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# The *Fresno* **VOTER**

## **Awards and ice cream featured at annual social event** by Francine Farber

**L**eague members and guests celebrated Women’s Equality Day and the awarding of scholarships to eleven Fresno City and Fresno State students on August 24 at the annual Ice Cream Social.

This year’s winner of the Women’s Equality Day Award is Deborah J. Ikeda, just retired as president of Clovis Community College. Previously as the president of Willow International Community College she had led the accreditation effort to start CCC.




**Deborah I. Ikeda**

Ms. Ikeda spoke about the importance of words, and how they can support or tear down another person very quickly. She gave as an example an experience when she was a community college counselor and talked with a young man who had done poorly and was considering leaving. She told him that he was a special person and she knew that he could be successful. Her support led him to continue his education and accomplish his goals. When asked what she had said to him to cause this turnaround, she said, “I said the same thing that I say to every young person who comes into my office for help.”

Ms. Ikeda is active in numerous volunteer positions, including a member of the St. Agnes Hospital Board of Directors, a member of the Citizens Review Panel for Measure B (the library sales tax), the Board of the Clovis Chamber of Commerce, and the Board of the Central California Asian Pacific Islander Women’s organization. Not content with her achievements to date, she is planning to run for office as District 6 representative for the State Center Community College District.

Scholarship winners came with family and friends and each spoke briefly about education and career goals. The winners from Fresno State were Daisy Cruz-Maya, Alexandra Gallo, Victoria Martinez, Rachel Ochoa, Madison Prettyman and Rosa Rosas. Winners from Fresno City College were Ana Lopez, Oscar Aleman Rivera, Elnora de la Rosa Sabroso, Frank Jourdain Solis and Danny Yang. The scholarship committee included Nyla Zender, Kay Bertken, Mary Perich and Liz Shields. Funds for the scholarships were donated by Bette Peterson, book publisher and League member.

A silent auction, the League’s annual fund-raiser, was also part of the evening, as was lots of ice cream. The event was held at the home of Francine and Murray Farber.



**Sunday, September 18**  
**Ballot Issues Presentation**  
**Unitarian Church**  
**Noon—1:15 P.M.**  
**2672 Alluvial**

**Monday, September 19**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
**5 p.m., League Office**

**Tuesday, September 27**  
**Maddy Candidates Forum**  
**Parc Grove Commons**  
**6—8 p.m.**  
**2674 E. Clinton Avenue**

**Monday, October 17**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
**5 p.m., League Office**

# President's Message



Someone asked me recently if the phrase from a song “the crazy, lazy, hazy days of summer was as true for the League as in other organizations who, in some cases, take a month off from meetings and activities.

Well, the answer is yes and no. Certainly the “hazy” is true as we are all plagued by the unhealthy air from which there is no escape unless one is able to travel to a place with cleaner air.

The “lazy” part is most certainly not true. We have been extraordinarily busy throughout the summer. In June, two members attended the LWVUS Convention in Washington, DC and came back with ideas for us to implement. Voter Service volunteers have a busy schedule in place to work on registration, new voter education, speaking on all of the ballot measures and co-sponsoring a mayoral candidates forum addressing such issues as “Parks for All.”

Other League members have been working to increase activities for our members and potential members that include field trips and lunches at a local restaurant to socialize and learn about a current issue. The most recent was a lunch featuring a discussion on “Money in Politics”. We encourage everyone who can to attend these very interesting events and to bring a friend.

A priority selected at Program Planning was a League self-evaluation process. This committee is examining every aspect of the organization, including evaluation of our handbook, our positions, how we choose priorities, the goals, objectives and effectiveness of our major program areas, how we communicate with membership and the public and much more. It should lead to a more effective and efficient League.

It does not appear that “lazy” applies to our League’s summer schedule or, for that matter, any season of the year. We have more going on than listed and so there may be an element of craziness to such an ambitious schedule, but we can be so proud to be members of a relatively small organization of volunteers that give so much to make things right.

*Nyla*

## Member News

*Please Note Changes in Your Roster*

### New Member

**Mary and William Stegall  
9525 N. Ft. Washington Rd.  
Apt. 330W  
Fresno, CA 93730  
530-227-4374  
mistegall@pacbell.net**

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

**This month we have received generous donations in memory of Bob Merrill and Vicki Haas from Toni Eames and Nyla Zender**

**We have received a generous donation in honor of Sue Strauss from Louise Richardson**

**A 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**



**Thank You!**

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

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

**Volume 75, No. 9 \* Editor: Francine Farber**

# Housing

by Patience Milrod



In late November 2015, a gas shutoff to 1,200 tenants at Summerset Village Apartments led to “discovery” of disastrous conditions that city code-enforcement officers had previously documented but failed to correct through actual enforcement. Two weeks later, five Fresnoans died by fire in an abandoned home that, according to a *Fresno Bee* editorial, was “well known to code-enforcement officers,” who had “levied fines against its owners...since 1996 without collecting a cent.”

These two human catastrophes galvanized Mayor Swearingin, who convened a code enforcement task force in January to help her create a systematic, proactive, interior code inspection program for the City of Fresno.

Once implemented, such a program would expose landlords whose business model exploits Fresno’s poorest families. Under this model, the property owner accepts a tenant’s first and last month’s rent and deposit in exchange for shelter where, literally, you would not house your dog.

Why—you might ask—would a family invest so much of its scant monthly income in unhealthy, even dangerous, lodgings? The answer is Economics 101: **Demand** for affordable housing is increasing (there are more poor people; rents are climbing; income for Central Valley workers is growing at a small fraction of the rent increase rate). Meanwhile, **supply** of affordable housing is decreasing (owners are raising rents on existing units; some owners are allowing their units to deteriorate past saving; the city fails to ensure new construction or replacement of units lost to neglect or fire).

