



# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO

July-August 2006

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL.57 NO.15

## Calendar of Events

### July 12th

Wednesday, 6:30pm  
Board Meeting  
3308 Worthington Drive

### July 24th

Monday, 7:00pm  
Moderator Training  
2505 Edgebrook

### July 25th

Tuesday, 12:00 noon  
Lunch and Learn  
Appetez Restaurant

### August 16th

Wednesday, 6:30pm  
Board Meeting  
1313 Broughton Place

### August 23th

Wednesday, 7:00pm  
Local Action Committee  
3308 Worthington Drive

### August 29<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, 12:00 noon  
Lunch and Learn  
Appetez Restaurant



## President's Message:

### **National LWV Convention 2006-- Exciting, Exhilarating, Exhausting**

I was once again honored to represent our local League at the League of Women Voters' 47<sup>th</sup> biennial national convention held in Minneapolis, this past month. My only regret was that we did not have more members attending and we did not have two voting delegates in attendance – please mark your calendar for the next convention which will be held in Portland, Oregon June 2008! Although we were allowed but two delegates this year, and, perhaps three in 2008, depending on membership totals, any number of us may attend convention – the experience is profound and I encourage you to try to attend at least one national conference as a League member. Once again, I was reminded of how our democracy must have first begun over 200 years ago when intellectual discourse and debate must have occurred as they do at national convention – all with the utmost respect and civility for multiple viewpoints! Death penalty, immigration reform, the erosion of civil liberties, separation of powers, paperless ballots, redistricting and voting systems were some of the many national topics that were rationally discussed, debated and decided civilly.

President Kay Maxwell gave an inspiring and motivational speech upon turning the gavel over to our new national League president, Mary Wilson, a lawyer from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Kay spoke of the continued challenge of membership growth, funding, burnout of committed League leaders, the role of the board of directors, and the need to focus on issues that matter most to our communities in a multi-issue organization. Her closing remarks are worth repeating:

*"If you always think what you've always thought,  
Then you will always feel what you've always felt.  
If you always feel what you've always felt,  
Then you will always do what you've always done.  
If you always do what you've always done,  
Then you will always get what you have always gotten.  
If you always get what you've always gotten,  
Then you will always think what you've always thought."*

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**President's Message Continued:**

One of the greatest concerns expressed at the convention was the continued loss of membership at the national level. Although our local league has experienced a steady growth in membership, nationally, the League has lost nearly 30% of its members over the past 30 years, which led to a \$2.50 increase this year in per-member-payments (PMP) that the local leagues must pay national and a \$3.00 increase next year. At the current dues level, our local League must now pay more per member than we receive in dues. Although this was expected when we adopted the budget for this year, it will result in the need for an even greater demand for a successful finance drive and a discussion about an increase in dues for 2007-08.

Our opening speaker, Thomas E. Mann of the Brookings Institution spoke about the "American Democracy in a Partisan Era". He stated that the political scene in Washington DC is the worst he has experienced in his 35 years of observing Congress, which he believes to be deeply dysfunctional and damaged by partisan bickering and internal rancor.

Garrison Keillor, comedian, author and host of the PBS radio show, "Prairie Home Companion" was the banquet speaker. He recalled winning an essay contest hosted by the League when he was eight years old and then used the example of his two children, ages 8 and 30, to demonstrate the relative changes in parenting expectations that have occurred.

There was a lively Judicial Panel, "Understanding the System to Defend the Courts", which discussed merit selection, elections and appointments of judges during the Monday plenary session. It was moderated by Bert Brandenburg, *Executive Director of Justice at Stake Campaign* and included panelists Honorable Michael Wolf, *Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court*, Professor Charlie Geyh, *Indiana Law School* and Mary C. McQueen, *President, National Center for State Courts*.

The delegates passed the resolutions recommended by national: adoption of increases in PMP for both the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 budget years, concurrence of the Illinois Death Penalty position and adoption of a three-year study of immigration policies.

During the adoption of the rules for convention, a very controversial addition made in the rules of the 2004 convention was again added to this convention, "Delegates may also move consideration of resolutions pertaining to program". This small change opened the potential for many non-recommended items in the national program to be re-considered. The recommended items were the final result of the grass-roots program planning that every League conducted in the fall/winter preceding convention but those 'final' decisions made by national are coming more into debate, which ought not to be too surprising considering the extraordinary pace at which news has moved in recent years.

