

THE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
www.lwvstanislaus.org



2025-2026
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Amy Wolfe
LWVSC President

Dear LWVSC Members and Friends,

Happy New Year! I trust that you and yours had a joyous holiday season. We certainly ended the year on a high note with merriment, fellowship and an exceptional presentation from Daren Williams. Daren shared a rich and captivating story of how his father amassed the largest known collection of artwork of the Holodomor. We are deeply thankful for Daren's commitment to telling this vital story and hope more learn as we did.

To build on that energy, we have not one but two educational opportunities this month. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Denise Nordell, this month on January 21st launches the LWVSC Book Club! We are reading *Her Honor* by LaDoris Hazzard Cordell, a captivating memoir from the first African American woman to sit on the Superior Court of Northern California. Denise has confirmed that the Honorable Hazzard Cordell will be able to join us online for our discussion and Q&A. This is an event not to be missed!! Details are later in the newsletter. Be sure to share with your network - all are welcome.

Our monthly Meet and Learn Luncheon, taking place on January 22nd, features Becky Hackler Arellano, Turlock Irrigation District Board Member. Ms. Hackler Arellano will discuss water for the future and Turlock Irrigation District's investment in storage and sustainability. Register online using the link below.

A full calendar with dynamic, interesting speakers addressing critical issues in our community. It's the perfect way to start the new year!! I look forward to seeing you at our events and encourage you to share this newsletter and activity details with family, friends and neighbors. The more, the merrier and all for the betterment of our community.

With appreciation,
Amy

LWVSC Holiday Fling

On December 10, LWVSC members and guests attended our annual Holiday Fling to celebrate the season and enjoy nibbles and conversation. Our special guest for the event this year was Daren Williams, Communications Director for the Almond Board. Daren's presentation was "Holodomor 1932-33: Through the Eyes of Ukrainian Airtists."

Daren's father, Morgan Williams, worked in Ukraine beginning in the 1990s, and he learned about the Holodomor then. The Soviet regime under Stalin systematically set out to starve the Ukrainian people by not allowing them to harvest their own crops, either for their own sustenance or to sell. Also known as the Ukrainian famine, this massive man-made famine killed millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933.

As he learned more about the Holodomor, which means, "death inflicted by starvation," Morgan Williams began to collect artworks related to the era and commission more art to be made. It became the world's largest collection of Holodomor-related art and was donated to the Holodomor Museum in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Daren shared the story of the Holodomor with us, showing images of his father's collection. This moving presentation prompted much discussion throughout the evening.

LWVSC appreciates Daren's time and informational presentation.



Modesto General Plan 2050 Meeting Recap

In mid-December, the city of Modesto hosted three meetings for public input on the next phase of Modesto 2050, the current general plan update process they are navigating. Five members of the LWVSC Board of Directors attended the third and final meeting to gain insight and perspective into the planning process.

Staff provided an overview of their work to date and unveiled the three land use alternatives that have been developed for review and consideration. Their presentation offered perspective around how the community has changed since the last update in 1995 and why they believe growth is important into the future. In addition, information was shared on how the city has navigated living within its existing sphere of influence and how those efforts, while successful, will not be sufficient moving forward.

The three land use alternatives, named Competitive Regional Hub Alternative, Emerging Economic Opportunity Alternative, and Minimal Economic Opportunity Alternative, focus on growing the city's limits in the north, west, and to a lesser extent, the east. As was requested by staff, Board members in attendance provided feedback by way of questions focused on what we saw as the most glaring issues not addressed. We felt details were lacking specific to the transportation impact all the alternatives pose, how growth will comply with state groundwater regulations, and the impact to economically disadvantaged communities. In addition, we noted our disappointment in the naming of the alternatives, which we believe reflect bias and are in poor form.

At our January meeting, the Board of Directors will be discussing our collective next steps to provide more thoughtful, detailed, and robust comments when that period is made available in Spring 2026. Be on the lookout for dedicated communication and action specific to these next steps.

To view the presentation by staff and see the three land use alternatives, visit <https://gp2050.modestogov.com/documents/> and to get more information on the Modesto 2050 process, visit <https://gp2050.modestogov.com/>

Amy Wolfe, President



Kari Casey
Tracey Kerr

Danielle Lohmann
Monica Ojcius

2025-2026 LWVSC Finance Drive

Dear League Members and Friends,

When I embarked on my journey as President of the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County (LWVSC), I did so with a passion and enthusiasm for the year ahead. As a stalwart in the community for almost 80-years, our organization has been steadfast in our commitment to non-partisan education, community engagement, and civic participation. We have garnered a well-earned reputation for quality, consistency, dependability, character, and trust.

I would argue now, more than ever, our community needs us for these very traits. It needs our ability to shine a light into all corners, raise awareness around the issues impacting all our citizens, focus on sharing facts, sources of factual information, and encouraging self-education from these resources.

In October, for example, we hosted a webinar, the Ins and Outs of Proposition 50, focused on helping voters understand exactly what a “yes” and “no” vote meant in the special election. The recording of the webinar was made available on our website, as was a Spanish version, along with printed materials in both languages. Reaching more voters in our community with easy-to-use tools like these to ensure they understand these increasingly complex issues continues to be a cornerstone of the LWVSC.

