



Phone: 559-226-VOTE

Web site: LWVFresno.org

The *Fresno*
VOTER



Wednesday, October 10
Transit Workshop
Denny's
See page 3

Saturday, October 27
Regional Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 6



Election Day

November (date TBA)
Lunch & Learn
Office of Independent Review

Members and guests are
invited to all League meetings
and events



We're hosting a regional League meeting!

Transformation Journey

**How will we ensure that the League remains
strong, visible, and relevant
in its next 100 years?**

with Helen Hutchison, LWVC President

Saturday, October 27



10 a.m.

Stone Soup

1345 Bulldog Lane

Lunch available by RSVP only—\$10

(559)226-VOTE (8683) or fourkasts@gmail.com

**GET OUT
THE VOTE!**

Order Non-Partisan Lawn Signs: see page 5

President's Message



I am writing to invite you, *every one of you*, to our LWV Regional get-together on Saturday, October 27 at 10 a.m. at Stone Soup. We will join with Leagues from Merced and Tulare counties to examine the actions that Leagues must take to remain relevant, visible, and key “defenders of democracy” as we approach our 100th year in 2020.

We are living in a time of resurgent interest in civic engagement. How do we involve new members in League work? How do community issues look through their eyes and are we able use their skills to reach an even wider audience?

These and many other questions have consumed LWVUS leadership over the past few years. A roadmap for securing the League’s future has been developed, and changes are afoot. We’ve invited Helen Hutchison, President, LWVC, to guide our regional conversation. Plan to attend!

Late last month, you should have received the first of our new weekly email messages. We have heard from some of our members that feel disconnected from the everyday work of our League. This new messaging system is planned to provide every member a way to “do League stuff” every week.

This is a busy time for League members, with Election Day about one month away. But our League is busy year-round, and we have a place for you to take part whenever you have the time and interest to get involved.

Though these emails are sent to League members, feel free to share the information with friends. If you have not provided an email address to us, and would like to receive our emails, please update your email information with Dolores O’Neal (dolores.oneal@comcast.net) or subscribe by clicking on the bottom of the email message.

Marianne

MEMBER NEWS

Please edit your roster



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New Members

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New Address

Ann and Jeffrey Nennig
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Fresno, CA 93720

A donation to League makes a great birthday or holiday gift or as a memorial. Please make checks out to

LWVVF

1345 Bulldog Lane Fresno, 93710



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Mailing Address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710

Volume 77. No. 10 Editor: Francine M. Farber

JOIN US FOR AN INFORMATIVE LUNCH AND LEARN



Lunch & Learn
Transit Service
in Fresno County
Wednesday, October 10
11:30 a.m.
Denny's
Blackstone & Herndon
No-host lunch available

- ◆ Transit ridership in California is decreasing. How is ridership doing in the Fresno Metro area and Fresno County?
- ◆ What has been the impact of SB1 Gas Tax funding on transit services? What will we lose if the tax is repealed?
- ◆ Hear Moses Stites from Fresno County Rural Transit, Jeff Long from Fresno FAX and Amy Hance from Clovis Transit talk about the status of local transit services.

BALLOT PROPOSITION RECOMMENDATIONS



Pros and Cons for the eleven ballot propositions have been issued by the State League and our speakers will be using these when making presentations to local groups including retirement homes, library, civic and religious groups. The State League has made its recommendations for the propositions as follows:

- ◆ **Proposition 1 Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond: Yes**
- ◆ **Proposition 2 Homeless Housing Bond: Yes**
- ◆ **Proposition 3 Water Bond: No**
- ◆ **Proposition 4 Children's Hospital Bond: No**
- ◆ **Proposition 5 Property Tax Amendment: No**
- ◆ **Proposition 6 Gas Tax Repeal: No**
- ◆ **Proposition 10 Local Governments Authority to Enact Rent Control: Yes**
- ◆ **(NO POSITION on Props 7, 8, 11, 12. Prop 9 has been withdrawn)**

Education

by Kay Bertken



Four out of the seven seats on the Fresno Unified School Board will be contested in the November elections. Two trustees are not running again, so there will be no incumbent on the ballot for Trustee Areas 1 and 7, Cal Johnson's and Brooke Ashjian's seats. While the trustee areas do not exactly conform to high school attendance areas, these are the areas that include Edison and Bullard High Schools. Valerie Davis (Sunnyside area 3) and Chris DelaCerde (McLane area 4) will face opposition on the ballot.

