



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO

April 2006

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL.57 NO.13

Calendar of Events

Apr. 10th

D. A. And Sheriff
Candidates' Forums
1010 Tenth Street

Apr. 12th

Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Board Meeting

Apr. 19th

School Superintendent &
County Supervisor
Candidates' Forums
1010 Tenth Street

Apr. 21st

Friday, 11:00 am
Local Action Meeting

Apr. 24th

County Clerk & Treasurer
Candidates' Forums
1010 Tenth Street

Apr. 25th

Tuesday, 12:00 noon
Lunch and Learn

Apr. 29th

Saturday, 10:00AM
Annual Meeting

May 3rd

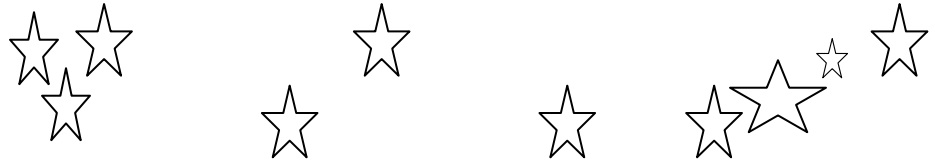
Pros and Cons - CSUS

May 6th-7th

State Council, Sacramento

May 30th

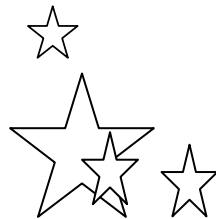
Tuesday, 12:00 noon
Lunch and Learn



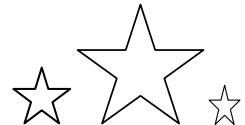
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO

ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2006



BREAKFAST MEETING
10:00 AM – 12:00 NOON
\$22 /PERSON
CLUB MAXX ROOM



DOUBLETREE HOTEL / MODESTO CENTRE PLAZA
COMPLIMENTARY PARKING WITH VALIDATION
9TH & K PARKING LOT

DR. HAMID SHIRVANI

PRESIDENT,

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY STANISLAUS

*"VISION FOR THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS EFFECT
ON THE CENTRAL VALLEY"*



QUESTIONS? CALL GLORIA SKOL @ 526-2421

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President's Message:

Our annual meeting is early this year so be certain to mark your calendars and send in your reservation! We have many important issues to discuss - most notably, the results of the gang study, which is included in this Voter and the name change proposal. Please attend this important event - it is a Saturday brunch. Many thanks to Gloria Skol and her committee for making the arrangements and for proposing a full slate of officers for next year's board. We all have such busy lives and those who have volunteered to become part of the 'movers and shakers' of next year's board must be commended for their willingness.

When I was nominated for President two years ago, I could only imagine how challenging and rewarding the experience would be and thanks to the mentoring from all of the very fine officers, both on-board and currently off-board, their depth of knowledge, and the energy and enthusiasm of those of newer to League. This combination provided for a very dynamic board that could discuss and come to consensus with very difficult local issues. My experiences as your president and at the state council and national convention proved to me that League is a model for grass-roots democracy-in-action. Thank you to the board for your patience, your persistence and your dedication!

Maria Arevalo did a very fine job of moderating and leading the gang study committee to a consensus - many hours of dedicated service went into this study and the results were fairly consistent - there needs to be prevention and intervention to keep our youth out of gangs - be sure to read Maria's report thoroughly. Thank you, Maria, and to your committee for an excellent study!

Gloria Skol and Pat Paul arranged a very successful and elegant membership event at the Mistlin Art Gallery. Having Carol Whiteside as a speaker was a propos, especially considering the proposal of changing our name to the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County - we can no longer separate out the challenges of Modesto from the challenges to our county and region.

I thank everyone who has actively participated in the events this year - without your volunteering and without your donations, League could not accomplish what it has. With the special elections of the past two years, we have had a very strong presence in the community thanks to your volunteering! Our non-partisan presence is appreciated by many, perhaps especially at our forums - and, there will be six this election cycle!

Several of our League members have been recognized in our community - I am sure there are many more who have who tirelessly given of themselves in ways that are not recognized but it is very special to note in this month's Voter the five of our members have been recognized for their efforts. We have a very exciting agenda awaiting you at our annual meeting and look forward to seeing you there!

-Patty Lundy, President

VOTER SERVICE ACTIVITIES:

During April and May, Voter Service will be very active with forums, presentations, and voter registration.

