

Phone: 559-226—VOTE

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www.lwvfresno.org



Monday, August 14
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m. in person
Stone Soup

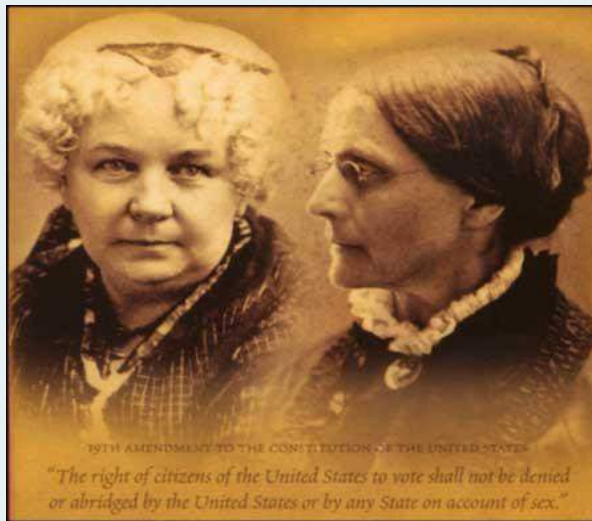
Sunday, August 27
Women's Equality Day
Unitarian Church
5:30 p.m.
RBG Scholarship Winner
Lipton Award



*
**THE FRESNO
VOTER**



Our League's 82nd Year!



Join us to celebrate Women's Equality Day

Sunday, August 27, 5:30 p.m.

*Unitarian Universalist Church * 2672 E. Alluvial Fresno*

Honoring

Dr. Michele Copher, Superintendent, FCOE
Women's Equality Day Award

Dr Marc Lasher, Addiction Specialist
Werner J. Lipton Award

Rosa Maria Nava Garcia
RBG Scholarship

Reservations and more information page 3-4

Co-president's message



July 2023

On a particularly hot day, I am thinking of all the things that there are to be engaged with—once I regain some energy I would like more of our members to imagine a cooler moment to engage with us.

Recently your League has been actively involved in a number of important civic issues: a new battle over a renewal of the Friant Ranch development project and its environmental impact report; ; a new Measure C transportation tax renewal bond measure (we opposed the last one); the pollution and traffic impact of a Highway 99 project; the lack of a climate action plan in the proposed County General Plan; the planning for a downtown mural celebrating the 19th amendment and the expansion of suffrage; and always voter education and registration, particularly in the high schools.

Other things that we are watching in our fair city include the development of an arts plan and its conformity to the Measure P provisions as well as downtown plans for the use of the \$250 million state grant for infrastructure. We are also beginning to re-engage with housing issues, a topic we have not had a member to lead in recent years.

Soon, I am hoping to be back looking at Fresno Unified's preschool expansion and the new literacy plans that will be developing in the new school year. All of this work requires the time and interest of volunteers. The League offers collegiality and access in that work.

I hope that now you are enjoying restful vacations out of the heat or, at least, consistently effective air conditioning and some excellent reading. But when you can, we would love to see you at our member meetings and enlist your help. You may email or call any of our Board members for whatever encouragement you might need.



Kay

Committee reports: Members are sought to serve on our new committee structure. Trudi Thom has volunteered to be on the Program Committee. Cathy Caples and Judi Steele volunteered for the Voter Services Committee, and Janice Marot will continue to sign up volunteers for unfolding ballots. Sue reported that a new law requires that every high school and community college have a student registration point person. Volunteers are also sought for the membership committee.

General Plan: LWVF and other organizations have made comments on the extension of the Cemex Environmental Review, especially with regard to air quality.

Climate change: A letter about the impact of road construction on the Juvenile Justice Campus was sent to authorities. The County's Council of Governments has received funding for a climate survey.

Housing: Faith in the Valley is concerned about the cost of housing in Fresno County.'

Mural: Year-long efforts have resulted in the decision to look for a wall elsewhere than downtown. Perhaps the Parks and Recreation department might suggest possible sites.'

Refugee Sponsorship: There is a possibility of inviting a speaker to review the different levels of involvement in which we might engage.

