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Monday, June 12
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m. in person
Stone Soup

June members meeting
Details to be announced

Monday, July 10
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m. in person
Stone Soup

Sunday, August 27
Women's Equality Day
Unitarian Church
5 p.m.
RBG Scholarship Winner
Lipton Award
WED Award
Make reservations
next month

JUN



THE FRESNO VOTER



Our League's 82nd Year!

Comeback of the Year and ideas for new members:

How a returning League member became meaningfully involved again

by Nancy Richardson

When I was in my twenties, I joined the League of Women Voters of Fresno and served actively, including a year as president from 1973 to 1974. I made friendships that have endured until now, when I am in my late seventies. The women I met early on provided a robust education which I could not have received anywhere else. I dropped out for decades due to a full schedule of civic activities emanating from everything I had learned from my League experiences.

* * * * *

Editor's Note: Education and land use were important issues during Nancy's tenure as president. In 1975 she won a seat on the Fresno Unified school board where she served until 1979 and again from 1990 to 1993. When she served as Interagency Coordinator for Children's Services she was engaged in issues of juvenile justice and authored influential reports about children and youth in our juvenile justice system. She was a member of the task force that authored Choosing Our Future, an evaluation of Fresno schools that led to leadership and system changes. She served on the county Mental Health Board and the county Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee.



* * * * *

Well, I'm back! As a retiree and widow, I am thrilled to rejoin and be an active member. I feel the same challenge and excitement as I did all those years ago. Wanting to learn something new, I heeded the admonition at the Annual Meeting that if we vote for our local priorities, we should pick one and work on it. So, I decided to learn about air pollution control.

As is true of all subjects of interest to the League, there is an entirely new vocabulary, endless abbreviations, and a whole new set of agencies, interests, and people. My personal favorite acronym so far is FONSI, Finding of No Significant Impact. It would be fun to work that into my everyday conversations. *(continued on page 3)*



Nominations



*The Co-President's Message will return here next month
In this issue it appears in convention news on page 4*

May 2023

The League is asking its members to nominate candidates for Women's Equality Day and the Lipton Award, both of whom will be honored at our Women's Equality Day event on August 27.

Nominations for **WED** should be local area women who have broken through the glass ceiling in a leadership position usually filled by men.

The Lipton Award is named in honor of Dr. Werner Lipton, husband of Life member and former League president Joan Lipton. The award was established in 2006 and given to him posthumously. Dr. Lipton had worked for many years as a scientist with the U.S. Agriculture Department, and then became a long-time volunteer especially interested in transportation and the environment. Lipton nominees should not be current members of the League; there is no gender restriction.

Both awards include a framed certificate and their name engraved on a permanent plaque. The LWVF Board of Directors will select the two honorees at its June meeting. Please send in your nominees now to me at

farberfrannola@gmail.com or Kaybertken752@gmail.com

Some of our previous award winners for Women's Equality Day: **Carole Goldsmith, Deborah Ikeda, Ashley Swearingin, Misty Her, Linda Penner, Hilary Chittick, Lynne Ashbeck, Kerry Donis**

Some of our previous Lipton Award winners: **Janet Claasson, Ruth Gadebusch, Paul Loeffler, Richard Haas, Dr. Lee Snyder, Coke Hallowell**

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New Board members: Former board member Marie Slater will collaborate with Marianne Kast on Program Planning. Naomi Bick, a Fresno State professor, has volunteered to be the new Student Unit director. Diana Durham has taken over as Membership Director, while Cathy Caples will be an at-large director to accept assignments as needed,

Program Planning: A members meeting for June is still under discussion as the planned speaker has not been responsive. There was a lack of enthusiasm for a Board retreat in July. Meanwhile the Women's Equality Day celebration has taken shape. A contract has been signed with the Unitarian Church on August 27 since the 26th, the actual date, is not available there. The contract includes hall rental, setting up and taking down tables and chairs, and use of a sound technician. It was decided to charge \$25 for the event which will include generous hors d'oeuvres. The fee will help to pay for rental costs, food and technical services. Nominations



are sought for the Lipton Award and the WED award.