Monday, April 10:

6:00 p.m. – Stanislaus County District Attorney

7:30 p.m. – Stanislaus County Sheriff/Coroner

Wednesday, April 19:

6:00 p.m. - Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors: Districts 3 and 4

8:00 p.m. – Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools

Monday, April 24:

6:00 p.m. - Stanislaus County Clerk/Recorder

7:30 p.m. - Stanislaus County Treasurer/Tax Collector

Each of the forums will be held in the City/County Chambers at 1010 Tenth Street, Modesto. All League members and interested community guests are highly encouraged to attend. The forums will be broadcast live on Comcast Cable channels 7 and 8 and will be re-broadcast until the election. Stay tuned for dates and times of re-broadcast.

-Amy Christensen, Voter Service

PROPOSED 2006-2007 LWV MODESTO BOARD SLATE

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Lunch and Learn

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NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Margie Lipsky, Chair
Lynn Kelso

-Gloria Skol, Nominating Committee

DIVERSITY POLICY:

League of Women Voters of Modesto 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.

League of Women Voter's of Modesto's Local Program

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.

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.

Child Abuse and Neglect (Adopted 1985, updated 1987)

The League of Women Voters of Modesto recognizes child abuse as a societal problem; therefore, we support:

- A. 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)

The League of Women Voters of Modesto supports 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.

Adult Criminal Justice (Adopted 1980, updated 1982 and 1984)

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.

-continued page 5

LWVM LOCAL PROGRAM-GANG STUDY

At the Annual Meeting in May 2005, the League approved the study of the issue of gangs in the Modesto, Stanislaus County area. The League felt that such a study could contribute to our position on juvenile justice or enable us to support legislation addressing this problem in our community and in the state. It was felt that the gang issue could be approached from a different perspective than one focused solely on criminal sanctions or the identification of gangs.

Over the past months, members of the Study Committee developed areas of inquiry and identified persons in the community to be interviewed regarding the study with the focus of obtaining information which would allow us to answer the following question:

What resources does the community need to address the gang issue?

Not surprisingly, the gang issue is a complex one. Our efforts addressed the youth gang issue in our community and not the related prison problems or adult activity. The mere association of young people into groups which can offer status, acceptance and self esteem may not be the problem; it is the association of young people into groups for the purpose of serious and violent criminal activity and for the control of turf that alarm school officials and community members. The age of gang members seems to be dropping and it is no longer a high school age problem or even junior high school, but a problem of great concern at the elementary school level and female membership in gangs is on the rise.

The committee interviewed members of law enforcement, teachers and other educators, social service organizations, ex gang members and their families. As the committee spoke to these people, it became clear that there were other people that could have valuable input because the gang issue affects many segments of our community but we had limited time and resources. We also attended meetings sponsored by the community on the gang issue. The committee also did not address the question of who makes up the gang population or how many gang members operate within the community. These number and facts are already available through law enforcement.

Law enforcement presently has access to funds which make resources available to identify gang members not just in this county but throughout the state.

The committee basically asked what resources are available, what resources are effective and are used now and what resources are needed. There were many and varied responses to the questions we posed. One of the main conclusions that can be drawn is that the Stanislaus County area lacks prevention and intervention programs. There are funds provided to law enforcement for suppression and identification. Significantly, law enforcement representatives told us "more cops and jail will not solve the problem".

According to the County School district, Stanislaus County provides grant funded after school programs in the K -8 grades in approximately 49% of schools. This is not sufficient since consistently, our interviews revealed the opinion that there are very few after school programs. The interviews also revealed that there are very few drug prevention or counseling programs for troubled youth or available job training programs. Another clear message was that existing prevention programs lack cultural sensitivity. The responses to our questions and an analysis of those answers will be included in the final report. As a result of the information collected the committee is ready to recommend that the League adopt the following position:

In addressing the gang issue our community and schools must place a priority on using present funding and obtaining additional funding for culturally sensitive prevention and intervention programs including after school, weekend and night time programs for grades 4 to 8, specifically, enrichment programs (art, music, recreation), counseling programs (drug and mental health) and job training programs.

*-Maria Arevalo, State and National,
Gang Study Chair*

We worry about what a child will become
tomorrow,
yet we forget that he is someone today.

-Stacia Tauscher

Prop 81

Imagine the Modesto and Turlock libraries transformed, with easier access for seniors and parents, more computers and quiet study areas, a special place for adult literacy, additional modern meeting rooms, a dedicated story time space for toddlers and preschoolers and increased programming for the whole community. Now imagine having to pay only 35% of the bill.

