

The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO



January 2004

Vol. 56 No. 1

Local Leagues Have Voice in National Program Planning

Every two years, local and state Leagues participate in the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) program planning process by reviewing existing positions and making recommendations for the future. LWVUS is asking each League to choose one position for systematic review and update, a process similar to

the update on Trade that our local League participated in during the 2000-2002 biennium. There are certainly many important issues facing our nation. This is our opportunity to give input to League action on these issues.

A summary of all LWVUS positions is printed on pages 4 to 6 in this issue of the Voter. *Impact on Issues*, which

provides in depth information on the positions, is available in its entirety on the LWVUS website. To access it, go to:
<www.lwv.org/leaders.html>
User ID: lwv
Password: carriecatt

See page 6 for information on providing your input on these positions.

--Julie Saugstad

Modesto: Cultural Center of the Valley

"Downtown Modesto is changing," says Chris Murphy, president of the State Theater Board. The State Theater is a big part of that evolution, with its emphasis on the famous acts they have attracted. Murphy listed the big names that have brought a profit to the theater and attracted audiences from all over the valley. But, he cautioned, the State is a historic theater, it will never make money overall. He promised to keep the independent films going, even though they will never break even.

The theater has only been going in its present incarnation for ten years, and needs to

--continued on p. 8

Calendar of Events

Wed., 1/14	BOARD MEETING 6 p.m. LWV office
Fri., 1/16	LOCAL ACTION COMMITTEE 12:00 1608 F Street, Modesto
Tues., 1/27	LUNCH AND LEARN Appetiz Restaurant 12:00
Mon, 2/9	PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING LWV office, 7 pm (see p. 4)
Wed., 2/ 11	BOARD MEETING 6 pm. LWV office
Thurs., 2/12	LWV CANDIDATE FORUM 7 pm. Board of Supervisors candidates VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!!

President's Message

Belated Holiday greetings. I hope your celebrations were filled with the joy of family and friends and hope for a happy and peaceful future.

As I reviewed the League's year, I realized that our members have been busy and visible. Perhaps one automatically brings about the other; when League members are doing the League's business, it is in and for our community.

Elections, of course, bring us out in full force with candidate forums and voter registration. In addition, our Local Action Committee helped prepare statements of our positions on two land use measures that were on the November ballot. Members of the committee attended several hearings and made presentations regarding the City's House Element and land use proposals.

Leaguers are a curious bunch – seeking information and taking interest in many topics. Our monthly Lunch and Learn speakers were varied and informative. These programs keep members abreast of issues in our community with opportunity for Q and A. Informative speakers highlighted our Annual Meeting and recent Holiday Fling. We also enjoyed a fieldtrip to the Hughson Arboretum.

We continue to welcome new members. We have seen many of these new faces at recent League events. Also, our Finance Drive was a success – almost meeting our goal by early December. As you know, this is our primary source of income for operating expenses.

--continued on p. 3

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

OFFICERS

President

Marie Bairey 523-0663

1st Vice President

Lynn Kelso 529-3273

2nd Vice President

Julie Saugstad 526-0795

Secretary

Mildred Kinser 523-4222

Treasurer

Betty Ann Vencill 577-1233

DIRECTORS

Voter Service

Linda Walden

Finance Drive

Debbie Kleinfelder

Voter Editor

Susan Cassidy

Public Relations

Susan Novak

State and National Action

Maria Arevalo

Membership

Patty Lundy

OFF-BOARD

Lunch and Learn

Bob Jackson

Webmaster

Stella Beratlis

Local Action

Committee (Myrtle Osner, chair)

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner



Mailing Address

PO Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

Office Address

723 13th Street, Modesto

Telephone

209-524-1698

www.lwvmodesto.org

This was also a year of changes in the way we do business. League membership renewals are now all due on July 1. We have been making the transition through out the year. We made some minor adjustments to our Local Program. We also increased our visibility and accessibility via the Internet through our web page and the e-mail communication network.

It looks like more of the same for 2004. League will be active in the campaign to retain the library tax on the March ballot. We also will hold candidate forums for the Board of Supervisors election prior to March. Look forward to our membership social – now in the spring rather than the fall.

--Marie Bairey

League of Women Voters 2004 pocket calendars are available for sale. Contact Myrtle Osner to get yours!

**COMING IN MARCH:
LWV MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL EVENT
DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED**

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

Smart Voter

At its November meeting, the Board decided not to participate in the local component of Smart Voter for the March election. Many factors were considered in this difficult decision.

LWV Modesto was one of the early participants in LWVC's Smart Voter, offering election information to assist voters and candidates. Modesto Leaguers were enthusiastic and tireless in their efforts to make Smart Voter a household word for our community. Initially, we were fortunate to obtain financial support from the Elections Department. Smart Voter was a service to the Elections Department as well as the voters by providing polling place information and local sample ballots.

Things have changed. The Elections Department now has its own web site that includes polling place information. At the same time, the Modesto Bee developed a website offering candidates an opportunity to introduce themselves and present their views. Smart Voter is not the only game in town now. And, unfortunately, Smart Voter did not receive wide participation from candidates in the November election, which reduced its effectiveness as a tool for voters.

