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Monday, November 8
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m. ZOOM

Plans for a holiday
event to be revealed
soon!



The

FRESNO

VOTER

Our 80th Year!



Photo by Peter Maiden

Front Row L to R: Cynthia Sterling, Nancy Richardson, Diane Milutinovich, Mary Curry, Armen Bacon, Juanita Stevenson, Patience Milrod, Ruth Gadebusch, Dr. Jackie Ryle

Middle Row: Hilda Cantu Montoy, Margaret Mims, Luisa Medina, Dr. Carole Goldsmith, Elizabeth Laval, Margarita Rocha, Marsha Conant

Back Row: Lynne Ashbeck, Lisa Smittcamp, Esmeralda Soria

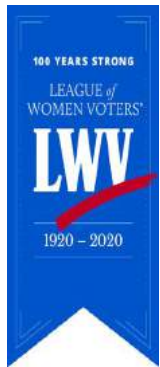
An audience of more than 75 people heard Elizabeth Laval, our featured speaker and president of the Fresno Historical Society, tell us about the Real Women of Fresno County. Along with slides of the early Fresno days we saw the demographic diversity that makes Fresno a special place. Speaking about the impact of being a woman on their professional lives were Diane Milutinovich, retired Athletic Director for Fresno State; Armen Bacon, author; Juanita Stevenson, journalist, Mary Curry, community activist; and Dr. Carole Goldsmith, president of Fresno City College. The honorees each received a miniature copy of their own poster. A gala reception followed in the museum lobby.

MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 6

President's Message



When the year 2020 was several years in the future, we began thinking about how the momentous 100th anniversary of women's right to vote should be celebrated. The League, after all, owes its existence to the coming of women's suffrage. The need for commemoration seemed indisputable and the choices endless, especially if we could find funding for our many ideas.



We are industrious for sure, and soon we had money from donors and were able to plan many unique events to mark that special year. Following the successful "First Ladies" exhibit at Fresno City Hall in January, 2020, and the BWOPA historical reenactment of Black suffragists in February, 2020, our future plans succumbed to the pandemic. We cancelled, delayed, finagled and reimagined our 2020 events, a process that continues to this moment.

Despite the disappointments, some really good things have come out of the pandemic. I'm tired of Zoom, but the switch to virtual events has allowed us to meet, learn, discuss and celebrate despite distance, disability, or dozens of other reasons that previously hampered our participation. We remembered how to enjoy outdoor activities, still our best choice for evading Covid-19. We learned that we can live with our older cars and with fewer choices of consumer goods from breakfast cereal to computer printers.

The pandemic coincided with a reawakening to systemic racism in our communities. Unequal access to healthcare, education, healthy food, and housing were laid bare. Despite years of advocacy, we seem to have progressed little on these issues. I hope that we won't forget what we learned this year and will continue to advocate for an equitable society.

Often now we can choose to remain at home and watch events online that, pre- Covid 19, we used to attend in-person. How does that change the need for the institutions we built and supported in previous decades? Which are important enough to lead into a changed world, and which will not make the cut? I'm hopeful that the important institutions of my life will retain their value, and we will again, soon, fearless gather together again in person.

—Marianne



A new feature highlighting monthly Board activities

October 2021

DONATIONS

A generous donation was made to the RBG Scholarship Fund from Carolyn Evans in honor of Phil Fullerton's 90th birthday.

Centennial: The 100 Notable Women exhibit at the Fresno Art Museum was a big success and well attended. Plans for the world premiere of the suffrage-based choral work are ever-changing due to the pandemic. Should be announced soon.

Program Planning: We are hoping for a discussion on Guaranteed Basic Income

Voter services: Redistricting participation is a priority. We are monitoring it closely and have concerns about some of the governmental entities and their loose interpretation of what they need to do,

FC General Plan: Radley Reep has asked people to sign up to get his weekly updates about sections of the General Plan.

Nominating Committee: Discussion of next year's needs and difficulties in filling key positions. Please submit nominations now for president or any other position.

Behavioral Health: The Community Forum planned earlier in October on school services and general behavioral health information was postponed until October 21 due to lack of publicity and resulting low attendance.

Donations are always accepted for the RBG Scholarship Fund at San Joaquin College of Law, the League's general fund, and any other purpose. Donations for RBG should note RBG in the memo line. Please make out checks to LWVF and send to Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno 93710.

