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The *Fresno*  
**VOTER**



Monday, March 9  
Board Meeting  
5 p.m.  
Stone Soup

Monday, March 23  
Centennial Event



Month of April  
Centennial Event  
Madden Library  
Details to follow

Monday, April 13  
Board Meeting  
5 p.m.  
Stone Soup



Members and Guests  
invited to all League  
meetings and events

**A SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL EVENT**

**Author Angelica Carpenter**

**“Born Criminal” - the story of Matilda Joslyn Gage,  
Radical Suffragist**



**Woodward Park Library**

**March 23**

**7 p.m.**

**Free and open to members and the public**

***Light refreshments***

# President's Message



## MEMBER NEWS

Please edit your roster



What obligation do elected officials have to meet with constituents? I believe they are busy people, pulled in many directions including fund raising for themselves, official appearances and, of course, meeting with interest groups looking for support for special projects.

Every year the state League asks local Leagues to meet with their legislators and determine their positions on specific legislation as well as surveying their personal legislative priorities. These tasks can be covered in a 30-45 minute meeting. So, compared to the other reasons constituents ask to meet with local legislators, meeting with the League seems like an easy gig.

After three years of trying to schedule these meetings, I can attest that this is not always an easy process. A single contact with Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula's office scored a meeting this month, the third year we've met with him. A couple of phone calls and an emailed request landed a meeting for us, along with League representatives from Merced, Monterey, and Stanislaus counties, with Senator Anna Caballero.

However, in previous years we met with staffers from Senator Andreas Borgeas' office, and they suggested we meet with the Senator himself this year. After four phone calls and a visit to his office I'm still waiting for that appointment. At least ten phone calls to Assemblyman Jim Patterson's office generated a meeting with one of his staffers. The staffer, not being well versed on the assemblyman's positions, agreed to get back to us with clarification on his positions. Weeks have gone by, and we're still waiting to hear from Patterson's office.

As I write this, we're in the heat of election season. Candidate forums and town halls are a major vehicle for learning a candidate's positions and demeanor. We certainly cannot rely on advertising to give us an accurate picture of candidates for office. Likewise, going to a fund-raising event is not a way to compare candidates. After attending three recent congressional candidate events, for congressional districts 16 and 22, I have yet to see our incumbent congressmen, Jim Costa and Devin Nunes. Both chose not to attend those events. Similarly, at three recent City of Fresno mayoral candidate forums, I have yet to see candidate Jerry Dyer participate.

The issue of access to elected officials and candidates for office is a concerning one. Without information directly from these people, citizens are missing a main component for decision making. I am frustrated by this lack of access. I hope the League will consider this important issue in the coming months.

*-Marianne*

***It's always a good time for a gift to the League. LWVF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your gift, including dues, is tax deductible. Checks should be sent to:***

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1345 Bulldog Lane  
Fresno, CA 93710**



**The Voter is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno  
Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane Fresno, CA 93710  
Volume 79, No.3 Editor: Francine M. Farber**

## Voter Services

by Liz Shields



This past month members from the Get Out The Vote (GOTV) group went to Clovis Farmers Market and the Vineyard Farmers Market to register new voters, to provide information for people who had not yet received their ballots and to remind voters to complete and return their ballots. We were concerned to find that many voters thought that they could still go to their old polling places on Election Day. As a result we have sent out the following message to all League members, teachers and other groups and asked them to spread the word that:

**The former polling places have been consolidated into 50 Vote Centers for this election. All Vote Centers will be open for 4 days: three days prior to Election Day and on Election Day, March 3. On Saturday, Sunday and Monday they will be open from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. On Election Day they will be open from 7 a.m – 8 p.m.**

**Don't leave it to the last minute if you plan to go to a Vote Center because the lines may be long. Find your Vote Center at [www.votefresnocounty.com](http://www.votefresnocounty.com). Clicking on 'Find Your Vote Center/Drop Box' will bring up an interactive map where you can insert any address in Fresno County and get information on Vote Centers and Drop Boxes within a two mile radius of the address.**

Ballot unfolding has begun at the Election Warehouse, 4525 E. Hamilton between Cedar and Maple, south of Butler. It is a much easier process this year as the new tabulating machines are more sophisticated There will be many more ballots to unfold this election so we need more League volunteers to help. Please contact me at [elizs44@yahoo.com](mailto:elizs44@yahoo.com) or phone 559-578-5670.

