

The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO



July 2003

Vol. 55 No. 7

League Takes Action at City Hall

The newly formed Local Action Committee recently studied and wrote statements addressing two very important issues in Modesto. On June 2 Julie Saugstad read a League statement based on our Land Use Position for the Urban Growth Policy Review at the Planning Commission meeting. On June 4, Marie Bairey read a statement based on our Housing Position supporting affordable housing in the Housing Element update at a joint meeting of the Modesto City Council and the Planning Commission.

It's been ten years since the Modesto Urban Growth Policy was thoroughly reviewed. This document, when adopted, will guide the growth of the city for the next ten years. Changes can be made, of course, but the overall aims are to have a pattern established that is fair to all and guides growth within the already established sphere of influence.

In order to grow, Modesto must extend sewer trunks to areas called Comprehensive Planning Districts (CPDs). The only growth-slowing process Modesto has is "Measure M", that says the City Council must put an

advisory measure on the ballot defining the area to which sewers are to be extended. Our League recommended only two CPDs, Johansen and Empire North. Three schools are either already built or in process within them.

continued on p. 8

Calendar of Events

Wednesday July 9	BOARD MEETING 6:00 p.m. LWV Office, members welcome
Friday July 18	LOCAL ACTION COMMITTEE 12:00 Eddie Cash-Dudley's office 1608 F Street, Modesto
July 25- August 3	COUNTY FAIR-- volunteers needed for demonstration of voting machines
Tuesday July 29	LUNCH AND LEARN 12:00 Appetiz Topic: Transportation Tax Speaker: Mayor Sabatino
Wednesday August 13	BOARD MEETING 6:00 p.m. LWV Office, members welcome
Sept. 25, 29, 30 and October 1	CANDIDATE FORUMS

President's Message

League of Women Voters Promotes Democracy by Example and Involvement

LWVC Convention, held in May in Oakland, attracted several hundred Leaguers from around the state. Here grassroots democracy meets representative government – and it works. The decisions that are made determine the LWVC Program and how the League's energy and resources will be spent for the next two years. The structured format of the plenary sessions gives time to review recommendations made by the LWVC Board and to entertain suggestions from the delegates. Speakers address the group passionately in support of (or opposition to) the issues. Additional information is available at small caucus meetings. With facts and information at hand, delegates cast their votes – and there were some close ones this time! But when all is said and done the rule of the majority prevails. (See article on program recommendations on page 5.)

Speaking of democracy in action... The Modesto League was invited to oversee the Wat Cambodian Buddhist Temple Society election for its Board of Directors May 31. League volunteers verified voters' identification against the list of eligible voters at the election. The election attracted old and young – all eager to make their voices heard through the ballot. League's reputation as non-partisan advocates for participatory government gave us the credibility needed to assist with this election.

Thank you to volunteers Marie and George Bairey, Bob Jackson, Myrtle Osner, Patty Lundy, Patrick and Sharon McKee, Daphne Erwin, Jim and Linda Griffin, Dorothy Schmidt, and Betty Ann Vencil.

--continued on p. 3

LVW 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

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OFF-BOARD

Lunch and Learn

Bob Jackson

Webmaster

Stella Beratlis

Local Action

Committee (Myrtle Osner, chair)

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner



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PO Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

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723 13th Street, Modesto

Telephone

209-524-1698

www.lwvmodesto.org

League On-Line

- We are expanding our use of e-mail for local League communication. Get reminders, Action Alerts or information between *Voter* issues. If we don't have your address yet, please send it to Marie Bairey gbandmb@thevision.net.
- Check our website at www.lwvmodesto.org for calendar reminders and links to other League sites. Offer suggestions or feedback to Webmaster Stella Beratlis.
- LWVUS will have a monthly newsletter to supplement the *National Voter* on its Member Site. www.lwv.org. User id is lwv and password is carriecatt.

Electronic Voting Machines

The County Elections Department gave electronic voting a trial run at the Newman City Council Election in June. Response from poll workers and voters was positive. Results were transmitted instantly to the Elections office at the end of the day. Margie Lipsky was the League observer.

The County is moving cautiously in developing its plan for purchase recommendations. They plan to have several electronic voting machines at the Stanislaus County Fair. This will give voters an opportunity to try out the different machines and for the County to get feedback about what works. League has been invited to assist with demonstrations. Volunteers are needed.

--Marie Bairey

A Win – Win Idea

The Stanislaus County Department of Elections is always in need of poll workers for election days. And they pay about \$100. In the past, the Department has also paid League \$3000 to support Smart Voter, but with budget cuts that probably won't happen this year.

If you have the time to volunteer on Election Day and are able to donate the stipend to League, everybody wins. The Elections Department gets needed assistance and our League earns funds for Smart Voter. Ten volunteers could earn \$1000 for Smart Voter!

