



Phone: 559-226-VOTE

Web site:  
<http://fresno.ca.lwvnet.org>

# The *Fresno* **VOTER**



**Tuesday, August 18**  
Ice Cream Social, 7 p.m.  
Home of Jacquie Canfield  
3597 W. Loma Linda  
Fresno

**Tuesday, August 25**  
Regular Board Meeting  
5 pm., League Office

**Monday, September 21**  
(note date change)  
Regular Board Meeting  
5 p.m., League Office



## Ice Cream Social

**Tuesday, August 18, 7 p.m.**



- ◆ **Women's Equality Day Award to Kerri Donis, Fresno Fire Chief**
- ◆ **Scholarship Winners from FCC and Fresno State**
- ◆ **Silent Auction: Call Patty to make a contribution: 472-3018**
- ◆ **Lots of Ice Cream**



**Home of Jacquie Canfield**

**◆ 3597 West Loma Linda, Fresno**



\*Going West on Herndon, turn right at Valentine.

\*Take the roundabout heading back towards Herndon and turn right on the Herndon frontage road.

\* Go past Forkner Elementary.

\* The road bends to the left and right—take the left bend --the road has turned into Charles.

\* Take the second left which is Loma Linda. Lost? Call 352-9731

# President's Message



I am so proud to be a member of the League of Women Voters. This organization, born out of the women's suffrage issues, carefully built upon the idea of thorough study of issues, truly grass roots in nature, and a goal to work for the common good, attracts the brightest and best members who are willing to work to achieve that goal.

Members of our new Voter Service Committee have been busy with an expanded schedule of voter education and registration aimed at high school seniors. They recently endured the sizzling heat registering voters at a large 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration thinking "what could be more appropriate on Independence Day." They are currently looking into other events where they could do voter education and registration, particularly in areas of the community where there is a low level of political engagement. They have great passion for their service.

One of our new board members is knowledgeable in social media and is eager to train other board members on its uses. It should allow us to reach many more individuals and groups with our message. It could also be a valuable tool to help increase membership by reaching younger people and also more culturally diverse groups. I am pleased and proud that we are taking this next step.

Water is a huge and complex issue being addressed by a few of our very talented members whose efforts have drawn the attention of LWVC; as a result, one of these members was appointed to the LWVC Water Committee. The Central Valley with its extremely serious water problems is well represented at the state level.

There are many other issues our League is working on, such as transportation, General Plans, land use, education, climate change and mental health. Many talented, passionate, dedicated League members are working within the goals and guideline of our great organization for the common good for all of the area residents. I could not be more proud.

*Nyla*

**The VOTER is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno**

**Mailing Address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710**

**Volume 74, No. 8 Editor: Francine Farber**

## Member News

**Please note changes in your roster**

We are now a 501 (c) (3) so all dues and donations are tax deductible and also much appreciated. Make checks out to LWVF and send to

**Treasurer, LWVF**

**1345 Bulldog Lane**

**Fresno, CA 93710**

## We need you!!!

**Your League is planning voter outreach through high schools, colleges, and minority groups. You can volunteer for a day, a week, or permanently.**

**Training and a partner available.**

**To volunteer or for more information contact**

**Marianne Kast**

**at 270-7937 or**

**fourkasts@gmail.com**

## Get Ready!!!

**75th**

## Anniversary Gala

**April, 2016**

**Want to help?**

**Have some suggestions?**

**Call Francine**

**226-5455**



Dane and Bob Merrill attended the LWVC Water Committee meeting in Sacramento on July 14. Diane and Bob gave an overview of Fresno County water issues, especially those related to rapidly declining groundwater levels, including well failures, land subsidence, poor water quality, and disproportionate negative impacts on small farmers, individual well owners, and disadvantaged unincorporated communities. They highlighted the importance of the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater

Management Act of 2014 to Fresno County and encouraged LWVC to take an increased interest in groundwater matters.

Their overview also informed water committee members of the our League's sustained effort against leapfrog development and urban sprawl, including the Friant Ranch lawsuit. They highlighted LWVF's advocacy for effective land use planning that provides for the sustainable and judicious use of pre-

vious natural resources, including water. There is a direct connection between sound land use planning and a sustainable and well-managed water supply.

