

Phone: 559-226—VOTE

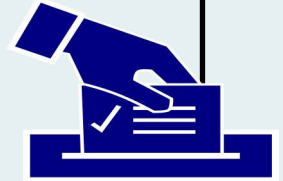
Info.lwvfresno@gmail.com

Web site:
www.lwvfresno.org



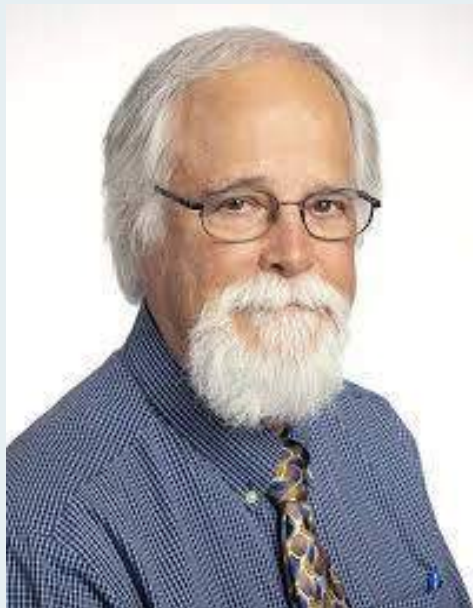
The
Fresno Voter

Our League's 82nd Year!



Keith Bergthold is the CEO of

Regenerate California Innovation (RCI).



The Greenfield Coalition is a group of residents and leaders who are committed to revitalizing our urban core, preserving Fresno's agricultural land and green spaces, and advocating for responsible growth and urban planning. As a founding member of this group with 49 years of experience in urban and regional planning and 25 years as a community organizer and developer, Keith will lead a conversation about the Coalition, the Southeast Development Area, and RCI.

Monday, November 13
Board Meeting
4 p.m. in person
Stone Soup

Thursday, November 16
Member Meeting
5:30 p.m.
Stone Soup
Greenfield Coalition

December
Holiday Event
Special Plans
To be announced



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16
5:30 p.m. **Stone Soup**

Members and guests welcome, no charge
No reservations required
Light refreshments



Co-president's Message

When I joined our League 20 years ago we had a rolling membership system. That is, if you joined in March, then your dues would be renewable the following March. That became too cumbersome, so we switched to a twice yearly plan. After a while for efficiency and convenience we switched everyone to our current annual renewal date in April.

But it looks like we won't be doing that much longer. Our national organization is planning a reorganization of membership policies and procedures which will affect you individually and our league. The LWVUS proposal was affirmed at the convention in 2022 but won't be in effect until November, 2024. Here are some highlights:

Members will be automatically notified of their rolling renewal date, presumably by LWVUS, which will be a year after their date of joining. Membership dues are recommended to be \$75 for an individual, and 50% additional for two in one household, or \$112.50, compared with \$70 and \$100 currently. The national will receive 33% of the dues, while the state will receive 47%. That's right, that leaves only 20% for your local league, which is actually a little better than what we are receiving now.

In addition, the portion of your dues that is retained by LWVF is tax deductible, but the balance will not be, because the state and national leagues are not 501 © (3) status such as we are. This procedure will replace the "per member payment" that has been in effect.

You may join at a higher tier, i.e. decide to make a larger dues payment to support your league. But that will not provide any additional benefits, and the additional money also will be split as described above. There will be no student memberships but part of the plan is a "pay what you can" provision with a floor of \$20 for those who cannot afford a higher payment, so students can join under that policy.

Your board will be discussing these new procedures, and others, and will take issue with those it opposes. Whether that will have any effect is hard to know at this time. We would like to hear from individual members about your reactions to these proposed changes.

Francine

**The Voter is a monthly publication of
the League of Women Voters of Fresno
Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710
Volume 82 No. 11 Editor: Francine M. Farber**



October 2023

Membership: Life member and past president Mary Savala has transferred to the San Luis Obispo League. Membership procedures will undergo many changes next year (*see President's Message this page*).

