

# The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO



May/June 2005

Vol. 57 No. 4

## Jeff Grover to speak at Annual Meeting

Please join us for our Annual Meeting on Monday, May 16th from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Jacob's Fine Dining (see p. 9).

In addition to electing new officers and considering important League business, we will hear from our keynote speaker, Jeff Grover. Mr. Grover will address land use issues in Stanislaus County.

Mr. Grover is President and owner of Solecon Industrial Contractors, which was established in 1981. The company provides mechanical systems and services to the plants, factories, hospitals and general contractors in the Central Valley. He is a Director of Partners International, a Christian missions organization, and also serves as a Board Director for the Workforce Alliance, Nexus Engineering and 5.11 Tactical, Inc. He has been actively involved in Stanislaus County business and civic organizations for a number of years, including serving as a member of the Board

Directors of the Modesto Commerce Bank, Modesto Chamber of Commerce, the McHenry Mansion, Doctors Medical Center Foundation, the Salvation Army Advisory Board, and the Modesto Rotary Club. He has also served on the City of Modesto Planning

Commission, the City of Modesto Board of Zoning Adjustments and was a Stanislaus County Grand Jury foreman. He is currently the Chairman of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors.

--Laurie Carley

### Calendar of Events

Mon., 5/16	<b>LWV Modesto ANNUAL MEETING</b> 6-9 pm, Jacob's Fine Dining (see p. 9)
Fri., 5/20	<b>LOCAL ACTION COMMITTEE</b> 12 noon LWV office, 720 13th Street
Wed., 6/15	<b>Board Meeting and Potluck</b> at Myrtle Osner's house, 6 pm (see p. 7)
Tues., 6/28	<b>LUNCH AND LEARN</b> 11:45 am Appetiz (see back)

**Note: No Lunch and Learn in May**

# President's Message

What an exciting year it has been serving as the president of the League of Women Voters of Modesto! A steep learning curve is nearly always inherent to a new position and is best ascended through mentoring by those who served before you. Thank you to Marie, Susan and Julie for their mentoring and patience! Thank you to Myrtle, who is the memory bank for League, and to the many volunteers who either served on the Board or who assisted with our numerous projects and who have been patient in this growth! The broad exposure I gained at state council and national convention proved to me that the League is truly the grassroots model for democracy in action, where everyone has their say and does so respectfully and efficiently. However, it is the local League for whom I hold the utmost regard – their unwavering dedication to serving their community (even amongst our own diversity) is what is so critical to our democracy!

Through the persistent work of Susan Cassidy, *TheVoter* continues to be our main avenue of communication. Although Susan will be leaving the Board this year for a much-needed break, we know she will continue behind the scenes, supporting our efforts. Ellen Meyer has heroically agreed to step into her place. With deadlines and action oftentimes arriving with little response time, we rely more and more on the websites and email for communication – especially for action alerts that are driven from the state and national levels. Therefore, although communication through *The Voter* will continue to be our monthly summary and projection of upcoming events and issues, I strongly encourage you to use email for receiving the critical action alerts that are sent regularly. The

*continued on p. 6*

*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



#### *Mailing Address*

PO Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

#### *Office Address*

720 13th Street, Modesto

#### *Telephone*

209-524-1698

**[www.lwvmodesto.org](http://www.lwvmodesto.org)**

# Membership Dues--It's Renewal Time!

It's that time of year again: time to renew your membership. Dues must be paid by July 1, 2005 and remain \$50 for an individual, \$75 for a family (two members in the same household) and \$15 for students. Please remember that dues are not tax deductible. Your membership check should be made payable to the **League of Women Voters Modesto** and sent to P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352. It is important to remember that members with dues three months in arrears will be dropped from the organization. We look forward to your continued membership!

*Amy Christensen*  
*Membership Director*

## League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County?

Help us decide whether or not to  
change our name at our Annual Meeting  
on May 16 (see p.1 and p.9)

### From the Editor...

As this is my last issue of *The Voter*, I would like to thank the many people who contributed to the finished product that arrived in your mailbox each month.

- Myrtle Osner, Bev and Ralph Sturtevant and Lynn Kelso for handling all the tasks associated with printing and mailing each issue
- Marie Bairey and Patty Lundy, who as LWVM presidents provided oversight and much of the content
- Marie, Patty and Susan Novak for proofreading
- The Board members for the past two years, most of whom contributed articles and information
- Linda Walden for advice and support

*--Susan Cassidy*

### Board Highlights

April 13, 2005

▷ M/s/c that we consider the proposal to change our name from League of Women Voters of Modesto to League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County.

