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The *Fresno*

VOTER

BE SURE TO ATTEND THE FIRST

“new format”

MONTHLY BOARD EVENT



Monday, October 14
New-style Board meeting
Yosemite Falls Cafe



Friday, October 25,
7 p.m.
“Big Tell”
Suffrage in the Valley
Tower Theatre
Free see page 6

*MEMBERS AND GUESTS
WELCOME*

*TO ALL
LEAGUE MEETINGS
AND EVENTS*



Monday, October 14 (not the 7th as advertised previously)

5 P.M. Regular Board business meeting

6 p.m. Guest Speaker

(You don't have to attend the Board meeting in order to hear the speaker)

Linda Gleason, Founding Director, The Children's Movement

Executive Director, Fresno Cradle to Career



Yosemite Falls Café

4020 North Cedar, at Dakota

No reservation needed: Just come
and bring as many guests as you like.

Easy access. Free parking.

Vegetarian, chicken and fish

**No-host dinner options available at
\$20**



Questions? 472-3018

President's Message



For the past half-dozen or so years, the League Board has wrestled with ways to get additional members actively involved with League work. While it is comforting to have a strong corps of members who reliably pay dues each year, our effectiveness as an organization is directly related to the number of active members we have.

In 2016 we initiated a variety of outreach attempts. First, we established a Facebook page, and gave access for posting to any Board member who wished to. Then, we thought we might find potential League activists at the public meetings our members already regularly attend. So we produced informational cards about the League's work to be offered to those potential members at education, transportation, behavioral health, land use planning, water, voter education, and housing events. Next, we remodeled our website and positioned it so that searching online for "LWV Fresno," and most similar taglines, gets you to our page. Further, we are consciously trying to keep our website current with events, newsletters, and articles of interest. Finally, about one year ago, we began a weekly email newsletter which offers opportunities for members (and potential members) to engage with local civic life.

As a result of these efforts, we've attracted a slow stream of new League members and some newly active members. But how can we encourage more new and old members both to dive into active League work? This month we will hold our first (in recent times) monthly League membership meeting. And, here's our ulterior motive: We want to convince you that you, too, can actively participate in any aspect of public life and use your League membership to your advantage. You'll be amazed to learn about the day-to-day work of our Fresno LWV.

On October 14 at 5 p.m. we will hold our monthly LWVF Board meeting. Immediately afterwards, we will begin our monthly membership meeting. Kay Bertken will talk briefly about the LWVF Education Committee and her work as Education Director. Then, Linda Gleason, founder of The Children's Movement, Fresno, will speak. I look forward to seeing you there.

Marianne

The Voter is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno

Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane Fresno, CA 93710

Volume 78, No.10 Editor: Francine M. Farber

MEMBER NEWS

Please edit your roster



LWVF is a 501 © (3) non-profit so your membership and/or donation are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.

**Checks should be sent to
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OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2020

Reports from committees you can join

CLIMATE CHANGE

Andrea and Connie have been invited to make a presentation at the Tulare County League. Connie is the chapter leader for Citizens Climate Lobby Fresno while Andrea is the media team lead. LWVF members are invited to attend and learn how we know climate change is real and caused by greenhouse gas production; why bipartisan legislation is necessary to solve this crisis; and what progress has been made and how we all can help.

The meeting is set for October 15, 5:30 p.m., Left of Center Café, 699 West Center, Visalia.

RSVP phoebet8@att.net

Next Fresno meeting: October 2, 4:30—6 p.m.
4860 North Teilman, Fresno, 824-1083
Co-Chairs: Andrea Farber De Zubiria/Connie Young



EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

This priority will be the topic of the first “new format” Board meeting on October 14 at 6 p.m. Linda Gleason, Director of the Children’s Movement and Executive Director of Cradle2Career, will speak about the work of these organizations. The Children’s Movement regularly convenes over 200 people across 95 organizations representing 10 different sectors. Linda is also the driving force behind the annual “State of Our Children” breakfast, which has become a powerful community building and fundraising event with significant increases in sponsorships each year.