Roster: We are still clarifying membership based on comparing our list with that of the national organization. Some members have till not paid dues

Notorious RBG: a letter of thanks was read from Rosa Nava-Garcia, the current scholarship winner.

State convention: Kay Bertken, Marianne Kast and Jaquie Canfield will be our voting reps at the convention from May 19-21. Robin Chiero will attend for one day. Some expenses will be underwritten through our budget.

Social responsibility: Kay reviewed information she had obtained from the Unitarian Church about adopting a refugee family. It does not appear to be as complicated as we had thought but we still need more information about possible financial obligations and other details.

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.

Education

by Kay Bertken



Next Board Meetings

Wednesday, June 14

Wednesday, June 21

At recent Fresno Unified Board meetings, staff reported on the camp experience that was available to all 6th graders this year. 97% of 6th graders attended (5,400 students). This year the district provided gear and sleeping bags to enable all kids

community, improving recruitment and retention of diverse staff, expanding real-world experiences for students, increase opportunities for family engagement.

Increased health services

Notable investments include funding an increase in health services, adding nine RN's and ten LVN's each year until all schools have a nurse on site by 2026/27. Safety proposals include adding a substantial number of campus safety assistants and specialists. Investments in more frequent and



who could go to be equipped to enjoy the winter camping experience. Summer camp sign-ups have begun for the 64 day camps being provided this July.

Shorter Budget Presentations

Most of this month's meetings have been taken up with a budget presentation—much abbreviated from previous years that involved multiple meetings with individual presentations by each of the district departments outlining their requests for the coming year. Trustees complained about the new presentation. Small group meetings with the trustees are planned to answer their questions.

Budget proposals were centered around the major themes garnered from public LCAP workshops—mental health, food and safety—and five district goals: improving academic performance, increasing student engagement in the school and

timely data reports to school sites are also being proposed. New allocations to college and career readiness, nutrition, and plant maintenance were also part of the presentation. The allocation of one-time funds and special grants are planned largely for extended learning opportunities—after school and camps—arts and music expansion, and facility projects.

More Special Ed Personnel

An exception to the summary presentation was a separate consideration of the proposed special education department augmentation. The department is asking for a substantial budget increase to restructure its administration with new leadership and support positions and to add 38 full-time equivalent paraeducators who will provide classroom services. Trustee Wittrup, who has a background in special education, was critical of the empha-

sis on structure and legal compliance rather than the substance of the program. The district is still responding to a critical 2018 report of its Special Education services by The Council of Great City Schools.

The Governor's May budget revise may have changed the district's revenue expectations. Another budget presentation is planned plus small group meetings with board members to answer their questions. The trustees will vote on a final budget in June.

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Nancy Richardson

(continued from page 1)

I am in awe of the League members on the Climate Action Committee who display and act on their expertise in climate change writ large, as well as deep knowledge of water, food, soil, agriculture, air, and so much more.

In addition, I am beginning to understand that the Fresno County General Plan is an extremely important precursor to an avalanche of actions whose impact cannot be exaggerated. The League's website has a superb tutorial and timeline on the General Plan. June 27 is the deadline for the League to weigh in on an update which is likely to be approved this year. As member Radley Reep has encouraged, we should all commit to influencing the Plan. nmricardson@comcast.net

Power and Possibility:

Four Voices from the Convention

Four members of LWVF attended the LWV California convention
Pictured from left: Jacquie Canfield, Marianne Kast, Robin Chiero, Kay Bertken

The Co-President's Message usually is seen on page 2. Kay's convention story replaces it for this month.
by Kay Bertken

I just left the State League Convention in San Francisco after two and a half days of League business, topic workshops, inspirational talks, stimulating conversations with members from around the state, and to-do lists—long, long to-do lists. This convention had none of the drama or controversy that has sometimes occupied conventions; business proceeded uneventfully in the approvals of the state budget, officers and program. But otherwise, like each of the League conventions I have attended, this one showcased the communal commitment of League members to finding answers to troubling issues—water, incarceration, immigration, voting access and participation, health care, and the inequities around all of it. As a bonding experience, there is nothing like one of these gatherings.