Proposition 81, on the June 6th ballot, offers just such an opportunity. Officially known as the “California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2006,” it would provide \$600 million in new bond funding for library construction. Prop. 81 is supported by the California Federation of Teachers, the California Business Roundtable, the Congress of California Seniors and the League of Women Voters, among others.

According to Vanessa Czopek, Stanislaus County Librarian, the Modesto and Turlock libraries are both “bursting at the seams and crumbling around our ears. This bond measure is our best chance for re-engineering and remodeling both.” Built in 1971 and 1968 respectively, both libraries pre-date computers, the internet, and handicap access and population increases of well over 300%. “Retrofitting will only take you so far;” said Czopek, “and we’ve done all we can do with the existing structures. At almost 40 years old, both libraries are at their breaking points and in grievous need of help.”

Prop. 81 is not a new tax. It authorizes the issuance of a general obligation bond to be paid back over 30 years, in tax dollars already paid to the state’s General Fund in the form of personal income, corporate and sales taxes. Combined with the 35% local match, it represents an almost \$900 million investment in California libraries. It also represents a boon to the local economies where the building and renovation will be done.

In recognition of the special partnership between schools and libraries, \$25 million of the bond measure is designated for joint use projects with public education institutions (K-12 school district, county office of education, community college district or a CSU/UC campus).

Prop. 81 has another unique feature not present in past bond measures: the requirement that half the money be awarded to suburban and rural libraries. “That’s a very exciting new wrinkle for us,” said Vanessa Czopek. “The large urban centers to our north and south received the lion’s share of these bond measures in the past, but given the way the new bond measure is written, the playing field is finally even.”

Stanislaus County Library has had a capital improvement plan for many years, using it as a long-range assessment tool of library needs and revising it on a regular basis. “The plan’s most recent update will go to the Board of Supervisors soon,” said Czopek. “We’ve kept it up to date in hopes of just such an opportunity as Prop 81. If it passes, we will be in a very good position to compete.”

Prop. 81 is the financial ability to operate the new or renovated facilities, since bond money can only be spent on one-time costs like land, buildings, renovations, furniture and equipment. “That’s where our existing 1/8 cent sales tax for local libraries would be a big plus,” continued Czopek. “We have a proven track record of community support and ability to put the money to good use.”

As to the 35% that must come from local sources, the library would use many of the same sources it used to build the new Salida Library. A 10-year plan bringing together a combination of funding sources, savings plans and debt service would be developed.

Successful passage would kick into gear a full calendar of meetings with library stakeholders. “We would only move forward with the full input of all segments of the community,” said Czopek.

Libraries work together with schools to educate our young, they provide literacy programs for adult learners, they offer equal access to technology, they supply large print and audio books to seniors and the disabled, they shelter students in a safe after-school environment, they offer programming for all ages – from story time for preschoolers to computer classes for seniors.

On June 6th voters will be given the chance to parlay a good thing into something great.

- Linda Walden

MEMBERSHIP EVENT

If you missed the Membership Event this year, you missed a wonderful evening! It was held at the Mistlin Gallery downtown, where we were surrounded by wonderful art and an atmosphere of creativity and possibilities!

A heartfelt thanks to Pat Paul for organizing this very successful event, to Margie Lipsky for coordinating all the wonderful food and flowers and to Myrtle Osner for making the floral displays!

Thanks also to the generosity of underwriters for the event: Eddy Cash Dudley, Lynne Fenderson, Kenni Friedman, Gloria Skol, Pat Paul, Beverly Finley, Jackie Gianelli, Rhonda Kluender, Douglas Chadwick. We also want to thank E. & J. Gallo Winery for providing the wine for the evening.

We had approximately 60 guests, including many new faces who expressed an interest in joining League.

We were honored to have Carol Whiteside as our guest speaker. Carol is President of the Great Valley Center in Modesto. With colorful maps to emphasize her point, she said the Central Valley is "at the tipping point" -- the theme of the Center's annual conference in May. **The time is now to act regionally to plan for inevitable growth headed our way.** Recent studies revealed that the Valley has a poverty rate comparable to Appalachia and a growth rate higher than Mexico but lacks the necessary resources. Historically, the Valley has had to compete with large metropolitan areas for state and federal dollars. By acting regionally, the Valley can and has developed the political clout to make some changes. Regional legislators have agreed to work together on behalf of the Valley. Case in point, the governor has pledged to commit significant money to improvement of Highway 99 in a future bond measure. By developing a plan that directs growth, cooperating agencies in the Valley can anticipate and provide the necessary infrastructure. We are "at the tipping point."

