



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

May/June 2009

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 9

Calendar of Events

Monday, June 8

6:30 p.m.

Local Action Committee
Home of Marie Bairey
Call her for directions

Wednesday, June 10

6:00 p.m.

Board Meeting
Incoming and Outgoing
Board Members
Home of Lynn Kelso
1004 Stanton Pl., Modesto

Thursday, June 18

5:00 p.m.

Valley Futures Forum
201 Needham St, Modesto

Tuesday, June 30

12:00 Noon

Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant
Roseburg Square

Unless noted otherwise,
All meetings are held at the
League Office,
720 13th Street, Modesto

This calendar
is current as of
printing. Check LWVSC
Website for updates
www.lwvstanislaus.org

Schafer Speaks at Annual Meeting

LWV Stanislaus County was honored to have as its Annual Meeting speaker Trudy Schafer, Director of Program for the League of Women Voters of California. Though she works in both the education and advocacy sides of League, her remarks highlighted League's recent legislative and lobbying efforts. She gave an informative and concise overview of LWVC's action and advocacy work. Taking direction from 2007 Convention, LWVC focused on education, healthcare and redistricting.

In accordance with LWVUS position, LWVC supported the Kuehl Bill for single-payer health care coverage. This is deemed to be the most cost-effective approach to assure both access and quality healthcare. Though the measure passed, it was vetoed by the governor. Its "replacement" legislation is SB810 (Leno). Ms. Schafer encouraged League members to be part of the grassroots efforts to educate the public on provisions of the legislation to increase support.

Since 2005, Ms. Schafer has spent most of her time and energy on legislative redistricting. Early on, it was hoped that the legislature would develop a reform proposal, but that didn't work out. In 2007, with a coalition of like-minded organizations, League supported Initiative Proposition 11 which passed last November. League will continue to be involved through the implementation phase. The measure calls for an independent commission to determine state legislative districts. Selection criteria and the application process are being developed. Again, public awareness of the issue and the process are important. Applications for the Commission will probably be considered in 2010 with new legislative districts in 2011.

LWVC also gave attention to the California budget crisis and subsequent ballot measures on the May 19 special election. After studying the measures, LWVC opposed 1 A, C, D, and E. These measures are bad policy and the need for them is being oversold. Measure 1A imposes limitations and restrictions on future budgets and does not solve the problem of balancing income and expenditures.

Ms. Schafer's presentation informed us about current issues, and she also educated us about how LWVC works to promote public understanding of those issues as well as influence public policy decisions.

Marie Bairey, Secretary

**LWV of STANISLAUS COUNTY
OFFICERS**

President

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

1st Vice President

Susan Novak 526-9534
snovak2@sbcglobal.net

2nd Vice President

Hanna Renning 632-4692
drenning@csustan.edu

Secretary

Marie Bairey 523-0663
gbandmb@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer

Michelle McNeil 699-6171
mcneilm1@att.net

DIRECTORS

Membership
Colleen Norby
Lynn Kelso

Voter Service
Ellen Dunbar

Finance Drive
Mary Giventer

Public Relations
Susan Novak

State and National Action
Sue Chaffee

Local Action

Voter Editor
Jean Tenney
jayper@mac.com

Lunch and Learn
Mildred Kinser
Lee DeLaMare

OFF-BOARD

Membership
Margie Lipsky

Nominating Committee
Laurie Carley
Seena Rhine

Voter Service
Marcia Waggoner

Web Master
Stella Beratlis

League Office
720 13th Street, Modesto
209-524-1698
www.lwvstanislaus.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I have just returned from a FUN and INFORMATIVE LWVC Convention in Long Beach. It was great seeing members from other Leagues again and hearing all the great things Leagues are doing in our state.

LWVC's main objective for these next two years is to focus on issues that involve democracy, voting and civic engagement. League will remain viable, effective and true to our mission in these ever-changing times. I was very pleased to hear this and was proud to know that LWVSC has always focused on these issues!

It was adopted at the LWVC Convention to retain all existing LWVC positions, and to undertake no new study, update, or concurrence. Issues adopted for Education and Advocacy are redistricting implementation and government reform, which includes: state and local finances, initiative and referendum process, state constitution, campaign financing, and voting rights.

At the convention, I had the wonderful opportunity to talk with our Management Training Advisor, Kathy Webb, and Charolette Fox, State Director Natural Resources, and many of the Valley League presidents about working together on our state's current crisis - WATER. We are hoping to work together to study this issue, focusing on concerns in our valley and California as a whole. Please let me know if you are interested in assisting with other Leagues on this important issue.

Some other news that you will be happy to hear is that the will of the convention was that LWVC should still produce Pros and Cons. LWVC will be taking a second look at this. We should be hearing soon on the details.

Thank you for allowing me to represent our Stanislaus County League at the convention, and for electing me as President once again. Thanks also go to all members who attended our 61st Annual Meeting. Please read Marie Bairey's article about our Speaker Trudy Schafer. It was a great event, and many thanks go to our nominating committee: Lynn Kelso, Susan Novak, Linda Walden, Virginia Lish and Lee DeLaMare, and to Event Designer Margie Lipsky. Bravo!

