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The *Our 80th Year!*
FRESNO
VOTER



Monday, January 11

4 p.m., Zoom
Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, January 14

5:30 p.m., Zoom
Oliver Baines
Police Reform
Commission
See page 3

Monday, February 8

4 p.m., Zoom
Regular Board meeting

Tuesday, February 23

5 p.m., Zoom
Program Planning
See page 3

League members and
guests are
invited to all League
events
and meetings



Patty



Marianne



Sue



Francine



Liz



Lisa



Sandy



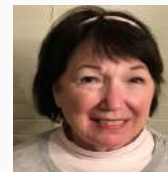
Dolores



Marie



Diane



Terri



Kay

*Did LWV Nevada
Gamble on
Re-Districting?
See Page 2*

2021

President's Message



MEMBER NEWS

"LWVUS Withdraws Recognition of LWV Nevada."

This headline ignited a flurry of email among League leaders across the nation. What could cause LWVUS to withdraw recognition of a state League? The story is complicated, but here's my take.

For well over a decade, Democrats have controlled Nevada's bicameral legislature. The state constitution there gives the legislature responsibility for drawing congressional and state legislative district lines, following each nationwide census. In 2011, the legislature proposed district lines but Republican Governor Brian Sandoval vetoed the map which, predictably, favored Democratic interests. A five-year brouhaha ensued, ending when a court-appointed panel of experts drew new maps which were adopted in the state. The new district drawings, produced by independent experts, were different from those drawn by the legislature, but they also heavily favored Democrats.

In June, 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Common Cause, et al vs. Rucho*, ruled that partisan redistricting is a political question, and not reviewable by federal courts. The LWVUS responded to this decision by launching its "People Powered Fair Maps" program. This program provides financial, organizational, and legal support to Leagues in states where fair redistricting processes are needed. Nevada is one of those states.

LWV Nevada took the lead in organizing an initiative campaign to amend the Nevada state constitution and create an independent redistricting commission. The effort was called, "Fair Maps Nevada." Using templates from around the nation, and advice from a couple of well-known Nevada Republican operatives, the LWVN initiative called for a seven member commission, with four members appointed by the legislature and three additional members appointed by the first four commissioners. Compare this proposal with the California Redistricting Commission, where the State Auditor, not the legislature, is responsible for choosing the commissioners. Additionally, the Nevada proposal contained no mechanism for funding the proposed redistricting commission.

Nevada Democrats are comfortable with the existing method for drawing district maps since they clearly benefit. It seems that the Fair Maps Nevada group did not seek Democratic buy-in while writing the initiative. In fact, Democrats (or their operatives) sued to prevent the initiative from being

(continued on page 8)



NOTORIOUS RBG SCHOLARSHIP

Donations for the Farber/League partnership scholarship fund at San Joaquin College of Law are welcome. Make out your check to LWVF and write RBG in memo line. We will forward it to the College.



Generous donations have been made this month by:

Murray Farber

In honor of Francine's birthday

Marianne Kast

Other generous donations were made to LWVF this month by:

Janice Maroot

Donations are a great gift for any occasion. LWVF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your gift and membership are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.



Please remember us in your estate planning. Help us continue the fight to defend and build participation in the democratic process. You can designate a gift amount now, or state a gift as a percentage, which will automatically adjust no matter what the future may bring.

This edition of the Voter is electronic only due to holiday schedules. The February issue will return to both electronic and print editions.



The Voter is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno
Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710
Volume 80, No. 1 Editor: Francine M. Farber



Baines to address LWVF

After months of collaboration a 39-person Police Reform Commission, made up of community leaders and law enforcement, came up with 73 recommendations to improve the Fresno Police Department. Commission Chair Oliver Baines says they were nearly unanimous.

He will discuss the recommendations at a LWVF meeting, describing what he learned from the commission and what he believes will actually happen, especially in light of the new police chief and mayor who will take office this month.