The phone bank at the Election Office is now in operation to respond to voters' calls about their ballots, their Vote Centers and the new voting system in Fresno County. Again we need volunteers to staff the phone bank, especially on Election Day. Please contact me to help.

If you need more information on the new election procedures go to the Election web site at [www.votefresnocounty.com](http://www.votefresnocounty.com) or phone 559-600-8683.

[elizs44@yahoo.com](mailto:elizs44@yahoo.com)

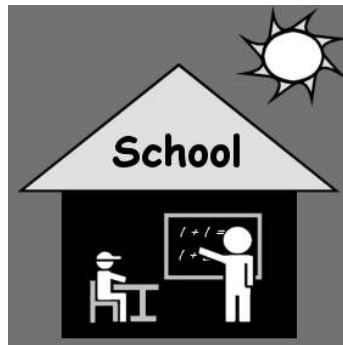
## Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The February meeting of the Behavioral Health Board began with an opportunity for all to share their Vision of Hope for an art project to be unveiled in May during Mental Health Awareness Month.

The focus of the Department of Behavioral Health update was the Youth Wellness Center that serves as the "front door" for access to Children's Mental Health Services. Children who walk in with their parents are triaged and referred to appropriate services dependent on the level of need. The Center also coordinates post-hospital follow up after psychiatric hospitalization, provides support to families, and assists with linkage to mental health services and other helpful, relevant community resources. The Youth Wellness Center, along with other county behavioral health services for children, is located at the Heritage Center, 3133 N. Millbrook Avenue, Fresno, 93703.



An update on All4Youth, the partnership program between the Department of Behavioral Health and the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, reported that 120 schools, plus five charter schools, are now included and are providing behavioral health services on site. Implementation is moving into its third year, with a plan to include all schools in Fresno County within five years.

The State is providing a one-time allocation to initiate a Whole Person Care-Like pilot program; Fresno County will receive \$894,377. The target population includes persons experiencing homelessness with serious mental illnesses, substance use disorders, and/or other chronic physical health conditions. The program will necessitate cross-county cooperation among Behavioral Health, Public Health, Social Services, and the County Administrative Office. We are excited to see how this program develops.

We invite League members to attend the March meeting of the Behavioral Health Board at the Health and Wellness Center, 1925 E. Dakota, Fresno 93726, from 2:30-4:30 pm. (with a notation that the Board voted to change its meeting time to 3:30-5:30 pm beginning in April.)

[evansalca@comcast.net](mailto:evansalca@comcast.net)

# Education

by Kay Bertken

NEXT FUSD Meetings: March 4 and 18

In person and streaming on your computer

Community members have been vocal in recent Board meetings around two issues: special education and ethnic bias. The district has pledged to institute implicit bias and cultural sensitivity training; parents suggest that the need is urgent and not moving fast enough.

Special education parents have been vocal about the need to implement special education reforms, particularly to provide the staffing that is important to meet their students' needs.

## Superintendent's goals

Superintendent Nelson met with his Board in a special meeting to discuss his goals for the year—some of which directly address these issues. In addition to promising a strategic plan to be delivered at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, other goals include:

- ♦ moving the district to a more diverse workforce and inserting a diversity and inclusion mindset into district programs
- ♦ providing an update on the special education plan and working on communication with special education parents
- ♦ continuing to deliver timely and reliable student data accompanied by action plans to address student needs
- ♦ improving communication with the Board when incidents involve their schools

While next year's budget development and the community meetings for the Local Control Accountability Plan that feed into that budget have been prominent on recent Board agendas, there

have also been reports from ongoing programs. Duncan's night school program has begun, offering certification programs plus some introductory career technical programs open to all high school students and community members.

The district has also handed out 1000 hotspot devices to make internet access possible in student homes. The African American Academic Acceleration program has reported out very positive results for its students: increases in attendance and GPA and declines in suspensions and D and F grades.

