



The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

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President's Message

Voting rights has been a primary goal of the League of Women Voters since its founding. Voter registration is the first step. Since it launched in April 2018, the California Motor Voter program has been a big step forward in making registration more accessible and efficient. The program has two main features: it is an opt-out rather than an opt-in system; secondly, information is electronically transferred, utilizing technology to enhance efficiency. When a person goes to the DMV to get or renew a driver's license or to get an identity card, he/she is asked the usual information of name, address, date of birth. But now the person will also be asked to affirm his/her eligibility to vote and asked to opt out if they do **not** want to be registered to vote. The personal information for those who want to register is then sent electronically to the office of the California Secretary of State for verification of citizenship and added to the voter rolls. Non-citizens applying for driver's licenses are issued special licenses and not given the option to register. This system not only registers new voters but also cleans up the voting rolls by automatically reregistering people who move at their new address and removing them from the voting roll at their previous address. In its first three months of operation, California Motor Voter registered 260,000 new voters and updated registration at new addresses for another 120,000.

California is one of 15 states and the District of Columbia with some form of Automatic Voter Registration. Oregon was the first state to enact the system in 2017 and reports 4 times more new voters registered in 2017 than 2016. In June of 2017 a federal Automatic Voter Registration Act was introduced in Congress. While it has not passed as yet, the League is in support of the legislation. Our days of setting up tables at community events to encourage voter registration are not yet over, but potential voters are being offered new options to take that first step to register to vote. Now our job focuses on giving them the opportunity to be informed voters. I am looking forward to our forums, Pros and Cons discussions and the on-line Voter's Edge – and encouraging voters to take the next step – VOTE! ■

Mary

Modesto Gospel Mission: Refuge, Recovery, Restoration

Jason Conway, Executive Director of the Modesto Gospel Mission, told his personal story and described the work of the Modesto Gospel Mission at the August Lunch and Learn.

The Mission was established 70 years ago after a Billy Graham Youth for Christ Crusade. Income in excess of costs for the event provided seed money to found the local shelter. Over the last 70 years its facilities and programs have grown to serve the homeless in our community.

For ten years, starting at age 17, Mr. Conway (a Modesto native) found himself without purpose, making poor choices (including addiction and mental health issues) and ultimately homeless. Looking for a bed, he went to the Gospel Mission. When invited to stay for the 30-day residential program, he said, "Great!" He was relieved: He had a place to stay. After two weeks, he enrolled in the 18-month faith-based New Life Program and graduated in 2009. It changed his life. It changed the old desires to new ones. He was soon offered a six-month internship opportunity which led to a position as assistant to the director for operations. When the former executive director resigned, Mr. Conway was offered the interim position — it being made clear he would not be considered for the permanent job. While serving as a pastor in Oakdale and taking courses at Liberty University for a business degree, he decided the Mission job was worth working for — which he did. After a nationwide search, in which Mr. Conway was called upon to show potential candidates around, he got a call from the board chair. On his birthday, the board voted to name him as executive director.

The Modesto Gospel Mission is a faith-based program and receives no government funding. In addition to providing 500 meals a day, the Mission offers a range of services including emergency shelter, medical and counseling services, tutoring, a 30-day recovery program followed by nine-months at the shelter while the clients continue to take steps to improve their lives and the 18-month New Life Program. The Mission has housing for men, women and children and can accommodate more than 200 people; it is usually at about 80 percent of capacity. The Mission's goal is to restore those who can to reenter the community by equipping them with sobriety, education, job training and life skills. People can't be forced to commit to the programs, but in 2017 40 individuals graduated from the New Life Program. Success is defined as a "transformed life." The Mission relies on volunteers and collaborates with other agencies. They are working to build a relationship with the La Loma Neighborhood Association.

The Mission is celebrating its 70 years and held a gala fundraiser September 7 at the Double Tree Hotel. Check modestogospelmission.org for more information.

Marie Bairey

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New Members

Four new memberships have recently come from throughout the county. The first one that came in was from **Lynn Sarraille**, a special ed teacher and artist from Turlock. Then came **Janie Meily** of Modesto. Janie is a native of Modesto and has been active with the McHenry Mansion for many years as a board member and docent. Shortly behind her was **RoseLee Hurst** of Newman. Rose is a retired faculty member from MJC (Literature and Language Arts). And finally, **Mary Ann Reynolds**, who has moved to Modesto from Merced County, where she was active with League. She is a retired resource specialist at Merced High. A very hearty and warm welcome to all! ■

1 On the Calendar

September 12 • Board Meeting • 6:30 PM • at the home of Marie Bairey.

September 27 • Lunch and Learn • Noon • At Ridgway's on Orangeburg. President Mary Giventer will provide information about the pros and cons for state propositions on the November ballot. (Chef's choice: \$15; vegetarian or gluten-free available on request.)

For a schedule of pros and cons on issues as well as our forums, please see the following page. ■

Democracy is NOT a spectator sport.

LWV Stanislaus County Voter Education Events for November 7, 2018, Election

The purpose of these events is to introduce candidates and issues on the November 7, 2018, ballot to the voters of Stanislaus County. The events are free and open to the public.

Thursday, October 4 • Pros and Cons for the state propositions on the November 7, 2018, ballot.

Modesto Junior College, West Campus, Sierra Hall, 132.
6:30– 8 PM.

Tuesday, October 9 • Candidate Forum.

Yosemite Community College Board of Trustees, Districts 1, 2, 4 and 7.
Modesto Junior College, East Campus, Forum 110.
6:30 – 8 PM.

Wednesday, October 10 • Candidates Forums.

City/County Chambers, Basement, 1010 Tenth Street, Modesto
Stanislaus County Supervisors, Districts 3 and 4 at 6 PM.
County Superintendent of Schools at 7:30 PM.

Thursday, October 11 • Candidate Forums — Turlock.

Walnut Elementary Education Center, 4219 N. Walnut Ave., Turlock
Turlock City Council at 6 PM.
Turlock Mayor at 7:30 PM.

Tuesday, October 16 – Candidate Forums.

City/County Chambers, Basement, 1010 Tenth Street, Modesto
State Assembly District 12 at 6 PM.
Stanislaus County District Attorney at 7:30 PM.

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

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
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