

Phone: 559-226—VOTE

Info.lwvfresno@gmail.com

Web site:

www.lwvfresno.org



Monday, August 11, 4 p.m. Regular Board Meeting and Retreat 11:30 a.m.—2 p.m. 751 E. Buckingham Way Fresno

Thursday, August 21 WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY



Monday, September 8
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m. Stone Soup
In person



THE

FRESNO VOTER

Our 86th Year



WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

August 21 5:30 p.m.

Mindy Casto has made history in Fresno by being named the first female police chief after almost 30 years in the department.
While there are almost 4,000



chiefs of police in the U.S., only about 300 are women. Chief Casto was chosen to be our Women's Equality Day honoree because she definitely has shattered the glass ceiling.

Please come to meet her and our other honorees:

Tom Bohigian, who was selected for the Lipton Award because of his dedication to service and advocacy; and Edna Villicana Madrigal for the Ruth Bader Ginsburg scholarship at the San Joaquin College of Law.

Join us in the newly remodeled Community Room at Stone Soup or phone an RSVP to Marianne at 270-7937 by August 15 in order to pay at the door. Of course include other guests if you wish.

\$25per person

Co-President's Message

by Robin Chiero



"Change requires a lot of people to engage in small acts persistently."

ast month's voter described the LWVUS **Unite and Rise 8.5** campaign of action. The California League website, lwvc.org, describes its work at the state level. The League is a grassroots organization, and it is also important to consider ways to make our voices heard on local issues of importance.

The national website has a recent blog post titled "Grassroots Activism: How you can Take Action," Dianna Wynn, President of the National League, notes that each of us has a voice and advocates that we can use that voice in a variety of ways to make a difference in areas that are important to us

The blog provides several tactics and tips on taking action. It is important to focus on one or two issues. Once you have determined the issues, stay informed on them. The next step is to take Grassroots Action. This step can involve a variety of tactics, including voting, contacting local officials, writing letters to the editor, attending government meetings, and protesting..

For example, you might plan to attend a city council, county board of supervisors, local school board, or other committee meeting to learn about important issues and to make your voice heard during a comment period. A schedule of regular meetings for several of these entities, along with Agendas and Minutes, can be found on our LWV Fresno website at https://lwvfresno.org/.

If you are not able to attend meetings in person, you can contact your local government representative to express your thoughts on legislation or other issues under consideration. You can find out your representatives at "Fresno County District Lookup." This site has a field to enter your address and then will provide a list of your state, city, and county elected officials.

I encourage you to visit the blog for additional information on Grassroots Activism .



The Voter is a monthly publication of the LWV Fresno
Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710
Volume 66 No. 8 Editor: Francine M. Farber



July 2025

Roster: It was decided to make a printed copy for Board members. Other members may request information from Board members if needed.

Convention: Members who attended workshops will summarize them for the Voter.

Tracking sheet: Robin has devised an Excel tracking sheet for Board members to record volunteer hours and activities to be reported at the end of the year. Alternatively, a paper copy can be kept,

LWVUS: Under their new setup our Per Member Payment is higher than previously. We decided to pay it all now rather than spread it over two years.

Program Planning: We received a list of suggested speakers for member meetings.

Voter Services: We should engage in voter education between elections. We should give out the QR code at food distribution lines, including the monthly food pantry at the Farber Campus which services hundreds of families.

- We will count ballots at homeowner association elections, for which we are paid.
- We will secure information about voting rights of people in jail.

Measure C: Kay is a member of the committee with Marianne as backup

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.

Climate Action

by Andrea Farber De Zubiria



Forest fire in California is a normal and necessary part of the ecosystem. But experts like Cal Fire say that warming temperatures and drought (along with our recent history of suppressing fires) have increased the severity of wildfires. In the classic vicious circle, these large fires are partially caused by climate change and also contribute to climate change by releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This also worsens our local air quality.

