



The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

January 2019

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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President's Message

Whew, 2018 was quite a year for LWVSC. The sad, sudden passing of President Mary Giventer left LWVSC with a leadership void, but fortunately Board members stepped forward to take on additional responsibilities to keep our organization on task and visible in the community. The highly contested 2018 midterm election brought the busiest fall in years for Voter Service with candidate forums and pros and cons presentations. The election also generated an increase in League membership. ☺ Several new members joined us at Holiday Fling, again hosted by Lynne Fenderson, to socialize as well as enjoy the OperaModesto program presented by Roy Stevens and his wife, Annalisa Winberg.

The new year is already starting off with a bang. A special thank-you to Colleen Norby who coordinated our booth at the Women's March on January 19 and to those who assisted – Karrie Bullock, Marsha Blomquist, Ed and Karen Tabacco, Theresa Greishaber and Trudy Silveira. Also at the event were Julie Saugstad, Larry Giventer, Shelly Scribner and Pat Portwood. Stella Beratlis, LWVSC member, was on the program to present a special poem for the event (you can read it on page 5 of this issue). LWVSCC was well represented.

Since it is an off-year for elections, we can focus on issues that are important to our region. We will be following our state and national representatives' legislative efforts and consider possible voter education programs. Monthly Lunch and Learn continues to be an excellent source for information on timely topics. January 19 was Women's March Modesto where LWVSC had an informational booth. On February 23, members who have joined in the last year will be invited to learn more about our League's activities and opportunities. Also, in February, annual LWV Program Planning is taking place. See *The Voter* (pages 2 and 3) for details and plan to participate. ■

Marie

Generous Donors Honor Mary Giventer

The League was deeply honored to be designated by the Giventer family for donations in Mary's memory. So far we have received about \$2800 in memorial donations. The board is considering several suggestions of how best to use these funds to honor Mary and will announce that decision when it is finalized. Mary gave so much to League and was so deeply vested in the League's principles. We want to make sure these donations make a difference on issues that were important to Mary and to the League. For those who were not already aware, we learned at her memorial service that Mary acted to assure women had equality in the workplace. She believed in the importance of education and justice for all. She felt strongly that everyone must have the opportunity to vote and be educated to do so wisely.

Our thanks to the following donors who gave in Mary's memory. Additional donors will be mentioned in a future *Voter*. Eileen Ambrosini, Liz and Bill Anderson, George and Marie Bairey, Diane Bartlett, Marsha Blomquist, Kathryn Bradfield, Laurie Carley, Larry Giventer, Mary Hardzinski, Nancy Hollister, William Leathen, Diana Loomis, Margery Neder, Colleen Norby, Dieter and Hanna Renning, Seena Rhine, Julie Saugstad, Wendy Scott, Ed and Karen Tabacco, Judy Vroege and the California Faculty Association (CSUS). ■

League of Women Voters of California 2019 Program Planning

As grassroots organizations, local Leagues are asked each February to provide input to either state or national League to recommend and adopt Program areas (position statements) for emphasis for the following two years. Recommendations from local Leagues are acted upon by delegates to convention in June. At the same time, local Leagues review their own position statements (Program) for possible updates or changes. This process is called Program Planning.

This year the LWVC process has three parts: Review LWVC positions and consider two proposed changes presented for concurrence by Los Angeles (Criminal Justice Reform) and Sacramento (Election Systems). (Concurrence is adopting a position that is already part of other Leagues' programs. No new study is required.)

1. LWVC Program Review: In addition to the Campaign for Making Democracy Work, we are asked to identify three issues where we think LWVC should concentrate its efforts. To familiarize yourself with current LWVC positions, you can go to lwv.org/lwvonly, click Program Planning Kit and scroll to Resources for Action Policies and Positions. (To get the gist of each position, read the "Position in Brief" after each title. Specific details follow.) We should indicate why this is an important issue.
2. Government: Voter Representation/Election Process: Presented for concurrence by LWV Sacramento County to replace the current elections position, which promotes a specific election process, with a set of principles for elections to support LWV goals for "an open,

governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.” (Go to our website: http://www.lwvstanislaus.org/files/program_wvsac/pdf.)

3. Criminal Justice Reform: Presented for concurrence by LWV, Los Angeles. This is a new, comprehensive position to address policing, sentencing, incarceration and re-entry. (Go to our website: http://www.lwvstanislaus.org/files/program_proposed_crimjust.pdf.)
4. Local Program: To review LWVSC Program, go to lwvstanislaus.org and click on Local Action. Look it over to identify possible changes or updates.

The February 28 Lunch and Learn will be dedicated to discussion and consensus to provide our feedback to LWVSC and to identify changes to our local program. **MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THIS IMPORTANT MEETING.** ■



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY UPCOMING EVENTS

LUNCH AND LEARN: Thursday, January 31 at noon. Ridgway’s in Century Center, Modesto. Chef’s choice menu at \$15. **SPEAKER:** Lee Lundrigan. She will talk about her career as well as the challenges of the 2018 election. She will also respond to any questions.

