



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

February/March 2010

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 16

President's Message

Dear Members,

February 14th the League of Women Voters celebrated its 90th year of safeguarding democracy. Leagues across the nation sent press releases to celebrate our good works and longevity including our League! In case you missed it here it is:

American Institution Turns 90

League of Women Voters Celebrates Milestone Birthday

Ninety years ago, Carrie Chapman Catt first proposed a League of Women Voters to "finish the fight" and work to end all discrimination against women. And so the League of Women Voters was founded on Valentine's Day in 1920, six months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. Today we are a grassroots organization with 850 Leagues throughout all 50 states. Although the League is known widely for our voter education efforts, the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County, formally of Modesto, has been an institution in our area since 1947, working on land use, affordable housing, local library financing and recently gang violence issues. The League is strictly non-partisan, but we have always been political, advocating to effect change at the national and local level. As we enter into a new year, we don't know exactly what issues will confront Stanislaus County. We do know that the League will be there doing what it has been trusted to do for more than 90 years: discuss the important issues, ask the difficult questions and demand accountability from our local government. Our members join the League because they know that whatever happens to our democracy over the next 90 years, it should be up to us, the people. The League of Women Voters is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement, and this year, on our 90th Anniversary, we hope you will stand with us in this work. If we don't do it, who will?

For more information or to join the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County go to our website www.lwvstanislaus.org.

This spring the board decided not to go forward with our Spring Membership Event. This event has been held to attract new members. In the past few years this event, while fun and educational, has not attracted as many members as we had hoped. We are accepting new ideas on what we can do to increase membership- so let us know your ideas!

Included in this Voter is news of a new Voter Registration Project that we are working on with LWVUS. Jennie Sweeney has graciously agreed to chair this project. Thanks Jennie!

Finance Director Mary Giventer has included her Finance Drive Report. Thanks go to Mary and her committee for their hard work in bringing in the financial support we need. **My sincere thanks to you and our community donors for supporting our League.**

-Ellen Meyer, President

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

**LWV of STANISLAUS COUNTY
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PROJECT VOTE

Our League is participating in LWVUS High School Voter Registration initiative. League member Jennie Sweeney has agreed to chair this project. The main point of the project is to determine which of two methods of providing voter registration to high school students - classroom setting or assemblies - is the most effective. Two hundred schools across the country will be randomly assigned to one of the methods, and a voter registration drive will be conducted in the schools to establish the efficacy of each method.

A sub goal of the project is to help us understand what needs to be done so that schools implement these types of programs on their own. And in the end LWVUS plans to write a best practices guide for all Leagues to utilize when implementing a high school voter registration drive. It is our hope that this project will be the first step in creating a large-scale nationwide high school voter registration drive.

The basic timeline for the project is:

March:

- coordinate with the schools (whether that's through the principals or teachers or student groups or PTA or School Board or the Superintendents, etc) and your local board of elections
- plan the program
- recruit volunteers

April through June:

- execute the voter registration drives.
- complete final reports by the end of June

Project Vote will be conducting the research component of this project. Project Vote is a national nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) that works to empower, educate, and mobilize low-income, minority, youth, and other marginalized and under-represented voters. Despite recent upticks in voter participation, a significant portion of the electorate, concentrated in low-income and minority communities, is still alienated from the electoral process. This weakens our democracy by excluding from major public policy decisions the voices of the most vulnerable and least powerful. Project Vote knows that strong democracy needs active participation from all sectors of society, and works hard to engage low-income and minority voters in the civic process.

Please contact Jennie Sweeney at sweeney.j@sbcglobal.net if you would be willing to assist her. Many thanks to Jennie for volunteering to chair this project.

Board of Directors, 2009-2010

LUNCH AND LEARN

March 30 Lunch and Learn

Matt Machado, PE

Director of Public Works, Stanislaus County

On Tuesday, March 30, the Lunch and Learn Program will be a presentation from Mr. Matt Machado, PE, who is the Director of the Public Works Department for Stanislaus County and also serves as the Authority Manager for the North County Corridor Transportation Expressway Authority. The program will address the planned North County Corridor project. The population in northern Stanislaus County has grown dramatically in recent years, resulting in increased traffic congestion which is expected to continue. The Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) estimates that vehicle miles traveled in our region will increase by almost 70 per cent. The North County Corridor Transportation Expressway Authority was formed to study and propose possible improvements to meet the expected growth. Two studies have been completed—the North County Corridor Feasibility in January 2008 and the Preliminary Design Report in April 2008. These studies analyzed existing conditions and potential route alignments and proposed two major alignments. Constraints and environmental issues are being studied further. The primary purpose of the North County Corridor is to provide a high-capacity, high-speed east-west roadway that will meet future traffic needs, improve safety in the north county area, alleviate traffic on parallel roadways, provide for economic growth, provide interregional connectivity and accommodate multi-modal travel. It is anticipated that the ultimate roadway will be a four-to-eight lane expressway with interchanges at intersections and that the corridor will likely be constructed in phases. The route proposed lies entirely within unincorporated portions of Stanislaus County and would extend approximately 25 miles from a location on State Route 99 in the vicinity of Salida to a location on State Route 120 approximately 6.25 miles east of the city of Oakdale. Please plan to come to this interesting and vital meeting.

