



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

January 2009

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 6

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, January 6

6:15 p.m.

Local Action Committee
Home of Amy Wolfe
Call Patty Beyer
for RSVP and directions

Wednesday, January 14

6:00 p.m.

Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 21

6:30 p.m.

Program Planning Meeting

Tuesday, January 27

12:00 Noon

Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant
Roseburg Square

Unless noted otherwise,
All meetings are held at the
League Office,
720 13th Street, Modesto

This calendar is current as of
printing. Check LWVSC
Website for updates

www.lwvstanislaus.org

PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

Please save the evening of **Wednesday, January 21, 2009, 7:00 p.m.**, at the League Office, 720 13th Street, for our annual program planning meeting. It is important that as many members as possible take part in the discussion, so that we can forward meaningful grassroots ideas to the State League (LWVC). **If you cannot attend the meeting, please be sure to fill out the enclosed flyer** and return it ASAP.

Janis Hirohama, President, LWVC, urges us to focus particularly on issues dealing with **Democracy, Voting, and Civic Engagement**. These areas were chosen by the state Board as those in which the League has the greatest impact. In her letter to local Leagues, she asks us to:

“Consider where there is the most **need**, where we will be most **effective**, and what activities best serve our **mission**. And consider the **indirect impact** of these choices, particularly on membership recruitment and retention, fundraising, and our reputation...”

Janis emphasizes that we must prioritize, since our resources, both human and financial, are limited. The League in California has made resources valuable to our decision making available on our “Members Only” Website, <http://www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly>, including previous positions, extensive survey results, articles and data. (Select **Program Planning Kit**.) For more information on our local positions, go to our Website, www.lwvstanislaus.org.

Please note that State League must receive our response by Friday, February 13. Our local Board will need to review the results of the meeting on January 21 and the flyers received at its meeting on February 11 in order to meet the deadline.

Hanna Renning, , Second Vice President

LWV of STANISLAUS COUNTY
OFFICERS

President

Ellen Meyer 579-1603
ellen-e@sbcglobal.net

1st Vice President

Susan Novak 526-9534
snovak2@sbcglobal.net

2nd Vice President

Hanna Renning 632-4692
drenning@csustan.edu

Secretary

Marie Bairey 523-0663
gbandmb@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer

Polly Klopfer (544-9269)
hklopfer@pacbell.net

DIRECTORS

Membership

Lynn Kelso

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

Local Action

Patty Beyer

Voter Editor

Jean Tenney

jayper@mac.com

Lunch and Learn

Mildred Kinser

Doris Scanlon

OFF-BOARD

Nominating Committee

Virginia Lish

Linda Walden

Web Master

Stella Beratlis

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner

League Office

720 13th Street, Modesto

209-524-1698

www.lwvstanislaus.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

Happy New Year! I hope all had a wonderful holiday and enjoyed some peaceful moments at the end of a most eventful year. The Holiday Fling was a wonderful time to start the holidays and end another successful year for our League. Many thanks go to Lynn and Albion Fenderson for hosting yet another wonderful evening in their home.

2008 was very fruitful for our League with many new members joining, increased voter registration over the previous year and more events for our community to learn about the issues. Thanks go to members for all your work in carrying out our mission in the community.

The events of 2008 in the political arena have encouraged citizens to participate in numbers unlike any other year.

The "light bulb" has been turned on. State League and local Leagues took advantage of this renewed interest and we were much more visible in the media. LWV is now known more than ever as a reliable source for information. Voters went to our local website this last fall more than ever before!

Our challenge is to continue doing what our League does best and build on this renewed interest. We have a wonderful opportunity to increase membership and participation at our community events. The Board welcomes all of you to participate this year in our activities and we welcome new ideas to assist in keeping the light bulb on in our community.

January 21st is our yearly planning meeting at the League office. This is when League members are called upon to review local positions. We will also be reviewing State Positions this year. This very important process is our opportunity to influence the selection of issues where the League will focus its time, talent, and money. At the meeting we will recommend maintaining or dropping positions and/or new studies or revisions of positions. Enclosed is information on this event.

