

Phone: 559-226—VOTE

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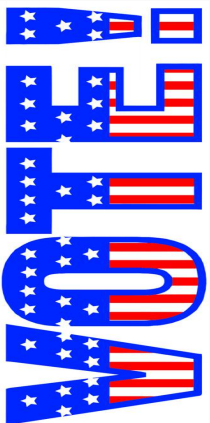
Web site:
www.lwvfresno.org



Monday, August 9
4 p.m. ZOOM
Regular Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 24
Women's
Equality Day
Celebration

SEPT. 14
RECALL
ELECTION FOR
GOVERNOR
NEWSOM



The *Our 80th Year!*
FRESNO
VOTER



Misty Her

More
Infor-
mation



Dr. Venise Curry

On
Page 6



Mary Curry

And there's more!!!

Be part of the first audience to see the League's posters of
100 Notable Women from Fresno
as selected by our Suffrage Centennial Committee.

Meet Amreet Badesha, winner of the Notorious RBG Law Scholarship.

- ◆ This special event is free and open to members, their guests and the public. For more information call 438-3082.
- ◆ Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served.
- ◆ Please sign up on Eventbrite by August 15 so we can plan space and refreshments.
- ◆ There is a small parking lot and ample free on-street parking

We assume that most people are fully vaccinated.

If you are not, for the health and safety of yourself and others, please wear a mask.

President's Message



James Kus, Fresno County's Registrar of Voters, was included in a suit brought by the Election Integrity Project against thirteen California counties, California Secretary of State Shirley Weber, former State Attorney General Xavier Becerra, and Governor Gavin Newsom.

The action challenged the State's move to near universal vote-by-mail, claiming harm from "ballot harvesting," from allowing non-citizens to register and vote, from the ability of registrars to "tamper" with voting equipment, from restricting election observers, and numerous other claims. Locally, defeated congressional candidate, Kevin Cookingham, was a plaintiff in the lawsuit. In June, a federal trial court dismissed the lawsuit, but the plaintiffs intend to appeal the decision.

In response to these claims, Kus held a series of countywide Election Security Presentations and Public Forums. Members of the LWVF redistricting committee attended each of these presentations in-person or online. The presentations were well-organized, thorough, and one was broadcast online. The slides are currently available to review on the Fresno County elections webpage.

It is disheartening to hear the charges of intentional malfeasance against the Registrar and his staff, many of whom have worked in the department for decades, and who commit to hundreds of hours of work during each election. We, who have answered Elections office phones, unfolded ballots, and assisted with election audits, know the efforts Fresno County elections staff take to assure that every eligible vote is cast and counted. While no process that handles the constantly changing information of hundreds of thousands of voters and their ballots can be perfect, new equipment and a culture of service to voters has made voting more accessible in our county.

Registrar Kus has requested funding for additional assistance to clean up Fresno County's voter rolls; he's invited voters to observe the testing of voting equipment, as well as poll and warehouse activities during coming elections. He is a personable and knowledgeable advocate for voting and is clearly looking for ways to improve the process

With California's recall election just weeks away, the Fresno County Elections office is reaching out to voters to verify addresses, and to the community to enlist vote centers and poll workers. We look forward to helping out in this election.

Marianne

A new feature highlighting monthly Board activities

- ◆ **We renewed the lease** for our Stone Soup office and will inquire about possible facility improvements
- ◆ **Water News:** Diane Merrill and Mary Perich reviewed the Urban Water Management Plan. The State LWV Water Committee is restructuring.
- ◆ **Voter Services:** The recall election for governor is set for September 14. County Clerk James Kus is holding meetings to address concerns about non-existent fraud issues.
- ◆ **Celebrations:** The posters of 100 Notable Women gathered by our Centennial Committee will be on exhibit at Women's Equality Day on August 24. See page 1. The Fresno Art Museum will exhibit them in October and the Fresno County Library is planning to exhibit them in March of 2022 during Women's History Month.
- ◆ **Three women applicants** from Fresno City College have been selected to receive Bette Peterson scholarships and will be invited to a future meeting.
- ◆ **Stone Soup** will host a meeting for its employees and preschool families where we will have an information table and describe our programs and services ranging from voting registration to advocacy for early childhood.



