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# The *Fresno* **VOTER**

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for a "DOUBLE HEADER"*



## Two very special events on one day!



**Awarding of 10 Bette Peterson Scholarships  
to Fresno City and Fresno State students**



**Women's Equality Day Award to  
Irma Olguin Jr., Co-Founder and CEO  
Bitwise Industries**

*We'll hit it out of the park*

*with delicious hors d'oeuvres and beverages*

Tuesday, August 29 \* 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

UC Merced Building \* 550 East Shaw, Fresno

Across from Fashion Fair Mall

Please let us know whether you will attend by August 22 at 226-8683



**Friday, August 18  
Board Annual Retreat  
Central Valley Community  
Foundation—9 a.m.—noon**

**Tuesday, August 29  
Women's  
Equality Day  
and Peterson  
Scholarship  
Celebration**



**Saturday, September 16  
Constitution Day**

**Monday, September 18  
Regular Board Meeting  
League Office, 4 p.m.**

**Tuesday, September 26  
National Voter Registration Day  
See page 5**

**All members and guests  
welcome to all events**

# President's Message



**T**here is absolute frenzy in the air these days. Whenever I check, my email brings issue after issue that demands my immediate response. “Call your representative now,” “donate before midnight tonight,” “only one day left to make a difference,” “sign this and join us in the fight today,” and so on.

Every cause has an imminent deadline. Since I'm an accomplished procrastinator, I understand the value of imposing deadlines, real or imagined. But really, so many crucial deadlines, daily?

Im sure that the new administration in Washington, DC, has spurred frenzied action in some ways. We are chaffing under the perception that changes to what we've become accustomed to may be coming. And, the issues are important and huge--nationwide health care, funding for NSF and NIH research, possible election suppression actions, just to list a few I've been called to act on this week.

But there is a whole slew of statewide and local issues insisting that I act now, as well. The immediacy of those needs cannot completely be blamed on Washington. These are tweaks to a system we have been trying to make work better forever.

Working with the League reminds me that no issue can be solved by a simple call to my congressperson, or signature on a petition, or donation by midnight. The work we do to bring substantive change is complex and long-term. It is achieved by slowly building understanding, investigating multiple viewpoints, considering past history, then slowly but steadily moving in one direction.

We call this slow, steady activity, building democracy. Democracy is not a series of frenzied actions at the last moment. Rather, it is a laborious, detailed march toward a better outcome for all. And, as we in the League say, “Democracy is not a spectator sport.”

*Marianne*

**The VOTER is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno**

**Mailing Address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710**

**Volume 76, No. 7 Editor: Francine Farber**

## Member News

*Please edit your roster*



### Reinstated Member

**Jodi Fitzpatrick**

**5132 North Palm, #365**

**Fresno, CA 93704**

**994-6150**

**jodifitzpatrick@sbcglobal.net**

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**A League donation is a great birthday or holiday gift or as a memorial. Please make checks out to**

**LWVF**

**1345 Bulldog Lane**

**Fresno, CA 93710**

**The League is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your dues payments and donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.**



**Thank You!**

# Summer Resolution: Join a Priority Committee!

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

We have been looking at other LWV websites, focusing on things we like and would like to see on our own, revised website. We will complete our series of handouts which are aimed at people who are already somewhat interested in the issues LWV advocates for, and who might benefit from the knowledge and experience of League members. We are writing job descriptions for student volunteers we hope to find at upcoming volunteer fairs at CSUF and FCC.

**Next meeting: Wednesday, August 2, 9:30 a.m.**  
**Stone Soup**  
**Chair: Marianne Kast [fourkasts@gmail.com](mailto:fourkasts@gmail.com)**



is being made to explain to the public how to address the Board of Trustees at its meetings.

**Next meeting: Wednesday, September 6, 4 p.m.**  
**752 E. Buckingham, Fresno**  
**Chair: Kay Bertken**  
**[Kayb@csufresno.edu](mailto:Kayb@csufresno.edu)**



## EDUCATION

With schools on summer vacation, the committee is looking forward to visiting local charter schools in the fall and compiling the results of their observations. A second Lunch & Learn will feature charter school personnel and advocates. As a result of contacting Fresno Unified Communications Department, a video



## HOUSING

We met with Barbara Anderson, health writer for the Fresno Bee at our last meeting. She and two other reporters wrote the "Living in Misery" series for the Bee. Anderson had a number of suggestions for issues for us to pursue. Among them are emergency housing in the City of Fresno (for residents who are unable to remain in sub-standard housing), tenant education and empowerment, and lobbying for continuing the City's STOP program. At our next meeting we will hear from Jim Fusselman, a local developer of affordable housing.

