



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

It has been a great, productive pre-election time and we can finally take a breather. It seems like there has been something going on almost every day or evening. Voter Service has conducted two candidate forums, Waterford and Turlock, as well as two Pros & Cons forums at Stanislaus State and MJC. Thanks to Amy Wolfe and Marsha Waggoner for their hard work on the Candidate Forums, and Mary Giventer for her informative analysis and presentations concerning the State Propositions.

Yours truly has also been busy spreading the word about the League in the past few weeks. I had the honor of presenting a brief history, a discussion of the way we study and arrive at consensus and our mission of electorate education to Dr. Harter's class at Humphrey's Law School. The students had just studied the Propositions, and it was a pleasure talking with them. I also presented a similar program along with the Pros & Cons to the DKG sorority, of which I am a member. Thanks, Mary for your work. I also had the privilege of presenting the Pros & Cons to MIKL (Modesto Institute of Continued Learning) at MJC. It is a moment of pride to realize how LWV is respected for giving straightforward and objective analyses of the issues. I received nothing but praise and appreciation for what we stand for and the education we impart to the electorate from all of the groups to which I spoke.

I encourage all of you to attend the Holiday Fling on Dec. 2nd to enjoy the fellowship of other members and to listen to and get to know our guest speaker, Jeff Jardine.

Seena Rhine, President LWVSC

Holiday Fling Tuesday December 2nd

Mark your calendars for the League's annual Holiday Fling held at the home of Lynn Fenderson **Tuesday, December 2nd** with Modesto Bee columnist **Jeff Jardine** providing the night's speaking entertainment. The annual membership directories will be available during this event, along with wine, appetizers and fellowship. Please keep a spot open on your busy holiday calendar to attend.

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September Lunch & Learn:

Government Teacher Speaks on Young Voters

Long-time Modesto City Schools' government teacher Ken Adair spoke at the October Lunch and Learn. He teaches college prep and advanced placement government/economics to seniors at Johansen High School. At the beginning of each year, he gives his students a "pre-test" to determine (and let them know) what they know or don't know about federal, state and local government. The average score is 6 of 30 – disappointing to be sure. He adds questions about pop culture which they do very well on. He tells the student they are not stupid; they just know the wrong things! Thus begins instruction on the required curriculum combined with efforts to introduce and engage his students in the wider world.

Mr. Adair offered several reasons why teens are not engaged in news, politics or voting.

- Apathy
- "Cocoon"- Students focus on a narrow range of interests within their comfort zone; they place their energies elsewhere.
- Students don't see how government impacts them.
- Students feel their vote won't matter.
- Generational patterns of non-voting families do not model voting behavior.
- Demographics (85% of Johansen students qualify as economically/socially disadvantaged.) With the stresses of daily life, voting is not a high priority.
- Institutional barriers – more so in other states where some factions do not want "everyone" (old, young, people of color, etc.) to vote.

Techniques Mr. Adair uses to get students excited and engaged emphasize active participation.

- Current events offer a starting point to link what is happening in the world to the curriculum and students' daily lives.
- He uses Twitter and other technology to ask questions or draw attention to issues for discussion and to link government and the curriculum to their lives. He also pointed out that with technology, there is no excuse for not being informed. Information is easily accessible.
- He gives extra credit to encourage students to "do something" in the community such as work on an election or a campaign, write a letter to the editor, attend government meetings.
- Students may get excited about a presidential election. Hopefully that interest can be transferred to local issues.
- He gives his students an 18th birthday card with a voter registration application!

Voter Services

We've just completed another busy voter service season. There were some great successes. We had an overflow crowd for the Turlock Mayor and City Council forums. There were also opportunities for improvement and the Voter Service committee is working on procedures to ensure smoother communications in the future. Thank you to all the volunteers who assisted with voter registration, candidate forums and Pros and Cons presentations. Voter Service is one of our core functions and we couldn't do it without you.

Mary Giventer, Vice President

Update on Higher Education Study

LWVC has announced the refined scope of the study: "A study examining access to quality public higher education in California including funding, affordability, preparedness, equity, and opportunities and barriers to success." Currently plans are to get the study kit to the local Leagues in August 2015 with consensus reports due April 2016.

Save the Date:

Ending the Culture of Violence on School and College Campuses

Our League is joining with AAUW, Stanislaus County Office of Education and Delta Kappa Gamma to sponsor a panel discussion, *Ending the Culture of Violence on School and College Campuses* on **Thursday, March 19, 2015, 7 to 9 PM at the Martin G. Petersen Education Center, 720 12th St., Modesto.** Panel members include Sheriff Adam Christianson, Office of Education Superintendent Tom Changnon, Oakdale Police Chief Lester Jenkins, University of Pacific Vice President of Student Life Patrick Day, Family Justice Center Executive Director Tom Ciccarelli and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Director, Dr. Madelyn Schlaepfer.

As I write this, the news is reporting yet another school shooting with multiple victims. While this is obviously a broad and complex issue, we hope to use this program to increase public awareness of the issue and most importantly facilitate dialogue and action on what we as a community can do. Please save the date and help spread the word about this important program.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Wednesday, November 12th 6:30-7:30 pm	Monthly Board Meeting Home of Seena Rhine—please email for address
Tuesday, December 2nd 7 pm-8:30 pm	Annual Holiday Fling At the home of Lynn Fenderson, address will be emailed or contact Seena Rhine.
There is no lunch and learn during the months of November and December.	

**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.