



The Fresno *VOTER*

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

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Calendar

Election Day
 November 2

Regular Board Meeting
 Tuesday, November 16
 League Office, 5 p.m.

CHANGE OF DATE

Lunch & Learn
 Charter Schools
 Friday, November 19
 Stone Soup, Noon

Holiday Party
 Members & Guests Invited
 Sunday, December 12
 2-4 p.m.

*****SAVE THE DATE*****

SATURDAY
APRIL 2, 2011
LWVF 70th Anniversary

Voter Services responds to election with support and media appearances

by Liz Shields

Voter Services and our many volunteers can breathe a little easier now that our busy season is over. Once again we were asked by the Elections Department to assist with unfolding the absentee ballots in preparation for scanning and to staff the phone bank on Election Day. Thank you to the approximately 60 volunteers who answered my call for help.



Candidate Forums

Thanks also to everyone who participated in the candidate forums that were taped at the Media Center of the Fresno County Office of Education. They were moderated by Jerry Lee, retired from Valley Public Television.

Many candidates took time from their busy schedules to attend. These were Phil Larson and Cynthia Sterling running for County Supervisor, District 1; Paul Dictos and Carole Laval running for County Assessor-Recorder; Oliver Baines and Mike Briggs running for City Council, District 3; Louise Bauer Davoli

and Sal Quintero running for City Council, District 5; Cal Johnson and Vurdell Newsome running for Fresno Unified Area 1; Valerie Davis and Silvia Salcido running for Fresno Unified Area 5; and Henry T Perea and Brandon Shoemaker running for 31st State Assembly District.

Some Races Not Taped

Other candidates for state and congressional races were invited but only one candidate from each race could attend; the League had to withdraw its invitation since policy requires two or more candidates for each forum.

Larry Powell, Superintendent of FCOE, and Jan Biggs, Senior Administrator to the Superintendent, allowed us to use their facilities, and their Media Center staff taped the forums. Our members Pat Campbell, Georgia Sisson and Radley Reep were time keepers and greeters for the candidates.

Forums Aired Locally

The forums were aired on Channel 96, a public education cable channel, from 6:00 pm – 9:30 pm each weekday through October 29. *(continued on page 6)*

President's Message



Nothing makes me prouder than to have people tell me how much they value the integrity and fairness of the League. Well, I guess I'm equally proud when I see our banner and logo displayed publicly. I had this pleasure recently when watching a series of candidate forums on cable channel 96.

Many thanks to Liz Shields, our Vice President for Voter Services, who supervised the taping of seven debates which were shown every weekday night for the two weeks leading up to Election Day. Liz sent out the invitations to the candidates, solicited questions from our members and drafted some of her own, and worked with the Fresno County Office of Education which partnered with us. They provided the use of their audiovisual studio and media specialists to videotape and process the debates, each of which lasted approximately 30 minutes.

In addition, a number of information sessions about the propositions were held for organizations requesting this service. Again, all this is organized by Liz. Our success also depends on the kindness and generosity with their time and talents of so many of our member volunteers.

You can read the details of Voter Services' outstanding work during the election season in the article beginning on page one of this issue.

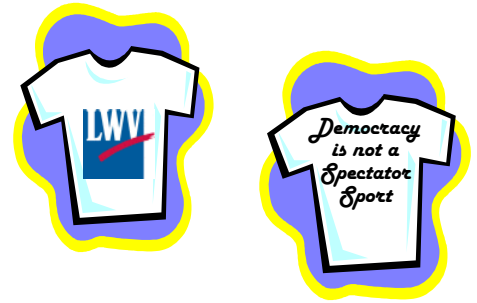
This was a huge undertaking in fulfillment of our mission to encourage the public to be informed and active participants through voter education.

Francine

Generous donations were received this month from Rosemary Hillman to support student unit memberships, Phyllis and Bob Wright, and Lynne Rodriguez.

Member News

T-Shirts for Sale



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Sizes M, L, XL

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New Members

Nancy Glassberg
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432-9606
4chicago419@yahoo.com

Trudi Thom
740 East Buckingham
Fresno, CA 93704
229-9541
tthom@cvip.net

Members and friends are invited to attend a memorial service for Phyllis S. Wilson at the home of Mary Savala on Saturday, November 6 from 2-4 p.m. at 7490 Tole-tachi Road in Fresno

We gratefully accept celebratory and memorial gifts.

If you make out your check to LWVF Fed Fund, it will be tax deductible.

