



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

May-June 2007

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 58 NO. 1

Calendar of Events

June 26

Tuesday, 12 noon
Lunch and Learn
Appetex Restaurant

July 11

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.
Board Meeting

July 24

Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Moderatory Training

July 31

Tuesday, 12 noon
Lunch and Learn
Appetex Restaurant

VISIT THE LEAGUE'S WEBSITE FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS

The FY 2006-07 Annual Report is now available at:
http://www.lwvstanislaus.org/files/annualreport2006_2007.pdf

Previous issues of the Voter are available at:
<http://www.lwvstanislaus.org/voter.html>

Visit "CapWiz" (the League of Women Voters Legislative Action Center) from our Action & Advocacy page at:
http://www.lwvstanislaus.org/about_action.html

2004-2007: Change and Growth

Three years ago, I stepped into the leadership of League. Although I had little experience in leadership with League, I had the confidence of the Board and our League had a strong member base, sound finances and, as always with League, a sense of purpose. We have made many accomplishments in those three years.

- We changed our name to the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County, with the understanding that problems affecting Modesto are problems that affect the county at large.
- While other Leagues throughout the nation experienced significant decreases in membership, our membership rose 7% and has remained stable the past year. This year's membership directors Jeannie Sweeny and Cindy van Empel have laid out the challenge of increasing our student membership in the upcoming year.
- We successfully negotiated with the Stanislaus County Registrar of Voters and the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund to co-fund the SmartVoter project.
- We actively participated in the rebuilding of the Yosemite Community College Civic Engagement Project.
- We studied and came to consensus on a recommendation for a local position on Gang Activity.
- We made a recommendation to the membership that we expedite a study in the summer of 2007 on the "Election of Municipal Officials"
- We increased and met our goals for our finance drive for a total increase of 12%.
- We significantly increased our visibility at local City Council and Board meetings with Marie Bairey as our Local Action Director and her dedicated team of volunteers.
- Our website has experienced a significant increase in usage and depth of coverage thanks to the dedication of Stella Beratlis, our webmaster for the past three years.
- Lunch and Learns show an increase in attendance and in the variety of speakers.

(Continued on Page 3)

**LWV of STANISLAUS
COUNTY OFFICERS**

President

Ellen Meyer 579-1603
ellen-e@sbcglobal.net

First Vice President

Patty Lundy 551-1558
pattylundy@sbcglobal.net

Second Vice President

Ann Krabach 667-1824
Annkrabach2004@yahoo.com

Secretary

Marie Bairey 523-0663
gbandmb@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer

Julie Saugstad 526-0795
saugstad@ainet.com

DIRECTORS

Membership

Lynn Kelso

Jennie Sweeney

Voter Service

Cynthia Morgan

Susan Novak

State and National

Sue Chaffee

Finance Drive

Joan Goldsmith

Local Action

(Vacant)

Nominating Committee

Cindy van Empel

Joan Patterson

Virginia Lish

Public Relations &

Voter Editor

Debbie Whitmore

quailcreek@aol.com

OFF-BOARD

Membership

Laurie Carley

Lunch and Learn

Helen Gordon

Web Master

Stella Beratlis

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner

League Office

720 13th Street, Modesto

209-524-1698

www.lwvstanislaus.org

President's Message:

Thank you for electing me to serve the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County (LWVSC) as your President for 2007-08. With that being done, two weeks later I was off to State Convention 2007-08 in Bakersfield with Julie Saugstad, Treasurer. I was fortunate to go with Julie, a seasoned League member. Thank you, Julie. State Convention was very informative and fun. The excitement and knowledge that comes from these events is exhilarating and all League members should consider attending such an event at some time.

At convention we were honored with hearing from The Honorable Debra Bowen, California Secretary of State who is actively reviewing the voting process to insure we have fair and accurate elections with properly functioning systems and machines in place. She applauded the League for our advocacy in this area.

Dolores Huerta, President, Dolores Huerta Foundation was the featured speaker at the Convention. She has been a labor activist since co-founding the United Farm Workers of America Union in 1962. Her life has been devoted to committed citizenship, and she encouraged all to continue our work in League. She also urged us to encourage and support women to run for political office. At the end of her presentation, her special magic of leadership brought her to lead us in an enthusiastic loud cheer of VIVA The League of Women Voters. We cheered several times until she heard us loud and strong. From that, one could see how she has been able to do all that she has in her life for others.

