



The Fresno VOTER

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Calendar

Tuesday, March 16

Regular Board Meeting
5 p.m., League Office

Saturday, April 17, Annual Meeting, 9 a.m.

Speaker Eddie Aubrey
Independent Police Auditor
Stone Soup
Community Room
See flyer inside

Sat-Sun May 15-16

LWV Leadership Council
Sacramento

Tuesday, May 18

Regular Board Meeting
5 p.m., League Office

Program planning meeting yields results for national and local focus

by Francine Farber

Spirited discussions calling for advocacy for different points of view made for a successful and league-like Program Planning Meeting on February 20.

Each year local leagues meet to prioritize local issues, and in alternate years do the same for either state or national issues. This year the focus was on local and national concerns.

Led by Vice President for Program Planning Georgia Sisson, the meeting featured members describing current national and local positions in the areas of government, natural resources and social policy. Unlike previous years, the LWVUS asked local leagues to select only one priority issue.

After large and small-group discussions, members voted to notify the national that our priority issue was

**Program Planning Results
at a Glance**

Selection for LWVUS update
Campaign Finance Reform

Selections for LWVUS focus
Charter Schools
Transportation
City Charter Section 1504

Campaign Finance charter schools.

Reform. This resulted largely from the recent Supreme Court decision that removed limits from corporate donations to political campaigns leading up to elections. A close second was the request for the LWVUS to update its education position to include

On a motion from Vice President for Administration Kay Bertken, it was decided that rather than select one or more local priority issues, the group would select three areas for which it would engage in education for members and the community.

(Continued on page 4)

President's Message



New Members

Robin Duke
1168 West Sample
Fresno, CA 93711
439-5060
duk1duchs@comcast.net

My husband and I are retired. I have been involved with Poverello House since 1990 and am a board member of the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association. I am also a board member of the North Fresno Lions and help at Stone Soup Coats for Kids. Bill and I have 6 children and 13 grandchildren. We like travel, movies, reading and entertaining friends.

Annabeth Palacios
6061 North Millbrook Ave.
Fresno, CA 93710
439-5114
annabethp@hotmail.com

I grew up in Illinois but moved to Fresno in 1964 and graduated from CSUF. After 25 years as a medical technologist at the Fresno VA, I became lab director at Fort Defiance Indian Hospital on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. Now retired, my husband and I enjoy living in Fresno with its diverse cultural population and generally mild climate.

New address
Tracy Pepper
1700 Dairy Avenue, Apt. 127
Corcoran, CA 93212

New e-mail address
Betty Cornelisen
Bcorn12@aol.com

You never know when you'll learn more about women suffrage history. In February Murray and I took a three-day bus trip to Reno with other sports fans to watch the Bulldogs play (and unfortunately lose) to the Nevada Wolfpack at Nevada. Our host visited the local Historical Society and brought back a newsletter that he passed around. Surprisingly, it carried an article titled "Woman Suffrage Comes to Nevada."

In Nevada the suffrage heroine was Anne Martin, educated at the University of Nevada and Stanford. She established the History Department at the University of Nevada in 1897 and in 1918 was the first woman to be nominated for the United States Senate. She lost in the subsequent two elections.

Anne Martin led the Nevada Equal Franchise Society which supported an amendment to the Nevada Constitution enabling woman to vote. First it had to pass the Nevada legislature. A newspaper article in 1911



prior to the vote indicated the prevalence of "dirty" politics. It quoted Senator Miller, who stated "while he was never an enthusiast along such lines, he believed that the votes of women will be a lot cleaner than some he could mention." Assemblyman Cole of Nye noted that by giving the women the vote, politics are subject to sanitation. His remarks were greeted by applause. Senator Gault added that the hand that rocked the cradle rocked the

world, and announced his support of the measure.

After the amendment passed the legislature, Anne Martin traveled thousands of miles over primitive Nevada roads to encourage voters to act in its favor in the general election of 1914. The amendment won 10,936 to 7,258. Women first voted in Nevada in 1916.

Now here's a surprise. In later life Anne Martin opposed the League of Women Voters because of its focus on education rather than activism.

Francine

★ **STATE REDISTRICTING NEWS** ★
★ Congratulations to League members Vickie Haas, Bob ★
★ Merrill, Mary Savala and Howard Watkins. They are among ★
★ the reported 30,000 California citizens who volunteered to be ★
★ on the state's 14-person redistricting committee. The process ★
★ continues. We will keep you posted. ★
★ ★

LWV Leadership Council

May 15-16

Sacramento

An opportunity for current and future leaders and members to broaden their understanding of the League and attend informative workshops.

Interested?