Donations are always accepted for the RBG Scholarship Fund at San Joaquin College of Law and any other purpose. Donations should be made out to LWVF and sent to Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno 93710.



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Volume 80, No. 8 Editor: Francine M. Farber

Education

by Kay Bertken



The Fresno Unified Board is on its summer break while a community effort supported by Trustee Slatice works on a recall of five of his fellow trustees.

At their last meeting, the trustees passed the 2021-22 budget; now the Governor and legislature are working on California's budget, a budget that will reflect a big increase in state revenues. In 2020-2021 state revenues amounted to \$118.7 billion. The Governor's budget proposal last May projected revenues of \$154 billion. The Legislative Analyst's Office and Legislature are projecting revenues much higher, but there is an agreement to maintain a conservative estimate close to the Governor's May amount given that the state's tax receipts are notoriously volatile.

Schools will receive more funds

Schools will benefit from allocation increases, \$5.4 billion in ongoing resources, including a 5.07% cost of living increase in base funding plus an addition to funds for districts serving high need students (concentration funds). An additional \$16.9 billion in one-time funds, much of which will pay off previously deferred district funding, has also been planned. Ongoing funds will support the recruitment, retention and training of teachers and expand learning time for high-need students. Special education and foster youth and nutrition programs will also get a permanent boost in this budget.

What about distance learning?

The current budget negotiations do not allow for an extension of distance learning. Trailer bills are anticipated that will resolve continuing issues. So far, the only options for districts to claim per student reimbursement from the state are in-person and independent study programs. Responding to concerns about the quality of distance learning during this last year, new accountability rules for independent study are incorporated in the budget, rules that include tracking satisfactory student progress and requirements for real time instruction daily for the youngest students and weekly for older youth.

A feature that has been widely anticipated is the expansion of transitional kindergarten. That expansion will take place over several years, beginning in 2022-2023, culminating with offering the program to all four-year-olds by 2025-2026. This budget also provides funds for competitive grants to increase the number of qualified preschool teachers and a modest amount for pre-K facilities construction or modernization.

Broader reach from community schools

Other important budget provisions include one-time funds for organizing community schools—schools that partner with other community groups to provide health, mental health and social services on the campuses. More money for mental and behavioral health supports for students responds to the concern that this last year has been stressful for students deprived of the social supports that school has traditionally offered. This budget has fulfilled the wish lists of many educators who have adjusted to many years of program cuts—an opportunity to bring students back to a more welcoming and accommodating school environment.

Governor Newsom campaigned hard on improvements in childcare support, but childcare provisions are still in flux as he and the legislature continue to work through disagreements. A first-ever agreement has been reached with the new union of childcare workers that includes an increase of at least 15% in state subsidy rates to daycare providers that will be in place till 2023. There will also be an increase in subsidized slots to be phased in over the next four years.

Long-time trustee dies

Carol Mills, a Board Trustee from the Fresno High region for 17 years, passed away on July 21 from ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease. She was a strong advocate for children and parents. She was also an attorney for the Fifth Appellate Court.



Carol Mills

It is not known how the Board will fill her position. Trustees may decide to leave it vacant or appoint a temporary replacement until the next scheduled School Board election in June, 2022, or decide to hold a special election before then.

kayb@csufresno.edu



Members of the Behavioral Health Board met with **Superior Court Judge Hilary Chittick** to discuss the five specialty collaborative courts over which she presides.

Behavioral Health Court serves individuals who have committed felonies as a result of their mental illness and who have pled guilty to the felony. Individuals may be referred from their “home” court at the recommendation of their attorney or the district attorney. This court has a staff including the judge, public defender, district attorney, probation officer, and behavioral health service providers, all of whom collaborate to determine who may benefit by acceptance into the court. Participation in the Court is voluntary, and may continue up to 18 months. Participants receive a wide range of mental health services, return to Court periodically, and remain free in the community so long as they comply with their treatment plan. It serves approximately 30 individuals at any one time. This court has been existence since 2009, and has a high success rate.

DUI Court serves individuals convicted of their third offense of Driving Under the Influence. Department of Behavioral Health staff does a risk and needs assessment for acceptance into the Court. Individuals are referred to treatment for substance use, are monitored for alcohol use, and are on formal probation for a year. Approximately 300 individuals are referred to this court annually.

