



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

September 2008

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 3

Calendar of Events

September 9th

Local Action Committee Meeting
11:00 a.m.

September 10th

Board Meeting
6:00 p.m.

September 17

MJC Constitution Day Program
Amy Wolfe, Speaker
Details soon on LWVSC Website

September 23

Candidates Forum
Mayor & City Council
Riverbank Community Center
3600 Santa Fe Ave.
Riverbank
Time TBA

September 30

Candidates Forum
City Council
Turlock City Council Chambers
156 S. Broadway
Turlock
7:00 p.m.

September 30

Lunch and Learn
Vincent Harris of StanCOG on Measure S
Appetiz Restaurant
Roseburg Square
12:00 Noon

All meetings are held at the League Office,
720 13th Street, Modesto, CA

Measure S Consensus Recommendation

League members met August 20 to study the county's proposed transportation tax measure on the November 4 ballot -Better Roads-Safer Streets Program. The group examined the components of the measure and the LWVSC Transportation Position. After considerable discussion and reservations, the group consensus was to recommend support for the measure. The recommendation will be considered at the September 10 LWVSC Board meeting. (It should be noted that League supported Measure K in 2006.)

The measure proposes a 1/2 cent sales tax for 20 years dedicated to transportation needs in the cities and county. The Expenditure Plan lists where the dollars will be spent for the first 10 years – much needed repair and upgrades to various streets and roads in the nine cities and the county. Plans for the next 10 years would be based on needs and conditions at the time. The measure includes three east-west county corridors, two of which could qualify Stanislaus County as a self-help county eligible for matching funds from the state. What the measure does not include are provisions for public transit, para-transit for elderly and disabled or alternate transportation modes to automobiles. Passage of the measure requires a 2/3 favorable vote.

For future transparency and public safeguards the measure requires a representative oversight committee, annual reviews of projects and expenditures and a process for amending the Expenditure Plan as needs change. The League group recognized the proponents' efforts to elicit public input and educate county residents about the proposal.

While noting the shortcomings of the proposal in the area of alternate transit modes, the consensus was that the overall benefits of the proposal outweigh the shortcomings at this time. The county has to "catch up" on road maintenance, meet the demands of growth and improve transportation for economic development. The process has been a significant step in regional planning, and the oversight provisions protect public interest.

Victor Harris of StanCOG will discuss Measure S at the September 30 Lunch and Learn.

Patty Beyer, Local Action Director

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Colleen Norby

Margie Lipsky (Off Board)

Voter Service

Ellen Dunbar

Marsha Waggoner (Off Board)

Finance Drive

Amy Wolfe

Public Relations

Susan Novak

State and National Action

Sue Chaffee

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Lunch and Learn

Mildred Kinser

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OFF-BOARD

Nominating Committee

Virginia Lish

Linda Walden

Web Master

Stella Beratlis

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner

League Office

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209-524-1698

www.lwvstanislaus.org

Dear Members,

Summer is winding down and fall, my favorite season, will soon be here. Fall to me has always been the beginning of the year: starting a new school year, starting a new year in life (birthday), and starting the holidays. Though the birthday part is starting to lose some of its appeal, the leaves falling and pumpkin pies have not.

With League the fall is where we start the majority of our activities in the community. Once again we have plans to hold candidate forums, voter registration, and our well received Pros and Cons presentations at Modesto Junior College. We need you to assist with these events to educate and involve the members of our community more than ever. All eyes are on the presidential election this year, and we need to ensure that our local races and state ballot measures do not get lost in the shuffle. The ballot measures with LWVCA positions are included in this *Voter*.

A new event this year is a presentation at MJC for Constitution Day September 17th. Amy Christenson Wolfe will be the speaker covering information from a book published by LWVUS *Choosing the President 2008*. Details will be provided soon on our Website.

Another start for League this fall is our annual finance drive. Letters will soon be going out to members and to the community. Our programs depend on your financial support. Please join me with positive thoughts for reaching our goal during this difficult economic time in our County.

Enclosed you will find our new *Facts for Voters*. This beautiful pamphlet is the product of members Susan Novak, Colleen Norby, and Irene Nunez of the MJC Graphic Arts Department. Changes were made in the information we provide to reflect our League's County status. Many thanks for their hard work. Modesto Junior College Civic Engagement Project joined League with financial support to produce this pamphlet.

Local Action held a well-organized consensus meeting on the new transportation tax that will be on the ballot this fall. Thanks to all who attended. Please read article in this *Voter* on this important issue.