Candidates for all of the seats faced off in a forum sponsored by Fresno GO at Patino School of Entrepreneurship on September 26, as this edition was going to press.

Plan for bilingualism

Superintendent Nelson has announced his intention that all students be bilingual by graduation. The trustees of Fresno Unified have made real commitments to bilingualism. The district has initiated seven dual immersion programs across the district, including one in Wawona Middle School and a program for pre-K and kindergarteners at Wawona that is beginning this year.

Solar brings savings

Last year the trustees approved a contract with Forefront Power to finance, construct, operate and maintain solar installations in the parking lots of the district high schools and the Brawley Service Center. Those installations are also providing shade in the parking lots. The board has approved another lease with Forefront for Caesar Chavez Adult Education Center and at the District's Nutrition Center. The contracts provide that the district purchase

Next Board Meetings: October 3 & 17, 5:30 p.m.

In person and streaming on your computer

power from Forefront at a flat rate over the 20-year period of the lease, with anticipated savings from the two new projects projected at \$3.1 million dollars.



The Board has received the unaudited financial report for last school year—2017-18. The District is in good financial shape though it is drawing on reserves to fund contract agreements from last year. The one area of concern, as in most public agencies in California, is the district's liability for future retiree pensions and health care.

The state requires the district to record on its books more than \$900 million in anticipated retiree liability. While there will never be a point in time when that amount will be disbursed, the Trustees are appropriately concerned about that very large number. The District is currently meeting all its retiree benefits and anticipates being able to do that.

Low administrative ratio

The other feature of the report that proved interesting was the administrative ratio in the District. While there are often complaints about school districts being top-heavy with administrators, FUSD actually has one of the lowest administrative ratios among 12 comparison districts in the state. The average ratio among the 12 was 4.91% in 2016-2017. Last year the local ratio was 4.2%.

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The City of Fresno completed construction of **Recharge Fresno**, a major water system upgrade, last month. The cornerstones of the project are construction of a surface water treatment plant in Southeast Fresno, a 13 mile pipeline to deliver Kings River water to the plant, and new water mains to distribute the treated water throughout Fresno.

The goal is to utilize the City’s allocation of Kings River water to reduce groundwater pumping that has resulted in a 100 foot drop in groundwater levels over the last 100 years. It is important to maintain groundwater levels so that groundwater will continue to be our “savings account” in drought years. In 2014/2015 LWVF actively supported approval of Recharge Fresno by speaking at public hearings and an op-ed in the Fresno Bee.



Implementation of the **Bay Delta Plan** for the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta has stirred debate among League members around the state. In Phase 1 of the plan, the State Water Resources Control Board proposes to dramatically increase flows on the Lower San Joaquin River and its tributaries (the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers) to support the environment and water quality in the Delta. Phase 2, involving increased flows from the Sacramento River and its tributaries, will follow.

As a result, there are a number of new items for posting under Natural Resources on the LWVC website. This includes a piece entitled “Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan” and a “Review of and Comments on League Positions Relative to Water, Agriculture, and the Environment.”

Legislation to establish a **Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund** did not pass during the current legislative session. Environmental social justice organizations will continue to pursue this type of legislation in the 2019-2020 session.

**BE THE FIRST
IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
TO DISPLAY A
NON-PARTISAN LAWN SIGN**



SIDE A



SIDE B

HOW TO ORDER

Call 226-8683

or e-mail info.lwvfresno@gmail.com

- ◆ Give your name and address
- ◆ How many do you want
- ◆ \$10 each as your donation to the League (signs are in color)
- ◆ For your lawn, business, church, other organizations
- ◆ Signs will be delivered to you!

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



Voter Services

by Liz Shields



The Behavioral Health Board began its September meeting with the reading of a proclamation proclaiming September 9-15 as Suicide Prevention Week. In addition, the Board had a sneak preview of the proclamation to be issued by the Supervisors for Recovery Happens Month, commemorating the recovery from alcohol and drug addiction at the Soberstock community celebration on September 28 -29 at Manchester Center.

After a number of high profile teen suicides in 2015, a wide-range of community partners came together to create a plan to reduce the number of suicides and attempted suicides. Department of Behavioral Health Director Dawan Utecht provided an overview of the strategic plan created by the Fresno County Suicide Prevention Collaborative. Large components of the plan include community education and provider training, such as communication campaigns, outreach to underserved populations, Mental Health First Aid training to non-profit organizations, special training to school staff, primary care physicians, and law enforcement. Another important aspect of the plan is the creation of a Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) Team.

