



Phone: 559-226-VOTE

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

The Fresno VOTER



Wednesday, July 5 , 8:30 a.m.

Housing Committee

Stone Soup see page 3

Friday, July 7, 9:30 a.m.

Civic Engagement Comm.

Stone Soup see page 3

All welcome

Wednesday, July 12, noon

Housing Committee

Stone Soup see page 3

Monday, July 10 (date change)

Regular Board Meeting

League Office, 5 p.m.

Friday, August 18

Board Annual Retreat

see page 7

Tuesday, August 29

Women's Equality Day and

Peterson Scholarship

Celebration see page 4

All members and guests

welcome to all events

League takes bus tour of Fresno parks

by Mary Savala

The League and Building Healthy Communities partnered last month to sponsor a guided bus tour around central city parks. Members and guests, accompanied by Parks and Development staff, visited four old parks in the southwest and southeast sections of Fresno.



Parks staff at the sites spoke with pride about the recreation and social service programs offered by the city and community partners. Frank H. Ball, Romain, Mosqueda and Mary Ella Brown all have community rooms. Ball and Romain have recently refurbished gymnasiums. We were touched to see the walls in the Ball community room filled with photographs of the athletes who played and trained there. Swimming pools at Mosqueda, Ball and Romain are well used, but in need of major refurbishing of their plumbing and structure. Ball is scheduled to get that plumbing renovation, at a cost of \$580,000 out of meager city parks funding.

Mary Ella Brown in southwest Fresno is the most underused facility, with some social service programs, few recreational programs, and acres of drying grass, part of which is city and part the West Fresno School District. Brown is difficult for neighbors to access by foot or bike as users have to cross busy North Avenue and travel long distances from walled off neighborhoods to approach the park from south and west.

Romain, south of Belmont on First Street, is located almost exactly under the SR180 and SR41 exchange. The sound of traffic is deafening and the smell and taste of exhaust very unpleasant, to say nothing of the effect of the emissions on lungs. Heavily used, the park was there first, and then the city and CalTrans planned the freeways. It is an intense example of why schools, playgrounds and housing should never be located so close to freeways.

The four parks have some trees, well trimmed grass badly in need of better irrigation, few benches, no flowers or landscaping, and don't compete well with the appearance of city parks in cooler, wetter climates or in north Fresno and Clovis. Consultants for the city's Parks Master Plan Update have broken costs into three major categories:

(continued on page 4)

President's Message



Last month I attended the LWV California convention in Sacramento. Three jam-packed days reminded me in so many ways why I admire the League. As with any organization that has been around awhile (nearly 100 years!), there are struggles to adjust to changes in our communities, to be relevant in our current society, and to fill the shoes of the League members who walked before us to “make democracy work.”

Some local Leagues around the state are trying to incorporate new members into the work their seasoned members have been involved with for decades. Other Leagues are being pulled by their communities into issues they’ve never investigated before, sometimes in collaboration with organizations whose scope, mission, and style are very different from the League.

As I talked to other delegates at the Convention, I came to realize how skilled our Fresno League is. We have directors who are experts in their portfolio areas. We have a Board that is civil and gets things done. We are fiscally conservative. We have members who are engaged in much more than just League issues, who in their “spare” time advocate for every manner of social change in our county. We are, by many standards, a great League.

Yet, our community still needs so many things. You’ve heard the numbers—one-in-four Fresnoans lives in poverty. Our schools are struggling, superintendents or not. We have serious concerns over water, clean air, land use, adequate housing, shrinking social services, and on and on.

The League has some features that other organizations can’t match. We enjoy a reputation of studied opinions, unblemished objectivity, and dogged persistence. There is no issue in our County that would not benefit from the League’s approach to solutions. We simply need more members who are able to advocate for our local issues.

So, now YOU have a job to do. Do you know of someone who is a potential League member? Someone who is passionate about an issue in our County who would benefit from some League know-how and wants to make a difference? **Ask them to become a member of LWVF!** We promise NOT to come to their door and drag them into service unless they ask for that.

Marianne

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

Mailing Address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710

Volume 76, No. 7 Editor: Francine Farber

Member News

Please edit your roster



New Member

Janet Van Kirk Throne
5132 North Palm, #341
Fresno, CA 93704

NOTICE

In order to conserve our resources, this month you will receive the Voter only electronically.

Beginning in August, you will receive the Voter both by mail and electronically since there is no additional cost for us to do that. That will allow you to read it in color, and in larger type if you desire. We hope you enjoy it.

