



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO

May-June 2006

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL.57 NO.14

Calendar of Events

May 5th-7th

State Council, Sacramento

May 8th

Absentee Ballots to be returned

May 10th

Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Board Meeting

May 22nd

Voter Registration
Modesto and Turlock
Libraries

May 30th

Tuesday, 12:00 noon
Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant

June 16th

Friday, 11:00am
Local Action Committee
League Office

June 27th

Tuesday, 12:00 noon
Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant

July 12th

Wednesday, 6:30pm
Board Meeting

ANNUAL MEETING HOSTS DR. HAMID SHIRVANI

With charm as well as an obvious driving force for change, Dr. Shirvani head lined the League's 2006 Annual Meeting. With the retirement of Dr. Marvalene Hughes, a new era is dawning. Dr. Shirvani listed as his major goals: to raise the stature of the University, to expand the range of offerings, to streamline bureaucracy, and to develop fields needed in the area, especially those important to health services. 75% of their students come from this area, and the retention rate is at the top two in the CSUS system. He briefly mentioned that a research project tied to where we live is one funded by the Federal government, to get factual input on endangered species.

Dr Shirvani wants CSUS to become more closely related to the City of Turlock and he includes area business as part of his plans. Among those he is pushing is a new sports complex on the Monte Vista edge of the campus. (A few weeks later, when the League monitored the student elections, we discovered a student body galvanized to vote on the issue of a raise in student fees to support a new sports program).

Annual Business Meeting followed Shirvani's address. As part of that meeting, we passed a significant milestone, voting to begin the process of becoming a county-wide League. We expect to serve all our Stanislaus County communities better, although we have always reached out beyond Modesto throughout our nearly 60 year history.

We also passed a balanced budget, elected directors for the coming year, and awarded the Sustaining Member award to Linda Walden. Reports from all committee chairs round out the report. If you wish a copy, please call the office, 524-1698, or Myrtle Osner at home, 522-4967. The reports will be mailed only to those who request them. For those unable to attend, you'll see the League in Action, always there when good government needs us.

-Myrtle Osner, Office Manager

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

Patty Lundy 551-1558
pattylundy@sbcglobal.net

First Vice President

Susan Novak 526-9534
snovak2@sbcglobal.net

Second Vice President

Laurie Carley 578-3145
modestocarley@sbcglobal.net

Secretary

Joan Patterson 575-1644
grammajmp@earthlink.net

Treasurer

Julie Saugstad 526-0795
saugstad@ainet.com

DIRECTORS

Membership

Cynthia Van Empel

Jennie Sweeney

Voter Service

Linda Walden

Susan Cassidy

Finance Drive

Joan Goldsmith

Local Action

Marie Bairey

State and National Action

Betty Ann Vencill

Public Relations &

Voter Editor

Ellen Meyer

ellen-e@sbcglobal.net

OFF-BOARD

Membership

Gloria Skol

Lunch and Learn

Doug Chadwick

Web Master

Stella Beratlis

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner

Office Address

League Office

720 13th Street, Modesto

209-524-1698

www.lwvmodesto.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

I have been very proud to have served as your president for the past two years but, to be honest; I have run out of words to say as I approach my third year in this leadership role. I suppose if there was one thing I would want all League members to know, it is this: the League is perhaps one of the most productive ways to become involved in the democracy that is so important to our great nation. By participating in a grassroots, non-partisan organization such as ours, I have learned better to listen to different sides of any argument, to value opinions that might differ from my own and to appreciate the enormous amount of hard work that goes behind any position the League takes. We study issues, re-study issues and then, only after having thoroughly explored those issues does the League take a stand and advocate for those issues. I hope that at some point in your membership, each of you have the opportunity to experience a similar level of commitment to this incredible organization, where you have the opportunity to be heard without condemnation. We are always looking for a fresh perspective on the board!

We have had a very successful year in the Modesto League that culminated at our annual meeting, where the membership approved the name change to the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County and where we voted to continue the study on gangs. Thank you to our many dedicated volunteers that have made this year successful.

For the upcoming year, 2006-2007, we plan to continue our growth in membership and to activate more members with the many projects and voter service activities planned – the November election will undoubtedly be as demanding as the past years' elections. In addition, we are looking for volunteers to serve on a committee to help explore and update our current by-laws to reflect better the needs of our expanded league. Although we currently have many voter service activities in our surrounding communities, we need more volunteers in those communities to become actively involved in helping their League expand those services.