Linda realized that to effect real change leaders across the County needed to be connected to the work. In 2015 Fresno

Cradle to Career (C2C) was launched with Linda as Executive Director and today this community-based partnership includes top leadership from 66 organizations including education, housing, health, justice and government. Using local data to identify gaps by race, gender and other demographics Fresno C2C works to make decisions that improve practices and target resources to improve educational and health outcomes for all children.

Next Meeting: October 11 10 a.m.
752 East Buckingham, Fresno, 226-2720
Chair Kay Bertken, kayb@csufresno.edu



GET OUT THE VOTE

The Get Out The Vote group met and set up a schedule for registering voters. Marianne has conducted voter registration at Buchanan High School. Teachers at Clovis West are doing voter registration in their classrooms both using voter registration forms provided by the League and online registration.

Constitution Day was celebrated at Fresno State on September 17 with three consecutive events from 11 am until 5 pm covering the first, fourteenth and nineteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Thanks to GOTV members who helped to register voters at those events.

In celebration of National Voter Registration Day the student government at Fresno State (ASI) sponsored a week-long series of events in the library to encourage students to register to vote. League members registered voters at Clovis Community College and Fresno Adult School.



We will also be setting up schedules to conduct voter registration events at Fresno County high schools during October. Anyone who would like to help with this outreach can call me at 559-298-5183.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Two members recently attended the 8th Annual San Joaquin Valley Affordable Housing Summit. It featured guest speaker Luisa Medina from the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley and representatives from California Forward, Self-Help Enterprises, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, California Coalition for Rural Housing and many more. Topics included the homeless; equitable communities; needs, challenges and opportunities in the Valley; and water and financial challenges. We learned a lot about what is currently happening in affordable housing and also made several valuable connections. The Summit proved to be worth the time and money involved.

Next Meeting: To be announced
Chair: Nyla Zender, nylazj@comcast.net

Climate Change



by Andrea Farber De Zubiria

September was a huge month for conversation and protest related to climate change in the US and throughout the world. First we had the seven hour Democratic Presidential Candidate Forum on Climate Change on CNN and a forum on MSNBC a few weeks later. On September 20, the youth-led Global Climate Strike got a lot of media attention and kicked off the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York .

During the TV forums, many of the candidates mentioned supporting a carbon fee and dividend policy. Many economists and experts believe this would incentivize business practices and products that would reduce greenhouse gas production and encourage technologies that contain carbon so it doesn't go into the atmosphere. LWVC also supports the concept of carbon pricing but has yet to take a stance on specific pricing legislation. The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act is now up to 62 co-sponsors, but so far, none of the Valley members of Congress have signed on.

It seems that there is an age gap when it comes to concerns about the climate crisis and the will to address it. A poll which surveyed 2000 adults about their position on global warming and climate policies reported that 77% of younger Republicans said that climate change is a serious threat, about the same as Democrats of the same age. Meanwhile only 51% of Republicans over 39 agreed the problem was a serious threat, compared to 95% of Democrats. Support for a federal carbon tax, further restrictions on methane emissions and a national renewable energy standard was virtually identical among Republicans and Democrats under 38. A Republican polling firm recently said that climate change was the most important issue for younger voters.

The League of Women Voters supports youth in their efforts to get legislative solutions. For example, the League has filed three amicus briefs in support of the youth plaintiffs in the case of Juliana vs United States. In this case, the youths hold the executive branch accountable for its role in failing to limit climate change, which interfered with their constitutional right to life, liberty and property, free from government endangerment.

Locally, a representative from LWVF's Climate Action Committee attended the LWV NorCal Climate Change Forum last month. Approximately 35 League members shared what their chapters are doing

Water News



by Diane Merrill

The California legislature passed Senate Bill 200, the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, which was signed into law by Governor Newsom. This legislation will provide \$130 million annually for construction and maintenance of water systems for disadvantaged communities that lack access to safe drinking water. This is great news for the San Joaquin Valley, where a number of these communities are located.

As reported previously, the North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency has re-



leased draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan for public review and comment. LWVF members have attended meetings about the plan and are doing our best to review this nearly 800 page document, and to comment as appropriate. Any comments we make will be in line with state and national league water positions and LWVF's land use position. The written comment period ends on October 18. The plan must be adopted and submitted to the State by January 31, 2020.

