



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

February/March 2011

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 22

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, March 9

6:00 p.m.
Board Meeting
League Office
720 13th St., Modesto

Tuesday, March 29

12:00 Noon
Lunch and Learn
Speaker Dr. Larry Giventer,
Professor Emeritus
of Political Science,
CSU Stanislaus
"California: an Update"
Appetiz Restaurant
Roseburg Square, Modesto

Tuesday, April 5

6:00 p.m.
"California Crackup"
Mary Stuart Rogers
Educational Services Bldg.
Room 130
CSUS Campus
Turlock

Tuesday, April 26

12:00 Noon
Lunch and Learn
Speakers:
Mayor Jim Ridenour
and Greg Nyhoff,
City Manager
"The Strategic Plan
for Modesto"

Saturday, May 21

10:00 a.m.
Annual Meeting
Appetiz Restaurant
Speaker:
Gaither Lowenstein,
MJC President

Check Website for Updates
www.lwvstanislaus.org

President's Message

Dear Members,

With the foggy weather behind us, we can look forward to getting out to some varied and informative League programs. Co-author Mark Paul will discuss *California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We Can Fix It* on Tuesday, April 5th at CSU Stanislaus, Turlock (see page 3.) Bring a friend and hear some sweeping and provocative ideas for comprehensive reform, starting with changing the way we elect our legislators. Plan on attending our Annual Meeting on May 21st to hear our guest speaker, MJC President Gaither Lowenstein. Take yourself out to lunch in April and learn about Modesto's new strategic plan from City Manager, Greg Nyhoff, and Mayor Jim Ridenour.

There will also be opportunities for action on local, state, and national issues. Be an arm-chair participant by following blogs or list serve discussions on topics of interest to you and by signing up for e-mail action alerts. To do this, follow links to the members' only section of our websites: <http://www.ca.lwv.org>; and <http://www.lwv.org>. Consider joining our Local Action Committee headed by Marie Bairey. It's a great way to keep up on local and regional issues and to learn the League process for study and action.

Hope to see you at a League program soon. And bring a friend!

Susan

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 91 years of experience and over 800 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

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STATE AND NATIONAL

STATE

The California LWV continues to support the re-districting of California and urges League members to participate in the process. The first Citizens' Redistricting Commission will begin drawing new district maps for all California's Assembly, State Senate, Board of Equalization and US Congress districts. These maps are due August 15, 2011. The commission will be holding public hearings around the state and will accept public comment. These meetings will be streamed live via the Internet. Videos and transcripts as well as meeting schedules will be available at www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov.

Community observers will hold the commission accountable to: maintain an open and transparent process fully accessible to the public; draw District lines that conform with strict, nonpartisan rules designed to create districts of relatively equal population with fair representation for all Californians; conduct themselves with integrity and fairness.

To train League members and other citizens who wish to observe and report on this work, the LWVC will hold a 45-minute webinar training session on March 3 at 10:00 a.m. To register for this session, go to the LWVC Website.

The League is also holding all-day workshops for League members to learn more about how to give our communities a voice in this process. An all-day workshop for Northern California will take place in March, either in Sacramento or the Bay Area. For information, check the LWV California Members Only Website.

NATIONAL

In January, The House of Representatives voted to repeal the Affordable Health Care Act. The repeal was voted down in the Senate, but it will be an ongoing issue. For more information about the content of Federal Health Care Reform, consult the January Voter and the LWVUS web site.

On January 26, the House of Representatives voted to repeal the presidential public financing system. A Senate bill for repeal will be voted on soon. The LWV opposes this repeal, stating, "The presidential financing system needs to be repaired, not repealed, in order to continue serving the interests of the American people and protecting against corruption."

Proposed reforms to the current act include measures such as increasing amounts available to candidates to help match excessive campaign spending and requiring candidates to disclose the names of campaign bundlers and the amounts they raise. Let Senators Feinstein and Boxer know you want this system to continue with modifications to make it more usable.