Baines is a 25-year resident of Fresno with an extensive record of community service. He was the only African American serving on the Fresno City Council during his two terms in office starting in 2010. His professional career began in law enforcement as a police officer for the Fresno Police Department. During his 11 years there he was highly decorated, receiving two Life Saving Medals, 2008 Officer of The Year recognition, Chief's Commendations, and multiple Peer Commendations.



Oliver Baines



Thursday, January 14
5:30 p.m. on Zoom
Link will be sent to members

Let us hear your voice at Program Planning Tuesday, February 23, 5:00 p.m.



Help us choose our priorities for the coming year. Then sign up to be part of a committee that educates and advocates for them. If a priority doesn't get volunteers, it won't go forward.

Here are some suggestions from your Board:

Childcare and Preschool: There are currently spaces in Fresno County for only 23% of children ages birth to 12. How can we support all of Fresno's youngest learners?

Environmental Practices: Shall we research and advocate for the best practices in agriculture, water, soil, land use?

Homelessness: How can we help meet basic human needs and prevent further homelessness?

Rank Choice Voting: Eliminates candidates winning with only a small plurality by having voters rank their top candidates. Some say it is too complicated and may confuse voters. Should we support it?

Criminal Justice Reform: With a new Fresno mayor and police chief, how will the 39 recommendations from the Police Reform Commission be evaluated and implemented?

- ◆ **Do you have other ideas? We want to hear them at the meeting!**
- ◆ **We will also forward to passing ideas along to LWVC as the state League attempts to establish its own priorities for the year.**



The February Voter will provide more information on these issues.



The State LWV Board is finally constituting a committee to consider an LWVC charter school position—long after our aborted effort to get our proposal passed at the State Convention a year and a half ago. I will be on the committee, which will begin discussion around our study and proposed position. Happily, much of what we proposed back then has already been adopted into new State Education Code provisions.

Changes in bond projects

The Fresno Unified board held a special meeting to discuss proposed staff reconsideration of Measure M bond measure projects. The topic was prompted by the receipt of state grant offers of \$14.3 million for three CTE projects-- at Sunnyside, Duncan and Edison High Schools. Each would require additional district funds.

Other projects staff recommended included modernization at Yosemite Middle School, an “e” sports center at Tehipite (a dedicated space for emerging e-sports that would serve the whole district), and work on accessibility at Roosevelt. The cost of the new projects would be balanced by removal or changes in previously prioritized projects. The trustees approved these proposals with some minor changes at their December 12 board meeting.

The main business at that meeting was the vote to change the image of the Fresno High mascot. There were strong feelings on both sides of the

issue. Those opposed were primarily alumni. Those in favor included current students. The Board voted six in favor and Trustee Slatic opposed.



Zoo and service charter school

The board held a hearing about a new seat-based charter school application. Golden Academy would primarily serve southwest Fresno students. It would open as a TK-3 school and eventually serve TK-8, emphasizing an environmental education and participation in service projects. The school is partnering with the Chaffee Zoo.

At its last meeting of the year, the Board heard a report on its Student Voice Collaborative initiative, an effort to better structure student input into district actions. A consistent theme from each of the reporting student groups was the sense of “academic overload” and stress they were feeling from their online lives; too much homework involving computer time on top of classes meeting online. The district was already proposing to reduce independent work in favor of more teacher/class time in its spring scheduling announcement. That did not appear to answer the student concerns. Students also requested more help for parents in their native languages.

Fresno Unified is currently soliciting stakeholder input for its Local Control Accountability Plan. It is scheduling focus groups for students, parents and community groups and holding virtual town hall meetings in each high school region to get direction on district goals, actions and investments for the coming year.

