

# *THE VOTER*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

September 2015

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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## *President's Message*

### **On your marks, get set, go!**

Be the first to sign up for one or all of the four candidate forums now being scheduled for late September and early October. The League will be conducting forums for the following elections: Modesto City School District, Modesto Mayoral election, Modesto City Council, and the Oakdale Irrigation District election. Please check out the dates, times and needs of each of these forums. The Modesto Mayor and Council forums will be on the same night so please sign up accordingly. I am truly amazed at the quick and efficient way our two "Marshas" with the help of Mary Giventer have been able to pull these forums together in such a timely manner. Thank you. I am lamenting that I will be out of the country at the time (Nepal) of all the forums, as I would have attended them all. These forums are our opportunity to shine and the participation from as many of you as possible is welcomed and necessary for them to be successful.

There is a new policy in registering voters in this county. All those people who help register voters in this county are **required** to list their home phone number and home address on the form and the receipt that goes to the person who is registering to vote. This requirement is not uniform nor required in all counties. The LWVSC Board has voted to **NOT** register any voters until this issue is resolved. It is our belief that it is an infringement on our personal rights and safety. The County Clerk and Registrar held a workshop on Friday, August 28 from 12:30-1:30 at 1010 10<sup>th</sup> St. We have offered to supply the registrar a membership list with registrars' information along with the league phone number but that offer was rejected. While we understand the reason behind the requirement, registrars who try to influence the registrants' party affiliations etc., the LWV has proven our unbiased assistance in registering voters. As voting is one of our primary goals, we hope that this issue can be resolved.

Keep November 4<sup>th</sup> open as there will be a social (food and a little wine tasting) for all members and a consensus meeting on the National study on the changing of the Constitution. This would be a great way to meet new members and catch up with more seasoned ones. More information to follow.

The St. Paul's Episcopal Church is co-sponsoring a summit on human trafficking on Sept. 17, 2015 in the Stanislaus Room at the Centre Plaza. Refreshments at 6:30 and Program at 7:00. The speaker is Debbie Johnson, CEO Without Permission. RSVP [209-567-2433](tel:209-567-2433); [revnick@hotmail.com](mailto:revnick@hotmail.com).

**LWV of STANISLAUS COUNTY  
OFFICERS**

*President*

**June Lunch & Learn, August 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Pat Portwood, President of Stanislaus County Library  
Foundation**

Pat is a former Modesto City Schools Administrator and Principal. She was raised in South America by a mom is instilled her a lifelong love of reading and supporting literacy. Pat provided an inspiring and information talk on the functions, services provided, staff roles and programs offered by the county-wide Stanislaus library system.

The Library and Library Support Groups consist of

1. The library advisory board
2. Friends of the Library
3. The Save Stanislaus Libraries committee
4. The Library Foundation.

The Stanislaus Library Mission is to foster the love of reading and the door to knowledge. The County Library system consists of 13 libraries located in Ceres, Denair, Empire, Hughson, Keyes, Modesto, Newman, Oakdale, Patterson, Riverbank, Salida, Turlock and Waterford.

Pat discussed the many services offered by the library including a huge inventory of available e books. The use of ebooks has increased in circulation by 140%. Another program is one for pre-kindergarten children and their parents/guardians. The children and families are encouraged to read or hear 1,000 books by the time they enter kindergarten. Along the way they are awarded milestones to encourage their progress. There are over 11,000 children enrolled in summer library programs with a budget of \$33,000 to share among the 13 libraries. The foundation is always seeking ways to increase this budget.

It is a misconception to believe that libraries are a "thing of the past" and that books are becoming obsolete. The use of the libraries and its programs proves the fallacy of these beliefs every day. Of major concern is the renewal of the library sales tax, which is due to be voted upon again in 2018. It has only been a few years since this tax was implemented but its effect is that 90% of the operating budget is from this sales tax. 90% !! Pat stressed the need to be prepared to help pass a continuation of the library sales tax and to hopefully make it effective for at least 10 more years. It was also stressed that donations and fundraisers are another important part of revenue and no donation is too small.

Many of the successful programs of the libraries are run by or at least helped by the many, many volunteers who dedicate so much time to the reading public. The Stanislaus County Foundation is currently seeking new board members and business partners. For more information or to volunteer





## ***League Studies***

One of the things I most appreciate about the League of Women Voters is that its public policy positions are based on a consensus of the opinions of its members after those members have had an opportunity to study and discuss the topic. It is an interesting process and one we will have ample opportunity to participate in this year. In total our league will undertake four studies this year: two national studies – Constitutional Amendments and Money in Politics, one state study – Higher Education Access and Finance, and one local study – Water Issues. All are topical and pertinent to all of us so I hope you will take the opportunity to participate.