Student Unit: SU president Carnala Saleh attended and reported on its first meeting in October. Twenty enthusiastic students both male and female, attended and spoke about interests and priorities.

Voter Services: Registration was held at three area high schools

Education: Clovis is going to vote by district for school board members rather than as a whole city. This may lead to a more diverse representation.

Fresno County: We have had no response to date for our request for a copy of community comments on the FC General Plan review and update. Another request will be sent.

Mural: Kay met with a potential muralist recommended by the Leadership Council. He will send preliminary drawings by the end of the month. The cost is anticipated at between seven and ten thousand dollars, well within our budget set aside from the Suffrage Centennial Fund.

Program Planning: We have been asked to sign on to the Greenfield Coalition. We will ask Keith Bergthold to speak at our next members meeting to explain the goals of this group.

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. Send to Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710.



Water News

by Diane Merrill



The Westlands Water District Groundwater Sustainability Agency was awarded a \$4 million Multibenefit Land Repurposing Grant by the California Department of Conservation.

With the decline in groundwater levels due to overpumping, drought, and climate change, the grant will provide funding to help the area transition from mainstream agriculture to less intensive water uses that offer additional public benefits.

Much of the program activity will be in and around the City of Huron, one of the poorest cities in California, and home to many farmworkers and their families. Partners in the project include the City of Huron and the non-profit Latino Equity, Advocacy and Policy Institute founded by longtime Huron Mayor Rey Leon. One his favorite quotes is “Climate resiliency cannot happen without social cohesion.”

A goal is to transition agricultural workers to other types of jobs and to work with the school system to prepare high school and middle school students to compete for jobs in the future economy and industries.



One of the projects involves greywater. Greywater is wastewater from non-toilet plumbing systems such as hand-basins, washing machines, showers and baths. A greywater system diverts waste water either to an irrigation or a treatment and recycling system. Huron is one of the first cities in California to establish an ordinance for greywater. Part of the training initiative involves installation of greywater systems in new homes or in older homes with a crawl space beneath the home.

Some of the greywater can be used to farm industrial hemp on 200 acres that the city has leased from the federal government. Hemp uses much less water than almonds and other tree crops.

Another grant partner is the Sequoia Riverlands Trust which provides guidance and support for preservation of agricultural land, natural lands and wildlife habitat.

Amendment would limit state ag standards

by Lenore Yousef



The EATS Act is a proposed amendment to the Farm Bill, which was the subject of last month’s column.

EATS (Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression) Act will limit the ability of state and local governments to set standards on agricultural products imported from other states, thereby invalidating California Proposition 12 which sets standards on confinement for egg-laying hens, breeding pigs and calves. Prop 12 was passed by almost 63% of California voters in 2018 and upheld by the US Supreme Court in May. The EATS Act would move agricultural oversight to federal agencies and courts.

Consequences of the EATS Act, written in broad and ambiguous language, go beyond invalidating Prop 12. The Act would circumvent established law and invalidate more than a thousand state and local public health and safety regulations. Doing so would impact agricultural pest and disease control, food safety, public health, and environmental protections. The Act could prevent the timely renewal of the Farm Bill and delay implementation of the climate-smart and conservation programs funded by the Inflation Reduction Act.

California and National Leagues have positions on issues impacted by the EATS Act, but there is no specific position taken on the EATS Act itself. However, individuals can take action on issues important to them without involving the League. If the EATS Act concerns you, please contact your national representatives who can influence members of the agricultural subcommittee to be sure that the amendment does not end up in the Farm Bill.

Much of the information above was obtained from Tina Doede of LWV North and Central San Mateo County, who says: “If you care about consumer safety, public health, animal welfare, the environment, or pest and disease prevention, then you should care about the EATS Act.”

lenorey@csufresno.edu

Health Care

by Richard Bertken MD



The recent report of the sale of the buildings and property of University Medical Center brings to mind the fate of public hospitals across the country. UMC dissolved over 16 years ago, but in the context of the bankruptcy of Madera Community Hospital, our locality feels like an exemplar of the changing face of American healthcare.

