



# *THE VOTER*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

Nov/Dec 2011

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 60 NO.4



League of Women Voters  
**HOLIDAY  
FLING**

*For members, donors and guests*

**Monday, December 5, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.**

*Please join us for appetizers and conversation!*

**Holiday Music by  
Y.E.S. Ambassadors**

*RSVP (non-members) and call for location/directions: 524-1698*

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.

**LWV of STANISLAUS  
COUNTY OFFICERS**

*President*

**Susan Novak**

[president@lwwstanislaus.org](mailto:president@lwwstanislaus.org)

*Vice President*

**Stella Beratlis**

[Vp2@lwwstanislaus.org](mailto:Vp2@lwwstanislaus.org)

*Secretary*

**Laurie Carley**

[secretary@lwwstanislaus.org](mailto:secretary@lwwstanislaus.org)

*Treasurer*

**Seena Rhine**

[treasurer@lwwstanislaus.org](mailto:treasurer@lwwstanislaus.org)

**DIRECTORS**

Action – State and National

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Action - Local

**Marie Bairey**

Finance Drive

**Mary Giventer**

Lunch and Learn

**Margie Lipsky**

Membership

**Hanna Renning**

Nominating Committee

**Amy Wolfe, chair**

Public Relations

**Jean Tenney**

Voter Editor

**Patty Beyer**

[newsletter@lwwstanislaus.org](mailto:newsletter@lwwstanislaus.org)

Voter Service

**Sarah Jamieson**

[voterservice@lwwstanislaus.org](mailto:voterservice@lwwstanislaus.org)

Board Administrator

**Lynn Kelso**

**OFF-BOARD**

Membership

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Voter Service

**Marsha Waggoner**

Web Master

**Diane Bartlett**

Lunch and Learn

**Joan Goldsmith**

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box E, Modesto 95352

209-524-1698

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

***Message from our President, Susan Novak:***

Now that Election Day is behind us, we can reflect on what we have accomplished and take pride in what we have achieved. Our Voter Services team, led by our student member, Sarah Jamieson, held forums for four different district elections in Modesto and elections for Modesto Mayor, Modesto City School Board, Stanislaus Union School Board, and Sylvan Union School Board. Four forums were videotaped and three of them were available 24/7 on our Smart Voter web site. Using the redesigned and very cool LWVC Smart Voter site, our Stanislaus County races had links to election news coverage in the Modesto Bee, videotaped candidate interviews, and links to candidate's individual web pages, including Face Book and Twitter. The 34 candidates who took advantage of this terrific service responded accordingly: "What a great community service. I had no idea this existed." Along with Sarah, I want to thank all the moderators, timers, question sorters, and greeters who made these forums possible.

We also sponsored an interesting and informative program for members and students on the topic of California women winning the right to vote. Hanna Renning, Member Services, did a wonderful job of selecting a dynamic and knowledgeable speakers and partnering with the Stanislaus County Office of Education, AAUW Turlock and the Stanislaus County Commission for Women. With more than 100 in attendance, many of them high school and college students, this was a great way to introduce our organizations to a younger audience. Thank you, Hanna.

We participated in the LWVUS Study of the Role of the Federal Government in Education. Thanks to Vice-President Stella Beratlis and a study group of nine interested league members, the committee's consensus report will go to the Board for approval on November 9th. As part of the study, Stella worked with Margie Lipsky and Joan Goldsmith to devote our October Lunch and Learn program to a speaker knowledgeable about Core Standards. (see Marie Bairey's article on page 4 of this month's Voter).

We also finally moved out of our shared office space in downtown Modesto. With our files accessible at Doc U Stor for much less than the cost of rent, we can start the New Year with a healthy bank balance and the opportunity to put our resources into programs and services that will further our mission.

It has been a great summer and fall for the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County. Thank you!

*Susan Novak, President*

***We welcome new member Michelle Coxford and  
we welcome back Mari Martelli!!***

## CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE EVENT "WAS GOLDEN" IN ITS EFFECTS

Thank you to the many of you who attended our event celebrating the Centennial of Women's Suffrage in California on October 13 at the Petersen Event Center. We had a good turnout, including quite a few students.