President's Message
continued from p. 2

Spring Fling – Day in the Country “When your head's full of pictures, they have to come out.” (Incredible Ned, 1997, as quoted in What the Dormouse Said.) Modesto Leaguers saw this first hand at the Hughson Arboretum in June. Margaret Sturtevant's vision to create a garden and arboretum on a 13-acre corner of her orchard is coming to life. Margie Lipsky arranged for a Picnic in the Country and a tour of the Arboretum by Board President Brian Sinclair and Mrs. Sturtevant. Twenty-two League members enjoyed a delightful introduction to what will become an educational and environmental resource in our area.

We also visited Samaritan Village, a senior residence, and site of the Hospice House which is under construction. Former League member Jeannette Peterson invited us into her cottage during the tour.

--Marie Bairey

Yes!

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

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.

Congratulations to Honored League Members

Mary Cullinan, a member of our League for several years, has just accepted a position as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas. She was Dean of the College of Arts, Letters and Sciences at CSUS.

Ricardo Cordova was just appointed a judge in Stanislaus County. And his wife, **Jane Manley**, was named one of the Outstanding Women of Stanislaus County by the

County Commission for Women.

Lee Honore Means, Executive Director of Muir Trail Girl Scout Council, was also named Outstanding Woman at the Ceremony March 22. Lee reminded us that the Girl Scouts are the largest women's organization in the world. Her goal is to make it possible for every girl to be strong, courageous and capable. And she repeated the slogan of the League of several years ago

when she said, "If we are going to make 50/50 by 2020, we had better get busy."

Both Jane and Lee paid tribute to the League of Women Voters As Jane said, "I stand on the shoulders of all the women who have received this award before, and I honor them." She works as a bi-lingual educator for the City schools and has been a continuing advocate for the value of diversity.

--Myrtle Osner

League of Women Voters of California Acts

In delegate kits, we found our state board proposed two major issues for emphasis: Health Care and State and Local Finance. This should be big enough to keep us busy acting on legislation in these two area for the next two years, right? Well, this daunting task did not change the enthusiasm of the delegates for other major issues and we passed an even bigger agenda for the next biennium. Here are the additional areas we will work on at the state level:

- Update our state election position by concurrence with the LWV Washington State position that states in brief: support the concept of a majority vote for winners of single offices using instant run-off rather than a separate runoff election.
- Contingent on funding which will now be sought by a group of interested Leaguers, update our Education position.
- Community Colleges will be an issue for emphasis utilizing the new position we passed at convention (our local study group was part of the process to create this position).
- At the 2001 convention a state energy committee was created. They have done extensive work to understand the energy environment we face. Their work will be the basis of a state study to develop new positions to allow LWVC to participate in the policy development of our energy future.

In addition to this full agenda we sent a resolution to LWVUS that could have an impact on national action. This was a resolution urging the board of LWVUS to stand publicly to voice concern about civil liberties and open government and take action to affirm and defend the Constitution and Bill of Rights. (See copy of the resolution on page 6 of this issue.)

--Julie Saugstaad

In Memorium

We remember Mary Johnson, who died this spring, as one of the founders of the Modesto League. Until she became unable because of her health, she was a faithful member since we began in 1948. Our history gives an insight into how we began: "Mary Johnson was president from 1953 to 1955. During her term she found herself editing the newsletter, leading studies, and coping with the attacks on the League of McCarthyism."

But the members supported her and the League carried on and grew stronger. It was also at this time that the League completed a study of city government and lobbied for the present city charter form of government. At the same time Mary was League president she was also doing a variety of things to help the struggling Unitarian church, including, again, editing the newsletter. We are grateful for her strength and courage passed on to younger generations. --Myrtle Osner

LWVC Resolution for Civil Liberties

The delegates at the LWVC 2003 Convention unanimously passed the following resolution to call attention to our concerns for protecting civil liberties brought on by the passage of the Patriot Act I and Homeland Security Act and proposals to extend them.

WHEREAS the League of Women Voters from its inception has worked to protect civil liberties and foster open government for all; and

WHEREAS portions of several executive orders and legislative acts, such as the USA Patriot Act of 2001 and the Homeland Security Act, are contrary to the following positions of the League of Women Voters of the United States:

- citizen rights: protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making
- individual liberties: oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights; and

WHEREAS portions of these acts and executive orders have undermined our fundamental rights and liberties including:

- freedom of speech, religion, assembly and the press
- protection from unreasonable searches and seizures
- the rights to counsel and due process in judicial proceedings
- equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS portions of these acts and executive orders impact our libraries and other sources of information, reducing our privacy as well as restricting our ability to obtain public information as provided under the Freedom of Information Act:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates of the League of Women Voters of California do express great concern about the erosion of civil liberties and acknowledge the need for extensive education to increase awareness and aid in protecting our constitutional rights while acknowledging widespread fear in the United States and the need for fair and effective ways to cope; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the League of Women Voters, at all levels,

- stand publicly and with other respected organizations that have voiced their concern about civil liberties and open government processes
- take timely and appropriate action to affirm and defend the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the League of Women Voters, at all levels, urge our elected representatives to

- closely oversee the implementation of these acts and executive orders
- actively work for the repeal of such portions of them that violate our constitutional rights and liberties
- adamantly oppose proposed legislation, such as the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003, and any future legislation that would undermine or curtail our fundamental rights and liberties set forth in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the League of Women Voters of California communicate this will of the convention to the League of Women Voters of the United States and urge their immediate action.

