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# The *Fresno* **VOTER**



**Monday, October 16**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
League Office, 4 p.m.

**Monday, November 20**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
League Office, 4 p.m.

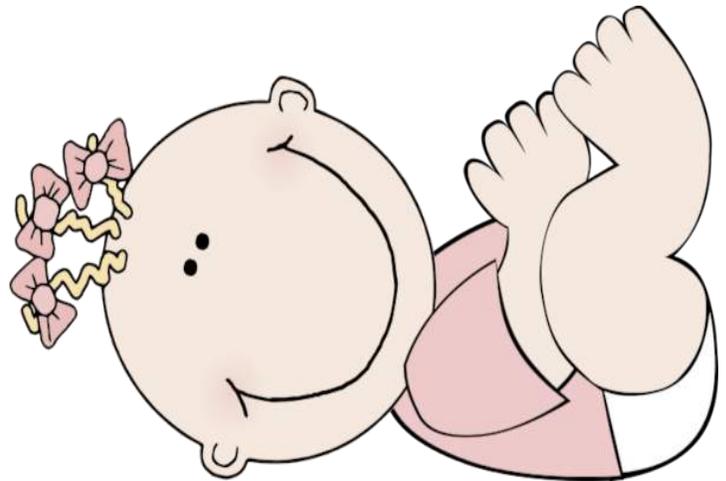
**Charter Schools Workshop**  
Date to be announced  
Details to follow

**Housing Workshop**  
Date to be announced  
Details to follow



Members and guests are always invited to all League meetings

*We Knew  
We Needed  
A Change!*



**For years we have had two dues cycles, with some members being billed in October and some in April. This has led to confusion and additional costs.**

**We knew we needed a change! From now on we will have one billing cycle, with all dues payments due in April. To facilitate the changeover, our October billing members have been sent a letter requesting that they pay \$35 for one-half year, right now; their next billing year will commence in April, 2018, at the customary rate of \$70. Members who are normally billed in April will see no difference in their billing cycle.**

**Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.**

*Marianne Kast, President*

*Jerri Figgs, Treasurer*

## President's Message



A couple of weeks ago ten League members joined with other community members and high school and college students to mark Constitution Day at Fresno State.

Constitution (and Citizenship) Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U. S. Constitution on September 17, 1787, and recognizes all who were born in the United States, or by naturalization have become citizens. The Fresno State event was sponsored by the Ethics Center at Fresno State, and was co-sponsored by the Fresno County Civic Learning Partnership and Fresno County Office of Education.

Panel presentations and table discussions focused on three issues:

1. What are our First Amendment Rights and how are they practiced in the real world, including free speech on college and high school campuses?
2. What does it mean to be an American in 2017 in an era of political division, factionalism, and incivility? What values and ideals can we agree on?
3. What can citizens—especially young people—do to sustain and support our democracy?

It is always rewarding to talk with young people. Their perspective is fresh, sometimes unexpected, usually thoughtful. Their comments, and my own experience as a public school teacher, remind me that our K-12 schools do a poor job of preparing citizens to participate in democracy. Students' elementary and high school experiences are limited by teachers and administrators unwilling or not allowed to bring controversy and current social issues into their classrooms.

Participation in our democracy requires investigation, analysis, civil conversation, and compromise. In education, the acquisition of facts seems to be the dominant activity. But the Internet has put facts at everyone's fingertips instantly. What students need to practice are the skills for meaningful participation in the community they will be shaping.

When students say that college opens their minds to ideas and possibilities they never considered before, I worry about how many young people never get to experience those mind-opening moments. Waiting for college to challenge students with the issues of the day is too late. Students now pre-register to vote at age 16; many will be casting their first votes as 18-year-olds before they leave high school. Controversy and civil discourse have to be part of a K-12 education.

- Marianne

The VOTER is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno  
Mailing Address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710  
Volume 76, No. 10 Editor: Francine Farber

## Member News

Please edit your roster



**New Member**  
**Giselle Gasco**  
5228 East Pine Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93727  
736-8648  
Giselle@mifamiliavota.org

**New Address**  
**Kathy Webb**  
179 Lakeshore Court  
Richmond, CA 94864

**DENNIS MANNING**  
**We deeply regret to inform you that Dennis Manning, a member since 2010, passed away on August 23. Dennis was a retired transportation engineer and had been on the League's Board of Directors in charge of Transportation for a number of years, before resigning due to illness.**

A donation to League makes a great birthday or holiday gift or as a memorial. Please make checks out to LWVF  
1345 Bulldog Lane  
Fresno, CA 93710



Thank You!

