



The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

November 2017 Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California VOL. 65, NO. 5

President's Message

Whether it is a “big election” year like 2016 was — and 2018 promises to be — or a “small election” year like 2017 that focuses on local issues, the League of Women Voters can be counted on to be active participants. We have registered new voters, informed voters through our candidate forums, and many of us have walked precincts, made phone calls, and written letters in support of Measure S to renew the 1/8 cent dedicated sales tax to fund the Stanislaus County Library system. All that is left is to **VOTE** and encourage our friends and neighbors to vote. Thank you all for everything you have done this election. Now rest up: I anticipate 2018 will be a wild ride!

I sometimes think the League of Women Voters is one of this area’s best kept secrets. Many people do recognize our voter service activities during election season, but far fewer are aware of our activities the rest of the year. Our Lunch and Learn programs provide us with excellent speakers on timely issues of local importance. In the coming year we hope to offer some of these on Saturdays or in the evening to be more available to those who may not be able to make weekday noon meetings. We are also working on a joint program with San Joaquin County League on immigration issues, particularly in relation to Central Valley agriculture. Hopefully, this will come together in early 2018. In addition, on the state and national levels the League is always actively keeping track of legislation and lobbying on behalf of adopted League positions. Those efforts have met with some success this year. Among our achievements at the state level was the passing and signing of AB 249, which requires all campaign ads on ballot propositions to clearly state, in readable print, the top three funders of the ad. We will now know whether the “Californians for a Better California” committee is really a large corporation or labor union or a single billionaire.

While the League is effective, we could be even more effective with more involved members. Membership chair, Karrie Bullock, is working to raise awareness of the League in our community. To launch this effort, we will be holding a Membership Event on Tuesday, November 7 (Election Day) from 6 to 9 PM at Tri-Chromatic Gallery, 1321 J Street for prospective members and anyone interested in learning more about the League. Please invite anyone—including men!—you feel would be interested, and come yourself to help spread the word. Call Karrie at 619-208-9494 for more details.

—Mary Giventer

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*Nominating Committee***Voter Service Thank-You**

League members have been busy providing educational opportunities for voters.

Candidates for Modesto City Schools' Board of Education, candidates for the Board of Directors for the Oakdale Irrigation District as well as candidates for the Modesto City Council were the individuals introduced to the voters in three forums held just before the ballots were received by vote-by-mail voters. Voters came to each forum with questions for the candidates. League members drove several miles to make certain that each forum would run smoothly so that voters would get the education they needed in order to become informed voters. Thank you to the following League members for their service to the voters of Stanislaus County: George Britton, Marie Bairey, Karrie Bullock, Ellen Dunbar, Ann Krabach, Mary Giventer, Arlene Ison, Colleen Norby and Marsha Waggoner.

— Marsha Blomquist, Voter Services

LWVSC would like to thank Marsha for organizing these events. She's a veritable powerhouse: she is dynamic. If you have other ideas, please call her.

Calendar of Events**Lunch and Learn**

Lunch and Learn is on temporary hiatus. The program will resume in January. Look for details in our December issue.

Tuesday, November 7 • Membership Event

From 6 to 9 PM at Tri-Chromatic Gallery, 1321 J Street, Modesto. All League members are invited — as well as guests who would be interested in becoming members. Program at 7 PM. Hors d'oeuvres and other goodies; wine will be available to buy for those who want something more than water. (Contact Karrie Bullock at 619-208-9494 or karrie.bullock@gmail.com if you can provide refreshments or meet and greet our guests at the event.)

Monday, November 27 • Holiday Fling

Beginning at 6:30 PM at Lynne Fenderson's home.

See full details on page 4; map on page 5.

Laura's Law



Three members of the local NAMI organization (National Alliance on Mental Illness) presented an informative and impassioned Lunch and Learn program — combining facts and personal experiences — supporting their advocacy for the implementation of Laura's Law in Stanislaus County. Rhonda Allen outlined the basics of Laura's Law:

What is it? Currently in California, entering a mental health treatment program is voluntary, but many who need it do not do so. AB 1421, approved by the California legislature in 2002, allows counties to implement Laura's Law, which authorizes court-mandated Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) for persons with severe mental illnesses who meet specific criteria.