Civic Education Partnership

The Civic Education Partnership also met this month. The League had co-sponsored its recent pilot web dialogue project involving a panel and subsequent discussions of women’s rights. Partnership leaders reported on the results and were especially pleased that civil dialogue was evident. LWVF offered mini-grants for projects that might follow up on the topic. *See Women’s Rights, page 10*

Civic engagement certificate

The Partnership also discussed the state and local criteria under consideration for students to qualify for a special seal to be added to a high school diploma as an award for students who meet standards of civic engagement. FUSD has been developing its criteria (in alignment with the developing state criteria) for piloting its own Silver Cord Award: a minimum 2.0 GPA, completion of one or more civic projects, demonstration of civics knowledge, completion of a portfolio, and an exit interview.

kayb@csufresno.edu



Climate Change

by Andrea Farber de Zubiria



Understanding the climate crisis and how to solve it is an enormous topic. In 2021 our committee will continue to inform ourselves and pass on what we learn to you.

In the past year and a half we met with a number of local agencies to gain insight into their role in monitoring or lowering greenhouse gas production. These included the



Council of Governments, The Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, the City of Fresno's Sustainability Manager and the Project Manager for the Transformative Climate Grant. We watched videos related to climate change and posted links to some on LWVF's facebook page. The Citizens' Climate

Lobby biweekly study group helped us learn about things like regenerative agriculture, nuclear energy, theories of behavior change and more.

Lenore Yousef joined the LWVC Food, Soil and Ag Team to represent us. Ruth Afifi provides reports from the LWVUS Renewable Energy team. Our committee developed a comprehensive list of candidate questions regarding climate and policy for the November election that was shared with the state Climate Task Force. Thanks to Terri Figgs, we posted questions on our new Climate web page on the LWVF website.

The web page includes links to State league activities related to climate as well as some up-to date articles related to the San Joaquin Valley. We plan to add information about Fresno County's climate adaptation plan. With guidance from member Radley Reep, we are considering how we might encourage the County to prepare and adopt a climate action plan to reduce greenhouse gases. We would also like to prompt the County to bring its existing climate adaptation plan up to code.

(continued on page 8)

Water News

by Diane Merrill



Researchers from Stanford University, UC Davis, and UC Riverside are collaborating with local water managers on electromagnetic (AEM) surveys to investigate locations where water flowing from the Sierras could enhance efforts to recharge groundwater aquifers. The surveys are being carried out by a low-flying helicopter towing a large rectangular-shaped frame. The researchers will be able to see beneath the ground to a depth of about 900 feet and create a 3-D model of electrical resistivity, revealing the types of materials in the subsurface.

The area being surveyed is the transition zone from the fractured rock of the Sierra Foot-hills to the sand and gravel deposits in the alluvial fans along the east side of the San Joaquin Valley in Fresno and Tulare counties. Recharge is difficult in areas of fractured granite and occurs easily in areas of sand and gravel. One of the target areas for the survey is a buried "paleo" valley in the alluvial fan near the Kings River. This valley may



be an especially efficient pathway for recharging water deep underground. While 70 to 80 percent of Central Valley is geologically difficult for recharge, these buried valley areas could be ideal pathways for aquifer recharge because of how easily water can move through them.

Our local North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency is one of the areas being surveyed. It is supplying data from monitoring wells as a second means of validating the AEM survey data for the buried valley near the Kings River and other surveyed areas. Water managers are looking forward to the results of the AEM survey as it will help fill data gaps about subsurface conditions and inform them as they develop and implement recharge projects to mitigate groundwater overdraft.



It's a wrap for the 2020 census

by Sue Goldman

The Fresno County's Complete Count Census Committee has completed its current work and is creating a final report to share with county, state and federal partners. The committee is also planning to develop a legacy document to pass on to a future 2030 committee.

In the course of its work the CCCC :

- ◆ sent out 250,000 mailers to areas and addresses in multiple languages.
- ◆ conducted a texting campaign to those 69 and older in the hard to count population.
- ◆ sent out 49,000 cell phone texts which resulted in a 13% response rate. Many of the targeted people had already completed the census form.
- ◆ added additional language hotlines in Punjabi and Hmong (the state had not included these languages).

