

The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO



April 2005

Vol. 57 No. 3

Annual Meeting Sets Agenda for the Coming Year

This issue of the *Voter* includes several pieces in preparation for our Annual Meeting on May 16. Please see page 11 for details about the meeting and a form on which to RSVP.

At the business portion of the meeting, members will vote on the following items:

- 2005-2006 slate of officers (see page 3)
- 2005-2006 budget (see pages 7-8)
- Local Program for 2005-2006 (see pages 4-6).

Our by-laws require that the information to be voted on must be presented to the membership one month prior to the meeting.

The Nominating Committee recommended the slate of officers for member approval. Nominations from the floor can be made at Annual Meeting with the

consent of the person nominated.

Similarly, the Budget Committee submitted the proposed budget to the members for approval. Members who attended the Program Review meeting last February looked over the current Local Program.

A new study of gangs was proposed at this meeting. See page 6 for more information on the proposed study. The Board is not recommending any changes of by-laws this year.

--Patty Lundy

Calendar of Events

Wed., 4/13	BOARD MEETING 6 pm. LWV office, 720 13th Street
Fri., 4/15	LOCAL ACTION COMMITTEE 12 noon LWV office, 720 13th Street
Tues., 4/26	LUNCH AND LEARN 12:00 Appetiz (see p. 7)
Mon., 5/16	LWV Modesto ANNUAL MEETING 6-9 pm, Jacob's Fine Dining (see p. 11)

President's Message

This spring has been a busy season for League, even without local elections! We are currently updating our membership records for the new Directory. Please send our Office Manager, Myrtle Osner, any changes in your Directory information. I urge you to send Myrtle your email address if we do not currently have it since I use email to send alerts to our membership.

At the request of LWVUS, we sent alerts to our membership to write to Congress on two important pieces of legislation. An alert was sent to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by opposing drilling. Our efforts were unsuccessful on this alert. The second alert, part of which is printed below, was sent opposing privatizing Social Security.

Social Security is not merely a retirement program – it is a social insurance program with broad effect. Many of our most vulnerable citizens rely upon the safety net provided by the system. Before Social Security, one in three senior citizens lived in poverty. Today that number is one in ten. In addition, disability and survivors' benefits under Social Security have provided for millions of American families. This is particularly important for women. Nearly two-thirds of women 65 and over get a majority of their income from Social Security.

It is very important that we inform our Senators and Representatives of our local, state and national positions when the opportunity arises – if you do respond to an alert, please reply to my email so I have some measure of our influence.

We had a very successful and entertaining Membership Celebration at the McHenry Museum. The speaker, A.G. Block, was both informative and entertaining. The food was fabulous as well – thank you to all who contributed and all who attended this very important celebration of and for all our members.

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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

1st Vice President

Susan Novak 526-9534

2nd Vice President

Julie Saugstad 526-0795

Secretary

Mildred Kinser 523-4222

Treasurer

Betty Ann Vencill 577-1233

DIRECTORS

Voter Service

Linda Walden

Finance Drive

Debbie Kleinfelder

Public Relations

Phyllis Babcock

Local Action

Marie Bairey

State and National Action

Maria Arevalo

Membership

Amy Christensen

OFF-BOARD

Lunch and Learn

Margie Lipsky

Webmaster

Stella Beratlis

Voter Editor

Susan Cassidy

Office Manager

Myrtle Osner



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www.lwvmodesto.org

Proposed 2005-2006 LWW Modesto Board Slate

OFFICERS

President
1st Vice President
2nd Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

NOMINEE

Patty Lundy
Susan Novak
Laurie Carley
Honor Denny
Julie Saugstad

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Gloria Guerra, chair

DIRECTORS

State/National Action	Maria Arevalo
Local Action	Marie Bairey
Finance Drive	Debbie Kleinfelder
Voter Service	Amy Christensen
Voter Editor	Ellen Meyers
Lunch and Learn	Mildred Kinser

Many thanks to Laurie Carley, (chair), Gloria Guerra, Susan Novak and Maria Arevalo for their hard work on this year's nominating committee. Their efforts were greatly appreciated.

