



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

Jan/Feb 2012

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 60 NO.5

Save Stanislaus Libraries—Get Involved!

Perhaps no other local issue is as dear to League members as providing consistent funding to our public libraries. Our founding Modesto League President, Helen Pierce, was a librarian at Modesto Junior College. Eight of our current members are active or retired librarians. Two of our members have served as presidents of Library Friends organizations and two are currently serving on the “Yes for Libraries” campaign steering committee. League members believe that the free access to knowledge and information provided by public libraries is necessary for informed and active participation in a democratic society. We love our libraries.

Our League used our local study process to adopt a library finance position in 1994. This was before there was a library finance position at our state League level. We campaigned vigorously in 1995 to pass the first dedicated sales tax in California that would be used exclusively to fund our Stanislaus County library system. League member and Stanislaus County Librarian, Starrett Kreissman, created a model for funding that other California public libraries in financial trouble could follow—if they could convince their voters. We did—not just in 1995 but in 1999 and 2004!

Renewing a dedicated sales tax election in California requires a two-thirds majority vote. In these difficult financial times, we cannot take public support for renewing this 1/8 cent sales tax for granted. The library sales tax funds 87% of the cost of operating the county’s 13 branches.

League members need to take an active role.

Sign up today! <http://www.savestanislauslibraries.com/Get-Involved.html>

Get your family and friends involved walking precincts. Consider making a donation and support campaign fundraising events. The next one is an E-Waste Recycling fundraiser on Feb. 11 in the Coldwell Banker-Vinson Chase parking lot at McHenry and Standiford Avenues (next to Target). Here's your opportunity to discard and support a worthy cause at the same time.

Learn more about the state of our libraries from League member and County Librarian, Vanessa Czopek at the Thursday, February 26th Lunch and Learn at Appetez Restaurant.

Nominating Committee Wants You!

The Nominating Committee has convened for this year's activities. Comprised of Amy Wolfe (Chair), Stella Beratlis, Laurie Carley, Ruby Hennessy, and Mercedes Hart, the committee is planning this year’s Annual Meeting and contacting potential board members and directors for the 2012-2013 year. If you would like to be involved more directly in League activities, please consider contacting the Nominating Committee to discuss how you can participate. We welcome all input! Contact Amy at amy@p3consulting.net or 209-499-4091.

**LWV of STANISLAUS
COUNTY OFFICERS**

President

Susan Novak

president@lwvstanislaus.org

Vice President

Stella Berathlis

Vp2@lwvstanislaus.org

Secretary

Laurie Carley

secretary@lwvstanislaus.org

Treasurer

Seena Rhine

treasurer@lwvstanislaus.org

DIRECTORS

Action – State and National

Ann Krabach

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@lwvstanislaus.org

Voter Service

Sarah Jamieson

voterservice@lwvstanislaus.org

Board Administrator

Lynn Kelso

OFF-BOARD

Membership

Colleen Norby

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.lwvstanislaus.org

Message from our President, Susan Novak:

A New Year brings new opportunities for League members and supporters to be actively involved in the democratic process.

Locally: We must pass the Library Sales Tax Renewal measure on the June ballot.

Yes for Libraries!

Statewide: We must educate voters about the Top-Two Open Primary system and new electoral districts debuting in the June election.

Nationally: We must fight back against the big money pouring into political campaigns. Begin by signing the LWVUS petition on the White House website urging President Obama to appoint new commissioners to the FEC. We need 25,000 signatures of support by February 10th in order to get a response from the White House.

<http://www.lwv.org/content/step-step-instructions-signing-white-house-petition>

Whether your interest is in voter service, advocacy or both, there will be opportunities for you to participate. I look forward to seeing you.

Susan Novak, President

**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

PROGRAM PLANNING PRIORITIES: NATIONAL 2012-2014 & LOCAL

Please attend the Program Planning Meeting on **WEDNESDAY, FEB. 8 at 6:00 P.M.** (arrive at 5:45 for light food) at the home of Marsha Waggoner. If you are unable to attend, please complete and return this flyer as described below.