Fresno County General Hospital, along with numerous public regional hospitals, emerged to provide county healthcare services in the late 1800's. As an active hospital, it resided at its 300-acre site from 1889 to 2007. It served its public through two world wars and multiple pandemics and pandemic threats. Like many public hospitals, it treated polio victims and then administered the Salk vaccine. It handled car crash and gunshot victims and acute psychiatric problems. It admirably provided continuity of care for medically indigent patients with acute and chronic illness, notably the farm workers who made the Valley an agricultural giant.

Most public hospitals provided fee-for-service care but dealt with indigent patients using sliding scale charges, re-imbursement programs, or no-charge care. Gradually they gained financial support from state and federal governmental agencies, accelerated by their utility in the teaching of medicine.

Most medical schools developed strong affiliations with large urban public hospitals. In the early 70's,

UCLA and UCSF pursued linking up with newly renamed Valley Medical Center. UCSF won out, resulting in the establishment of UCSF-Fresno, a major long-term gain for healthcare in the Central Valley. In 1997 the hospital, extensively staffed by UCSF faculty and doctors in training, became University Medical Center.

Just like 40% of urban public hospitals in the U.S., UMC languished as a public hospital. The county handed over its management to Community Medical Centers as we entered the new millennium. By 2007 the UMC towers and surrounding clinics were abandoned, resolutely standing, stuffed with asbestos insulation, without purpose or prospects, until now.

The transfer of responsibility for care of low-pay/no-pay patients to non-



profit corporate healthcare boards has become a nationwide phenomenon, driven by chaotic economic

forces. Highly remunerative activities—advanced imaging, highly technical surgery, and complex cancer and immunologic therapies—are emigrating away from general hospitals to establish freestanding centers. To compete, hospitals have been forced to invest in new facilities and to attract high-earning specialists. So far, Community Hospitals has made large investments in multiple campuses to sustain its income in a region with physician shortages and low reimbursements.

In a parallel story, I completed much of my training in internal medicine at the District of Columbia General Hospital in the early 70's. Its history

is distinguished by its role as the civil war hospital, one that Walt Whitman certainly visited to attend the wounded. It continued operation for another 140 years. When it closed in 2001, it was the only public hospital in DC. The healthcare scene there is now congruent with what we see in Fresno and most other sizable cities: universities or healthcare corporations providing medically indigent patients with care funded by Medicaid and other government subsidies.

After my stay in DC I did much of my specialty training at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose. SCVHC tells a different story about public hospitals. Amidst a crush of highly organized health systems, Santa Clara County sustains the largest hospital in California. Its robust performance and determined contribution to its community refute the idea that "government-run" healthcare must be inefficient.

Over the last two decades, many major urban public hospital systems have had to close or consolidate healthcare facilities. All are stressed by undercompensated care that must be backfilled by government revenues. City and county governments must also fund and operate a vast array of public services—police, sanitation, transportation, and housing come to mind—that cannot be outsourced.

These pressures explain the current trend across the U.S. to increased delegation of public healthcare services to states, their medical schools, or, primarily, regional non-governmental healthcare systems. Our healthcare continues on its long and winding path of increasing complexity and attendant expense.

rbertken@comcast.net

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



While the Department of Behavioral Health provides Specialty Mental Health services to Fresno County residents with serious mental illnesses who have Medi-Cal, or no insurance, the Behavioral Health Board wanted to know about services for those residents with mild to moderate mental health disorders.

CalViva and Anthem Blue Cross are the two Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans in Fresno County. Representatives of those plans attended the October Board meeting to explain their services for those with mild to moderate mental health impairment due to behavioral health conditions. For referrals members may call the phone number on their insurance card to be connected to a representative who can conduct a screening and provide referrals for non-specialty mental health outpatient services, such as therapy or psychiatry.