In 2010, Fresno County had a 66.8% response rate to the census which was the largest increase in self-response rate of any in the state. They had hoped for a 75% response rate this year. However, when Covid hit they were hoping just to equal the 2010 response rate. The actual response rate this year was 68.4%.



For further information, go to the following website: <http://www.census.gov/data.html>

The committee has decided to continue communication with members regarding the redistricting process

Tuesday, January 19

**Dr. Robin Tokmakian, on Zoom at Noon
LWV, the UN and Climate Change
Meeting ID 890 5504 0715 Passcode LWVTC**

**Dr. Martin Keller 9 a.m.—Noon
Director of the National Renewable Energy Lab
Renewable Energy Webinar
Register on Torrance LWV web site**

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



As a result of their behavioral health disorders, some individuals become involved with the criminal justice system. A diversion program, that is, assignment to a mental health facility or services, is the best option. But when people end up in the Fresno County jail, their physical and mental health care becomes the responsibility of the contracted provider Wellpath, which gave a report to the Behavioral Health Board recently.



Wellpath provides services to those with acute mental illnesses, subacute mental health conditions, and substance use disorders, any of which require clinical behavioral health attention; especially targeted are inmates with Serious Mental Illnesses (SMI). Inmates needing mental health services may be identified at intake,

may request services, or may be referred by correctional staff.

Wellpath staff has access to the electronic health records from the Department of Behavioral Health, and does accept information from family members. Goals include: (1) three mental health contacts per week, in individual and/or group sessions, (2) decrease in the number of inmates placed in safety (isolation) cells, where they are monitored by crisis clinicians, and (3) decrease the need for mental health inpatient services, requiring placement outside the jail.

While services inside the jail have improved in recent years, our board is concerned about the care provided to inmates, especially for the approximately 200 individuals with SMIs. Of those, it was reported that 52 inmates are incarcerated in isolation cells, either for their own safety or because of their inability to function in a group setting.

Another concern is the lack of discharge planning and community program linkage at time of release. Staff provides transportation, prescriptions, and information about community resources, but individuals basically are on their own once released from jail. There is no follow-up by Wellpath staff; perhaps follow up services should be included in the next contract.

(continued on page 8)



When our Centennial Celebration Committee selected 100 Notable Women from our area, we knew their achievements weren't over. Periodically we'll tell you about their new contributions to society.

Sheriff Margaret Mims was a featured panelist on a livestreamed webcast sponsored by LWVF and the Center for Civic Education at the Ethics Center at Fresno State. She talked about the meaning of the Suffrage Centennial in her life.

Lynne Ashbeck and **Jackie Ryle** served as experts on a threeday web dialogue on women's rights, responding to student comments and providing mentorship to participants.

Carol Chandler and her husband were awarded the Agriculture Business Award by the Fresno Chamber of Commerce for their stewardship of Chandler Farms.

Brandi Orth, county registrar, filled a difficult and complicated role in the recent presidential election, keeping Fresno voters informed, safe and voting.

No doubt 2020 was a difficult year, but "nevertheless, she persisted." Here are some "firsts" during these challenging months.

- ◆ The first statue of real women was installed in New York City's Central Park
- ◆
- ◆ The first woman was named CEO of a major U.S. banking institution
- ◆ The first woman lay in state at the Capitol
- ◆ The first woman reached Earth's highest and lowest points
- ◆ The first woman was appointed General Manager of a U.S. professional men's baseball team
- ◆ The first woman free-climbed El Capitan Golden Gate in under 24 hours
- ◆ The first time women will represent 25% of seats in the next Congress
- ◆ The first woman in our country' 244-year history was voted into the office of Vice President-elect.



From the Coalition for Constitutional Equality at ERA-coalition.org

Court ruling affirmed in League's favor in Friant Ranch case

by Radley Reep

The Fifth District Court of Appeal (Appellate Court) has once again ruled in favor of Sierra Club and League in their 2011 environmental lawsuit against Fresno County for the approval of a 2,500-unit residential development near the community of Friant called Friant Ranch.