There were 12 considerations this year – whereas 'only' eight were introduced two years ago.

*-continued Page 3*

## **President's Message Continued:**

Two actually passed at the 2006 convention whereas at the 2004 convention, only SARA (Secure, Accurate, Recountable and Accessible) Resolution passed – unfortunately the wording accepted then needed to be further clarified and passed this year with a card vote (439-269) as follows:

Whereas: Some LWVs have had difficulty applying the SARA Resolution (Secure, Accurate, Recountable and Accessible) passed at the last Convention, and  
Whereas: Paperless electronic voting systems are not inherently secure, can malfunction, and do not provide a recountable audit trail,  
Therefore be it resolved that:  
The position on the Citizens' Right to Vote be interpreted to affirm that LWVUS supports only voting systems that are designed so that:

1. they employ a voter-verifiable paper ballot or other paper record, said paper being the official record of the voter's intent; and
2. the voter can verify, either by eye or with the aid of suitable devices for those who have impaired vision, that the paper ballot/record accurately reflects his or her intent; and
3. such verification takes place while the voter is still in the process of voting; and
4. the paper ballot/record is used for audits and recounts; and
5. the vote totals can be verified by an independent hand count of the paper ballot/record; and
6. routine audits of the paper ballot/record in randomly selected precincts can be conducted in every election, and the results published by the jurisdiction.

Motion 529 to move consideration on the not-recommended program item, Balance of Powers, also passed as a resolution:

1. Elevate the restoration of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers to a top priority by specifically adding it to our Democracy Agenda for advocacy and education.
2. Denouncing the erosion of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers and the resulting damage to our constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties.
3. Call upon Congress to assume its vital role for oversight and as a co-equal branch of government responsive to the citizens its members represent.

So, of the 12, two were passed as resolutions, one was ruled out of order, four were defeated as considerations: changes to the LWV name, update and further study of the International Criminal Court, update of our military and defense spending position, prioritizing the nuclear control and disarmament position, and amending the position on electing the President. Then, five more were to be defeated as resolutions: requiring cable and telecommunications broadcasting of public affairs programming, giving energy and climate control a high priority on the action agenda, internet neutrality, higher priority to public health care reform and an update on apportionment.

In closing this month's president's message, I would like to say that serving as your president the past two years has been the most rewarding and most exciting job I have ever had – it has changed me in ways I would never have imagined. I encourage everyone to serve on the board at least once – it is a lot of work but the reward has been stupendous.

*-Patty Lundy, President*

### **DIVERSITY POLICY:**

League of Women Voters of Modesto in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

# VOTER SERVICE



## Volunteers Needed!

Election season is just around the corner and we will soon be busy with voter registration drives, candidate forums and "Pros and Cons" presentations.

We need you! Whether you are a long-time member or the ink's still wet on your membership check, there is a place for you in our fall election season. All our activities take place from approximately mid-September to the end of October. Then it's all over but the voting. Here's an overview of some of the volunteer possibilities.

### Candidate Forums-

If you are new to our forums, we make it easy. You will be paired with an experienced member and work up gradually to whatever it is you like doing best. Maybe you'll collect the questions from the live audience and deliver them to the question sorters. Can you work a stopwatch? Try the timekeeper's job. There are also jobs taking questions over the phone, sorting questions for the moderator, setting up, etc. And when you are ready, come to a moderator training and learn how to run the whole show. Working at candidate forums is one of the most rewarding ways you can make a citizen's contribution to local democracy.

### Voter Registration-

We need people to register voters on the last-day-to-register in October. You will be trained, as well as have an experienced member with you. If you like one-on-one interactions in a comfortable library setting (usually Modesto and Turlock), we have a place for you. Last minute registrants are always grateful to have us there. Come feel the love.

### Pros & Cons-

This November there will be at least 13 propositions on the ballot. We get many requests from community groups to come and explain the ballot measures in a nonpartisan way. Maybe this is where you see yourself making a difference. If you don't mind public speaking, help us explain this year's ballot measures. As always, you will be matched with an experienced partner who will make it fun.

There you have it. Something for the newest, shyest member as well as those with a touch of the Auntie Mame in them. LWV's Voter Service is the most visible "face" of League. We want to see your face!

Call Linda Walden (577-0570) or Sue Cassidy (521-4180) to become involved.