Anne Krabach, State and National Director

**Voter Service
Forum in Riverbank**

LWVSC, with the City of Riverbank, conducted a candidate Forum for the Riverbank City Council special election on February 10. Fifty people attended the forum. Marie Bairey served as the Moderator. Others who volunteered for the forum were President Susan Novak, Marjorie Brooks, Mary Giventer, Marsha Waggoner, and Carmen Morad.

Ellen Dunbar, VoterService Director

**Board Highlights
January 13, 2011**

- The Nominating committee is actively planning and recruiting for the 2011-12 slate. If you are interested, please contact Ellen Meyer.
- LWV Stanislaus is working to coordinate and promote a presentation by Mark Paul, co-author of *California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We Can Fix It*.
- Thanks to Mary Giventer and the Finance Drive Committee we have met our finance drive goal despite the poor local economy.
- The Bylaw Revision Committee has completed work on the bylaws, and we forwarded them to the LWVC for comments and approval. The final draft will be made available for member review at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting.
- Members are now able to donate through Pay Pal or charge card to the LWVSC Ed Fund or General Fund. Details may be found at www.lwvstanislaus.org.

Laurie Carley, Secretary

**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.

CALIFORNIA CRACKUP

Is California broken beyond repair? Incessant budget crises plus a government paralyzed by partisan gridlock have led to demands for reform including a constitutional convention. What is wrong and how can we fix it? Mark Paul, co-author of the new book, *California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We can Fix It*, will be sharing his solutions with us on Tuesday, April 5th at 6 p.m. The event will take place at the Mary Stuart Rogers Educational Services Building, Room 130 on the California State University, Stanislaus campus in Turlock starting at 6 p.m. Students and the public are invited to attend free of charge. Turlock AAUW and CSUS Stanislaus are co-sponsors.

This should be a thought provoking evening. Reviews of the book have been very good and include comments like: "The best ideas for rebuilding California's government that the state has seen since—well probably ever." (*American Prospect*) Paul, along with co-author Joe Matthews, stresses that the process of fixing what's wrong with California will require full citizen engagement and a new conversation about reform. Their book provides a framework for that conversation. Copies of the book will be available for purchase that evening thanks to the University Bookstore.

Mark Paul is well qualified to address the complexities of the state's problems, serving as senior scholar and deputy director of the California program at the New America Foundation. He is currently a visiting scholar at the Institute of Governmental Studies at UC Berkeley. He was formerly deputy treasurer of California. He also was national editor and editorial page editor of the *Oakland Tribune* and deputy editorial page editor and columnist at the *Sacramento Bee*, where he won the 2000 Best in the West award for his editorials on the Gray Davis administration.

Susan Novak, 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.

PROGAM PLANNING

Twelve League members met on the evening of January 26 to discuss the LWVC program plus the local program positions. We decided to recommend retaining all state positions under the Government, Natural Resources, and Social Policy categories, with a few exceptions.

Those present agreed to recommend that LWVC update its Initiative & Referendum position. The existing position does not allow League to take positions on particular reforms which have recently been proposed, such as increasing the number of signatures needed to qualify an initiative or subjecting initiatives to legislative oversight before going before voters.

In addition, we agreed to recommend an update of the Election Systems position to be able to take a position on primary elections and the role of political parties; this notion stems from the League's inability to take a position on Prop. 14—also known as the Top Two Primaries Act—in the June 2010 election because the Election Systems position does not specifically address primary elections and political parties.

For the local program, we agreed to retain our existing positions with no recommendations for updates or drops. Those positions can be viewed at http://lwvstanislaus.org/local_action.html.

Next, our input on state positions will be sent to LWVC, whose board of directors will evaluate the responses of all participating local Leagues. They will consider current state issues and available human and financial resources; from these considerations, the board will propose a League program which includes issues for emphasis based on existing positions or the possible development of new or updated positions through the study process. In May, 2011, delegates to the LWVC Convention will vote on issues for emphasis as well as retention; update, and deletion of positions; proposed studies; and the budget for these actions.