OFF-BOARD DIRECTORS

Office Manager	Myrtle Osner
Webmaster	Stella Beratlis
Public Relations	Linda Walden
Membership Event	Dot Daul

Visit the League on the Web:

LWW of Modesto	www.lww.modesto.org
LWW of California	www.ca.lww.org
LWW of the U. S.	www.lww.org

President's Message, continued from p. 2

Please note the date of our annual meeting on your calendars – we need you to help us make important decisions regarding the upcoming year. We have again maintained our membership dues even though they barely cover our state and national PMP costs (per member payment). We will be sending representatives to the State Convention May 20 – 22, 2005. We can have one more delegate vote – please contact me ASAP if you are interested in attending!

And, last but not least, enjoy this fabulous Spring. I recently visited Death Valley and the profusion of wildflowers was a once-in-a-lifetime experience – the rain also seemed to enhance the colors of the canyon walls. The wildflowers should be beautiful in the valley and in the Sierra this year, as well.

--Patty Lundy

LWV Modesto Local Program Positions

The Modesto League's Local Program Positions were discussed at our National Program Planning Meeting in February. The consensus at that meeting was to retain all of our positions. A new study on gangs was proposed (see details on page 6). This program will be presented for approved at our May Annual Meeting. Proposals to do an additional new study or update current positions can be presented if you wish to do so. Your proposal must be submitted to the board. In order to make a proposal, contact Julie Saugstad for assistance to bring your proposal to the board or contact Patty Lundy to be placed on the board meeting agenda.

Land Use (Adopted 1976, updated 1988 and 2003)

We recognize that land use decisions have an impact on many areas, notably on the quality of life and on the economy; and we recognize that land itself is an irreplaceable resource that needs to be preserved and protected. We support land use planning that:

- A. Protects farmland outside clearly defined urban boundaries to avoid unnecessary conversion of farmlands.
- B. Protects the overall quality of environment (soil, air, and water).
- C. Provides urban development contiguous with existing development where urban services can be provided.
- D. Provides adequate funding for infrastructure needs (transportation, schools, parks, government services and public utilities.)

Land use planning should involve cooperation between and among the various local regional government bodies.

Housing (Adopted 1975, updated 1982 and 2003)

We recognize that the need for shelter is fundamental, and that a diverse population will desire a wide selection of housing options. Therefore, we:

- A. Support equal opportunity in housing options in Stanislaus County.
- B. Support local measures to increase the supply of a diverse range of housing types to serve a diverse population.
- C. Support local measures to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing for everyone.

Child Abuse and Neglect (Adopted 1985, updated 1987)

The League of Women Voters of Modesto recognizes child abuse as a societal problem; therefore, we support:

- A. Legislation which addresses the jurisdictional, organizational and procedural problems in the prosecution of child abuse cases.
- B. Modification of the courtroom process to accommodate child victims.
- C. Consistent reporting and recording of child abuse and neglect cases and development of comprehensive statistics.
- D. Broad-based prevention programs which are accessible to all family members and take into consideration the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of those being served.
- E. Efforts of public and private agencies to continually focus public attention on the problems of child abuse and neglect.

Local Library Finance (Adopted 1994, updated 1997 and 2003)

The League of Women Voters of Modesto supports long-term, consistent funding of the Stanislaus County Free Library

- A. We strongly support a dedicated source of funds which could be used only for the Library
- B. Basic library services should remain free and become more accessible to all Stanislaus County residents in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- C. We support a long range goal of maintaining a library system of excellence.

Adult Criminal Justice (Adopted 1980, updated 1982 and 1984)

Support:

- A. The funding in Stanislaus County of a wide range of alternatives to incarceration for all but the physically dangerous offender.
- B. Efforts to further the expansion of rehabilitative programs and facilities for persons convicted of drug and alcohol abuse.
- C. A greater allocation of funds within the criminal justice budget for crime prevention, crime detection and rehabilitation.

Proposal for Local Study on Gangs

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Modesto recommends adoption of a study of gangs.

This study would look at the impact of gangs on our community and investigate current information on the causes of gang membership and effective means of prevention. It would also look at the impact of gangs on our local systems of law enforcement and criminal justice.

This study could result in a recommendation for an update of the State League Juvenile Justice position.