There is a First Call to Convention from LWVC. The Long Beach LWV is hosting this event. A dinner and tour of the famous Queen Mary will be offered on Friday evening as a special dinner option. Look for more information on the LWVC Members-Only Website. This is a great opportunity to see our grassroots organization in action and talk with members from around the state. If you are interested in going, please contact me by February 14, 2008, so we may get our reservations in on time.

Wishing you a happy new year and I hope to see you at our many activities.

-Ellen Meyer, President

Local Action

Affordable Housing Approved

We are pleased that the EAH 9th Street Development for affordable housing was approved by the City Council on December 2nd.

The Local Action committee and the Board supported this project. Copies of the following letter were mailed to the Modesto Planning Commission, which Marie Bairey also presented at the November 17th meeting. Marie also attended the City Council meeting.

The League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County supports the EAH Archway Commons project for affordable housing as part of the Modesto Redevelopment Area Master Plan. The League has advocated for affordable housing in our community for years. Our review of planning documents and conversations with the developer suggest EAH is doing everything according to the Modesto Redevelopment Implementation Plan. Modesto needs this kind of project to increase available housing for working families.

EAH has a record of accomplishment of similar successful and award winning projects in other areas of northern California. They have identified funding sources and established management standards for the project. They have given considerable thought not only to the configuration and pricing of housing but also to the environment in which the resident families would live. There is open space. The project is convenient to shopping, employment, schools and public transportation. From a planning standpoint, Archway Commons revitalizes and beautifies an underutilized in-fill area that already has municipal infrastructure.

We encourage the Modesto Planning Commission and the Modesto City Council to approve this project. This is what redevelopment is all about.

It is gratifying to have been a part of this process, and to see our hard work pay off for our community.

Patty Beyer, Local Action Director

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

Help Wanted!

The Local Action Committee needs your help. We review local issues and make recommendations to the Board for possible action or advocacy. The committee is in sore need of new members to sustain this critical League function. The tasks may seem intimidating, but the opportunities to learn and be heard make it satisfying work.

We definitely need persons willing to research topics within the county; we currently need someone to research gangs and what interventions work, so we can begin acting on our position.

We need members outside Modesto to keep us apprised of issues in their area that require our attention!

We are considering changing the meeting to the first Tuesday of each month and meeting in the evening rather than morning, to accommodate more working people.

Please email Patty Beyer if you would be interested in attending evening meetings. We need more active participation!

Patty Beyer, Local Action Director

Holiday Fling Big Success

Even the foggy weather didn't dampen the spirit of our annual membership gathering at the beautiful home of the Fendersons, coordinated this year by Hanna Renning and Margie Lipsky. There was time for mingling, sampling an array of delicious hors d'oeuvres, and being introduced to the creative process of design by this year's speaker, Dean Daryl J. Moore of the College of the Arts of California State University, Stanislaus. Thank you to all the League volunteers who made this social event memorable.

Susan Novak, Vice-President

DIVERSITY POLICY:

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County 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.

Celebrating our Voices

We use “lack of time” as an excuse so often that it becomes a reason for many individuals to no longer take part in government or politics. Some citizens forget how powerful that right is, and that failing to vote may mean that only the privileged will participate in elections. To change these attitudes, Paris Dixon and I (both senators in Associated Students of Modesto Junior College) took on the task of presenting “Nov 4th Voting with Entertainment”. This event was designed to celebrate our right, as citizens, to voice our thoughts toward our future. We wanted to raise awareness on our campus that it is “cool” to vote and remind individuals to do so.

This semester has been great, with all the activities that we have had surrounding the elections. We registered hundreds of students and we had plenty of forums. Thanks to the Civic Engagement Project and League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County and with a little help from ASMJC, we had numerous informed students voting in this past election. So what else could we do on Nov 4th? “Well,” Paris and I thought, “party it up!” From 10 am to 10 pm we had live local bands perform, a small poetry slam, a hair fashion show, salsa and swing dancing lessons, as well as dance performances and a political debate. Also, if a person had on the “I Voted” sticker, they received free food and beverages. Toward the end of the night, we watched the results come in. It was a great day with plenty of performers and volunteers.