How we manage forests can contribute to forest health and resiliency. The bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act passed the House in January 2025 with a vote of 279-141. It is now being reviewed in the Senate. Some Democrats and environmental groups were opposed to the original bill. This was primarily due to concerns that some provisions could open up our forests to more logging.

The Senate version of the bill was introduced by two Republican and two Democrat senators, including Senator Alex Padilla, who represents our area. It has garnered more approval due to some revisions that allow for more tribal and community input and other changes. American Forests, The Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy and Citizens' Climate Lobby support the Fix Our Forests Act. The League of Women Voters has no position about this piece of legislation.

The purpose of the bill is to combat catastrophic wildfires, restore forest ecosystems, accelerate and improve forest management, streamline environmental reviews and strengthen partnerships between federal agencies, states, tribes, and private stakeholders.

All of the Valley members of Congress--Costa, Fong, Gray, McClintock and Valadao-- co-sponsored the House version of this bill. You can contact your member of Congress to ask him to continue to support the Fix Our Forests Act when it returns to the House. To find your member's contact information, go to House.gov and provide your address.

afarberdezub@gmail.com

Position on the Federal Judiciary, as announced by the national board, June 2025

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) believes that all powers of the US government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of the balance of powers among the three branches of government.

The League believes that, within the bounds of the US Constitution, the overarching principles of transparency, accountability, independence, and ethics are essential to an effective federal judiciary. These principles are not only essential for a strong democracy but foster public trust in the federal judiciary and adherence to the rule of law, the essence of our constitutional democracy.

For the federal judiciary, the League supports the essential principles of:

Transparency: Federal court documents, proceedings, and rulings, including those in "shadow docket" cases, should be open and available to the public within the bounds of the law, recognizing the need for limited exceptions, such as legally protected sensitive information.

Accountability: Judges and Justices should be held legally and ethically responsible for the integrity of their actions, with enforceable consequences for violations.

Independence: Federal judges and Justices should act in accordance with Constitution and statutory and case law, free from the influence of the other branches of government and free from shifting popular and political opinion.

Ethics: Federal judges and Justices should adhere to ethical standards of conduct that apply universally at all levels of the federal courts. There should be a meaningful enforcement process with judges and Justices subject to penalties for failure to comply with the standards.

The League believes that standards of conduct for federal judges and Justices should include requirements to disclose non-judicial income; other financial benefits including, but not limited to, gifts and hospitality; and investment holdings. Federal judges, Justices, and their partners or spouses should be subject to penalties for failure to disclose accurately and in a timely manner.

Education

by Kay Bertken



The school trustees and teachers are on summer break until later this month, but summer academies finished in June, summer camps were held in July, and free lunches were provided through July at various schools that were operating this summer for kids 0-18.

The major education news this summer is the impact of federal actions on the students here and around the country. The virtual end to the Department of Education happened early this year. So did the billion-dollar cut to USDA funding that supported fresh local produce for schools and food banks. \$660 million of those funds went to the Local Foods for Schools program that was worth close to \$500,000 to Fresno Unified last year.

Our President has also frozen already-approved funding for more school programs. A billion dollars in mental health appropriations was frozen earlier in the spring. Multiple states are now suing the administration to release those funds. Congressionally passed allocations for the English Language Learner(EL) program, after school programs, and some in-service teacher trainings that were due to school districts on July 1 were frozen on June 30.

Fresno Unified was notified the day before \$7.1 million was due to arrive. Clovis stood to lose \$2.2 million. Education spokespersons for the administration said the freeze was meant to ensure that resources are spent in accord with the President's priorities and the Education Department's legal obligations. In response to lawsuits and pressure from some Congress members, the administration announced first that the after-school funds be released, then the rest a week later. The release came with guardrails to assure that the funds would not be spent in violation President's executive orders or policies—presumably his concern about the possibility of any diversity, equity and inclusion provisions.