▷ New *Facts for Voters* should be ready to circulate after May 16 Annual Meeting.

▷ Three members plan to attend the State Convention in Anaheim on May 20-22.

*--Mildred Kinser, Secretary*

# ACTION ALERT: Redistricting Reform in California

**ACTION NEEDED:** Keep up the pressure for redistricting reform! Please contact Governor Schwarzenegger and legislative leaders; urge them to work together to consider and pass a LEGISLATIVE measure that will be placed on the next statewide ballot. Tell them that reform of the redistricting process should include:

- an independent, diverse citizens' commission to draw the lines for congressional, state senate, state assembly, and Board of Equalization districts
- an open process with information readily available to the public and opportunities for public comment at all stages
- fair criteria for drawing district lines
- no provision for "mid-decade redistricting" i.e., for drawing new lines before the 2010 census.

**THE MESSAGE:** Californians want real redistricting reform. The only way a satisfactory measure can be crafted is through the legislative process, where proposals can be examined and improvements to them made.

Tell Governor Schwarzenegger and Assembly Member McCarthy that you appreciate their efforts and hope they will remove the mid-decade redistricting provision so that a compromise bill can be crafted. Ask them to work with the Democrats to produce a constitutional amendment that will be passed by the legislature and by the voters.

Urge Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, Assembly District Representation Committee Chair Tom Umberg, Senate President pro Tempore Don Perata, and Senate Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments Chair Debra Bowen to go forward with hearings on the existing bills. Tell them legislators should get public input about good and bad features and discuss improvements so that negotiations with the governor and his party will be fruitful. Also, contact your own senator and assembly member and ask them to support their leaders in the effort to find a legislative solution to this essential reform.

**LWVC REDISTRICTING POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support a state redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation in the state legislature and in the House of Representatives with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny. Support of a bipartisan commission as the preferred redistricting body.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Go to the LWVC Web page on Redistricting, <http://lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/> . You can also check the April 1, 2005 UPDATE on the LWVC members-only Web page.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-445-2841; Fax 916-445-4633

# League Supports SAFE Act of 2005

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) is pleased to endorse the Security and Freedom Enhancement (SAFE) Act of 2005, and commends Senators Larry E. Craig and Richard J. Durbin for their leadership in introducing this important legislation.

The League believes that the SAFE Act will address the concerns of the American people about the excesses of the USA Patriot Act. By placing limits on "sneak and peek" searches and "John Doe" roving wiretaps and requiring increased public recording on the use of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the SAFE Act will protect innocent Americans from unrestricted government surveillance.

"These are challenging times for the United States," said LWVUS President Kay J. Maxwell. "We believe there must be balance between the need to protect against security threats and the need to preserve the very liberties that are the foundation of this country - from independent judicial review of law enforcement actions to prohibitions on indiscriminate

searches. The SAFE Act provides that balance."

Since the League's inception 85 years ago, the protection of civil liberties as provided for by the Bill of Rights has been one of the organization's top priorities. During World War II, the League called on the government "to preserve the greatest degree of civil liberty consistent with national safety." During the "witch hunt" period of the early 1950's, the League conducted a

community education program known as the Freedom Agenda, providing Americans with the opportunity to discuss and learn about their freedoms under the Bill of Rights. Today, the League is working on "Local Voices: Citizen Conversations on Civil Liberties and Secure Communities," an initiative to foster public dialogue about the balance between civil liberties and homeland security.

**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**

## President's message, continued from p. 2

following action alerts have recently surfaced— when you respond be sure to let me know so that we have some indication of our effectiveness:

- Redistricting reform
  - HR 6: Dirty Energy Bill
  - S 737 Security and Freedom Enhancement (SAFE) Act
  - S271 527 Reform Act of 2005
  - Social Security Privatization
  - HAVA funding
  - S131 “Clear Skies”
  - Arctic Wilderness
  - SB921 Health Care for All Californians Act

As we conclude this fiscal year, we face many challenges at the national, state and local levels. Health care, campaign finance, state finance and redistricting will be the greater challenges outside the local level. Cities within Stanislaus County face staggering losses to income that will require community input, support and creativity to resolve. Air, water and land resources continue to be critical local issues as well. Our schools continue to meet the challenges of standards testing and curriculum expectations that seem more and more driven by the legislators and those in elected offices yet are being creatively met by our hard-working local boards and educators.

