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THE

FRESNO

VOTER



Our 84th Year

IT'S LESS THAN A MONTH AWAY FROM ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTIONS IN YOUR LIFETIME

Monday, October 14
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m. in person
Stone Soup

Thursday, October 17
Proposition Workshop
5:30 p.m. ZOOM
A link will be sent to you

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

Get Involved !

- ◆ Phone Banking at the Elections Office: contact Sue Goldman at sueg4676@yahoo.com
- ◆ Open ballots at the Elections Warehouse: contact Janice Maroot at jmarootlwv@yahoo.com
- ◆ Candidate Forums assistance : contact Cathy Caples at cathybcaples@gmail.com
- ◆ Ensuring candidates are listed in Vote 411: contact Robin Chiero at rchiero@comcast.net

There are 10 state propositions on the California ballot. Don't let them give you a headache. Join our Zoom meeting at 5:30 on Thursday, October 17 to break through the confusion. A link will be sent to you.



See the list of state propositions on page 8.

Fresno County has more propositions on the ballot. Only the ones for your voting district will appear on your ballot. See the full list on page 8.



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 Robin Chiero



September Board Minutes

Program Planning With excellent attendance at the Women's Equality Day Event, we made a profit. Some people want more creative catering. Anyone who knows of a caterer who can supply this demand should let Marianne and Marie know as soon as possible.

Bylaws: Changes in the cycle for election of officers and dues payments are being recommended and will be discussed at our next meeting. Other recommended changes will be forthcoming.

Voter Services: Calls will be going out for people to staff the Elections Office as well as to open ballots at the Elections Warehouse

Handbook: Robin and Francine have made all the necessary editorial changes and now are working on formatting it with our printer.

Letters: The Youth Leadership Institute would like us to send a letter to City Council opposing the granting of a liquor store permit in the Webster School area. There are already too many there according to city regulations.

Mural: There is a possibility of a wall on Amador. The owners would like more information about the content.

DONATIONS

This month generous donations were received from:

**Kay and Richard Bertken
Diana & Jim Durham
Maureen & John Hayes
Angela and Michael Presto**



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.

When I first came to Fresno State in the fall of 1997 my teaching load consisted primarily of a course on the use of computers for instruction, one of the courses K-12 teachers had to take in order to clear their teaching credential.

We met in a computer lab and for one of the activities I sent them to the website for a fictitious city (they were not aware it was fictitious) to learn what they could about the city. Afterward we discussed whether they thought the city was actually real and how they came to their conclusion. We then discussed the importance of teaching their students to critically evaluate online information.

Fast forward the next 27 years, and the proliferation of access to information, misinformation and disinformation online, the ability for pretty much any individual to easily post on a plethora of social media platforms, and advances in artificial intelligence, have made this issue even more critical, not only for students but for all of us who consume information in various forms. Sometimes the mis- or disinformation is of a personal nature, but often, particularly this year, it is in the political realm.

The League of Women Voters has extensive and useful information on mis- and disinformation on its website, including a link to the website of one of its partners, The News Literacy Project, a nonpartisan education nonprofit founded in 2008. The vision of the News Literacy Project is that "All students in the United States are skilled in news literacy before they graduate high school, giving them the knowledge and ability to participate in civic society as well-informed, critical thinkers."

Their website is a treasure trove of resources, not only for students but for everyone. Under their "News Literacy Tips, Tools & Quizzes" at <https://newslit.org/tips-tools/>, you can access a variety of topics. To hopefully pique your interest in investigating what this valuable site has to offer, here are just a few of the topics: "In brief: Misinformation," "6 things to know about AI," "Confirmation bias," and "Astroturfing: As fake as it sounds."

Robin

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

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Education

by Kay Bertken



The Fresno Unified Board elaborated some of the specifics of Interim Superintendent Her's plans for student achievement gains in the context of reviewing last year's scores from the State's Smarter Balanced Assessment.

The scores showed modest gains for some grades, but overall did not reveal much progress. Schools that did do especially well in improving scores and/or showed growth through improved "distance from standard" (DFS) were indicated as models for improvements elsewhere. "Distance from standard" displays the average score distance from meeting grade level standards in English or Math.