The Merrills also argued for including groundwater storage as a beneficial use of surface water during wet years. Recharge of local groundwater basins is important if sustainable management of groundwater is to be achieved in the Southern San Joaquin Valley. Recharge needs to be accomplished in a way that does not diminish water flows that are essential to protect the environment.



## *Behavioral Health*

By Francine Farber



The Behavioral Health Board received a draft of the voluminous three-year Mental Health Services Act Three Year Plan covering years 20014-17. The public can provide input into the plan, posted on the Department's website, for 30 days. It will go to the Board of Supervisors for approval on September 22. The Plan contains detailed work plans, workforce education and training program, a section on capital facilities and technology needs, and budget and fiscal details.

Department Director Dawan Utecht noted that the new Rural Triage program will receiving matching funds from SB 82 and the Police Chiefs Association. The program embeds mental health professionals together with rural law enforcement as well as expanding the program we already have in Fresno. She also noted that the new Kingsburg Healing Center will add 44 mental health in-patient beds to the County. Plans

are going forward for the Multi-Agency Access Program which provides a central screening for mental health and substance abuse needs as well as housing and other social services.

**The Behavioral Health Board approved its new Vision and Mission statements, which appeared in draft form in the Voter last month.**

A program presentation was made on the Urgent Care Wellness Center. The Center employs 17 clinicians, 6 case managers and two field law enforcement personnel. Ten of the clinicians were hired recently to boost the provision of timely services. Although the Center is designed for Medicaid users it will not turn away anyone who requires a consultation and referral for an appropriate treatment facility. A number of varied wellness groups are open to all patients in treatment at the Department of Behavioral Health. The program provided 480,000 units of service last year. Amazingly, the response time to an urgent need is same day. Non-urgent cases are usually seen within a week.

## Education

by Kay Bertken



School is out, and the FUSD Board is on its summerbreak, but that does not mean that activities and controversies are not ongoing. Internally, the District is in contract negotiations with its employees. At their sixth negotiating meeting in early July, the FTA and District differed substantially in their proposals. The FTA is asking for an 8% salary schedule increase plus a 2% one-time payment. The district is offering a 4% ongoing increase plus a 2% one-time payment. The other major separation involves the District contribution to employee health care. The District is offering

to add \$3 million; FTA is requesting \$11million.

### Lease-leaseback controversy

On a more public front, the District is still defending its lease-leaseback contract with Harris Construction for the building of Gaston Middle School and its general use of Lease-leaseback contracts. Our League has encouraged District leadership to be more transparent and provide more information about these contracts in answer to the insinuations of insider deal-making and illegal and excessively expensive building contracts. The District has now

posted extensive information about all of its lease-leaseback contracts on the District website, and the Superintendent has held a press conference.

### Contracting under appeal

FUSD has appealed to the California Supreme Court to review the appellate court decision that found provisions of the Gaston contract illegal. The provisions of that contract were not substantially different from lease-leaseback contracting done by districts all over the state. This is not a uniquely Fresno issue. While the state Supreme Court considers the case, districts all over the state are having to reconsider millions in building contracts.

## Health Care

by Richard Bertken, M.D.



“Obama can give you an insurance card, but he can’t make you an appointment.” So goes the common wisdom of professional observers of health care in metropolitan Fresno. What ails our local care are the related problems of inadequate professional health care manpower and poor organization. While this is a national problem, it is particularly intense in the greater Fresno, where we have far fewer primary and specialist physicians per capita than nearly all the developed world, including our own nation and state. An excellent report card on Fresno’s health care scene is a 2009 article by the California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF), in which our region is described as “one of the poorest communities in California, sometimes referred to as “the Appalachia of the West.”

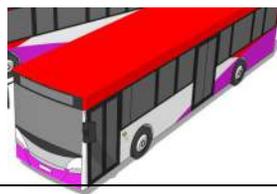
This report (go to <http://www.chcf.org>, then search Fresno) details the innumerable problems of this five-

county area (Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Madera, Mariposa): higher poverty rates and unemployment than the rest of California and its component metropolitan areas, the largest and ever-expanding income gap, lowest educational attainment, lowest self-reported health status, lowest private health insurance rate, highest hospital occupancy rates with the lowest payer mixes, and the absence of large national employers (forces for health care cooperation and economy). Somehow the major hospitals have remained in the black. But the financial stress has been promoting conflicts and antagonism between the hospitals, most notably seen in the recent fallout between Valley Children’s Hospital and the Community Hospital system. This sad affair led to pointless damage to a fine pediatric training program overseen by UCSF.

