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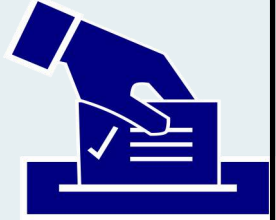
Info.lwvfresno@gmail.com

Web site:
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THE

FRESNO

VOTER



Our 84th Year



“Thanks 4 Giving”

Monday, November 11
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m Stone Soup’

Saturday, November 16
Violunteer Breakfast
9:30 a.m Stone Soup

Monday, December 9
Reguar Bord Meeting
4 p.m. Stone Sou
December
Holiday Event
To be announced



Thanks to our volunteers for giving their time so graciously, opening ballots and answering phones for the Elections Office.

We’re showing our appreciation with a breakfast for volunteers on Saturday, November 16 at 9:30 a.m. at Stone Soup, sponsored by our Board members.



Please join us at a board meeting and find out more about what the League does and how you can help.

Co-president's Message

by Kay Bertken



October Board Minutes

Guests: Both our League coach, Alexandra Starr, and Parven Takar, a representative of our Student Unit, were present at the meeting.

Volunteers: A breakfast honoring volunteers will be held at Stone Soup on Saturday, November 16 at 9:30. Board members will bring the food.

Transportation: The Biola busing site to which we contributed to reduce rider costs has proved to be too expensive. Moses Stites, the Executive Director of the Fresno County Rural Transportation Authority, will talk to the board at our November meeting about alternatives.

Bond Measures: A discussion led to approval of all local educational bond measures in Fresno County plus those for the state college community districts. We will check with the LWVC to make sure we can legally provide this support.

Grant: The Arts Council sent us a check for 90% of our requested grant which will fund our mural. The final draft from the artist will be shared with the business that owns the wall we are currently pursuing.

Bylaws: Recommendations for changes in the cycle of elections of officers will be presented to membership at our annual meeting.

Purchase: A projector was purchased to be available for League presentations to the community.

This month there is nothing more important to talk about than the November general election and the preparation for it. League members have devoted and are continuing to devote hours of time to opening ballots and answering voter calls for the Elections Office.

It is a pleasure to be up close and personal with the elections process here in Fresno. The Elections Office staff takes such care to ensure that each voter has every chance to receive and have their ballots counted. It is also impressive to hear the concerns of the voters who call the office. They generally are working hard to get and understand their ballots and be able to vote, sometimes for the first time.

It appears in Fresno that people do believe in the voting process and the power that their vote gives them. Most are so grateful for the help they get when they call with questions. Among the calls I have answered, there have been infrequent concerns expressed about the safety of their vote. Concerns that are expressed: *Are the ballot boxes safe? Who picks up the ballots from drop boxes? I didn't get my ballot; what if someone stole it, could they vote instead of me? Is it too late to register?* All seem to be calmed by good information.



So far, unlike so many places in the country, workers at the Fresno County Elections Office do not appear to be the victims of harassment and threats. We should be so grateful for that. As we receive news here about those behaviors and hear about election officials leaving their jobs, it is clear that the prospect of free and fair elections cannot be taken for granted. Here in Fresno, for now, we can believe that this fundamental feature of a democratic government is available to us. Work remains across much of the country to be sure of that.

Kay

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LWVF IS A 501 C3 non-profit organization and all donations, including dues, are tax deductible. Your estate planning is encouraged to consider LWVF. Please make out checks to LWVF and send to Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno 93710. Donations are always accepted for the RBG Scholarship.

Education

by Kay Bertken



The biggest issue facing Fresno Unified and its board in October was the pre-election announced opposition to the passage of the district's Measure H facility bond by the Board President, Susan Wittrup. Trustee Wittrup's very public opposition, joined by former Bullard area trustees and two city council members, has caused anxiety over the Measure's fate.

The Fresno League board voted to support Measure H, as we have supported school bond measures in the past. It is the way local districts build and maintain their school facilities, often with the help of state matching grants. The California League has supported Proposition 2, California's own school facilities bond measure. If it passes on the November ballot, Proposition 2 will again enable those matching funds, assuming a district has its own available funding to qualify for that help.

Measure H

Supported by LWVF

Publicly stated opposition to H focused on the alleged lack of a list of anticipated bond-funded projects preceding the election (it was available two days after ballots were mailed) and a lack of public participation in the development of the bond. But previous FUSD bond measures have not provided a specific project list; and H had undergone rounds of board discussion, facility evaluation, surveys, and public discussion.

Showing more unanimity, the Board has focused board meeting attention on Interim Superintendent Her's goals for student achievement gains. Staff presented a detailed look at the training and expectations for school principals and the learning communities of teachers at each site that will focus on the status of each student's learning. New tools for evaluating and tracking that individual learning will be used to assign additional supports for students in need of help

(continued on page 5)

Behavioral Health

by Sherri Gibson



Twenty state bills have been signed into effect which are related to mental health or substance abuse care. There are several bills related to housing and homelessness. These include further guidance regarding the Care Court process and proceedings and the mandate that requires a judge to consider CARE when the person is found incompetent to stand trial. There is an expansion of facilities for the gravely disabled.