NEWer MEMBER INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL: Members new to League are invited to learn more about League and meet other new members and Board members over coffee and goodies: Saturday, February 23 and 10:00 AM at the home of Marie Bairey. Watch your mail for details.

PROGRAM PLANNING: This is an annual process when local Leagues are asked to provide input to state and national LWV regarding issues for emphasis in their education and advocacy efforts. We also renew our local positions for possible changes. Go to lwvstanislaus.org. Click on Program Planning for more information. Discussion and consensus will be at the February Lunch and Learn, Thursday, February 28. Mark your calendar to be part of the process.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: If you are interested in serving on the 2019–20 Board or if you have an area of particular interest and would like to be part of a committee, contact George Britton at gwbritton@gmail.com. ■

Women's March 2019

On January 19, 2019, women and men gathered at the corner of Briggsmore and McHenry for an hour-long rally. (On the following pages of this month's issue of *The Voter* we include Stella Berattlis's poem as well as some remarks she made.) The group then marched from McHenry Village to Graceada Park, where additional activities took place. LWVSC had an informational booth.



Left to right: Karrie Bullock, Colleen Norby, Karen Tabacco, Theresa Grieshaber and Marsha Blomquist. Photo courtesy of K. Bullock

This year the group celebrated the 2018 vote and focused on getting more women and allies into office and other leadership positions, with actions focused on voter registration, voter mobilization, supporting women running for office, and electing women in more offices and legislative advocacy. ■

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government.

Villanelle Against Silence and Not-Knowing

after Raquel Salas Rivera & Audre Lord

There's a list of reasons in my bag, a thing that I don't know.
My house is an enemy of the people, look into its windows, its face,
there's a violence that we swallow and try to make our own.

The true north star of justice oscillates and shifts,
What do we call this city on the hill, where's the map of this place?
Check the reasons in my bag, that thing that I can't know.

Are you listening to the voices? Here: take this gift—
the anger of non-White women, whom the world casually erases—
by the violence that we swallow and try to make our own.

In the commonwealth of cruelty, white tears when we are miffed,
then cognitive dissonance of state violence, enforced by trauma and shame.
For reference: see the reasons in your bag, the terror you don't know.

When we talk of women's rights, the language slides, see it drift—
but your feminism is nothing if it does nothing less than embrace
all those beaten by the rocks that we have swallowed and tried to make our own.

Therefore, resolved: feel the anger; let it fuel ferocity. The hiss
of oppression in the synapses, a relentless memory trace;
see the list of reasons in my bag, name that thing that I don't know—
Fight the tyrannies I swallow and try to make my own. ■

Stella Berattis

Modesto Women's March, January 19, 2019

Original passages:

"What are the words you do not have yet? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?"

— Audre Lord

"I fight with my girlfriend because the fascists want me dead

...

I have a list of reasons in my bag.

reasons to hate yourself and all others by extension..."

— Raquel Salas Rivera

Welcome everyone to the 2019 Modesto Women’s March. In the decade that DT has been president, we’ve seen how a group of woman-hating conservatives have come to be in charge of our destinies—but it’s more than just misogyny. It’s oppression that cuts across many axes of power—gender, race, class, age, ability. As your city’s poet laureate, I decided that the poem I was writing for today had to engage with the idea of intersectionality because feminism, according to bell hooks, is a blueprint for everyone regardless of gender, race or sexuality—and feminism has, unfortunately, historically excluded women of color from the struggle. This poem addresses white women, who benefit from our whiteness and is intended to challenge us. In the words of Emmeline Pankhurst, noted early British women’s rights activist, “I don’t intend that you should be pleased.”

Note: in the poem, the thing that you can’t see: white privilege; the list of reasons in my bag = the ways in which white women benefit from a capitalist, white supremacist, imperialist patriarchal system. ■



Stella Beratlis passes the mic to another speaker (1/19/19).
Photo courtesy of Colleen Norby

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Stella Beratlis
Webmaster

George Britton, chair
Stella Beratlis
Nominating Committee

New Members

The Stanislaus County League has gained several new members since the last edition of *The Voter* appeared. Four joined in November: **Janise Lemos, Arlene Griffin, Christine Bereton** and **Angelica Anguiano**. Angelica is an attorney with Mark S. Nelson. Christine has been president of the Modesto Friends of the Library as well as a Girl Scout volunteer.

Two more joined during our Holiday Fling: **Marsha David** and **Marilyn Michael**.

Martha Carlton, Denise Crosby and **Izabel Crosby** joined at the Women’s March earlier this month. Martha was a member many years ago. Rumor has it that the trio consists of grandmother, mother and daughter! We welcome all and hope to see some of you at the informational social to take place in late February (see page 3 for a few more details). ■

1 On the Calendar

January 31, 2019 • Lunch and Learn • Noon • At Ridgway’s on Orangeburg. Retired Stanislaus County Clerk/Recorder Lee Lundrigan will talk about her career and the challenges of the 2018 election. She will also answer questions. (Chef’s choice: \$15; vegetarian or gluten-free available on request.) ■

See page 3 for additional upcoming events. ■

Democracy is NOT a spectator sport.



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