



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

Democracy is not a spectator sport has long been a League motto. That was clearly evident during the January 20 Women's March. Regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum, it would be hard not to be impressed by the sheer number of women (and men and children) who marched in Modesto and around the nation to express their commitment to free speech and the democratic process. A young man carrying a "Thank You President Trump" sign walked along the road, as did the young woman with her Impeach Trump sign. There were many opinions expressed strongly, sometimes passionately, but also with civility. Thank you to the many League members who helped with the table at Graceada Park. I was impressed by how many people stopped by the table simply to express their appreciation for the League of Women Voters and the work we do for voter education. "I always look to see what the League's position on an issue is because I know it is well thought out" was a comment I heard several times.

We are at the time of year when we review League positions both locally and nationally. Marie Bairey and Michael Fuller did an outstanding job producing a special edition of *The Voter* that outlined current positions, proposals and national recommendations. If you have not yet read it, please go back and do so. We will be discussing and submitting our report to national at the next Board meeting on February 14. We want everyone to have a chance to give input. You are invited to come to the Board meeting or email Mary Giventer, mgiventer@pacbell.net with your comments.

The primary election will include several important local elections in addition to the Congressional race. Several groups and candidates have already approached us requesting candidate forums. Specific details won't be finalized until after the close of the filing period, but Marsha Blomquist is sure to need some help, so please volunteer to help make democracy a sport where everyone participates.

—Mary

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New Members

We would like to welcome two new members to our local League. They are Stacy Speiller of Oakdale and Nancy Hinton of Modesto.

Calendar of Events

Board Meeting

The LWVSC Board meets the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 PM. If you would like to attend, please email Mary Giventer (mgiventer@pacbell.net) to find out where the meeting will be.

Lunch and Learn

Thursday, February 22, 2018 • Noon

Larry Giventer will speak on “Collaborative Court: A local approach to restorative justice.” Collaborative Court, as we understand it, is a San Joaquin County courts program to keep minor offenders out of jail and mentoring them to reform their lives.

Watch your email for a blast on where we will meet and the price of the lunch.

If you missed last month’s L&L, read a résumé beginning on the next page.

Find us on Internet

League of Women Voters US • <http://lwv.org>

League of Women Voters of California •
<https://lwvc.org>

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<http://www.lwvstanislaus.org>

Lunch and Learn

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau



Wayne Zipser, Executive Director, and Tom Orvis, Governmental Affairs, with the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau presented at our January meeting. The Stanislaus County Farm Bureau is a grass-roots organization dedicated to promoting and preserving agriculture in Stanislaus County.

California produces more than 400 agricultural commodities. Over a third of the country's vegetables and two thirds of the country's fruits and nuts are grown in CA. Stanislaus County ranks 5th in the state for total agricultural production value with 200–250 different crops. The availability of a reliable water supply determines what is grown: the eastern part of the county has a reliable source from Don Pedro and New Melones while the western part of the county has a less dependable source, especially since the damage to Oroville Dam.

Wayne is a third-generation farmer and says agriculture is his passion. He represents the Farm Bureau at the state level. Tom's family have been farmers for 145 years. His position with the Farm Bureau includes dealing with compliance of clean air, clean water, endangered species and irrigated lands regulatory programs. The biggest complaint they hear from local farmers is over regulation. Wayne notes that this is more of a problem for the older generation of farmers who are not used to the changes in technology. Federal cuts in regulations have not affected California farmers because California has clean air and water regulations in addition to the federal regulations. He stressed that he does not want to circumvent regulations that protect the health and safety of consumers and workers, but many of the regulations are especially hard on small farmers because of the paperwork and reporting required to prove compliance. Furthermore, large corporate farms can hire someone to do their paperwork while the small family farmer has to take away from time spent on farming to do paperwork.

Tom believes that one of the biggest problems with regulations is that they change every few years, resulting in the need for new equipment and different requirements. He notes that legislators build the framework for regulations but agencies end up determining what the people really get. He finds that working with local politicians is easier than those at the federal level because they tend to be nonpartisan when it comes to farming and more knowledgeable about the area. He says farmers wouldn't be farming if they didn't love it, but he is concerned about dairy farmers moving out of the state and whether the next generation will even want to continue family farms. Farmers can apply for help to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which is a voluntary cost-share program for conservation. It provides financial and one-on-one assistance to promote cleaner water and air, healthy soil and better wildlife habitats while improving agricultural practices.

Another big concern for local farmers is an increase in rural crime. Many farmers also have other jobs, so criminals have easy access to their property. The Farm Bureau and the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department have teamed up to work on crime. Farmers have contributed money to

purchase crime prevention equipment to combat crime. The Sheriff's Department also offers workshops on crime prevention and reporting. Methamphetamine use is believed to be a large part of the crime problem.

Questions and Answers:

Q. Have immigration policies affected the farmers? • **A.** Wayne said that local farmers do need people to work in the fields. Large farms across the United States use large machines which do not work here. They have not seen a labor shortage yet because crops have changed in the valley (with fewer crops that need to be picked by hand such as peaches and apricots and more almonds which can be harvested by machine).

Q. What is happening with the bees? • **A.** The bee population is improving, but no one has been able to find the cause of the problem. The State Ag Commission has programs in place to keep bees safe when farmers spray their crops.

Q. How is pesticide use controlled? • **A.** Farmers must follow rules from both the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the California EPA. California is more restrictive than any other state. Each township in the state has a limit on how much of a pesticide can be used over a period of time to prevent over-spraying. Once that limit is reached, the pesticide cannot be used until the next time period. The speakers also said that more pesticides are used by consumers in their

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.

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