*-Linda Walden and Susan Cassidy, Voter Service*

### League Joins New Alliance With Overseas Vote Foundation

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO – Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF) today announced a sweeping list of new Alliance Partners including the League of Women Voters, the National Campus Voter Registration Project, the National Defense Committee, and the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas and the Election Administration Research Center, University of California, Berkeley. The new OVF Alliance Partners join the National Association of Secretaries of State to establish a broad spectrum of support for Overseas Vote Foundation. All OVF Alliance Partners plan to run the VOTERTOOLSTM\* Platform, targeted for release in August 2006. "The League will work with OVF to reach overseas and military voters with a voter service message they can truly use. We are delighted to be able to run the VOTERTOOLS Platform on our Web site for the 2006 election – this marks the first time the League will have an effective way to reach overseas voters who may need our voter services," said Mary G. Wilson, President, League of Women Voters.

*-Excerpts from July 11, 2006 OVF press*



## LOCAL ACTION REPORT

There will be no LWV Local Action Committee meeting in July as I will be out of town. The Modesto City Charter Review Committee has begun its work. Among the first steps are seeking public input. Watch for opportunities to contribute your ideas about what elements of the Charter should or should not be modified. The LWV Modesto Local Action Committee is a watchdog group monitoring local issues, especially land use, affordable housing and elections.

We are always looking for new members to share their insights and passions. With the prospect of becoming a county League, we encourage members from outside Modesto to become involved. We have been meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month at 11 am. However, meeting time is determined by the convenience of the participants. League members interested in monitoring and taking action on local issues contact Marie Bairey (523-0663 or [gbandmb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gbandmb@sbcglobal.net)).

*-Marie Bairey, Local Action Director*

### **IMPORTANT LOCAL ACTION MEETING!**

The Local Action committee is having a meeting Wednesday, August 23, 2006 at 7:00pm at 3308 Worthington Drive.

The meeting is to study the local transportation tax initiative. We hope this evening meeting will allow more members to participate and see what local action is all about. We look forward to having your input.

*-Patty Lundy, President*

## LWV RUNOFF ELECTION POSITION:

One of the issues that has been suggested to the City Charter Review Committee is examination of the runoff election procedures. After City Council Member Kristin Olsen's remarks at the last Lunch and Learn, the question of the League's position was raised.

The LWVC position on Election Systems was amended in 2003 to read as follows:

‘Support election systems for executive offices, both at the state and local levels, that require the winner to receive a majority of the votes, as long as the majority is achieved using a voting method such as Instant Runoff Voting, rather than a second, separate runoff election.’

Following the November, 2005, City Council election, LWV Modesto wrote a letter to the Modesto Bee explaining how such a system might work and its advantages. Here is summary of that statement:

Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) or ranked choice voting saves the cost of conducting and campaigning in a second election. Results are available after a single election. It guarantees that winning candidates are elected by a majority of voters. Candidates must appeal to a broad base of voters to attract first or second choice votes.

Using IRV, voters rank the candidates; the preferred candidate is first choice and in case their favorite is eliminated, their runoff choices are second, third, etc. If the first count does not yield a majority winner, the Instant Runoff Voting system proceeds. Ballots are counted with the last place candidate eliminated, and the second choice votes on those ballots are awarded to the front runners. Thus, a candidate is elected by a majority of voters.

This method of voting has been approved and used by voters in San Francisco, California; it was also approved by voters in Berkeley, California but the city has not implemented it. "It was used for the first time in Burlington, Vermont in March 2006 and is being proposed on a November ballot measure for Minneapolis, Minnesota. More information on this method of voting can be viewed on the following website which includes a sample ballot for the cutest animal at the San Francisco Zoo – try it! <http://calirv.org/>

*Patty Lundy, President*



## Telemundo and League of Women Voters Launch 2006 Hispanic Vote Project

*Effort will focus on increasing Hispanic voter registration and participation*

**Washington, DC** - ZGS Communications, the largest independent owner of Telemundo affiliate television stations, and the League of Women Voters have partnered to launch *Tu Voto, Tu Voz*, a public awareness campaign to encourage voter registration and electoral participation among U.S. Hispanics. The ZGS Station Group's DMAs (Designated Market Areas) cover portions of 10 states and the District of Columbia including Florida, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maryland, Virginia, Texas, New Mexico, and North Carolina. The League in turn has hundreds of local Leagues across the United States.