First up is the national study on the constitutional amendment process. Until now the League has not had a position on this. The basic question is: what are the shared values and beliefs within the League that might allow or compel the League to endorse a constitutional amendment or an Article V Convention? As we consider this we are asked to consider guiding principles not whether or not we favor a particular proposed amendment.

Unlike the California constitution, which is amended fairly easily and quite frequently by ballot propositions, the United States Constitution is difficult to amend and has been done only 27 times. Article V of the Constitution outlines two ways of proposing amendments. Congress, by 2/3 vote of both chambers, may propose an amendment for the states to ratify OR 2/3 of the states (34) may ask Congress to call a convention to propose amendments. In both cases any proposed amendment would need to be ratified by 3/4 of the states (38). All of the amendments to the constitution have come about from the first procedure. The second method, an Article V convention, has never been successfully invoked.

The consensus questions are in three parts. The questions in Part I are to develop guidelines for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals. Part II asks about aspects of an Article V Convention that may be important in conducting such a convention. Part III asks balancing questions between League support of positions and League support of the amendment process.

If you wish to start considering these questions before we have the consensus meeting, I will have copies of the questions with very brief pros and cons statements available at the September and October Lunch and Learns or you can download them from the member's section of the national website. If you would like to do some background reading, these references are suggested by national:

- Synopsis of "Constitutional Amendments and the Constitutional Common Law" by Adrian Vermeule. <http://www.law.uchicago.edu/files/73-av-amendments.pdf>.
- Synopsis of "Constitutional Amendmentitis" by Kathleen Sullivan. <http://prospect.org/article/constitutional-amendtitis>.

We will have our consensus meeting to discuss these questions

on

**Welcome new members!**  
**Julie Hamilton**

## Board Highlights

1. Upcoming Studies – If you are interested in participating, contact Mary Giventer.
  - LWVUS – Procedures for U.S. Constitutional Amendments. Discussion/consensus November 4 at 6:30 at the home of Seena Rhine.
  - LWVUS – Money in politics. Details to come
  - LWVC – Higher Education. Consensus questions expected in September.
2. Workshop on conducting a voter registration drive August 28. LWVSC will attend to clarify new procedures.
3. Candidate forums planned for Modesto Mayor and three City Council seats. Also MCS Board of Education. Watch for dates. To assist, contact Marsha Waggoner.

## Voter Service

Fall means it is election season and election season means it is time for Candidate Forums. This fall we have four forums scheduled:

**Tuesday, September 29, 7- 8 PM, Oakdale Irrigation District at the Gene Bianchi Community Center, 110 South Second Avenue, Oakdale.**

**Tuesday, October 6, 7 – 8 PM, Modesto City School Board at the Board Chambers, 426 Locust St., Modesto.**

**Monday, October 12, 6 – 7 PM, Modesto Mayor at City Council Chambers, 1010 10<sup>th</sup> St., Modesto.**

**Monday, October 12, 7:15 – 8:30 PM, Modesto City Council at Modesto City Council Chambers, 1010 10<sup>th</sup> St., Modesto. This forum will include candidates from all three council districts up for election.**

We need moderators, question sorters, timers and question takers/ushers for all of these forums. In addition, we need help setting up and taking down chairs at the Bianchi Center in Oakdale. Please check your calendars and see when you are available to help and then contact Marsha Waggoner (marshawag@sbc.global) or Marsha Blomquist ([blomq@att.net](mailto:blomq@att.net)).

*Candidate forums are what we are most noted for in the community. Your time investment is only a couple of hours, but we do need everyone's help to make them successful.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

**Wednesday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>**

**6:30pm-8:00pm Board Meeting**

**Hosted at Marie Bairey's—please call 524-1698 for directions.**

**Thursday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>**

**12:00pm-1:30pm Lunch & Learn, Anthony Presto, National Air Control District. *Ridgeways, Modesto.* \$13 chef choice.**

**Tuesday, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00pm Oakdale Irrigation District Director Forum, *Bianchi Center, Oakdale.***

**Please contact Mary Giventer for volunteer opportunity.**

**Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00-8:30pm Modesto City School Board Forum, *Modesto City School Board Room, Locust.* Please contact Marsha Waggoner to help run forum.**

**Monday, October 12**

**6:00-8:00pm Mayoral Forum, and Council Districts 1, 3, and 6; *Modesto City Hall, 1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Modesto.* Please contact Marsha Waggoner to help run forum.**

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

**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**