was Frederick Douglass, who spoke at the Seneca Falls women’s rights convention urging women not to compromise on their demand for the vote. Donations to our League’s Frederick Douglass Diversity Fund allow scholarship and “try us” memberships.

Thank you for remaining a member of a committed group of women and men who are working to make a difference in the future of our country.

Jary Stavelly
Membership Chair

LWVMC Membership Renewal, 2019-2020

Name _____	Phone _____	Email _____
Student Membership	@ 0	_____
Susan B. Anthony Individual Membership	@ \$60	_____
Amelia Bloomer Household Membership	@ \$90	_____
Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership	@ \$100	_____
Carrie Chapman Catt Membership	@ \$250	_____
Donation to LWVMC		_____
Donation to Frederick Douglass Diversity Fund		_____
Donation to LWVMC Education Fund (tax deductible)		_____
Total		_____

*Please make checks payable to LWVMC, and mail to P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg CA 95437.
Sorry, only Education Fund donations are tax-deductible.*

LWVMC Members Join Global Demonstration : Act Now on Climate Change!

Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg's moving speech to the UN afterwards can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/v33ro5lGHQg>.



Local resident Marilyn Boese also participated in the climate strike. She posted this on the Mendocino Announce List:

“If you are focused on the Climate Change crisis today, and have not read this article in the recent New Yorker, you might search it out: *Money Is the Oxygen on Which the Fire of Global Warming Burns*, by Bill McKibben: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/money-is-the-oxygen-on-which-the-fire-of-global-warming-burns>.”

Video of the Mendocino participants is at https://drive.google.com/open?id=1niG4lhF3c_dxd22qNjNdGK0qD-IZTj0K.