I will be attending the national conference June 9-13 and appreciate any opinions or input you might have regarding some of the issues that will be addressed: abolition of the death penalty, immigration, military policy and defense spending, civil liberties and checks and balances are but a few of those issues.

Thank you, again, to the many volunteers of this past year's board and activities and to those who volunteered to serve on the board for the upcoming year.

-Patty Lundy, President



VOTER SERVICE REPORT

Thanks to all who participated in making League's record-breaking, six-forums-in-three-nights marathon such a great success. Amy Christensen did a remarkable job in getting the events scheduled, the candidates invited and the volunteers organized. We were extremely well represented by our forum moderators, Susan Novak, Julie Saugstad, and Marie Bairey. Special thanks go to them and also to Beth Dippery, Patty Lundy, Margie Lipsky, Bev and Ralph Sturtevant, Karen and Edward Tabacco, Lee Means, Debbie Kleinfelder, Henry Klopfer, Cynthia Van Emple, Ellen Meyer Debbie Whitmore, Linda Walden, Laurie Carley, Lynn Kelso, Betty Ann Vencill, Maria Arevalo,

For members who have never been forum volunteers, we encourage you to get involved. Candidate forums are the most important and visible piece of our non-partisan educational mission and one of the most rewarding and worthwhile League events. For those of you who have been participating for awhile, have you ever considered being a moderator? There will be a moderator's workshop this summer (tentatively scheduled for July) and we need recruits. Call Susan Novak, Linda Walden or Susan Cassidy if you are interested.

Additional thanks to Marie Bairey, Lynn Kelso and Myrtle Osner for stepping up to organize our May voter registration drive at the Modesto Library and to Diane Bartlett for her organizational efforts at the Turlock Library.

Thanks again to the many League hands that made this spring's League election season such a success. And don't forget, the fall run-offs are just around the corner.

*-Linda Walden & Susan Cassidy,
Voter Service Co-Directors*

PROS AND CONS OF THE BALLOT MEASURES ASSIST VOTERS

Included with this Voter is a copy of "Pros and Cons" which has been prepared by the State League to assist Voters in deciding the issues of the day. Our League has, for many years, used our Education fund money to pay for these. They are distributed free to: High School Government-Civics teachers in Modesto High Schools, all county libraries, to El Concilio for further distribution to Spanish speakers, and others. If you wish to give them to your friends, please call the office at 524-1698. They are going fast.

-Myrtle Osner Office Manager

JOIN LWV LOCAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The LWV Modesto Local Action Committee is a watchdog group monitoring local issues, especially land use, affordable housing and elections. We meet on a regular basis to discuss issues as they arise and to prepare position statements when appropriate. In the past year we have written in favor of instant runoff elections, opposed changes to Modesto's Tin Cup ordinance, supported affordable housing and opposed a developer's efforts to by-pass General Plan procedures.

We are always looking for new members to share their insights and passions. With the prospect of becoming a county League, we encourage members from outside Modesto to become involved. We have been meeting on the 3rd Friday of each month at 11 am. However, meeting time is determined by the convenience of the participants. League members interested in monitoring and taking action on local issues contact Marie Bairey (523-0663 or gbandmb@sbcglobal.net).

Next Local Action Committee meeting will be June 16 at the League office.

-Marie Bairey, Local Action Director

LOCAL ACTION



SECRETARY'S **REPORT**

APRIL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Gearing up for forums and volunteers signed up.
- Membership report that LWVM membership stands at 163.
- Treasurer report- CD has been renewed at a better rate.
- Charter Review Committee begins process in May.
- It was suggested that the slow-growth initiative being proposed by Denny Jackman be considered.
- Betty Vencill to chair the study committee on Save our Sprawl.
- Gang Study is near completion.
- Patty Lundy, President, will attend the National Convention in June
- Ellen Meyer, Voter Editor, will attend the State Leadership Council in May
- Joint Board Meeting in May.
- A motion was made for LWVM rejoin the Stanislaus Commission on Women...MSC

MAY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Combined meeting of 'old' and 'new' board members.
- Name change approved at State level; will next be considered by National LWV.
- Board portfolios for 2006-2007 reviewed.
- All officers and committee directors duties detailed and reviewed.
- New office holders introduced.
- Dues letter to be sent out next week. Letters to include inquiries of members' willingness/preference for receiving The Voter electronically.
- Voters Service reports successful Forums, time, and timing problems discussed.
- Smart Voter funding issue being discussed with County Clerk-Recorder.
- Lunch & Learn schedule being set up.
- No meeting in June.