On December 22, the Appellate Court officially disposed of the Friant Ranch case by ordering as follows: *"For purposes of clarity in subsequent proceedings, the superior court is directed to promptly issue an amended peremptory writ compelling County to*

(1) vacate its decision to approve the Friant Ranch project, which includes the approval of General Plan Amendment No. 511

(2) void its decision to certify the completion of the final EIR, and (3) not approve the project before preparing a revised EIR, circulating the revisions to the EIR, and certifying the completion of the revised EIR."

Should it choose to do so, Friant Ranch L.P. has until the first week in January to petition the California Supreme to review the Appellate Court's disposition of the case.

Previously on November 24 the Appellate Court had affirmed that prior to revising the project's environmental impact report (EIR) and reconsidering project approval, the County would need to first decertify the EIR and set aside all project approvals. In an earlier 2014 ruling, the Appellate Court directed the County to revise the air quality section of the EIR to more thoroughly analyze the effects that project air emissions would have on human health, and in 2018 the California Supreme Court upheld that order.

Appellate court opinions are certified for publication when they advance new interpretations of particular statutes or otherwise make significant contributions to legal literature. Published cases can then be cited as precedent in other legal proceedings. The Appellate Court chose to publish only a small portion of its November 24 opinion. Believing the entire opinion worthy of publication, Sierra Club, League and nine other parties requested that the Appellate Court publish its opinion in full. The Appellate Court denied that request. As a result, the California Supreme Court will decide whether the opinion should be published in full, in part or not at all.

President's Message *(continued from page 2)*

placed on the ballot. A judge's rewording of the measure's summary for the ballot allowed the measure to move forward. About 10,000 signatures were gathered before the pandemic stopped in-person petition signing. Fair Maps petitioned the Nevada courts to extend the signature gathering period by six weeks and also allow electronic signatures be used to qualify the measure. Sensing another opportunity to quash the measure, Democrats rallied support from individuals and the powerful Nevada Gaming Association lobby to oppose the petition. The six-week extension was allowed; electronic signatures were not. Needing over 97,000 signatures, the measure failed to qualify for the ballot.

Of course, I'm simplifying the story here, perhaps leaving out salient details of who said or wrote what. It appears that Sondra Cosgrove, president of LWV Nevada, did not build the kind of coalition that a change to redistricting needs. Too, the proposed measure did not have features making it palatable to all stakeholders. An op-ed piece written early-on by *The Nevada Independent* indicated that Cosgrove was not open to



Sondra Cosgrove

revising the measure, labeling questions about the initiative "sexist" or "smearing" her character.

Leading an initiative campaign requires perseverance, compromise, and a commitment to inclusion. The multi-year process of qualifying California's Proposition 15 for last November's ballot is an example. After gathering enough signatures to place that initiative on the 2016 ballot, organizers sensed that concerns raised about the measure were substantial and might turn potential supporters into opponents.

A revised draft was created and that mandated a second signature-gathering campaign to qualify for the ballot. Though the measure failed to pass (barely), the foundation is set for future action and the statewide coalition of support for tax reformation is set

With the Nevada statewide League dissolved, Cosgrove has moved on to form Vote Nevada, a non-profit group dedicated to civic engagement and improving the state. It is unclear if the LWV of Southern Nevada, which Cosgrove also chaired, will survive. There is still a local league in northern Nevada.

Marianne

CLIMATE CHANGE

(continued from page 5)

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in April we are planning a zoom informational meeting about climate change and the 16 inspiring projects underway in southwest Fresno, Chinatown and Downtown Fresno thanks to the Transformative Climate Communities grant. From a City College satellite in South West Fresno to community gardens, solar panels, electric buses and more, these projects all had extensive community input. They will provide economic and social benefit to historically neglected areas while reducing greenhouse gas production.

