



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

November/December 2009 Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California VOL. 59 NO. 14

SUCCESSFUL LWVSC CANDIDATE FORUMS

The League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County held six candidate forums in September and October. Two forums for the Modesto City Council District Elections were held in the new districts to be accessible to the voters of the district. The District 4 forum was held just outside the district boundary at the City/County Chambers on the same night as the League forum for the Modesto School Board of Education. That location allowed those two forums to be broadcast live. All of the City Council candidates participated in the forum for their District and all Modesto School Board candidates participated.

All six forums were well attended, with 30-100 people at each one. For the first time ever all of the forums were broadcast at later dates on public access channels. Wow!

The Modesto Bee provided great coverage for the forums, which surely helped to increase the attendance as well as inform the public about the candidates.

The forum in District 2, on the west side of Modesto, was co-sponsored by the King Kennedy Community Center.

A forum for the candidates for the Turlock School Board, co-sponsored by the Walnut School Parent Teachers' Association, was held in Turlock. This forum was attended by more than 60 people.

The forum for mayor of Riverbank, with five candidates participating, was attended by about 100 citizens. The City Clerk's office of The City of Riverbank helped with the preparation and public notification for this forum.

The League assisted with a seventh forum, providing a moderator and question sorters for a Modesto School Board forum sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Civic Engagement Project. This forum was planned by Allan McKissick, Chair of the Voter Education Committee of the Civic Engagement Project and a member of LWVSC.

Special thanks to the moderators of these forums: Julie Saugstad, Stella Beratlis, Marie Bairey, Amy Wolfe, Diane Bartlett, and Susan Novak. Their skillful handling of the questions was appreciated by the candidates and the audiences.

Others who assisted with the forums as greeters, question sorters, and timers, included Ellen Meyer, Marsha Waggoner, Debbie Kleinfelder, Marjorie Brooks, Mary Giventer, Ann Krabach, Hanna Renning, Joan Patterson, Jean Tenney, Seena Rhine, and Holly Craytor (our student intern). Susan Novak provided public information for the Bee and arranged for television coverage by Central Valley Media Center (Comcast Channel 26), Final Cut Media (Comcast Channel 7 and Charter Channel 19), and Charter Channel 2 in Turlock. Thanks also to Modesto City Clerk Stephanie Lopez for operating the PA system at the District 4 and Modesto City School Board forums. Riverbank Action 2 coverage was arranged by the City Clerk, and that forum can be viewed by going to the City's website, www.action2riverbank.com.

Ellen Dunbar, Voter Service Director

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President's Message

Dear Members,

Our fall season was a whirlwind of activity and our events were fun, informative and very successful.

Our Regional Workshop offered 23 League members from the Central Valley a great day to meet members from other Leagues as well as those who serve in state level positions. The presentations were informative and our League members got a new perspective on what the League is about. Many thanks go to Susan Novak and Colleen Norby for pulling this event together.

Our Voter Service Team, Ellen Dunbar, Marsha Waggoner, and Susan Novak, set up six candidate forums in our county and assisted other groups in holding their forums. The forums were very well attended, and questions from the audience were thoughtful and many. In Modesto, the candidate forums were held within the newly created districts, and it was very exciting to see the number of people who attended. It was also exciting to see the fantastic coverage we received for our events from The Modesto Bee, Central Valley Media Center, Final Cut Media and other media. It was probably the best we have had in years!

We took action on the Modesto Sewer Extension Ballot Measures A - E, and our op-ed piece was printed in the Modesto Bee. Several people informed me that they saw this article and cut it out to use as reference in their voting decisions. Marie Bairey did an excellent job managing the study process for our League.

Coming up, on November 5th in Turlock we are jointly sponsoring a dinner with AAUW featuring Roy Wasden as speaker. Roy Wasden is the new City Manager for Turlock. I encourage you to attend this event which we hope is one of many in Turlock for our members. We wish to enhance our membership in Turlock, and your support in this process will help increased membership happen!

Thank you, members, for your efforts in assisting League in educating the community this election period and attending our member education events.

Ellen Meyer, President

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. JOIN LWVSC where leaders are actively engaged in effecting change at the local, state, and national levels.