We cannot send the Voter electronically to some people, and by mail to others, because we will lose our favorable bulk mail rate.

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

LWVF

1345 Bulldog Lane

Fresno, CA 93710

The League is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your dues payments and donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.



Thank You!

Summer Resolution: Join a Priority Committee!

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

We need to use social media to get more and younger people involved in social and political issues. The LWV California will be debuting a new version of the website that we and many other local leagues across the country use. Much of our discussion over the past weeks has been evaluating our site and concluding that it is not engaging enough and doesn't adequately describe what we at the League do. The new site promises to be easier to use, optimized for mobile use, and set up for shared content between Leagues. Meanwhile, we are examining the content of our current site and that of other leagues to get ideas of what we'd like to put on our revised site, available this fall. We also plan to engage student volunteers to assist with our digital presence.



Next meeting: Friday, July 7, 9:30 a.m.

Stone Soup

Chair: Marianne Kast fourkasts@gmail.com

EDUCATION

At our first meeting we determined to concentrate on learning more about charter schools. We collected data about the 15 charter schools operating within Fresno Unified (16 starting in the fall) and held our first lunch and learn with Debra Odom, the Charter School manager for Fresno Unified.



The schools enroll approximately 5000 students and range in size from very small to more than 500 students. Ten of the fifteen charter schools serve students in secondary school. Six offer only an independent study program, with three more offering a combination of independent study plus classroom instruction.

Many serve at-risk student populations and have very high drop out rates and low achievement scores rela-

tive to the district at large. On the other end of the spectrum are University High and Dailey Charter, with many fewer English language learners, students in poverty, foster youth and homeless youth. At risk students are 9.3% for University High and 41.4% for Daily, compared to nearly 90% for the district at large. They also have stellar achievement score profiles.

Teams of committee members will visit the charters in the fall to observe the programs they offer. We will also be holding a second lunch and learn featuring charter school personnel and advocates to better understand their perspective.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 6, 4 p.m.

752 E. Buckingham, Fresno

Chair: Kay Bertken Kayb@csufresno.edu

HOUSING

We are continuing the process of self-education on the topic of affordable housing. We plan to meet with a local affordable housing developer and a journalist from the Fresno Bee as part of this education process. We have been invited to join a local coalition that will meet with Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula to encourage support of current housing legislation. Additionally, we are searching for models of successful affordable housing creation throughout the state to get an idea of how it is done.



Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 5, 8:30 a.m.

Stone Soup: Guest Barbara Anderson, Fresno Bee

Following Meeting: Wednesday, July 12, Noon

Stone Soup: Guest Jim Fusselman, Affordable Housing

Chair: Mariane Kast fourkasts@gmail.com

PLEASE CONTACT THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO JOIN A COMMITTEE.

...and the Women's Equality Day Winner is...

Irma Olguin Jr., CEO and co-founder, Bitwise Industries. She will be our featured speaker at the Women's Equality Day/Scholarship celebration



Tuesday, August 29, 5:30—7 p.m., UC Merced Center, 550 East Shaw . Please join us for complimentary hors d'oeuvres & beverages. Meet Irma and our 10 Peterson scholarship winners. More next issue.

Parks Tour *(continued from page 1)*

- ◆ Maintenance of \$7,700,000 to \$11,000,000 to bring Fresno up to Northern California standard maintenance spending averages (\$7,000 to \$10,000 per acre). Currently the city spends \$2,500 per acre of park.
- ◆ Millions of dollars for refurbishing or major infrastructure of rest rooms, irrigation systems, swimming and wading pools.
- ◆ New parks. A pocket park (.5 – 2 acres) costs \$400,000 to \$1.6 million, Neighborhood parks (2 -8 acres) cost \$1M to \$4M. Community parks (10-15 acres) cost \$5M to \$20M. A regional park, such a Kearney and Woodward (50 to 1250 acres) costs \$50M to \$200M. These figures do not include the cost of land acquisition. New or renovated parks will still require ongoing maintenance, and eventually further renovation.

funding and would be willing to pay if they could be certain of how funds would be spent.



League has joined with Building Healthy Communities to keep the cry of more and better parks before the City's decision makers. Our advocacy has been funded by two generous grants from the California Endowment.

Parks are necessary urban community assets to restore our souls in open, natural places. They get us out and moving our bodies in healthy recreation. They encourage community building in coming together and playing together. Well maintained parks increase our city's attraction for living and working. Last, but not least, attractive, accessible, green, open spaces increase property values.