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Volume 80, No. 11 Editor: Francine M. Farber



Voter Services

by Sue Goldman and Judi Steele

YOUR INPUT = YOUR FUTURE

Voter Services continues to be focused on the redistricting process, monitoring the California Redistricting Commission meetings, the county Advisory Commission meeting for supervisor districts, and the City Council redistricting meetings

CA Redistricting Commission:

The state supreme court denied the CRC's extension request until January 14 for final Map submissions. They are now due December 27 for final Certification by the state legislature. During October, submissions included line drawers' presentations of hypothetical visualizations maps based on public input, Communities Of Interest, (COI's) and the Voting Rights Act requirements with input from the Voting Rights Act Council. In addition, commissioners gave directions to the line drawers. You can find the maps pertaining to the Central Valley in the handouts for mtgs held in October along with a feedback form. The links for these are:

[October 13-15, 2021 Handouts](#)
[Visualizations Feedback Form](#)

Some of our League redistricting members gave feedback concerning Fresno County being divided into four congressional districts again on the first visualizations. In addition, feedback was given regarding the lack of detail on some of the Fresno County maps.

Public input of district maps for our Valley was included on several of the maps in handouts found in meetings during October, which are continuing this month. The first live draft Map drawings are scheduled

for the CRC November 10th meeting. They need to be completed by

November 15, so the public has a chance to give input at the CRC meetings November 17 – 23.

A review of the Public Input/line drawing is scheduled for CRC meetings November—December 2. You can watch past meetings and find the upcoming live meetings and handouts on the CRC Redistricting Website @ Wedrawthelinesca.org.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors COI meetings:

The ACLU sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors expressing concern with some of its initial comments indicating they were just looking at “tweaking” current districts. The letter emphasized the legal guidelines, both federal and state, that have to be followed.

Our League sent a similar letter. There has been significant COI input at meetings and 22 maps have been submitted. A number of them exceed the 10% variation from the average district size. Some of the maps were submitted anonymously with no supporting documentation or rationale for boundary lines.

We submitted an email to the county regarding a number of issues: the note taking at meetings that did not capture the essence of what speakers had said; asking what criteria would be utilized to analyze COI input and maps particularly since some maps were submitted anonymously without backup documentation; and concern regarding the Advisory Commission-

ers having had only an evening meeting to review maps and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The state CRC mapping playbook was sent along with this email as a resource. There will be two meetings in November

November 2nd: BOS Hearing to consider draft map recommendations, provide direction to staff and discuss the election process

November 16th: BOS Hearing to selection final map and election sequence as well as conduct first reading of ordinance.

Fresno City Council:

Most of the city redistricting meetings have been held as part of the city council meetings where no COI input was given.

On October 16 they held three COI input meetings and the League was represented at two of them. At those two there was no COI input but there was input given at the one we were unable to attend. However, no maps have

been submitted. There are groups in town planning on submitting maps. When asked what the process would be for developing maps when none had been submitted, the response was that they would follow the law. The next city council meeting that will have redistricting on the agenda will be November 4 at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

Several League members have continued bi-weekly meetings with Common Cause and other local groups to discuss efforts around the redistricting process.

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Up until the Fresno school board meeting on October 13, community participation has been minimal and civil. Generally, Fresno Unified trustees have not seen the anger that has met school boards around the country, including in neighboring Clovis where community members have been urging that Board to defy mask and vaccine mandates.

But at the recent meeting anger erupted over two agenda items: the renaming of Forkner and the re-censure of Trustee Slatik. Other issues surfacing in public comments included the dangers of masks and the introduction of “radical ideology” in the classrooms.

Prior to the agenda items being discussed, the president of the Fresno Teacher’s Union and a number of teacher members spoke to the Board about the stresses teachers are feeling, dealing with the return to in-person learning, making up for time lost last year, and dealing with the continuing challenges posed by COVID. They saw a huge need for more preparation time, advocating for a half day per week of released time. Members in the audience applauded loudly.

Two agenda items concerned the renaming of Forkner and a policy for renaming schools generally. A group of Forkner parents and its principal were upset by the determination to vote on a name change for their school without a general policy in place. They felt they had been left out of involvement in the naming decision and pled ignorance that the issue was pending. Some of the parents just wanted to keep the name, justifying J. C. Forkner’s discriminatory and restrictive deeds as a reflection of his time or suggesting the name was not really identified with the man any longer.

Spokespersons for the Armenian community once again lauded the achievements of Roger Tatarian, the new proposed name honoree; criticized the district for not having any schools named for prominent Armenians; and called out Forkner’s redlining of Fresno realty. There was loud applause for some speakers and some argument among audience members. The Board voted unani-

mously to change the name to Roger Tatarian Elementary, a change that will happen over the summer with a transition plan for the campus community preceding the change. The audience erupted over the vote; some in the crowd yelled at each other and some called out for the recall of all of the trustees.

The vote on establishing a panel of trustee-appointed community members to draft a policy for renaming schools and reviewing the process for initial naming of campuses proceeded with less discussion. Trustee Slatik’s nomination for his panel member was rejected by the rest of the Board. That nominee, a constant speaker at Board meetings, is regarded by the other trustees as prone to anger and disruption.