Please fax to 209-521-4939 or email to vp@lwwstanislaus.org by February 7. The form may also be downloaded from <http://www.lwwstanislaus.org/>.

Name _____

Part 1: National Positions. Different procedure this year: *Local Leagues have the option to propose one new study, or one review and update, or one concurrence or to make no recommendation.* Leagues are no longer being asked to adopt existing program, although convention delegates will continue to do so.

LWVUS Program Positions can be found in *Impact on Issues 2010-2012*:

<http://www.lww.org/content/impact-issues-online-edition>

and are categorized under the following headings:

Representative Government

International Relations

Natural Resources

Social Policy

Please review the positions in *Impact on Issues*. Based upon your review, make a recommendation:

I recommend (if more than one, rank as 1, 2, and 3):

_____ New study on (topic): _____

_____ Review of an existing League position on: _____
(note position title)

_____ Adopt by concurrence position on: _____

_____ No recommendation

Please comment on need for a new national study. (Use back if necessary.)

Part II: Local Program Positions. (See Page 4) Circle the positions you wish to retain; draw a line through those you wish to drop. Note any that you would want to update.

Land Use

Housing

Adult Criminal Justice

Municipal Government

Child Abuse and Neglect

Local Library Finance

Gang Violence

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County Proposed Local Program 2011-2012

Housing (Adopted 1975, updated 1982 and 2003)

We recognize that the need for shelter is fundamental, and that a diverse population will desire a wide selection of housing options. Therefore, we:

- A. Support equal opportunity in housing options in Stanislaus County.
- B. Support local measures to increase the supply of a diverse range of housing types to serve a diverse population.
- C. Support local measures to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing for everyone.

Land Use (Adopted 1976, updated 1988 and 2003)

We recognize that land use decisions have an impact on many areas, notably on the quality of life and on the economy; and we recognize that land itself is an irreplaceable resource that needs to be preserved and protected. We support land use planning that:

- A. Protects farmland outside clearly defined urban boundaries to avoid unnecessary conversion of farmlands.
- B. Protects the overall quality of environment (soil, air, and water).
- C. Provides urban development contiguous with existing development where urban services can be provided.
- D. Provides adequate funding for infrastructure needs (transportation, schools, parks, government services and public utilities.)

Land use planning should involve cooperation between and among the various local regional government bodies.

Adult Criminal Justice (Adopted 1980, 1982 and 1984)

We support:

- A. The funding in Stanislaus County of a wide range of alternatives to incarceration for all but the physically dangerous offender.
- B. Efforts to further the expansion of rehabilitative programs and facilities for persons convicted of drug and alcohol abuse.
- C. A greater allocation of funds within the criminal justice budget for crime prevention, crime detection and rehabilitation

Child Abuse and Neglect (Adopted 1985, updated 1987)

- A. We recognize child abuse as a societal problem; therefore, we support: Legislation, which addresses the jurisdictional, organizational and procedural problems in the prosecution of child abuse cases.
- B. Modification of the courtroom process to accommodate child victims.
- C. Consistent reporting and recording of child abuse and neglect cases and development of comprehensive statistics.
- D. Broad-based prevention programs that are accessible to all family members and take into consideration the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of those being served.
- E. Efforts of public and private agencies to continually focus public attention on the problems of child abuse and neglect.

Local Library Finance (Adopted 1994, updated 1997 and 2003)

We support long-term, consistent funding of the Stanislaus County Free Library

- A. We strongly support a dedicated source of funds which could be used only for the Library
- B. Basic library services should remain free and become more accessible to all Stanislaus County residents in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- C. We support a long-range goal of maintaining a library system of excellence.

Gang Violence (Adopted 2007)

In order to address the problem of criminal gang activity within our community, we support the development of culturally diverse intervention and enrichment programs at the elementary school level and beyond.

- A. Such programs may include recreational, athletic, academic, creative and/or social activities.
- B. We encourage allocation of resources to fund these programs through public, private and/or non-profit organizations.

