

The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO



August 2004

Vol. 56 No. 7

Local action committee following proposed Modesto developments and Measure M

Two development projects and a Measure M ballot measure will keep the LWV Modesto Action Committee busy in the next few months. The Modesto City Council has recommended that a Measure M advisory vote for sewer extensions to the Robertson Road neighborhood, which is a county "island" within the city, be placed on the November ballot. The city and the county have been working together to find funding to bring the neighborhood up to city standards – starting with sewer service.

At the same meeting, the Council authorized an Environmental Impact Study for the proposed Promenade north of Vintage Faire. And at its July 19th meeting, the Modesto Planning Commission considered various zoning and planning issues for the Kaiser Medical Center proposal

north of Modesto.

LWVM Land Use Position supports planning that protects the quality of our environment, is contiguous to existing development and provides adequate funding for infrastructure. We will study these proposals with these factors in mind.

The Local Action committee meets at noon on the second Friday of the month at the LWV office, 720 13th Street. Interested persons are invited to attend.

--Marie Bairey

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Wed., 8/11 | BOARD MEETING 6:30 P.M. LWV office |
| Fri., 8/13 | LOCAL ACTION COMMITTEE 12:00
LWV office, 720 13th Street, Modesto |
| Tues., 8/31 | LUNCH AND LEARN
Appetiz Restaurant 12:00 (see p. 9) |
| Wed., 9/8 | BOARD MEETING 6:30 P.M. LWV office |
| Sat., 9/18 | LWVC Central Valley Regional Workshop
9:30 am to 3:30 pm, Merced College (see p. 11) |

President's Message

As we near the upcoming election season, we will be calling upon members to assist with the many functions the League supports as the leading nonpartisan political organization in our community. Please read this month's articles about the upcoming forums, voter registration opportunities, committees and community meetings. There are many important community issues facing the city council, planning commission and county supervisors, among them the developments proposed along Dale Road.

If you want to become more involved or wonder how you might be more involved, be sure to return your membership survey (turquoise paper that arrived with your membership dues reminder) so we know whom to contact for League activities. If you lost or misplaced your survey, please call the office or check our website for a new one!

Thank you, Stella Beratlis, for keep our website updated. Stella donates many hours keeping the calendar current along with posting our monthly Voter, agenda and minutes. Please visit the site soon and give us input on how we can make it more useful for you! <http://www.lwvmodesto.org>

I encourage you to keep us current with your address, phone number and email address so we can keep you informed of news alerts and opportunities as they arise. Please do not hesitate to call (551-1558) or email (lundy.p@sbcglobal.net) me of your concerns and about issues that might arise that need our attention!

--Patty Lundy

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.

LWV of MODESTO

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LWVUS supports renewal of assault weapons ban

In a letter to Members of the House of Representatives in May 2004, LWVUS President Kay Maxwell stated, "LWVUS believes it is critical that Congress act now to renew the federal assault weapons ban before it expires on September 12, 2004." League has a long standing position in support of the assault weapons ban. The ban instituted in 1994 has been effective: the number of assault weapons has declined as has the number of these weapons used in crimes.

"We believe that there are not legitimate protective, sporting or recreational purposes for these weapons," Maxwell stated.

Members are urged to contact their representative and President Bush to support H.R. 3831 to extend the assault weapons ban for another 10 years. Contact your representative on-line by going to House of Representatives.gov, enter your zip code (including the 4 digit extension), and type your message.

Our Representatives need to hear from us on this issue.

--Marie Bairey

SB 999

SB 999, introduced by Sen. Mike Machado, proposes changes in the makeup of the San Joaquin Valley Air Quality Control District Board.

Several Central Valley Leagues are requesting that the state League advocate for passage of SB 999 and would like our support of this measure.

To help us make an educated decision, please read about this bill on our website and call or email Patty Lundy.