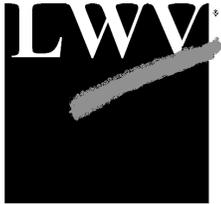
If you have not sent in the annual membership survey, please do so. The Board needs to know what League activities you are willing to help with. As mentioned above we really need your assistance with voter registration and candidate forums.

Here is to a great start!

-Ellen Meyer, President

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.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
RECOMMENDS
NOVEMBER 4, 2008 GENERAL ELECTION

PROP 1 High-Speed Rail Bonds Decision Pending

This \$9.95 billion bond act would partially fund a high-speed rail project segment between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Federal grants and public-private partnerships would be needed to fund the remainder of the total project cost (\$40 billion, including additional segments). Providing a transportation option that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and lessens the need to expand highways and airports is worthwhile. The high cost and financial uncertainties pose a problem. Legislation to require a new business plan, peer review, and other accountability provisions and to allow funding to be used for other segments was pending at the time of our review.

PROP 3 Children's Hospital Bond Act SUPPORT

Proposition 3 authorizes \$980 million in bonds to fund children's hospitals. These regional centers provide specialized care for children with serious illnesses or injuries without regard to a family's ability to pay. They treat the majority of California's low-income children. Eighty percent of the proceeds would go to eight nonprofit children's hospitals and 20 percent to University of California children's hospitals. Prop 3 will address escalating construction costs and improve health care access for children who are indigent, uninsured, underinsured or eligible for government health programs.

PROP 4 Waiting Period and Parental Notification before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy OPPOSE

Prop 4 requires a physician to notify the parent of a pregnant minor before performing an abortion. Mandatory notification laws may sound good but, in the real world, they put the health and safety of teens in danger. A frightened, pregnant teen who can't go to her parents may choose an unsafe, illegal abortion, or even contemplate suicide, instead of seeking the counseling and safe medical care she needs. Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives, but good family communication can't be imposed by government. California voters have rejected this proposal twice, but proponents have put it on the ballot again, adding more unreasonable provisions.

PROP 5 Nonviolent Drug Offenses. Sentencing, Parole and Rehabilitation SUPPORT

Proposition 5 would require the state to expand treatment and rehabilitation for nonviolent drug offenders and parolees, and reduce the criminal consequences of nonviolent offenses. Additional costs of treatment would be offset by reductions in prison and parole operating costs, as well as in the need for capital outlay for prison facilities. The League's study of juvenile justice affirmed the need to give funding priority to prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation.

PROP 6 Police and Law Enforcement Funding. Criminal Penalties and Laws (Runner Initiative) OPPOSE

This measure requires that nearly \$1 billion annually in state general funds be used for designated local law enforcement and probation programs. This will mean an increase of \$500 million a year for these programs and for operating prison and parole systems, and a \$500 million capital outlay for prison facilities. The League opposes the further restriction on the ongoing use of general funds. Harmful policy changes in this initiative include prosecuting more 14-year-olds as adults and giving counties less flexibility in the use of drug and mental health funds for juveniles.

PROP 7 **Renewable Energy Generation** **OPPOSE**

Proposition 7 requires all utilities, including government-owned utilities, to generate 50 percent of their power from renewable energy by 2025. While the League supports a renewable energy target, we feel this is too optimistic to be achieved, and well beyond the targets for implementing the landmark greenhouse-gas emissions reduction law, AB 32. Moreover, Prop 7 is poorly drafted. Experts say it will not achieve its stated goals and will actually disrupt the development of renewable power. It will force small renewable energy companies out of California's market and cause higher energy bills.

PROP 8 **Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry** **OPPOSE**

This proposed limitation of marriage as only between a man and a woman infringes on the equal rights that should be available to all people. The California Supreme Court has concluded that there is a "fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship." The League opposed Proposition 22 in 2000 and continues to oppose such limits on the basic civil rights that should be guaranteed to all Californians.

PROP 9 **Criminal Justice System. Victims' Rights. Parole** **OPPOSE**

Proposition 9 would expand the legal rights of crime victims in various ways and could undo many of the rights of prisoners and parolees to due process and speedy parole revocation hearings. This initiative asks voters to support victims' rights that are already protected under state law and is unnecessary.

PROP 10 **Alternative Fuel Vehicles and Renewable Energy. Bonds** **OPPOSE**

This measure would authorize the sale of \$5 billion in general obligation bonds to provide rebates to purchasers of certain high fuel economy and alternative fuel vehicles, and to fund grants and other incentives for technology development. The League favors the use of bonds to finance capital expenditures or the purchase of property for public purposes. The purposes of this bond are not an appropriate use for state-issued, bond-generated revenues.