In other news, the NKGSA Board of Directors recently appointed Kassy Chauhan Executive Officer-Designate to take over for Gary Serrato, who will be retiring in February 2020.

Voter Services

by Liz Shields



The Fresno County Clerk/Elections Department Voters updated the members of the Voters Choice Act Advisory Committee on the Election Administration Plan that is being forwarded to the Secretary of State. The only remaining decisions are the precise locations of the Vote Centers and the Drop Boxes for the Presidential Primary on March 3.

Flyers summarizing the “Countdown to Election Day” that voters should be aware of prior to the Primary Election on March 3 and the ways by which ballots may be returned to the Elections Department are being distributed at community events or available from the Elections Department at 2221 Kern Street.

There will be a Toolkit Training session conducted by the Election Department staff at the Election Warehouse, 4525 E. Hamilton on October 16 at 4 p.m. This Toolkit will include social media copy, print ads, links to a powerpoint presentation and other materials. Everyone interested in using this toolkit to educate voters is encouraged to attend.

Go to <https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/county-clerk-registrar-of-voters> and click on ‘Vote Fresno County’ for full details of the Election Administration Plans in nine languages and the maps used to determine Vote Center sites and Drop Box locations.

CLIMATE CHANGE *(continued from page 4)*

with respect to climate change, including addressing promoting healthy soils, electrification, and evaluating the role of mass transit. In Fresno, our main focus is educating ourselves and encouraging voters to be informed about climate change and what our county is doing about it.

Please take a few minutes to let your member of Congress know via email, letter or phone call that you want effective legislation to limit and contain greenhouse gas emissions. Whether you are working on education, housing, homelessness, mental or physical health, agriculture or water keep in mind that “all roads lead to climate change” and encourage practices with lower greenhouse gas emissions. afarberdezub@gmail.com

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The September meeting of the Behavioral Health Board began with the reading of proclamations issued by our Board of Supervisors recognizing National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention Month. Updates followed on the work being done around these issues by the Department of Behavioral Health.



The Board of Supervisors formally adopted the county’s Suicide Prevention Plan. That Board also adopted the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale, so that all county systems will use the same tool to assess risk. The Local Outreach to Survivors of Suicide Loss Team is up and running. Already the Team has reached out to survivors of several suicides, and has connected people to services that could be helpful to their recovery from loss. A crucial part of this plan is maintaining the local Suicide Prevention Hotline at 888-506-5991.

The new Substance Use Disorders System of Care is continuing to serve clients while working through some challenges. There has been a big shift in service delivery with the new criteria of American Society of Addiction Medicine. Many providers need more training to work with co-occurring clients. The Department is meeting regularly with providers to work through these difficulties, as well as billing and payment issues. The only provider with Social Detox services closed, leaving a gap in the system of care; another provider plans to open a detox facility soon. There is no Medical Detox in Fresno County except in the local hospitals, and that situation is unlikely to change. Residents may access treatment for Substance Use Disorders by calling the 24/7 Access Line (800-654-3937) or by walking into the office of a treatment provider.

Stay tuned for information about participation in the 2020 Mental Health Services Act 3-Year Plan. This will be an opportunity for community members to make known their ideas for new services to fill gaps and to improve our behavioral health system of care.

evansalca@comcast.net

Education

by Kay Bertken



The Board reviewed some impressive statistics: 15,000 students participated in summer school; 188,000 meals were served over the summer, and last year's Smarter Balanced Assessments showed continued improvement in the percentage of students who have met or exceeded English language and math standards. Since 2015 when these tests were introduced, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in English has gone from 27% to 36.7% with a steady increase over those years. In math, the percentage meeting or exceeding standards has gone from just 18% to 26.89%, again representing a steady increase, though still a very low level.



FRESNO CITY COLLEGE

Other news from the summer includes a new home for Design Science High School, the cooperative arrangement between

Fresno City College and FUSD that simultaneously awards a high school diploma and an Associates degree. It now has a permanent home on the City College Campus.