This year 2007-08, will be our second year as League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County. We will continue to work towards increasing membership and to increase member participation with many projects and voter service activities planned. Please make a commitment to participate in some activity this year and let the Board know how you can be involved. Now that we are serving more communities, your help is invaluable in assisting League with membership recruitment in those communities. We have new "Join the League" pamphlets to give to those who would be interested in joining. Call the League Office and ask Myrtle to send you some. LWVSC's main study this year is "Immigration." Please check out Julie Saugstad's article on this very important study.

The Local Action Chair is still open. Local Action has always been one of our League's strengths and it is even more vital now as we are a County League. To take from The Beatles "HELP!": The League needs somebody!

For those who could not attend the Annual Meeting, please check the Officer List for who's-who on the Board. We have members new to the Board and some who just changed "hats"! I am very excited to be able to serve with all of them.

VIVA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!

-Ellen Meyer, President

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.

2004-07: Change and Growth

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- The appearance, distribution and depth of coverage of our “Voter” increased significantly under the professionalism of Ellen Meyer and her staff of editors. Thanks to the persistence and dedication of Ellen Meyer, our press releases have increased to include publications in Modesto, Turlock, Ceres, Oakdale, Salida and Denair.
- We have expanded our Pros and Cons to include multi-media presentations at Modesto Junior College and California State University, Stanislaus.
- We increased the budget spending for “Voter” Service resulting in a significant increase in visibility and professionalism of resources.

The past three years have been full and rewarding. I appreciate the support and dedication of all Board, Directors, and members who made it possible to carry out our mission. The challenges that lie ahead include a membership base, voter service activities and League events that are more broadly inclusive of the county. With President Ellen Meyer’s background in business and advertising and our new Board of both seasoned and less experienced representatives, we will be able to move forward to meet these new challenges.

-Patty Lundy, 2004-2007 President

Moderators Needed!

Have you ever wondered how to moderate a League forum? League members interested in becoming moderators are invited to a short training session on Tuesday evening, July 24 at 7 p.m. at 2505 Edgebrook Drive, the home of Susan Novak. Julie Saugstad, one of our most experienced moderators, will teach you all you need to know to get started. Members who previously took Julie's training are welcome back for a refresher course!

Please e-mail Susan at snovak2@sbcglobal.net, if you plan to attend.

-Susan Novak and Cynthia Morgan, Voter Service

A CALL TO ACTION From LWV CALIFORNIA

In California, the League is a strong supporter of Senator Sheila Kuehl's SB 840, a bill proposing *comprehensive single payer health care coverage*.

For more information, go online to:

<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/healthcare/index.html>

LOCAL ACTION

Municipal Election Study Underway

The committee studying the impact of municipal election systems (at-large or by district) had its first meeting in mid-May. At that meeting, the committee decided to focus the study on the impact one or the other system might have on voter participation because a primary goal for League is to promote participation in government. We developed a strategy to gather information including interviews with community members and search for relevant literature or studies.

As committee members searched the Net for background information, it appeared that our view might be too narrow to be useful. A second meeting on May 30 was planned to review the literature and examine other directions the study might take.

When the information is gathered, the committee will examine it to see what conclusions can be made. In the meantime, we welcome LWV member input as well as participation. We need volunteers to help conduct interviews which need to be completed before June 30. These can be done with a partner, and a set of questions will be provided so all interviewees respond to the same items. Call or e-mail to volunteer.

-Marie Bairey, Study Chair

**DON'T FORGET TO
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP-
IT'S GOING TO BE A GREAT YEAR!**

Membership renewal letters are in the mail!

**Please renew your membership
by July 31st.**

While you are renewing your membership, invite a friend to join you in the League!

-Jennie Sweeney, Membership Director

LWVUS Immigration Study

As a national organization, we are studying immigration- a very hot issue right now! For a national study, local Leagues form a committee to read LWVUS materials and then hold meetings to educate local members. The study committee phase lasts until January 2008. LWVUS has not yet formed a committee. Without a committee we won't be able to give our input to the national position on immigration. If you are interested in this topic and would like to read well-researched material and form an educated opinion on the topic, you have options.