January 26 Lunch and Learn

Mary Sherwood, Coordinator

Stanislaus County Reserve Corps

Our Lunch and Learn program opened the New Year on Tuesday, January 26 with a very timely presentation by Ms. Mary Sherwood, Coordinator of the Stanislaus County Medical Reserve Corps. Ms. Sherwood utilized a power-point presentation to outline the history of the program, which came about after 9/11. In the confusion that followed on that day, many valuable lessons were learned which are being implemented across the country. According to FEMA, today, every citizen in this country is a part of a national emergency management system that is all about protection – protecting people and property from all types of hazards. Ms. Sherwood told us that the Medical Reserve Corps is community-based to organize and utilize local volunteers. After pointing out some of the potential hazards we live with in our area, she showed us some of the things that our county has done and is doing to respond to emergencies of all types. A group of volunteers is being trained in a course to teach them essential awareness of an organized, efficient and coordinated response to natural, manmade or biological disasters. Volunteers will be trained, credentialed and screened, and will serve in assisting in such areas as alternate care sites. She showed a picture of a trailer equipped to serve as a field hospital should the need arise, and another which could serve as a POD - a point of dispensing of medications or vaccines which can be given quickly to a large number of people in the event of a public health emergency. She answered many questions from those in attendance and gave each League member at the lunch a handy emergency information guide which can be placed on their refrigerator outlining steps to take in such personal emergencies as calling 911, the ABC's of first aid and an emergency planning check list. Again, thank you, Jill Sousa, for suggesting this program.

Lee DeLaMare, Lunch and Learn Director

Local Action – Join Us

The LWV Stanislaus County Local Action Committee met in January and February. We are trying different meeting days in an effort to attract more participants.

As a grassroots organization, League can have an impact in our communities by studying issues, preparing position statements and advocating for those positions. League's positions on the June Modesto sewer extension advisory vote were cited often. But it takes people with interests and/or passions (and a little time!) to learn about the issues that affect all of us.

Currently the Local Action Committee, comprised of a dedicated few, is following the Modesto General Plan Amendment process. Members from Turlock have expressed interest in the Turlock General Plan Review. The County is also embarking on a General Plan Review. All of these have implications for land use decisions. The Committee is also looking for ways to learn more about the North County Corridor. Lee DeLaMare has scheduled the March Lunch and Learn speaker to discuss the North County Corridor.

If you are interested in local issues; if you are knowledgeable on any of above issues; if you know someone who is involved with the above issues and could be a resource to us – please contact Marie Bairey. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at our next meeting.

The Local Action Committee

In Memory

It is with great sorrow that we say goodbye to two dedicated members. Betty Cohen and Katherine Holmberg were long time members and loyal supporters of our League. They will be greatly missed.

Board Highlights

- February 10, 2010
- It was decided not to have a spring membership event. It was also suggested we have a procedure to follow-up potential members who attend Lunch and Learn.
- A study to determine the cost effectiveness of e-mail vs. printed, bulk mail distribution of the *Voter* was approved.
- Ellen will appoint a Budget Committee to prepare the 2010-2011 budget which will be presented to the membership at Annual Meeting.
- LWVUS Convention is in Atlanta in June.

Marie Bairey, Secretary

THE LATEST NEWS

We are happy to announce that league member Malerie Michael was accepted into the UC Irvine / Washington D.C. program this January. This is a program established to assist students in applying for internships in organizations and governmental agencies in Washington DC.

Malerie is hoping to go to Washington D.C. this summer and wants to work with something related to Law/Criminal Justice, Congressional (Senate or House), Government/Federal/ White House.

Malerie started with our League as a Modesto Junior College student in our Student Internship Program in League member Professor Steve Miller's Political Science class. She really enjoyed learning about the League and what we do. She joined our League two years ago. Malerie is a go-getter, and we wish her the best. We are anxious to hear what internship opportunity she will have.

The 2009-2010 Board of Directors

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.

2010 PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

Nine members attended the program planning meeting on January 20, while an additional four members submitted their input by e-mail and completed questionnaires. The consensus was to recommend retention of all national and local LWV positions, while supporting the request for one new study at the national level.

This new study, recommended by League members in Palo Alto, Los Altos/Mountain View, Berkeley/Albany and Santa Monica, concerns the role of the federal government in public education. According to the proposal the focus will be on (1) the basic goals of public education, (2) the role of the federal government in education policy-making, (3) the relationship between national, state, and local levels of education governance, including funding, and (4) the development of common standards.

The purpose is to establish national League positions that would enable the League of Women Voters to

- review, consider, evaluate and advocate for or against federal education legislation;
- advocate on issues related to what the federal role in public education should be;
- join in coalition with other national organizations that speak out on issues of public education.

For more information on the proposed study, please contact me.

Hanna Renning, 2nd Vice President

Save the Date

. Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 22nd at 10:00 a.m. This event will be held at Appetiz Restaurant and our guest speaker will be Vito Chiesa, Board of Supervisors, District 2, speaking on the challenges and opportunities facing agriculture and land use in Stanislaus County. More information to follow.

Nominating Committee News

The nominating committee has been working on developing the slate of officers for next year. We are pleased with and excited about our progress to date. If you would be interested in serving in an on or off board position next year, please contact Susan Novak at 526-9534 or snovak2@sbcglobal.net. We look forward to presenting the full slate in the April Voter

Laurie Carley, Nominating Committee Member

Dance like no one is watching. Sing like no one is listening. Love like you've never been hurt and live like it's heaven on Earth.

Mark Twain

Welcome Our Newest Members

Holly Crater
Lauren Klein

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

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

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Check Website for Updates)

Wednesday, March 10

**6:00 p.m. Board Meeting
League Office, 720 13th Street, Modesto**

Thursday, March 18

**5:00 p.m. Valley Futures Forum
201 Needham Street, Modesto
Topic: "Passenger Rail: Beyond the Pipe Dream"
\$10 fee**

Tuesday, March 30

**12:00 noon Lunch and Learn
Speaker: Matt Machado, PE
North County Corridor Project
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square. Modesto
\$11.00. For special dietary needs call one day ahead**

Saturday, May 22

**10:00 a.m. Annual Meeting
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square
See page 5 for more information**