



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

July 2015

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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President's Message

We finally have a new computer that works so there should be no more delays with *The Voter*. Karrie is ready to go and we are looking forward to her fine work. Now for a little update as to what has and what is happening in the League.

Thanks to Marsha Waggoner for hosting such a great Annual Meeting. Everyone seemed to enjoy each other's company along with the tasty hors d'oeuvres with a nice variety of wines from which to choose. Mike Dunbar, Editorial Page Editor for the *Modesto Bee* gave us an informative and entertaining account of the editorial policy and insight to the water problem, locally and statewide. Those members who could not make it to the meeting missed a very enjoyable and informative evening.

Congratulations go to Laurie Carley for being the recipient of the Sustaining Member award. With all her hard work over the years it was richly deserved.

With this year over we need to get in gear for the coming year. Please get in contact with Mary Giventer if you are interested in the upcoming LWVC study of Higher Education with emphasis on accessibility. The materials should be here by September. It is the hope that we can get some college students interested in doing this study with us by offering them free membership to the League. The National League is preparing two studies: Money in Politics and Voting Rights. Hopefully, there will be enough interest from the members to do at least one of these studies.

I will be heading a study on Water to be able to add a position to our Local Action Program. It is such a vital issue in this county that a separate position statement is needed. Further information will follow shortly. For those interested, the *Bee* is having a forum on the water issue on July 15 (7:00-9:00) at the Gallo Center for the Arts. Reservations are required and can be obtained by calling the *Bee* at 578-2148

I had a valuable experience at the LWVC Conference in San Diego in mid-May. Issues that are still in the spotlight include climate change, voter rights, campaign spending, and the water crisis. Thanks to our League for including the 2016 convention in our 2015-16 budget. Our budget also includes absorbing a \$2.50 increase in our Per Member Payment to LWVC this year and will need to decide next year on another \$2.50 increase.

I'm looking forward to working with all of you and the new Board.

Seena Rhine, President LWVSC

Member Directory

If you have not yet received your Stanislaus County League 2015 Directory, please contact Lynn Kelso at 209-524-1698, and we will promptly mail you your copy. This is a valuable networking tool and a great way to stay active with your fellow League members.



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**February Lunch & Learn
*Citizens' Climate Lobby***

Lee Ballance, MD and Mary Selkirk of Citizens' Climate Lobby were the speakers for the February Lunch and Learn. Citizens' Climate Lobby is a non-profit, non-partisan grass roots advocacy organization focused on national politics to address climate change. The speakers provided some history on the scientific studies of CO2 in our atmosphere starting with a study by Joseph Fourier in the 1800s who hypothesized that if the CO2 level doubled it would take 1,000 years to see a temperature rise of 5-7 degrees. All of that has changed with the increase in both population and carbon emissions.

They stated that science has been conservative in its findings and predictions but can show that there are 22 parts per million of CO2 in our air by human influence. If it were not for CO2 emissions, we would be in a cooling phase. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), comprised of scientists from all over the world, has stated that we cannot afford to lose another decade doing nothing to address this issue. The Northern Hemisphere and Australia contribute the most to pollution while the Southern Hemisphere suffers the most. To see how climate change is affecting California check CalAdapt.org to see predictions for temperatures and precipitation.

Modesto is expected to see an increase in the number of heat waves defined as 5 or more days of extreme heat in a row. Since hot air days equals more bad air days, rises in temperature and pollution lead to more respiratory and heart problems. We also face the economic cost of drought and increased wildfires. Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) believes that the United States is in a key position to change the business as usual approach to climate change. Developing a national policy requires focusing on congressional lobbying through grassroots efforts; educating legislators and the public through face-to-face meetings and letter writing campaigns to legislators and newspaper editors. The solution proposed by CCL is a national Carbon Fee and Dividend Policy. Simply put, the policy places a fee on polluting carbon production (gas, coal and oil) and returns all funds collected to U.S. households as rebates. This protects consumers from rising prices and reduces pollution as it stimulates investment in and use of clean energy. It is predicted that this policy would result in a 33% reduction in carbon emissions over 10 years and a 50% reduction over 20 years. It would also increase jobs in the clean energy field and prevent 130,000 deaths. Currently there is bipartisan interest and support for this market based approach, but the speakers stressed that legislators listen to their own constituents so it is vitally important to have local involvement.

