



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

January 2008

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 58 NO.6

Calendar of Events

Jan. 8th

Tuesday, 10:00am
Local Action Meeting
League Office

Jan. 9th

Wednesday, 6:00pm
Board Meeting
League Office

Jan. 16th

Wednesday, 7:00-9:00pm
Pros and Cons
Sierra Hall 132
MJC West Campus

Jan. 21st

Last day to register to vote
for February 5th Elections
Stanislaus County Libraries

Jan. 23rd

Wednesday, 7:00pm
Program Planning Meeting
League office

Jan. 29th

Tuesday, 12:00 noon
Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant

Feb. 13th

Wednesday, 6:00pm
Board Meeting
League Office

Mar. 6th

Thursday
5:30 Social 6:15 Speaker
Arturo Flores
Superintendent MCS
McHenry Museum

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

PROS AND CONS PRESENTATION

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

7:00-9:00pm

Sierra Hall 132, MJC West Campus.

The League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County will deliver a "Pros and Cons Ballot Measures Presentation" at Modesto Junior College. The League's presentation will discuss the measures on the ballot for the February 5, 2008 California Presidential Primary Election. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session. The text of all of the measures on the ballot can be viewed at <http://www.smartvoter.org>

We are pleased to be co-sponsoring the event with the MJC Civic Engagement Project's Voter Education and Registration Committee, and the Associated Students of Modesto Junior College.

Steve Miller and Alan McKissick, Members

ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

Wednesday, January 23, 2008 7:00 PM

League program planning is one of most important ways the LWV at all levels maintains its grassroots connection. The Program Planning process gives each League member the opportunity to participate as we balance the pros and cons, assess possible support, and consider viability of issues. At our January 23 Program Planning Meeting at the League office, we will look at our local and national programs and possibly recommend new studies and/ or reviews and updates of old studies.

To prepare for the meeting, you can consult the national and local Voters for information about our positions and action we have taken, join the program planning discussion group, and look at Impact on Issues at the LWVUS web site. Read the e-mail information on our positions that we will send to you this month.

Do you already have an issue to propose for a national or local League study? Is the issue timely? Of widespread interest? Is governmental action the most effective way to address the problem? If so, now is the time to be heard. Fill out the form in this issue of the Voter and attend the planning session on January 23rd.

Ann Krabach, Vice President

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President's Message:

Dear Members:

Happy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and got rested to greet the New Year AND another Election!

Our Holiday Fling was a big success with David Pier, Executive Director of from the Gallo Center for the Arts informing us about the operations of our newest venue. The refreshments and the company were wonderful. We are very fortunate that Albion and Lynne Fenderson have welcomed our League in to their home for these many years. It was a great way to start off the Holiday Season.

Like I stated I hope you are well rested for this year 2008. We have many activities this winter and spring to enjoy and become informed.

This January we have two very important events that I encourage members to attend. We are co-sponsoring a Pros and Cons presentation with Modesto Junior College Civic Engagement Project and Government Department January 16th. This will be a very informative event reviewing the state and local ballot measures. Patty Beyer, Amy Christensen and Marie Bairy will be the speakers for this event. Details are noted in this Voter on page one and page 2.

January 23rd at our League office is our Annual Planning Meeting where this year League members are called to review national positions along with our local positions. This is a very important process to League for it is our opportunity to influence the selection of issues where the League will focus its time, talent, and money. At the meeting we will recommend maintaining or dropping positions, new studies or revisions of positions. Please see page one for more information.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our Local Action Committee members and their dedication and commitment to our League. During the month of December THROUGH Christmas and New Year's these members spent a lot of time discussing Measure M and the other issues we are facing in our County. We have a lot happening and it is happening fast. We need more League members assisting with our Local Action committee so that we can be more proactive in this area. It has been EXCITING and very INFORMATIVE! Join the discussion. Contact Patty Beyer at 551-1558 to join.