Veterans Court works in partnership with the Veterans Administration that provides behavioral health services to individuals. Other courts that recognize their special needs refer veterans to this court. Veteran mentors work with the offenders to lend support during their probation term. Currently there are 50 veterans being served.

Adult Drug Court is an opportunity for individuals accused or convicted of either a misdemeanor or felony drug offense to receive treatment for their substance use disorders and to have their offenses reduced or dismissed.

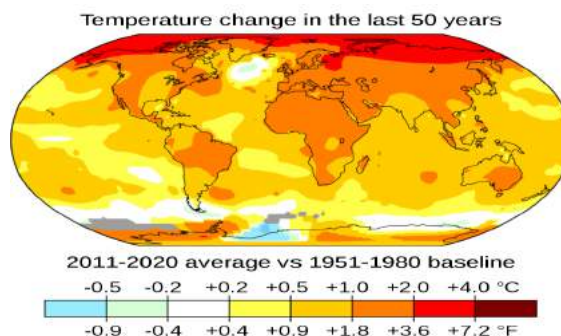
(continued on page 5)



Extending long-range land use planning until 2040, drafts of the update of the Fresno County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance are likely to be released by Fresno County this year.

Public review of these draft documents will be a mammoth task. There will be thousands of pages to read — including an environmental impact report, and the review period could be as short as 45 days.

In an effort to assist the public with its review of the air quality and climate change sections of these draft docu



ments, the League’s Climate Action Committee (CAC) has developed a packet of information that identifies five opportunities for public engagement in the review of the data, policies, programs, codes and mitigation measures designed to address air quality, adaptation to climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

This information packet — which includes the most recent proposed revisions to the air quality and climate change sections of the General Plan, as well as the text of applicable state laws — was recently sent to twelve nonprofit organizations in the Fresno area having a keen interest in either improving the Valley’s air quality or in forestalling climate change. The Committee hopes to work with these organizations to ensure a coordinated and robust response to the County’s draft plans.

To receive our information packet on air quality and climate change, please contact me at (559) 326-6227 or radleyreep@netzero.com.

Voter Services

by Sue Goldman



Voter Services continues to focus on the redistricting process. The redistricting committee attended the Zoom input session for Zone F (our Zone). The next Communities of Interest input session for Zone F is August 4, to be held in Fresno with time and place to be determined. The following session for this zone will be August 25 (a change from the original August 29 date), time and place to be determined.

The redistricting committee is following up with the Board of Supervisors, city and school boards that are elected by district to see what their process for redistricting is and their protocol for community input.

We are meeting bi-weekly with representatives of Common Cause, the Black Metro Chamber of Commerce, and Communities for a New California, to see where we can coordinate efforts with regard to redistricting.

County Clerk James Kus has been having meetings throughout the county explaining the voting systems and their security. He has begun to schedule meetings to obtain input on the Voters Choice Act and how it is being implemented in the county.

When joining the Communities of Interest meetings by Zoom, participants cannot give verbal input but are able to email input. There was a Spanish translator for those watching by Zoom by not for those present in person. Upcoming meetings for August are listed below

⇒ Education on the redistricting process and soliciting public input

August 3 – District 1 - Gaston Middle School – 1100 E. Church Ave., Fresno; 6 p.m.

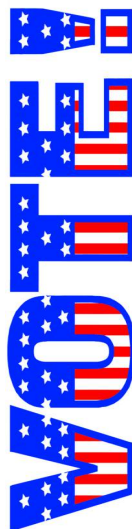
August 4 – District 3 - Fresno High School – 1839 N. Echo Ave., Fresno; 6 p.m.

August 21 – District 2 - Bullard High School – 5445 N. Palm Ave., Fresno; 9 a.m.

August 21 – District 5 - Veterans Memorial Center – 808 4th Street, Clovis; 2 p.m.

⇒ Commission Hearing August 12 **Pre-draft of map public hearing, solicit input on the communities in the districts**

Fresno County Health and Wellness Center – 1925 E. Dakota Ave. Fresno; 6 p.m.



The Special Recall Election for Governor will be held on September 14.

There will be two questions on the ballot:

- ◆ Are you in favor of recalling Gov. Newsom?
- ◆ If he is recalled, who is your choice for Governor?

There will be 41 names on the ballot.