Our excellent speaker, Teri Lunt, e-mailed this about one of her students, who attended to get extra credit: "She is a returning student and she brought her fifth-grade daughter with her. On the way home, her daughter asked about how the student voted in the last election. She was ashamed to have to admit that she has never voted. In her paper, the student expressed her surprise about the history of women's voting and her dismay about her own ambivalence toward the right to vote. She then vowed to pay more attention to elections, and to participate in the political process in an effort to set a good example for her children. Your event changed this woman's life. (The result) was golden, as evidenced by just this one student."

Doesn't this make our efforts worthwhile?

*Hanna Renning, Nominating Committee*

### Education Study Consensus

On Saturday November 5, eleven LWV members met to hear the findings of the Education Study Committee, which met during the summer to reach consensus on 15 questions keyed to the study topic, the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education.

The local committee presented its answers along with comments on each category. Categories of questions included general questions about the history and overall role of the federal government in education, the Common Core standards plus associated assessment and curriculum, and funding and equity issues. Individual questions could be answered with yes/no, multiple choice, or by ranking of statements to indicate priorities.

Essentially, the committee supported the idea of the federal government's role in public education with a caveat that its role be supportive and not overly prescriptive; the mandating of Common Core Standards to provide equitable education across all states; the right of local and state education agencies to determine curriculum mapped to the national standards; the continuation of categorical, non-competitive funding for schools; and the notion of universal preschool, to name a few of the significant issues addressed in the consensus study.

After the meeting, comments and feedback from attendees were compiled into a report and presented to the Board on November 9 for approval. Pending board approval, the report will be submitted to the LWVUS National Study Committee by its November 30 deadline.

Thank you to Sylvia Orozco, branch manager at Oak Valley Community Bank on McHenry and Sylvan in Modesto, for allowing us the use of the bank's conference room. Thank you also to all of the Education Study committee members, and to Sarah Jamieson, recorder, and Mary Giventer, who presented many of the questions to the group.

If you would like to participate in a study, there is another opportunity to get involved with the upcoming LWVUS study on privatization. This study will examine policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. The study in particular will examine privatization/subcontracting of public education, prisons, and publicly-owned wastewater treatment works. If you are interested in these topics, please contact Stella Beratlis at <mailto:vp@lwwstanislaus.org> for more information.

*—Stella Beratlis*

## ***State Action:***

**Decline to Sign:** The campaign to do away with the work of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission continues despite a recent Court ruling. The California Supreme Court upheld Congressional and State Senate maps drawn by the California Citizens Redistricting Committee. The Court unanimously denied two lawsuits that challenged these maps and also denied petitioners' requests for an emergency stay of the certified maps.

However, a group calling itself Fairness and Accountability in Redistricting (FAIR) continues to gather signatures for a ballot referendum to overturn the Commission's work.

The LWVC urges you not to sign the FAIR petitions and to alert others of this threat to the redistricting process. We believe placing redistricting in the hands of an independent, nonpartisan citizens' commission with established rules and procedures, soliciting input from the public, and opening the commission's work to public scrutiny has succeeded. California voters established this process. The Court has determined that the rules were followed and the results are reasonable. For more information, go to [www.cavotes.org](http://www.cavotes.org).

**Safe California Act:** LWVC is helping circulate petitions for signatures to qualify the Safe California Act for the November 2012 ballot. This initiative would end executions and replace the death penalty with permanent imprisonment. Some of the savings would be set aside to augment investigation of open rape and murder cases. For details, check out [taxpayersforjustice.org](http://taxpayersforjustice.org).

Governor Brown signed two bills recently supported by LWVC. SB 397 allows the state to begin registering voters online. This bill should save money and allow more people to vote. AB 420 counts prisoners as residing at their last known place of residence, rather than at the institution of their incarceration, when drawing new district lines following the 2020 census. This bill addresses an inequity that affects political representation among California's Latino and African American populations.

## ***National Action:***

**Clean Air Standards:** LWVUS continues to focus on public health by urging Congress to reject proposals to weaken clean air standards by rolling back significant EPA regulations such as the cross-state air pollution rule, mercury and air toxics standards for power plants.