Fresno Unified also has a new mobile health vehicle that will be visiting the high schools on a rotating schedule. It will offer physicals, sports exams, hearing and vision screening and vaccinations to any FUSD student.

The Board members discussed some revisions and new bylaws related to their own roles. They plan a vote on them at the next board meeting in October. The newly proposed bylaws involve procedures for handling complaints about trustees and a censure policy that specifies a procedure.

Censure rules

Trustees recognized that they were in novel territory in passing a censure resolution against Trustee Slatik and are seeking to formalize the requirements. A community group has been formed to try to recall Trustee Slatik though no initiating documents have been filed as yet.

Board stipends

There was only modest audience reaction to the Board's proposal to increase their stipends. Currently the Board members receive \$1,500 per month. They unanimously passed a 5% annual increase to begin this month. Most school boards in the country receive no compensation, including three of the biggest—New York, Houston and Chicago. Los Angeles, on the other hand, recently passed an increase that gave full-time board members \$125,000 a year and trustees with other employment \$50,000.

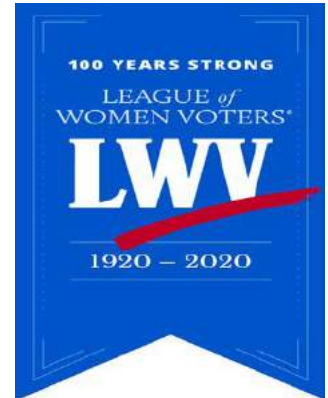
Salaries in other districts vary widely. Locally, members of the City Council earn \$65,000 per year. Arguments for paid school board members routinely emphasize the amount of time required by the positions and the difficulty in balancing school district demands with that of another full-time job.

kayb@csufresno.edu

LWVF film to premiere October 25 in Tower

The League's proposal for a mini-documentary about Suffrage in the Valley won a competitive Big Tell award from the Central Valley Community Foundation and will be shown publicly for the first time this month.

New member Micheline Golden wrote the winning proposal, which was among 75 from which the Foundation selected ten. Each of the ten received a \$5,000 grant to produce their film. LWVF was assigned an experienced videographer, Orlando Gomez, to tell



the story about our 2020 Centennial celebration and the Fresno women who were instrumental in the story of suffrage. He was assisted by Haley White.

The ten mini-documentaries will premiere on Friday, October 25 at 7 p.m. at the Tower Theater. Admission is free. We will have some reserved seats for the League but the theater fills up rapidly so get there early. After its premiere the film will belong to the League. We plan to showcase it throughout the Centennial year.

This is the third year that the Foundation has sponsored Big Tell grants to produce stories that shine a light on the people and places that make our region extraordinary.

-F Farber

Health Care

By Richard Bertken, M.D.



quent loss of productivity across an economy. Economists have studied this issue since the mid-80's with the

employer contributions to social security, Medicare, and health and retirement plans.

Employees or Independents?

Some social scientists have called the designation of such workers as independent contractors the “fissuring of the workplace,” a modern meme denoting a return to an economic class system of privileged, secure employees and outsider, day laborers. Many of the workers themselves, while wanting better pay (without any practical means

of bargaining for it), appreciate the freedom and independence of their non-employee status.

The California Supreme Court in its 2018 decision *Dynamex Operations v. Superior Court* offered a very narrow definition of independent contractors that ultimately triggered the California legislature to pass Assembly Bill 5. Governor Newsom signed it on September 18. Heavily lobbied against by affected employers (including the *Fresno Bee*), the law requires employee status for ridesharing drivers (and many other types of now-independent service providers).

The impetus for passing laws distinguishing employees from independent contractors is much lower in countries with universal health care, likely resulting in gains to their economies.

Drbertken@comcast.net

About half of the population of the U.S. receives health care through employee-sponsored health insurance (ESHI). This benefit is untaxed both as a business expense for the employer and as a form of income for the employee. This leverage gives it an advantaged status compared to privately purchased health insurance, including even policies purchased through Affordable Care Act (ACA) exchanges.

For the employees of large private or government businesses, it is a uniquely valuable asset, especially for those with potentially costly health conditions.