The Climate Action Committee meets via zoom on the second Wednesday of the month from 4-5:30 p.m. If you would like to attend a meeting, please contact Lenore Yousef, committee chair for 2021, at Lenorey@csufresno.edu or afarberdezub@gmail.com

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

(continued from page 6)

Wellpath also provides health services at the Juvenile Justice Center where young people involved with the criminal justice system are housed.

Again diversion programs are the best option for these clients. Diversion programs are more abundant and more successful for youth, shown by the steady decline in the numbers of those incarcerated at JJC; in a facility built to house 400,

on December 16 the incarcerated population was 115. Services for youth are more extensive with psychiatric and mental health evaluation and assessment, crisis intervention, medication management, acute psychiatric referrals, and case management services. Staff educate families about behavioral health disorders, and create discharge plans with community referrals.

The long awaited Mental Health Services Act Three-Year Plan has been posted. Public comments are welcomed for 30 days prior to and during the Public Hearing at our January 20, 2021 Board meeting. Following Board approval, the Plan will go to the Board of Supervisors, and then to the State for final approval. You may access the plan and comment cards on the MHSA website: www.fresnomhsa.com

evansalca@comcast.net



manufactured spike protein segment gets presented to immune cells that recognize and remember a variety of binding sites on the protein for future inactivation and destruction of the virus.

Making the vaccine cells of the recipients responsible for the needed massive production of immunizing proteins has turned out to be very efficient. More importantly, these types of vaccines can be quickly modified and scaled up for future vaccines. They may even permit immunization against multiple microorganisms in a single shot.

Look forward to getting shots

The “S spike” is 1273 amino acids long. Our immune system can recognize and initiate attacks on foreign amino acid configurations as small as 5 amino acids, so depending on the size of the mRNA spike segment synthesized by the vaccine producers, there are likely to be multiple sites of immune attack on an invading COVID-19. More to the point, any set of mutations that allowed the virus to escape the vaccines’ induced immunity would likely destroy the key binding region of the spike that permits it to enter human cells. Loss of vaccine potency due to mutations is not a serious threat. We should all be looking forward to Covid-19 shots.



Drbertken@comcast.net

Hospitals in Fresno started administering Covid-19 vaccinations on December 20. This Pfizer vaccine, and the Moderna version to follow, are stunning scientific and technological achievements. At the same time, we are seeing worldwide Covid-19 contagion and new concerns about mutations in the virus that might augment its virulence or reduce its susceptibility to vaccines. Despite these concerns, there is credible evidence that 2021 will usher us back into the world we once knew.

Among the most important aspects of Covid-19 is its slow mutation rate—half that of influenza and a quarter of that of HIV. Its RNA genome is continuously tracked by molecular biologists around the world, so we know that two viruses found anywhere differ by an average of only ten RNA letters out of about the 30,000 that construct the virus.

New strain slightly more infectious

As early as April 2020 a mutation in the key outer surface spike of the virus—the “S spike” that contains the critical protein configuration that unlocks human cells for viral entry—was suspected to have fostered more rapid spread of infections. Intensive laboratory and epidemiologic study showed that the new version was modestly more infectious and has, in fact, become the Covid-19 we know today, against which our vaccines are effective.

This is the same issue we are seeing in the UK and South Africa now, with premature attributions of increased transmission rates to a new strain with “20 mutations” and “70% increased transmissibility.” Most COVID-19 strains have at least 20 single

letter mutations compared to the original Chinese strain, so this is likely not to be as disturbing as it sounds.

Changes in transmissibility cannot be inferred from epidemiologic data. Laboratory testing is required for that. This research has been facilitated by another scientific breakthrough: the production of harmless viral particles with all the surface characteristics of dangerous viruses. The infectivity of these particles is then tested on susceptible lab animals. On the positive side of the recent mutation reports, frightening portrayals of the virus are likely to improve adherence to public health measures, which is the main thing for the time being.