It was wonderful to see just how all the scheduled acts wanted to help spread the message to get out and vote. It has been a long road for everyone voting to have that right. I hope we reminded many students throughout the day to get their voice heard. Every vote does count, and I believe we were all reminded of that.

*Malerie Michael, LWVSC Member
Former MJC Student Intern*

State and National

Public Input on Health Care Reform (NEW)

Tom Daschle, Health and Human Services Secretary-Designee, has posted a request for public input on health care reform on the Obama-Biden Transition site, www.Change.gov. As the Obama-Biden team works to put together a health care proposal, it is important for citizens to let their views be heard. League members are encouraged to take this opportunity to participate and urge the new administration to act quickly to pass legislation containing this provision: A basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents as a matter of public policy. It is critical that health care reform include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.

Youth Engagement Activity: “Building Democracy 2.0” (NEW)

Following the historical 2008 election season, the LWVUS continues to work to engage young voters. The LWVUS will be joining organizations such as Mobilize.org, Declare Yourself, the National Conference on Citizenship and others at the “Constitutional Convention: Building Democracy 2.0.” This event encourages young people (ages 16 - 30) to develop solutions to various challenges in their community. The League is proud to have been asked to participate in this event as an “expert advisor” and help select winners. Winning proposals will receive funding for their vision. ... We encourage all League members to share this opportunity with young leaders in your community.

*From LWVUS Website
Sue Chaffee, State and National Director*

Web Master's Report

We had a very huge month in October for the website--it was our busiest month ever, so far, with 5,431 requests for pages. The last week in that month (starting October 26) was the heaviest usage period, with 1,687 requests for pages. Oct. 31 (Friday) was the busiest day, with 592 requests for pages.

Compare that with our previously "biggest" month, August 2008, when we had 4803 requests for pages total.

On November 1 (Saturday) we had 295 page requests, which is OK...but it bounced up on Nov. 2 (Sun.), with 478 page requests. That figure is amazingly high!

Then visits decreased gradually, with a moderately high figure for Monday, Nov 3 (332 page requests) and a high-average figure for Election Day (191). We went back to regular usage patterns after that--"regular" being anywhere from 100-200 page requests per day, depending on day of the week.

So, the peaks for web activity were Friday (Oct. 31) and Sunday (Nov. 2).

This all suggests that the last week of the month prior to the election, and the Sunday before the election, are big days for League website activity. No surprise there! What is surprising is that folks are not referring to the website for very last-minute election information, as evidenced by the decreasing usage for Nov. 3 and 4.

Stella Beratlis, Web Master

Membership Directory Corrections

Jill Sousa: phone (209) 521-7154

Amy Wolfe: (209) 499-4091 (c), 838-8899(h)

Please update your directory

Welcome Our Newest Members

Michele Bettencourt

Marjorie Brooks

*We look forward to seeing you
at our events*

Board Highlights

November 12, 2008

- Six-month accomplishments will be included in the *Voter*.
- Webmaster Stella reported 5,431 hits to our Website in October – a new record.
- League registered more than 200 voters. Procedures need to be updated, and assistants must wear League ID and review the procedures each time we have a voter registration activity.
- Board approved recommendation of Local Action Committee to support the EAH Archway Commons affordable housing project on 9th Street.

Marie Bairey, Secretary



*Be always at war with your vices, at peace with
your neighbors, and let each new year find you a
better man. ~Benjamin Franklin*

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
U.S. Postage
PAID
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Permit No. 69

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

{Check Website for Updates}

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|------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday, January 6 | 6:15 p.m.. Local Action Committee
Home of Amy Wolfe (call Patty Beyer for RSVP, directions) |
| Wednesday, January 14 | 6:00 p.m. Board Meeting
League Office 720 13th Street, Modesto |
| Wednesday, January 21 | 6:30 p.m. Program Planning Meeting
League Office 720 13th Street, Modesto |
| Tuesday, January 27 | 12:00 Noon Lunch and Learn Appetez Restaurant
Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Anthony Cannella, Mayor of Ceres
\$11.00 For special dietary needs, call one day ahead |