Speakers were consistently inspiring. The first day, a panel included a State Assemblyman, two leaders of organizations bringing voting rights and its empowering potential into prisons, and an attorney who has worked across the state to ensure fair redistricting maps. Later in the meeting, two different academics presented their research on voting and nonvoting behavior. The final speaker of the weekend was the registrar of



A rapt audience listens as Dr. Debora Turner, newly elected as LWVUS President for another two years, speaks to the convention.



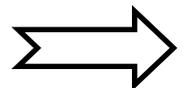
a county whose board of supervisors, accepting the misinformation around the equipment's contribution to election fraud, determined to remove their Dominion voting equipment and institute hand-counts of the county's ballots.

I have come home with so much to work on. I attended a workshop on engaging high school students in civic projects and voting. I have references to civic engagement curriculum and games to share with teachers. I learned about a League's sharable video about voter registration, regulations and voting that runs in their probation department and jails. I listened to Leagues across the state talking about their very diverse water problems—flooding, sea-level rise, Colorado River allocation disputes, dam removal and draught. I listened to two speakers who shared the power of personal stories to empower the storytellers and reform lives and policy.

The theme of this year's convention was "Power and Possibility." The speakers and workshops all reinforced the idea that lifting the voices of people who have been traditionally silenced and then working and speaking together will open a world of possibility for all of us. I hope the energy around that message's delivery does not fade away quickly for those of us that were there to hear it.

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More convention voices on page 5



Using the VOTER

by Marianne Kast

Early Saturday morning, I joined 30 others at the convention workshop, “What’s Up with Your League’s *Voter* Newsletter?”

This gathering was hosted by LWV Pasadena which produces a colorful, 8-plus page, glossy, monthly *Voter*. Their newsletter is sent digitally to most members, and by mail to a handful who request the print edition. In addition, articles from their *Voter* are posted to the pages of their website, sorted by topic. They also send email “blasts” to advertise upcoming events or meetings of various committees and community partners. LWV Pasa-

dena is questioning whether the effort required to produce and post their *Voter* is worth it. In this age of digital media, could they accomplish similar results with just a portion of the half-dozen or more League members required to produce the *Voter* and the email notices as they do it now.

Attendees shared how the *Voter* is produced in their Leagues. Only a few produce monthly print versions, many create digital *Voters* and several rely on frequent email messages to notify members of events and opportunities. Some Leagues have joined the all-inclusive Club Express platform, suggested by LWVUS, which offers the combined functions of website hosting, messaging (like Mail-

Chimp), and a membership database.

Many Leagues use their *Voter* as an outreach tool, seeking new members by sending digital versions to anyone whose email address they obtain. No one is sure this approach is effective, and many suggest that people of all ages don’t regularly read email.

The most effective way to grow League membership seems to be engagement in the community. When League members are integrally involved with community issues, others are inspired to join the work. But the *Voter*, in some form, is an important tool for keeping members informed of the happenings of their League.

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Election count goes manual by Jacquie Canfield

The Shasta County Supervisors in a recent action cancelled their contract with Dominion (their election software company) and moved to hand counting all ballots. County Clerk and Registrar of Voters Cathy Darling Allen stated their action was taken with little regard to the financial burden it places on the county, no plan of action to install new voting technology and no input from the her..

Subsequently, the Election staff presented information over multiple board meetings to help the Supervisors understand the impact of their actions including accessibility requirements by law; space, staffing both permanent and temporary, funding impacts.

While the Supervisors did approve a voting system for voters that are disabled as required by law, they did not change their overall position.

The elections office is preparing for a manual tally process. To understand the magnitude, in November 2022 Shasta County counted 68,986 ballots, which equates to 2.8 million individual *ovals* tabulated. No other California elections department does a manual tally. Election staff estimates increasing permanent staff 33% and 1300 hand counting staff (an increase of over 200% from current poll worker staff) to comply with election rules and timelines. While there are still many unknown costs, the current increase in costs through the 24/25 fiscal year is at least \$3 million.