Please send to Jane Worsley, Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710



It's magnetic: high-speed rail in Reedley

by Dennis Manning



Central Transit Associates announced the company has developed a plan in cooperation with the City of Reedley to build a high technology Personal Rapid Transit test facility as the first phase of a system planned to eventually link to other Valley cities.

Initial funds will be sought from the Measure C New Technology Reserve Fund along with grants at the state level and funds from the private sector. Phase I will test the maglev PRT system already under development by the Applied Levitation Company in Goleta, California. *Maglev is short for magnetic levitation; the*

vehicles have no wheels but instead float above the surface and are propelled by magnetic forces as well.

On successful completion of Phase I which is expected to take 24 - 36 months, Phase II envisions a network of the small fully automated vehicles to cover the City of Reedley. Phase III is planned to extend beyond Reedley towards Highway 99 and beyond.

It is Phase III in which the system is projected to pay for itself with private sector investments. The project will be carried out by Applied Levitation and administered by the City of Reedley and the Fresno Council of Governments with Central Transit Associates acting as liaison.

LWVC CONVENTION

MAY 13-15, 2011

CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

VENTURA, CA

*Plan to
Attend!*



Natural Resources

by Mary Savala

A tentative agreement was worked out for the city's sidewalk policy on September 28 by Fresno City Planning and Public Works staff, city attorney's office, League, Medical Advocates for Healthy Air and builders. The issue has been continued a number of times by the City Council, most recently until October 28.

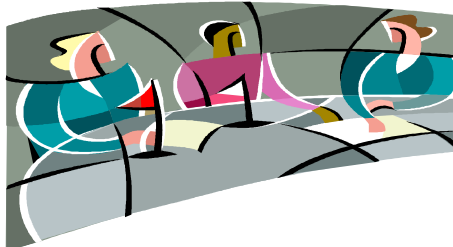
The Citizens Oversight Committee met on October 14 to review the agency budgets for Measure C Extension expenditures in 2010-2011. Audits of the 2007-2008 year were due to the Fresno County Transportation Authority October 15 and will come to the Oversight Committee in December, 2010. Seems like an extraordinarily long time for a citizen review of the actual expenditures of the transportation tax funds. AND the report from the Citizens Committee to the public will be for work of the committee in the year 2010-2011, not published until February 2011, four years after the expenditures!

Budget Actions Preserve Brown Act Provisions

The State Assembly took action to excise language in a budget trailer bill (SB 856) that would have suspended the notice and reporting provisions of the Brown Act.

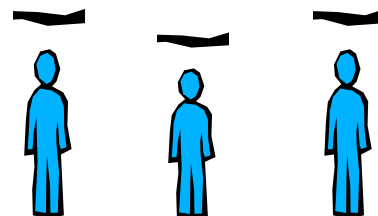
The language placed in SB 856 would have suspended the reimbursable state mandate that requires local governmental bodies under the Brown Act to post agendas and report closed session actions and instead make them “best practices” for local agencies to either follow or not. The move was intended to save the state approximately \$20 million a year.

It appears right now the Brown Act will be funded and in force for one more year. The California



Newspaper Publishers Association staff continues to believe a change to Proposition 59 is needed to permanently protect the Brown Act during times of fiscal stress that would constitutionally require public bodies to notice meetings and require public disclosure of “action taken.” A constitutional mandate would allow the legislature to implement the Brown Act provisions without creating a duty to reimburse local agencies for the costs of compliance.

*Did
You
Know?*



*17 percent
of our members
are men*

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Student Unit

by Diane Blair



Fresno State hosted a gubernatorial debate between candidates Meg Whitman and Jerry Brown on October 2. Unfortunately, most of the campus community was not allowed to attend the debate. What could have been a significant educational and learning opportunity in California politics became a lesson in exclusion instead.

Univision Reportedly Set Debate Rules

Of the 20,000 students enrolled, only 30 students were given tickets to attend the debate. The student paper, *The Collegian*, was also excluded from attending the debate. Student representatives of the university newspaper were only allowed in the press tent outside the event. When the administration was questioned about the lack of student participation in the debate, they explained that the debate's primary sponsor, Univision, set the rules for the debate. When Univision was approached by the Associated Students President, Pedro Ramirez, with a request to provide a live feed to interested students at another location on campus, Univision refused.

Ana Mendoza, one of the student officers for the League, was able to secure a ticket to the debate, and she spoke with President Welty about the exclusion of students from this campus event. He explained that Fresno State received only 50 tickets total, and that 30 of those tickets were given to students. When asked why the event was not held at the Save Mart Center to accommodate a larger audience, his response was once again that Univision had the final say in the arrangements for the debate.