Ellen Meyer, President

DIVERSITY POLICY:

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County 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.

LUNCH and LEARN

June 30th Lunch and Learn Modesto Mayor Jim Ridenour

Our speaker for the June Lunch & Learn will be Modesto's Mayor, Mr. Jim Ridenour. Mr. Ridenour is a life-long resident of Modesto and is currently serving his second term as Mayor, having been first elected in 2003 and re-elected to a second term in 2007. Mr. Ridenour will address the effects of today's economy on the City of Modesto budget. He will outline core services which will need to be funded and those which are facing cuts. He will address the City's need to assure an 8% reserve as well as the postponement of sewer and water rate hikes. He will discuss the proposed November ballot measures that could result in eventual annexations of four sites now outside of Modesto's city limits - the Kiernan Corridor, the North McHenry Corridor, College West and Tivoli North. He will present his ideas for furthering cooperation of the various governments in Stanislaus County for regional planning.

Mr. Ridenour was born at Robertson Hospital in Modesto. He attended local schools and graduated from Downey High School in 1958. After completing basic training for the Army National Guard, Mr. Ridenour returned to Modesto where he became involved full-time in the ambulance industry. He worked in this field for over four decades prior to his retirement last July. At the time of his retirement, Mayor Ridenour was the top operations executive for Central Valley Operations of American Response. He served five terms as Chairman of the California Ambulance Association and received many awards and honors from the association and state legislators.

Seeking Input

Do you have any issues, topics, people or services you would like to hear more about at your Lunch & Learn sessions? Share your ideas and suggestions by calling Lee DeLaMare at 524-1159.. Or email your ideas to Lee at leentom@sbcglobal.net. We look forward to hearing from you.

April Lunch and Learn Report Newman Mayor Ed Katen

(Many thanks to Myrtle Osner for her prodigious note-taking skills).

Continuing this year's theme of getting acquainted with the local governments of Stanislaus County, April's Lunch & Learn featured Mr. Ed Katen, Mayor of Newman. Speaking about growth issues, Mr. Katen told us that Newman, with a population of approximately 11,000, recently had 400 homes in foreclosure. However, the city has been able to obtain stimulus money to upgrade its downtown area, and Mr. Katen is confident that they will weather the "storm."

The Newman Odd Fellows building was destroyed by an arson fire in April, displacing six businesses. The community is determined to rebuild.

When asked his opinion of the West Park proposal for the Patterson area, Mr. Katen said that he was concerned about the size of the project and the impact of such a massive population growth that would surely accompany it. "Where would all of these people be housed?" he asked. Sustaining the growth will involve major water issues, and Mr. Katen believes these and other issues have been underrated in the project analysis. Mr. Katen's views, in combination with those expressed by the mayor of Patterson at an earlier L&L, have afforded the League a more complete view of the potential problems with this proposed project.

The League's program of Mayors' presentations has given the members a perspective on the issues facing the city governments in Stanislaus County. Some issues still to be addressed might be the impact of growth on schools, and pollution.

Lee DeLaMare, Lunch and Learn Director

LWV – US!

That's the theme of the 2008-2010 LWVUS Nominating Committee. It means that the leadership of the LWV is *us* – League members just like you and me who are committed to insuring the continued success of our organization. The goals of this Nominating Committee are to promote that idea and to build a slate for 2010-2012 that reflects the values, concerns, and diversity of Leagues large and small across the country.

What can you do to help the Nominating Committee insure that the LWV leadership is *us*? Your most important contribution will be to act as our eyes and ears in the leadership search. We can't personally recruit everywhere so we're relying on members like you. Please make us aware of leaders in your area and nominate them for positions on the LWVUS Board or Nominating Committee. You can even nominate yourself!

The postmark deadline for nominations is September 30, 2009. A hard copy nomination form and an on-line form will be available on the lwv.org website soon. For more information you can join the Nominating Committee discussion list on the LWVUS website or email us at nominatingcommittee@lwv.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Robbie Davis, Chair
LWVUS Nominating Committee
URL: <http://www.lwv.org/Nominate>

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

Student Membership \$15 _____
Individual Membership \$60 _____
Household Membership \$90 _____

Please contact me with more information:

Name(s): _____
Address: _____

Phone (for directory): _____
Email: _____

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

Board Highlights

April 8, 2009

- We will purchase a laptop computer and accounting software for the Treasurer and to maintain League records. It will facilitate budgeting, managing our various accounts and monitoring cash on-hand.
- LWVC no longer prepares Pros and Cons for state ballot issues. Inquiries should be directed to the LWVC Website or www.smartvoter.org.
- Polly Klopfer has developed written procedures for the Treasurer's Portfolio that are within League guidelines and good accounting practices.
- Webmaster Stella Beratlis is authorized to create a Facebook account. Many non-profits, including LWVUS, are doing so.



