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The Fresno **VOTER**

Program Planning meeting to develop local and national priorities for League

by Terri Figgs

We look forward to your participation at the annual Program Planning process in February. Program Planning is an important League tool for identifying issues for study. It is an avenue for members to communicate with the leadership and make recommendations concerning program issues. This is how we remain a grassroots organization.

Program Planning
Saturday, February 4
9 a.m.
League Office
All invited
Breakfast will be served

While no special preparation is required to attend this meeting, you can be better informed by looking at *Impact on Issues 2010-2012* online or downloadable from <http://www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues-online-edition>.

This is the current blueprint the League is working with. Local Leagues have the option to propose one new study, or one review and update, or one concurrence, or to make no recommendation. Leagues are no longer being asked to adopt existing programs, although national convention delegates will continue to do so.

We will submit the results of our meeting to the national organization by March 1. After the LWV compiles the responses from throughout the nation, it will draft a proposal to approve a Proposed Program for 2012-2014. This proposal will be posted on the website (www.lwv.org) during April and May. In June, at the convention, a 2012-2014 LWVUS Program Plan will be adopted after debate and discussion. As we are fond of saying: Democracy is not a spectator sport.

Be involved and take that first step in participatory democracy by coming to the Program Planning meeting of our local League. Let's talk about issues that are important to all of us.

Calendar

Saturday, February 4
Program Planning Meeting
League Office

Wednesday, February 8
Lunch & Learn
Solar Energy Panel
11:30 a.m.
Woodward Park Library

Tuesday, February 28
Regular Board Meeting
5 p.m.—League office

Sunday, March 25
Philip Levine in person
Newman Center
2 p.m.
See flyer for details

President's Message



We're looking for a few good women...or men! We need you to nominate yourself or other members to fill a few places on the Board of Directors when current directors' terms expire in April.

If you look at the Board list on page 1 of the Voter, you will see that we have some directors who have specific portfolios, or areas of concentration. Their responsibility is to attend public meetings relating to their area and send out a written report to Board members once a month summarizing their observations and recommendations. Sometimes Board members speak at these meetings as a representative of the League, with the approval of the Board. The written report for the Board is also used to keep membership informed through the Voter each month.

Other directors may not have specific portfolios but may volunteer or receive specific assignments for tasks related to Board activities. These might include assisting with membership, Lunch & Learn programs, special projects and other League events.

Your monthly responsibility would be to attend a Board meeting from 5 to 7 p.m. at our Stone Soup office. We also hope you will attend League events such as Lunch & Learn meetings, (usually 3 or 4 a year), Program Planning in February, Annual Meeting in April, Ice Cream Social in August, and not least, the Holiday Party in December.

What you will receive in return for your service is a great deal of satisfaction. Members know that the League is held in high regard and is credited not only with impartiality, but fairness and integrity. I know that I always feel proud to get this community recognition for our organization. You also get to hone your leadership skills, develop some new ones, and work with some great people. The term is two years.

If you would like to serve, or have a member nominee in mind, please call Georgia Sisson, the head of the Nominating Committee this year, at 439-5418, or e-mail wardandgeorgia@sbcglobal.net. Other committee members are Liz Shields, Terri Figgs and Sue Sheragy. Feel free to contact any of them with your recommendations.

Member News

Please make notes in your roster accordingly.

Change of E-Mail Address

Margaret Johnson
gmj472@yahoo.com

We gratefully accept celebratory and memorial gifts. Your check may be made out to LWVF Ed Fund, and it will be tax deductible.

This month we received generous donations from the following:

Shirley Valett

Your contribution for the Friant lawsuit should be made out to Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter and note Friant Ranch Lawsuit in the memo line.

All donations should be sent to

**Jane Worsley
Treasurer, LWVF
1345 Bulldog Lane
Fresno, 93710**



A Fond Farewell?

Below we regretfully list those members who will be dropped at the end of the month because their dues check has not been received. If this is an oversight, please mail your check by February 20.

Betty Ellsworth	Frances Mosgrove
Louise George	Tracy Pepper
Elanore Kurtz	Margaret Thorburn
Lydia Kuhn	Barbara Varley
Lexy Lambert	Chris Williams

Frances Mosgrove

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

TELL US YOUR PRIORITIES

SATURDAY, February 4

9.am. Breakfast

9:30 Discuss priorities

League Office

NATIONAL CONVENTION

June 8—12, Washington, D.C.