-Joan Patterson, Secretary

PROPOSITION 81 AND PROPOSITION 82

The League is **recommending a "YES" vote on Proposition 81 (Library Bonds) and is taking no position on Proposition 82 (Tax for Public Preschool) in the June 6, 2006 election.**

At its March 2006 meeting, the LWVC board of directors decided that the League will remain neutral on Proposition 82, the Preschool for All Act initiative that will appear on the June ballot. This decision was based on the fact that the LWVC has conflicting positions with regard to the measure. Generally speaking, our PreK-12 Education positions would support the preschool program, but our State and Local Finances positions would not support the way in which it would be financed.

-Patty Lundy, President

Help LWVIL take the Death Penalty Abolition Position to the LWVUS Convention in 2006!

The LWVIL will ask the LWVUS convention in June, 2006 to concur with [the LWVIL position](#) that the death penalty be abolished. **We are pleased to report that the LWVUS Board is recommending the adoption of this concurrence.**

In 2004, the League of Women Voters of Illinois came to the national convention seeking a concurrence with its state position that the death penalty should be abolished. Although a majority of delegates supported this position, a super majority was necessary to adopt the position as required by concurrence.

The Illinois League at the 2006 Convention will again propose that the LWVUS adopt the position that the death penalty be abolished. We seek the active support of local Leagues and League members to make this a recommended item. Please contact Janet Kittlaus at dpconcurrence@lwwil.org in order to work with us toward this goal.

Specific Ways in Which Leagues and League members can support the effort:

- Encourage your League to study and/or adopt by concurrence an abolition position using the materials on this page or on the pages of other state Leagues with abolition positions -- and let us know!
- During national program planning, encourage your League to support a new national position (The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the abolition of the death penalty.)
- Financial help is appreciated since the mailings and other preparations can be expensive! Donations may be sent to the League of Women Voters of Illinois at 332 S. Michigan, Suite #1050, Chicago, IL 60604 earmarked for "Death Penalty Abolition Concurrence."

Let us know if you plan to attend national convention in Minneapolis in June 2006 and are willing to help. Please email Janet Kittlaus at dpconcurrence@lwwil.org if you are able to help.

We encourage all local Leagues to study the issue if possible and/or adopt by concurrence an abolition position; please add your support when you do national program planning this winter. We recommend the death penalty information on our site to you and encourage you to visit the sites of the other state Leagues named, especially the sites of Maryland, New York and Ohio, which adopted their positions in 2005.

Following are arguments which support an abolition position:

- The death penalty is inherently flawed and no amount of reform can make it an appropriate sentencing option anywhere.
- We believe that the flaws in the death penalty are so many and so deep, that any League which engages in a study of the death penalty will inevitably reach the same conclusion as Illinois and the state Leagues listed above.
- The United States stands almost alone among first world nations in its support of the death penalty.
- Over 100 persons on various state death rows have been wrongfully convicted and subsequently exonerated: that our criminal justice systems will execute or are executing innocent people lends urgency to the adoption of an abolition position.

We believe that concurrence is an excellent tool by which we can adopt a national position opposing the death penalty. Concurrence at convention is a valid method of developing new League positions (as has been done in the past on Gun Control in 1990, Early Intervention for Children at Risk and Violence Prevention in 1994). It is particularly useful for issues that are easily understood and where a traditional local-League based study could be expected to reach the same conclusion as the proposed concurrence. The Illinois League believes that this is the case with the question of abolition of the death penalty.

