



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

March 2013

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 61 NO.7

Message from our President, Mary Giventer:

At this time of year we remember our nation's history with the President's Day Holiday and Black History Month in February and Women's History Month in March. This month, 93 years ago, Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters. Since that time, the League has worked to extend voting rights and to ensure that our elections are fair, free and accessible to all eligible voters. That work is still not done. Within the next few weeks the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments, and eventually rule, on the constitutionality of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965. Some of us are old enough to remember the marches and registration attempts by brave civil right workers, often met by violence and bloodshed that led up to the passage of the Voting Rights Act, ensuring the right to vote regardless of race. While it is very discouraging to realize that basic right is being challenged once again, it is heartening that the League is once again standing up for voting rights. League members are literally standing up on the Supreme Court steps making their voices heard, and the League has filed an amicus brief with the court in support of the Voting Rights Act.

Locally, we can be proud that our local founder, Helen Pierce, has been named Stanislaus County Woman of History for 2013 by the Stanislaus County Commission for Women. In 1947 Modesto was facing significant problems related to rapid post war population growth - inadequate sewage system, an insufficient number of schools, traffic and parking problems, and city regulations and ordinances that did not fit with the city's new growth. Helen, a librarian at Modesto Junior College and an active leader in the American Association of University Women, decided that Modesto needed a local League of Women Voters to inform its citizens and encourage active citizen participation in shaping Modesto's future. Sixty-six years later we are still fulfilling that role.

Carrie Chapman Catt's words are as true today as they were 93 years ago: *Everybody counts in applying democracy. There will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchasable voice in government.*

Stanislaus County Commission for Women Recognition Dinner

The Stanislaus County Commission of Women will be holding their 34th annual Outstanding Women of Stanislaus County Awards on Saturday March 16 at the Assyrian Cultural Center of Bet-Nahrain, 3119 Central Ave., Ceres. No host cocktails will be at 6 PM, dinner at 6:30 PM; followed by the program at 7:00 PM. Tickets are \$40 per person. Our League will be reserving a table for eight. If you would like to attend, please mail your reservation and check made out to LWVSC to League of Women Voters, PO Box E, Modesto, CA 95352. Reservations must be in by March 4.

Besides honoring our founder, Helen Pierce, as the Outstanding Woman of History, other Outstanding Women honored of 2013 are Pam Able, Solange Altman, Sandra de Alcuaz, Mary Lou Dieterich, Lynette Grandison, Maree Hawkins, Lyn Lysko, Dotty Nygard, Mary Ann Sanders, Leah Silvestre, Yamilet Valladolid. The Outstanding Young Women of 2013 are Jenna Anderson, Analisa Freitas, Fallon Ferris. This should be a great event to share with other League members. Make your reservation now.

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President's Message (continued): Miss Representation

On Sunday, March 17, the Turlock/Modesto Branch of AAUW in partnership with the Carnegie Arts Center will be hosting a FREE screening of the documentary film, Miss Representation. Produced by Jennifer Siebel Newsome and first screened at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, this film examines the stereotypical portrayal of women by the media. Young women are being sold the concept that their value lies in their youth, beauty and sexuality. Miss Representation believes that it is time to break that cycle and advocates that all people should be equally represented. It is time for young women to be told that they are valued for their talents, capacity as leaders and ability to contribute to the world at large. This is a worthwhile film for everyone, but especially young women and those who influence them. Bring your daughters and granddaughters. The showing is at 2 PM at the Carnegie Art Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock.

Mary Giventer, President

January Board Highlights

- Mary spoke to the Oakdale, Riverbank, and Escalon Branch of AAUW on the history and current activities of LWV. They would be interested in partnering with the League on projects of mutual interest.
- Mary, along with Marie Bairey, represented the League at the Mayor's Forum on Public Safety. After hearing public safety statistics for Modesto, the group broke into smaller groups of 10 to brainstorm solutions. A smaller group will review these suggestions and there will be a follow up meeting on February 1.
- Ann will be setting up legislative visits. Anyone who wishes to participate in these visits should contact Ann.
- Mary commended Patty for continuing to be the VOTER Editor, even though she has moved out of State.

February Board Highlights

- The League will be sponsoring a table for eight at the Annual Stanislaus Commission's Outstanding Women's Event which is scheduled for March 16th. If members are interested, they should send a \$40.00 check to the Leagues P.O. Box. Helen Pearce, the founder of our local League, will be honored.
- We now have a Facebook page thanks to Stella. Members are encouraged to go on the League page and 'like'.
- According to the County Registrar there are no elections scheduled for this June.
- The Nominating Committee is convening; if interested in serving on the League Board, contact Amy Wolf.