Interested? Call Francine, 226-5455



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Fresno, CA 93705



June Primary Election 2012

Brandi Orth has been selected as the County Clerk replacing Victor Salazar who resigned in January. She has worked for the county for 18 years including 10 years in the County Clerk's Office prior to moving to the County Administrator's Office, We will inform her of our high school voter registration

project in the spring and of the contract that we have with the County for assisting with absentee ballot processing

Youth Voter Registration Project

We are setting dates with Fresno and Clovis high school social studies staff to carry out the high school voter registration project in May. Our Social Media expert Genny Mayhew has designed a separate study to measure the effectiveness of the project that she would like to have incorporated into our classroom presentations, pending approval by the project's coordinator in Washington, D.C. Volunteers are being recruited to help with the voter registration project. Call 298-5183 or email elizs44@yahoo.com to add your name to the list.

CALPIRG's student development coordinator is interested in developing a voter registration project with us for local community colleges and universities prior to the November election.

Associated Students Inc. (ASI) Referendum

The League was asked by Gary Nelson at Fresno State to verify the results of a January referendum on a new executive position within ASI.

American Association of University Women

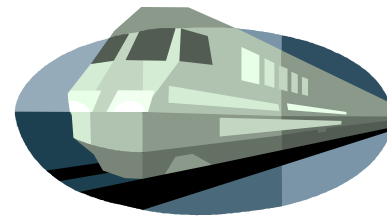
AAUW is trying to restore its Fresno chapter. We discussed ways in which we can collaborate on voter registration and other election-related activities.

Transportation activities are moving forward at all levels. At the County and Regional Level the COG SB 375 Task force grapples with setting green house gas reduction targets. SB 375 strives for GHG reduction to ward off climate change and clean the air through combining land use planning and transportation planning. The primary tools are higher density land uses coupled with more use of non-auto transportation such as walking, biking, or public transportation.



At the State level the California High Speed Rail project is in the news spotlight. A critical vote by the State Legislature looms as a construction start

deadline is fast approaching. The Legislature must allow the sale of bonds to fund the starting segment here in the Valley.



The uncertainty hanging over the legislators is whether the Federal funds needed to complete the project will ever materialize. If they don't, the prospect is for the State to be left with a \$10 billion set of tracks of little value. The anti-HSR forces dub it the "train to nowhere". Control of CHSR effort has passed into the hands of Governor Jerry Brown as a shakeup of the project's top management takes place.

At the Federal level work is focused on hammering out the Federal Transportation Reauthorization Bill. The Reauthorization has been extended eight times by Congress. The current extension expires March 31, 2012. Given the drastic difference between the House and Senate versions of the Reauthorization, agreement is unlikely and another extension is likely.

The level of Federal Transportation spending trickles down to affect all the local and state programs.

“Lunch & Learn” features solar energy

by Diane Merrill



On February 8 we will host a “Lunch and Learn” on large-scale solar projects in Fresno County. The meeting will take place at the Woodward Park Public Library due to anticipated large attendance. This is a timely topic as there are over 30 pending solar project applications before the County, most of which are on agricultural land. The Lunch and Learn speakers will be the Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner and representatives from PG&E and a solar development company.

With the passage of greenhouse gas legislation, the State is mandating that electric utilities obtain 33 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2020. With its abundance of sunlight and large expanses of agricultural land, Fresno County has an opportunity and a challenge to adopt solar energy development policies that benefit the County’s economy and quality of life.

Some of the questions that we hope will be addressed at our panel discussion are:

- What are the criteria that solar developers use in siting a project so that it will be economically viable and receive necessary regulatory approvals?
- Should preference be given to solar projects located near existing electric transmission infrastructure?
- What policies need to be put in place to allow for solar development in a way that is compatible with agriculture? What can be done to mitigate the loss of ag land?
- What criteria should the County adopt to evaluate solar applications on land under Williamson Act contract? What criteria should be used to evaluate requests to cancel WA contracts? Should solar development be allowed without cancellation of the WA contract?