The study will be implemented with a committee of interested members. It may include research, speakers at meetings, Voter articles or presentations by committee members. --Julie Saugstad

Membership Celebration a Huge Success

Stimulating and occasionally controversial commentary took center stage at the March 10th Spring Membership Celebration at McHenry Museum in downtown Modesto. With over fifty members, guests and community leaders in attendance, *California Journal* former Executive Editor A.G. Block offered his perspective on the role of the Central Valley in the future of California politics. Not afraid to share his decades of political journalism experience and opinion, Mr. Block touched on such issues as voter demographics, voting trends and what motivates Californians to get to the polls. During the question and answer session he covered such topics as teacher wages, our Governor and his political future, and population growth and sprawl. The active discourse could have continued late into the evening and many participants carried over their conversations after the close of the event. In all, a wonderful evening of fellowship and thought-provoking discussions. --Amy Christensen

Board Highlights

March 16, 2005

- ▷ Annual meeting date set for May 16, 6 pm at Jacobs Restaurant.
- ▷ Our league will help with CSUS Student Body election again-- April 20 & 21 from 7:30 am to 7 pm.
- ▷ The Board recommends adoption of a local study on Gangs.
- ▷ Our own Kenni Friedman will be the speaker at the April Lunch and Learn. Topic: Health Care Today and in the Future."

--Mildred Kinser, Secretary

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**

LWV Modesto 2005-2006 Proposed Budget

The Budget Committee and the LWV Modesto Board of Directors recommend approval of the proposed 2005-2006 budget (see page 8 for figures).

- The budget document includes estimated beginning and ending cash balances to summarize our League's total fiscal status.

- Income from dues covers PMP (Per Member Payment) to LWVC and LWFVUS with less than \$400 available for local use.

- Finance Drive is our primary source of income for operating expenses. Members and donors have been generous, and we have met or exceeded our income goals for the past several years.

- A percentage of our operating expenses and PMP as well as Voter Service expenses can be reimbursed to our General Fund from our Education Fund.

- The budget maintains both restricted and unrestricted reserves which could be available for unexpected expenses.

- As a non-profit organization with a mission to serve our community, it is appropriate that our funds be spent to support that mission. The proposed budget is not "balanced" in that anticipated expenses exceed expected revenues. Rather than retain excess funds, increase dues or reduce program, this budget proposes that we use our assets to support our program. A similar "spend down" budget was approved for 2002-2003.

Join us for Lunch and Learn!

April 26 at 11:45 am

Appetize Restaurant

Speaker: Kenni Friedman

"Health care Today and in the Future"

Kenni served on the Memorial Hospital Foundation Board for many years and now sits on the Sutter Health Board of which Memorial Hospital and Sutter Gould are affiliated. She oversees the 44,000 Sutter Health employees. With health care issues in the news each day, League should have many questions for her. As a past-President of the Modesto League, past State Board President of the LWV and member of the National Board, Kenni brings a wealth of knowledge to our membership.

League supports California health care bill

The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports Senator Sheila Kuehl's SB 840, the California Health Insurance Reliability Act (CHIRA). SB 840 will provide fiscally sound, affordable health insurance to all Californians, provide Californians the right to choose their own physician, and control health cost inflation. In essence, the bill is the same as Kuehl's SB 921 of 2003-04, but with the addition of much more detail.

SB 840 is scheduled for its first committee hearing on April 6 in the Senate Banking, Finance and Insurance Committee. This gives us only ten business days to lobby the committee to support SB 840. Failure to pass this committee would mean the end for single payer reform in this legislative cycle.

ACTION NEEDED: If your state senator is a member of the Banking, Finance and Insurance Committee, please immediately contact him or her to express your support.

Members of the Senate BF&I Committee are Jackie Speier (chair), Dave Cox (vice chair), **Jeff Denham**, Liz Figueroa, Dennis Hollingsworth, Alan Lowenthal, Michael Machado, Abel Maldonado, Kevin Murray, Deborah Ortiz, and Jack Scott.

League Members: Members should contact their senators as individuals, showing evidence of support by your representatives' individual constituents. We also urge you to send this alert to as many of your personal contacts as possible.

LEAGUE POSITION: The LWVUS Health Care position promotes a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

BACKGROUND: More than six million California residents, as many as 80 percent of whom are employed, have gone without health insurance in recent years. Cost cutting measures by providers to assure profitability have reduced quality of care, sometimes to tragic proportion. Insurance premiums are now increasing at double digit rates and are expected to continue to rise. The system is in worse condition than 10 years ago because of excess administrative costs, overpriced pharmaceuticals, use of emergency rooms for non-emergency care and uncontrolled capital costs. And now, the situation is further compounded by the state's budget woes.