The Fresno Center provides a range of services to our community. The Living Well Center provides culture based treatment programs utilizing a cross cultural counseling model and bilingual therapists. It also provides training for post-doctoral students in order to expand access to cross cultural counseling services. In the last year 382 people were referred by self, county behavioral health or other providers.

The Holistic Wellness Program is a non treatment program complementing healing which is funded by prevention and early intervention funds. It has served over 3,000 people and provided linkage to mental health services when appropriate. The Fresno Center also provides the Culture Based Access Navigation Support Program which serves as a conduit between community and health services by providing case management to 2,300 people. These three components are integrally connected,

The TURN Behavioral Health Services-IMPACT program provides full mental health services to adults with severe mental health and substance abuse disorders. This is a difficult to treat population and obstacles include housing.

The Fresno County Behavioral Health Board is seeking two additional board members. One position is for a member age 18-24 who has received behavioral health services or has a family member who has received services. The other is for a school or district staff person who has an awareness of behavioral health and can bring a school perspective. Interested persons should contact dominja@fresnocountyca.gov or phone 559 600-0738.

sgibson@russellgsmithinc.com

Water News

by Diane Merrill



The seven local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the critically overdrafted Kings Groundwater Subbasin submitted detailed Groundwater Sustainability Plans to the California Department of Water Resources in 2020. These plans detail how the GSAs will coordinate with each other to bring groundwater levels throughout the Basin to a sustainable condition no later than 2040.

The Kings Subbasin is a large area that extends from the San Joaquin River south to the Kings River, and from the base of the foothills to the center of the Valley. The Basin includes the cities of Fresno and Clovis, as well smaller cities, rural residential areas, farmland, and riverine areas. Water users in some areas have access to surface water, while those in other areas rely only on groundwater. The Kings River and the San Joaquin River are the primary sources of surface water in the Kings Subbasin.

GSA's have been encouraging private well owners, including farmers and rural residents, to register their wells

with their local GSA. One of the reasons for this is so the groundwater agencies will have a better understanding of groundwater levels and groundwater quality throughout the Kings Subbasin. Another reason is the GSAs are developing a dry well relief

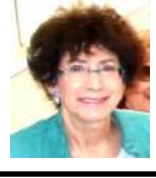


program to support domestic owners who lose water access if their well goes dry due to declining groundwater levels.

According to the GSAs, eligible households living within the Kings Subbasin will be provided with temporary water relief services, such as bottled water delivery and a hauled water tank, while the program team works to identify and execute a long term plan such as deepening the well, or drilling a new one.

Voter Services

by Sue Goldman



I want to thank the members of the Voter Services Committee for all of their efforts during this busy election season.

High school voter registration: Janet Baker and I spent a full day at Hoover High School presenting our Power-Point on All About Voting. This included registering the students to vote down to the age of 16. I made the same presentation to a class at the new Farber Campus. Trudi Thom and I tabled at a career event at Duncan Polytechnic High School.

Higher education: Janet Baker and Cathy Caples presented on Zoom to students at Clovis Community College on the importance of registering to vote.

The Propositions: Robin Chiero and I presented to the Clovis Democratic Club, the Naitonal Women's Political Caucus and the Terraces at San Joaquin Gardens

Presentations to organizations: Kay Bertken and Trudi Thom presented to the staff at Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Mission. I presented to the Economic Opportunity Commission Conservation Corps

Presentations to the community: The focus of these presentations was to target low voter turnout areas. A huge thanks goes to Cathy Caples for organizing and recruiting volunteers for staffing presentations at four public libraries, five United Health Center locations and numerous governmental and educational agencies.

Partnerships:

Youth Leadership Institute provided excellent interpretation support. Building Healthy Communities shared its simultaneous interpretation equipment. League of Mexican American Women provided ongoing communication with members including one interpreter from this group.

Central California Community Food Bank. provided coordination with food pantries to have flyers available for our volunteers. Volunteers gave positive feedback about their interaction with people in line about the importance of voting.

(continued on page 5)

Voter Services

(continued from page 4)

The QR codes on the flyers which directed people to the Secretary of State site for FAQ and registration were well received. Flyers were available in Hmong, Spanish and English.

Forums: The forum for the Board of Supervisors District 3 race between Sal Quintero and Luis Chavez on October 7 was co-sponsored by Fresno, KVPR, CMAC and the Maddy Institute. The second forum for Assembly District 27 between Esmeralda Soria and Sonya Rose included a partnership with the Merced Focus.

wldtr1951@gmail.com

Education *(continued from page 3)*

Some of that evaluation in the form of the first Transitional Kindergarten Foundational Skills Assessment of the year, the autumn I-Ready Progress Monitoring results for grades 3 and 8, and the number of D's and F's earned by 9th graders in the fall quarter (a measure of their being on track to graduate) will be presented to the Board and discussed in November.

kaybertken@gmail.com

Alfred Burney Evans, Jr.