## State commits to early childhood

News on the state and national fronts always suggest impacts on our local schools. Governor Newsom has released his budget that continues his commitment to early childhood care



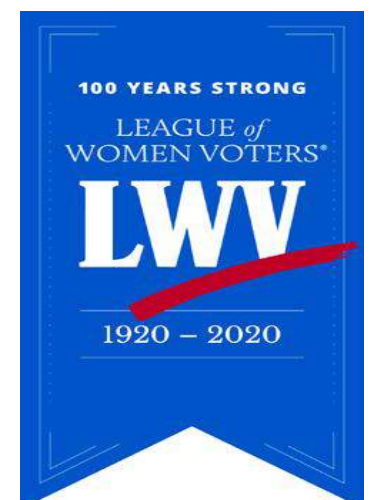
and education. He has established a commission to develop a strategic plan, and Fresno has a member on that team. At the same time that group begins work, the governor is organizing a Department of Early Childhood Development to better coordinate state programs and services. He has also proposed increased funding for child-care and preschool slots as well as money for preschool programming that is inclusive of children with disabilities.

## Religious school funding at issue

On the national front, the Supreme Court will issue a decision this summer that will potentially open public funding to private and religious schools. At issue is a Montana constitutional provision that bars direct and indirect taxpayer aid to religious institutions. The Montana legislature passed a bill providing dollar for dollar tax credits for contributions to scholarships at private schools. Most of the schools receiving those donations were religiously affiliated. The Montana Supreme Court struck down the program. School choice advocates, backed by the Trump administration, are asking for the program's reinstatement, arguing that families going to religious schools should be treated equally to those that choose nonreligious schools.

Many states, including California, which bars taxpayer funding of all private schools, have constitutions that bar funding of religious schools. Depending on how broadly the Court rules, there is fear that this case could muddy the line between church and state and open the door to expansive public funding of religious education.

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## Health Care

by Richard Bertken, M.D.



**H**ow does an epidemic end? I regret contributing to the current anxiety news cycle, but I am interested in this question more broadly than as a coronavirus headline (hereafter Covid-19).

My most recent read was *The Mosquito* by Timothy C. Winegard. It portrays the history of the world from the perspective of “Generals” Anopheles (vector of malaria), Aedes (yellow fever, dengue, Zika), and Culex (West Nile and other brain infections). Mosquitos have no intention and certainly deserve no military rank. They cannot transmit diseases without the aid of human carriers. However, Winegard does make a powerful case that the eruption of and countermeasures against diseases have dramatically changed human history in ways that historians have not adequately recorded. We are all here today because our ancestors escaped plagues that repeatedly killed many family members, friends, soldiers, and leaders.

What stopped the 1917 flu pandemic that killed 50 million people? One good answer would be: nothing, except the nature of the disease itself. It was unusually abrupt, lethal and very transmissible. The only vector was human, and there was no significant third-party reservoir storing away and distributing the virus. It was subjected to the opposite of a quarantine: World War I. It ran its course just like most previous epidemics throughout history, decimating the susceptible population and immunizing those lucky enough to have some natural immune resistance or to have gotten a smaller than lethal dose of the pathogen. A rapidly lethal, contagious infection could not sustain a durable epidemic because it would run out of susceptible subjects. This was especially true if all the susceptible subjects had left town, a frequent historical strategy of the wealthy acting in a form of reverse quarantining.

At the other end of the spectrum is malaria, which lingers for long periods, creating durable human reservoirs. Malaria cannot be transmitted from human to human except by blood transfer, which is performed by the Anopheles mosquito. Malaria can cause an epidemic only when dense populations of human reservoirs of the malarial parasite live among high concentrations of Anopheles mosquitos. It could in theory

be eradicated by eradication of the mosquitos (DDT almost achieved this, too non-specifically) or by curing all human carriers.

Where is Covid-19 on this spectrum? So far, its lethality per infection is dramatically lower than the 1917 flu and lower than the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic of 2002, also caused by a Chinese-origin coronavirus.