Who is eligible? Persons must be 18 or older, have a diagnosed mental illness, history of previous services, previous refusal of treatment, threat to themselves and/or others, and a deteriorating condition but with the potential to improve. To date, the law has been implemented in 18 counties. It is an alternative to criminalization and conservatorship. Patients retain their independence if they comply with their treatment program. Families, doctors, police officers, friends, etc. — someone who knows the patient — can make a referral and petition the court to mandate AOT.

Why is it needed? Nationally, one in 25 are in need of mental health services. In Stanislaus County, it is estimated that 2000 people have unmet mental health needs. 5150 is the designation for crises calls for police to place someone with mental illness on a 72-hour hold. Stanislaus County is second in the state for 5150 calls; police get 1400 calls per year for 72-hour holds.

What are the benefits of Laura's Law? Eighteen counties in California have adopted Laura's Law, resulting in cost benefits due to reductions in 5150 calls, homelessness, arrests and psychological hospitalizations (at \$1500 per day!). Without treatment, the mentally ill don't go away; they are caught in the revolving door of being on the street, homeless, in jail, in hospitals or becoming violent. Unless a patient voluntarily enters and complies with a treatment program, long-term benefits are limited. California's Nevada County was the first to implement Laura's Law and serves as a model for others. Out-patient treatment (AOT) is seen as more humane and less costly. When treated, these patients are no more likely to become violent than the general population. The most important benefit of Laura's Law is that treatment improves the lives of patients and their families.

Linda Mayo and Jo Lambert described their experiences with family members who have mental illness and their frustrations in finding long-term treatment.

NAMI is preparing a proposal to implement a three-year pilot program of Laura's Law in Stanislaus County. It will come before the Board of Supervisors on April 28, 2018. For more information about NAMI, visit their website at www.namistanislaus.org.

Lunch and Learn will return in January.

— Marie Bairey



League of Women Voters
of Stanislaus County

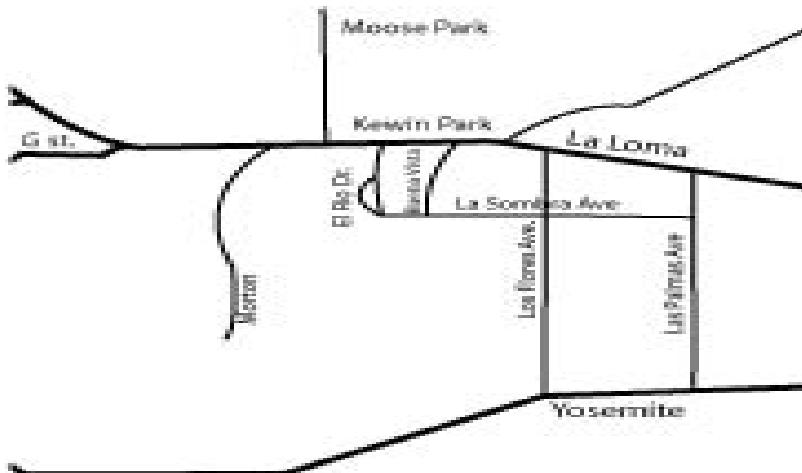
Holiday Fling

Monday
November 27, 2017
6:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker

***George Boodrookas
MJC Foundation***

At the Home of Lynne Fenderson
221 El Rio Drive, Modesto
Directions on next page.



Lynne's home is at 221 El Rio Drive in Modesto. El Rio is located off La Loma Avenue, directly across from Kewin Park, between Morton and Buena Vista.

From Downtown: Take G Street east to La Loma. Turn right on El Rio. 221 is nearly at the bottom of the hill on your right.

From East Modesto. Take Yosemite to La Loma Avenue (or Yosemite to Las Palmas to La Loma). Turn left on El Rio. 221 is nearly at the bottom of the hill on your right.

If all else fails, use your GPS. It can be tricky in the dark.



我已投票 = wǒ yǐ tóupiào 'I already voted'.

Please make sure you do on November 7 if you haven't already.

New Members: We would like to welcome two new members, Melissa Santos of *Mi Familia Vota* and Darellea (Dee) Keshner of Sonora. Dee wants to register students to vote in Sonora and also start a local chapter in Tuolumne County. Melissa attended our October Lunch and Learn.

Would you like to know just exactly what's going on in the California legislature? It's easy to find out all about bills by going through the legislature by visiting <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>. Even if you don't know the bill's number, you can type in a subject and let the app do all the work for you.

**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.