



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 want to thank the League for giving me the opportunity to attend the national convention in Dallas. It was an experience that I wish all members could experience. It was, at different times, inspiring, informative, exciting, frustrating, and even boring.

I do want to share with you some of the major issues that are vital to us as LWV members and will be the focus of the National in the next two years. Resolutions on the following issues were adopted: 1) Climate change and support for controlling carbon emissions, 2) Campaign financing, and 3) Restoring voting rights to released felons. There was much discussion concerning economic inequality and its impact on our society. I suspect that this issue will be a major part of the national program in 2016 - 2017. Concurrence on a position supporting laws against human trafficking was passed.

The major program for the next two years will be a three-part program combining study and review of key, specific structures of American Democracy, consisting of: A study of the process of amending the U.S. Constitution; and a review and update of the League position on campaign finance and a review of the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress. It is not likely to result in a formal study in the next two years.

Please take the opportunity to learn more about these important issues confronting us and the League's positions by logging on to the national LWVUS website.

There will not be an increase in dues in 2014/15 but it will increase by \$1.00 in 2015-16.

Seena Rhine, President LWVSC

Board Highlights June 18, 2014

Highlights of the June 18, 2014 Board meeting:

- Executive Committee – Seena Rhine, Mary Giventer, Marie Bairey and Amy Wolfe.
- Possibility of study on Higher Ed.(State Study) to include Stan. State students in the process. Possible use of generous donation of Doris Scanlon to help defray costs.
- Check into the possibility of registering new voters at the swearing in ceremony for new citizens.
- Discussed ideas to increase attendance at the Holiday Fling.

**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) _____

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STATE AND NATIONAL ACTION

As League members we consider the ability to vote as one of the key components of our democracy. Thomas Jefferson noted, “Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.”

Education is what informs us. But we may take our education for granted. Marc Champion posed this question on May 14, in the Bloomberg View about women’s equality, education, and ability to make choices. He asked:

What does the kidnapping of almost 300 schoolgirls by Nigerian Islamists have in common with an inspiring Facebook campaign in which Iranian women display themselves without headscarves?

Nothing directly, but both go to the heart of what’s wrong with religious zealots and why ultimately they must fail: their attempt to deprive women of choice ultimately cannot coexist with rising levels of education.

The Iranian Facebook page is extraordinarily touching. It was begun by a journalist who posted a photograph of herself without a headscarf. She invited other Iranian women to share their own ‘stealthy freedom’ moments. And so they did, posting pictures in which they defied the law to take off their headscarves, often in remote areas where they couldn’t be seen. The page now has 150,000 likes. I can’t read the original comments, in Persian, of those who posted the photographs—an act of some bravery, given that the women can be tracked by Iran’s morality police. Judging by the translations reported in English-language media and a random selection loaded into Google Translate, they aren’t talking about religion. They are demanding the freedom to choose for themselves what they wear, or don’t, on their heads.

In Turkey, an opposite but similar debate raged several years ago, as the ruling Justice and Development Party—whose leadership consists of former Islamists—sought to eliminate restrictions that the previous secularist regime had imposed on women, banning them from wearing headscarves at universities or in government jobs. The froth of that debate between conservatives and secularists was always about religion, or the rescue of girls from traditional parents. The women and girls involved, however, invariably said they just wanted the right to choose.

In Iran, conservative media have attacked the Facebook page as irreligious and anti-revolutionary. Even President Hassan Rouhani, arguing against any crackdown against women without headscarves as he reached out to moderates last year, remained trapped within the fundamentalist terms of the debate: ‘In my view, many women in our society who do not respect our hijab law are virtuous,’ he said. That is true, only the women aren’t debating their virtue, which no doubt they see as their own business.

Both Turkey and Iran have seen a big expansion in the number of women going to university in recent years. The demand by women to decide their own clothes and fates will surely grow in tandem. How can you train women as surgeons, with the power to make life or death decisions, and at the same time demand they accept that they can’t be trusted to choose what they wear on their heads?

The answer of the kidnapers in Nigeria is to stop education. They said they took the 300 girls because they had no business going to school. A recently released video of about half the schoolgirls showed them wearing head coverings and cloaks. Some were Christian but they said they had not converted to Islam. ‘We have indeed liberated them,’ said Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau, according to the BBC. I doubt he asked them. But he did propose trading them for other prisoners.

Thomas Jefferson also wrote, “Information (or education) is the currency of democracy”

(Reprinted with permission of the author, Marc Chapman can be contacted at mchampion7@bloomberg.net)

Venessa Czopek, State & National Action

May Lunch and Learn, Ginger Johnson: Major Changes Ahead for California Education

Ginger Johnson, MCS Assistant Superintendent, outlined major changes in California and particularly Modesto City Schools at the April Lunch and Learn. One change is that State funding formulas will replace restricted allocations with more flexible funding to meet local needs. Another change is the student demographics. MCS student population currently is 58% Latino and 26% white; poverty is also a factor with 85% of elementary students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The graduation rate of 78% raises the question of what happens to the other 22%.

It became evident that previous standards and instructional strategies were not adequately preparing students for life after high school when 50% of four-year college students and 80% of two-year college students required remedial courses. Jobs of the future will require critical thinking, collaboration, communication and media literacy in addition to basic skills. To address these realities, curriculum, instruction and assessment are undergoing major changes. In 2010 states' governors came together to establish standards that are rigorous, teach basic skills, focus on conceptual understanding and problem solving, and flow smoothly from grade to grade. Common Core Curriculum, a set of educational standards adopted by 45 states, is being implemented with the 2014-15 school year. Language arts instruction will emphasize reading for information, explaining with textual citations, listening and speaking. Math will stress conceptual understanding, reasoning and application of basic skills. The computerized Smarter Balance Assessment, being piloted in California this year, will stress reasoning and performance tasks with quick turn-around to report of results.

One criticism of Common Core is that the roll out has been too fast without adequate staff development or technology training or infrastructure. MCS is piloting "Digital Davis" High School next year with a digital device for every student. Many current instructional materials incorporate Common Core; MCS is reviewing these and training teachers to teach the content in a new way.

Marie Bairey, Secretary

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Wednesday, July 9th 6:30pm	Board meeting, Seena Rhine's house. Please email for directions.
Thursday, July 31st	Lunch & Learn: Marian Kaanon, Why Philanthropy Matters in Community Transformation. Jacobs Restaurant, \$13 Chef's Choice.

**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.