Behavioral Health

(continued from page 4)

Since recent legislation has reduced many drug offenses to misdemeanors, it has become increasingly difficult to engage individuals in treatment. Three to five thousand individuals are referred to this court each year.

Mental Health Diversion Court is the most recent collaborative court and was created by the state legislature for the purpose of diverting people with serious mental illness from the criminal justice system and from incarceration.

Special Courts Judge Hilary Chittick



Their attorneys may refer individuals who are accused of felonies or misdemeanors that were the result of their mental health conditions. If persons agree to participate and to accept mental health services, their charges may be dismissed upon the completion of their treatment plan. The Department of Behavioral Health and its contracted provider Turning Point provide services, though defendants may be permitted to choose private providers. As this is a new court, its success rate is undetermined.

These specialty courts all seek to treat, rehabilitate, avoid incarceration, and create productive, law abiding citizens.

evansalca@comcast.net

OUR HONOREES ON WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY



Misty Her will receive the Women's Equality Day Award for achievement in a non-traditional field for women. She has been named Deputy Superintendent of Fresno Unified, making her the highest ranking Hmong educator in the United States.

"I enrolled in first grade here, and had only been in the country for about two years and we didn't speak a single word of English," she remembers. After graduating from Fresno State, Her was determined to return to Fresno Unified and make a difference. "I want to give back to the district that has given so much to me, and I felt like there was a calling for me to be here," she said.

Her and her family immigrated to the U.S. in 1980. Her father was a soldier in the Laotian Civil War, after which the family fled to a refugee camp in Thailand, then made their way to Southern California, and finally to the Central Valley. Her parents eventually became custodians at Fresno Unified campuses for more than 30 years.

One of her priorities is hiring people who mirror the student population. "Diversity is something that we really value as a district. It's about making sure that when all kids walk on to our schools they can look around and go, 'I belong here'."

Mary Curry and Dr. Venise Curry, mother and daughter, will each receive the Werner Lipton Award for long-term volunteerism.

Mary Curry became an activist out of the need to guarantee equal educational opportunity for her own children and for all children in Fresno. She challenged the school board in its attempts to desegregate the schools by busing only black children and by closing the all black high school. Her efforts were successful and she became the first African American elected to the Board of Education in Fresno Unified. A life-long champion for the lives of people in southwest Fresno, she continues advocating for non-discrimination in employment and other areas.



Although **Dr. Venise Curry** is a formally trained psychiatrist, she has instead concentrated her efforts on medical, social and environmental justice work through community organizing, civic engagement, communicating with policy makers and sharing her expertise on panels and committees.



Her work has been far reaching, particularly in west Fresno, where she was instrumental in landmark policy changes, such as the Parks Master Plan, which supported green community parks in urban areas. Her commitment to local and statewide issues pertaining to healthcare access, education and land use has had long-lasting results.

Water News

by Diane Merrill



A resolution approving the city's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan for submission to the California Department of Water Resources was passed by the Fresno City Council last month.

This lengthy and detailed plan is meant to address the city's water service reliability, future challenges, and strategies for managing risks to water reliability through 2045. Preparation and submission of this plan every five years allows the City to apply for state grant and loan programs related to drinking water, wastewater and recycled water infrastructure.

Here are a few highlights from the Executive Summary.

- ◆ As a result of water conservation efforts, water use measured in gallons per capita per day (GPCD) dropped from a high of 332 in 2001 to 198 in 2020, and is expected to decline to 188 GPCD by 2040.
- ◆ About half of the city's potable water comes from the Kings and San Joaquin Rivers and half is groundwater pumped from over 200 municipal water supply wells.
- ◆ The city's management strategy is to maximize surface water for potable use and groundwater recharge during wet and normal years, while relying on groundwater during dry years. The city must average at least 60,000 to 70,000 acre feet per year if recharge with surface water to meet its long-term water supply goals.
- ◆ The city is now using tertiary-treated non-potable recycled water from the Fresno-Clovis Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility and the North Fresno Wastewater Reclamation Facility for landscape watering. The City plans to increase the use of recycled water.
- ◆ Long term water planning interfaces with the city's overall planning process. The city plans to eventually serve out to the Sphere of Influence boundary adopted in the 2014 General Plan.

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Paul@paulepierce.com

559-246-7236