LUNCH AND LEARN

On September 23, those members who attended the Lunch & Learn were privileged to see a PowerPoint presentation by Stanislaus County's District Attorney, Birgit Fladager, about the County's new gang injunction program. Ms. Fladager explained that the injunction targets the Deep South Side Modesto gang and is a civil lawsuit. Her office received the court-ordered permanent injunction against DSSM from Judge Whiteside on September 10, 2009. She brought out a large bundle of papers and told us that this was the documentation routinely gathered for an injunction. This large bundle of legal documents is "dropped" on the members of the DSSM targeted for service and informs them that they have been served with a civil suit. They soon learn that, because this is a civil suit, they do not qualify for the services of a public defender in this matter. The injunction forbids the targeted individual from certain gang behaviors: wearing red, flashing gang signs to intimidate witnesses, doing gang graffiti, or threatening others. If the gang member is charged with any of these activities, the punishment is up to 180 days in jail, 3 years probation and a requirement that they register as a gang member.

There are 51 separate documented gangs in Stanislaus County with 4,750 documented individual gang members and an estimated 7,000 undocumented members. DSSM has been shown to have connections to the Nuestra Familia prison gang. So far, 31 DSSM members have been served with the injunction, and this number continues to increase as law enforcement and the DA's office work together on this problem. Two people in Ms. Fladager's office have primary responsibility for this program: Ms. Marlisa Ferreira, who is the prosecutor in charge of the injunction, and Froilan Mariscal, the gang investigator.

Ms. Fladager said that her office is receiving excellent cooperation from all of the law enforcement groups in the county, with a designated officer from the Modesto Police Department and one from the Sheriff's Office serving on the task force. The current injunction outlines a "safety zone" on the south side of Modesto which has always presented law enforcement challenges due to the fact that there are unincorporated "islands" of county land in the middle of the city. Now both the city and county forces have a common tool to use to intervene in the area. Ms. Fladager told us that her office hopes to eventually expand the program to possibly designate "safety zones" at the Mall, one at each hospital in the City, one on the West side of the county and one in the Airport District.

LWV President Ellen Meyer shared with Ms. Fladager our position statement on gang violence adopted in 2007, wherein we declare our support of the development of culturally diverse interventions and enrichment programs at the elementary school level and beyond. Ms. Fladager stated that this type of intervention would certainly complement the gang injunction program and she appreciated the support of the League.

The visual program documented in detail gang graffiti and the tattoos gang members use to declare their commitment to gang life. Ms. Fladager asked the members to please contact her if they might know of a plastic surgeon in the area willing to work with the county to remove gang tattoos from those wanting to leave gang life behind. A lively question and answer period followed the presentation.

*Lee DeLaMare, Lunch and Learn Director
with thanks to Barbara DeLaMare-Cremer for taking great notes.*

State and National

LWVC Monitored Water Bills

In the weeks before the close of the legislative session, members of the LWVC legislation team monitored the five water bills dubbed the "water bill package." The bills were intended to address water conservation, the creation of a Delta Stewardship Council, protection of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and groundwater management. Infrastructure was treated in a separate bill. The current legislative session ended September 12 with no solution. A last-minute effort lumped the five bills into a new bill, SB 68 (Steinberg). The first hearing on SB 68 was held at 7 p.m. the night of September 12 by the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee. Although several environmental groups had worked with the authors of bills in the package and spoke in favor of SB 68, speakers representing a number of other environmental groups lined up to voice their concerns about environmental protections for the Delta, existing water law and the state's economy. Though the bill passed out of the committee, it stalled at that point.

Discussions about Water

League interest in an ongoing discussion of regional water issues was expressed by several who attended LWVC Convention in Long Beach in May. LWVC Water Co-Program Director Roberta Borgonovo held an initial meeting in August to discuss what form a statewide water discussion among League members might take. To be part of future discussions, contact the water team at water@lwvc.org.

From LWVC Website
Sue Chaffee, State and National Director

Board Highlights

October 14, 2009

- Current membership is 135 with several new members in the last few weeks.
- Election related activities gave League community visibility: 6 candidate forums, all aired on cable; Modesto Bee Op-Ed coverage of Measures A – E position statement; Modesto Bee editorial praise for holding forums in the council districts.
- Finance Drive has not reached its goal yet. Reminder letters will be sent to previous donors.

Marie Bairey, Secretary

FINANCE DRIVE

The Finance Drive is off to a good start, but we still need more donations to reach this year's goal. Even small amounts from every member add up. If you have not yet contributed to the Finance Drive, please consider doing so. We have had one of our most active falls ever, and it is largely the money we raise through the yearly Finance Drives that enables us to provide this level of service to the community.

Mary Giventer, Finance Drive Director

You are Invited Black and Brown Reentry Summit at MJC

MJC will be hosting a national conference aimed at addressing community issues related to the 16,000 – 25,000 non-violent early release inmates that will be released from California prisons over the next two years. The Summit will highlight successful re-entry programs and explore new strategies that help keep communities safe. Visit www.bbsummit.org for more details.