LWV EDUCATION POSITION

LWVC will be updating its Education Position this year, and the Modesto LWV will hold a consensus meeting in October or November to contribute information to LWVC on this topic.

To prepare for the consensus meeting, the Modesto Voter is running a series of articles on California's school funding system. Last month we ran "The Basics of California's School Finance System" from EdSource. This month, on the following two pages, we include "The School District Budget Process."

More information on these topics is available at the EdSource website, www.edsource.org. *--Editor*

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 _____

Address _____

Phone (for the directory) _____

E-mail _____

**Mail to: P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352**

for content of this page and the next, see
www.edsource.org/pdf/QA/budget_final.pdf

Voter Services gears up for Fall

■ Members interested in helping with this fall's candidate forums should mark their calendars for Monday, October 11 and Thursday, October 14. Forums begin at 7 P.M. and are held in the 10th Street Place city/county chambers.

■ The last day to register is Monday, October 18th and League will be offering citizens their last chance to register before the presidential election from 2:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the Modesto Library.

■ Voter Service is working on voter education and registration opportunities one Saturday at the Mall and one Saturday at Farmer's Market during October.

League's success in these endeavors depends on you. Please take a moment to check your calendar and volunteer for one or more events. Most shifts are just a couple of hours long. Leave a message for Linda Walden at 577-0570 if you can help.

--Linda Walden

Membership reminder

I want to thank everyone who has done a great job in sending in their dues renewal! Membership was due for renewal on July 1, so if you haven't had a chance to do so, please take the time to send it in. If you haven't received a membership renewal letter, please call the office at 209-524-1698. Payment should be mailed to LWV of Modesto; PO Box E; Modesto, CA 95352. Renewal rates are the same as last year: \$75 for family; \$50 for individual; \$15 for student. Also, within those membership renewal notices is a blue survey asking questions about your particular interests. It is important that you fill that out and send it in along with your renewal. We want to know about you and your interests!

--Kate Weiner, Membership

What's at stake today?

Coming this fall, the "Today" show on NBC will feature a special series titled, "What's at Stake Today," where they'll take a closer look at the issues you think are most important as we approach the 2004 presidential election. They are looking for input. This is a great opportunity for issue-savvy League members to weigh in. Let them know what issues matter most to you when you're considering how you'll cast your vote in November.

Submit your comments at <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/5396445>.

--Patty Lundy

National non-profits partner with Advance America to register over 50,000 voters

SPARTANBURG, S.C., -- A coalition of seven prominent non-profit organizations are partnering with Advance America Cash Advance Centers, Inc. to conduct Register in Advance, a national non-partisan effort to register more than 50,000 new voters this election year. NFL running back Stephen Davis of the Carolina Panthers serves as honorary chair of the program, encouraging citizens to register to vote through public service announcements airing in markets nationwide.

The League of Women Voters, National Urban League, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, People for the American Way Foundation, League of United Latin American Citizens, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda are providing grassroots support for the campaign, conducting voter registration drives and outreach activities across the U.S. Advance America, corporate sponsor for Register in Advance, is making voter registration forms and instructional materials available through September 18 in more than 2,000 Advance America locations in 29 states. During National Voter Registration Week, September 12-18, Register in Advance partners will draw national focus on efforts to register citizens for the 2004 general election.

Register in Advance began in 2002 as an unprecedented voter registration partnership between non-profits and the business community. That year, approximately 50,000 citizens became registered voters as a result of this endeavor. Advance America and its partners are aiming to exceed that number in this 2004 election year.

According to U.S. Census data, approximately 57 million Americans (roughly 30 percent of the U.S. voting age population) are not registered to vote. Attitudes about the power of voting, family and community influences, and difficulties in understanding the voting process are all barriers to more citizens actively participating in elections. Register in Advance seeks to break down those barriers through a sustained campaign that provides citizens with convenient access to voter registration forms, in English and Spanish, as well as the information they need to become registered voters.

continued on p. 8



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HELP WANTED

The Modesto League is looking for a Historian

If you already read the news...