Call 226-5455



69th Annual Meeting of the

*League of Women Voters
of Fresno*

Saturday, April 17, 2010

Community Room, Stone Soup

**Featuring our Luncheon Speaker
Independent Police Auditor Eddie Aubrey**

Agenda in Brief

- 9 a.m. Continental Breakfast**
- 9:30 Business meeting**
 - Directors' Reports**
 - Adoption of new budget**
 - Adoption of local program**
 - Recommendations to LWVUS**
- 10:45 Election of Officers and Board**
- 11:00 Werner Lipton Award**
- 11:30 Luncheon and Speaker**



No Charge for Business Meeting Only
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Lunch Fee includes continental breakfast

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1345 Bulldog Lane * Fresno, CA 93710

Program Planning

(Continued from page 1)

The three areas of focus were Charter Schools, Transportation and Section 1504 of the City Charter.

Charter Schools

Recognizing the increasing prevalence of Charter Schools and their significance in our community, members want to educate themselves and the community on how they work and whether they are working well. Kay Bertken, our Education specialist, has volunteered to take the lead in this focus area.

Transportation

John Donaldson, the Transportation expert on our Board, pointed out that our transportation position has been in place since 1987. Since that time there have been a number of changes, including high speed rail, that need to be factored in to our thinking. He will take the lead in this focus area.

City Charter Section 1504

At League's last update study of the

City Charter concluded in 2006, our Board was unable to come to consensus on this section of the charter which currently mandates an increase of two council members when the City of Fresno population reaches 540,000. We are expected to surpass this number by 2012. In selecting this issue for focus, our members are interested in providing information to the public on pros and cons since it is going to be on our June ballot as an initiative. Vice President for Voter Services Liz Shields will be leading this focus area.

After approval at our Annual Meeting in April, these three areas will be opened up to membership and the public in a number of ways. These may include panel discussions, Lunch & Learn workshops, media articles, and other venues. Members interested in one or more of these areas should contact Kay Bertken, Liz Shields and John Donaldson to learn how they can participate.

Nominees Sought for Lipton Award
 This Annual LWVF Award is for an outstanding community volunteer, not a League member, whose civic dedication and work exemplifies the service performed by the late Werner Lipton. To nominate someone, please contact any Board member or e-mail fmfarber@hotmail.com. Nominations are due by March 15.

*****Consider Convention*****

Atlanta * June 11-15



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Legislation

By Terri Figgs



Health Care

In January the California Senate passed historic reform legislation, SB 810, that calls for sweeping changes in the financing of health care. Next, the bill is assigned to the Assembly Health Committee.

In the coming weeks we will find out when the bill is scheduled for a hearing. According to the official Assembly calendar, SB 810 must pass the Health Committee by July 2. Then it will be sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing. **It must pass Appropriations by August 13. Finally, it must pass the full Assembly by August 31, at which time the bill is sent to the Governor.**

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (from the Sacramento Bee)

A proposed initiative to suspend California's landmark legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emission has been cleared by the secretary of state's office and signature collecting will begin.

Opponents have argued that AB 32 would be extremely costly to businesses and take a heavy toll on the state's economy. The proposed initiative would suspend the state's greenhouse-gas reduction requirements until California's unemployment rate, currently above 12 percent, falls to 5.5 percent or less for four consecutive quarters.

San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Update

In year four of the Blueprint process, regional planners are grappling with how to change decades-old development patterns and put more people on less land. They are also mindful of incorporating Senate Bill 375, enacted in late 2008, that requires local agencies to provide for greenhouse-gas reductions in long-term housing and transportation plans, and promises more state funding in those areas for those who comply.

The next step in the Blueprint process is scheduled to get under way this month when a consultant starts work on a "toolkit" of planning techniques aimed at helping local agencies implement the Blueprint guidelines.

Some examples: Model zoning codes, case studies showing how other communities have handled similar planning issues, and a primer on legal issues. The work is scheduled to be completed in October.

From the Planning and Conservation League Newsletter

Senator Fran Pavley introduced SB 918 which is currently co-sponsored by the Planning and Conservation League and Water Reuse California. This bill would help improve the availability of safe recycled drinking water by requiring the Department of Public Health to develop and adopt uniform health standards. **If passed, the bill will help California develop a new drought-proof source of safe, clean water.**

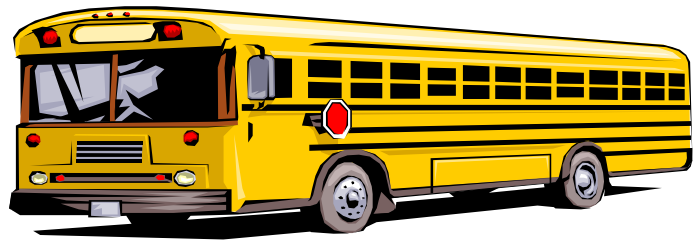
Every year, California discharges nearly 4 million acre feet of used water into the ocean - more than the State Water Project delivers to the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and Southern California. Much of that water could be recycled, but because uniform safety standards have not been adopted, the permitting and design processes for creating recycling facilities are unpredictable, discouraging local communities from tapping into this major water source.

By adopting uniform health criteria for using recycled water to augment local drinking water supplies, the Department of Public Health can provide project designers with the guidance they need to cost-effectively create new water recycling facilities that are fully protective of public health.