Countering arguments by those who would dilute clean air standards in service to improving the economy, the League states, "Clean air is an issue of public health, and multiple studies have demonstrated that efforts to clean up the air not only protect our health but also provide a significant economic benefit to the country... Protecting public health is a social commitment we make to each other and which we depend on our elected officials in Congress to carry out and safeguard."

A recent public opinion poll by the LWVUS and others confirmed that the public supports strong pollution standards and believes that scientists and experts at EPA should be the ones to set pollution standards.

*Ann Kraback, State and National Action*

## ***Lunch and Learn: Role of Federal Government in Education***

Sue Rich, Stanislaus County Assistant Superintendent of Schools, for Instructional Support Services gave October Lunch and Learn attendees an overview of changes coming to public education as a result of national Common Core standards. She noted that though education is said to be the backbone of democracy, there is no mention of it in the US Constitution, leaving implementation to the states. That has changed over the years through federal funding of educational programs and, more recently, No Child Left Behind.

Updating state instructional standards and reauthorizing federal education legislation was long overdue. Developing national Common Core standards, which California adopted in 2010, is the latest effort to establish uniform curricular standards and rigorous expectations for all students' learning. Though states are not required to adopt the Common Core, all but a few have done so (a pre-requisite to applying for federal grants.) Whereas previously instructional materials may have been loosely aligned to state standards, now publishers will have a national market for textbooks and technology to be adopted by 2016 and 2018. Innovative, aligned student assessments are being developed which will rely heavily on computer technology. It will be possible to measure student growth from year to year for better accountability. A bone of contention is the issue of teacher quality initiatives which include student learning as a factor in identifying "highly effective teachers".

Questions remain as to how to balance the role of federal and state governments to benefit children and how politics can be minimized so the benefits can be realized.

LWVUS is in the process of studying these issues in an effort to update its position for advocacy. LWV Stanislaus offered input through the consensus meeting held November 5.

*Marie Bairey*

## ***Lunch and Learn***

Our monthly Lunch and Learn meetings will **change to Thursdays beginning January 2012**. This change was made to accommodate those members who have been unable to attend because of other Tuesday commitments.

There will be no luncheons in November and December because of the holidays. Our attendance at Lunch and Learn has been great this year. A survey of our regular attendees indicated there would be no drop off with the **switch to Thursday**. We are hoping attendance will even increase.

*Margie Lipsky, Lunch and Learn Director*

## ***Finance Drive***

The Finance Drive is off to a good start. We are receiving donations from some new donors as well as our faithful donors. To date we have raised \$2025.00 in the Education Fund and \$2665.00 in the General Fund. If you have not yet donated, please consider doing so. We need to raise at least \$2000.00 more to meet our goal. If you had a chance to attend any of our many voter forums this fall or the outstanding Women's Suffragette program you know what a valuable service we perform for the community. Your contribution, at any level you are comfortable with, will help us continue our efforts.

*Mary Giventer, Finance Drive Director*

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**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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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  
P.O. Box E  
Modesto, CA 95352

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**  
[\(Check Website for Updates\)](#)

Wednesday, November 9	<b>CHANGE OF DATE &amp; TIME: 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting,</b> <b>CHANGE OF LOCATION: Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road</b>
Monday, December 5	<b>HOLIDAY FLING</b> <b>Time: 6:30 p.m.</b> <b>Holiday Music by the Y.E.S. Ambassadors</b> <i>Non-members please RSVP: 524-1698</i>
Thursday, January 26	<b>Lunch and Learn</b> <b>CHANGE OF WEEKDAY: THURSDAY!!!</b> <b>12:00 noon</b> <b>Location: Appetez Restaurant</b>
Thursday, February 23	<b>Lunch and Learn</b> <b>CHANGE OF WEEKDAY: THURSDAY!!!</b> <b>12:00 noon</b> <b>Location: Appetez Restaurant</b>
Thursday, March 29	<b>Lunch and Learn</b> <b>CHANGE OF WEEKDAY: THURSDAY!!!</b> <b>12:00 noon</b> <b>Location: Appetez Restaurant</b>
Wednesday, January 11	<b>CHANGE OF DATE &amp; TIME: 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting,</b> <b>CHANGE OF LOCATION: Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road</b>