Another option is for members to search their plan's website to locate care providers and schedule appointments directly; no prior authorization is required. If an individual goes to the Department with a mild or moderate impairment, its staff can send their completed screening tool to a managed care clinician for linkage to an appropriate provider. In addition, the insurance plans provide information and care coordination to support members in acquiring services for substance use disorders. There should be "no wrong door" for behavioral health services.

Board members visited Crestwood Fresno Bridge this month. This program is a 15 -bed co-ed Transitional Adult Residential Facility, licensed as a Social Rehab Facility. The Bridge has a homelike atmosphere that allows adults, 18-59 years of age who are on conservatorship, the opportunity to live in a home with high level of support and controlled supervision where they may gain independence and learn the skills to live successfully in the community. Residents typically live at The Bridge for 12-18 months until they are released from conservatorship or move to a lower level of care in the community.

evansalca@comcast.net

Housing

by Marianne Kast



Could this be the answer to our prayers? "Yes in God's Backyard", signed into law by Gov. Newsom in September, allows nonprofit colleges, churches, mosques, and other faith institutions the right to build affordable housing on their land.

Many faith-based and charitable organizations have excess land that could accommodate housing but have been held back because of zoning laws. SB 4 removes barriers and streamlines the development process for these institutions. For Fresno County, the Terner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley estimates that faith-based organizations (FBOs) own 589 potentially developable parcels, averaging about one acre each, totaling 1893 acres. In addition, local non-profit colleges own 92 developable parcels, averaging about two acres each, for 1344 total acres.

One advantage of using land owned by FBOs and colleges is that it could expand affordable housing options in high-resource neighborhoods that might otherwise resist affordable housing. Statewide, about half the excess land owned by FBOs and colleges is located in "high" and "highest" resource neighborhoods according to the TCAC/HCD Opportunity Map.* In Fresno County, 50.1% of FBOs' lands and 60% of colleges' lands are in these well-resourced neighborhoods. Often, too, these parcels are in single family neighborhoods and near good transit options, two additional factors that make this type of development attractive.

But despite streamlined approvals and relaxed zoning restrictions, developing affordable housing has proved to be complex and time-consuming even for experienced developers. FBOs and colleges are limited by lack of expertise and lack of funding sources for development. A few local organizations have cropped up to assist non-profits with the process, but technical assistance from the state and federal levels is needed as well. The success of this legislation depends on the availability of this assistance.

**(Tax Credit Allocation Committee/Housing & Community Development Opportunity Map identifies areas in the state whose characteristics have been shown to be most strongly associated with positive educational, economic, and health outcomes for low-income families..)*

fourkasts@gmail.com



Next Board Meetings

Wednesday, November 1

Wednesday, November 15

By the time you read this column, the Fresno Teacher's Association will have completed its strike vote and teachers may be out on strike. The vote itself does not immediately call for a strike. It represents an intention and perhaps gives the FTA more leverage, but it does allow for ongoing negotiation. The negotiations have been happening for months but with increasing urgency.

A neutral factfinding report has been released, addressing the outstanding issues of the term of the contract, professional learning time, compensation in the form of salary and healthcare benefits, and class size.

Factfinding report released

A major recommendation of the factfinding report was advice for the parties to be trained in on-going interest-based bargaining. Rather than focus on the entire contract at once, the approach starts with one topic or problem at once, reaching consensus on that item, folding that into the master agreement before moving on to the next topic.

Recommendations in the report relative to professional learning, class size support, and health care benefits support the status quo for the current school year with continued discussion by a problem-solving team to address subsequent years in a 2023-2026 contract. The factfinder recommended the restrictions on gap-to-Medicare coverage offered by the district for those retiring before Medicare age be extended, which a subsequent district offer did. With respect to salaries, the fact-finder's recommendations altered the district's offer slightly, replacing some ongoing salary increases with one-time payments.