The district English Language Arts scores improved from 2023 by 1.5% to 33.2% of students meeting or exceeding standards, and a DFS of improvement by 2.2 points to 49.1 points below standard. In Math, scores went up 1.8% to 25.1%, with DFS improving by 4.5 points to 78.1 points below standard. The Superintendent's goal is to improve DFS by 15 points each of the next two years. There will be a focus on 3rd grade and 9th where many students fall off their track to graduation. There will also be a pilot program in middle school that has not yet been announced. These initiatives will build on the focus of reading by first grade and attendance initiatives already launched.

The district's Analysis, Measurement and Accountability Department has developed a customized internal reporting system that shows grade level, site, classroom and individual student level achievement level reports. Each site will be charged with developing strategies and implementation plans for meeting the achievement goals, reviewing data and adapting as necessary.

Reflecting the intensified focus, Board meetings will change as a result of decisions at a two-day retreat over Labor Day weekend with a consultant provided by the Council of Great City Schools. Board meetings will be student oriented. Meeting time will no longer be spent on Superintendent comments or Board-Superintendent communications, most of which were commendations or recounting of recent or upcoming events. Those messages will now be communicated in the district's newsletter.

(continued on page 6)

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The Behavioral Health Board conducted a site visit at IMPACT, a Full Service Partnership program. Department of Behavioral Health Director Susan Holt gave an overview and reported on the outcomes of the program.

The Department contracts with Turn Behavioral Health to serve adults with co-occurring diagnoses of Severe Mental Illnesses and Substance Use Disorders. Turn provides services at The Hacienda, a former motel, at Highway 99 and Clinton Avenue. Individuals eligible for the program are those with these co-occurring diagnoses who frequently use crisis services, emergency rooms, and detox services and those recently released from institutional care. Each client has a personal plan for stability, with a goal of living successfully in the community.

The services have a low staff to client ratio (1:15) and 24/7 availability of the multidisciplinary team. The target goals for the program are 75% reductions in psychiatric hospitalizations, arrests, incarcerations, homelessness, and crisis center visits. The program successfully met all goals except for homelessness; housing remains a major barrier in our community.

Patients' Rights Advocates serve individuals receiving behavioral health services. Advocates investigate complaints from clients about violations of their rights, monitor mental health facilities, services and programs for compliance with patients' rights laws, regulations and policies, and represent patients at hearings that determine patients' care. The Department terminated its agreement with its longtime provider of these services. A temporary provider is serving clients until a permanent provider is selected.

September was National Suicide Prevention Month. "Out of the Darkness" Community Walks were held on September 28 at Woodward Park. In addition, September was National Recovery Month. SoberStock is an annual celebration of recovery that was held on September 28 at Eaton Plaza.

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Health Care

by Richard Bertken, MD



In mid-June of this year the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca resulted in 1300 deaths from heatstroke. Extensive healthcare planning for heatstroke prevention and treatment provided by the Saudi Ministry of Health was not enough. During the five days of rituals, temperatures reached 120 degrees within the Great Mosque.

This recent heatstroke disaster was nothing new in the world. Since the sixteenth century lethal heat wave events have killed many thousands of people all over the temperate ranges of the planet. While there is zero data, that death toll may be equaled by victims with permanent, debilitating brain damage.

Heat illness like poisoning

Heat illness is akin to poisoning, except that the only antidote is lots of cold water by immersion, if possible, or by compresses. Fans help only if the skin is wet. Once a human body gets to a sustained core temperature of 104°, all physiologic cooling responses fail. Sweating with evaporative cooling and vasodilation with radiant cooling come to a stop. The body heats uncontrollably, reaching in just ten to fifteen minutes temperatures that damage vital tissues.

Fortunately, before this happens the potential victim shows signs of heat exhaustion: slow and uncoordinated motor activity and slurred speech. The key sign of impending heatstroke is the loss of coherent

thought patterns. Dousing with cold water must begin immediately when any of these signs emerge. Treatment of heat illness is *on site!*

Farm workers need rest areas

On farms, building sites, and factories, employers must provide shade, water, and resting areas distributed so the workers can access them even in an exhausted state. Rural areas generally cannot depend on emergency medical response teams or regional healthcare facilities because the travel time exceeds the safety time limits for heatstroke. They must depend on preventative measures and on moveable or mobile cooling facilities.