The June freeze happened after districts had passed their own budgets. For Fresno Unified and other large districts with budget reserves, the potential loss and the consistent uncertainty generated by national education policy may be accommodated. For the small districts in our valley, many with large numbers of EL students and high poverty levels, finding resources to replace any withdrawn federal funds will be much more difficult. The cuts in the Big Beautiful Bill to the SNAP food stamp program and Medicaid will further impact county students.

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans





At its July meeting the Behavioral Health Board approved its response to a questionnaire related to its activities for Fiscal Year 2024-25. Highlights include goals as follows:

- Serve as a conduit to the community through sub-committee meetings, site visits to applicable services through the behavioral health continuum, attend community events, and participate in other committees or meetings where behavioral health is involved.
- Monitor and recruit BHB members so that the Board is following California Welfare and Institutions Code requirements.
- Monitor implementation of the Behavioral Health Services Act and its effect on the community.

Challenges to achieving these goals include:

- Board recruitment, especially new specific requirements to include a youth member (under 25) and an educator currently working in a school setting.
- Understanding how the changing federal and state financial landscape will affect an already stressed community that does not have enough providers.
- Developing a better relationship with the Board of Supervisors to make our annual recommendations more meaningful and actionable for them.

The Children's Committee heard from River Vista Behavioral Health Hospital, which is located adjacent to Valley Children's Hospital. It serves as a locked inpatient psychiatric hospital for adults and youth, ages 12-17, most of whom are on involuntary holds. It has been open for two years and is opening new programs in stages, as staff becomes available. It is hoped that the hospital will be able to accept

(continued on page 5)



by Marianne Kast



New State Housing Agency

The first step towards simplifying California's complicated affordable housing system happened last month. Governor Newsom proposed (and the legislature did not veto) the creation of a cabinet-level advisor who will lead a new state agency dedicated only to housing and homelessness.



The governor and legislature have pressured local governments to plan for more housing, to clear encampments of unhoused Californians, and implement recent legislation to speed up construction but the oversight for these tasks was spread throughout the state government.

Additionally, the creation of this agency will simplify the state's complex system of financing for affordable housing. A recent study found that building a publicly funded project in California costs 2.5 times more per square foot than both Texas and Colorado, due in part to the need to apply to multiple funding sources.

Apartment complex approved by Superior Court

The Fresno City Council has about 6 weeks to approve plans for an 82-unit market-rate apartment complex proposed for northwest Fresno, at the corner of Herndon and Prospect. The Fresno City Planning Commission denied approval for this project citing traffic and other concerns raised by neighbors, despite the recommendation for approval by the City Planning and Development Department. The decision was brought to the City Council on appeal, where the Planning Commission's denial was upheld. LandValue Management LLC, the developer, sued and the Fresno Superior Court agreed that the project is consistent with the General Plan and all required policies, ordinances, etc., and should not be denied. The City will likely also have to pay the developer's legal fees. fourkasts@gmail.com

JUDITH PARKER

Judith Parker passed away on June 12. A member of LWVF since 2010, she was also a member of the Fresno County Master Gardeners and kept



meticulous records of volunteer hours. She retired from teaching at Roosevelt High School and taught plant identification classes that were offered to Master Gardeners. Even though she struggled with multiple orthopedic surgeries she was physically active and had a smile for everyone.

Behavioral Health

(continued from page 4)

children ages 5-11 within the next year. Most clients are referred from hospitals or Exodus Crisis Center, though walk-ins are accepted if space is available. Currently, the youth program is capped at 20 clients. The average stay is 10-14 days.

Recently the hospital opened an Intensive Outpatient Program and a Partial Hospitalization Program for individuals who do not need inpatient care, but still need help with their mental health disorders. These programs usually include three to four weeks of group therapy for three days per week. Telehealth also is available. Transportation is provided for adults if needed, but children are transported by families or case managers.