The last item on the agenda of the evening was the censure resolution. The Board passed the resolution by a 5 to 1 vote, Slatik voting no. The vote took place after emotional defenses of Slatik and yelling from the audience at the Board members, who by this time had difficulty controlling the audience.

Slatik spoke in his own defense, calling himself the representative of diversity on the Board and the only trustee who was asking what the district was doing to address poor achievement. He attributed the censure resolution as a reflection of the other trustees dislike of him. There was more yelling from his defenders in the audience, some threatening a recall, and one member was escorted from the room after the vote.

When I was in graduate school, I recall long discussions of school systems as highly “permeable” institutions, organizations with none or few barriers to access. Parents and community members have more access at every level of the organization—classroom, school office, the Superintendent, and the Board—than to any other public or private institution. That access is being exercised across the country, for good and bad effect. This local level of our public life is not well prepared to defend against the anger that is coming with that access.

Health Care

by Richard Bertken, MD



Sample QR Code

During a recent visit to San Francisco, I was initially denied entrance to indoor dining and to the Exploratorium because these places lacked a working QR (Quick Response) code reader for proof of Covid vaccination.

I do have a CDC immunization card, but I elected not to carry it because it resists being folded into a wallet. The California Department of Public Health issues QR codes—those odd square patches of hundreds of black boxes-within-boxes and Lego-like pieces—to all vaccinees who request them at its website. They are stored on one's mobile phone. When read by the appropriate code reader (currently an app with some glitches), one's name and immunization type and dates are displayed. Unlike CDC immunization cards, the codes cannot be forged. My possession of an unread California QR code was ultimately accorded evidence of immunization, but that was not enough.

I was also asked to provide a picture ID to prove that I was the person identified in the QR code format.



By contrast, since late May, we traveled to Montana, Colorado,

Santa Cruz, and Pacific Grove. We visited our daughters (after 18 months of two-dimensional relationships), celebrated a delayed 50th wedding anniversary, and escaped intolerable heat and smoke. In none of these spots was evidence of vaccination requested or required for indoor gatherings. San Francisco and all these other locations have been seeing the same recent spike in Covid cases and deaths. Graphs of cases and deaths per population show similar spikes and troughs in nearly all US locations, but San Francisco's rates have been consistently much lower. As of the end of September this year, 6.2% of San Francisco County's population was diagnosed with Covid, compared with 15% of LA County and 13% of Fresno County. The San Francisco Covid death rate was 7.6 per 100,000, compared with LA's 26 per 100,000 and Fresno's 20 per 100,000.

Those data come from county health department reports that, at least on websites, never index cases and deaths to population and seldom report the exact periods covered. The above data, which required me to perform some math, do not exactly match other reports, but in all reports the differences between locations remain similar and invite speculation about the effects of local management of the Covid epidemic.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed was a very early adopter of social distancing, which critically shut down the city's vibrant cultural life—sports, music, theater, restaurants et al—generating storms of criticism. But she also got a positive review in *The Atlantic* article *The City That Has Flattened the Coronavirus Curve* published in April of 2020: “Mayor London Breed's early and aggressive moves to contain the outbreak have made San Francisco a national model in fighting the pandemic.” San Francisco's early action mirrors the early preparations of St. Louis during the great influenza of 1917, which resulted in many fewer deaths than in comparable urban centers of the time.

There are many aspects of San Francisco's population and industries that are likely contributors to the success of “The City.” However, as I marveled at the extreme vigilance exemplified by mandatory display of proof of vaccination in the face of very low case rates, I was reminded that San Francisco has an enduring relationship to the HIV epidemic. That experience has likely engendered a strong cultural attachment to the goals of our public health establishment, something our entire nation needs in our armament against an increasingly fragile world. Proper QR code readers would also be helpful.

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Pictures at an Exhibition



Elizabeth Laval



**Mary
Curry**



Carole Goldsmith



Armen Bacon



Diane Milutinovich



**Juanita
Stevenson**

Climate Change News

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The Behavioral Health Board learned recently that two of its long time recommendations finally are coming to fruition.

Peer Support Specialist Certification will provide recognition of value, along with appropriate compensation, for the work done by peers. It long has been known that those with lived experience are among the best qualified to provide support to those working towards recovery. Once peers become certified their services will be MediCal billable, and their wages will reflect their value to the community that they serve.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), otherwise known as Laura's Law, will provide services in the community to those individuals who have been reluctant to accept treatment for their mental health disorders. Family, friends, and health care providers will be able to refer individuals to this program, which hopefully, will engage clients in treatment; if not, the courts will require participation in treatment. In other counties, individuals given the option of community treatment or inpatient hospitalization have chosen to accept treatment and remain in the community.

