

# Committed To Good, Open Government

By Jack Beardwood

Strictly non-partisan, but wholeheartedly political, the League of Women Voters has worked to improve systems of government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy since 1920.

Los Osos resident Ann Garfinkel has been involved with the organization for 39 years, as a resident of Rochester, NY, Shaker Heights, Ohio, Pasadena, Calif., and even Hong Kong, China.

A former president of LWV groups in Ohio and Pasadena, she was recently named to a 2-year term as head of the San Luis Obispo County League of Women Voters.

She's been with the group so long, "because I'm absolutely committed to good government. We're the only non-partisan political organization that I am aware of that has consistently done a marvelous job of informing the voters of what's going on in the world. We keep them

abreast of all the important issues."

A member of the local group for the last five years, Ann said the San Luis Obispo Chapter is a strong advocate of work force affordable housing, they are supportive of natural resources, local libraries, creation of an oak tree preservation ordinance and they are working hard on improving health care.

In September, they will be holding a forum on Medicare reimbursement rates with the hope local rates can be brought more in line with other areas.

The local League has moderated candidate forums on the Central Coast for decades.

"I've always cared deeply about the world I live in," said Ann, "about good government, and the process of government and I believe in the League's grassroots approach. We can make a difference in the world by being informed and involved citizens — starting with our own community.

"I especially like that we

don't think alike. The League attracts leaders and activists that span an array of perspectives. The key is to be respectful of another person's point of view. If we can't agree on plan A or B, let's craft a C together. That's what the League does every day. That wide diversity, careful deliberation and vigorous discussion is reflected in each and every one of our positions."

She also teaches knitting, plays bridge, and loves gourmet cooking, good wine and travel. Ann and her husband Bill — a retired engineer — have four grown children.

Bill is also highly involved with the community. He is the chairman of the county's Technical Advisory Committee, whose job is to come up with a pro/con analysis of alternatives for the long awaited Los Osos sewer project. He is also a member of the Los Osos Community Advisory Council.

The 2007-08 LWV board includes Emily Penfield, first vice president; Lee Chivens, sec-

retary; and directors Marlys McPherson, Arlene Powers and Los Osos resident Galen Ricard.

Their terms expire in 2009. Board members continuing through 2008 include Sara Horne, second vice president; Maggie Higgins, treasurer; and directors Elinor Kogan, Bob McDougle and Donna Sullivan.

In addition to Hong Kong, there are LWV organizations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. For more infor-



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mation about the local organization, call 543-2220.