Our Board was pleased to learn that a contract for an expanded metropolitan Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) will be going to the supervisors next month. CIT pairs law enforcement officers and mental health clinicians to respond to 911 calls related to mental health concerns. A pilot program was begun by the Department last year; now a contracted provider will provide eight clinicians to work with four Fresno and two Clovis police officers, and two sheriff deputies. A similar program already is working in the rural areas of Fresno County.

The Mental Health Services Act Annual Update has been posted. The Public Hearing tentatively is scheduled at 1:30 p.m. on October 17 prior to our Board meeting. League members are encouraged to read the update on the department web site and to attend and participate in the Public Hearing.

October will be a busy month for Voter Services. Five retirement homes have asked for presentations on the propositions as well as voter registration for new residents who need to update their addresses. Three presentations are scheduled for Madera County which does not have a League chapter.

For the past two general elections we have been invited to speak to voters at North Fork Library; it will be interesting to see if there is greater attendance than in the past because Madera County is one of the five counties chosen to test the new Voter Choice election process that will be used throughout California in 2020 elections.

Under the Voter Choice law all voters receive a ballot by mail. They can return the ballot by mail, drop it in a secure ballot drop box prior to or on Election Day, or visit any vote center in the county where they may vote in person, drop off their ballot, or get the other services offered at former polling places. Some vote centers will be open for 10 days before Election Day while additional ones will open for the weekend before the election; all will be open on Election Day.

Preliminary results from the June Primary indicate that voter turnout was higher in those counties that tested the new law. The test counties also provided feedback to iron out the “wrinkles” that occurred, such as placing vote centers in libraries which historically do not open at 7 a.m. even on Election Day.

We will be contacting our volunteers who help with unfolding ballots, staffing the phone bank and helping with the canvass after the election. New members will also be contacted as these are activities where we strengthen League bonds. Our work should begin at the Elections Department on October 22 so check your calendars for free times around that date.

elizabeth44@yahoo.com

**See Page 3 for LWVC
recommendations
on ballot propositions**

Priority Report



Reports on the work of Priority Committees established at the Program Planning meeting last February

HOUSING

Inspections have begun under the city's Affordable Housing Act; the issue of adequate training of inspectors was raised by a committee member who experienced the inspection process. More information will be obtained.



The Committee discussed the results of members' reports on YIMBY towns (Yes In My Back Yard). The YIMBYs (affiliates of the National Housing Conference) are located all around the nation and some in Europe. They are composed of grassroots community organizers, political leaders, builders and developers, educators and everyday people to identify problems, create solutions and share resources on issues that impact housing.

We studied 14 different YIMBY towns and found many common goals among them. Expanding the home supply relieves pressure on prices. The group supports higher densities as a solution for many problems because high-density affordable living allows people of all backgrounds and income levels to live close to one another, and it is one key to overcoming racial segregation and economic inequity. It can also help prevent sprawl and pollution. Higher densities could support walkable, transit-rich, bike-able neighborhoods along business corridors and near transit hubs.

Ideally such developments should be spread throughout a city, and should

feature mixed use development and inclusionary zoning. Regulations should also allow for medium-rise mixed-use with apartments or condos located above shops, businesses or offices. Many YIMBYs support the use of Housing or Land Trusts to aid in the development of these housing communities.

The Tokyo housing experience presents a real success story. The city went from having a housing deficit in 1963 to a surplus in 1973 and an even bigger surplus every year after that until in 2013 there were 849,000 more homes than households. They accomplished this growth by demolishing and redevelopment, replacing older homes with taller, denser new housing. This was done in the face of opposition at the neighborhood and city levels.

Next meeting: October
nylajz@comcast.net

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The League participated in the Fresno State Community Service Opportunities Fair again in September. We received interest in collaborating with LWVF from 18 students, and have two already working on League projects. Graciela Moreno is managing our new weekly email message project, and Mike Lawrence is behind the camera working on a set of short video pieces about our League and its members. Two additional students expressed interest in doing elections work, and we are hoping they will assist Jacquie Canfield with Voter's Edge.

Terri Figgs, Bill Jordan, and Marianne Kast met with a student team from a

Mass Communications and Journalism class that will produce one or two video marketing pieces to help the LWVF better tell its story. Work will be getting underway on that project immediately.

