



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

April 2013

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 61 NO.8

Message from our President, Mary Giventer:

There are several points in the year that seem to be a "New Year" to me. Of course, there is January 1, but I also sense a new year every September when school starts again and every spring when I can start to get into the garden and outdoor activities again. For LWV Stanislaus County spring is also a New Year as we wrap up one program year and transition to the next with new board members, new ideas, and, hopefully, new excitement. Our annual meeting is the most important business meeting of the year. Besides electing new officers, we will be adopting a new budget and adopting our local program positions. This is your opportunity to have direct input on the direction you want our local group to move. This is also your opportunity to get more involved with the League and take on new challenges. Listen with an open mind when the nominating committee calls, or even better call them and let them know how you would like to be involved. Do not be afraid that a new position is too overwhelming; there are many experienced hands to guide you. I certainly know, for I have depended on them many times this year. Do not be afraid that you do not have time; there are on-board and off-board positions and we now have the miracles of electronic communication. We have coordinated nearly all our activities through e-mail and text messages. Our newsletter editor even lives out of state. Details of the annual meeting are still being worked out and more information will follow, but for now, SAVE THE DATE, MAY 8 at Marsha Wagoner's. Happy Passover, Happy Easter and Happy Spring!

Mary Giventer, President

Message from our Vice-President, Stella Beratlis:

Initiative & Referendum Process Update Study – Consensus Report

On March 2, the LWVSC held a Consensus Meeting for the Initiative & Referendum Process Update Study, a LWVC study on the Initiative & Referendum process in California. For the month prior to the consensus meeting, the I & R Committee had been considering the existing process, problems, reform ideas, and more regarding the citizens' initiative process in the course of its study. In the end, the committee reached consensus on the main question, which was: Should California retain the citizens' initiative and referendum process? The consensus response was "retain, but with changes." At a lively presentation attended by about 13 participants on March 2, the committee presented its results and welcomed further discussion on the issues. Those in attendance agreed with the committee's conclusions and added more comments and insights to the discussion at hand. The consensus report was filed with LWVC by the March 31 deadline; the State League will then consider all the local League responses in formulating new language and points in its existing Initiative & Referendum Process position. **A copy of the four-page consensus report can be found on our website at http://modesto.ca.lwvnet.org/about_action.html.**

Stella Beratlis, Vice-President

**LWV of STANISLAUS
COUNTY OFFICERS**

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NATIONAL: For the second time this year, the Supreme Court is hearing challenges to elements of the National Voter Registration Act, also known as the Motor Voter Law. Arizona, joined by Alabama, Georgia and Kansas, is challenging this law. The LWVUS is filing an Amicus Brief opposing this challenge.

The Motor Voter Law requires all states to treat an application for a driver's license as a request for voter registration, and allows an applicant to register by mail. The Act requires each state to use the official federal registration form in which applicants state under penalty of perjury that they are US citizens.

Arizona recently passed Proposition 200, which requires applicants to provide proof of citizenship when they register to vote. Providing documentation in person is a problem for naturalized citizens, as federal law prohibits making copies of the documentation, and other sources for documentation are often incomplete.

The LWVUS worked diligently for passage of the NVRA and, according to President Elizabeth McNamara, supports further measures to make it easier for people to vote such as "legislation requiring early voting, setting limits on waiting times, providing for portable voter registration, and setting up secure online voter registration."

STATE: The LWVC continues to monitor the regulations on fracking being developed by the Senate Committees on Environmental Quality and on Natural Resources and Water. Representing the League, Dr. Linda Phillips recently addressed the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) at a joint informational hearing held in southern California. Dr Phillips argued for a strong regulatory program that "...protects the environment, prevents pollution and ensures public safety".

