



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

July/August 2011

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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Message from out-going State President, Janis R. Hirohama:

It has been my privilege to serve as president of the League of Women Voters of California since July 2007. During these last few months of my second term, I've thought a lot about the importance of the work the League does and what it has meant to me personally. The fact that this year marks the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in California has made me especially aware of the long arc of history and how short, in a chronological sense, the four years I have served as state League president actually are. Looking back at the past four years, there were high points and low points, setbacks and triumphs, challenges and opportunities. But it has never been dull!

In my [President's Report](#) at our state convention a few weeks ago, I shared some of why I feel such personal passion for the League's mission. I mentioned my grandfather, who emigrated from Japan in 1903 but was barred by discriminatory laws from becoming a naturalized citizen for more than 50 years. He was a man whose love for America and faith in democracy was unshaken by racism and imprisonment in an internment camp during World War II. Because of my family's history and experiences, I feel strongly about the responsibilities of citizenship, because it was a privilege denied to my grandparents. I believe in the value of a vote and the importance of exercising it, because I know a vote is a voice, and that those without a voice are all too easily disregarded and disempowered. The League of Women Voters is an organization whose work is directed toward values that matter deeply to me—empowering ordinary people, strengthening the instruments of democracy, and holding those in power accountable.

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage informed and active participation in government through education and advocacy, but it is hard for those few words to convey the depth and commitment of our members to fully realizing the opportunities, the hopes, and the promise of democracy for all Americans. As state president, I have seen our members take that mission statement and make it a reality as they work to improve their communities, every day, year after year.

I am grateful for everything the League has given me. It provided me with the opportunity to grow professionally and personally. I was privileged to work with extraordinarily dedicated women and men who are committed to helping make democracy work. Through the League, I was able to make a difference. And this I know and believe: through the League, all of us can make a difference.

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve the League of Women Voters, and all of you, as president. Thank you.
Janis R. Hirohama
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. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With 92 years of experiences and over 800 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

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President's Message

Dear Members,

You've probably heard the phrase, with change comes opportunity. At our July meeting the Board made the decision to relinquish our office space at the Peace/Life Center on 13th Street in Modesto beginning October 1st. For the past several years each Board has weighed the cost of the space versus its usefulness to the Board and League members.

Because we have embraced technology, the space has been used mostly for storage and for 9 or 10 Board meetings per year. The space has not been large enough to accommodate general meetings so it has been necessary to find other places to use for speakers and public meetings.

Members do their League work from the comfort of their homes using their own computers and printers. The one exception is the treasurer who keeps a League laptop dedicated to keeping our financial records.

We see this move as an opportunity to make the best use of our limited resources. The savings will allow us to continue to televise and or videotape our forums so that they reach a wider audience. And it will give us the flexibility to pay janitorial and/or security fees required by some schools and public buildings so that we can sponsor forums in the districts. We understand the current financial stress of local schools and government and their need to collect fees to meet costs.

We welcome volunteers to help us move our belongings to a yet undecided storage facility. If you would like to help, or have strong kids or grandkids, please e-mail president@lwvstanislaus.org.

A special thanks to Ed Heyman, a League member, who has arranged for the Board to begin meeting at no cost at Dale Commons in Modesto. We will be moving the time of our Board meetings back to 6:30 p.m. when their small dining/meeting room will be free.

We are planning a busy fall of forums and possibly pros and cons presentations. Be sure to check your next newsletter for dates and times. It's not too late to sign up to help! Contact voterservice@lwvstanislaus.org

Thanks for renewing your memberships!

Susan Novak, President

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS:

- Voted to discontinue renting space at the Peace Life Center, due to cost, as of October 1, 2011. Future meetings will be held at Dale Commons at no cost
- Discussed Membership event to be held in October to celebrate the Centennial of California Women's Suffrage -Hanna Renning is coordinating
- Education Study meeting will be on July 29th in Laurie Carley's home at 10:00 a.m.-Stella Beratlis is coordinating

Supervisor Withrow Looks at Salida

We don't need more housing; we need jobs.

That was Supervisor Withrow's mantra when he addressed the June Lunch and Learn. The current Salida Plan is based on new housing providing infrastructure to be followed by business park development. Withrow suggested the assumptions need to be revisited and agreed it is a complicated issue, e.g. ag land preservation, commitments to developers, tight budgets and encroachment from the City of Modesto to name a few.

The first question that needs to be asked is what do the residents of the Salida area want? Services, including public safety, might be at the top of the list. With the current budget crunch, the County spreads its resources as best it can. There may be sympathy to incorporate Salida as a city, but it would add another layer of duplicated government and is it viable?

If Salidans want jobs/business parks instead of housing, how can the needed infrastructure be provided? Withrow suggests that a grassroots effort could promote cooperative planning among Salida, Stanislaus County and Modesto. Rather than competing, working together for the greater good could lead to establishing a shovel-ready business park near Highway 99, limiting potential growth into prime ag land (especially Beckwith Triangle) and improving services to Salida residents.

Marie Bairey

Ed Study

In accordance with the approval of delegates at Convention2010, LWVUS will undertake a study of the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education.

The first meeting will be held on the morning of Friday July 29 at the home of Laurie Carley.

Please join us in this effort. If you wish to participate, contact Stella Beratlis at vp2@lwwstanislaus.org or 613-9283.

Study background reading materials are available at LWV.org, under For Members > Projects and Programs.

More information next month!!!

Lunch and Learn

We will continue our Lunch and Learn through the summer with our noon luncheon on August 30th. We will take a breather from some of the "hot-button" issues and turn to a refreshing topic of cultural interest. Our speaker, Rebecca Phillips Abbott, is the Executive Director and Curator of the Carnegie Arts Center in Turlock. She comes to this new assignment with an impressive background in art. Rebecca has served as an advocate and volunteer consultant to the Carnegie Arts Center since 2008. She is currently preparing the opening exhibit of Ansel Adams CALIFORNIA in September.

Our Lunch and Learn speaker on September 27th will be Jane Wagner-Tyack, the Past- President of the San Joaquin LWV. She participated on a panel at LWVC convention discussing "Water issues, the myths and the facts". This is a topic that continues to appear regularly in the media. We have asked Jane to help us sort this out. Join us for lunch the last Tuesday of September at Appetez Restaurant at noon. Any vegetarian meal should be reserved with the restaurant in advance.

Membership Renewal

Thank you to everyone who has already renewed! It is not too late. Please make sure that you include your up-to-date telephone number and email address when renewing. Thank you!

Colleen Norby, Membership Committee

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) _____

Email _____

Please deliver my *Voter* by E-mail__ US mail __

MAIL TO

LWVSC

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352

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**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS
(Check Website for Updates)**

- Friday, July 29** **EDUCATION STUDY – home of Laurie Carley – call Stella Beratlis for details!!**
- Wednesday, August 10** **CHANGE OF TIME: 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting,
CHANGE OF LOCATION: Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road**
- Tuesday, August 30** **12:00 Noon – Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Rebecca Phillips Abbott, Executive Director and Curator of the Carnegie
Arts Center in Turlock**
- Wednesday, September 14** **CHANGE OF TIME: 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting,
CHANGE OF LOCATION: Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road**
- Tuesday, September 27** **12:00 Noon – Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Jane Wagner Tyack, LWV San Joaquin County
Topic: Water Issues: The Myths and the Facts**
- Thursday, October 13** **A CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S
SUFFRAGE
7:00 p.m. Petersen Event Center, Modesto CA
Details Upcoming!!**