If you are interested in learning more about Citizens' Climate Lobby a local group has just formed. Call 209 523-5907 for more information or check the website at www.citizensclimatelobby.org

Ruby Hennessey, Lunch & Learn Director

March Lunch & Learn ***Groundwater Resources and Management***

Walter Ward, Water Resources Manager for Stanislaus County, discussed the timely subject of Groundwater Resources and Management in California at the March Lunch and Learn. Ward focused his talk on The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, which Governor Brown signed into law in September 2014 and went into effect January 2015. The legislation includes the following components: Gives local public agencies the opportunity to become a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and the authority to adopt Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) intended to manage the groundwater to maintain the “Safe Yield” of basins within their area; and imposes timelines of the adoption of such plans. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) designates basins as “critically overdrafted” by January 31, 2020, or “not critically overdrafted” and basins are specified a high or medium priority by January 31, 2022. A critical condition of overdraft exists when continuation of present water management practices will result in significant adverse overdraft-related environmental, social or economic impacts.

Agencies electing to become a GSA are given broad powers and authority regarding groundwater management, including: a 50 Year Planning Horizon and 20 Year Implementation Period with 5 year reviews and updates; the ability to investigate and determine the sustainable yield of a groundwater basin; collect pertinent groundwater monitoring information; limit groundwater extraction; impose fees for groundwater management; and enforcement of the terms of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The legislation allows multiple agencies to operate within single or multiple groundwater basins. Stanislaus County has 4 basins: Eastern San Joaquin County, Modesto, Turlock, and Delta Mendota. Eastern San Joaquin Basin is designated critically overdrafted.

By June 1st, 2016 DWR must adopt regulations for evaluating Groundwater Sustainability Plans, which also identify required plan components. By January 1st, 2017 DWR must establish “best management practices” for the sustainable management of groundwater, and periodically review plans to determine compliance and meeting goals. Sustainable groundwater management defined as the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results. Undesirable results include: significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage; significant and unreasonable degraded water quality which includes the migration of contaminant plumes that impair water supplies; significant and unreasonable land subsidence that substantially interferes with surface land uses; and surface water depletions that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water. The State has the ability to step in if: no local agency is willing to serve as a GSA; the GSA does not complete a GSP; the GSP is found to be inadequate; or the the GSP does not achieve its goals.

Stanislaus County has 14 water suppliers identified as districts or irrigation districts. Mr. Ward said that the challenge has been getting everyone to work together in the Groundwater Sustainability Agency since there is some rivalry between districts. One of the issues they are dealing with is lack of knowledge as to the location of wells, and Mr. Ward is now approved to get this information from the State. In order to get a permit for a new well, sustainability must be proven. This is not a problem on the West side of the county because the area is flat and with flood irrigation the water returns to the earth. On the East side the water runs downhill and does not meet the groundwater sustainability requirement. Mr. Ward said that most of the wells that have gone dry are older wells, which were not deep enough. To find information on drought conditions including reservoir levels and ways to save water, check out the following sites: www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions and <http://drought.ca.gov/saveourwater.com>

Ruby Hennessey, Lunch & Learn Director

Board Highlights

At the 67th Annual Meeting May 2, 2015 the following actions were taken. Copies of the Annual Report are available from President Seena Rhine.

- Adopted 2015-2016 Budget. Includes no dues increase even though LWVC Per Member Payment will increase by \$2.50 this year.
- Elected Officers and Directors
- Retained current Local Program.
- Approved a study of Water to bring a separate position statement to the next Annual Meeting. Currently Water is included in our Land Use position.
- Heard Mike Dunbar, Opinions Page Editor of *Modesto Bee*, describe the process for editorial positions and current water issues.
- 29 members and guests attended. Thank you to Marsha Waggoner for making her home available for our Annual Meeting.

Marie Bairey, Secretary

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!!

Cathy Day
Truman Jensen
Judy Schunke
Suzanne Roth

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

[\(Check Website for Updates\)](#)

July Board meeting	NO BOARD MEETING DURING JULY
Wednesday, July 15th 7pm-9:00pm	Water Panel Gallo Center for the Arts, 7pm. Tickets required: contact Seena to acquire
Thursday, July 30th 12pm-1:30pm	Lunch and Learn, Speaker - TBA *NEW LOCATION* <i>Ridgeways, Modesto.</i> \$13 Chef's Choice
Wednesday, August 12th 6:30pm-8:00pm	Board Meeting Hosted at Marie Bairey's—please call 524-1698 for directions.
Thursday, August 27th 12:00pm-1:30pm	Lunch & Learn, Pat Portwood of the Stanislaus County Library Foundation. <i>Ridgeways, Modesto.</i> \$13 chef choice.

**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
P.O. Box E
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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.