A 2004 study done by UC Merced showed an emigration of 500 million dollars in health care out of the

# Transportation

by Stephenie Frederick



## ◆ Cap & Trade Funding.

The first round of cap-and-trade dollars has been allocated. In the "Low Carbon Transit Operations" category, Fresno Area Express received \$249,311 to operate extra buses ("trippers") on certain routes when they are most overcrowded. Clovis Transit received \$36,902 to upgrade bus shelters. The Fresno County Rural Transit Agency received \$69,760 for its electric-bus program.

In the "Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities" category, Hotel Fresno was awarded \$4,800,000. The project will provide 40 affordable apartments out of 79 total in the now boarded-up building in downtown Fresno.

## ◆ High-Speed Rail Heavy Maintenance Facility

Fresno has been the most likely candidate for the location of HSR's heavy maintenance facility. But now Bakersfield has come up with a large piece of land that is already under single ownership, a status attractive to the HSR Authority. To compete, "Fresno Works," a coalition of Fresno public and private entities, proposes use of Measure C funds for the following: A local developer would put up private funds to acquire purchase options on a good location in

Fresno, with the objective of placing the location under single ownership. If the HSR did not build the facility in Fresno, Measure C funds would be used to reimburse the developer for up to \$750,000 in purchase-option expenses. Otherwise the developer would recoup the expenses through sale of the land to the HSR Authority.

## ◆ Measure C "New Technology" Funds

Every year, Measure C taxes are set aside in a special reserve intended to fund new transportation technology projects in Fresno County. To date no such project has been funded; the reserve now contains \$9.4 million and is expected to increase by \$1.4 million per year. The funds have drawn the interest of several entities that propose such uses as operation of rural electric school buses, creation of an institute to study transportation matters, and installation of a personal rapid transit system in the City of Fresno.

## ◆ Transit Service to National Parks

The Fresno Council of Governments has launched two demonstration bus services to connect the City of Fresno with nearby national parks. Travelers may board the Yosemite bus at five Fresno stops for a one-way fare of \$15.00; see [www.yarts.com](http://www.yarts.com) for information. Service to Grants Grove in Kings Canyon-Sequoia national parks has three Fresno stops; round-trip fare is \$15.00; find information at [www.bigtreestransit.com](http://www.bigtreestransit.com).

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## Health Care

*(continued from page 4)*

greater Fresno area to more trusted (or available) major metropolitan areas. In spite of a proliferation of local, small specialty hospital centers, this exodus is likely to have persisted as major urban areas have heightened their recruitment of Valley patients. Meanwhile, the CHCF report further states, "Fresno's safety net is generally considered weak, fragmented and inadequate." Since the loss of state realignment funds due to the Affordable Care Act, our safety net has

grown even weaker. Unlike other California regions, the Central Valley local governments have not been active in sponsoring coordination of health care among the hospitals and the Federally Qualified Health Centers.

The American Association of Medical Colleges predicts a nationwide shortage of about 70,000 physicians by 2025, even though our physician training programs are currently accepting about 10,000 trainees yearly from foreign medical schools and the burgeoning osteopathy schools. It

takes about ten years for an increase in medical school enrollment to be reflected in an increased supply of physicians. So for now we can only increase our supply of health care through organization and innovation.

The California Department of Health Care Services has been tasked with bringing large ideas and federal monies (from the ACA's State Innovation Program) to our chronically warring health care personnel and institutions. We should work to insure that their ideas will be earnestly pursued.

We are grateful to our sponsors for their support in "Making Democracy Work."  
 League members who wish to be sponsors or to secure sponsorship for us, may contact Francine Farber at 226-5455

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*Men and Women of Voting Age Making Democracy Work*

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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 - \$30**

**Please send your check payable to the League of Women Voters, Fresno, with registration form (below), to: LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Suite 4, Fresno, CA 93710.**

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