The League is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your dues payments and donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.

# Join a Priority Committee!

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



The Civic Engagement committee participated in the CSU Fresno Service Learning Fair. We made a few contacts with students to volunteer with the League. Work has begun on the new, upgraded website for LWVF. We have begun to discuss ways to get more citizens involved in current issues, with the ulterior motive of gaining new members for the League. Our attention is focused on increasing the number of League sponsored events and meetings. You are welcome to join this committee.

**Next meeting: Friday, Oct. 6, 4 p.m., Stone Soup**

**Chair: Marianne Kast: [fourkasts@gmail.com](mailto:fourkasts@gmail.com)**

## EDUCATION



Our members will be visiting charter schools in Fresno this fall to learn more about them, their students and their operation. We have also contacted potential speakers for a workshop event on Charter Schools that will be coming up before Thanksgiving. Alternative times and venues are being considered to attract a maximum

audience.

**Next meeting: to be announced**

**Chair: Kay Bertken: [kayb@csufresno.edu](mailto:kayb@csufresno.edu)**

## HOUSING



League members along with several other groups interested in housing issues met with Representative Joaquin Arambula. He had previously indicated opposition to SB2, an affordable housing bill that would raise funds by attaching a fee on certain real estate transactions. In the end, he did vote in favor and the bill passed with exactly the 2/3 majority it required. SB3, the Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2018, also passed. It authorizes \$3 billion to be used for affordable housing programs.

The committee discussed the possibility of having a Lunch & Learn on the results of our research and the input of various speakers

**Next Meeting: Thursday, Oct. 12, 5 p.m., Stone Soup**

**Chairs: Marianne Kast: [fourkasts@gmail.com](mailto:fourkasts@gmail.com)  
Nyla Zender: [nylajz@comcast.net](mailto:nylajz@comcast.net)**

## Women's Equality Day Successful

Our first combined Women's Equality Day/Peterson Scholarship event attracted an enthusiastic audience on August 27. Irma Olguin, Jr., co-founder and CEO of Bitwise Industries, received the award because of her innovation in entrepreneurship and technology. A delightful speaker, she described growing up in a farmworker family in the Central Valley and gradually developing an awareness that she could be successful in a competitive environment.

Ten scholarships were awarded to Fresno City College and Fresno State students, thanks to Bette Peterson's continual generosity in donating \$10,000 annually for this purpose. Also celebrated at the event was Gloria Smith's 50 years of membership in our League, now becoming our fifth life member. Due to illness she was unable to attend.

## CCLS

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# Transportation

by Mary Savala



LWVF signed on to a letter to the Council of Governments composed by Leadership Counsel's legal team which raised objections to process in transportation planning efforts to meet Green House Gas Emission reductions over the next four years. League was joined by the State Routes to School National Partnership, Central California Asthma Collaboration and the Catholic Diocese of Fresno as signatures on the letter.

Objections to the Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) planning include:

- ◆ Lacked public participation in developing scenarios. Three scenarios were drafted by COG staff and presented as alternatives to the public although federal law makes it clear that public participation may not be limited to voting between predetermined scenarios.
- ◆ Established a pattern of hostility toward equity in violation of Title VI. COG and the Regional Transportation Planning (RTP) Roundtable denied inclusion of language promoting equity in transportation in policies of the RTP, despite the law's prohibition against disparate impacts on minority and low-income populations and requirements to address discriminatory conditions.

- ◆ Lacked adequate environmental justice indicators to measure the impacts of regional transportation investments on environmental justice communities.
- ◆ Failed to give the public a basic understanding of the data and modeling assumptions used in scenario development.
- ◆ Failed to comply with obligations to further fair housing in its Regional Transportation Plan.

California Rural Legal Assistance also sent a letter to the Transportation Technical Committee of COG presenting the omissions of legal requirements that COG must consider in complying with Title VI.

A meeting with COG staff is being set to discuss the issues raised in the letter.