Cathy Allen

A first-time conventioneer enjoys the experience

by Robin Chiero

The 2023 California LWV Convention was my first, and it was an interesting, enjoyable and informative experience. The convention leadership emphasized the importance of welcoming those who were attending for the first time, and informal conversations at breakfast and during general session breaks were a valuable addition to the structured agenda. Although I was able to attend only one day, the time was filled with opportunities to hear from LWVC leadership, workshop and panel presenters and to spend time with the Fresno delegates and members of other local Leagues. Because of my role in Voter Services, I was particularly attuned to the topic of empowering voters.

In the workshop *Countdown to 2024: Community outreach for GOTV Success*, three organizations presented strategies for

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County plan open for comment

by Radley Reep

Over a decade in the making, Fresno County's long-awaited draft land use plans for 2023 – 2042 are now available for public review and comment. Public comments are due by 5 P.M. June 27.

To access these draft plans, enter “*Fresno County General Plan Review and Zoning Ordinance Update*” into an Internet search box. That should lead directly to a County webpage with these four draft documents:

Draft 2023 General Plan Policy Document

The Draft 2023 Policy Document contains the goals, policies and implementation programs that will govern decision-making over the next twenty years for just about every issue affecting the quality of our lives, including economic development, transportation, water supply and environmental protection.

Draft 2023 General Plan Background Report

The Draft 2023 Background Report is a policy-neutral document that describes existing conditions and trends in the county. It covers a wide range of topics, such as natural resources, demographics, and land use, as well as public services, facilities and infrastructure.

Draft 2023 Zoning Ordinance

The Draft 2023 Zoning Ordinance codifies allowable uses and building standards for a set of around 40 zoning districts, examples being Rural Residential (R-R), Exclusive Agriculture (AE) and General Industrial (M-2).

Draft 2023 Environmental Impact Report

The Draft 2023 Environmental Impact Report assesses the environmental impact of buildout over the next twenty years under the new Draft 2023 General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The 2023 Draft EIR contains a finding that plan implementation is likely to adversely impact air quality, agriculture, forest resources and transportation infrastructure.

The document that draws the most interest is the Draft Policy Document. If adopted as now written, the Document will include new policies and programs that specifically target climate change, flooding potential, wildfire danger and environmental justice. In contrast to the current Policy Document, the revision also decreases support for farmland conservation and increases support for

non-agricultural residential and commercial development.

Admittedly, public review of (and comment on) the new Draft 2023 Policy Document is a daunting task. For starters, there's the sheer volume of the changes. The County proposes to delete or significantly revise 82 of 121 programs (68%) and to do the same for 174 of 604 policies (29%). The draft also contains 58 new programs and 125 new policies. It's a challenge to understand the need for so many changes, especially since the County has made little effort to explain the need for a majority of the revisions.

Should you wish to participate in the review of these new plans, I'm willing to offer guidance. **Contact me at radleyreep@netzero.com or (559) 326-6227.**

First time conventioneer

(continued from page 5)

outreach and partnering. San Francisco Rising, CAL-PIRG Students from UC Berkely New Voters Project, and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CA) all use community partners to help them advocate for greater participation in the political process.

Tabling is used widely by all those presenting, and Leagues were encouraged to participate in events such as job and career fairs. Small cards with the QR code for registration (or other information as well) could be provided. Even if those attending are already registered, League presence increases visibility. There was some discussion about whether phone banking was an effective strategy.

Examples of successful collaborations by Local Leagues were also presented during the workshop. The Eden Area League collaborated with Castro Valley on its New Citizen Celebration and Oakland collaborated with its food bank to include a one-page flyer about the importance of voting in their food distributions.

The workshop emphasized the importance for Leagues to expand their reach by collaborating with organizations that already have a relationship to their communities. Each one brings a particular strength to the collaboration. The relationships can lift all organizations' visibility in the community and further the mission of empowering voters.

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Although this article is about the future of drug addiction, focusing on opioid addiction, the starting point is mental health.

May was Mental Health Awareness Month. Any internet search would have found hundreds of suggested activities to improve the sense of well-being in the average person.