Laura Carley, Secretary

National Action:

When the Voting Rights Act was last reauthorized in 2006 with overwhelming bipartisan support, Congress declared that without its protections, “racial and language minority citizens will be deprived of the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.” However, the constitutionality of this Act is being contested in the Supreme Court. The Court will focus on Section 5, which applies to specific states or jurisdictions with histories of discriminatory voting practices and requires that these jurisdictions obtain “preclearance” for proposed changes in their election laws. The LWVUS has signed on to an amicus brief in support of Section 5 and will be participating in a rally at the Supreme Court on February 27. On February 17, the LWVUS joined participants in the “Climate Rally” in Washington DC and other cities throughout the nation. Rally participants called on President Obama to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline and to limit carbon pollution from power plants.

State Action:

CEQA, The California Environmental Quality Act, a state policy of environmental protection was established in 1970, shortly after Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act. However, some state legislators and others have proposed weakening the law’s key tenets by limiting public input into land use planning and weakening environmental and public health protection. LWVC has joined CEQA Works, a coalition of civic, conservation, environmental justice, labor, preservation and public health groups to protect CEQA. Participating organizations are committed to educating California’s residents and legislators about the significant benefits this law has brought to the state since it was enacted by Governor Ronald Reagan 43 years ago. For a list of current bills the LWVC is following or on which we have a position, go to

. <http://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publish.aspx?session=13&id=efb5b39d-6b0e-4edf-a0af-c0f69e9c1e6f>

Ann Kraback, State and National Action

Thank you to this year's donors!

***Our Voter editor, Patricia Beyer, has relocated out of state.
Please contact Mary Giventer, President, if you are able to fill this position for the
remainder of the 2012-13 year. A template will be provided!***

Lunch and Learn:

Jean Okuye, Merced County Farm Bureau President, is our Lunch and Learn speaker for February. She is the first female president of the 95-year-old nongovernmental organization that advocates for laws and policies that benefit farmers. Mrs. Okuye is also active in the Valley Land Alliance. The title of her talk is, "There is no place like here - preserving our farmland and way of life".

The meeting will be held at 12 pm on Thursday, February 28th at Appetez Restaurant in the Roseburg Square Shopping Center, Modesto. The cost of lunch is \$11 and the program is open to the public as well as League members. Reservations are not required but vegetarian meal requests should be made directly with the restaurant in advance.

The speaker for March will be Lynn Padlo, education coordinator for a mental health advocacy group called NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness. The grassroots organization offers advocacy and education for individuals who have mental illness and their families along with community education.

Ruby Hennessey, Lunch and Learn

Welcome New Members:

Karrie Bullock and Barbara Palitz

**I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS
BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!**

- Student Membership \$25
- Individual Membership \$60
- Household Membership \$90

Please contact me with more information.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone (for directory) _____

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Please deliver my *Voter* by E-mail US mail

MAIL TO

LWVSC

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352

Local Action:

More than 30 members and guests heard Modesto Mayor Garrad Marsh discuss Salida and public safety. Hearing that LWVC is currently studying the Initiative and Referendum Process, he prefaced his remarks with a caution that he feels the current system is being abused, often at the expense of local governments, and is in need of review.

On the Salida annexation/incorporation issue, Mayor Marsh noted that people generally do not like change and do not trust government. However, he said change will come to Salida, the largest unincorporated area in the county, as a result of Salida Now, a 25-year development agreement that commits five square miles of farmland to home construction, fees from which would fund infrastructure for business parks. The plan was approved by the Stanislaus Board of Supervisors in 2007 without a vote of the people. The recent economic/housing downturn has made this plan less viable today. Salida is back on the front burner starting with a city/county study to determine the area's economic future. Salida has three options: status quo, incorporation or annexation to Modesto. Mayor Marsh favors the last option, while recognizing that ultimately the decision is for residents of Salida to make. He hopes that information from the study and other discussions will make Salidans more open to his proposals, a process that will take time.

On public safety, Mayor Marsh presented figures on crime increase – up 20 to 25 percent in California with the national increase at 4 to 5 percent. Realignment – the release of non-violent criminals from state prisons to the counties - is contributing to that increase. He has organized a community forum to generate ideas for local efforts to reduce crime. Although some efficiencies may be possible, the bottom line is that more money is needed to provide more services such as increasing police responses to calls, anti-gang efforts and gang prevention activities.

Marie Bairrey, Local Action

Thank you to this year's donors!!

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Leonard Choate
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Stella Beratlis
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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

[\(Check Website for Updates\)](#)

Thursday, February 28, 2013	Lunch and Learn, 12:00 pm, Appetez Restaurant, Jean Okuye, President Merced County Farm Bureau (first woman president).
Wednesday, March 13, 2013	Board Meeting, 6:30 pm, Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road, Modesto
Thursday, March 28, 2013	Lunch and Learn 12:00 pm, Appetez Restaurant, Lynn Padlo, NAMI,
Wednesday, April 10, 2013	Board Meeting, 6:30 pm, Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road, Modesto
Thursday, April 26, 2013	Lunch and Learn 12:00 pm, Appetez Restaurant