Solar Lunch & Learn
Wednesday, February 8
11:30 a.m.
Woodward Park Library
944 E. Perrin, Fresno
Free and open to the public
Bring a sandwich—
We’ll provide beverages

- What is SB 618 and will it be effective in expediting the exit from Williamson Act contracts on “bad land”?
- Should preference for solar development be given to projects on land that is considered non-prime? On land that has been retired from production due to selenium or other salt build-up? On land that has limited water availability?
- What are the tax benefits or liabilities to the County if solar development occurs on ag land, especially land under Williamson Act contract?
- What are the long and short term economic benefits to the County in terms of job creation and direct and indirect purchases of goods and services?

If you would like more information prior to the Lunch & Learn, documents from the November 17 solar workshop are available at the County of Fresno Department of Public Works and Planning website <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departmentspage.aspx?id=6030> (See information under the third green bullet).

Education by Kay Bertken



Governor Brown's budget announcements contain the most significant education news of the month. In his State of the State Speech he emphasized the need

for new sources of state revenue to help close a \$9.2 billion deficit and avoid even more massive cuts to California schools and social welfare and service programs. He is proposing a ballot measure for November that would boost the state sales tax by one half of one percent and impose a higher income tax rate on individuals earning more than \$250,000 a year. Without the increased revenue, the Governor is foreseeing \$5.4 billion in additional cuts, impacting the schools the most, potentially with a 3 week reduction in the school year.

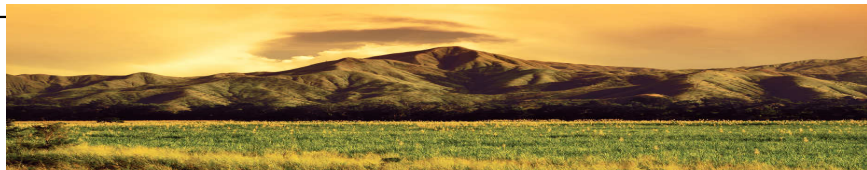
In his speech, the Governor laid out a vision for reforming the State's approach to reduced education funding. He proposed eliminating remaining categorical funding in favor of lump sum payments to districts. Districts with large populations of low income and English Language Learners would get additional funds, an acknowledgment of the increased complexity of serving these students.

Brown's previous proposal to eliminate funding for transitional kindergarten has been opposed by our local League. Preschool programs have been proven to make significant improvements in educational achievement, particularly for disadvantaged students.

The community is invited to submit suggestions for the name of the new Fresno Unified South West Fresno Middle School. The school is expected to open and serve about 1,000 students beginning in the fall of 2013. If you have a suggestion for the name of the new school, you should submit it online at www.fresnounified.org by February 3.

Natural Resources

by Mary Savala



When citizens in opposition to the Jessie Morrow Mountain mining proposal came to the League Board early in 2005, the Board agreed that it would comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposal. League member Radley Reep subsequently prepared a lengthy response to the DEIR, questioning the need for the aggregate resources from the project.

Responses to the comments on the DEIR were issued by the County last December. All comments made by League were dismissed by the County as being irrelevant to the Environmental Review process. We are recommending to the Board that we answer the responses in writing. We also will testify at the Planning Commission and

Board of Supervisors in February that the premise of the need for the resources is based on faulty evidence.

League's position is officially neutral on the proposal, but answering the responses for the written record by questioning the need for this project in this location is, in effect, opposition.

The League Board needs to address the question of answering the County's rejection of our comments, the question of our position on the project, and what other action League might take if opposing the mining.

The proposal to mine has been scaled down to reduce the number of years for the mining permit from 100 to 50 years, to reduce the amount of gravel projected to be excavated, and to miti-

gate the removal of the top of the mountain and its visual impact by mining only the back side of the mountain. Significant impacts on transportation and air quality as well as desecration of the Indian burial site remain impossible to fully mitigate.

LOST LAKE NEWS

The Friends of Lost Lake Park is coordinating a final cleanup of the park's day-use areas on Saturday, February 11 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Volunteers will remove the remaining smaller tree debris and inspect the grounds and picnic facilities for unsafe conditions. Those who wish to volunteer for this February event are asked to leave their names with the Friends of Lost Lake Park (LostLakePark@gmail.com). It may take longer than expected to remove all of the fallen trees. If that should happen, this final cleanup event will be rescheduled for later in the month.

...R. Reep


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League members who wish to be sponsors or to secure sponsorship for us, may contact Francine Farber at 226-5455**



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JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS!

Men and Women of Voting Age Making Democracy Work

MISSION: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues.

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

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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