PROP 11 **Redistricting Reform: California Voters FIRST Act** **STRONG SUPPORT**

It is an inherent conflict of interest for legislators to draw their own districts to guarantee their reelection. Proposition 11 removes from the legislature the power to redraw district boundaries for the State Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization after each census. Instead, it provides for the appointment of a 14-member independent citizens commission to perform this process, establishes clear criteria for how the boundaries shall be drawn, and requires an open and transparent process with due notice, public hearings, and no communications outside of the hearings. This measure will hold politicians accountable and help stop the gridlock in Sacramento that keeps pressing issues from being addressed.

Because League positions do not cover the issues in Proposition 2, Standards for Confining Farm Animals, and Proposition 12, Veterans' Bond Act of 2008, the LWVC is taking no stand on these measures.

7/24/08

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 4!

From LWVC Website

Voter Service

Voter Service activities are now underway for the coming elections. We are seeking volunteers to help with voter registration and forums.

Voter Registration

For the first time we had a voter registration table at the Wine and Art Festival in Modesto on August 16. Plans are in the works for a table at the Modesto Home and Garden Show on September 26, 27 and 28. Call Ellen D. if you can help. We are also planning for tables at the libraries on the last day to register to vote, October 20. Contact Susan Novak to volunteer.

Forums

Riverbank: Mayor and City Council, Tuesday, September 23 (time TBA), Riverbank Community Center, 3600 Santa Fe. Amy Wolfe will moderate.

Turlock: City Council, Tuesday, September 30th at 7 p.m., Turlock City Hall, 156 S. Broad way

Call Ellen if you can help.

Pros and Cons of the ballot propositions/initiatives

The pros and cons of the ballot initiatives will be presented at MJC on October 15. Presenters will include Patty Beyer, Amy Wolfe, and Ellen Dunbar. Other presentations are under consideration. If you have ideas for additional presentations of the Pros and Cons, call Patty Beyer.

Ellen Dunbar, Voter Services Director

Finance Drive Kicking Off!

The time has come, once again, for the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County Annual Finance Drive! This serves as our yearly fundraising effort and donations are used to ensure the League can conduct its education and advocacy efforts. We have set ambitious goals for the 2008-2009 campaign, hoping to raise \$4,500 for our general fund and \$3,500 for our education fund.

It is important to remember that donations to the general fund are not tax deductible, but help the League conduct its outreach and policy-related activities. Gifts to the education fund are tax deductible and go specifically towards information sharing, non-advocacy activities.

Keep an eye on your mailbox as letters will be going out around the Labor Day holiday. Thank you, in advance, for your continued support of League. Without your assistance and generosity, our League could not offer such an extensive variety of services and information.

Amy Christensen Wolfe, Finance Drive Director

Board Highlights

August 13, 2008

- League telephone transferred to Lynn Kelso.
- *Facts for Voters* revised and ready for distribution. Printing costs shared with MJC Civic Engagement Project.
- Finance Drive letters to be sent in September
- Lynn Kelso and Susan Novak appointed as Board representatives to Nominating Committee.

Marie Bairey, Secretary

Membership Report

Membership renewal letters went out to 157 active members, and reminder post cards were mailed mid-August. Forty-eight current members have not responded. Three members have chosen not to renew, and we have two new members.

Your continued membership is what makes our local League strong!

Colleen Norby, Membership Director

Welcome Our Newest Members

Rich Wolfe

Dieter Renning

*We look forward to seeing you
at our events*

I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS BY JOINING THE LEAGUE 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: _____

MAIL TO

LWVSC

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352

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.

Tear off and send to:
League of Women Voters of
Stanislaus County
LWV Modesto
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| Tuesday, September 9 | 11:00 am Local Action Committee
League Office 720 13th Street, Modesto |
| Wednesday, September 10 | 6:00 p.m. Board Meeting
League Office 720 13th Street, Modesto |
| Wednesday, September 17 | Constitution Day Program at MJC (Time TBA)
Amy Christensen Wolfe, Speaker
Details to be announced soon on LWVSC Website |
| Tuesday, September 23 | City of Riverbank Candidates Forum
Riverbank Community Center, 3600 Santa Fe Avenue, |
| Tuesday September 30 | 7:00 p.m. City of Turlock Candidates Forum
Turlock City Council Chambers, 156 S. Broadway |
| Tuesday, September 30 | 12:00 Noon Lunch and Learn Appetez Restaurant
Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Vincent Harris of StanCOG, on Measure S
\$11.00 For vegetarian entree, call one day ahead |