But what about the increasing numbers of people experiencing persistent mood or thought disorders? Because of continuing stigmatization of mental health and psychiatric care, too many reject that care or are shut out because professional care is expensive and in short supply.

Narcotic use is “DIY” problem

“Do it yourself” care is more readily available. This may involve withdrawal from their social scene, various forms of misbehavior or self-harm, or the use of illicit drugs. Self-prescribed psychopharmacology is a hazardous pathway leading to long-term addiction or worsened psychic suffering.

From opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment programs we have learned that over half of patients report PTSD, chronic anxiety, or depression precipitating their use of narcotics. What we also need is extensive, confidential monitoring of emotional health in our schools, offices, and healthcare facilities.

The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) is a recent, extensively validated questionnaire for depression and suicidality. The school districts that have adopted it have reported surprisingly good acceptance by

students and most parents. The results have been useful. Troubled schoolchildren usually want their parents to find out how they are feeling, and parents usually want to help or find help. But few pediatricians or primary care doctors use the PHQ-9 or similar mental health inventories.

Drugs easily available

Our schools and public health departments are on the front line of an expanding battle against mental illness and drug addiction. They are now confronted with a different war on drugs. Trying to curtail access to addictive agents through law enforcement has not worked. With arrival of fentanyl and a host of synthetic, easily transported narcotics and cannabinoids, the supply of drugs is essentially infinite. We are challenged to shrink the demand side.

Reducing demand is possible using two tools at hand. One is early detection and diagnosis of mood and behavior disorders and referral to professional mental healthcare services, including psychiatrists if appropriate. This is often not possible because a serious shortage of providers throughout California and, indeed, our entire country.

Advantage of medical care

The other tool is medical treatment to get drug transactions off the street and into addiction treatment centers. The decision to get this treatment is left solely to patients. However, an increasing number of patients with OUD are electing medical treatment, motivated in part by saving money. (street opi-

oids cost \$50-150 per day, whereas medical treatment may be covered under Medicaid/Medicare). They also see advantages avoiding harm or death from IV needle usage or laced street opioids and the violence that attends drug dealing.

The medical treatment of OUD has been dramatically advanced by expanded use of the drug buprenorphine. As a sublingual film or tablet, it is taken daily to curb opioid craving and withdrawal. It works as both an activator and suppressor of the opioid receptor and must be carefully initiated and maintained.

Narcan now OTC

Other good news: the vast expansion in the availability of intranasal Narcan, an opioid blocker that instantly reverses respiratory arrest caused by fentanyl and other opioid overdoses. The FDA approved over-the-counter Narcan at the end of March. County health departments have widely distributed Narcan units to treatment centers, needle exchanges, homeless encampments, and concerned families. These actions, given the current rate of opioid use, will save thousands of lives every year.

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Manual counting

(continued from page 5)

Cathy Darling Allen has been in her elected position since 2004, winning five elections, and is steadfast in her efforts to oversee the election process even with all these obstacles. She continues to: respond to attacks; respond to public comments based on mis/dis/mal information; take care of staff and each other; advocate for resources.

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Housing

by Marianne Kast



The saga of Fresno's Trail's End Mobile Home Park played out in the news starting in early 2021.

Months of tenant complaints and the owner's refusal to address habitability issues resulted in the California Housing and Community Development Department suspending the park's permit to operate. With that suspension, the Park's owner could not charge rent until safety standards were met. Two deadly fires occurred in the months following the suspension, causing one death and the loss of several homes.

How is it that the oversight of mobile home communities falls to a state department rather than to local agencies as with other forms of rental housing? Think about the concept of "mobile" housing. The California HCD manages the titling, and registration for mobile homes, manufactured homes, commercial modulars, floating homes, and truck campers. Basically, any form of "building" that is able to be moved and which may remain mobile or be placed permanently or temporarily onto a foundation is regulated by HCD. It makes sense that these hybrid constructions are not handled by the DMV or the municipal building departments when they are manufactured. However, once a mobile unit becomes permanent housing, assuring the safety of resident in these units can remain with HCD or can be transferred to local municipalities.