Wishing you a great start on the year and I hope to see you at our many activities.

-Ellen Meyer, 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.

City Charter Accountability Measure M.

Members of the Local Action Committee have reviewed the proposed changes to the Modesto City Charter in the **Increase Accountability in City Hall Measure of 2008** recommended by the Charter Review Committee and placed on the February 5, 2008 ballot by the City Council. Measure M contains several elements which together would change mayoral responsibilities and the budget preparation process and add oversight to City departments. It calls for a separate City Auditor position. (Currently it is combined with the City Clerk.) It also calls for establishment of an independent commission to recommend compensation and prescribes limits for City Council members' compensation. (For complete text, check the Stanislaus County Elections Department website.) After examining League positions, we find there is none that directly relates to structural change of local government. Therefore, we will remain neutral on this issue.

Yes on E. No on L

The local action has studied both land use measures on the Feb. 5 ballot, and the LWV Stanislaus County Board approved the recommendation to support Measure E (Stamp Out Sprawl) and oppose Measure L (Board of Supervisors alternative to E). Both measures are available on line at www.smartvoter.org and type in your address for your ballot.

Measure E prohibits rezoning unincorporated areas from agricultural or open-space use to residential without approval of a majority of the voters. It is simple and addresses the issue of directing residential development to cities where infrastructure and public safety services are in place.

Measure L would establish a General Plan Review Commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors to present recommendations for the county's General Plan over the next two years. The Supervisors would select their preferred alternative plan to submit to the voters. If the voters reject the proposals twice, the supervisors will decide.

-Patty Beyer, Local Action Director

Voter Registration

Tuesday, January 22nd is the last day to register to vote for the February 5th Presidential Primary Election. Come help register voters at the Modesto, Turlock, Salida or Patterson Libraries. Phone Susan Novak or Cynthia Morgan or e-mail. voterservice@lwvstanislaus.org.

Pros & Cons

Back by popular demand, the dynamic duo of Patty Beyer and Amy Christensen will be presenting a discussion of the Pros & Cons of the February 5th ballot measures on Wednesday, January 16th at 7 p.m. at Sierra Hall on the MJC West Campus. They will review the 7 statewide measures.

Marie Bairey is joining the duo in assisting with presenting information on our local ballot measures.

For those interested in learning to make Pros and Cons presentations come and see how the PROS do it!

*Susan Novak and Cynthia Morgan.
Voter Service Co-Directors*

LWVC POSITIONS ON STATE PROPOSITIONS

OPPOSED
Proposition 91: Transportation Funds

OPPOSED
Proposition 92: Community Colleges Funding. Governance. Fees.

NEUTRAL
Proposition 93: Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office

NEUTRAL
Propositions 94,95,96,97
Amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts

**The League, Governor Endorse
California Voters FIRST Initiative**

The LWVC has joined Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California Common Cause, AARP, and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce in launching a campaign to place a redistricting initiative on the November 2008 ballot. The California Voters FIRST initiative will reform the process for redrawing district lines for the state Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization following each census. At a press conference on December 3, LWVC President Janis R. Hirohama said: "This proposal meets all the criteria that the League of Women Voters wants to see:

1. An independent citizen's commission that has members, who are qualified, balanced among the major parties while providing for others to participate, and representing the diversity of our state's population.
2. Clear criteria, in priority order, for establishing districts – not only abiding by the U.S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act, but also recognizing communities of interest and the political boundaries of cities and counties.
3. An open and public process. She concluded, "League of Women Voters members around the State will work enthusiastically to help qualify this initiative and see that it is passed by the voters next November."

An overview of the initiative, its full text, and a press release about the event are posted on the LWVC Web site. It's full steam ahead for organizing the campaign, and we need volunteers – lots of volunteers who will make a difference. The first phase is gathering signatures to qualify the initiative for the ballot. If you can join the effort, e-mail LWVC Advocacy Assistant Maggie Young. Sign on for an exciting, hands-on experience in making democracy work!

