



The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

July 2018

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 66, NO. 1

President's Message

The long, hot days of summer are upon us. We are in a lull in the election cycle. The primary is over, and we have a short break until heavy campaigning begins in the fall. Congress has adjourned until July 10 and then will return for three weeks before adjourning again on July 26 until September 4. Normally, this is when I am happy to put political thoughts aside and enjoy time lounging by the pool with a cold drink and a light book. However, this summer I don't feel able to put my concerns aside. Congress adjourned with no solution in sight for the immigration issue, leaving thousands of children separated from their families, Dreamers in limbo and general confusion for all concerned. There can be legitimate disagreements over what immigration policy should be, but separating children from their parents is not an acceptable public policy option: it is morally wrong. I am thankful that President Trump has halted the practice, and I applaud the strong public sentiment that encouraged him to do so. We now need to continue to pay attention to ensure that families are reunited as soon as possible and that families seeking to enter the country are dealt with expeditiously and fairly.

One of the things I most appreciate about the League is that it strives to look at issues factually and from varied perspectives. Most of what I read and hear about immigration comes from one ideological position or another — immigrants are either poor victims of violence or they are criminals and drug smugglers. Neither is accurate, and the facts are much more nuanced. The best article I have read on who the immigrants are was "Who's Really Crossing the US Border and Why They're Coming" written by Stephanie Leutert in Lawfare (lawfareblog.com) on June 23. Thank you, Stella Beratlis, for sharing this article. I would encourage you to read it. For a more personal immigrant story I recommend a book I first read a couple of years ago, *Enrique's Journey*, by Sonia Nazario. It was first written in 2006 and has been more recently updated. This is the story of a young boy from Honduras who travels alone to attempt to come to the United States to locate his mother. While the recent actions of separating children from their parents at the border is new, dealing with unaccompanied minors crossing the border is a problem which has existed for years with little attention. Hopefully, as we deal with the separated children, we can also find ways to better handle the unaccompanied children. I would love it if League members could share with each other similar thoughtful, well-researched articles and books which help us understand

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this and other complex issues. Happy summer reading — and I am sure I will sneak in more than one mystery novel by the pool. ■

Mary

Trudy Porter Schafer

I am sad to report that Trudy Schafer, former LWVC Director for Programs, passed away on June 20. Some of you may have met her; many more of you have probably gotten emails from her or read articles written by her for League publications. Trudy had a Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of Chicago. On moving to Sacramento in 1978, she became active in the Sacramento League and discovered that public policy was her true passion. For 25 years, from 1992 until late 2017, Trudy oversaw League analysis of multiple issues on the legislative agenda, was a respected expert on election and redistricting reform, limiting the influence of money in politics and reforming the California budget process. Her family is requesting any remembrances be made to the Schafer Fellowship for Public Policy of LWVC. ■

1 On the Calendar

July 10 • Board Meeting • 6:30 PM • Call or email Mary for location if you wish to attend.

July 26 • Lunch and Learn • Noon • Lunch and Learn will resume this month at Ridgway's on Orangeburg. Oakdale City Manager Bryan Whitemyer will describe the city's current issues and goals. More details when available. (Chef's choice: \$15; vegetarian or gluten-free available on request.) ■

New Member

It's a pleasure to be welcome Freda Motto as a new member. Freda is a retired Modesto City Schools teacher who is active in the community through her support of Townsend Opera and the McHenry Mansion. ■

*Remember: Democracy is NOT a spectator sport.
Have a Happy Fourth!*

Dealing with Opioids in Stanislaus County Lunch & Learn Presentation for June

Dr. Lyn Raible is Chief Medical Officer for Modesto's Aegis, one of a network of out-patient opiate treatment centers with 31 clinics in California. The Modesto center is serving 850 patients. Dr. Raible came to addiction treatment by way of a Ph.D. in bio-psychology and an M.D. in family practice from Michigan. With roots in California, she completed her medical residency with the Stanislaus County training program. Her message is that addiction is not a moral failing: it is a neurobiological process — a medical disorder that may not be curable ... but *is* treatable.

CDC data show continuing increases in opioid overdose deaths. Dr. Raible noted that addiction often begins with faulty pain management. But why do some become addicted and not others? In 70 percent of cases, there is a strong genetic predisposition: the brain reacts in a different way to opiates or other drugs. At first exposure to opioids, a person with a predisposition feels energized, feels good; he or she likes it, which is not how most people react. The drug initiates neurological changes in an area of the brain related to survival, thus the need for more. The addicted brain is not under voluntary control; it is not a rational brain. For an addict, trying a drug or beginning pain meds may have been a choice, but what happens next is not.

Methadone has been the treatment of choice for 50 years. Now other medications are used as well. The medications act to stabilize (rewire) the area of the brain that drives addiction to the pre-exposed state, allowing the person to regain control. Research indicates that medication combined with counseling is superior to either approach alone. Following a detox period, Aegis patients start with daily treatment, counseling and regular and/or random urine tests at the clinic. Patients may move on to a program of reduced dosage and/or take-home medication that make it easier to take control of their lives to include jobs and family. It takes time. Patients' successes are measured by stopping use of opioids, graduating from the program and getting control of their lives. Eighty percent of Aegis patients graduate within two to three years. Aegis is funded by insurance, mostly Medical, or private pay.

In addition to her oversight of patient care, Dr. Raible works to educate the public and physicians about addiction and treatment. ■

Marie Bairey

Editor's Note:

Dr. Raible's talk was videotaped. As soon as it gets uploaded to YouTube, we will send out a web address so you can watch it if you missed the live presentation.

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