Marie Bairey, Secretary

Voter Service

League members registered voters at Modesto and Turlock libraries on Saturday May 2 and Monday May 4. Thank you to Susan Novak, Mildred Kinser, Marie Bairey, Marge Lipsky, Joan Goldsmith, Ann Krabach, Hanna Renning, Marjorie Brooks, and Jean Tenney for helping with voter registration.

We need more members to help with voter registration in the future. If you are interested in helping, contact Ellen Dunbar at edunbar1@comcast.net.

Ellen Dunbar, Voter Service Director

Congratulations, Malerie!

Malerie Michael, our former MJC student intern and current League member, has been appointed, as the student member, to the Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee of the Yosemite Community College district.

AT-RISK AMERICANS: THE UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED

Data from multiple sources agree that in 2007, 47 million Americans (15.6 percent of the total U.S. population) lacked any kind of health insurance coverage. When these numbers are adjusted for age (excluding those 65 years and older), the uninsured percentage of the population rises to 17.9 percent. Moreover, it is estimated that 25 million adults under age 65 were underinsured during 2007, despite having insurance all year. In total, 42 percent of *all* adults (86.7 million) were either uninsured or underinsured during 2007.

Putting a face on persons who were uninsured or underinsured during 2007 and 2008¹

- **Age:** One of three people under age 65 were uninsured for some or all of 2007 and 2008; of the total uninsured population, 60.1 million were adults (between 19 and 64 years of age)
- **Duration:** Among the underinsured/uninsured, 74.5 percent were uninsured for nine or more months and one-quarter were uninsured the entire 24 months
- **Employment status:** 80 percent of individuals who were uninsured were in working families and only 16 percent were not in the labor force (due to disabilities, chronic illness, or serving as family caregivers)
- **Income:** Nearly 60 percent were in families with incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL: \$21,200/year for a family of four); 52 percent with incomes between 100 to 200 percent of FPL went without health insurance in 2007/2008
- **Racial and Ethnic origin:** 55 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, 40.3 percent of African Americans and 34 percent of other racial or ethnic minorities had no health insurance in 2007/2008, compared to 25.8 percent of whites. While racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be uninsured, whites accounted for 49.8 percent of the uninsured
- **Age breakdown:** The likelihood of being uninsured declines with age; 49.5 percent of those 19 – 24 years old, 36.3 percent of those 25 – 44 years old, 32.5 percent of those 45 – 54 years old and 21.2 percent of those 55 – 64 years old were uninsured over this two-year time period. The 55- to 64-year-old age group consumes more health care on average than younger adults.

For all ethnic and racial groups, lower-income families and individuals were more likely to be uninsured than lower-income whites. This disparity continues even as incomes rise in all groups.

There is a marked increase in the number of adults having difficulty paying medical bills – the most visible consequence of the weakening in insurance coverage. In 2007, 41 percent of adults (72 million people) reported problems paying medical bills, faced bill collectors or were in debt for medical care, up from 34 percent or 58 million in 2005. The majority had insurance at the time these bills were incurred, well in advance of the economic downturn.

*By Janis McMillen, Chair
LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force, 2009*

National Popular Vote Compact Study Completed

Our League participated in the LWVUS study of the National Popular Vote Compact. Committee members who studied and presented the pros and cons of the Compact were Susan Novak, Marsha Waggoner, Seena Rhine, Mildred Kinser, and Jill Sousa. Ellen Dunbar facilitated discussion of the consensus questions. Lynn Kelso, Jean Tenney, Colleen Norby, and Ellen Meyer were active participants at the consensus meeting held at the home of Marsha Waggoner. We reached a consensus (which by League rules we can't disclose) and sent our results on to LWVUS to be counted in with those of other Leagues. We anxiously await an announcement of what the LWVUS Board position will be on this interesting approach to getting the President elected by popular vote. "Interesting and informative" is how one member described the April consensus meeting. This was the first time LWVUS put together a study without supplying hard copies of the study materials.

The study material was easy to find and download from the members' web site. There was an excellent online discussion site where members could share information, ask questions, and get clarifications about the NPV Compact and the consensus questions which proved to be somewhat controversial. This made participating in the study even more interesting.

Susan Novak, First Vice President

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
LWV Modesto
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Check Website for Updates)

- Monday, June 8** **6:30 p.m. Local Action Committee**
Home of Marie Bairey (Call her for directions)
- Wednesday, June 10** **6:00 p.m. Board Meeting (incoming and outgoing Board**
members)
Dinner Meeting
Home of Lynn Kelso
1004 Stanton Place, Modesto
- Thursday, June 18** **5:00 p.m. Valley Futures Forum**
201 Needham Street, Modesto
Speaker: Dan Zack, on "Delightful Density" in planning for
growth (\$10 charge)
- Tuesday, June 30** **12 Noon Lunch and Learn, Appetez Restaurant**
Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Jim Ridenour, Modesto Mayor
\$11.00. For special dietary needs call one day ahead