More cheerful news is the recent inauguration of the Transportation Institute in the CSUF Department of Engineering. The Institute is the collaboration of community and CSUF efforts to develop a research and training program for transportation, particularly advancements in transportation, and to encourage interest in high school students in transportation planning and development. The Institute has been funded with a healthy donation of funds from the Advanced Transit Technologies (ATT) program of Measure C. League has been an early and full time advocate of the ATT program and its contribution to the Institute.

## Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Act

by Diane Merrill



Last month The Voter contained an article on SB 623, the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Act. LWVC was one of 45 organizations signing on to a letter of support for SB 623.

This legislation aims to create a continuing source of funding to address barriers to accessing safe and affordable drinking water for hundreds of communities in California. Many of

these communities are small, disadvantaged, and located in the southern San Joaquin Valley.



A major barrier is the lack of dedicated funding to support ongoing operations and maintenance costs for drinking water treatment. Environmental social justice organizations were able to forge coalitions that included agricultural organizations, legislators, government officials, and water agencies.

Facing a deadline for passage by the legislature and the high bar of a two

thirds vote required for passage, SB 623 did not move forward in 2017. It will be considered again in 2018.

**Thank you to League members who were able to respond to our League Alert on SB 623.**



**Other Water News**  
The University of California at Davis has been awarded \$ 1.6 million from the National Science Foundation to study water and land use issues in disadvantaged communities. The focus will be on the Tulare Basin, but the findings from this study may inform other areas facing similar water issues.

## Education

by Kay Bertken



**NEXT FUSD BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday, October 11, 5:30 P.M.**  
**VIEW IT STREAMING ON YOUR COMPUTER**

At the first FUSD Board meeting of September, the trustees approved Bob Nelson's contract as the District's next superintendent. The contract runs till June 30, 2021. Mr. Nelson's wife and many children were on hand to help him celebrate the occasion, supporting his effort to bring civility and openness to the Board and District. It will not be an easy task.

The Board room was full of people reacting to Board President Ashjian's remarks about the district's new sex education curriculum, expressing his worry about including information about alternative sexual preference and identity. Previous public comment regarding his remarks were nearly uniform in their criticism. At this last meeting there was a crowd of people there to support President Ashjian's

remarks as representing his free speech and freedom of religion rights. Although it was a smaller group than those calling for his censure, the supporters dominated the early part of the public comment period. The Board is evidently set to vote in October on a proposal to remove him from his office as president.

Another looming challenge was represented in the audience that night as well. The Fresno Teacher's Association handed out fliers indicating that the district was unresponsive to its contract proposals for smaller class sizes, increases in the district contribution to health insurance, a 10% salary increase phased in over the years 2016-2017 through 2018-2019, reduced "administrative meeting hours" in favor of more autonomous planning

time, inclusion of multiple alternative education sites students with discipline issues as well as numerous school safety provisions. The negotiations are evidently now going to the fact finding stage and there are already rumors of a strike vote.

On a more positive note, the District has opened a Dream Center in Manchester Shopping Center that will provide assistance to Dreamers. Along with DACA renewal assistance, the center will also offer citizenship and English as a second language courses and naturalization applications. It will be a hub for dissemination of accurate information, a training facility and office space for the professionals who will be assisting young people in the DACA program, and house services and support.

## Voter Services

by Jane Worsley & Mary Perich



September was a busy month for the Voter Services committee. Before the month began we staffed a table at CSU Fresno's Gender Equality Day. We used a card game to ask students questions about voting and our system of government.

We offered our services to County Office of Education for National High School Registration Week in September. We will follow up with those contacts in the spring before the close of registration for the June primary.

We attended Constitution Day events at CSUF and Reedley College and placed ads in the Collegian (Fresno State), Rampage (Fresno City College), and Community Alliance newspapers, letting people know

where they can register to vote, and staffed the League office on National Voter Registration Day for those wishing to register in person.

At this writing we are waiting for Liz Shields' op-ed piece to appear in The Fresno Bee on the importance of voting. And we had a lunch and learn meeting with Brandi Orth, Fresno County Registrar of Voters, on September 27, at which we were able to ask questions about new laws passed in California and the voting system we use here in Fresno County.

We are always looking for volunteers and will be calling on those members who enjoy meeting with high school students after the first of the year.

**Jane: 431-0360; Mary: 432-6448**



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Member since 1982

**Frank Powell**  
Member since 1999

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and the Voter*



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<hr/>	
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***Democracy is not a spectator sport***

**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.**

.....  
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