Thank you to everyone who participated either by mail or in person. Your input is valuable to the process.

Stella Beratlis, Vice President

January 25 Lunch and Learn Virginia Madueño, Mayor of Riverbank

Riverbank Mayor Virginia Madueño was the January Lunch and Learn speaker. One of six children of immigrant parents, she graduated from CSU Stanislaus and participated in a leadership program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. She is married, has three sons and owns a small business. She was elected to the Riverbank City Council in 2005 and was elected mayor in 2009.

A key element of Mayor Madueño's message is that government can no longer work in the same old ways. She noted that local governments need to reach out to their communities to identify what is working and what the needs are – as seen through the eyes of the residents. She advocates results-based accountability: Does it work? Who benefits? At what cost? She encourages looking for new solutions to old problems, especially through collaboration and regional planning. Cities can no longer go it alone. The sewer issue in Riverbank needs to be brought back to the Council with perhaps a look to collaborating with other agencies rather than an independent project.

Though economic development and jobs are at the top of everyone's agenda, "Government does not create jobs but can facilitate jobs coming into the community." She talked about developing a working relationship with U.S. Army decision makers to assure the Army ammunitions plant property would be cleaned-up in anticipation of the transfer to the city. She is working actively on elements of SB 375 and development of climate plans which require new ideas and policy decisions.

Mayor Madueño recognized that she devotes considerable time to her responsibilities in the community, but sees that as giving her children a life lesson - an example of civic activity and creating opportunities for their futures.

Marie Bairey

Nominating Committee Update

If you are interested in serving as a board member for the 2011-2012 League year, please contact Ellen Meyer, Nominating Committee Chair at 209-579-1603 or email at ellen-e@sbcglobalnet.net.

Ellen Meyer, Nominating Director

FINANCE DRIVE CONTRIBUTORS 2010-2011

A sincere thank you to our many donors from the community and from our League members. Your donation will ensure that we can continue to carry out our League mission. We had a very busy season of voter activities and the coming months will again call for our services. We could not maintain this level of involvement without your assistance.

Fundraising is very difficult in the current economic climate, so we are especially pleased that we were able to raise a total of \$6690.00, which met our fundraising goal for the year. Thank you for helping the League to be a vital voice for democracy in Stanislaus County.

Mary Giventer, Finance Director

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Lunch and Learn Upcoming Programs

On **March 29** Dr. Larry Giventer , professor emeritus of political science, CSU Stanislaus, will present our program: "California: an Update"

On **April 26** Mayor Ridenour and City Manager, Greg Nyhoff will discuss the Strategic Plan for Modesto, 2011 - 2013.

Come and join us!

Mark your Calendar!

*Annual Meeting
Saturday, May 21
10-12 noon*

*Guest Speaker
Gäither Lowenstein
MJC President*

*Appetize in Roseburg Square
Buffet brunch*

In Memory

It is with great sorrow that we say goodbye to dedicated member Jill Sousa. Jill was a member and loyal supporter of our League, and participated with passion and commitment. She will be greatly missed.

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League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
(Check Website for Updates.)

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720 13th Street, Modesto
- Tuesday, March 29** **12:00 Noon Lunch and Learn**
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Dr. Larry Giventer, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, CSUS
Topic: "California: an Update"
\$11. Call one day ahead for special dietary needs
- Tuesday, April 5** **6:00 p.m. *California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We can Fix It.* Presented by Mark Paul, Co-author**
Mary Stuart Rogers Educational Services Building, Room 130
CSUS Campus, Turlock
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Speakers: Mayor Jim Ridenour and City Manager Greg Nyhoff
Topic: The Strategic Plan for Modesto
- Saturday, May 21** **10:a.m. to Noon Annual Meeting**
Appetiz Restaurant Roseburg Square
Guest Speaker: Gaither Lowenstein, MJC President