You always are invited to attend BHB meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at the DBH Health and Wellness Center, 1925 E. Dakota at 3:30 p.m.. Subcommittees meeting in August are the Adult Services Committee on August 4 at 10 a.m. and the Children's Services Committee on August 28 at 9 a.m. Subcommittee meetings are held at Blue Sky Wellness Center, 1617 E Saginaw Way

evansalca@comcast.net

DONATIONS

This month the following members made generous donations to the League

Socorro Fimbres
Paul Pierce

Mary Stegall Julie Taylor



Virtual LWVC Convention attended by delegates, observers

by Kay Bertken and Robin Chiero

n-person conventions are very expensive, and the state and local Leagues saved a lot by taking the LWVC convention online this year, but a lot was lost, too ---notably the informal conversations with other convention participants. While the online chat feature of Zoom allowed for questions to the presenters, there was no chance for conversations with League members across the state who happened to sit at the same table where there might be discussions about a shared concern or ambition. There were also a more limited number of topic workshops offered this year compared to the last in-person LWVC convention.

There were some real highlights, though, in the inspiring speeches by Dora Rose, the California League's Deputy Director and lobbyist, and the National League President, Dianna Wynn. Both spoke of the major challenges facing the country and encouraged our continued commitment to the essential work of the League. Dianna laid out the five ambitious foci of the League's Women Defending Democracy campaign:

- providing democracy education
- restoring the Voting Rights Act that was gutted by the Supreme Court, defending voting rights, and fighting voter suppression
- abolishing the electoral college
- fighting for reproductive freedom
- protecting democratic organizations and institutions.

It was hard to listen to these League leaders and not feel proud of the League, comforted by its principles, and energized to do the work.



Ithough Zoom conventions do not provide the same level of personal connection as in-person conventions, speakers can have an impact whether in person or virtually.

Justin Levitt was the first speaker on day one of the convention. He is a Constitutional Law expert and his speech focused on where we can be most effective in protecting voting rights and democracy. His speech was full of information and kept me busy trying to take notes.

He provided a back story about Elizabeth Powel, a prominent member of the Philadelphia upper class during the late 18th and early 19th centuries and a close friend of George Washington. Although she had no formal participation in the First Continental Congress, she hosted dinner parties and events for the delegates – a way at that time for women to take a leading role in political conversations. She is said to be the person who asked Benjamin Franklin, "What have we got, a republic or a monarchy?", to which he reportedly replied, "A republic ... if you can keep it".

He suggested we have inherited a democratic republic and it is critical to keep working to improve it—in other words to constantly work to form "a more perfect union" – and that progress rarely goes in a straight line. He described a series of points which may be influencing our ability to accomplish this goal, such as making it more difficult to vote (we should not be testing fortitude), re-districting abuses, some rulings of the Supreme Court (he cited "The Shadow Docket" by Stephen Vladeck), and "The Big Lie" - An attempt to normalize the notion that elections don't matter. He recommended that voters deserve a reminder that elections are important and that we should start early developing habits among young potential voters re-



See more **Summaries** Next page

Presentation Strategies

by Faye Nennig

Behind the Scenes: Preparing your league for the Pros

& Cons was an informative and practical workshop focused on



strategies for preparing and conducting pro and con presentations for ballot measures during an election cycle. League representatives shared their experiences and best practices for organizing logistics, maintaining communication, and adapting content for diverse audiences, while emphasizing the importance of early planning and speaker training.

Standardized presentations smooth out inconsistences in presentation style and content. It is essential that a speaker become familiar with the details of each ballot measure to handle question & answer sessions with ease. Practice sessions promote confidence in a new speaker who should shadow veteran presenters until s/he is comfortable speaking before an audience. Eventually, co-presenting and tag-teaming on various measures makes a presentation more enjoyable and is easier on each speaker and more interesting for the audience.

The session concluded with discussions about video recordings, campaign contribution updates, and strategies for engaging younger audiences in voter education, along with guidance on maintaining a clear separation between educational content and advocacy positions when presenting information about ballot initiatives and propositions.