Plans for literacy campaign

In other district news, staff will be compiling and soon sharing the area plans for their Literacy Campaign. Additionally, public meetings to inform the Local Control Accountability Plan are being held now around the district. The LCAP meetings will inform priorities for next year's budget.



The June 2023 California CAASP testing results have been released. Modest improvements in the proportion of students meeting or exceeding standards were made in English Language Arts (up 1% to 33.2% since 2022) and in math (up 2.5% to 23.3%).



The measure of average distance from the standard (DFS) also improved, indicating that students are moving closer on average to meeting standards. Individual schools with particularly impressive gains prompted trustees to ask for descriptions of those sites that might lead to replication elsewhere. The district is targeting a 15-point reduction in the DFS for each of the next two years. A three-point change in DFS equals a 1% increase in proficiency.

A division of the results between third grade students who have been in the district for four or more years vs. those who have been in the district for two or fewer years showed that longer tenured students outperformed the newer arrivals among all students and among subgroups of foster, homeless and special education students.

Bill honors deceased Edison valedictorian


The Neng Thao Drowning Prevention Bill authored by Assemblyman Arambula has passed. It honors an Edison High valedictorian who drowned in 2017. The bill authorizes the distribution of drowning prevention information and guidance to access student swimming lessons. Fresno Unified provides summer lessons.



Finally, trustees heard a consultant presentation about facilities planning through an equity lens for its upcoming bond measure. The consultant encouraged a bottom-up process for developing its new bond measure that involves continuous conversation with constituents, including students, in all areas of the district and throughout the bond development process.

MOTORS
SOLD • REPAIRED • REWOUND

PH (559) 650-1153
FAX (559) 650-1186




Electric Motor Shop and Supply Co.

ELECTRICAL WIRING "Since 1913"
No. 246015

253 FULTON ST.
P.O. BOX 446
FRESNO, CA 93709

HELPING TO PRESERVE
FRESNO'S PICTORIAL HISTORY



Howard K. Watkins
Fresno's Photo Laureate

www.watkinsphotoarchive.com

Contact: 964 Palo Verde Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90815
559-355-7040 * howardkwatkins@gmail.com

Be a Voter sponsor—\$100 per year—226-8683



This space sponsored by
Joan Lipton


Merci

Gracias

THANK YOU

Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom

WILPF
supports
local peace and
social justice
groups



Skyhorse3593
@sbcglobal.net

**WILL YOU
BE OUR
NEW SPONSOR?**

**\$100 FOR A YEAR OF ADS IN THE VOTER
BOTH IN PAPER COPY AND DIGITAL
CALL 559-226-8683 or farberfrannola@gmail.com**

Investment Services Retirement Planning Income Strategies

**Capital Financial &
Insurance Services, Inc.**




Robert H. Gunning
Financial Advisor
CA Insurance Lic #0E61490

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

PATIENCE MILROD
LAWYER/LICENCIADA EN LEYES

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

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS,
NEIGHBORS, GUESTS,
RELATIVES TO
ATTEND OUR
MONTHLY MEETINGS.
It's all free, fun and educational, too.





1345 Bulldog Lane * Fresno, CA 93710

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Webmaster Jacquie Canfield

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS!
Men and Women age 16 and above Making Democracy Work

MISSION: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of interested individuals and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues. The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

DIVERSITY POLICY: There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVF on the basis of race, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic level.

What do you get when you join the League? All for one fee, you become a member of the Fresno, California and National Leagues and receive their newsletters. You may participate in League studies of issues; receive leadership training; hone your public speaking skills; become knowledgeable about local and state issues; learn more about government, natural resources and social policies as your time and interests dictate. You will also meet some interesting and friendly women and men who represent diverse backgrounds but find common ground in keeping abreast of current issues.

Yearly Dues Individual - \$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.**

Name _____ Ph. _____ E-mail _____

Address: _____