- Gloria Skol, Membership

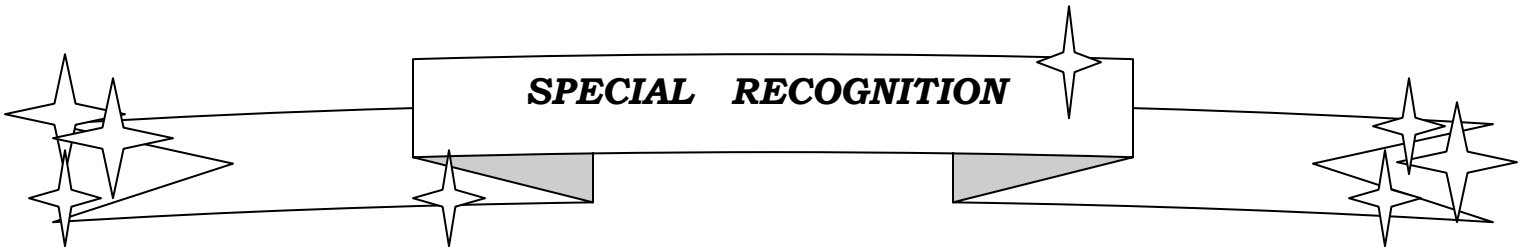


PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

A recent issue of the Great Valley News, published by the Great Valley Center, listed the nine Growth Principles adopted last October by the San Joaquin Valley Regional Association of Counties. As stated in the article, the document "includes principles that taken together validate important principles of land use, transportation, housing and resource management." It should also be noted that these Growth Principles are consistent with our own Land Use position.

1. New growth should be located in or adjacent to existing communities.
2. Land use planning and development solutions should be regionally coordinated to encourage compact development and more efficient land use.
3. The best locations for placement of higher densities that are most effectively integrated into region-wide transportation opportunities should be identified regionally.
4. Premature or unnecessary conversion of prime or productive agricultural land should be avoided.
5. Incentives that link funding of regional transportation improvements to land development should be provided.
6. Policies to increase housing supply and affordability should be supported with policy and action.
7. Regional strategies should be developed to assure sufficient water supply and water quality.
8. Regional infrastructure needs should be collaboratively planned and include funding strategies.
9. A process which enables regular, ongoing conversation about issues of regional significance should be established and maintained.

-Marie Bairey, Local Action



EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD:

League member Julie Fox will receive the prestigious Richard E Cone award for Excellence in Leadership in April. Julie is a long time League of Women Voters member; we congratulate her for her work, one of the examples of the inspiration that the League tries to promote in its members.

Julie is the CSUS Service Learning Coordinator. In this position she has increased the level of civic engagement by students and faculty with her commitment to community service and by leading by example to develop a host of programs of community partnership in which students and faculty have become involved.

- Myrtle Osner, Office Manager

LWVM MEMBERS HONORED:

The League Members who were chosen as Outstanding Women this year are the following women:

Wendy Byrd
Eddy Cash Dudley
Lynn Hansen

Many League members have in the past been named Outstanding by the Stanislaus County Commission for Women. We are honored to have our members chosen and look forward to many more years of attracting outstanding citizens, both men and women to the League of Women Voters (whose members are both women and men).

-Myrtle Osner, Office Manager

LEAGUE MEMBER APPOINTED:

Marie Bairey has been appointed to the Modesto City Charter Review Committee by Councilman Garrad Marsh. This committee will be reviewing the City Charter to examine if any changes or modifications need to be made. Congratulations Marie!

-Patty Lundy, President

PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

This month we had three new members join the League:

Ed Heyman Shirlee Court Paula Barker

Welcome, we look forward to seeing you!

-Myrtle Osner, Office Manager

I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO!

Student Membership \$15 Individual Membership \$50
 Household Membership \$75 Please contact me with more information
Name(s) _____
Address _____
Phone (for directory) _____ Email _____

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LUNCH AND LEARN

Tuesday, April 25, 2006 at 12:00pm
Appetez Restaurant
in Roseburg Square
\$11.00 for chef's entrée
For vegetarian entree,
you must call Appetez one day ahead.

SPEAKER: Kirk Ford
Deputy Planning Director