And are willing to clip and achive articles
about local issues, elections and League concerns,

Please call or email Patty Lundy

551-1558 or lundy.p@sbcglobal.net

VOTER REGISTRATION, *continued from p. 7*

Register in Advance's ultimate goal is to build better communities through active participation in the process of democracy. With the theme, "Register in Advance ... You count because you vote," the campaign reminds citizens of their ability to make positive changes in their communities by first registering, then voting. Register in Advance partners hope this initiative will serve as a model for businesses and non-profits to jointly address this and other issues of importance to citizens.

"Working with our partner organizations, Advance America is committed to ensuring that our customers, employees and their families understand that they do, indeed, have the power to make a difference in their communities; all it takes is a visit to the voting booth on Election Day," said Advance America CEO Billy Webster. "Register in Advance gives citizens access to one of the most valuable and essential freedoms of democracy -- the right to vote."

About Advance America

Founded in 1997, Advance America Cash Advance Centers, Inc. is the country's leading payday advance provider. Advance America offers convenient, less-costly, short-term credit options to consumers whose needs are not met by traditional financial institutions. The company is a founding member of the Community Financial Services Association of America (CFSA), whose mission is to promote laws that provide substantive consumer protections and to encourage responsible industry practices. For more information about Advance America and the Register in Advance program, visit <http://www.advanceamerica.net>.

--from League of Women Voters website

Board Highlights

July 14, 2004

- Finance Director Debbie Kleinfelder announced that the finance drive is under way.
- The board decided to appeal for a volunteer historian to collect and archive news for our Modesto League.
- Membership Chair, Kate Weiner, announced that membership is up to 164, with over 90 renewals already received.
- The year-end financial report will be audited and ready for the September Voter.
- The 2004-05 membership directory will be ready for printing in August.
- New membership brochures will be printed soon – the state's brochure is no longer available.

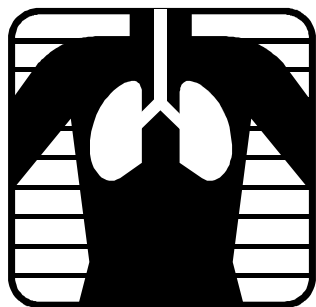
--Patty Lundy

Join us for the August Lunch and Learn

Tuesday, August 31 12:00 pm

Appetiz Restaurant \$11

Contact restaurant for special dietary requests



Guest Speaker:

Anthony Presto, Public Education Administrator

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

"The Air Quality Journey"

With increasing health risks from bad air in the Valley, League has an active interest in learning more about the major sources of harmful air pollution. League has a position on Air Quality under Natural Resources. Attend our luncheon and refresh your interest on this issue.

LEAGUE'S NONPARTISAN POLICY

The League of Women Voters of Modesto is nonpartisan. As an organization, it does not support or oppose candidates for public office, but acts only on those issues chosen by the membership for study and action.

The League believes that the political parties are essential to the American system of government and that the participation of informed citizens is beneficial to the political parties and to the system. Consequently, the League encourages its members as INDIVIDUALS to be active in the political parties, in finding and supporting the candidates for public office, and in seeking election to public office.

Members of the League are not eligible to serve on the Board of Directors while seeking or holding elective office. The President, Voter Service Director and Office Manager may not campaign for candidates as individuals, due to the visibility of their positions. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors, collectively and individually, to insure that the community has no reason to question the nonpartisan position as an organization.

SOUND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES RECOMMENDED FOR 2004

WASHINGTON, DC- The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) today issued a new report to help safeguard the votes of all Americans in the 2004 election. *Helping America Vote: Safeguarding the Vote* outlines a set of recommended operational and management practices for state and local election officials to enhance voting system security, protect eligible voters and ensure that valid votes are counted.

