



# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

February/March 2009

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 7

## Calendar of Events

### Wednesday, February 11

6:00 p.m.  
Board Meeting

### Tuesday, February 24

12:00 Noon  
Lunch and Learn  
Appetiz Restaurant  
Roseburg Square

### Thursday, March 5

5:30 p.m.  
Spring Membership Event  
3100 Sherwood Avenue  
Modesto

### Wednesday, March 11

6:00 p.m.  
Board Meeting

### Tuesday, March 31

12:00 Noon  
Lunch and Learn  
Appetiz Restaurant

### Tuesday, April 7

6:15 p.m.  
Local Action Committee  
Home of Patty Beyer  
Call her for directions  
(No March Meeting)

Unless noted otherwise,  
All meetings are held at the  
League Office,  
720 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Modesto

This calendar is current as of  
printing. Check LWVSC  
Website for updates

[www.lwvstanislaus.org](http://www.lwvstanislaus.org)

## *Spring Membership Event*

*Speaker:*

*Greg Nyhoff*

*Modesto City Manager*

*When: Thursday, March 5, 2009*

*Time: 5:30 Social, 6:15*

*Where: Stoneybrook Lodge*

*3100 Sherwood Avenue, Modesto*

*(Red building with waterwheel  
just north of Rumble Road)*

*Park on the street*

*RSVP League Office*

*524-1698*

*This is a membership recruitment event  
Come and bring a friend!*

*(See page 4 for more on Membership Event)*

**LWV of STANISLAUS COUNTY**  
**OFFICERS**

*President*

**Ellen Meyer 579-1603**  
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*Treasurer*

**Polly Klopfer (544-9269)**  
[hklopfer@pacbell.net](mailto:hklopfer@pacbell.net)

**DIRECTORS**

*Membership*

**Lynn Kelso**

**Colleen Norby**

**Margie Lipsky (Off Board)**

*Voter Service*

**Ellen Dunbar**

**Marsha Waggoner (Off Board)**

*Finance Drive*

**Amy Wolfe**

*Public Relations*

**Susan Novak**

*State and National Action*

**Sue Chaffee**

*Local Action*

**Patty Beyer**

*Voter Editor*

**Jean Tenney**

[jayper@mac.com](mailto:jayper@mac.com)

*Lunch and Learn*

**Mildred Kinser**

**Doris Scanlon**

**OFF-BOARD**

*Nominating Committee*

**Virginia Lish**

**Linda Walden**

*Web Master*

**Stella Beratlis**

*Office Manager*

**Myrtle Osner**

*League Office*

**720 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Modesto**

**209-524-1698**

**[www.lwvstanislaus.org](http://www.lwvstanislaus.org)**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Members,

League can be a great way to spend more time with our friends - attending monthly Lunch and Learn events, working on our committees, and catching up with family news while registering new voters. The list of reasons to invite our friends to our Annual Spring Membership Event goes on and on. Our Spring Membership Event is THE event in the year where we hope to sign up new members who will assist us in our mission, and hopefully have fun too! Details are on the front page of this *Voter*.

News from LWVUS came out today in President Mary Wilson's email newsletter that though LWV is financially doing better than most non-profits in this country, they have made two major decisions to save money. The first decision is that they are suspending the *National Voter*, both in print and on line, until finances improve. If you wish to receive LWV Newsletter updates through email, send me your email and I will get you into the system. Also, if you have not been receiving event announcements from our League, please let Marie Bairey or me know so we can get you set up on our email list.

The second decision made from LWVUS Board is that LWV Council in June, 2009 will be "virtual". Our President stated that there may be drawbacks, but it will provide an opportunity for state Leagues to expand their members' participation in the Council meeting that otherwise would be available to only 100 or so members. I applaud LWVUS Board for taking steps to keep the financial health of LWV in good order. This will definitely assist League at all levels.

Enclosed is our Finance Drive Report from our Finance Director, Amy Wolfe. Amy and the Finance Drive committee members did a great job! My heartfelt thanks to members of League and our community donors who supported us this year.

See you at the Spring Membership Event!

*Ellen Meyer, President*

**DIVERSITY POLICY:**

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County 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.