Her remarks focused on hazardous materials disclosure, an issue important to the LWVC. She stated, "To protect public health and safety and the environment, it is absolutely necessary for government agencies – including local agencies that might need to respond to hazardous materials spills or accidents – to have information immediately available on the hazardous materials in their community. To protect water quality and supplies, it is necessary for water agencies, such as the Regional Water Quality Control Boards and water suppliers, to have access to such information. Under California law since 1985, the public also has a right to know. She also emphasized that disclosure must be timely and complete. Prior notification of fracking and the hazardous materials to be used must be given and disclosure of hazardous materials, including those considered trade secrets must be complete and that there should be no exemptions for confidential or exploratory wells. She ended by stating that disclosure and oversight have been needed for years and that the first step is to begin gathering data so that we will know the size and scope of fracking in California and what hazardous materials and toxic chemicals are present.

Ann Krabach, State and National Action

Lunch and Learn:

Jean Okuye, our February Lunch and Learn speaker, an almond farmer who lives in a straw bale house in Livingston, is passionate about preserving farmland, water and wetlands. She is the first woman president of the Merced County Farm Bureau and an active member of the [Valley Land Alliance](#).

Jean started her talk by sharing that to keep up with the population growth more food will have to be produced in the next 50 years than in all of the past 10,000 years combined. Six of the top ten food producing counties in the state are in the valley with Merced at number 5 and Stanislaus number 6.

Thanks to good soil, good climate and availability of water \$30 billion worth of product is produced annually. Jean expressed concern about the valley selling water to other areas. She explained that there are no regulations on how many wells a person can put on their property and, if more surface water is sold to others, then farmers would be forced to draw water from more wells. She also pointed out that just because an area is zoned as farmland does not mean that it is being farmed. In Merced 40% of the land zoned as agricultural is used for recreational purposes.

Jean also talked about the work of The Valley Land Alliance. Their mission is to educate to save our farmland and food security. Their goals include the protection of watersheds and supporting growth that is compact and maximizes density within existing city boundaries. Urban growth must be directed away from wetland areas, which, in addition to providing a habitat for migrating birds, also produce jobs, and help with flood control, water purification and groundwater recharge. To help in this area, Jean suggested that people need to be educated and to educate others, to go after available money, to be at the table when decisions are made, to be proactive, to be positive, and to support organizations that are working hard by contributing monetarily or with volunteer hours.

In conclusion, Jean noted that there is no place like here, but... Our land and water can easily evaporate without careful long term planning by selfless decision makers, our city councils and county supervisors. Food, water, shelter and air are our habitat and it must all be protected.

Lynn Padlo, education coordinator for a mental health advocacy group called National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is our Lunch and Learn speaker for March. She will speak about the work of this grassroots organization that advocates for and educates individuals and families about mental illness. It also educates schools, health care providers and the community about early signs of mental illness and the importance of early referral and treatment.

The meeting will be held at 12 pm on Thursday, March 28th at Appetez Restaurant in the Roseberg Square Shopping Center, Modesto. The cost of lunch is \$11 and the program is open to the public as well as League members. Reservations are not required but vegetarian meal requests should be made directly to the restaurant in advance.

The speaker for April will be Debbie Johnson from "Without Permission" a Modesto-based non-profit working against human trafficking.

Ruby Hennessey, Lunch and Learn

[Call to State Convention - myLeague](#)

Dolce Hayes Mansion, 200 Edenvale Avenue, San Jose, CA 95136

May 17 – May 19, 2013

Board Highlights:

- The Nominating committee is in the process of contacting potential nominees. At present, about half of the slate has been completed.
- We welcome two new members: Phyllis Hart and Marianne Marible.
- A Legislative Interview has been set up with State Senator Cathleen Gagliani on Wednesday, April 3, at 3 pm in her Stockton office. Jean Tenney, Ann Krabach, and Ellen Meyer will attend.
- We will have a table at Earth Day in Graceda Park on Saturday, April 20 for advocacy. Ann will be asking members to help with this event.
- The March Lunch and Learn speaker will be Lynn Padlo of the National Association of Mental Illness.
- The Annual Meeting is scheduled for May 8 at Marsha Waggoner’s home.