Lunch and Learn

We think the changes in our monthly Lunch and Learn meetings will benefit the speakers and those who attend. It is a challenge to find a meeting place that accommodates a small group and offers a separate room for our speaker (at no extra charge), convenient location, good food and a reasonable cost. We think we have it all!

The new location, Appetez Restaurant in Roseburg Square Shopping Center, offers plenty of parking and is centrally located. By guaranteeing 15 people at each meeting, we are assured of a private room. Speakers and audience should find this more comfortable.

The menu will change each month. The buffet will include soup or salad, chef's choice of entrée and beverage for \$11. (Coffee or other drinks are extra.) Those with special dietary needs should contact Appetez one day before the event.

The meetings will be on the last Tuesday of each month. Attendance at Lunch and Learn varies from 12 to 25 people. We hope the changes will attract even more. (Remember, we need at least 15 each time!)

Contact Bob Jackson (524-0372) if you have ideas for speakers.



Curious about the details of the **Proposed Transportation Tax?**

Guest Speaker:
Mayor Carmen Sabatino

Join us at the
July Lunch and Learn

Tuesday, July 29 at noon
Appetez Restaurant
\$11.00

Local Action

continued from page 1



Address Changes

Please note the following changes of address in your directories:

***Karen Rodriguez
917 Scenic Court
Modesto, CA 95355***

***Cathee Vaughn
7406 Pine Street
Hughson, CA 95326***

Coupled with Urban Growth Review is a new Housing Element, also required by the state to be updated. In our statements to both the hearings, we emphasized the need here for affordable housing. To get it built, we believe that we must have inclusionary zoning which mandates that after a certain number of units are built, the builders must build units for low and moderate income persons. We emphasized that the need is even greater today than it was ten years ago. Very little housing has been built in the last ten years that is affordable to the average person. The Housing Element documented this clearly with its statistics.

Other issues included the possible annexation of several "islands" of inhabited land completely surrounded by the city. Most of these were built many years ago and have substandard streets, no sewer hookups, and need upgrades. Since this costs a heap of money, some Council members have recommended that the county and city negotiate who will pay for this upgrade. Many of the islands

could hook up to sewers without a trunk line being extended. There are sanitary issues here, to say nothing of safety. Annexation is a contentious issue, not easy to solve.

Leaguers who are interested in other action issues should attend the next meeting of the Local Action Committee. Current members are Julie Saugstad, Myrtle Osner, Alita Roberts, Cindy Van Empel, Eddy Cash-Dudley, and Debra Whitmore. We plan to meet monthly at Eddy Cash-Dudley's office on 16th and F St. at noon on the third Friday of each month. Our next meeting is July 18. There are other important issues on which we may need to act; come and tell us your interest. All members are welcome. Call Myrtle at 522-4967, or 524-1698.

*--Myrtle Osner and
Marie Bairey*

**Join the
Local Action
Committee**

Education Key to Success

Carol Dee, retiring superintendent of the Sylvan School District, was our Lunch and Learn speaker recently. She radiated her love of the work she has been doing. Among other pieces of advice she gave:

- o Focus on the children
- o Engage the public
- o Service is the key to life

More advice: Leadership is not a popularity contest. Do the right thing. You want people to respect you but not necessarily like you. A leader says, "We can do things better. Be a risk taker."

Carol Dee is a former nun. She assured us that she has always aspired to serving children. Though she never expected to be superintendent, she is retiring and leaving with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

It was announced that Carol Dee will be continuing her quest for serving children by becoming principal of the parochial school in Palm Desert at Sacred Heart Church. (Modesto Bee, June 17). We will miss her in Modesto.

--Myrtle Osner

JUNE BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Approved contribution to the Hughson Arboretum

Set dates for candidate forums: September 25, 29, 30 and October 1.

Membership renewal letters have been sent.

-- Mildred Kinser

PLEASE WELCOME TWO NEW MEMBERS

George Gaekle, 302 Northgate,
Modesto, CA 95350

Mr. Gaekle was our speaker at a recent Lunch and Learn. He spoke about the way in which redistricting has been captured by the incumbents and the parties to create "safe" seats in the legislature. He encouraged the League to join the effort to change the way in which redistricting is done in California. Mr. Gaekle is also this area's most authoritative voice about train travel. He is a retired Stanislaus County Chief Executive Officer.

Dorali Mitre, 4240 McKenna Dr.
Turlock, CA 95382

Ms. Mitre called the office and then downloaded the application blank from our website.

Encourage your friends to join!