-Sue Chaffee, State and National Director

**\$805.00 TO GO!
TO REACH OUR GOAL**

As of this month, our Finance Drive brought in \$7,895.00 and our goal is \$8,700.00. We have only \$805.00 to reach our goal! Many, many thanks go to all of those who have donated.

Members, if the donation envelope is still in your follow-up pile, please dig it out and mail in your donation today. Please remember that our annual dues cover only our Per Member Payment to State and National. The Finance Drive is the only source of income for our Local Program. Donations to the Education Fund are tax deductible! The Education Fund pays for all of our non-partisan community support efforts such as Smart Voter, candidate's nights, and Pros and Cons.

-Joan Goldsmith, Finance Drive Director



**www.SmartVoter.org
for election information**

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE
WANTS YOU!**

Your nominating committee has started to fill the slate for Board of Directors with qualified and dedicated Officers for the 2008-2009 year.

If **YOU** are interested in this very important part of League membership and helping us grow as a County League **OR** if you know someone who might be interested, please call Cindy van Empel at 577-8802.

-Cindy vanEmpel, Nominating Director

❖ ANNUAL HOLIDAY FLING

Kudos to Lynne Fenderson, our gracious hostess, for once again sharing her and Albion's elegant home with us, and to Margie Lipsky, who, with the help of Lynn Kelso and Helen Gordon organized the refreshments and took care of the myriad of details involved in the success of this year's Holiday Fling. David Pier, Executive Director of the Gallo Center for the Arts, presented an interesting and informative view of the Center and the many programs and activities that take place there. Thanks to everyone involved in making this a sparkling evening for League members and their guests.

Ann Krabach, Vice President

LWVSC EMAIL UPDATE

LWV of Stanislaus County has new email addresses. Please remove info@lwgstanislaus.org from your address books and replace with league@lwgstanislaus.org. Please remove webmaster@lwgstanislaus.org from your address books and replace with wm@lwgstanislaus.org.

These changes were made by LWV of California in response to complaints that local League contacts were receiving too much spam. If you have any questions, please contact Stella Beratlis at wm@lwgstanislaus.org.

-Stella Beratlis, Webmaster

SECRETARY'S REPORT

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- LWV Stanislaus supports MJC Civic Engagement Project to promote voter registration; they will develop "Why I Vote" posters.
- Finance Drive is nearing Goal.
- LWVC Pros and Cons will be distributed to MJC, high schools and libraries. Presentation January 16 at MJC.
- Local Action:
 - ❖ Measure N – Although we support change from the current city council election system, LWV Stanislaus will not take a position on the By-district ballot measure on Feb. 5 as it does not meet the full intent of our local program statement on municipal election systems.
 - ❖ Incorporate a pros/cons discussion of the By-district measure at the MJC Pros and Cons program.
 - ❖ If By-district measure passes, LWV Stanislaus will advocate for the implementation procedures included in the measure.
 - ❖ February 5 ballot measures Measure E (Stamp Out Sprawl Initiative) and Measure L (Supervisors' Alternative Initiative) to be studied.

-Maire Bairey, Secretary

I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!

- Student Membership \$15
- Individual Membership \$50
- Household Membership \$75
- Please contact me with more information.

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

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Phone (for directory) _____ Email _____

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan 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.

League of Women Voters of
Stanislaus County
Tear off and send to:
LWV Modesto
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Modesto, CA
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LUNCH AND LEARN

January Speaker
Ron Swift
President, West Side-Patterson
Alliance for Community and
Environment
Tuesday, January 29, 2008

February Speaker
Roy Wasden
Chief of Police
Modesto
Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Both are at 12:00pm, Appetez Restaurant in Roseburg Square
\$11.00 for chef's entrée
For vegetarian entree, you must call Appetez one day ahead

VOTE ★ ★ ★ FEBRUARY 5, 2008