OSHA adopts standards

Formal heat safety guidelines for employers were proposed by our federal Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) only in July of this year. California's OSHA adopted similar regulations in June, one of only five states to do so. These standards incorporate all the basic elements of protection for workers against heat illness.

The most thorough treatment of workplace heat safety was issued this year by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, a niche agency surprisingly lodged within the Centers for Disease Control. Its recommendations included key concepts in heatstroke prevention: ongoing education and training of workers, including a "buddy system" of coworkers keyed into signs of heat stress; recognition of the profound effect of adaptation to heat, so that workers new to exertional heat

stress are eased into full workloads over at least two weeks; and the importance of monitoring the "heat index," a combined measure of heat and humidity, in predicting the risk of heat injury. The Centers for Disease Control is partnering with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop an advanced system of graphic heat threat data, analogous to current hurricane tracking.



Poverty related to heat illness

Over 90% of American households have some form of air conditioning. About 70% have central, or whole house, conditioning. Poverty is a strong predictor of lack of air conditioning and therefore risk of heat illness. The homeless population is at extreme risk. The poor and unhoused are partially protected by adaptation to heat, an unpleasant way to survive through heat waves.

Most American states and local governments, even in northern climes, have developed heat action plans that call for warnings via the usual media and directions to designated networks of cooling centers. These are existing public buildings such as libraries, community centers, malls, veterans halls, and senior centers. Fresno, like most large cities in California, offers free bus rides to anyone requesting a ride to a cooling center.

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Water News

by Diane Merrill



The State of California established the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program to provide assistance to communities without clean and affordable drinking water. The program, begun in 2019, is administered by the State Water Resources Control Board and receives funding from sales of cap and trade emissions credits.

A number of disadvantaged communities throughout the State are having to replace failing infrastructure during this time of extreme weather and impacts from climate change. An impetus for starting the SAFER Program was the dire situation for households in the San Joaquin Valley, such as the hundreds of failing domestic wells on the outskirts of the City of Porterville. Many of these homes have since been consolidated into the City of Porterville's more reliable water system.



Five years into this ten-year program, the Governor and California water agencies are assessing the impact of the program to date. In the last five years the program has reduced the number of Californians without access to clean drinking water by more than half, from 1.6 million in 2019 to 700,000 in 2024. The program is expected to continue until 2030 and applies to both residences and schools.

According to the State, the SAFER Program has distributed more than \$850 million in grants to disadvantaged communities. This is over two and a half times the amount of grants provided in the five years prior to the SAFER Program.

Projects receiving SAFER funding include treatment systems for contaminants, new wells, and funding to hook up smaller systems to consolidate with larger urban water systems. Non-profit organizations including Self Help Enterprises, the Community Water Center, and the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability have partnered with the State to help implement solutions for communities.

Voter Services

by Sue Goldman



The Voter Services Committee has 16 presentations planned around the county focusing on those communities with low voter turnout. Four of these will be in partnership with the Fresno County libraries.

The presentations will utilize a PowerPoint entitled, "All About Voting". To promote the presentations, we will be tabling at events throughout the county. We are partnering with the Central California Food Bank to promote the presentations with flyers being given out to recipients of food bank pantries. In addition to these activities, we will be doing high school voter registration utilizing the same PowerPoint presentation in a modified format. Several presentations are being done to discuss the 10 state propositions on the ballot.

The League of Women Voters of California is supporting propositions 2, 3, 5, 6, and 32. They have taken a neutral position on proposition 33, no position on proposition 34 and have opposed proposition 35.

Websites where you can obtain additional information on the propositions: Ballotpedia, CalMatters, Secretary of State's website – sos.ca.org, the legislative analyst office, the state League's Easy Voter Guide, and Vote 411. Vote 411 will also be able to give you information about individual candidates.