Other Leagues are generous with their guides to effective election presentations. The "Pros & Cons: Assets You Can Re-Use" link has invaluable content and advice. The Oakland League's *Speakers Manual* and the Greater L.A. Leagues "Guidebook & Timelines for General Election Prep" have templates for all Leagues to use.



Communications Workshop by Sue Goldman

Put important information up front; be concise; highlight your call to action. Social media suggestions: Use a scheduler to assist with timing of posts; use graphics and pho-

tos; message topics can include activities, announcements and actions; raise up partner posts; follow other Leagues' posts. The LWVUS has a social media guide.

Social Media Workshop: Much of this workshop was to inform members of a new League service called One Voice Social Media. This service will upload six posts per month to a local League's Facebook and Instagram accounts. The cost is \$80 per month or \$720 per year. The state League also stays on X in order to counter mis and dis-information. No fund-raising posts will be uploaded to local League's social media accounts. They will also have suggested messaging calendars.

Suggestions beyond those listed in the communications workshop include: focus on local events and issues; ask family members and friends to amplify posts by liking and resharing; follow and like partner content

A newer social media site is called Bluesky (a decentralized social media app) that aims to give users more control over their experience on the site. In researching the demographics of the users, I found that one third of users are 18-24, 60% are male and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is the most followed user on the site.

There was also some discussion on dealing with traditional media. They suggested having one or two spokespersons, usually the presidents, interact with the media. They can then deputize others with expertise in certain areas to talk with the media. Press releases such as the election of a new president can be a way to get the League's name out there. Invite the press to cover events. Letters to the editor or op-eds are another way to make an impact. Our League does a good job with this. Contact the media about current litigation.

Health Care

by Richard Bertken, M.D.



How did a mutant gene, prevalent in China, help prove that drinking alcohol increases cancer risk?

Plenty of large, long-term observational studies strongly implicated alcohol ingestion as a major risk factor for the development of various cancers. Specificity for type of cancer—some cancers much more likely to be triggered than others—and for the amount of drinking led researchers to believe that a causal relationship was likely. The next step was to look for the biochemical pathway responsible for turning cells into cancerous cells.

They did not have far to look. This first product of the breakdown of alcohol—acetaldehyde—is a known carcinogen. Acetaldehyde (ACHY) in air and water has been monitored in the U.S.for decades. What we learned was this: ACHY levels have declined modestly over the last seventy years. In retrospect, this reassuring finding suggests reducing our vigilance about environmental exposure

In our bodies ACHY attaches to proteins and DNA. While there are innumerable checkpoints that prevent this reaction from triggering cancerous cells, some cells escape to proliferate uncontrollably.

Most living things generate ACHY and, break it down using an enzyme known as ALDH. In humans, the gene for ALDH has undergone well-known mutations. This mutation is prevalent in China. People with this mutation experience wildly different responses to alcohol ingestion depending on whether they got the mutant gene from one parent or from both.

Those with two defective genes upon drinking experience a host of acute ACHY toxicity symptoms: headache, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, and shortness of breath. Very few are able to countenance any drinking at all. While they have resting ACHY levels three times higher than normal, they experience none of the huge spikes of drinkers. They have the same low rate of key cancers—oral, throat, and esophage-al—as non-drinkers. Those with one mutant ALDH



gene have modest or no symptoms of ACHY toxicity in spite of resting ACHY twice that of the general population The regular drinkers in this group experience exceptionally high rates of the key cancers due to sustained toxic pulses of ACHY levels.

The ALDH gene mutation created a spontaneous controlled experiment proving that drinking alcohol triggers cancers. It also proved that this risk of malignancy is related to one's long-term lifetime dose of alcohol. Researchers using long-term surveillance data can detect modest cancer promotion of all types from just a couple of drinks a week. Public health experts have recommended teetotaling but have given no weight to potential personal pleasures and social benefits of liquor, which could for many people easily outweigh minimal cancer risks of occasional cocktail hours. On the positive side, the experts have highlighted the data that supports a gradual return to normal cancer risk among those who become non-drinkers.

