



Lake County residents take part in the national A Day Without A Woman protest, gathering on a corner in downtown Lakeport. Hans Peter — Lake County Publishing

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LAKEPORT >> Yesterday marked International Women’s Day, and several Lakeport residents — men and women alike — spent the afternoon hoisting signs in support of a related event, a Day Without A Woman.

Several cars honked loudly as they passed, showing solidarity with the red-clad marchers. They marched around the intersection of Main and Third Streets, making it nearly impossible not to see the signs.

“This is a follow-up to the marches after (President Trump’s) inauguration,” said Elizabeth Montgomery, a counsellor who often coordinates and participates in such events.

She said many women who aim to raise awareness of the issue chose to take the day off completely, as part of “A Day Without Women,” a national event that encourages women to take the holiday off to show the importance of women in the workplace. While Lake County has many supporters of the issue, Montgomery said most women in Lake County elected to go to work.

John Winslow moved his schedule around to take the day off. As he lifted his sign to nearby traffic, he sported Vietnam medals.

“I never got involved in politics after Vietnam,” he said. “But when Bernie (Sanders) ran, I decided to. A lot of us are Bernie people.”

Some of the marchers attended displayed their affiliation with Progressive Democrats of America, an organization that hopes for reform in the party.

“Those of us who can be here are showing their support,” Montgomery said.

It may have been a small demonstration in Lake County, but there were larger ones held in urban areas. A Day Without A Woman, a national strike that coincides with International Women’s Day, was organized across the country by the same people behind the earlier demonstrations supporting Mexican and Hispanic immigrants.

“When millions of us stood together in January, we saw clearly that our army of love greatly outnumbers that of fear, greed and hatred,” the organizers said on their website. “Let’s raise our voices together again, to say that women’s rights are human rights, regardless of a woman’s race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexual identity, gender expression, economic status, age or disability.”

As women stayed home in droves on Wednesday around the country, drawing attention to the Great National Double Standard that favors men over women in issues like wage disparity, sexual harassment and job insecurity, a number of businesses and school districts across the nation closed their doors to allow staff and teachers to participate. Here in the Bay Area, organizers announced a variety of actions to support the strike, including an 11 a.m. march at San Francisco City Hall and other events in downtown Oakland, San Jose and the UC Berkeley campus. At Palo Alto High School, for example, 45 staff members and 11 teachers, were out; a normal day would have seen 10 or so.

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In the Bay Area, marchers took to the streets in San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland, while some Silicon Valley tech companies voiced their support for the strike in various ways. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey changed his profile picture to red and the company showcased some of the women engineers in a video, while Facebook was encouraging women to share live videos of their stories, interview a female entrepreneur, or tell their friends about a women-owned business.

Shannon Coulter, the Bay Area based media strategist who co-launched the the #grabyourwallet boycott of retailers that sell products from Ivanka Trump or Donald Trump product lines, told the crowd of between 1,000 and 2,000 people: "I have important news to share with you. After November 8, many of you felt powerless, but I'm here to remind you that you are powerful."

Coulter said that since the boycott was launched, becoming a social media phenomenon that apparently prompted Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus and other retailers to stop selling Ivanka Trump clothes and jewelry, 1,400 companies have also stopped advertising on Breitbart News and 23 large and publicly traded companies have "stopped doing business with the most divisive political figure and family we've ever seen."

"A Day Without A Woman" gained momentum in reaction to President Trump's policies and comments on women — especially immigrants and Muslims. But planning for the strike predates the Trump administration. Inspiration came from International Women's Day events outside the United States, where the day is more widely observed.

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