This month Board members virtually visited **Centro La Familia** to learn about its Consumer and Family Advocacy Program. This program, funded through the Mental Health Services Act Prevention and Early Intervention plan, provides community-based behavioral health support and stigma reduction education services. The program targets unserved and underserved individuals and their families in rural and urban areas of Fresno County who may be experiencing early onset of mental illness. This program does a big job with its limited budget, reaching 4,000 to 6,000 individuals per year in our county.

The Department of Behavioral Health is engaged in its Community Planning Process to receive input for its Annual Mental Health Updated Plan. You are invited to participate and to offer any suggestions for behavioral health needs in our county. evansalca@comcast.net

The California Budget Act of 2021 that was passed in July is a one hundred billion dollar plan, and the good news is that it includes more than \$15 billion for climate projects.

\$1.5 billion Wildfire and Forest Resilience Plan to increase the pace and scale of fuels management measures.

\$5.2 billion Water and Drought Resilience Package to support immediate drought response and long-term water resilience.

\$3.7 billion Climate Resilience Package to build resilience against the state's multi-faceted climate risks in the communities bearing the brunt of climate change.

\$2.9 billion Zero Emission Vehicle Package to move faster toward ZEV in personal vehicles, mass transit, commercial transit, rail, and infrastructure.

\$1.1 billion to Support Climate-Smart Agriculture to support sustainable agriculture and create a resilient and equitable food system amid climate-driven drought and extreme heat.

Along with these budget priorities, there is **AB 72, The Coastal Adaptation Permitting Act of 2021** which requires the Natural Resources Agency to explore and implement options to establish a more coordinated and efficient regulatory review and permitting process for coastal adaptation projects that use natural infrastructure, as defined. The bill would require the agency to submit a plan by July 1, 2023.

SB 1 directs the California Coastal Commission to take sea level rise into account in its planning, policies, and activities, and would establish the California Sea Level Rise State and Regional Support Collaborative, a cross-government group tasked with educating the public and advising local, regional, and state government on feasible sea level rise mitigation efforts.

SB 27 is designed to accelerate the removal of climate-harming carbon from the atmosphere, partly by improving the carbon retention of the state's natural and working lands. SB 27 directs the California Air Resources Board to include carbon sequestration targets in the next AB 32 Scoping Plan. The work on the 2022 Scoping plan is ongoing with relevant materials available on the Board's AB 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan Meetings and Workshops webpage prior to the workshops.

Water News

by Diane Merril



California is in the midst of the driest two year period since the late 1800s, and some domestic wells in rural areas are going dry. According to the California Department of Water Resources *My Dry Water Supply* reporting system and database, the San Joaquin Valley is the epicenter for well failures in California. In addition to well failures in rural residential areas, some domestic well failures are occurring on small family farms that are an important source of local and regional food supplies.



The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley is based at Fresno State, and its Water Workgroup is

involved in a valley-wide effort to assist well owners with dry or failing wells. This Workgroup includes representatives from the Valley's eight counties, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations and utilities. The North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency encompasses the cities of Fresno, Clovis, and Kerman, and the surrounding rural areas and is participating in this effort.

The Workgroup developed a list of resources that are available to private well owners who have lost, or are concerned about losing access to water due to falling groundwater levels. A flier describing these services is available in Spanish, Hmong, and Punjabi. The resources available may include bottled water, a water tank, well assessment, and water quality testing. Self Help Enterprises, headquartered in Visalia, is the point of contact in our area for accessing these services. Much of the funding to assist well owners is provided by the State Water Resources Control Board.

If a domestic well needs to be refurbished or replaced, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation has loan and grant programs for well owners. Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

We're looking for you!!!

We're keeping our eyes out for new members, new directors, and officers for our board.

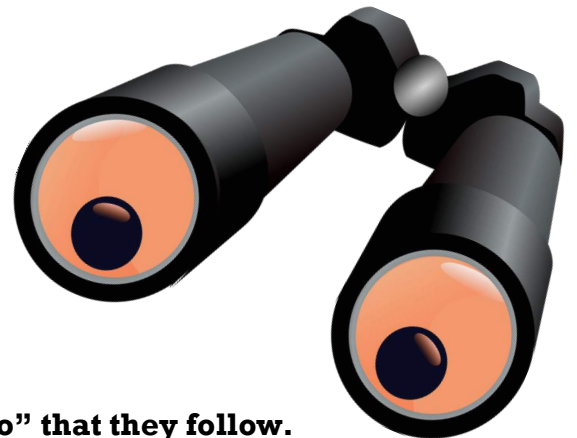
Tell your friends about us and think about becoming more active yourself.

Come to our special in-person or virtual events as a member.

Or visit us at a board meeting to see what we do.

We meet as a board once a month on Zoom; each board member has an interest area or "portfolio" that they follow.

Next meeting: Nov 8, 4 p.m. Let Marianne know you're interested at fourkasts@gmail.com or contact dolores.oneal@comcast.net doloredodoloresDolores.oneal!@comcast.net



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