When: November 6-7, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Nov. 6) Lunch Included

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Nov. 7)

Where: MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132

2201 Blue Gum

Cost: \$40

Register: Special \$40

Student Rate \$20/Register @www.bbsummit.org

Welcome Our Newest Members

Maggie Mejia

Mark and Diedre West

We look forward to seeing you at our events

I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF 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): _____

E-mail: _____

MAIL TO

LWVSC
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 9535

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.

DINNER WITH WASDEN

I hope many of you can join us on November 5 for the dinner, jointly sponsored with AAUW, featuring Roy Wasden as speaker. Mr. Wasden was formerly the chief of police in Modesto and was recently appointed Turlock City Manager. He will be speaking on current issues and his vision of Turlock's future. Dinner will be at 6 PM at Henry's Restaurant on Golden State Boulevard in Turlock. The cost will vary with the entree but is about \$20. Advanced reservations are not required but would be appreciated to give us an idea how many to set up for. Please call (632-8996) or e-mail (mgiventer@pacbell.net) for more information or to make reservations.

Mary Giventer

Save the Date!
Holiday Fling
Monday, December 7, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Program:
To Be Announced

We propose to get into the great parties and to work from the inside. We do not fear issues, and we do not fear the future. We'll not vote as women, but as American citizens, and we are unafraid.

Carrie Chapman Catt, 1919



Donate Your Old Car or Boat Today!

You can donate your car, truck, trailer, recreational vehicle, boat, or even real estate to the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund!

Qualify for a tax deduction. Avoid confusing DMV paperwork or smog check hassles. Avoid all the headaches of trying to sell during a tough economy.



Call **800-320-0476** to speak to a live customer service representative, seven days a week, or visit our home page and donate online: **WWW.LWVC.ORG**.

LWVSC Six-Month Update for 2009-10 Year:

Listed below is a review of League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County accomplishments for 2009-2010 as of October. Some are new, and others are accomplishments that have been maintained by our local League. These accomplishments enhanced our external impact on education and advocacy. We also continued our increased visibility in the community and continued our work with training of members, maintaining membership and financial stability of our organization.

- Completed study, consensus, and League positions for Modesto Sewer Extension Advisory Vote
- Submitted op-ed piece to the Modesto Bee on the Modesto Sewer Extension Advisory Vote
- Sponsored Modesto City Council District 4 and District 5 candidate forums, co-sponsored Modesto City Council District 2 with King Kennedy Center, sponsored the Modesto School Board candidate forum, assisted with City of Riverbank candidate's forum for mayoral race, and co-sponsored with Walnut Elementary PTA Turlock School Board candidate forum.
- Registered voters in Modesto and Turlock for June and November elections
- Maintained Smart Voter Website
- Partnered with Modesto Junior College with a Student Internship Program
- Assisted with Modesto Junior College Civic Engagement Project Candidate's forum for Modesto School Board
- Sent Public Service Announcements to local radio stations
- Sent notices to newspapers in Stanislaus County for candidate forums and voter registration locations
- Announced our monthly Lunch and Learn speakers in our county newspapers
- Sent our publication *The Voter* to outlying communities in Stanislaus County
- Sent one delegate to LWVC State Convention June, 2009
- Presented Moderator Training Workshop August, 2009
- Held LWVC Regional Training Workshop September, 2009 for Central Valley League members
- Offered monthly Lunch and Learn events
- Audited LWV Stanislaus County accounting records for year 2008-09
- Mailed annual membership renewal letters and follow-up postcards
- Positioned our website on Face book to attract new members
- Updated our League website with latest information
- Sent letters and promoted annual Finance Drive

Thank you members!

Ellen Meyer, President

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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:
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Stanislaus County
LWV Modesto
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Check Website for Updates)

Tuesday, November 3

Election Day - VOTE!

Thursday, November 5

**6:00 pm Dinner with Roy Wasden, Turlock CEO
Henry's Restaurant, Scandia Village
217 S. Golden State Boulevard, Turlock**

**Friday & Saturday
November 6- 7**

**Black & Brown Reentry Summit at MJC
See page 4 for details**

Wednesday, November 11

**6:00 pm Board Meeting
League Office, 720 13th Street, Modesto**

Thursday, November 19

**5:00-6:45pm Valley Futures Forum
Great Valley Center, 201 Needham Street, Modesto)
Speaker: John Anderson, builder, developer, planner
"Smart Growth and the Pesky Realities of Building in California"
(\$10 fee at door)**

Monday, December 7

**6:30 pm Holiday Fling
Program: To be Announced
Invitation to Follow**