In partnership with Fresnoland, KVPR, CMAC, and the Maddy Institute, we will be holding candidate forums at CMAC on October 7 for the Board of Supervisors District 3 Quintero/Chavez race and October 9 for the Assembly District 27 Soria/Rose race. Additional forums may be held. However, these have not yet been finalized. Wldtr1951@gmail.com

SEE PAGE 8 for STATE PROPOSITIONS

SEE PAGE 8 for FRESNO COUNTY PROPOSITIONS
Only those candidates for your own voting district will appear on your ballot.

Update on lawsuits:

General Plan challenge moving slowly

by Radley Reep

The two lawsuits challenging Fresno County’s February 20, 2024 approval of a revised General Plan are moving along, albeit slowly.

It’s been five months since the League, together with the Central Valley Partnership and Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter, filed suit in Superior Court. The “administrative record” for the court, which is a collection of all the documents and testimony the Board of Supervisors considered —or should have considered — when revising the plan, was only recently compiled by Fresno County and shared with the League’s legal counsel. The League is now working diligently to make sure the record is complete.

The City of Fresno filed a similar suit last spring, but because of a pro-

cedural error on the City’s part — the failure to timely file a request for hearing -- the County is now asking to have a portion of the City’s lawsuit dismissed. A hearing on that matter is scheduled for October 9.

Because the two lawsuits challenge the same County project, and because the administrative record for both suits is the same, the two cases are said to be “related.”

Court hearings for related cases are often combined — held at the same

time before the same judge. But for reasons unknown, the two cases are still on separate tracks in the court.

As a result, the court has scheduled two different dates for case management conferences — October 25 for the League and November 19 for the City of Fresno. At a case management conference, all parties involved in a lawsuit meet in court to address procedural issues and to ensure that legal matters progress efficiently. The court has the option to schedule a single case management conference for both of

these cases.

Because the two suits are progressing somewhat slowly, a court ruling on the merits of either case may not occur until next spring.

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Education

(continued from page 3)

Fresno Unified has a \$500 million bond measure on the November ballot. The Board has begun identifying the specific projects to be funded should it pass.

Staff reported a proposed distribution based on previous discussions and commitments. It included one-third of the bond or \$167 million for FTA contract-related agreements on classroom size reduction, \$80 million for deferred maintenance and small capital projects, \$80 million for turf, track and stands, \$15 million for the new aviation facility, \$20 million for unseen cost escalation, and \$37 million for remaining projects left over from the last bond measure list. \$101 million remains to be allocated, assuming the board



agreed with the foregoing staff recommendations.

There was a division among members over whether projects would be prioritized solely by the equity consideration ratings supplied by their consultant or be more evenly distributed across the trustee areas. There likely will be some significant compromises ahead.

kaybertken752@gmail.com

Transportation

by Terri Figgs



Fresno Council of Governments (COG) is conducting a community outreach effort through October 31 to gather transportation project suggestions from our region's residents to be included in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) being developed for 2026.

Already completed was a Public Opinion Survey during July and August. A telephone survey comprised of 604 completed surveys and an online survey of 433 respondents, have been reviewed. Analysis of both surveys showed that preserving farmland, supporting a robust economy, investing in existing communities, and safeguarding clean air proved to be especially important to all who responded.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey at planfresno.com, then click on Take the Survey. It is currently available in English and Spanish.

One of our League's co-presidents took the survey and offered these comments for inclusion in any policy document governing the development of the final project list:

- ◆ A commitment to infill development. Reinstatement of County developer fees to disincentivize residential construction projects outside of established communities.
- ◆ A commitment by city and county agencies to a vehicle replacement program that transitions fleets to electric vehicles.
- ◆ Creation of an inventory and map of existing EV charging stations and support for expansion of their availability in all parts of the county.
- ◆ Development of comprehensive bike lane plans within each of the county's incorporated communities. The city of Fresno is developing bike lanes, but in a disjointed fashion.
- ◆ A commitment to the greening of our urban streets.
- ◆ Provision of connected public transit services to our airport and train stations.