Next meeting: October date TBD
fourkasts@gmail.com)

EDUCATION

Thanks to committee members' collaborative efforts and the great leadership of chair Kay Bertken, the Education Committee has launched a 25-page draft of its report on charter schools in the City of Fresno. The draft has been sent to school leaders of the charter institutions that were part of the study for their commentary. Their suggestions will be evaluated and included if appropriate.



After this process is complete the report will be finalized by the committee and sent to a wide audience that will include school districts and boards of education in Fresno County. The state League of Women Voters and other local leagues in California, some of whom have expressed interest in our work, will also receive the report, as well as education-related organizations.

The extensive report includes the following sections: Structure, Numbers, Demographics, Curriculum, Achievement, Success Markers, Trends, Areas of Concern, and Recommendations. In addition to chair Bertken, the committee includes Jacquie Canfield, Francine Farber, Sue Goldman, Janet Ryan, Amy Schmidt, Marsha Wagner, Lenore Yousef, and Nyla Zender.



A couple of months ago the *Bee* featured the death of a local woman caused by Lyme disease, a tick-borne systemic bacterial infection. This was startling, because Lyme is almost never fatal and because Lyme is rare in central California. The Centers for Disease Control estimates the Lyme case rate at 10 yearly in Fresno County, with no evident trend over the last two decades. Across the US the annual case burden is 300,000, with about a 15% increase since 2000.

Efforts to control the disease through public and professional education about the nature of the illness and about the need for tick bite prevention have been ineffective at curbing this emerging public health problem. The tale of the efforts to prevent the illness through vaccination provides insight into our troubled pathway to immunization programs.

Willy Burgdorfer was a Swiss-trained microbiologist who spent most of his professional career studying tick-borne disease. A self-proclaimed “tick surgeon,” in 1980 he started operating on tiny black-legged deer ticks sent to him by researchers at Yale School of Medicine—dead center of the mysterious epidemic of arthritis and rash in the Northeast U.S. Yale researchers, after years of work, came to suspect them in the transmission of Lyme disease. He was able to identify and culture borrelia bacteria—closely related to the bacteria that cause syphilis—*only from the minute stomach* of the ixodes scapularis tick. Like the syphilis bacteria, borrelia burgdorferi (as it was officially named) was susceptible to short courses of a wide range of antibiotics.

However, the problem was not quite solved. The borrelia organism defied standard cultural and blood diagnosis. Although the classic signs of arthritis, rash, and peripheral nerve dysfunction occasionally led to a firm clinical diagnosis, most cases required blood serum testing to advance confidently to treatment. This testing relied on the patient’s immune response rather than finding bacterial products or bacterial DNA. Borrelia burgdorferi was a prodigiously silent invader only revealed, often later than ideal, by patients’ immune response. Further, case histories revealed that delay

in treatment could lead to sustained symptoms or even permanent damage after effective antibiotic treatment.

Because of the apparently irreducible disability caused by Lyme disease, Burgdorfer assisted Smith-Kline-Beecham in producing a vaccine—LYMERix—that induced antibodies capable of killing borrelia before they could be released into the victims’ bloodstreams. It was 75% effective in preventing Lyme in vulnerable populations. It was approved by the FDA in 1998 and over a million courses of three injections were administered through 2002 without notable, durable adverse effects.



Regrettably, the anti-vaccination sect produced a series of internet memes suggesting that the vaccine could *cause* Lyme disease or some similarly damaging autoimmune illness. Because sales were limited to few geographic areas, the adverse publicity sucked profitability from SKB’s vaccine. The company stopped making LYMERix despite intense negotiations with Centers of Disease Control over sustaining production with some government support.

California ticks carry borrelia burgdorferi, but at less than a tenth the rate of Connecticut ticks. Still, if you live in Auberry, for example, the home of a patient I diagnosed with Lyme disease in 1985, you have a finite risk of contracting Lyme disease but do not have the choice of getting vaccinated against it. However, you probably should get your dog vaccinated. The canine vaccine is widely available and administered.

The Lyme vaccine story provides a warning about our ability to produce and distribute vaccines needed to prevent epidemics sponsored by population growth and mobility and by, potentially, climate change. Today, the perceived risk-to-benefit ratio for an individual must be lower than ever if a new vaccine is to be acceptable to the public. Even when objective data indicate that adverse events are rare and efficacy is nearly 100%, some vaccines have been anecdotally linked to prevalent disease conditions in popular opinion, creating a perception of harm and evading scientific rebuttal.

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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.

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