Measure C: 5 representatives from No on Measure C and 5 from Yes have been meeting to work out acceptable wording for the next ballot.

LWVF IS A 501 C3 non-profit organization and all donations, including dues, are tax deductible. Donations are always accepted for the RBG Scholarship Fund at San Joaquin College of Law, the League's general fund, and any other purpose. Your estate planning is encouraged to consider LWVF. Please make out checks to LWVF and send to Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno 93710.

The Voter is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno
Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710
Volume 82 No. 8 Editor: Francine M. Farber

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!

Please make your reservations for Women's Equality Day **now**



\$25 per person

Generous

Hors D'oeuvres

by Teresa Hurtado

Food for Thought

Sunday, August 27, 5:30 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church

2672 East Alluvial

Plenty of parking, handicapped accessible

Pay now through PayPal on our website or pay at the door

using credit card, check or cash

But make reservation now by leaving message

at 226-8683 or emailing kaybertken@gmail.com

Reservation deadline is August 17

Our Honorees for Women's Equality Day 2023

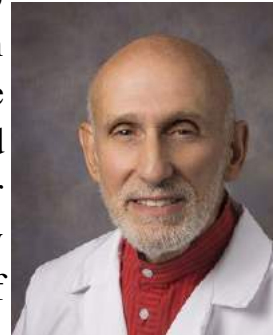
Join us on Sunday, August 27, 5:30 p.m Unitarian Universalist Church



Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, is devoted to improving the lives of all children in Fresno County. Dr. Cantwell-Copher believes we must be committed to the success of the “whole child,” starting with healthy families and early care, with close monitoring of our youth by caring and responsible adults across the educational continuum. Dr. has led FCSS’s successful expansion of business-education partnerships and collaborative work with nonprofit, community-based organizations and civic groups

**Women's Equality
Day Award**

Dr. Marc Lasher is an outstanding example of the blend of devotion to medicine and community activism. For the last 25 years, he has been the medical director of the San Joaquin Valley Free Medical Clinic, a free Needle Exchange that has developed low barrier medication-assisted treatment for people coming out of community emergency rooms for their substance use disorder. For 10 years he worked with small family farmers and farmworkers who were fighting for access to the promise of benefiting from federal dams and canals. Dr.Lasher was founder and chairman of Inside /Out, a human rights organization for prisoners and the nation’s largest publisher of self-help legal materials for indigent prisoners. His long-term involvement in volunteering to fulfill significant community needs makes him the ideal person to receive the 2023 Lipton Award.



**Werner J. Lipton
Award**

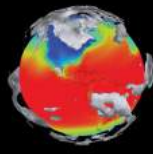


RBG Scholarship

Rosa Maria Nava Garcia is the recipient of the Notorious RBG Award, established by the Farber family and LWVF. She was born n Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico and at the age of eight came to Fresno. Since her arrival in the United States, she was determined to pursue a higher education. With perseverance she was the first in her family to graduate from a four-year university. Currently she attends San Joaquin College of Law while being a law fellow at the New American Legal Clinic on campus. Once she graduates and passes the bar, she intends to practice immigration law in the San Joaquin Central Valley.

Climate Change

by Faye Nennig



The Valley Air District is offering a Zero-Emission Landscaping Equipment Voucher Program that provides incentives for the replacement of existing gas or diesel-powered landscape maintenance equipment with new electric landscape maintenance equipment. This program is for individuals who have their own landscape maintenance services or for small business entities and public agencies that provide commercial scale landscape maintenance inhouse. All applicants must be located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin and they must conduct 100% of their landscape maintenance operations within this geographic area.



Eligible equipment includes edgers, string trimmers, hedge trimmers, chainsaws, pole saws, brush cutters, leaf blowers and vacuums, walk-behind mowers, and ride-on/stand-ride mowers. Funding may include the cost of additional batteries and chargers. Applicants must not purchase or dispose of any eligible equipment until receiving an approved voucher from the District for their project.