COG hopes to engage further with the community through making the online community survey available in Punjabi and Hmong. It also plans to ask member agencies, transit agencies, the RTP Roundtable membership and community organizations to share social posts, emails, flyers with their contacts. COG hopes to set up booths at community events across the county and present virtual and in-person workshops to share the RTP Update and the survey opportunity

COG will forward all project suggestions to corresponding local agencies for review and consideration prior to the RTP project submittal's due date of December 1, 2024. The list of projects and location mapping will be available to the public on Fresno COG's website on or before November 15.

The goal is to have a draft plan available for public review in January and a final plan and adoption in May 2025.

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An unexpected revelation

Editors note: I was surprised to read this obituary in the New York Times. It was shocking to think that one of our leagues behaved like this. I can only hope it wasn't more widespread. The obituary was very lengthy but I'm only re-printing a small excerpt from the beginning

Sybil Haydel Morial, an activist who was also the matriarch of the most prominent civil rights family in New Orleans, died on Sept, 3 in that city. She was 91.

Morial was the wife of Ernest N. Morial, known as Dutch, who was the city's first Black mayor, and broke down numerous racial barriers. Their son Marc Morial, currently president of the National Urban League, was also mayor, from 1994 to 2002. As a civil crusader Ms. Morial took up the fight for equal rights at a critical time of change and resistance in the city where she was born and raised.

Excluded from the League of Women Voters in New Orleans in 1961 because of her race, she formed her own voting rights group, the Louisiana League of Good government.

"That shut door was an epiphany for me," she wrote in her memoir, "Witness to Change."

STATE PROPOSITIONS

Proposition 2: Issues \$10 billion in bonds to fund construction and modernization of public education facilities; gives the offender the option to participate in drug and mental health treatment

Proposition 3: Repeals Proposition 8 and establishes a right to marry

Proposition 4: Issues \$10 billion in bonds to fund state and local parks, environmental protection projects, water infrastructure projects, energy projects, and flood protection projects

Proposition 5: Lowers the vote threshold from 66.67% to 55% for local bond measures to fund housing projects and public infrastructure

Proposition 6: Removes involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime from the state constitution

Proposition 32: Increase minimum wage to \$18 an hour

Proposition 33: Repeals Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act

Proposition 34: Requires health care providers to spend 98% of revenues from federal discount prescription drug program on direct patient care

Proposition 35: Permanently authorizes a tax on managed care organizations to fund Medi-Cal programs

Proposition 36: Increases drug crime and theft penalties and allows a new class of crime to be called treatment-mandated felony, which gives the offender the option to participate in drug and mental health treatment

FRESNO COUNTY PROPOSITIONS **only those will appear on your ballot that are for your own voting district**

Central Unified School District: Measure X, School Improvements Bond Measure \$109 million

Clovis: Measure Y, Public Safety and City Services 1% Sales Tax

Clovis Unified School District: Measure A, School Improvements Bond Measure \$100 Million

Coalinga: Measure J, Renewal of 1% Sales Tax Measure for 14 years

Dinuba Unified School District: Measure D, School Improvements Bond Measure \$42 million

Fig Garden Fire Protection District: Measure N, Board of Directors Membership Measure expanding to 5 members

Firebaugh: Measure V, City Clerk as appointive office

Firebaugh: Measure W, City Treasurer as appointive office

Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District: Measure F, School Improvements Bond Measure \$25 million

Fresno: Measure BB, Ashlan-Hayes land Annexation Measure

Fresno Unified School District: Measure H, School Improvements Bond Measure \$500 million

Huron: Measure Z, Mayoral Term Limits Measure 4 years

Kingsburg Joint Union High School District: Measure K, School Improvements Bond Measure \$20 million

Laton Joint Unified School District: Measure L, School Improvements Bond Measure \$9,700,000 million

Parlier Unified School District: Measure P, School Improvements Bond Measure \$14,100,000 million

Sanger Unified School District: Measure M, School Improvements Bond Measure \$175 million

Sanger: Measure R: renewal of 0.75% sales tax

Sierra Unified School District: Measure U, School Improvements Bond Measure \$24,150,000 million

State Center Community College District: Measure Q, School Improvements Bond Measure \$698 million



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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.

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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