Overall this is unwelcome news for the liquor industry and for frequent drinkers. Liquor sales are down 6% in the last year and trending down. Younger people are drinking less because of greater attention to alcohol's negative health impacts, many alternative social intoxicants, and cultural rejection of parental stereotypes.

The liquor industry also faces an unexpected problem: the expanding use of anti-diabetes and anti-obesity drugs. These drugs—Wegovy, Ozempic, and Maunjaro are leading examples—work in the brain to reduce addictive cravings, including those for alcohol. About 5% of the US adult population is taking these drugs and experiencing decreased drive to drink despite our nationwide anxiety over where our government is headed.

Will a media advertising war break out between the liquor and pharmaceutical industries? Both are planning massive invasions of on-line content. Given the current blitz of stereotyped and mind-numbing ads from these industrial giants, it would be a nightmare.



Mark Fagin, D.D,S., M.S. Specialist in Orthodontics USC Graduate

4747 North First Street, Ste. 138 Fresno, CA 93729 Ph. (559) 375-8727 Fx, (559) 375-8754 info@faginortho.com

Support the League

Pour message can be here For only \$100 per year

Contact Francine at

farberfrannola@gmail.com

Raging Grannies

Wild Hats, Cheeky Songs and Witty Actions for a Better World

> Invite Us to Your Next Event!



kaypítts@gmail.com Raging Grannies International

Contact 209-531-3554

Investment Services Retiremen Planning

Income Strategies



Robert H. Gunning Financial Advisor

CA Insurance ic #0E61490

1318 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 200 * Fresno, CA 93710 Cell (559) 999-0773 * (559) 222-7441 * (800)726-2732 Fax (559) 221-6519 * rgunning@ifgrr.com Website https://www.rgunningcfis.com

Wish happy birthday to your grandchildren! Ce ebrate a friend's anniversary! Recognize a favorite organization! When you purchase this space for a year for \$100 you can change your message every month if you like. . Or if you prefer, keep the same message for a year.

Just contact me and we will set it up for you. farberfrannola@gmail.com

Women's International League

for Peace and Freedom

WILPF supports local peace and social justice groups

Skyhorse3593 @sbcglobal.net



PATIENCE MILROD

LAWYER/LICENCIADA EN LEYES

985 NORTH VAN NESS AVENUE FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93728 559.246.7239 PM@PATIENCEMILROD.COM

HELPING TO PRESERVE FRESNO'S PICTORIAL HISTORY



Howard K. Watkins Fresno's Photo Laureate www.watkinsphotoarchive.com

Contact: 964 Palo Verde Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90815

559-355-7040 * howardkwatkins@gmail.com

1345 Bulldog Lane * Fresno, CA 93710

Non-profit Organization U.S.Postage Paid Fresno 93706 Permit #896

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents Kay Bertken/Robin Chiero Secretary **Fave Nennig** Treasurer Maureen Hayes Vice President, Voter Services Sue Goldman **Director, Voter Services** Robin Chiero **Director, Education** Kay Bertken Director, Membership Diana Durham Director, Program Planning **Marianne Kast** Director, Program Planning **Marie Slater** Director at Large **Dolores O'Neal** Director, At Large Radley Reep **Director, Student Unit** Naomi Bick **Voter Editor** Francine Farber

Webmaster Robin Chiero

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS!

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.

Yearly Dues Individual - \$75 is the recommended amount. However you can choose an amount, with \$20 being the least you can pay. Renew online at https://portal.lwv.org/

Please make your check payable to the US League of Women Voters, Fresno, and send to our local office at LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710. with registration form below

Name	Ph	
_Email	Address:	
Address:		