We will be introducing two important proposals at annual meeting. The board looks forward to re-visiting with each of you and gaining your important input into those proposals:

- A proposal for a local gang study. As out-going Treasurer Betty Ann Vencill commented recently regarding a gang study, "The more we understand of it, the better chance we have of dealing with things and changing the reasons for the situation in the first place. We cannot hide from the situation, or it will overwhelm us. If League puts its name on a study, the larger society will be more apt to pay better attention to the situation. The more people we can involve, even if they just read the study, the better we understand the forces that act on the men and women who are now finding themselves disenfranchised and likely to turn to the 'family' of the gang."

- A proposal to change our name to the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County – currently 15% of our membership lives outside Modesto. Since we want increased inclusion for the areas outside Modesto, whom we already serve in numerous ways, a change of name seems prudent at this time.

Since we will not proceed with these proposals without the critical input from our membership, be sure to attend this year's annual meeting and have your voice heard!! If you cannot attend, please contact me (or any of our board members) by phone, email, snail-mail (USPS) or in person to share your ideas!

*--Patty Lundy*

## San Joaquin River report

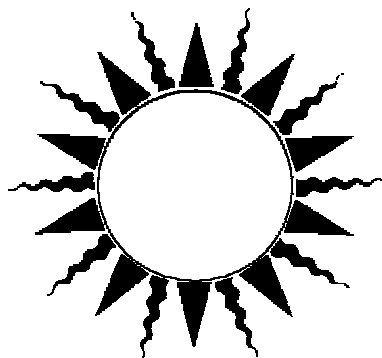
The Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River was completed in 1945 to provide irrigation water to farmers on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley. The diversion of water for irrigation, however, caused the San Joaquin to dry up in places and this, in turn, seriously affected salmon runs up the river. Recently a federal judge ruled that the Bureau of Reclamation, which runs the dam, was required to provide water to sustain fish populations on the river. The method for achieving this outcome has yet to be worked out and will likely take some time to establish. The story of salmon and the San Joaquin River is presented in The Water Education Foundation's November/December 2004 issue of *Western Water*. You can order this edition of *Western Water*, and other water-related items, by going to [www.watereducation.org](http://www.watereducation.org), sending email to [orders@watereducation.org](mailto:orders@watereducation.org), or calling 916-444-6240

## LVW Modesto assists with student elections

Several League members provided services to CSU Stanislaus and to MJC last month, registering the students to vote in their student elections. We were very busy at CSUS and they gave us a donation for this service. We have been told that without a non-partisan organization, like us, they believe that the elections would not be properly monitored.

--Myrtle Osner

### LWV Modesto June Board Meeting and Potluck All members welcome!!



Wednesday, June 15  
6:00 pm Potluck Dinner  
6:30 pm Meeting

Myrtle Osner's home  
1104 Wellesley



## **LWVC praises creation of Advisory Committee on Education Excellence**

On April 8, LWVC joined a coalition of educational justice and equity groups in praising the Governor's appointment of an Advisory Committee on Education Excellence. This committee is charged with identifying the actual cost of providing high quality education to every student in California. While the coalition expressed satisfaction that the committee had been formed, it went on to state that the work of the Advisory Committee must be monitored in order to ensure that it remains impartial, independent and objective. The coalition also advised the governor's committee to use public input to define the resources, conditions and actual costs needed to meet the high standards the state has set for students. Other members of this coalition are Californians for Justice, CADRE, Justice Matters Institute, and Public Advocates, Inc.

## **Senator Boxer supports Alzheimer's disease research**

Millions of families suffer with the consequences of Alzheimer's disease. They struggle to cope with the changes they see in a loved one's behavior. They alter their routines and job schedules to better care for family members. They dip into savings to help pay for care.

To help ease the struggle of these families, I've joined Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) in introducing the Ronald Reagan Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2005. This legislation would support the effort to develop better diagnostic procedures, treatments, and, ultimately, a cure for Alzheimer's disease. It would also authorize programs to help families and individuals deal with this disease.

Today, an estimated 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease. The average lifetime cost of care for an individual with Alzheimer's disease is \$170,000. By 2050, the number of individuals with the disease could reach 16 million. In 2000, Medicare alone spent \$31.9 billion for the care of individuals with Alzheimer's disease, and this amount is projected to increase to \$49.3 billion in 2010.

It is important that science find the causes of Alzheimer's disease as well as new treatments and a cure. I am proud to cosponsor the Ronald Reagan Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2005. If you have any questions about this or any other matter, I encourage you to contact me.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer

United States Senator

<http://www.boxer.senate.gov>



# 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

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*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  
P.O. Box E

Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

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:

LWW Modesto

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352

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*Join us for Lunch and Learn!*

Tuesday, June 28 at 11:45 am  
Appetiz Restaurant in Roseburg Square  
\$11.00 for chef's entree

Speaker: Jim Ridenour  
Mayor of Modesto  
*"The State of the City"*