“Every community should have safeguards for voting systems so that they operate properly and accurately record the voter’s intent,” stated Kay J. Maxwell, LWVUS president. “In this report, the League has put together a list of common-sense practices that have proven effective in states that have already put them into use,” Maxwell said.

“Many people don’t realize that most voters coming to the polls this fall will cast their votes on the same type of voting machines they used in the 2000 elections,” said Maxwell. “*Checklist for Voting Systems* – an easy-to-read supplement in *Safeguarding* – is a handy starting place for election officials and voters to ensure that all voting machines are ready for Election Day. This resource includes a simple list that applies to all voting machines and a specific checklist for each type of machine,” Maxwell stated.

“No matter the voting machine being used – punch card or optical scan, lever or touchscreen – there are universal steps to be followed in preparing for Election Day,” noted Maxwell. “All voting machines, for instance, should meet federal qualifications and state certification standards, and these should not be bypassed on Election Day. Ballot design for each type of machine is vitally important in making sure that voters properly cast their votes. And aggressive education efforts are essential to show voters how to use their voting machines,” according to Maxwell. “The *Checklist* also provides basic measures for each particular type of machine so officials can tailor protections to their precinct or county,” Maxwell stated.

“The League’s report provides the tools – the nuts and bolts – to assist election officials in improving voting system security, ensuring that machines operate properly, and setting up voter registration systems that enfranchise, not disenfranchise voters,” Maxwell said. For example, the report recommends “tracking and documentation of all procedures, from the testing of machines to the handling of ballots,” to ensure that such practices are actually carried out and that audits are possible if problems occur.

“The League is known for working closely with election officials to make the system function better, and this report is part of our ongoing efforts. *Safeguarding* builds on the recommendations we provided officials in the first Helping America Vote monograph, *A Guide to Implementing the New Federal Provisional Ballot Requirement* (http://www.lwv.org/elibrary/pub/voting_help-vote.pdf) in August 2003,” said Maxwell.

“From now until well beyond Election Day, League members in communities nationwide will continue fighting for changes that protect eligible voters. Sound management practices will strengthen the election process and protect the fundamental right to vote,” concluded Maxwell.

The *Safeguarding the Vote* report is available at www.lwv.org/elibrary/pub/voting_safeguarding_color.pdf.

--League of Women Voters press release, July 21, 2004

LWVC REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL VALLEY LEAGUES

WHEN:

Saturday, September 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

WHERE:

Merced College, Library 1, 3600 M Street, Merced (Map and driving directions on back)

WHAT:

This training workshop is especially for members of the Central Valley Leagues (& others who would like to come). We will discuss common interests, focus on how to manage League programs, strategize how we can grow, retain members, and become more diverse.

REGISTRATION COST:

\$25.00 includes morning coffee and rolls, workshop handouts, and a box lunch.

THE AGENDA:

9:30 to 10 a.m.	Registration & Continental Breakfast
10 to 10:30 a.m.	Welcome, Introductions
10:30a.m. to noon	Morning workshop sessions (repeated in afternoon)
Noon to 1p.m.	Lunch
	UC Merced PowerPoint Presentation on current construction & programs
	Round table sessions for treasurers, secretaries & Voter editors
1 to 2:30p.m.	Afternoon workshop sessions
2:30 to 3p.m.	Wrap-up & evaluations

REGISTRATION

Mail this form to: Treasurer, LWVMC, PO Box 2675, Merced CA 95344.
[Registration after 9/10 or on site: \$30.] **Checks payable to LWVC.**

Name: _____ League: _____
Email address: _____ Day Telephone: _____

Reservations Due Thursday September 10.

Tell us which two sessions you would like to attend (we will place you in one in the morning and one in the afternoon.)

_____ League 101--Everything you've wanted to know about the League --Gail Dryden
_____ Making the Most of Your Membership--Lois Chaney
_____ Making the Most of Your Ed Fund--Robbie Davis
_____ Making a Difference through Advocacy & Action--Marion Taylor

The League of Women Voters®, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters of Modesto

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