**Next meeting: Wednesday, August 23, 8:30 a.m.**  
**Stone Soup**  
**Chair: Marianne Kast [fourkasts@gmail.com](mailto:fourkasts@gmail.com)**

## Voter Services

by Mary Perich & Jane Worsley

September is not usually a month most people think about voting. But this year we in LWV Fresno are planning to celebrate National Voter Registration Day (September 26, 2017) with several events highlighting this important right and responsibility. Constitution Day will be celebrated in September at CSU Fresno and we will register voters there.

We are also making plans to visit area schools in the Spring and register first

time voters and speak about the value and importance of exercising this right.

We plan on getting a head start on our ambitious plans at a National Night Out event in the League's office neighborhood on August 1.

We can always use ideas and help so if you are interested in voting issues and want to join us in any of these events, Call Mary at 432-6448 or Jane at 431-0360.



### CCLS

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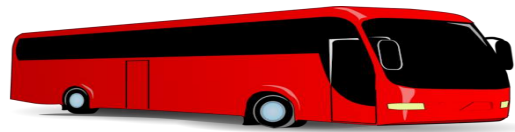
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# Transportation

by Mary Savala

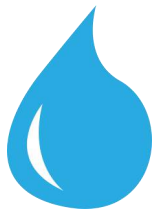


Bruce Rudd, former Fresno City Manager, now acting as interim FAX manager, reported at the city budget hearings in June that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Blackstone and Ventura is set to begin in March 2018. The initiation of BRT had been set for end of 2017, but has been delayed by last year's wet winter weather.

The City of Fresno in partnership with Metro Ministry's Better Blackstone project, private investors, and Fresno City College is beginning to focus on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the Blackstone Avenue /Fresno City College hub. Early stages of planning envision a high rise parking structure for the college with retail/commercial on the lower level facing Blackstone. The southwest corner

of Clinton and Blackstone has been cleared for mixed use development with the hope that apartment and condo housing could serve college students and faculty. The college has appropriations from state funding to apply for capital development and is working with the city to turn eyes on the Blackstone corridor and its new transportation opportunities. The housing development is still visionary, but all good planning begins with a vision and the city is willing to incentivize TOD development.

Better Blackstone envisions a more pedestrian friendly intersection at the BNSF tracks and the possibilities of private investments in residential development at Dakota and Blackstone. The Railroad is notoriously famous for operating on its own path but there is much the city might do on its own with alternative transportation and Measure C funding to improve the crossing site with landscaping and an underpass.



## Water

by Diane Merrill

Our League has been following implementation of the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in the Kings Groundwater Sub-basin, which encompasses the eastern and central portions of the valley areas of Fresno County along with small areas of Tulare and Kings Counties.

### Groundwater sustainable agencies

An important milestone in the SGMA process is the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). In the Kings, and other critically over-drafted groundwater basins, the deadline for GSA formation was June 30. Local water providers, cities, and counties met this deadline with the formation of seven GSAs covering the entire Kings Sub-basin.

This was a lengthy and arduous process that included public hearings, passage of several bills in the California legislature, a reconciliation of two GSAs with overlapping territories, and counties identifying and taking responsibility for areas of the Kings Sub-basin not served by water providers.

### Many water and land use agencies

Most LWVF members live in the North Kings GSA covering the most populous area in the County. Water and land use organizations in this GSA include the cities of Fresno, Clovis and Kerman, Fresno Irrigation District, Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, Biola Community Services District, the Garfield and International Water Districts, Bakman Water Company, and County of Fresno.



A map of the seven GSAs and other information about SGMA can be found at the Kings Region

Groundwater Info Portal at [kings-groundwater.info](http://kings-groundwater.info).

### Agencies must plan together

The next major step in the SGMA process requires these seven GSAs to work together to establish one or more detailed and coordinated Groundwater Management Plans to bring the entire groundwater basin to sustainability. The deadline to adopt and begin implementation of the plans is January 31, 2020. In anticipation of the complexity and challenges of this task, the California Department of Water Resources recently opened an application process for facilitation support services for plan development.

## Education

by Kay Bertken



The Fresno Unified School Board is on summer break but did hold a special meeting to cancel another construction contract that the Board President had voted to approve in spite of his having worked for the company involved. The assembled Board voted unanimously to cancel the contract and approve a rebidding process. President Ashjian missed the meeting and Trustee Jonasson Rosas was there for the discussion but left before the vote. Beyond the costs associated with the move, the most significant impact of the cancellation will be the elimination of a major local contractor from the list of potential project bidders.

