



# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

October 2013

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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## *President's Message*

One of the primary missions of the League of Women Voters is to provide our community with clear, unbiased and accurate information on public policy issues. I am very proud of how well we were able to provide that service with the Ask Emily program on September 12. An overflow crowd filled the auditorium at Modesto Junior College to hear Emily Bazar, senior writer for the Center for Health Reporting, explain the Affordable Care Act and how it would, or often wouldn't, change the accessibility and affordability of health care for the individual. As people left the auditorium, we were thanked many times for putting this program on, and many people expressed that they now felt more aware and comfortable with the decisions they would be making in the next few months.

Several of our members were instrumental in our success. Joan Goldsmith initially made contact with Emily and maintained a steady exchange of information with her and her editor throughout the project. Ruby Hennessey did everything from participating in the planning meetings, to distributing flyers, to directing traffic the evening of the event. Colleen Norby arranged for us to have the use of the auditorium and the technical support. Wendy Scott sent out press releases and made other media contacts. I am not entirely sure how they became aware of the program, but Fox 40 News had a reporter there and he interviewed Emily after the program. Several other board members helped distribute flyers and get out information to the community. We had great partners in the Civic Engagement Project at MJC and the *Modesto Bee*. Of course, I especially want to thank Emily Bazar and Richard Kipling for their enthusiasm, knowledge and eagerness to work with the League. Thank you everyone – I am so proud of our League and our role in voter education in Stanislaus County.

Of course, there is no time to rest on our laurels. We have several candidate forums and voter registration events this month. I believe we could still use some additional help at several of these. Check the Voter Service article for details and then call Ellen Meyer or Marsha Waggoner if you can help. The candidate forums are always interesting and a great way to hear from and ask questions of all the candidates.

*Mary Giventer, Elected President*

## *Fracking in California*

This is a topic of great interest to many of our members. As I write this, the legislature has passed, but the governor not yet signed, a bill, which would increase disclosure of fracking practices. Some environmental groups feel it falls far short of the regulation required. Fracking in California will be the topic of a program sponsored by the Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS) on Friday, September 27, at 7:30 PM in the Mary Stuart Rogers Building on the Modesto Junior College West Campus. The speaker will be Mark Nechodom, Director of the California Department of Conservation. This should be an interesting and informative program, which I hope some of our members will be able to attend.

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***Lunch & Learn, August:  
President's Report on the 2013 LWVC Convention***

President Mary Giventer reported at the August Lunch and Learn on the 2013 LWVC Convention. As usual, the event had a full agenda with business meetings, workshops and topic-specific caucuses. The primary purpose is to adopt the LWVC Program for the next 2 years and to identify issues for emphasis and possible studies. Mary noted that the meetings are well-organized, and the discussions are thoughtful and respectful.

Mary attended a workshop on the next generation 2014 Smartvoter. It will work on mobile devices to accommodate the increasing number of people who do not use desktop computers to access information. The site will be more easily updated with links to YouTube and other sites for more resources. LWVC has partnered with maplightvoteredge.com in several counties to provide a vehicle for pros and cons for local ballot measures. They hope to expand this capability.

The Convention approved changes to the Initiative and Referendum Position based on the LWVC study completed in 2012. The changes focus on increasing transparency--disclosure of funding and supporters/opponents--and clarity.

The LWVC Board usually recommends studies from those suggested by local Leagues, and several processes are required to consider a non-recommended study. Two persevering young men succeeded in proposing a non-recommended study on higher education. The first vote came one vote short of the 60% required. A revote is possible if a NO voter proposes it. On the second vote, two people changed their vote. LWVC will do a study on financing and governance of higher education!

Issues for emphasis and advocacy in the next two years are money and politics and education, especially early childhood. Second tier issues for community education are healthcare and water. LWVC advocated for three state legislative bills – Sunshine in Campaign Act - SB 2, 3 and 27. They also supported bills to promote regulation and oversight of Fracking, which did not pass, and they lobbied the EPA for storm water standards.

***Marie Bairey, Secretary***

***Lunch & Learn Upcoming Speaker:***

Victor Serrato, Director of Student Support Services, Stanislaus Office of Education will be our speaker at the September Lunch and Learn program. He will talk about the young people he works with including homeless, incarcerated and foster youth. As part of his efforts to help all students succeed, he developed Operation Backpack to bring school supplies to those in need. If you can donate backpacks and/or school supplies, please bring them to our meeting on September 26.

Lunch and Learn will take place at noon on Thursday, September 26th at Jacob's Fine Dining. The restaurant is located at 2501 McHenry Ave (McHenry and Floyd shopping area), Modesto. The cost of the lunch is \$13 and is open to the community as well as League members. Reservations are not required.

The speaker for October will be Birgit Fladager, Stanislaus County District Attorney.

***Mary Giventer, President***

## ***STATE AND NATIONAL ACTION***

### **STATE: Reform Bills Regarding Non-Citizens Reach Governor's Desk**

The 2013 legislative session concluded on Thursday, September 12, with final approval of several bills that expand the rights of non-citizens. According to the *Modesto Bee* of 9-14-13, legislators sent Gov. Jerry Brown bills allowing undocumented immigrants to practice law, to serve on juries and to staff polling places. "Perhaps most significantly, the Legislature passed a bill permitting undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses," which will enable them to drive to work and thus support the California economy. Although similar bills have been passed before, only to be vetoed by more than one governor, this year several Republicans supported the latter measure, and Gov. Brown has hinted that he will sign it since Congress is deadlocked on national immigration reform (which LWV supports).

### **NATIONAL: Climate Change Progress at Risk (Take action!)**

The progress we have made in the fight against climate change this year following the President's announcement of a comprehensive carbon control plan is now being threatened in the Senate. Tell your Senators to reject bad environmental amendments that will put the health and safety of our children and future at risk.