But we can't do this work without you! Our annual Finance Drive funds our operational and educational efforts. Your donation, no matter the amount, ensures we can continue our array of activities, including election educational efforts like the webinar, our monthly Meet and Learn Luncheon series and the newly launched LWVSC Book Club.

I ask that you consider a donation today in any amount, to either our General Fund (for operational expenses) or the Education Fund (for voter education and outreach expenses) to enable us to continue serving our community as we have for so long.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support of the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County!

With deep gratitude,

Amy Wolfe
2025-26 President

2025-26 LWVSC Finance Drive, continued

You have two options for your donation

1. To **DONATE ONLINE**: Go to lwvstanislaus.org and click the red Donate button.
2. To **DONATE by MAIL**: Mail your donation to LWVSC, P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352.

You have two donation categories

1. The General Fund:

- Our General Fund supports everything we do, but because of IRS rules, donations to this fund are **NOT** tax deductible.

2. The Education Fund (Local Impact Fund):

- Nonpartisan voter information and activities including Candidate Forums and Ballot measure Pros/Cons, Voter Guides, and “Your Elected Official” contact lists
- Building citizen participation in the democratic process including voter registration event and youth outreach

If tax deductibility of your donation is important for you, consider donating through the mechanism of the Education Fund, administered for us by the California State League of Women Voters. The Education Fund is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public policy educational organization used to conduct voter service and citizen education activities. By IRS rules, donations to this fund can **only** be used for above mentioned activities.

Donations to our LWVSC Education Fund are received and managed by the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund (LWVCEF), a 501(c) 3 corporation and are fully tax-deductible where allowed by law.

Please Note:

If you donate to **both funds**, (thanks!)

Please write/enclose **2 SEPARATE CHECKS**:

~ One for the **Education Fund**

made out to: **"LWVCEF"** (or "League of Women Voters of California Education Fund")

Memo: LWVSC (or "League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County")

PLUS

~Another for the **General Fund**

made out to: **"LWVSC"** (or "LWV of Stanislaus County")

Why separate checks?

By IRS requirements, we now must keep General Fund donations totally separate from Education Fund donations. Thank you for helping us to comply!

Renew Your LWVSC Membership on ChapterSpot

WHAT?

ChapterSpot is the new League online membership system that provides a centralized website where anyone can join or renew their membership, regardless of which League they are joining. Dues amounts and membership categories have changed.

WHY?

LWV changed dues structure for all local Leagues to increase and diversify overall membership and LWV's ability to fulfill our mission. Funding at the state and local levels will increase. By adopting technology that streamlines membership, your League leaders will be able to focus on more substantive work.

HOW?

Earlier this year, you should have received an email asking you to log in for the first time to "claim your membership." If you didn't receive an email, check your spam folder. Or contact us at lwvstanislaus@gmail.com or (209) 324-3375. If you have not registered online on the LWV Member Portal, do it now!

<https://portal.lwv.org/>

WHEN?

Log in to register yourself ASAP and be prepared to pay your dues on your annual renewal date. Credit card is the preferred method of payment. See other option below.

MORE INFO

Visit our website for more details:

<https://my.lwv.org/california/stanislaus-county/membership-changes-2025-chapterspot>

Can I still pay by check?

This is not the preferred method - it requires more time and effort from your League treasurer, plus, more time for funds to transfer. If you do, write your check to LWVUS with the note "renewal/membership" and send to our treasurer at LWVSC, PO Box E, Modesto, CA 95352.



BOOK CLUB

Join us as we expand our understanding of our 250-year-old experiment called Democracy through the reading and discussion of both fiction and nonfiction.

Engage with others members in meaningful dialogue.

Think more deeply about our political system and our role in it.

Inaugural Meeting

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Brown Bag Lunch

Nick Blom Salida Regional Library

The program is FREE, but please register to attend - *scan in the corner*

January 2026 Book Selection

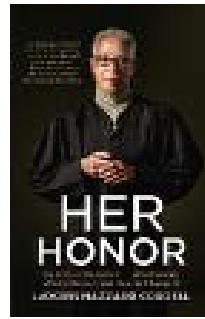
Her Honor by LaDoris Hazzard Cordell

In *Her Honor*, Judge LaDoris Hazzard Cordell provides a rare and thought-provoking insider account of our legal system, sharing vivid stories of the cases that came through her courtroom and revealing the strengths, flaws, and much-needed changes within our courts.

Judge Cordell, the first African American woman to sit on the Superior Court of Northern California, knows firsthand how prejudice has permeated our legal system. And yet, she believes in the system. From ending school segregation to legalizing same-sex marriage, its progress relies on legal professionals and jurors who strive to make the imperfect system as fair as possible.

Learn more:

lwvstanislaus.org or contact Denise Nordell: 209-840-8825





MEET & LEARN

January 22, 2026

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Gather, 2424 McHenry Avenue, Modesto

Becky Hackler Arellano
Turlock Irrigation District Board Member

Join us as our speaker discusses water for the future and Turlock Irrigation District's investment in storage and sustainability.

Cost: \$30 per person

Register online at www.lwvstanislaus.org or scan:

*Advanced registrations online required.
Deadline is January 19, 2026.*



Upcoming Meet & Learn Luncheons

February 19, 2026: Amanda Hughes, Stanislaus 2030
Childcare Expansion

March 19, 2026: Jessica Filbrun, Esq., Stanislaus Equity Partners (STEP)
Stories from a Community Development Corporation

Thank you to our Meet & Learn Sponsors



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