

The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO



November 2004

Vol. 56 No. 10

Education Study Update Plans

The LWV California Education Study Committee recently sent an extensive study kit which has been duplicated and distributed to the local committee. These members will study the materials and prepare a presentation for a meeting open to all members. At that meeting we will discuss a long list of questions on equitable access to quality education, school finance, governance, accountability and assessment and the public's role in public education.

These are complex but crucial issues. The state league needs to know the opinion of local members on these issues. The consensus from local leagues will be used to develop a position with strong member support allowing us to take effective action in this arena.

You are invited to the LWV Modesto State Education Update Consensus Meeting on November 30, 2004 at 6:00-9:00 PM at Myrtle Osner's home, 1104 Wellesley,

Modesto. A light dinner will be provided and we'll eat as we talk. So that we can provide enough to eat and set up enough chairs, we ask that you call the League phone to let us know that you plan to attend: 524-1698.

If you have questions, please contact the study

committee chair, Julie Saugstad, 526-0795, saugstad@ainet.com. If there is interest expressed in a Saturday meeting, the committee has set aside January 8 for that purpose. Please contact Julie if you prefer that date.

--Julie Saugstad

Calendar of Events

Tues, Nov. 2	ELECTION DAY
Wed., 10/10	BOARD MEETING 6:30 P.M. LWV office
Fri., 11/19	LOCAL ACTION COMM. 12 noon, LWV office
Tues., 11/30	EDUCATION STUDY CONSENSUS MEETING 6-9 PM 1104 Wellesley
Mon., 12/6	HOLIDAY FLING 7-9 PM (see p. 5)
Wed., 12/8	BOARD MEETING 6:30 PM LWV Office

No Lunch & Learn in November and December

President's Message

October has proven to be a long and exhausting month for the many volunteers who helped with our voter drives, forums and the Civic Engagement Project. Linda Walden has been a real hero with the many hours she has worked in developing and arranging fair and balanced forums for all our local candidates. Thank you, Linda!

We were forced to cancel several forums due to lack of candidate participation. In the interest of maintaining our non-partisan status and reputation for our strict adherence to the rules nation-wide, we were unable to conduct "empty seat" forums. In addition, candidates are not participating in the SmartVoter website as enthusiastically as we might have expected. This is a very disturbing trend in politics today.

On a positive note, we registered hundreds of voters on the last day for voter registration at the Modesto Library. The Pros and Cons presentation by Amy Christiansen and Maria Arevalo at Modesto Junior College was excellent and well attended.

The Civic Engagement Project has had a very successful launch with its film series and is moving toward its long term goals. We will continue to work with that project and help coordinate events. Next month you can expect a more detailed report.

We continue to experience an increase in the number of participants in Lunch and Learn. There will be no Lunch and Learn meetings in November and December, but we hope to see many of you when we resume in January.

The Holiday Fling will be here very soon – be sure to mark your calendars for Monday, December 6th at 7 pm at the Fenderson's (see the flyer on p. 5).

Remember there are many ways to become more involved with the League--- just give us a call! We value your membership.

--Patty Lundy

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

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Secretary

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Membership

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Lunch and Learn

Margie Lipsky

Webmaster

Stella Berattis

Voter Editor

Susan Cassidy

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner



Mailing Address

PO Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

Office Address

720 13th Street, Modesto

Telephone

209-524-1698

www.lwvmodesto.org

League engages in foreign policy discussions

The LWVEF, along with the Center for Women Policy Studies and Women's Environment and Development Organization, will help host five forums to broaden the engagement of women in foreign policy discussions, after earning support from the Connect US Fund. The first will be December 2, on *U.S. Foreign Policy and its Impact on Women: The Case of Afghanistan and Iraq*. This forum will be hosted by LWV of Minnesota. LWVEF encourages Leagues to apply for pass-through grants of \$500-\$1000 to host the next four forums, to be held the 3rd or 4th week of February, March, April, and May, 2005. Possible topics include: *U.S. Foreign Policy and its Impact on Women: Beijing Plus 10* (preferably in February), *Refugee and Immigrant Women*, *International Trafficking of Women* and *HIV/AIDS Policies*.

LWV Directory Update

Shawna Amaral: VioletAngel2286@aol.com

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

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

October 6, 2004

▷ Dates and times for two candidate forums in Modesto and one in Riverbank were confirmed. Because some candidates are unable to attend, two other planned forums had to be cancelled.

▷ Susan Cassidy will be serving as *Voter* editor in an off-board position.

▷ The Civic Engagement Project at Modesto Junior College is going well.

▷ The Finance Drive is edging up towards our goal.

▷ The Holiday Fling is scheduled for December 6 at the home of Lynn Fenderson.

--Mildred Kinser

Affordable, Smart and Green Housing

In September, UC Davis, The California Coalition for Rural Housing and the Planning and Conservation League Foundation sponsored a workshop that brought together more than 75 people who are interested in, and in some cases passionate about, creating energy efficient, affordable housing that also achieves smart growth in the Central Valley. Background information included a 2004 publication funded by the Great Valley Center, Smart Growth and Affordable Housing: Best Practices in the Central Valley. The document cited a dozen exemplary projects in the Valley.

One of these is Ashwood Village, a multifamily apartment complex near Vintage Faire in Modesto. In addition to proximity to retail, transportation and services, it is near a large convalescent home that offers employment opportunities and job training for care workers. A couple of the projects took advantage of their community's inclusionary zoning ordinances which require that low-income housing be included in all new development. Others negotiated density or plot plan variances with city planning departments to better utilize infill lots.

Smart growth promotes infill and higher density and incorporates energy conservation, green space, and public transit as well as proximity of schools, employment, retail and services. Energy efficiency reduces tenants' energy costs. It can be accomplished with, among other things, building orientation to reduce impact of the sun and provide natural ventilation, double pane windows, shade trees and overhangs, low water demand landscaping, permeable pavement, fluorescent lights and high R value insulation.

"A growing number of developers, environmentalists, architects, planners and others in local communities are recognizing that affordability, environmental values and green building technology are enhanced when all three elements are integrated into housing." (Cited from workshop overview statement.)


-- Marie Bairey

Busy Fall for Voter Service

- Distributed 4000 copies of the League's Pros and Cons with information on the state ballot propositions.
- Fielded a team to speak on Pros and Cons. League volunteers spoke at six events, by invitation.
- Helped plan and participate in the Civic Engagement Project with MJC. This exciting new partnership is screening 4 democracy-related films and participating in discussions afterwards. We also spoke on the ballot propositions one evening, as part of this project.
- Planned four candidate forums. Unfortunately 2 had to be cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. Both forums were televised live with re-broadcasts until the election.
- Held a 6 hour voter registration drive at the Modesto Library on the last day to register. There were 2-3 League members helping lines of 6-12 people deep all afternoon and evening, and as a result League registered several hundred voters. We delivered them to the Elections Dept. at 8:15 that evening, where someone was waiting in the closed office to receive them.

A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED!! We couldn't have done it without all our loyal members.

--Myrtle Osner and Linda Walden



League of Women Voters of Modesto

Holiday Fling

*Monday, December 6
7 PM to 9 PM*

*at the home of Lynn and
Albion Fenderson
221 El Rio Drive*

Guest Speaker:

Paul Zdunek

Executive Director, Modesto Symphony Orchestra

"New Directions for the Orchestra"

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

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League of Women Voters of Modesto
Spring Membership Event
Keynote Speaker:
A. J. Brock
Editor-in-Chief, *California Journal*
Date and Place TBA