**League of Women Voters of Modesto
2006-2007 Proposed Budget-Compared to 2005-2006 Budget**

	Proposed 2006-2007	Budget 2005-2006	Difference	Explanation
Estimated Beginning Balance:	16367	18312		(Assets at the beginning of each year)
Income:				
Dues	7125	8075	-950	(31 Family/96 Individual)
Finance Drive	6000	6000	0	(unrestricted)
Finance Drive-Designated Education	2000	2000	0	(tax deductible)
Interest Income	150	100	50	
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	
Publication Sales	0	25	-25	
Voter Ads	0	450	-450	(6 ads @ \$75 each)
Voter Service Income	400	300	100	
Total Income	15675	16950	-1275	
Expenses:				
Office Expenses:				
Equipment	0	0	0	(no specific requests made)
General Postage	400	300	100	(PO Box, board mailings, permit)
Insurance	400	350	50	(general liability thru LWVC)
Rent	2400	2400	0	(\$200/mo)
Supplies	250	300	-50	(stationary, envelopes)
Telephone	250	275	-25	
Voter Newsletter	2000	2000	0	(postage, printing)
Website	160	110	50	(yearly rate from lwvc)
Total Office Expenses	5860	5735	125	(45% can be reimbursed from Ed Fund)
Dues Expenses:				
State PMP	2995	3845	-850	(31 Family@ 31.50/ 96 Individual @ 21.00)
National PMP	3425	3845	-420	(31 Family@ 36.20/ 96 Individual @ 24.30)
Total Dues Expenses	6420	7690	-1270	
Membership Expenses:				
Action	50	50	0	
Annual Meeting	400	400	0	(includes annual report)
Board Tools	50	50	0	
Child Care	100	100	0	(reimburse parents for lwv board duties)
Convention	1500	2000	-500	(send 2 delegates to State)
Finance Drive	500	300	200	(postage & printing)
Meetings	200	300	-100	(Lunch & Learn, holiday fling)
Membership	800	800	0	(Spring Public Event, 5 student memberships)
Publications	350	220	130	(publications, directory)
Workshops	100	100	0	(eg."affordable housing",Sacramento)
Total Membership Expenses	4050	4320	-270	
Voter Service Expenses:				
Candidate Forums	200	200	0	
Public Relations	50	50	0	
Publications	600	400	200	(pros/cons)
Smart Voter	0	500	-500	(Note: Only \$500 spent for 2004-2005)
Total Voter Service Expenses	850	1150	-300	(100% can be reimbursed from Ed Fund)
Total Expenses	17180	18895	-1715	
Income less expenses	-1505	-1945		
Estimated Ending Balance:	14862	16367		(Assets remaining at the end of the year)
Restricted Reserve:(Do not Touch)	6500	6500		
Unrestricted Reserve (Available)	8362	9867		

MEMBERSHIP



PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

This month we had these new members join the League:

Bill Bishop	Chesley Cochran
Dawn Gulick	Cornelia Leach
Virginia Lish	Colleen Norby

Welcome, we look forward to seeing you!

-Myrtle Osner, Office Manager

LWVM WEBSITE SURVEY

Membership will be sending out a survey with Dues reminder as to whether you wish to continue receiving The Voter in the mail or that you prefer to go to our local League website to keep up to date.

Please take the time to respond so that we can properly serve your needs.

-Ellen Meyer, Voter Editor

LVWC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

I was fortunate to attend my first Leadership Council that was held this May. The weekend event also was LVWC's 2005-2006 council meeting.

It was very inspiring to see so many League members who have been involved with League for years and catching up with members they have worked with before. I was very impressed with their commitment to League and how they valued that the League is a grassroots organization.

The workshops I went to covered information and training for emerging leaders and organizational skills. There was also review of the State Budget, and information on fundraising, and the Smart Voter for all League members that attended.

I could only attend one day of the seminar and had to leave before the evening dinner when Kay Maxwell was to speak. She came early and slipped into the workshops where I got to meet right before I had to leave which was exciting and unexpected.

I had hoped to go with my mother, a past Sacramento League President as an added bonus of a mother-daughter event, but she was unable to attend. However, I had a big surprise. Anne Rudin past Mayor of Sacramento was the morning guest speaker. She was also honored for celebrating 50 years with the League. Anne Rudin and my mother worked together for years in League when I was a little girl. So it was great to talk with her!

-Ellen Meyer, Voter 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(s) _____
Address _____
Phone (for directory) _____ Email _____

MAIL TO: LWVM P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

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 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

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LUNCH AND LEARN

Tuesday, May 30, 2006 at
12:00pm
Appetez Restaurant
in Roseburg Square
\$11.00 for chef's entrée
For vegetarian entree,
you must call Appetez one
day ahead.
Speaker:
Jeani Ferrari
American Farmland Trust

Tuesday, June 27, 2006 at
12:00pm
Appetez Restaurant
in Roseburg Square
\$11.00 for chef's entrée
For vegetarian entree,
you must call Appetez one
day ahead.
Speaker:
Kristin Olsen
Modesto City Council Member