Whether or not to participate in Smart Voter in the future will be considered again when the 2004-2005 League budget is developed.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

This is your chance to participate in our grassroots influence on LWVUS. Read over the positions below, or get more information online (see p. 1). Then fill out the form on p. 6 and mail it to the LWV office, or bring it to our **PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING on Monday, February 9 at 7 pm at the LWV office.** At that meeting we will also discuss local program issues to prepare for our next Annual Meeting. Use one or both of these options to make your voice heard at the LWVUS convention in June 2004.

Public Policy Positions of LWVUS

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote and open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

Voting Rights

Citizen's Right to Vote: Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation:

Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

Election Process

Apportionment: Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Campaign Finance: Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Election of the President: Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation: Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

Individual Liberties: Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices: Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Congress and the Presidency

Congress: Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

The Presidency: Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

United Nations

Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

Trade

Support U. S. trade policies that reduce barriers and expand international trade and that advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

U. S. Relations with Developing Countries

Promote U. S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

Arms Control

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

Military Policy and Defense Spending

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

Natural Resources

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

Resource Management

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

Air Quality: Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

Energy: Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Land Use: Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

Water Resources: Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

Waste Management: Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

Nuclear Issues: Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

Public Participation

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

Agricultural Policy

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

SOCIAL POLICY

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all.

Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

Equality of Opportunity

Equal Rights: Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

Education, Employment and Housing: Support equal access to education, employment and fair housing.

Fiscal Policy

Tax Policy: Support adequate and flexible government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

Federal Deficit: Promote responsible deficit policies.

Funding of Entitlements: Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

Health Care

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U. S. residents and controls health care costs.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Income Assistance: Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

Support Services: Provide for essential support services.

Housing Supply: Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

Child Care

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

Gun Control

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

Urban Policy

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well defined channels for citizen input and review.

Fill out and mail to LWV Modesto, P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352, or bring to the Program Planning Meeting at the LWV office on February 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Name _____

Program item	Retain	Drop	Review/ Update
Government			
Citizen's Right to Vote			
DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation			
Apportionment			
Campaign Finance			
Election of the President*			
Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation			
Individual Liberties			
Public Policy on Reproductive Choices			
Congress			
The Presidency			
International Relations			
United Nations			
Trade			
U. S. Relations with Developing Countries			
Arms Control			
Military Policy and Defense Spending			
Natural Resources			
Natural Resources			
Resource Management			
Environmental Protection and Pollution Control			
Public Participation			
Agricultural Policy			
Social Policy			
Equality of Opportunity			
Fiscal Policy			
Health Care			
Meeting Basic Human Needs			
Child Care			
Early Intervention for Children at Risk			
Violence Prevention			
Gun Control			
Urban Policy			
*Currently being updated in the 2002-2004 biennium.			

Instant Runoff Voting

In the November 4 election, Measure I, the proposal to amend the Modesto City Charter to move runoff elections to March failed. The measure had been proposed to alleviate the tight time line required to meet deadlines for a December runoff. This result raises the question of how to structure elections that guarantee the winning candidates receive a majority (50 percent + 1) of the votes and the election is completed in a timely manner.

In the summer of 2002 when the City was considering ways to conduct run-off elections, I began to do a little research about Instant Runoff. By the time I got the material, the City Council tabled the issue. It suddenly reappeared in the form of Measure I for the November ballot. There was no time for League to suggest yet another option – Instant Runoff Voting.

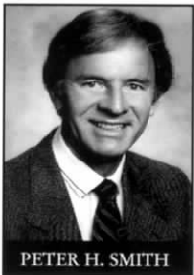
At its 2003 Convention, the League of Women Voters of California agreed to an amendment to its Election Systems position by concurring with LWV Washington State position. The position now states: (LWVC) supports election systems for executive offices, both at the state and local levels that require the winner to receive a majority of the votes, as long as the majority is achieved using a voting method such as Instant Runoff Voting, rather than a second, separate runoff election.

Using IRV, voters rank the candidates; the preferred candidate is first choice and, in case their favorite is eliminated, their runoff choices are ranked second, third, etc. If the first count does not yield a majority winner, the Instant Runoff voting system proceeds. Ballots are counted with the last place candidate eliminated and the second choice votes on those ballots are awarded to the front runners. Thus, a candidate is elected by a majority of voters.

The advantages of such a system are clear. It saves the cost of conducting and campaigning in a second election. Results are available after a single election. It guarantees that winning candidates are elected by a majority of voters. Candidates must appeal to a broad base of voters to attract first or second choice votes.

IRV is used in Australia, Ireland and London. Other cities and institutions use versions of IRV. For more information check www.instantrunoff.com.

--Marie Bairey



PETER H. SMITH
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Member of the California and Oregon State Bars


A BUSINESS LAWYER
WITH 20 YEARS OF
INSIDE CORPORATE
EXPERIENCE

Corporate Counsel, E. & J. Gallo Winery, 1972-1992

1535 J Street, Suite A
P.O. Box 1867
Modesto, California 95353

Telephone:
(209) 579-9524

Facsimile:
(209) 579-9940



E.F. CASH-DUDLEY
A Professional Law Corporation

Certified Specialist in Family Law
The State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization

1608 F Street
Modesto, CA 95354-2525

(209) 526-1533
Fax (209) 526-1711

LEAGUE ISSUES IN THE NEWS:

Secretary of State Kevin Shelley has called for "voter verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) on electronic voting machines."