There seems never to be enough money for parks as they battle for funding with police and fire expenditures. Last year a survey indicated that over two-thirds of Fresno taxpayers and property owners see the need for more parks

SUZANNE MEEK

We deeply regret to inform you that Suzanne Meek, a League member since 2012, passed away on May 23. She had served as a coordinator of the Elementary Multi-lingual Multi-cultural Program for Fresno Unified for many years.

Suzanne was also a Master Gardener and enjoyed traveling abroad.



Recently I spent hours trying to find a primary care physician (PCP) I could recommend to a close friend. None of the sources—the Medical Society, the health systems, the insurance plans, the medical websites—was capable of correctly identifying a physician actively receiving new patients in Northeast Fresno.

Only GPs and Internists

Before 1970, there were no doctors known as primary care doctors or family practitioners. There were general practitioners and there were internal medicine specialists. Confusingly known as “internists,” these latter MD’s completed three years of hospital training and passed notoriously difficult written and oral tests formulated by the Board of Internal Medicine. GP’s might do varying degrees of surgery, pediatrics, and obstetrics. Internists might offer subspecialty services (often without formal training) in cardiology, pulmonary medicine, hematology, or gastroenterology, for example. But the core of their practices was general ambulatory care in response to individual patient symptoms. Preventive or population-based care was not in their portfolio.

Call for preventive medicine

In 1966, a coalition of American public health agencies issued the Folsom Report, which stated the following: “Every individual should have a personal physician who is the central point for integration and continuity of all medical services to his patient. Such a physician will emphasize the practice of preventive medicine. He will be aware of the many social, emotional, and environmental factors that influence the health of the patient and his family.”

Development of Family Practice standards

In response to this clarion call for self-organization of our muddled health care system, the American Board of Medical Specialties recognized the American Board of Family Medicine in 1969, and rigorous training and board exams for certification in Family Practice were established the next year. Most GP’s accepted FP certification on a “grandfather” basis. Over the next decade, all medical schools developed Departments of Family and Community Medicine.

But as “primary care physician” grew as a fundamental key in American medicine, its meaning subtly morphed

from preventative and coordinative to “first line” and “gatekeeping.” Chief among several causes of this decay of the original meaning was the failure of our medical education/training programs to develop a curriculum for comprehensive health care management by a *principal physician*—your doctor-in-chief. This decay was aided by the lack of rapid communication among physicians, by health plans mistakenly trying to control costs by limiting access to specialists, by competition—occasionally hostile—between internal medicine and family practice, and by the lack of adequate payment systems to reward physician managers of patients’ overall health. It is telling that while there are twenty-four national medical specialty boards, there is no American Board of Primary Care Medicine.

Concierge services on demand

The response of PCP’s has been fueled by the difficulty of the job and the low reimbursements. They have migrated at least partially to other specialties—sports medicine, palliative care, medical-legal medicine, occupational medicine, vein sclerosis therapy, and laser hair removal are examples from our own community. Many PCP’s have set up concierge (AKA “boutique”) practices that charge \$1200 to \$2000 yearly per person to provide swift, personal, on-demand office services. They manage 400-750 patients (instead of the national average of 1800) and provide services uncomplicated by billing or the perverse incentives of the fee-for-service model.

Providing incentives for physicians to accept careers as health care team leaders—what I prefer to call principal physicians—is a challenge to any emerging health care system, including California’s renewed plans to establish statewide universal care.

Dr. Bertken may be reached at DrBertken@comcast.net

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Education

by Kay Bertken



The last two meetings of the year for the Fresno Unified trustees were consumed with final discussions and approval of the Local Control Accountability Plan and the budget for the 2017-2018 school year. The two reflect the district's increased state funding based on the nearly 90% count of at risk students (foster youth, homeless youth, English learners and children from poverty level households) and the more than 100 community meetings that solicited community concerns.

Of particular interest were additional proposals made on the basis of the Governor's May revision of the state budget which resulted in almost \$7 million more in ongoing funds for FUSD next year. While the legislature and the governor continued to debate the specifics of their funding decisions, FUSD and the other districts in the state were required to approve their budgets based on some uncertainty before their last meetings of the school year.