Al Evans passed away on October 10 at the age of 85. A member of the League since 2014 and husband of member Carolyn Evans, Al was a Professor Emeritus at Fresno State. He was an expert in Russian politics who wrote over 50 books and articles. He was a founder of the Interfaith Scholars weekend

At his request, there will be no services. Donations may be sent to Doctors without Borders or the Central California Food Bank.



Housing

by Marianne Kast



In a flurry of press coverage, Governor Newsom signed a bipartisan package of 32 housing bills last month. The measures require cities and counties to plan for very-low income housing, streamline housing permitting processes, and expand some protection for renters. Here are a few highlights.

SB 1037 targets local governments that refuse to adopt a compliant housing element and/or violate a law that requires a housing development application to be processed according to local established standards. The AG will be able to assess penalties from the date the housing violation began at a minimum of \$10K per month and following a court order to comply, cities and counties could face possible curtailment of local land use authority. The penalty monies assessed by this legislation would be earmarked for local affordable housing developments.

SB3093 creates two new income categories, Acutely Low income (0-15% of area median income) and Extremely Low Income (15-30% of AMI) in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process and throughout housing element law.

SB1123 creates more affordable homeownership opportunities in neighborhoods that have traditional-



ly excluded lower- and middle-income families and communities of color by allowing ministerial approval of infill developments of 10 or fewer units on vacant lots zoned for single family or multifamily housing.

AB2801 requires a landlord to take photos of a rental unit following inspection but prior to occupancy and again after tenancy, following inspection and itemization of the specific repairs required, but prior to beginning any work to restore the unit.

fourkasts@gmail.com

Climate Action

by Carol Ann Meme



As we are closing one of the hottest summers ever experienced in the Central Valley, we must think about how our warming planet is going to impact the food we grow here in America's breadbasket.

In July alone we had 11 days with temperatures between 105°F and 110°F and 8 days of over 110°F. These excessive temperatures stress crops, require increased water usage, make it challenging for bees to complete their duty of , pollination and tend to result in lower crop yields. My usually productive home garden suffered terribly.

Various news sources yield some interesting information. In Vietnam extreme heat damaged the coffee crop, resulting in increased prices globally. The price of sriracha is expected to increase due to extreme heat damaging the pepper crops. Climate change will make food prices even more challenging in the near future. Overall, worldwide food prices, adjusted for inflation, have grown about 50% since 1999. American grocery prices have grown by almost 21% between 2020-2023. The price of olive oil has tripled, and the price of imported cocoa has risen even more in less than 2 years. These crops, along with avocados, are considered "climate-endangered foodstuffs."

In order to comply with the California Groundwater Management Act thousands of acres of cropland will be fal-lowed to replenish aquifers. According to a Cal Matters Newsletter, farmers in the greater Central Valley are attempting to adapt to climate change in creative ways. A farmer in northern California is growing mangos, avocados, cherimoyas, a fruit plant, and golden date palms. A Santa Cruz farmer is growing lucuma – a Chinese fruit, and others are growing dragon fruit from the central coast to San Diego. Dragon fruit requires one-third less water than citrus or avocados.

Researchers at UC Davis are trying to make walnut, pistachio and stone fruit trees more resilient by selectively breeding for heat, disease, and drought tolerance. Farming in California and worldwide is complicated. The need to feed the planet and for farms to be sustainable is challenging. It will be very interesting to see how things evolve as we all try to adapt to a warmer planet.

mecarolann3@gmail.com

The rail industry and air pollution

by Nancy Richardson

Congressman Vince Fong's Opinion piece about supply-chain infrastructure printed in The Fresno Bee recently deserves further discussion. He states, "...we must protect our nation's supply chain from self-inflicted disruptions that come from short sighted and unworkable regulations." We must also protect public health from the self-inflicted pollution associated with our current supply-chain infrastructure. We can do both, but not without change.

Can train engines be less polluting? The technology already exists. Newer engines create a fraction of the pollution of older engines. Again and again, technology scales up, and costs go down, when there are deadlines for changes which guarantee a market for superior technology. Smog levels have improved because mandates (pushed by California's waiver) have required improving automotive mileage and lower emissions. The auto industry has continued to profit.

Locally and elsewhere modernization of the rail industry is already underway by leaders who are eager to partner with our state and the federal government. The California Air Resources Board plan develops over the next quarter of a century in a process which involves industry choice of pathways, grants, and exceptions for small operations.. Engines which operate on zero emission platforms when passing through urban areas are in use today.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Report to the Community states that our attainment of the new more healthful PM2.5 air quality standard is "not attainable without support from the federal government." These tiny airborne particles, as well as other locomotive emissions, are associated with cancer, asthma, pulmonary disease, emphysema, adverse birth outcomes, cardiovascular diseases, and neurological disorders such as dementia.

Giant strides have been made in reducing local air pollution levels, but more effort is urgently needed. Federal and State collaboration in developing tighter standards for auto, trucks, and yes trains, to reduce sources of disease-causing levels of pollution is critical. The burdens of disease, premature deaths, and billions of dollars in health care costs can be avoided.

nmrichardson@comcast.net



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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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