The LWVC strongly supported SB 480 of 1999, a bill which after four years came to fruition as California's landmark Health Care Options Project. The HCOP analyzed nine options for expanding health coverage in terms of how many people would be covered, how much each reform would cost, and how each reform could improve the quality of health care. Only the three single-payer systems were found to provide universal coverage and operate at net savings over the status quo.

The League supported SB 921 (Kuehl) during the 2003-2004 legislative session. This bill would have provided health care coverage to all Californians through a publicly financed single payer health care system. A recent

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analysis of the bill by the Virginia-based Lewin Group, which also did the HCOP analyses, showed SB 840 would provide even greater savings to Californians than the previously studied single payer models. The Lewin Group report is available at www.healthcareforall.org.

**** SB 840 provides for universal coverage and comprehensive benefits while making very significant state savings in health care spending. In the short run, it adds no new spending, and in the long run it controls the growth in health care spending.**

**** SB 840 provides for reliable coverage and security for every California resident. Eligibility is based on residency, not employment or income. No one will ever lose coverage because of unaffordable insurance premiums, changing or losing a job, going to or graduating from college, or pre-existing conditions.**

**** SB 840 provides for affordable health care. Health benefits will be paid for by federal, state and county monies currently being spent on the health care system and affordable insurance premiums that replace all premiums, deductibles, out-of pocket payments, and co-payments now paid by employers and consumers.**

- - System savings resulting from use of the state's purchasing power to buy pharmaceuticals and medical equipment at discounted rates, administrative simplification, and making primary care and preventive care available for everyone will dramatically increase the funds that can be spent on providing universal coverage. According to the Lewin Group study, even after care is made available to California's uninsured and underinsured, the net state savings will be about \$8 billion in the first year.

**** SB 840 provides for efficient delivery of health care. Waste will be eliminated by consolidating the functions of many insurance companies into one comprehensive insurance plan saving the state and consumers billions of dollars each year. A recent Boston University study shows half of every dollar spent on health care is squandered on clinical and administrative waste, insurance company profits and over-priced pharmaceuticals. The Lewin Group report estimates that California will save more than \$20 billion in reduced administrative costs in the first year alone.**

**** SB 840 provides for high quality health care. Consumers will have total freedom to choose their personal primary care provider. Health care providers and facilities will receive fair reimbursement for all covered services they provide.**

**** SB 840 provides for generous health care benefits based on all care prescribed by a health care provider that meets accepted standards of care and practice. The benefit package is broader than that of many current health plans and includes hospital, medical, surgical, and mental health; dental and vision care; prescription drugs and medical equipment; diagnostic testing; emergency care; health education and translation services; hospice care; and more.**

**** SB 840 will stabilize the growth in health care spending by linking spending increases to growth in state gross domestic product and population, employment rates, and other relevant demographic indicators. It includes cost controls and an emphasis on preventative and primary care.**

League of Women Voters of Modesto Annual Meeting

Monday, May 16, 2005

6:00-9:00 pm

Jacob's Fine Dining
2501 McHenry Suite D
\$35.00 per person

Jeff Grover

Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

"Land Use Issues in Stanislaus County"

socializing and no-host beverages at 6:00 pm, dinner at 6:30
followed by speaker and business meeting

for reservations, clip and send this portion with a check by May 9

Dinner choices: Chicken or Pasta (vegetarian)

Name _____ Meal choice _____

Name _____ Meal choice _____

Name _____ Meal choice _____

Mail to: League of Women Voters

Total enclosed: _____

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 policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters of Modesto

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ACTION ALERT: SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY

LWVUS OPPOSES PRIVATIZING SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security is not merely a retirement program – it is a social insurance program with broad effect. Many of our most vulnerable citizens rely upon the safety net provided by the system. Before Social Security, one in three senior citizens lived in poverty. Today that number is one in ten. In addition, disability and survivors' benefits under Social Security have provided for millions of American families. This is particularly important for women. Nearly two-thirds of women 65 and over get a majority of their income from Social Security.

ACTION NEEDED Contact your U.S. Senators and Representative now, by phone and by email, and urge them to oppose attempts to privatize Social Security. The Social Security system is not in crisis and any changes should make the safety net more solvent, and more dependable, not less secure. Phone calls can be made through the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121.