Enhanced funding levels up to 100% are available for public schools located within Shafter, South-Central Fresno, and Stockton. These public schools can receive 100% of the purchase price of up to two batteries and one charger per piece of new all-electric equipment purchased. The legislation is part of a statewide initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen the economy, and improve public health and the environment. The Valley Air District is facilitating full engagement of all sectors within each of the its disadvantaged communities through meaningful and effective implementation of this law.

To learn whether you qualify, find complete program guidelines in English and Spanish on the Air District's web site. Additional assistance is available by calling the Valley Air District at 559-230-5800.

fayemetta@icloud.com

Water News

by Diane Merrill



In 2021 researchers at UC Merced and UC Santa Cruz conducted a study on the water saving potential of installing solar panels over the approximately 4,000 miles of exposed water canals in California. The U.S. Department of Agriculture was one of the funders of that study. Researchers found an estimated annual savings of 63 billion gallons of water, which is comparable to irrigating 50,000 acres of farmland, or providing water for two million people.

Solar panels shade canals. The study found a substantial reduction in evaporative water losses. The evaporation that does occur cools the panels and increases their efficiency in converting sunlight into electricity. The projected 13 gigawatts of electricity generated by installing panels on canals throughout the state would be significant in helping California meet its decarbonization goals.



California recently began a pilot project to install solar panels over canals in the Turlock Irrigation District. This is the first solar covered canal project in the United States. The project is a collaboration between the State of California, Solar Aqua Grid, a private company that will serve as the project developer, and researchers at UC Merced.

According to the Courthouse News, in late July a group of environmental organizations sent a letter to the U.S. Interior Department and the Bureau of Reclamation urging U.S. officials to consider installing solar panels over nearly 8,000 miles of federally owned and operated open air canals and aqueducts. In addition to water and energy savings, these organizations want solar panels to be installed on existing infrastructure, such as canals, because it can be done without disrupting the habitat of endangered species.

Education

by Kay Bertken



Next Board Meetings
Wednesday, August 9
Wednesday, August 23



Housing

by Marianne Kast



A community of 500-square-foot starter homes in Flagstaff, Arizona, developed by *Habitat* for Humanity, is featured in its magazine article that was sent to me by our member John Hayes last month.

There are many aspects of this development that are interesting. First, the design of the homes is unique, featuring 23-foot vaulted ceilings, a lofted bedroom, a kitchen, full bathroom, living area, large windows, solar panels and thermal insulation. Each of these units can be built for \$100,000 to \$125,000, and *Habitat* relies on in-kind and financial donations to fund the construction.

Next, homeowners purchase the house with a \$1000 down payment and their monthly principal payments, totaling \$10,000 annually, are placed in a savings account that is set aside for them to access once they move out of their starter home. Occupancy is for a minimum of 3 years, up to a maximum of 10. When a homeowner moves out, *Habitat* writes them a check for the amount of the principal they've paid, for their use as they choose.

Finally, the homes are built on deed-restricted property, allowing *Habitat* to offer the home to another low-income resident when a homeowner moves out. The first starter homes were built on land donated by Flagstaff's Land Trust Program. Then, a 3-acre parcel was donated to *Habitat* when a local developer who planned to build 10 affordable homes learned that *Habitat* could leverage the same space to build 48 starter homes. The first starter homes were built by students in a local community college's construction program which reduced costs and provided hands-on experience to future workers in that field.

We commonly see deed restrictions placed on homes in planned unit developments or condominiums. Those deed restrictions convey a kind of exclusivity (and sometimes nuisance) for home buyers in those developments. But the adoption of this tool by non-profits and local governments can be a way to maintain long-term affordability, and may include income restrictions for buyers, equity sharing arrangements for the future sale of the home, and other requirements, similar to the *Habitat* project. This is an example of re-purposing a common housing tool to create and maintain affordable housing.

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Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The Behavioral Health Board received an update on Children's Services and the impact on this program of moving to a new temporary location. Previously Children's Services were located at the Heritage Center; those facilities are being converted to the Crisis Center and the Psychiatric Health Facilities (or children and adults, both of which are in dire need of improved facilities. Because of the move to a smaller space the Children's Service uses a model that includes more field-based care; however, for those families that prefer to come to the office, treatment rooms are available. Some staff members were not comfortable with the community-based services and have resigned, but many are happy to be able to travel to provide services in homes, schools, and community locations.