### New child care options

On the State front two interesting bills are making their way through the state legislature. The first concerns child care options in the Fresno area. AB 258 would authorize Fresno County to develop and implement an individualized county child care subsidy plan. Like similar pilot projects in other areas of the state, AB 258 would give Fresno County limited local flexibility to maximize allocated funding and efficiently use child care subsidy funds in order to meet local conditions. Without taking funds from other counties, or increasing state costs, the Pilot will permit waivers of specific state rules: 1) family eligibility criteria, 2) family fees, 3) reimbursement rates, and 4) methods of maximizing the efficient use of subsidy funds.

### Civic Engagement Recognition

The second bill, AB 24, will provide for a special seal to be affixed to the high school diploma of students who have participated in significant civic engagement projects. The League has occupied a seat on the local Civic Education Partnership, which has been instrumental in encouraging civic engagement as citizenship training for students in our area. The part

**NEXT FUSD BOARD MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 5:30 P.M.**  
**VIEW IT STREAMING ON YOUR COMPUTER**

nership is very supportive of the seal as an important inducement to student participation in the community.

### Federal cuts to education

On the national front, President Trump's K-12 spending plan proposes a 9 billion dollar cut in federal funding, reducing funding from the current 68.2 billion to 59 billion. There is new money in the proposals for school choice, including a 1 billion dollar augmentation of Title I to include school choice grants. The plan would eliminate funding for teacher training and after school programs and make smaller cuts in other programs. It remains to be seen whether these proposals will make it through the Congressional budget process.



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# Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



At its July meeting the Fresno County Behavioral Health Board expressed concern about Blue Sky Wellness Center. Since its beginning, the client-driven program at Blue Sky has been a model Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) project, focusing on behavioral health wellness and recovery. Education, recreation, and support groups have been the core components, along with some amenities, such as food service, showers, and laundry facilities. In the past 2 years, Blue Sky has been overrun with individuals seeking the amenities, without the goals of wellness and recovery.

## Severe problems have developed

PEI programs are designed to be inclusive of all who wish to participate, so denying access has been problematic. However, recently the problems have become so severe that Fresno Police Department and Code Enforcement have demanded changes; a security guard is now on site, which is disturbing to many clients and community members. The possible solutions involve changes that may be in conflict with the funding sources—Mental Health Services Act, Department of Behavioral Health, the contracted provider Kings View, and the clients of the program are working together to

find a solution to regain the positive program that Blue Sky had in the past. Representatives from Kings View will attend the August Board meeting to give an update.



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**Fresno, CA 933755**

This month the Board visited with the California Health Collaborative to learn about its drug prevention educational pro-

grams: “Performing Above the High,” to reduce marijuana use among young people, and the “Lock It Up Project,” to encourage the safekeeping and proper disposal of prescription medications. One challenge of the program is the lack of cooperation from large chain pharmacies, specifically CVS and Walgreen’s. The Board will send a letter of support for the program to encourage the cooperation of these pharmacies. The Board is impressed with the work being done by the Collaborative in response to Fresno County’s Alcohol and Other Drug Strategic Prevention Plan.

## Laura’s Law

In response to a newspaper opinion piece, there was a brief discussion of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), aka Laura’s Law. When implemented by a county, AOT legally requires seriously mentally ill individuals to accept treatment. Typically individuals referred to AOT have a history of non-compliance with treatment. This program avoids the trauma of involving law enforcement, and allows behavioral health professionals to make referrals to the court to require treatment. Seventeen California counties have implemented AOT—Fresno County has not. Members of the community are advocating for the availability of this program in our county. Department Director Dawan Utecht agreed to give a response at the August meeting.

## Stakeholder process

The Department is beginning the stakeholder process necessary for the completion of its Mental Health Services Act Annual Update. Currently forms are available for personal input on the Department’s web site. A schedule of public meetings is forthcoming. The Board will conduct a Public Hearing on the Annual Update prior to its October 18 meeting. League members are encouraged to participate in person or by writing.

**Next Behavioral Health Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 16 \* 2:30 p.m.**

**Sierra Building**

**1925 East Dakota, Fresno**

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*Men and Women age 16 and above Making Democracy Work*

**MISSION:** The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of interested individuals and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues. The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

**DIVERSITY POLICY:** There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVF on the basis of race, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic level.

**What do you get when you join the League?** All for one fee, you become a member of the Fresno, California and national Leagues and receive their newsletters. You may participate in League studies of issues; receive leadership training; hone your public speaking skills; become knowledgeable about local and state issues; learn more about government, natural resources and social policies as your time and interests dictate. You will also meet some interesting and friendly women and men who represent diverse backgrounds but find common ground in keeping abreast of current issues.

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