Through a variety of public service announcements (PSAs) that will air on every ZGS television station, and active participation in community events, *Tu Voto, Tu Voz* will underscore the importance of citizenship, provide information on registering to vote, and encourage going out to vote on Election Days. The PSAs will feature community leaders, League representatives, Telemundo talent, and celebrity spokespersons. "To a considerable extent, the media can play a fundamental role in the acculturation of communities, and since voting is one of the most important functions of civic participation, we want to be there to assist our audience," stated Ronald Gordon, ZGS President. "*Tu Voto, Tu Voz* is what the League is all about – voting is a key to being heard in the democratic process. As part of this initiative, our Leagues nationwide will be giving voters a simple message – get registered, get informed and then get out and vote," said Mary G. Wilson, national League president.

The Hispanic population in the United States now exceeds 40 million. U.S. Hispanics play an important role in this nation's political process especially as Hispanics are located throughout the country in "swing" states and "swing" seats. *Tu Voto, Tu Voz* is strictly a nonpartisan, multi-faceted community outreach effort targeting all U.S. Hispanics.

*ZGS Communications is a Hispanic-owned broadcasting company headquartered in Arlington, Virginia that currently owns and operates the largest group of Telemundo affiliate television stations. ZGS has 10 television stations located in Washington, DC, Orlando, Tampa, Ft. Myers-Naples, Boston, Springfield, Hartford, Providence, El Paso-Las Cruces, and Raleigh. In addition, ZGS owns and operates three Spanish-language radio stations serving Washington, DC and Tampa. For nearly two decades ZGS has been proud to be a community broadcaster with a special commitment to service, local programming, community outreach, and the celebration of Hispanic culture and heritage.*

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

*LWVUS press release, July 11, 2006*

### **Immigration Study Committee** **Applications Now Available:**

Delegates at LWVUS Convention 2006 adopted a three-year study of immigration policies – two years of study and one year of consensus. League members who are interested in serving on the LWV study committee can apply by completing the nomination/application form before the August 1, 2006, deadline. This form is available from Patty Lundy. (209) 551-1558

*-Patty Lundy, President*

# MEMBERSHIP



# SECRETARY'S REPORT

## JULY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- President Patty Lundy reviewed issues at the National Convention.
- Name change approved .by National LWV of Modesto to LWV of Stanislaus County. To be officially implemented next spring 2007.
- LWVM will again monitor elections at CSUS...Nov.15 &16.
- Treasurer...we have more income than expenses!!
- Moderator Training set for July 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Approved purchase of display kit for presentations
- LWV-M news items to have a broader media distribution.
- We will review and discuss the issues of the SOS and Transportation tax initiatives in Action committee meetings for reports at future Board meetings.
- Lunch & Learn-July 25-To be announced August 29-Denny Jackman

*-Joan Patterson. Secretary*

Just a reminder that membership dues are now due. We sent out notices in June with a survey concerning the Voter. (See LWVM Website Survey) We only send out one notice so this is a reminder to send in your membership dues! And do not to forget to send in The Website survey so we know to continue mailing you The Voter or that you will check for The Voter on our Website.

If you cannot find your notice the membership dues information is at the bottom of this page and just add on if you would wish to continue receiving the Voter in the mail.

Thank you to all who sent in their membership dues promptly. We have had a good start as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

This last month we had these new members join the League:

James E. Beyer Carolyn Bronowski

Welcome, we look forward to seeing you !

*Cindy Van Empel and  
Jennie Sweeny, Membership*

## I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO!

Student Membership \$15                       Individual Membership \$50  
 Household Membership \$75                       Please contact me with more information  
Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (for directory) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: LWVM P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

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

League of Women Voters of Modesto  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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## LUNCH AND LEARN

Tuesday, July 25, 2006 at  
12:00pm  
Appetez Restaurant  
in Roseburg Square  
\$11.00 for chef's entrée  
For vegetarian entree,  
you must call Appetez one  
day ahead.  
Speaker:  
To Be Announced

Tuesday, August 29, 2006 at  
12:00pm  
Appetez Restaurant  
in Roseburg Square  
\$11.00 for chef's entrée  
For vegetarian entree,  
you must call Appetez one  
day ahead.  
Speaker:  
Denny Jackman  
"Stamp Out Sprawl"