## State and National

### The Primary Care Dilemma

A recent PBS documentary on healthcare issues focused on the inadequate number of primary care physicians in the United States. According to a JAMA article, only 2% of MD's are going into primary care. Since 1997 the numbers have decreased by 50%. First, the number one reason is thought to be the high cost of student loans MD's must repay after graduation. A recent Boston University graduate who paid \$65,000 a year for medical school, upon graduation, will have a \$200,000 debt that will ultimately cost her about \$500,000. Primary care physicians make \$185,000 annually, while certain specialists have an income two to seven times that. Specialists, then, can pay off their student loans more quickly, have more money to develop a new practice, and attain a lifestyle primary care physicians may never be able to accomplish in their lifetimes. Secondly, primary care physicians receive on average one third less for doing the same procedures specialists do, and the time specialists spend with patients is reimbursed by insurance at a much higher rate than primary care physicians receive. For example, patient's initial visit to a specialist might be billed at \$300, while a primary care physician would only bill \$60 to \$100 for a first visit. Also, whereas a primary care physician may have to address several problems (e.g. blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis) at a single visit, the specialist focuses on just one.

What incentives for increasing primary care physicians are being proposed? First, increasing incentives for universities to excuse some of the student loans would help. Most physicians are attracted to urban areas, leaving rural areas under-served. Some loan-reduction incentives already exist for serving in rural areas like ours, but they aren't attractive enough to recruit primary care physicians. Secondly, government subsidies are being explored. Some of those exist today. If a doctor agrees to serve in a government facility, some of his/her student loans will be excused, but the pay might be less than the private market rate. Urban slums and Indian reservations have these incentives already. It continues to be difficult to recruit primary care physicians to an under-served population like Stanislaus County because subsidies are not yet in place.

On the national universal healthcare scene, we are looking at models for Massachusetts and Maine. Four hundred thousand, or 95%, of previously uninsured are now covered in Massachusetts. The state funds subsidized insurance for qualified low income residents. Those who can afford to have insurance, but don't, are penalized via taxation. At the same time, the problem of recruiting primary care physicians in Massachusetts is acute. There are too few, so it takes too long to get in to see one's own MD. The patient may end up going to the emergency department for care, which costs all of us too much and is contrary to what we are trying to accomplish.

What, then, are our goals? First, our health care system should focus on wellness, not putting the pieces back together when illness occurs. We must decrease mortality, deaths, morbidity and illness rates by managing chronic illnesses well, and enhance quality of life through teaching prevention. We need to facilitate patient access to healthcare information to prevent illness. HMOs and PPOs, like Kaiser, and Giesner's in Pennsylvania, are doing this now. The primary care physician is too busy to do all the teaching necessary for both wellness and the management of illness. Some nurses and nurse practitioners at Kaiser and Giesners are currently being reimbursed by their insurance providers for teaching services. We can look to these companies as a model for the future.

*Sue Chaffee, State and National Director*

## MEETING GREG NYHOFF

League has invited Greg Nyhoff, Modesto City Manager, to be our featured speaker at our March 5<sup>th</sup> membership event. Greg has 14 years experience as a City Manager having served in Fountain, Colorado and Montague, Michigan, and most recently as Assistant City Manager of Colorado Springs, Colorado. His experience also includes water management from his earlier career as Operations Manager with the Highlands Ranch Metropolitan District in Highlands, Colorado.

He earned his B.A. degree in Business Administration and Economics from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Greg and his wife, Cindy, have lived in Modesto with their three children since his appointment in June, 2008.

League has been highly supportive of the City Manager form of local government having lobbied for it during the drafting of Modesto's original city charter.

We look forward to introducing our League to Modesto's new city manager and hearing his views on solving Modesto's current economic problems.

Don't miss this annual membership recruitment event in the Lodge of Stoneybrook Apartments at 3100 Sherwood Avenue, ( corner of W. Rumble Road and Sherwood Avenue) Bring a friend and let us entertain them with wine and appetizers. This is a special Board sponsored event and there is no charge.

*Margie Lipsky, Membership Committee*

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

Student Membership \$15 \_\_\_\_\_  
Individual Membership \$60 \_\_\_\_\_  
Household Membership \$90 \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me with more information:

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (for directory): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### MAIL TO

LWVSC

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352

## Regional Planning Volunteer Needed

The League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County is looking for a member with an interest in regional planning. We have joined a local coalition, the Valley Futures Forum. The group is made up of representatives from the organizations listed below, and its purpose is to inform and educate the public, elected and appointed officials, the business and development communities, and public and private planners, engineers, and architects about planning and development issues that the San Joaquin Valley must address today and in the future.

Topics to be addressed include Assembly Bill 32, Senate Bill 375, high speed rail and ACE train, preserving agriculture – why and how, the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint, and the Obama Administration Economic Stimulus Package. Representatives for each group are helping to coordinate the various events and promote the issues within their constituencies. If you are interested in serving as the League representative to this group, please contact Amy Christensen Wolfe at [amy\\_v\\_christensen@hotmail.com](mailto:amy_v_christensen@hotmail.com) or 499-4091.