Following the tragedies at Trail's End, the Fresno City Council voted in May, 2021 to take control of enforcement

at ALL local mobile home parks through the City's Code Enforcement Division. Interestingly, while HCD is responsible for inspecting and enforcing the safety and habitability of mobile home parks, they do not have the ability to shut down unsafe parks. That has always been the responsibility of local officials. It seems, in the case of Trail's End, that there were known problems with the management and operation of the park, but the City took a "not-my-problem" view before being pressed into action by tragedy.

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Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The Behavioral Health Board heard about two Transitional Age Youth (TAY) programs at its May meeting. The county operated program serves young adults ages 17-23 with serious and persistent mental health difficulties. Services include case management and care coordination, group/individual therapy, psychiatry and medication services, linkages to supports and resources in the community, including connection to housing. Services were provided to 764 unique persons during 2021-22.



The TAY Full Service Partnership is contracted to Central Star Behavioral Health, Inc. serving individuals ages 16-25 with more serious and persistent mental health difficulties, including histories with one or more human service sectors and life events. Services are similar to those in the county operated program, but are more intensive and available 24/7. The latter youth have shown reductions in homelessness, psychiatric hospitalizations, and arrests. The Partnership served 157 young people in 2021/2022. The Board was happy to learn that there is a permanent supportive housing development in process specifically for the TAY population. The Arthur at Blackstone, funded by a No-Place-Like-Home award, will have 41 units for these young adults. The site may be remembered by long-time Fresno residents as Arthur's Toy Store on Blackstone, just south of Shields.

Ordinarily in the mental health world "co-occurring" refers to mental illness and substance use disorder, but "co-occurring" may refer to other dual conditions. This month the Board made a site visit to Sanger Place, which is a Mental Health Recovery Center for individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disorders and Serious Mental Illnesses. It was a unique opportunity to see a program serving a population from our community that we rarely observe. Sanger Place is a 15-bed facility that provides intensive mental health treatment for these dually diagnosed adults ages 18-59. It is designed to prepare clients to move into the community at a lower level of care. The program is voluntary, and the doors are not locked.

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Voter Services

by Sue Goldman



At the national state and local levels, the League of Women Voters advocates for voting rights. National and state leagues around the country are engaged in legal action to fight discriminatory and suppressive voting regulations in various states that limit access to the ballot. In addition, the national League is supporting the Washington, D.C. Admissions Act to enable the people of our nation's capital to have full representation in Congress. The League has reported that they have protected 25 million voters in 2020 and have a 78% win rate in federal lawsuits.

Here in California, we are fortunate not to have to fight the same restrictive voting legislation. However, the state League does support legislation related to campaigning as listed below.

AB 83: The Political Reform Act of 1974 prohibits foreign entities from making contributions in support of or in opposition to propositions or to give financial support to any candidate. AB 83 makes accepting a contribution from a foreign entity a misdemeanor. Any business making a contribution would have to certify that they were not foreign influenced.

AB 270: This bill is also an expansion of the Political Reform Act of 1974 that prohibits a public officer from expending, and a candidate from accepting, public moneys for the purpose of seeking elective office. This

bill would allow the candidate to accept public moneys if the state or local government entity established a dedicated fund for this purpose. However, the money could not be taken from government allocations earmarked for education, transportation or public safety. This restriction would not apply to charter cities.

Note: *Fresno is a charter city*

AB 868: This bill is also related to the Political Reform Act of 1974 and relates to digital political advertisements. It would enact the Digital Advertisement Transparency and Accountability Act (or DATA). This act would establish a system that would require a committee that pays for a digital advertisement to appear on an online platform, to submit to the commission a copy of the digital advertisement and specified information, including among other things, the name and identification number of the committee that paid for the advertisement, information related to the subject of the advertisement, the name for the online platform(s) on which the advertisement would be displayed, and the amount paid or agreed to be paid to the online platform. The bill



would require the information to be submitted by a certain deadline and would require the Fair Political Practices Commission to make this information available in a centralized and publicly accessible online format.

SB 24: This is the Senate companion

bill to AB83.