Municipal Government (Adopted 2008)

To assure that municipal government is open, accountable, and responsive to residents and to promote full participation by citizens, we support:

- A system that balances neighborhood needs with citywide perspective
- Encourages and offers opportunity for increased voter and candidate participation

(Should districts be part of a proposal, criteria for establishing districts are addressed by LWVC.

Also, LWVC has a position favoring majority decisions for elections officials.)

Water Politics in California

At January's Lunch and Learn Dr. David Colnic, Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at CSUS, discussed the issues and challenges for water policy in California.

Water = Life! This is especially true in the American West, much of which has less than 10 inches of annual rainfall. The Central Valley benefits from Sierra snow melt that flows to the rivers. Historically, areas and cities develop or are revitalized because of access to water. Scarcity, on the other hand, can generate some positive consequences such as conservation measures, imposition of pricing structures and innovations as well as efforts to capture and move water to areas of need by constructing dams, canals and aqueducts.

The primary goal of water policy should be to develop equitable, democratic ways to distribute water to all stakeholders – agriculture, urban areas and environmental protection. Easier said than done considering California's water history.

Dr. Colnic identified four challenges.

- The "Lords of Yesterday" refers to the antiquated laws and institutions such as the Gold Rush era tradition of water rights and mid 20th century administrative structures which establish powerful top-down bureaucracies.
- Ecological limits – demand for water is more than the supply. This is exacerbated by periodic drought and climate change.
- Population growth increases demand. Unless there is a "pay for use" pricing structure, there is no incentive to conserve. Growth also decreases arable land while at the same time people voice concern for environmental protection, whether as a moral value or for commercial sustainability.
- Political Gridlock – entrenched interests are unlikely to compromise and solutions are costly – politically and economically. Often issues are resolved in the courts or through social movements.

The Delta is "the elephant in the room". Lessons from Katrina. We need infrastructure for flood prevention, to hold back salt water and for environmental safeguards. What to do? The peripheral canal was rejected by the voters and ground water recharge requires significant amounts of water. Next?

Dr. Colnic suggests that water policy should reflect understanding of needs and place, should bring diverse voices to the table, should be flexible and should offer incentives for innovation and cooperation.

Marie Bairey, Local Action

Board Highlights January 11, 2012

- It was moved, seconded, and carried (Renning/Carley) to appoint Seena Rhine, Sarah Jameison, and Julie Saugstad to the Budget Committee
- We will have a student intern from CSUS. Susan has completed the necessary paperwork for this semester for our Voter Service Director and CSUS student, Sarah Jamieson.
- The LWVUS Convention is in Washington D.C. June 8th to the 12th
- Local Action Director, M. Bairey, attended the public hearing on MID water sale, it appears we cannot take a position on this local matter because this is a state issue and the LWVC position does not include water transfer. It relates primarily to conservation
- Susan and the board gave kudos to Mary and committee for a terrific Finance Drive

Laurie Carley, Secretary

Voter Service

What a busy fall we had in Voter Services! We facilitated numerous forums for Modesto voters this fall including city council seats, mayor, and various school board positions. With help from the Voter Services Committee and all our wonderful League volunteers we were able to provide this service to the voters and make the information available to the Smartvoter website as well. In the coming months, we are going to look into how to increase the amount of information we can make available on the Smartvoter site for future elections.

Thank you to all the volunteers and moderators who helped us this past fall. You are very much appreciated!

As you all know the race for Modesto Mayor continues so please do not forget to vote!

Sarah Jamieson, Voter Service

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, February 8	PROGRAM PLANNING 6:00 p.m. Home of Marsha Waggoner – arrive at 5:45 for light food
Wednesday, February 8	CHANGE OF DATE & TIME: 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting, Home of Marsha Waggoner
Thursday, February 23	Lunch and Learn: Vanessa Czopek, Stanislaus County Librarian CHANGE OF WEEKDAY: THURSDAY!!! 12:00 noon Location: Appetez Restaurant
Thursday, March 29	Lunch and Learn CHANGE OF WEEKDAY: THURSDAY!!! 12:00 noon Location: Appetez Restaurant