



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

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Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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President's Message

I just got back from the LWVUS Convention in Washington DC and I would like to thank the League for funds to be able to do so. I will share with you a few of the things happening with the League in the next two years. First, it was recommended and voted upon to NOT increase the National dues in the next two years. RAH! After much debate and an amendment, it was voted to lower the age of membership to 16 and change the word from "citizens" to "persons" in relation to membership. It now means that any person 16 and older can be a voting member of the League.

The Program for the League in the next two years will be "Making for Democracy Work". The Program includes: 1. Voter protection and mobilization, 2. Election reform, and 3. Money in Politics, constitutional amendment and redistricting. If this seems familiar to you it should, as it is basically the same as the past two years. None of the 48 non-recommended items were considered. While the Program adopted is plenty to keep the League busy I was hoping for the inclusion of climate change or its implications to be considered. We, in California, are in much better shape than many of the states which are experiencing many efforts to restrict voting rights by making it very difficult to register or to actually vote. This has occurred due to the Supreme Court decision negating the Right to Vote Act. We also have a workable redistricting plan put into law a few years ago. Money in Politics is a national issue, thanks to the Supreme Court decisions.

I did attend some interesting sessions covering the following: Working toward a more uniform justice code (US has 52 separate criminal codes), and Behavior Health and the Water/Climate issue.

Overall, it was a good conference. Now, on to an exciting and productive year.

Seena Rhine, President LWVSC

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***LWVSC Lunch & Learn, June 30, 2016
Kristina Hacker, Turlock Journal***

Founded in 1904, the *Turlock Journal* is the city's oldest continuously operating enterprise. Its editor, Kristina Hacker, has been associated with the paper only since 2007, but she has changed the paper into an excellent example of what a small local paper can be. Owned by the Morris Newspaper Corporation, headquartered in Savanna, Georgia, the *Journal* and other local newspapers (the *Ceres Courier*, the *Manteca Bulletin*, the *Oakdale Leader*, the *Escalon Times*, the *Ripon Bulletin* and the *Riverbank News*) are free to support any political point of view they care to, but Hacker says she prefers to present a balanced variety of viewpoints.

Why are community newspapers still important? Although there is a considerable amount of news about Turlock in the *Modesto Bee*, for example, only a local paper can present news that pertains mostly to that local community: people, businesses, and city politics. Although it is the *Journal's* policy not to endorse candidates for political office, the paper's five reporters and editor cover a lot of territory: education, arts and leisure, Future Farmers of America, 4-H, sports, crime, local events and, of course, local politics, to name a few.

One area where newspapers are crucial is government oversight: for example, had there been a small-town newspaper in Bell, CA, there might not have been such a sweeping financial scandal surrounding its elected officials in 2010. No one seemed aware that the city manager of a city of a little more than 35,000 residents had an annual salary of nearly \$788,000, not including benefits. He and other city officials tried to stay below the radar but got caught by *The Los Angeles Times*. (Incidentally, the city manager had been hired in 1993: 17 years of bilking the town.)

Reporters for the *Journal* attend not only City Council meetings but also less frequently attended meetings such as those of the Planning Commission, the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission and the School Board.

Newspapers are also good for community cohesion by keeping people involved and bringing neighborhoods together. Hacker cited a study that showed the folding of Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* as well as that of the print *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* had profound negative repercussions in their respective cities.

The *Journal* has a website with breaking news items and video uploads. In addition, they have a presence in social media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram. The regional magazine for area code 209, called *209*, is also published by the *Journal*.

Often asked why the *Journal* contains so few "feel-good" stories, Hacker points out that the most visited pages on the website are those concerning crime stories, followed closely by the obituaries.

Michael Fuller, Finance Drive Director

In Remembrance of Myrtle Osner (1920-2016)

When I remember Myrtle Osner, I hear the music from *Sound of Music*. "How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand?" No matter who you were, you noticed Myrtle and listened to her message because you knew it was for the betterment of the community. Myrtle eschewed the values of the League. Voter Service was very important to her because it educated voters of the issues; good land use policies and a respect for the environment were just good common sense. Myrtle was an early adopter of riding your bike to everything. The only problem was she drove the same way. Early on, I became the designated driver for meetings out-of-town.

Myrtle assumed leadership roles with ease. She was president of our local League from 1979 - 1981. In addition, she served as a director on the board of the League of Women Voters of California. She was more than an officer, she continued to give volunteer time from picking-up mail to catching you at a meeting to give you the Membership Directory (this saved the League the cost of postage and reduced pollution of the mail carrier driving to your home!!!).

More than all of this, she was a great teacher and judge. I was very new to League when I became president and Myrtle was the encyclopedia of information. She had no problem setting me on the right course and I am very grateful for all she did for me and for this community.

Kenni Friedman

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Thursday, July 28th 12:00-1:30pm	Wanda Bonnell. Coordinator of the Promise Scholars Program at CSU, Stanislaus, will speak on "Empowering Foster & Homeless Youth Through Education." Ridgeways, Modesto. \$13, Chef's
Wednesday, July 13th 6:30pm-8:00pm	Board meeting. Hosted at Marie Bairey's. Please call (209) 524-1698 for directions or to carpool.
Wednesday, August 10th 6:30-8:00pm	Board meeting. Host TBA. Please call (209)524-1698 for directions or to carpool.



**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
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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.