SB 328: The Political Reform Act of 1974 prohibits a person, other than a small contributor committee or political party from making a contribution to a candidate for any state, county or city office totaling more than \$3,000 per election, an amount that the Fair



Political Practices Commission can adjust in odd years to reflect inflation. This bill would apply those limits to candidates for community college districts, school districts, and other special district elections.

However, those districts would be permitted to impose campaign contribution limits that differ from the limits imposed by the act.

AB 678: This bill relates to elections disclosures. It would require a person who is paid by a committee to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure on an internet website, web application, or digital application to include a disclaimer, stating that they were paid by the committee in connection with the post. The committee would be required to notify the person of the requirement. Failure to post the disclaimer would result in the Commission seeking injunctive relief to compel disclosure.

Climate Change

by Nancy Richardson



Some good news about emissions reductions in our area: The American Lung Association reports that the number of bad-air days and the levels of short-term particle and ozone pollution in our area decreased from 2021 to 2022. Our committee member (and Citizens' Climate Lobby State Coordinator) Connie Young, congratulated the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District for its contribution to this achievement recently.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) has adopted a far-reaching rule that can help to further reduce air pollution in the Valley. Heavy duty diesel trucks are the largest source of air



pollution, accounting for 39% of the problem, according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. In late April, CARB adopted a rule requiring a transition over a period of years toward zero-emission medium-and-heavy duty vehicles. CARB predicts billions of dollars of savings in health care costs and operating costs of truck fleets through 2050.

The rule, known as Advanced Clean Fleets, calls for California “to commit \$9 billion to a multi-year, multi-agency zero-emissions vehicle package to equitably decarbonize the transportation sector that was agreed upon by the Governor and the Legislature in 2021.” A Fresno Bee editorial recommended extension of deadlines that would affect trucking fleets which haul Central Valley produce to ports. Litigation is likely on many of the requirements. Still, it is a monumental step to have developed a comprehensive plan for something so complex.

It is not lost on people who follow climate change and air quality issues that, while CARB adopts the Advanced Class Fleets rule, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration are the subject of litigation filed by Friends of Calwa, Inc. and Fresno Building Healthy Communities. Their Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief states that although CARB designated South Central Fresno a priority community under AB 617 requiring air monitoring and implementing a program to reduce emissions, the defendants' South Fresno State Route 99 Corridor Project would “increase the capacity of traffic—particularly heavy-duty trucks-- to flow between the highway and local South Fresno roadways.” nmrichardson@comcast.net

Water News

by Diane Merrill



The results from a recent snow water survey show the water content of the Southern Sierra snowpack at an all-time record of 291 percent of average. As temperatures rise and the snowpack melts the risk of flooding increases, especially in the Tulare Lake Basin.

The California Department of Water Resources recently began implementing an emergency program to divert high river flows away from flood prone areas in the Central Valley and into groundwater recharge basins. The goal is to assist local agencies to take advantage of high river flows to recharge groundwater supplies that have been depleted over the last few years during the worst drought in a millennium.

The Department is deploying temporary diversion equipment, including pumps and siphons for use by local agencies. One priority is diverting some of the water flowing into Tulare Lake Basin from the Kings River, and other local rivers. A goal is to reduce the potential for flooding in the communities of Corcoran, Al lensworth, and Alpaugh, including two state prisons that are located in Corcoran.

The first set of equipment was deployed to the Fresno Irrigation District in late April. Over the next four months, the equipment will be used to pump water into a recently constructed flood control and groundwater recharge basin that did not yet have a physical and permitted intertie with the District's canal system.

During this record wet year, the District is encouraging farmers to take advantage of canal water for irrigation and to help recharge the aquifer, rather than relying on drip irrigation.

SYLVIA WOODBURNE

Sylvia Woodburne, a member of the League since 1998, died in April at age 85. Sylvia was an outspoken woman who wrote fiery letters to the Bee and worked for a number of causes. She was a volunteer for many years as a California Court Appointed Special Advocate, ensuring that children and youth in the foster care system have a voice and the services they need for a stable future. Sylvia was an active member of the LWVF Housing Committee and was interested in finding solutions for people who are experiencing homelessness.

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**Look for the
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