Laurie Carley, Secretary

Proposed Slate 2013-2014:

Position	2013-2014
President	<i>Mary Giventer</i>
Vice President	<i>Seena Rhine</i>
Secretary	<i>Marie Bairey</i>
Treasurer	
Finance Drive	<i>Ellen Dunbar</i>
Voter Service	<i>Ellen Meyer</i>
Membership	
State & National Action	<i>Hanna Renning</i>
Local Action	<i>Stella Beratlis</i>
Voter Editor	
Public Relations	
Board Administrator	<i>Lynn Kelso</i>
Voter Service	<i>Marsha Waggoner</i>
Membership	<i>Colleen Norby</i>
Webmaster	<i>Diane Bartlett</i>
Lunch & Learn	<i>Ruby Hennessey & Joan Goldsmith</i>

Welcome New Members:

Phyllis Hart and Marianne Marible

**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) _____

Email _____

— Please deliver my *Voter* by E-mail__ US mail __

MAIL TO

LWVSC

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352

**Please attend this
year’s annual
meeting!**

Wednesday May 8, 2013

6:00 pm

Home of Marsha Waggoner

Please RSVP to Amy Wolfe
by May 1, 2013

209-499-4091 or
amy@agsafe.org.

LOCAL ACTION: POSITIONS OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

Local Program (2012-13) League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County

Housing (Adopted 1975, updated 1982 and 2003)

We recognize that the need for shelter is fundamental, and that a diverse population will desire a wide selection of housing options. Therefore, we:

- A. Support equal opportunity in housing options in Stanislaus County.
- B. Support local measures to increase the supply of a diverse range of housing types to serve a diverse population.
- C. Support local measures to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing for everyone.

Land Use (Adopted 1976, updated 1988 and 2003)

We recognize that land use decisions have an impact on many areas, notably on the quality of life and on the economy; and we recognize that land itself is an irreplaceable resource that needs to be preserved and protected. We support land use planning that:

- A. Protects farmland outside clearly defined urban boundaries to avoid unnecessary conversion of farmlands.
- B. Protects the overall quality of environment (soil, air, and water).
- C. Provides urban development contiguous with existing development where urban services can be provided.
- D. Provides adequate funding for infrastructure needs (transportation, schools, parks, government services and public utilities.)

Land use planning should involve cooperation between and among the various local regional government bodies.

****Adult Criminal Justice (Adopted 1980, 1982 and 1984) We support::**

- A. The funding in Stanislaus County of a wide range of alternatives to incarceration for all but the physically dangerous offender.
- B. Efforts to further the expansion of rehabilitative programs and facilities for persons convicted of drug and alcohol abuse.
- C. A greater allocation of funds within the criminal justice budget for crime prevention, crime detection and rehabilitation

****Child Abuse and Neglect (Adopted 1985, updated 1987)**

- A. We recognize child abuse as a societal problem; therefore, we support: Legislation, which addresses the jurisdictional, organizational and procedural problems in the prosecution of child abuse cases.
- B. Modification of the courtroom process to accommodate child victims.
- C. Consistent reporting and recording of child abuse and neglect cases and development of comprehensive statistics.
- D. Broad-based prevention programs that are accessible to all family members and take into consideration the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of those being served.
- E. Efforts of public and private agencies to continually focus public attention on the problems of child abuse and neglect.

Local Library Finance (Adopted 1994, updated 1997 and 2003)

We support long-term, consistent funding of the Stanislaus County Free Library.

- A. We strongly support a dedicated source of funds which could be used only for the Library
- B. Basic library services should remain free and become more accessible to all Stanislaus County residents in a

nondiscriminatory manner.

C. We support a long-range goal of maintaining a library system of excellence.

****Gang Violence (Adopted 2007)**

In order to address the problem of criminal gang activity within our community, we support the development of culturally diverse intervention and enrichment programs at the elementary school level and beyond.