The LWWUS will hold a presidential debate in Los Angeles on February 15.

See the League Web Sites for more information:

LWWUS **www.lwv.org**

LWV of Calif. **www.ca.lwv.org**

LWV Modesto **www.lwvmodesto.org**

STATE THEATER, *continued from p. 1*

and needs to have its extensive damage from the earlier years repaired. Old debts have been paid off, and a new screen installed, a gift from the estate of movie-lover Sara Jane Thompson.

The State partners with non-profits; Murphy reminded us that the State was originally a project of the Downtown Arts Project. The State Theater will be an integral part of economic development in Modesto.

A good time was had by all at the Holiday Fling. Many thanks to Lynn and Albion Fenderson for opening their home to us as they have done for a number of Holiday parties.

--Myrtle Osner

Subscribe Now

LWWUS is offering a monthly newsletter –

LeaguE-Voice - in addition to the three issues to the *National Voter* that are mailed. It's easy to subscribe. Go to lwv.org and click on Subscribe to LeaguE-Voice. Enter your e-mail address. You're in!!

Both the state and national Leagues are relying more and more on electronic communication. Besides being quick and cheap, it enables more League members to have access to League information. Once you get into the web site, you'll quickly find yourself clicking to other pages. For example, there is good information about electronic voting machines.

Board Highlights

November 12, 2003

Board voted to not participate in Smart Voter for the March, 2004 election. See p. 3 for details.

A membership event will be held in March 2004, in place of our former fall event.

--Mildred Kinser, secretary

Directory Changes

Betty Ann Vencill
2504 Bluff Creek Drive

Margie Lipsky
mlipsky@sbcglobal.net

Finance Drive in Final Stretch

As the finance drive enters its final stretch, we would like to thank all of our donors for their contributions and remind you there is still time to help the League reach our goal. Please send your contribution today.



Join us for the January Lunch and Learn

Tuesday, January 27 12:00 p.m.

Appetize Restaurant \$11.00

Guest Speaker: Monica Weakley of the Tuolumne River Trust

Take time to view beautiful slides of some of Tuolumne County's most treasured rivers. Monica Weakley from the Tuolumne River Trust will share slides of the Tuolumne River Watershed and talk about its history and ecology, as well as the Trust's current efforts to secure permanent protection for two extraordinary Tuolumne River tributaries—the South Fork Tuolumne and Clavey Rivers.

Join us to learn more about these incredible rivers and how we can ensure they remain free flowing!

CSUS Elections

A note of thanks to the League volunteers who staffed the CSUS special election in November. Before leaving town, Patrick McKee scheduled the volunteers. Because most of the volunteers are needed during the daytime, not everyone is able to participate in this League activity. We appreciate those who were available and willing to spend a few hours working on the Turlock election. Thanks to Debbie Kleinfelder, Pat Cole, Bev and Ralph Sturtevant, Bob Jackson, Jeanne Sereno, Julie Fox, Gloria Guerra, Lynn Kelso, Connie Chin, Helen Gordon, Joan Patterson, Margie Lipsky, Mildred Kinser and Marie Bairey.

If you haven't visited the CSUS campus lately, you'll find it very impressive. The grounds are park-like, and the cluster of buildings is growing. It was nostalgic to watch the students coming and going, studying together or taking a break in the cafeteria. The only down side is that the voter turnout was sparse – not unlike elections in other jurisdictions. We usually monitor the spring student body elections which, hopefully, will generate more student/voter participation.

The League is paid for the service it provides to the CUSU student body. In addition, volunteers get free parking and snacks at the cafeteria.

--Marie Bairey

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

Tear off and send to:

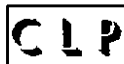
LWV Modesto

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage PAID
Modesto, CA
Permit No. 69



**Commercial
Loan
Packaging**

McKEE COMPANY

PATRICK F. McKEE – Mortgage Broker

2621 Prescott Rd.
#196
Modesto, CA 95350

Phone/Fax (209) 529-5812
email: mckeeco@thevision.net
Cell: (209) 985-8670

A-1 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

TRUSTWORTHY - DEPENDABLE - EXPERIENCED

JORENE M. MORATTO
Broker/Owner

P.O. Box 404
Modesto, CA 95353-0404

Office (209) 526-8891
Pager (209) 577-7303

Cal-Comfort **Insulating Windows, Inc.**

*Residential & Commercial Windows and Door Systems
New Construction & Replacement Products*

1050 Kansas Ave., Modesto, CA 95351
Lic. #513170
Class C-17-B

(209) 527-1310
FAX (209) 527-1347

JOSEPH
GREGORY

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES

1012 15th Street
Modesto Ca 95354
T 209-491-3077
F 209-491-3070

Hours:
10-6 Monday-
Saturday
12-5 Sunday