- a) Volunteer to chair or serve on an immigration study committee for LWVUS; contact Ellen Meyer to volunteer.
- b) Educate yourself. Read materials on the topic in The "National Voter," starting with the February 2007 issue. Go to the LWV website at www.lwv.org, click on "for Members" and, on the right side of the next screen under the "Immigration Study," in the "Quick Links" box. Materials there include:
 - the scope of the study
 - a resource list
 - guidelines on how to do the study at the local level
 - eight background papers
- c) Join the immigration discussion list, information available on LWVUS website.

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OUR LOCAL ACTION DIRECTOR BOARD POSITION IS OPEN!

Our local Action Board Member Position has not been filled. I am calling on a League member to volunteer for this very important position. The position is as follows:

ACTION DIRECTOR-LOCAL

- With a committee, develops statements for local government bodies or other response to issues. Obtains an approval signature of president for all statements.
- Keeps members informed in the Voter and Annual Report
- Monitors local government action related to LWV program issues.
- Submits regular Voter articles to the Voter editor.

For those concerned about starting a committee, no worries. We have many members who are experienced with local issues and making position statements.

For those of you already assisting in League or unable to take on the position:

DO YOU KNOW ANY ONE IN LEAGUE, OR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT JOIN, WHO WOULD TAKE ON THIS JOB?

Our League has been recognized as being very involved in local action issues, and we must continue this tradition. Now that we are county-wide, it is even more important!

Please call Ellen Meyer, President, at 579-1603 or e-mail at ellen-e@sbcglobal.net, if you can help or suggest someone. Your assistance on this is appreciated.

-Ellen Meyer, President

(Continued from page 4 – Immigration Study)

Using the consensus responses from local leagues, LWVUS Immigration Study Committee will formulate a position for adoption by the national board in April 2008. The position can then be used for advocacy.

If you would like to be part of a study committee on immigration, please contact Ellen. **We can't do this without YOU!**

-Julie Saugstad, Treasurer

SECRETARY'S REPORT

MAY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- The May 23 Board meeting provided an opportunity for the outgoing officers to transfer duties to the new Board members. Welcome all!
- Lynn Kelso has been elected as Board Representative to the Nominating Committee. In accordance with the League's By-laws a second Board member will need to be elected to serve as a member on the committee. Please notify Ellen Meyer, President, if you have an interest in serving on this committee.
- The 2007-2008 Executive Committee is Ellen Meyer, President; Patty Lundy, 1st Vice President; Marie Bairey, Secretary; Julie Saugstad, Treasurer; and Lynn Kelso, Membership Director.
- The Board is looking for a volunteer to fill the Local Action Director position. This position is critical in two areas: 1) keeping League members informed and active on local issues; and 2) keeping the League in the public's eye.
- The Finance Drive and Voter Service committees are being formed. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, please contact the Directors, listed on page 2, to get more information.
- The Municipal Election Study Committee is continuing to conduct research and will be meeting with local leaders.

-Marie Bairey, Secretary

HELP EXPAND OUR FINANCE DRIVE TO COVER THE COUNTY ...COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED!

We need a few more people on the Finance Committee for 2007-2008.



Only two meetings will be scheduled. The first will be on Thursday morning of the second or third week in June to review the donor list, add new prospects and decide how far to expand our mailing to cover county elected individuals. The second meeting will be in August to prepare the mailing for September deadline.

Please e-mail me at joan.goldsmith@sbcglobal.net
or
call 573-0720.

-Joan Goldsmith, Finance Drive Director

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

Student Membership	\$15	_____
Individual Membership	\$50	_____
Household Membership	\$75	_____

Please contact me with more information:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone (for directory): _____

Email: _____

MAIL TO:

LWVSC P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

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.

Tear off and send to:
League of Women Voters of
Stanislaus County
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
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LUNCH AND LEARN



June 26, 2007
Speaker: John Kidd
(Director of the Modesto
Irrigation District Board)

July 31, 2007
Speaker: Judy Sly
(Editor of the
Modesto Bee Opinion Pages)

Both at 12 Noon, Appetez Restaurant in Roseburg Square
\$11.00 for chef's entrée
For vegetarian entree, you must call Appetez one day ahead