A. Such programs may include recreational, athletic, academic, creative and/or social activities.

B. We encourage allocation of resources to fund these programs through public, private and/or nonprofit organizations.

Municipal Government (Adopted 2008)

To assure that municipal government is open, accountable, and responsive to residents and to promote full participation by citizens, we support:

- A system that balances neighborhood needs with citywide perspective
- A system that encourages and offers opportunity for increased voter and candidate participation

(Should districts be part of a proposal, criteria for establishing districts are addressed by LWVC. Also, LWVC has a position favoring majority decisions for elections officials.)

****Reviews proposed by Board:**

State and Local Program Planning was completed on Feb. 13, with 13 participants meeting prior to the regular board meeting as announced in VOTER. For local program, we voted to retain our local program with possible updates to the following positions:

- Child Abuse & Neglect, to add reference to foster care system and continued support system;
- Adult Criminal Justice, to review position in terms of realignment; and
- Gang Violence, to add language which reflects a commitment to whole-family interventions and solutions.

LWVSC 2013 -2014 Proposed Budget

INCOME	2012 -13 YTD	2012-13 Budget	2013-14 Proposed
Membership	5,022.96	5,900.00	5,900.00
Ed Fund	2,280.00	3,100.00	2,800.00
Gen Fund	4,355.00	3,700.00	4,000.00
Misc.	254.00		
Total Income	11,911.96	12,700.00	12,700.00
EXPENSES			
Per Member Dues			
State	2,254.00	2,365.00	2,365.00
National	3,038.00	2,955.00	2,955.00
Total Dues Payment	\$ 5,292.00	\$ 5,320.00	\$ 5,320.00
Member Expenses			
Action	20.25	50.00	50.00
Board tools	-	100.00	100.00
Child care	-	100.00	100.00
Convention	-	1,200.00	1,500.00
Finance Drive	-	400.00	400.00
Meetings	88.00	900.00	800.00
Org. Mem.	20.00	20.00	20.00
Postage	-	150.00	150.00
Publications	-	150.00	150.00
Supplies	-	150.00	150.00
Workshops	-	125.00	125.00
Total Member Expenses	\$ 128.25	\$ 3,345.00	\$ 3,545.00
Office Expenses			
Equipment	-	500.00	250.00
Postage	27.00	250.00	250.00
Insurance	232.00	325.00	325.00
Rent	214.75	300.00	300.00
Supplies	88.00	100.00	100.00
Telephone	369.32	475.00	475.00
Newsletter	261.09	400.00	450.00
Website	160.00	200.00	200.00
Total Office Expenses	\$ 1,352.16	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,350.00
Voter Service Expenses			
Forums	245.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Publicity	-	250.00	250.00
Publications	-	200.00	200.00
Total Voter Service Expenses	\$ 245.00	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 1,450.00
Total All Expenses	\$ 7,017.41	\$ 12,615.00	\$ 12,665.00

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.

**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Thursday, March 28, 2013	Lunch and Learn, 12:00 pm, Lynn Padlo, NAMI, Appetez Restaurant, Roseberg Square Shopping Center, Modesto
Wednesday, April 3, 2013	Legislative Interview, 3:00 pm, Senator Catherine Gagliani, Stockton
Wednesday, April 10, 2013	Board Meeting, 6:30 pm, Dale Commons, 3900 Dale Road, Modesto
Thursday, April 26, 2013	Lunch and Learn, 12:00 pm, Debbie Johnson from “Without Permission”, Appetez Restaurant, Roseberg Square Shopping Center, Modesto
Wednesday, May 8, 2013	Annual Meeting, 6:00 pm, home of Marsha Waggoner. We have invited Senator Anthony Canella to speak. Please RSVP to Amy Wolfe by May 1, 2013 to 209-499-4091 or amy@agsafe.org.