Only One Student Asks Question

What is still not clear is why the administration would agree to allow Univision and the two campaigns to use public campus facilities at university expense when they knew the event would not be open to the public and the campus community. The only student permitted to ask a question of the candidates asked one of the more challenging questions of the debate regarding the candidates' stance on undocumented students and whether or not they supported the federal DREAM Act. At the same time we hear people talk about voter apathy among our youth, an unfortunate message was communicated to Fresno State students at this event: your participation is neither wanted nor needed when it comes to democratic deliberation and debate.

The Student Unit sought to engage students and the campus community throughout the month of October by distributing Easy Voter Guides, tabling at the annual Take Back the Night event, and hosting a Prop Talk on select ballot initiatives for the November election.

Look What's Coming on April 2

LWVF's 70th Anniversary

1941-2011

**70 years advocating good government
in Fresno**

- ◆ Annual Meeting
- ◆ Luncheon
- ◆ Panel Discussion

"The Impact of Modern Media on Government"

Moderator: Jim Tucker, PBS

Jim Boren, Editor, The Fresno Bee

Joe Moore, Exec Prod, Quality of Life, NPR

Dr. Tamyra Pierce, CSUF

Sarah Reyes, California Endowment

Luncheon and Panel: \$35

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***Inside color cover + 2 lunches
\$200***

B&W full page ad + 1 lunch \$100

Black and white half-page ad \$50

Business Card Size Ads \$25

Watch for reservation form next month!

Election Services

(continued from page 1)

Proposition Presentations

Alice Powell gave a presentation on the propositions to Hadassah, while Francine Farber spoke on several propositions on Terry Phillips' program, Quality of Life, on KVPR. I also spoke on Quality of Life regarding some local candidate races.

A Lunch 'n Learn at Stone Soup, attended by a number of non-members as well as members covered the propositions. Other presentations on the propositions were made to a YMCA service group, residents at San Joaquin Gardens and the Windham, and a group at Wesleyan Church.

Easy Voter Guides

Easy Voter Guides were distributed to the County libraries, community centers and retirement homes in the area, and other groups and individuals.

High School Project

We have completed the LWVUS High School Voter Registration project funded by the national League to determine the most effective way to register high school students. It was interesting to note that our classroom presentations last Spring had much better responses than the assembly presentations in the Fall. The administrator of the



project in Washington told me that this was a nationwide phenomenon found by other project participants. Both teachers and students were more enthusiastic in the Spring which may be due to the fact that most of the school curriculum had been covered and testing was complete for the year.

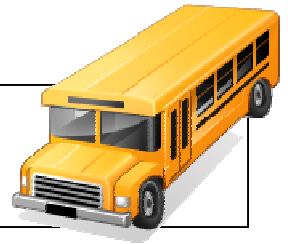
Some teachers don't wait for voter registration drives. Social Science teachers at Sunnyside High School revealed that they give students a "birthday gift" of a voter registration form on their 18th birthdays. This probably explained the low voter registration there since only one student with a birthday in July registered to vote while others told me that they had already received and filled out forms from the teachers.

Early Start

I spoke to 6th grade classes at Yokomi Elementary school about the voting process, held a mock election and urged students to tell their parents and other family members about Measure Q. It's never too young to start.

Education

by Kay Bertken



A broad examination of schooling in the United States was held in New York over a week in late September. All the major names in educational reform were involved in this Education Nation conference. Teachers and students all over the country were incorporated in the conversations through video conferences.

The meetings highlighted a new national focus on the failings of our education system. The ambitious New York conference coincided with the national release of a film called Waiting for Superman. This documentary follows some students in a poor urban district, whose futures are apparently linked to whether they can get out of their neighborhood public schools and into a good charter school.

There is considerable hope invested in the charter school movement by many educational reformers. The opinion on charter schools is mixed at best. We will be hosting a Lunch 'n Learn about charter schools on November 19. Fresno's mixed experience with charters will highlight the issues that surround this movement.


At the Board of Trustees Meeting on September 22, the Board approved a site for the proposed new Southwest Middle School. Finding an acceptable site for this new school has been challenging. The new approved site is across the street from an undeveloped site on the land currently occupied by the Carver Academy, a FUSD school. The Carver School land is not large enough for a middle school so the site will have to be expanded with the acquisition of land north of the campus.

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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Democracy is not a spectator sport

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),
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