Skepticism re dangerous mutations

Mutations in viruses, as in all living things, are overwhelmingly either harmful or inconsequential to the organism. Evolution proceeds by very rare beneficial mutations that promote reproduction under inhospitable conditions. At this moment, Covid-19 is thriving in a very hospitable world, hardly needing a mutation to become more infectious. “As far as the virus is concerned, every single person that it comes to is a good piece of meat,” says William Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. “There’s no selection to be doing it any better.” This reasoning invites skepticism about worries of dangerous mutations in Covid-19.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines work by inducing our own cells to produce the immunizing vaccine. They send a message via synthesized “messenger RNA” to inform the recipients’ cells to produce key portions of the spike protein. The mRNA conveys the message without ever penetrating the nucleus of the cell or contacting DNA and is eventually broken down and recycled in the cell. The self-

Two students win awards for Women's Rights projects

As a co-sponsor with the Civics Education Center and the Ethics Center of the recent web dialogues about Women's Rights, LWVF offered to provide mini-grants of \$500 each to high school or college students who developed a plan to improve women's and/or girls' rights in their school or community.

Two awards have been made.

The first is to Alexis Macedo, a student in the theater department at Fresno State. Alexis will write and film a script about the "Town of Castle Rock v. Jessica Gonzales." The police had refused to enforce a restraining order against her abusive husband, who had abducted their three daughters. Their bodies were later found in the cab of his truck, after he committed 'suicide by cop'. Eventually her persistence led to a landmark decision that found the United States responsible for human rights violations against women and made changes to the government's domestic violence policy.

The daughters will be played by puppets and the male characters will be played by women. Alexis will use the funds to pay for props, costumes, equipment rental and

theater space. The resulting film will be shown to League members and the public.



The second award is for a planning grant to Aaralyn Vang, a sophomore at Sanger High. Aaralyn will work with her social studies teacher, Andrea Lucero, to research the need for a safe space where female students can discuss their problems including harassment, stalking, depression etc. without concern about retribution or unwanted parent involvement.

The research process is part of a protocol taught to students by the Civic Education Center and requires a study of already existing support services and whether they are adequate, and the development of a specific plan including site, budget and anticipated outcomes. Mrs. Lucero will maintain the funds and distribute them to Aaralyn as needed. If research determines that the plan is not practicable, remaining funds will be returned to the League.

The funds for the awards are coming from the League's Suffrage Centennial Fund that was created for 2020.

-F. Farber

Cellist performs for LWVF holiday concert

Dr. Thomas Loewenheim is passionate about the power of music. At the League's holiday concert on Zoom, he gave a talk and performed as an orchestral soloist on tape.

Loewenheim is a cellist and conductor who is a professor of cello at Fresno State, Director of its Symphony Orchestra, and the artistic director of the Fresno Opera Academy. But one of his most important responsibilities is the Director of Youth Orchestras of Fresno.

"I'm so proud that students come from throughout the Valley to play in the Youth Orchestras, introducing

Fresno youngsters to new friends and experiences," he said.



Loewenheim grew up in Israel, where he attended the Rubin Academy for Music and Dance in Jerusalem. He jumped at the chance when he received an offer for a full scholarship in the U.S. He earned a master's degree from the University of Michigan and a doctorate from Indiana University, both in cello performance. "I was thrilled when the Fresno State position was offered to me because I would be able to teach cello as well as conduct," he commented.

Loewenheim began playing the cello at age 4. His grandparents, both professional musicians, thought that be-

cause of a disability in both legs he would be unable to play the violin since it required standing for long periods as a soloist. With the cello, he could sit. Loewenheim's two young children are budding musicians, one playing violin and piano, and the other playing cello and piano. "Some of our best times are when we play together," he smiled.

He hopes to get community support through the Youth Orchestras of Fresno website, which describes sponsorship opportunities. "I think we're the best-kept secret in Fresno," he said ruefully.



-F. Farber

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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 - \$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),
 to: LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710.**

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 Name _____ Ph. _____ E-mail _____

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