



# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

November 2013

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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## *President's Message*

I've just returned from a wonderful "girls" trip with my sister and daughter to eastern Pennsylvania. While the government shutdown limited some of our plans in Gettysburg and Philadelphia, we were still able to appreciate the role this area played in our national history. One of our absolute favorite stops was the Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Since it is privately funded it remained open. The exhibits were both moving and highly informative. Each amendment to the constitution, well explained, was placed in the context of what was happening in the country at the time. What particularly struck me was how very many of the pivotal decisions were adopted by a very few, or often even one, vote. The 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to abolish slavery passed the House of Representatives by two votes. The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, giving women the right to vote, was ratified in the Tennessee legislature by one vote. Can you imagine how different our country might be today if those one or two people had not bothered to vote?

This reminder of the importance of each of our votes made me even prouder of the role the League of Women Voters plays in the electoral process. October has been a very busy month for us. We have just completed our series of candidate forums for Modesto City Council, Modesto City Schools Board, and Modesto Irrigation District, and we have registered voters in both Modesto and Turlock. Thank you to Ellen Meyer and Marsha Waggoner for all their efforts organizing and coordinating these events. Thank you very much to all of the members who participated – we could not have done it without you. Now, just remember to vote on November 5!

*Mary Giventer, Elected President*

## MONEY IN POLITICS

Governor Brown has finished signing or vetoing bills sent to him before the legislature went on hiatus. Overall, 26 bills supported by LWVC were sent to the Governor and he signed 19 of them. See the LWVC web site for a full report on these bills. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed SB3 (Yee and Liew), one of the League's priority Money in Politics bills, which would have begun modernizing the Cal-ACCESS on-line campaign and lobbying disclosure system and required on-line training of campaign treasurers. On the positive side the Governor did acknowledge the need for an updated Cal-ACCESS and directed his administration to work on improved campaign disclosure. LWVC President, Jenny Waggoner, said, "This problem isn't going away, and neither will we." Stay tuned for 2014 developments.

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***Lunch & Learn***

***Recap from Victor Serrato, September 26, 2013***

Victor Serrato, Director of Student Services for Stanislaus County Office of Education, was the speaker for the September Lunch and Learn meeting. Victor grew up in a migrant farm-labor family and noted that education was the gateway for his path in life. He is passionate about his work with disadvantaged youth in Stanislaus County including homeless, foster, pregnant and parenting teens, and incarcerated youth.

There are 4,200 homeless youth identified by school registration forms thus far for 2013, compared to 3,000 in 2012. By definition, homelessness includes any young person living in a substandard housing situation such as homeless shelters, substandard vehicles, couch surfing, at risk of eviction, and on the streets. Other traumas, including abuse, often accompany homelessness. Victor noted that these statistics do not include the youth who are not in school at all. Stanislaus County has approximately 1,100 drop-outs a year.

Foster children are mostly in the system because of neglect, although delinquency problems can also lead to a foster placement. Foster children face many obstacles in life often moving from home to home as foster parents give up on them. There is no average number of moves, but Victor has seen young persons move as little as twice and as much as 40 times. Each new placement results in a 6-month loss in educational progress. Even with tutoring programs are available, less than 2% go to college. But, Victor notes, they need much more than an education. His goal is to provide a mentor for every foster youth, provide organized activities to help them stay connected, and have intervention specialists brought in to assist as needed.

AB 12 was passed last year to extend the benefits for foster youth age 21 or 22 for those in special education. If the young person has left the program at high school graduation, which often happens, they can opt back in until they reach the cutoff age. The goal of AB 12 was to ease the transition for foster youth into adulthood, giving them some support as they continue their education and job seeking.

Birgit Fladage, Stanislaus County District Attorney, will be the speaker for our October Lunch and Learn program. The meeting will be held at Jacob's Fine Dining, 2501 McHenry Ave., on Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup> at 12:00 pm.

The meeting is open to the general public as well as League members and reservations are not required. The cost is \$13.

**GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT**

The LWV California has just released the updated, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, *Guide to California Government*. The book is designed to engage and inform readers by emphasizing the public's role in California government. This easy to use book explains

- voting and elections logistics
- the initiative system
- levels of government
- state finances
- the education system
- how to contact your government

This unique edition has handy info graphics explaining complicated structures of government, icons in the margin to link and highlight topics along with related Web sites so readers can find and access their government easily. The book can be ordered from Amazon for \$18.00.

## ***Voter Service Fall 2013***

The League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County held three forums since our last report. We sponsored forums for the Modesto City Council, Modesto City School Board and Modesto Irrigation District races. All three forums went smoothly and were very informative. Though attendance was lower than previous years, the audience asked very good questions. Candidates responded with well-thought responses and good ideas. The *Modesto Bee* did promote our forums and wrote articles about the Modesto City County Forum and the Modesto Irrigation District. Many thanks go to Julie Saugstad and Amy Wolfe for moderating these forums and to Ellen Dunbar, Seena Rhine, Laurie Carley, Carman Morad, Colleen Norby, Joan Goldsmith, and Mary Giventer for assisting at the forums.

Many thanks to our President Mary Giventer for taking on the Smart Voter program. Letters were sent out to all 91 candidates running for the various offices in all of Stanislaus County. As of this report, 18 candidates have put up their candidate information on our FREE Smart Voter website. This may not seem a lot, but is on par with previous years. We registered voters at the Modesto and Turlock Libraries. Many thanks go to Ellen Dunbar, Marie Bairey, Karrie Bullock, Wendy Scott and Jo Roullard.

***Ellen Meyer and Marsha Waggoner,  
Voter Service Directors***

### **HOLIDAY FLING: MONDAY, DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2013**

The League's annual Holiday Fling will be held Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Location, directions, and details announced as the event finalizes. In the meantime, keep your calendars clear and your favorite appetizer or side in mind, as this is a potluck event, as League honors the Donors who help LWVSC thrive!

Please RSVP with Laurie at [cadee@IVCMedia.LLC.com](mailto:cadee@IVCMedia.LLC.com) or (209)756-1201

### ***CALENDAR OF EVENTS***

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

<b>Thursday, October 31st</b>	<b>Lunch and Learn: Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager Jacob's 1201 McHenry Ave., at 12pm.</b>
<b>Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Summit on Fracking: Independent Voter Project; petroleum representatives, environmentalists and state legislators will be on hand. Free event, but RSVP is required. Lunch provided. California Room, UC Merced. Contact Mary Giventer to attend.</b>
<b>Wednesday, November 13th</b>	<b>Board Meeting 6:00pm Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road, Modesto</b>
<b>December 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Holiday Fling! Details will be emailed and mailed closer to event.</b>

## **Welcome New Members!**

**Donna Pierce**

**I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS  
BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!**

- Student Membership \$25
- Individual Membership \$60
- Household Membership \$90

Please contact me with more information.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (for directory) \_\_\_\_\_

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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.**