Budget includes many new proposals

Highlights of FUSD proposals for the new year include: nurses at all school sites; an expansion of dual immersion programs including planning for a Hmong dual immersion program; a program to specifically target the academic and social emotional needs of the district's African American students, whose academic achievement has consistently lagged other student groups. Other investments involve expansion of elementary school music; subsidizing of SAT, IB and AP testing fees; an increase in the number of social workers and school psychologists; extended library hours, and reorganization and expansion of alternative education programming.

A controversial proposal that was incorporated in the budget was an allocation for part time assistants for each of the Board members. Trustees Davis, DeLaCerde, and Johnson opposed the proposal, which passed on a 4-3 vote. Davis and DeLaCerde have determined not to hire liaisons and have requested that the funds be allocated to an alternative use. Whether that can happen has yet to be determined.

"Go Public Schools Fresno"

Outside of the FUSD Board room, a new organization is coming to Fresno known as **Go Public Schools Fresno**. Diego Arambula, a familiar name in Fresno and a new member of our League, is the local director of this new group which is a spinoff of an organization that began in the Bay Area to improve the schools through policy advocacy and the promotion of candidates for school boards.

The local organization had its community launch this month at the Fresno Community Foundation offices. Initial ambitions for the group include the research and development of a *Choosing Our Futures II* document, describing the current status of our schools and their needs. In addition, "Go" will be developing a Family Leadership Council to engage families and students in its work. Another ambition is to start a school board watch program that will publicize the agendas, discussions and decisions of the local school board.

The following individuals have been appointed by the FUSD Board of Education as community representatives in the search for a new superintendent:

- Larry Powell, Retired FCOE Superintendent**
- Emilia Reyes, Executive Director, First Five**
- Pete Weber, Retired Corporate Executive**
- Blong Xiong, Director, SE Asian Chamber of Commerce**
- Oliver Baines, Councilman, District 3, Fresno**
- Gail Gaston, Nurse, Business Woman**
- Michael Berg, Retired Central Unified Superintendent**
- Benton Johnson, ASB President, Fresno High (student)**
- Tish Rice, President, Fresno Teachers Association**
- Mattie Thomas, Chapter President, CSEA Assn.**
- Diego Arambula, Charter Schools Representative**
- Chuck Riojas, Career Technical Education Representative**
- Carole Goldsmith, President, Fresno City College**
- Joseph Castro, President, Fresno State University**

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Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



During her presentation at the June meeting of the Behavioral Health Board, Department of Behavioral Health Director Dawan Utecht reported that a Housing Assessment Workgroup has met to identify goals, which will be forthcoming. The Board learned that actions taken as a result of the first meeting include

- ◆ emergency temporary lodging for those with a firm housing plan
- ◆ emergency housing for high-risk clients in higher level Board and Care homes
- ◆ examination and evaluation of current supportive housing by an outside firm
- ◆ pursuit of grants for permanent supportive housing through state initiatives.

Additionally, it was reported that the Department will begin evaluating Room and Board homes for “quality of standards” prior to placing them on a referral list for use by

clients and case managers. Through a new master leasing agreement, up to 25 apartments may be subleased to clients of the Department who are actively engaged in services. These are positive steps in providing appropriate housing for clients at all levels of care.

The Program Review for this month was the Horticultural Therapeutic Community Centers, i.e., Community Gardens. This is a Mental Health Services Act Prevention and Early Intervention program that provides culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health education, outreach, and engagement, along with peer support, in a community garden setting, to unserved or underserved populations. Gardeners report a higher level of well-being as a result of the program, citing reduced depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Earlier this month Board members visited the Community Gardens at Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, where they found culturally diverse, supportive staff members and happy gardeners. Concerns expressed by the Board were the lack of eligibility criteria to receive a garden plot and the reluctance of individuals to turn over gardening space, resulting in long wait lists for new gardeners. Additionally, it was noted that tracking outcomes for Prevention programs is difficult and requires longitudinal studies.

Members and guests are invited to our Annual Retreat on August 18 at the Central Valley Community Foundation. While much of the concentration will be on increasing membership, diversification, recruiting younger members and enhancing our activities, there will also be other topics of discussion. The retreat will include our regular monthly meeting and will conclude with lunch.

Look for more information in the August VOTER.



Volunteer with our League on National Registration Day, September 26, to build momentum for the midterm state and municipal elections in 2018. More information to come.

*Mary Perich/Jane Worsley
Voter Services VP's*



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Men and Women age 16 and above Making Democracy Work

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.

Yearly Dues Individual - \$70 ~ Family - \$100 (2 members, same address) ~ Student - Subsidized

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