The eventual location for both children's and adult behavioral health services will be at the new campus at Olive and Clovis Avenues. The earliest occupancy is likely at the end of 2025.

The Board conducted a virtual Site Visit, and the Department of Behavioral Health reported on the Family Urgent Response System (FURS), which is a state mandated program. Foster parents, schools, Social Services personnel and others serving foster youth (to age 20), and current or former foster youth themselves may call the FURS Hotline (833-939-3877) in times of instability. A state representative answers the Hotline, establishes that the situation meets the FURS criteria, and sometimes is able to solve the problem on the phone. If necessary, the state representative calls in a local clinician, who responds in person 24/7 and stays with the youth and family until the situation is resolved.

The aim is to stabilize the current situation, to preserve the youth's placement, to prevent hospitalization, and to prevent involvement in the criminal justice system. The clinician provides linkages to permanent resources and services. Clinicians follow up for a few days until permanent services are established. The program is being underutilized, responding to only 17 calls within the past year. Other counties report a similar response. The question is whether the program is lacking publicity or other programs are providing similar services.

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One man's Opinion: Faults county's procedures for unincorporated community plans

by
 Radley
 Reep

as a guide for all land use decision-making for the next twenty years (2024-2044). And even though community plans

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors adopted a 'Guidance Document for Unincorporated Community Plans' last month which the County claims will hasten the update of antiquated land use plans for unincorporated communities, most of which are disadvantaged. The communities are Biola, Caruthers, Del Rey, Easton, Friant, Lanare, Laton, Riverdale, Shaver Lake and Tranquillity. Lanare is notable for having the oldest plan — last updated in 1982. That community's plan is sixth in line to be updated — and the County has funding enough to update one plan.

Fresno County is currently revising its 2000-2020 General Plan. When that revision is adopted later this year, the new plan will serve

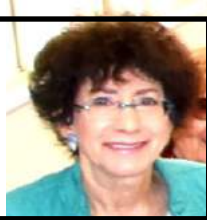
are part of the General Plan, the County has decided that updating community plans is a project separate from the review of the General Plan — and that's simply wrong.

Worse still, the new Guidance Document...

- Contains no information about how to fund plan updates.
 - Contains no timetable by which to accomplish the task.
 - Allows County staff to change the criteria for prioritizing the order of plan updates without input from the public.

Voter Services

by Sue Goldman



Voter registration has always been a key function of the LWV. It has been difficult resuming this function in high schools since Covid. We recently were made aware of some California Elections Codes that may assist us in this endeavor.

California Elections Code 2146:

The Secretary of State shall annually provide every high school, community college, and California State University and University of California campus- with voter registration forms. The Secretary of State shall provide additional forms to a school, free of charge, if so requested by a school. Every community college and Cali-

fornia State University campus that operates an automated class registration system on or before January 1, 2008, shall, through an automated program, in coordination with the Secretary of State, permit students, during the class registration process, to apply to register to vote online by submitting an affidavit of voter registration electronically on the Internet Web site of the Secretary of State.

California Elections Code 2148:

(a) Every high school, community college, and California State University campus shall designate a contact person and provide his or




her address, telephone number, and e-mail address, when possible, to the Secretary of State for the Secretary of State to contact in order to facilitate the distribution of voter registration cards, as provided under this article.

(b) The University of California is encouraged to comply with this subdivision.

Our intent is to contact superintendents when school starts in the Fall, to ascertain the designated person at each high school and getmake contact with them to assist us with the voter registration process.

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**Women's Equality Day
Recognition Event
Sunday, August 27
Unitarian Church**

5:30 p.m.
\$25 per person

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Men and Women age 16 and above Making Democracy Work

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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.

Yearly Dues Individual - \$70 ~ Family - \$100 (2 members, same address) ~ Student - Subsidized

**Please send your check payable to the League of Women Voters, Fresno, with registration form (below),
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