Covid-19 has already affected far more people and caused many more deaths than SARS. In both these infectious outbreaks, the Chinese government delayed the release of critical information about the potential epidemic. This was a crucial mistake, because modern, early identification of infections and targeted quarantining can be very effective in preventing not only human suffering, but also economic recession. All advanced countries—with China near the top of the heap—now have sophisticated diagnostic tools and demographic tracking data that were not available in 2002.

China is going all-out to achieve the impossible: make up for lost time. They forwarded the DNA sequence of the virus to all major nations about six weeks after being made aware of the first cases. They quickly developed highly specific testing for the virus and implemented screening and hospitalization protocols—and of course the now infamous quarantining of Wuhan and much of the entire Hubei province. They have started controlled trials of antiviral drugs.

We are learning more about Covid-19 with each passing day. Swab testing for virus will likely require fecal as well as oral swipes. The infection may be less severe outside of Wuhan. Men are far more vulnerable. The Centers for Disease Control has sent virus testing kits to 110 medical centers around the U.S. with plans for monitoring positive results. Vaccine manufacturers are using super-technology to manufacture immunizations, which could pass usual human testing in 18 months. Some sources suggest that vaccines could be available much sooner, perhaps with something less than usual human testing if needed.

We are living in a world where exponential growth in biomedical knowledge appears to be keeping up with exponential growth in the risk of pandemics. We need to make sure that the US makes robust contributions to the World Health Organization and sustains healthy funding of the CDC’s role as a world leader in international health.

*rbertken@comcast.net*

# Climate Change



by Andrea Farber  
De Zubiria

At the suggestion of the LWVUS Climate Task Force, our committee has submitted the recommendation to LWV Fresno that “Climate Emergency” be added to the program focus of “Making Democracy Work”.

Climate Emergency clearly falls within the general framework of “Making Democracy Work.” World leaders and the U.S. military warn that the impacts of climate disruption have become increasingly severe and frequent. The resulting climate chaos will have devastating effects on our economy, the lives of individuals and all levels of government. These effects pose a serious threat to the civil liberties and freedoms upon which our democracy rests.



“Making Democracy Work” must include work on solutions to the climate crisis that are responsive to equity and climate justice. Tragically, those least responsible for climate change suffer the greatest consequences of environmental

degradation and pollution - lack of clean air and water, reduced access to safe, healthy food, illness, dislocation or death from extreme weather events. Democracy only works when all of its citizens have a voice at the table and are assured of a safe, sustainable, and healthy environment in which to live and contribute.

**What you can do:** We can all use our power as voters by voicing our concerns and asking for legislation to curb greenhouse gas emissions and help our communities adapt to a changing climate. Ask questions and speak up at city council meetings, voter forums and political debates. The League’s climate change task force has resources to learn more at .LWVUS Toolkit for Climate Change .

**Citizens’ Climate Lobby Monthly Calling Campaign:** Calling your representatives helps create the political will needed to solve climate change by demonstrating constituent concern. You can sign up for a reminder text or email with phone numbers and suggestions for how to express your concerns and respectfully urge climate action at <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/monthly-calling-campaign/>

# Water News



by Diane Merrill

As required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, the seven Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in the critically overdrafted Kings Subbasin submitted required Groundwater Sustainability Plans to the California Department of Water Resources in January. The Kings Subbasin covers the eastern and mid valley areas of Fresno County. LWVF is focusing on the plan for the North Kings agency, the largest and most populous of the seven agencies. All seven plans are available on local groundwater agency websites for public review and comment. Comments may be submitted to the department by April 15, which with input from the State Water Resources Control Board, has up to two years to review the plans.

Seven agencies scheduled a community workshop in late February to inform the public about groundwater management implementation at the regional level. A panel of leaders discussed how the Kings Subbasin plans to coordinate the seven plans, and what they have set out to accomplish during the first two years of implementing the plans. This will include upcoming projects and considerations for disadvantaged communities and rural households on individual wells.

Unless something changes soon, this will be a dry year. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor webpage, as of February 20, the eastern portion of the Southern San Joaquin Valley is in a moderate drought. A question asked at the community workshop was: If drought conditions continue, what are the Kings Basin agencies’ plans to prepare and to minimize the potential for further groundwater overdraft and dry domestic wells?



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**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.

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