### Forum Membership

American Institute of Architects

American Planning Association

Building Industry Association

Chamber of Commerce

Congress for the New Urbanism

Great Valley Center

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County

Local Government Commission

*Amy Christensen Wolfe*

### New Membership Directory

2008-2009 League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County Membership Directory is now available. Members can get their copy at Lunch and Learn and the upcoming Membership Event, or contact our League Office at 209-524-1698 to have one mailed to you.

*Lynn Kelso, Membership*

## LWV Supports SCHIP

January 12, 2009

To: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

From: Mary G. Wilson, President

Re: SCHIP Reauthorization

The League of Women Voters urges you to support reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) when it comes to the House floor for a vote. In the years since Congress first passed SCHIP, the program has provided access to health care coverage to six million low-income children. However, there are still over nine million children who remain uninsured.

The League of Women Voters has long supported the concept of universal access to quality health care. We believe that all children should have comprehensive health care including preventive and primary care and that programs like SCHIP play a key role in promoting the health, well being and full development of children.

The benefits of SCHIP are clear. The program has played a critical role in reaching uninsured low-income children who are not eligible for Medicaid. Over the past decade, six million children have been covered by SCHIP in addition to the 28 million children covered by Medicaid. As a result, the percentage of low-income children in the United States without health coverage has fallen by one-third in the past decade even as employer-based coverage has decreased.

But there is still much to be done. Even with these advances, over nine million children, many of whom are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP, are without health coverage. Unless the program is fully funded, those children currently covered under SCHIP could lose their coverage.

Reauthorization of this important program is long overdue. The League of Women Voters urges you to reauthorize SCHIP so that those children currently in the program can continue to receive this critically needed health coverage while extending coverage to those children who are eligible but not in the program.

From LWVUS *Leaders' Update*

## Boxer Praised on Global Warming

The League of Women Voters today congratulated Senator Barbara Boxer (D CA) on her "[Principles for Global Warming Legislation](#)" released on February 1. Senator Boxer serves as chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, with primary jurisdiction in the Senate over climate change policy.

"Senator Boxer has crafted a realistic and prudent plan to deal with global climate change and the emerging public health and environmental disaster it represents," said Mary G. Wilson, president of the League of Women Voters of the United States. "Senator Boxer clearly recognizes the critical nature of this issue. We congratulate her on her proposal and look to her leadership in moving vital legislation quickly through Congress," Wilson said.

"It is especially important that the Boxer principles do not contain the loopholes that plagued earlier proposals in the House and Senate and from outside interests," Wilson noted.

"Loopholes – such as unenforceable offsets, so-called 'cost containment' provisions, and free emissions allowances for polluters -- will likely be the critical issue during the climate change debate," Wilson said.

"The strategy of the polluters and special interests is clear – to say they are concerned about global warming and then support loopholes that will let them off the hook," Wilson charged. "It will be up to citizens around the country and their elected representatives in Congress to fight these loopholes," she said.

"Every polluter and special interest in the country will be seeking their own private loopholes," Wilson said. "If they win, the result will be business as usual," she said. "The League of Women Voters is committed to holding Congress accountable," Wilson pledged.

"We thank Senator Boxer for her leadership in developing these six important principles to guide the legislative effort," Wilson said. "Global climate change is getting worse every day, damaging our health and threatening our planet. It is time to act," Wilson concluded.

From LWVUS *Leaders' Update*

**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.**

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

**Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
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Permit No. 69**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
(Check Website for Updates)**

- |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Wednesday, February 11</b> | <b>6:00 p.m.. Board Meeting<br/>League Office 720 13th Street.Modesto</b>                                                                                                             |
| <b>Tuesday, February 24</b>   | <b>12 Noon Lunch and Learn, Appetez Restaurant<br/>Roseburg Square, Modesto<br/>Speaker: Becky Campo, Mayor of Patterson<br/>\$11.00 For special dietary needs call one day ahead</b> |
| <b>Thursday, March 5</b>      | <b>5:30 p.m. Spring Membership Event<br/>3100 Sherwood Avenue, Modesto</b>                                                                                                            |
| <b>Wednesday, March 11</b>    | <b>6:00 p.m. Board Meeting<br/>League Office 720 13th Street, Modesto</b>                                                                                                             |
| <b>Tuesday, March 31</b>      | <b>12 Noon Lunch and Learn, Appetez Restaurant<br/>Roseburg Square, Modesto<br/>Speaker: Charlie Goeken, Mayor of Waterford</b>                                                       |
| <b>Tuesday, April 7</b>       | <b>6:15 Local Action Committee<br/>Home of Patty Beyer {Call her for directions}</b>                                                                                                  |