Impact on Job Lock

In the 80's and 90's Congress passed several laws governing the distribution and maintenance of ESHI plans, attempting to impose fairness with respect to employees' age, disabilities, incomes, and insurability after termination of employment. Overall, these had modest impact on the serious problem widely known as “job lock.”

Job lock is an employee's disincentive from moving to another job, to an entrepreneurial role, or to full or partial retirement due to threatened loss of benefits. Loss of ESHI is high on the list for all employees, but for some high users of health care it is the premier concern. The net effect of job lock is constriction of free markets for employment and conse-

slippery goal of costing it out, but there is agreement that job lock due to threatened loss of ESHI affects 10-20% of employees and is bad for our economy.

Coverage after leaving a job

ACA strengthened ESHI plans in standardizing coverages for all employees in a company, out-of-pocket expenses, and vesting periods (a

maximum of 90 days). But continuation of coverage after leaving employment, while covered by some businesses for retirement (especially as a supplement to Medicare), is only backed up by purchase of private or ACA exchange plans. While a few advanced democracies retain ESHI, they all have provisions for universal health coverage. The contribution of health insurance to potential job lock is negligible in these countries, and in fact the overall social safety net in most liberal democracies takes job lock out of public discussion.

We are now confronted by a contentious debate over whether workers in the “gig economy”—most notably app-activated service providers such as ride-hailing drivers and delivery workers—are employees entitled to



Friant lawsuit continues... and continues ...and continues...

by Radley Reep



In 2011 LWVF and Sierra Club jointly filed suit against Fresno County challenging the County's approval of a 2,500-unit residential development near the community of Friant. The case eventually made its way to the California Supreme Court where we prevailed.

In accordance with directives issued by the California Supreme Court and the Fifth District Court of Appeal, in March 2019 the Fresno County Superior Court issued a judgment in our favor, ordering the County to set aside its approval of the Friant Ranch project and redo the air quality section of the environmental impact report (EIR).

In May, the County and project developers motioned to have the Superior Court reconsider its March judgment, claiming that the order was "*a harsh and draconian remedy.*" They asked for a judgment that would allow project approvals to remain in place while the EIR was being revised.

The day preceding a scheduled hearing on August 30, the court issued a tentative ruling in our favor, sustaining the judgment it had issued in March. Not wanting to contest the ruling in Superior Court, the County and developers chose not to attend the hearing. The hearing was cancelled, and the tentative ruling became the order of the court. The County and developers appealed and in response, the Fifth District Court of Appeal sent a letter to all counsel reading in part as follows:

Based on...the fact this court is in a much better position than counsel to know the intention underlying the court's actions, the court is providing counsel with this letter to explain what it intended when it issued its (directive) after receiving the California Supreme Court's opinion.

This court intended and expected the Superior Court to issue a writ of mandate directing the County to take the following steps to implement this court's decision, as modified by the California Supreme Court: (1) Vacate or set aside its approval of the Friant Ranch project and not approve the project before preparing and certifying a "revised EIR.... Having clarified (the court's intent) the parties may proceed with this appeal as they see fit."

We will wait to see whether the appeal is continued.

African American women fought for Suffrage

When the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1920, women all over the country registered to vote. However, in the Deep South, African American women were often stopped at the courthouse door with literacy tests so arcane that few could pass, poll taxes so steep few could afford them, and with vigilantes milling about. Black women, who had always viewed the vote as a community asset, never stopped fighting.

Before the suffrage parade in 1913 in Washington D.C., Ida B Wells, a formidable activist for suffrage and against the lynching of black men, applied to march with the Illinois delegation. The women who headed the state suffrage organization said no. Wells went to D.C. and waited on the sidewalk until the delegation came into view, squeezed in between two friends and marched the rest of the parade route with them.



Ida B. Wells

By the 1960s a new civil rights movement emerged to restore the voting rights of black women and men in the South. Often it was African American women who did grassroots organizing. In 1965 with civil rights activists pushing from the streets and Lyndon Johnson lobbying from the White House, Congress enacted the historic Voting Rights Act, which banned literacy tests and gave the Justice Department wide authority to investigate discrimination. Parts of this Act have been invalidated.

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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.

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.**

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