Opposition is growing to a bill in Congress to reward Central Valley agribusiness for recent bad decisions. Even with full knowledge of the current drought, these corporations actually increased planting of almond trees over the past four years - some of which could not be sustained due to limited water supplies. House Resolution 4225 would subsidize the corporations to replant the lost trees. The bill also includes a troubling provision that would exempt the corporations from traditional cost sharing requirements applied to all other water users. This giveaway of taxpayer money is being opposed by organizations including PCL, the Sierra Club California and Friends of the River.

Education

By Kay Bertken



The Fresno Unified School Board has tackled some volatile issues and faced well-organized opposition in the last weeks. It approved a charter school plan for Dailey School on a 6-1 vote, and it postponed the selection of a site for the new Southwest Fresno Middle School. **The Dailey School charter brought out a large, vocal audience with teachers and union representatives speaking in opposition.** Members of the Southwest Fresno community were well represented when the Board heard the Facilities staff recommendation for a preferred middle school site in West Fresno.

Charter Proposed for Dailey

Dailey Elementary School has been closed for several

years. It is located in the Fresno High area and enjoys strong and loyal neighborhood and alumni



interest. Meetings with these interested supporters a couple of years ago elicited a recommendation that Dailey reopen as an elementary magnet school that would feed into the International Baccalaureate program at Fresno High. The IB program is a rigorous academic program that adheres to an internationally recognized curriculum and diploma.

Charters Benefit from Fewer Rules

At the same time a plan for the Dailey campus was due, the District was experiencing pressure from various charter school organizations to find sites and open schools in Fresno Unified. While charter schools are free to students and supported by public

funds, charter school legislation releases these schools from many of the restrictions that are perceived to limit experimentation in our public schools: they are run by their own boards; they are not necessarily union represented and do not necessarily have to hire credentialed teachers. **They are, however, accountable to the State and school districts that charter them.** California's Proposition 39 gave these schools a further boost by allowing charter schools to take over unused public facilities and requiring that districts support those facilities. Charter school organizations were looking carefully at the unused Dailey campus.

Fresno Unified has had mixed experience with charters. Some, like University High School on the campus of Fresno State, have been very successful. Others have had troubles and not served Fresno students well. The District has closed several failing charters in the last few years and has become much more careful in granting charters to applicants.

With that mixed experience as background, FUSD proposed forming its own non-profit to open and run a charter, a novel step for a school district.

Teachers Union Opposes Plan

The teachers who spoke against the proposal complained bitterly about it and claimed the proposal was a union-busting effort. An additional and more emotional complaint against the proposal was the IB inquiry-based learning approach proposed for Dailey. Teacher after teacher complained that their teaching options were severely limited by the district's scripted lessons. They felt they and their students were being seriously disadvantaged by FUSD at the same time that freedoms were being distributed to a newly constituted school, students and teachers.

New Middle School for Southwest

The school board generally rejected the FTA arguments and approved the Dailey charter recommendation. At the very same Board meeting the trustees heard their facilities staff make a recommendation for a middle school site in southwest Fresno. The board determined in open session nearly two years ago that it was committed to building a neighborhood middle school in West Fresno and ending the 30 year busing of West Fresno students out of their neighborhood to middle schools all around FUSD. West Fresno groups had been lobbying the Board to choose a property near Edison, Computech and the Hinton Community Center. Unfortunately, that site was inside the West Fresno Elementary District. **Negotiations failed to generate any solution.** All of the other involved agencies opposed any acquisition or land swap that would have allowed for FUSD use of that site.

Difficulties with Proposed Site

The District recommended the only other parcel that could be acquired and built on with little complication. The downsides of that property were also considerable. The site was near a rendering plant, an auto-dismantler and a Foster Farms plant. **Additionally, the proposed site at California and West was not as centrally located as the neighborhood residents desired.**

Neighborhood opposition at the Board meeting influenced the trustees to postpone any decision until after a meeting in the West Fresno neighborhood to share more information. All possibility of acquiring the West Fresno District site was put to rest at that meeting by County Superintendent Larry Powell. Neighbors are left to determine what other options they might support. The California and West site still has vocal opposition.

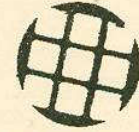
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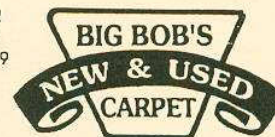
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NONPARTISANSHIP: The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

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.

TO PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS: For more information, please leave your name and phone number on the League message phone, 226-8683, or contact our **Membership Chair, Dolores O’Neal at 435-1185**. Prospective members receive one issue of *The Fresno Voter* free.

JOIN US! Members receive newsletters from national, state and local Leagues, may access local, state and national League websites and list-serves, and may participate in League studies of issues.

Yearly Dues Individual - \$60 ~ Family - \$90 (2 members, same address) ~ Student - \$30

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