### **NATIONAL: Please Volunteer to Help Register Voters.**

Did you know that 1 in 4 eligible Americans are not registered to vote? The League encourages all community members to get involved to make democracy work.

### **NATIONAL: Supreme Court Preview: McCutcheon v Federal Election Commission**

The Supreme Court is about to begin its fall term. On the second day of arguments, the Justices will hear both sides of the McCutcheon v Federal Election Commission case, which has been labeled "the next Citizens United." The case challenges aggregate spending limits imposed by FECA (the Federal Election Campaign Act) and other laws supported by the League. To get an overview of the case, read the LWV blog at [www.lwv.org/blog/supreme-court-preview-mccutcheon-v-federal-election-commission](http://www.lwv.org/blog/supreme-court-preview-mccutcheon-v-federal-election-commission).

### **NATIONAL: New Report by LWV Lays Out Election Improvement Agenda**

Read a LWV blog and the text of the report for details at: [www.lwv.org/content/new-report-lays-out-election-improvement-agenda](http://www.lwv.org/content/new-report-lays-out-election-improvement-agenda).

*Hanna Renning, State and National Action*

## ***Regional League Program***

There will be a meeting of Leagues throughout the Central Valley in Fresno on Saturday, October 19, from 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM. The LWV California president, Jennifer Waggoner, will address the group and answer questions. The group will then discuss three issues: water resources, other natural resource issues, and mental health issues. A catered lunch will be served at noon at a cost of \$12. The meeting is at 1345 Bulldog Lane. All members are welcome to attend.

It is a valuable way to learn more about how the League functions beyond the local level. If anyone wishes to car pool contact Mary Giventer, 632-8996.

## ***Voter Service Fall 2013***

We kicked off the Voter Service fall program by registering voters at the Modesto Rotary Senior Stride event at La Loma Park, Modesto. We did register some seniors and gave out registration forms and there was some interest in joining our League. This was the second year we have been present at the Senior Stride event and we hope to do it again next year.

We are registering voters at the Stanislaus County Library at the Modesto and Turlock locations October 19, 2013 from 10a.m. to 2p.m. **We still need volunteers in Turlock!**

We are sponsoring the following forums this fall:

September 30, 2013--Modesto City Council Districts 2, 4, and 5 Forum, 6:00-7:30, Modesto City Chambers

October 10, 2013--Modesto City School Board Forum, 6:00-8:00, King Kennedy Center

October 17, 2013--Modesto Irrigation District Forum, 6:00-7:30, MJC West Campus, Glacier Room 101

**We still need volunteers for moderators, question takers and question sorters!**

Contact Ellen Meyer or Marsha Waggoner at voterservice@lwvstanislaus.org to sign up for any of these Voter Service Events.

*Ellen Meyer and Marsha Waggoner,  
Voter Service Directors*

## ***Board Highlights:***

The highlights from the September 11 Board meeting:

- **Lunch & Learn moved to Jacob's, located on Mc Henry Ave., Modesto, starting in September.**
- Membership renewals are due September 30
- Donor request letters mailed.

*Marie Bairey, Secretary*

**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) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (for directory) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Welcome New Members!**

Mari Martelli (returning member)

## ***Decoding Obamacare: Useful Resources***

Emily provided a list of useful resources for the Affordable Care Act at the September 12 program, but we ran out of copies. If you did not get one, here is the basic list.

- Health Insurance Exchange (Covered California) visit [coveredca.com](http://coveredca.com)
- Link to rate calculator (how much it will cost you): <http://www.coveredca.com/fieldcalc/#calculator>
- Exchange Tax Credit Guidelines: Families earning between 138% - 400% of the federal poverty level may qualify for tax credits to offset health plan costs. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm>
- MediCal Expansion: As of January 1, 2014 more than 1 million Californians, making up to 138% of the federal poverty level, will be newly eligible, including childless adults. <http://www.stanworks.com>
- You can submit questions to Emily at [askemily@usc.edu](mailto:askemily@usc.edu). She does caution that she is currently receiving about 500 questions a week so there may be some delay in response time. You can also follow her on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/chcfhealthreport](http://www.facebook.com/chcfhealthreport).

## ***CALENDAR OF EVENTS***

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

<b>Thursday, September 26th</b>	<b>Lunch and Learn: Speaker Victor Serrato, SCOE Director of Student Support Service, will talk on at-risk youth and Operation Backpack. New location – Jacob’s at 2501 McHenry Ave.</b>
<b>Wednesday, October 9th</b>	<b>**NO Board Meeting for month of October**</b>
<b>Tuesday, September 24th</b>	<b>National Voter Registration Day!</b>
<b>September 30</b>	<b>Candidate Forum: Modesto City Council Districts 2, 4, and 5, Council Chambers 1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street. 6:00 pm</b>
<b>Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Celebration of Life of long-time League member Margie Lipsky. Held at Vintage Gardens, 4342 Dale Road, Modesto (Informal reception from 5-7pm, followed by remembrances). RSVP with Dana Lipsky: <a href="mailto:vitamin_d@mac.com">vitamin_d@mac.com</a></b>
<b>Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Candidate Forum: Modesto City Schools Board, King Kennedy Community Center, 605 S. Martin Luther King Drive. 6-7:30pm</b>
<b>Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Modesto Irrigation District, MJC West Campus. Glacier Hall, 101 6-7:30pm</b>
<b>Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Voter Registration: at Modesto and Turlock libraries (volunteers needed for the Turlock Library! Contact Ellen Meyer or Marsha Waggoner)</b>
<b>Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Regional Meeting: Leagues throughout the Central Valley in Fresno on Saturday, October 19, from 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM.</b>

**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.**