Thus, tenants fear a complaint about conditions will trigger eviction, in a market where it is just about impossible to find replacement shelter. Since better units are beyond reach, many families accept housing riddled with health and safety violations—housing that is in fact illegal to offer for rent under California law.

The Mayor’s proposed systematic code inspection program is essential law enforcement protection for such families: identifying scofflaw landlords through routine inspections, and protecting Fresnoans by enforcing state and local health and safety codes.

# Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The Behavioral Health Board received a presentation on the progress of the Drug Medi-Cal Redesign at its August meeting. Drug Medi-Cal funds treatment for clients with Substance Use Disorders (SUD). The State has asked each county to redesign its plan so that access to services and range of services may be expanded, and that payment rates for providers may be increased as necessary. The newly designed plan will encourage greater integration of SUD services with primary care and mental health services. Fresno County is in the early stages of redesigning its plan, and is seeking input from community members to make sure that the new plan will provide services that are accessible and effective for all clients.

The Board reviewed the Outcome Report from the Urgent Care Wellness Center (UCWC). Prior to the meeting, board members visited the program, which is located on the Kings Canyon Campus. UCWC is the “front door” for all Department of Behavioral Health mental health services. UCWC provides an individual with assessment, treatment planning, individual and group counseling, and linkage to community resources. Also, a report was given on the Innovation’s project, Integrated Discharge Team, which now has been incorporated into UCWC, and provides intensive services for individuals exiting crisis facilities.

Harder + Company reported to the BHB about its Housing Assessment and Inventory. It has completed the housing inventory and is moving into the data collection phase, which will include client surveys, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups to determine the housing needs of DBH clients.

Throughout the month, DBH will continue with stakeholder meetings to receive input from the community on the use of funds from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). League members are invited to attend any of the remaining meetings or to provide suggestions by using the DBH MHSA web site.

# Education

by Kay Bertken and Francine Farber



## Next FUSD Board Meetings

Wednesday, September 14

Wednesday, September 28

**A**t its first Board meeting of the new school year, the Fresno Unified Superintendent announced that over 14,000 students had participated in summer school, including 135 students who were then able to graduate from high school. Unlike other districts, Fresno Unified has formal graduation ceremonies for these students.

**Most of the Board meeting was devoted to a discussion of the proposal to place a \$245 million bond on the November election ballot.** The bond would be used to maintain and renovate facilities, including the possibility of a new school in the southeast area; to attract quality teachers through salary incentives; to address infrastructure needs for heating, ventilating, air conditioning, gas, water and irrigation; to address safety and security needs; to enhance arts, activities and sports through facility changes; to upgrade technology; and to address career technical education facility needs.

Trustees Johnson, Ryan, De la Cerda, Davis and Chavez gave unequivocal support to the bond initiative. Trustee Mills had a long list of questions which were responded to by both Director of Operations Karin Temple and the board's bond counsel. At the end, Trustee Mills voted in favor of placing the bond issue on the ballot although she reiterated that her vote did not mean that she was ready to support it personally. **That was not the case with Trustee Ashjian; although he stated that he thought the bond was a great thing, he presented a list of "must haves" before he could support it, including a guarantee that there would be no lease-leaseback provision.** His was the sole "no" vote, so the resolution will be placed on November's regular ballot.

A retired teacher who had complained previously about the board renting Edison auditorium to Hillary Clinton when she brought her campaign to Fresno was told by the Board's attorney that California Education Law has two statutes which seem in opposition to each other. One appears to forbid such rentals for partisan political events. The other encourages schools to be considered as civic resources for the community to be used for activities including political, moral, educational and a list of many other purposes, so long as everyone is treated equitably.

- F. Farber

**P**rompted by Howard Watkins' entreaties in various community forums to focus more attention on the welfare of children "conception to two" I met with Matilda Soria, who oversees many of the Fresno County Office of Education's pre-school age services, to learn about the provision of day care in the County. From offices in First Five's Light House for Children on Tulare, she and other county personnel manage a Child Development Center that offers direct services; oversee a 4 quality grading system for licensed day care centers around the county; offer training for family/ friend daycare providers and provide support and training to all providers to help them negotiate the steps required to advance as an early childhood educator; and they determine the priority day care needs of the county that will direct any available state funding.

**A major concern in the county is the shortage of quality day care. The Tulare site is a beautiful facility that provides day care and enrichment to children aged 6 weeks to pre-kindergarten.** When that program is fully implemented, it will be able to serve just 96 children. There are many quality providers in the county, many subsidized, but the need is also great and private care is expensive.

Matilda is also involved with First Five in a Packard-funded effort to develop better indicators for kindergarten readiness. The current test is given to entering kindergarteners, a bit too late to identify and ameliorate any problems. Currently, all state and federally funded child care centers administer a developmental assessment at least once a year. Unfortunately, that information is not routinely available or utilized by the K-12 system.

**There is a First Five driven initiative involving FUSD and other districts to infuse pre-kindergarten information into the culture of school. The FCOE is also convening a task force to work on improvements in tools that evaluate school readiness.**

Fresno Unified is developing a program to include in its high school sex education curriculum that will address parenting skills and the importance of the earliest years in determining the future of children.

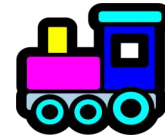
- K. Bertken





# Transportation

By Stephenie Frederick



During the last eight months, the Fresno Bee has published at least three articles about the deplorable state of our local highways and streets – and the lack of funding to repair them.

It may help to know that insufficient funding for street maintenance is a nationwide problem. Americans in general are opposed to raising taxes for road repair. Fresno County has bucked this trend to some extent. We are more fortunate than most because in 2006 Fresno County voters adopted a half-cent sales tax devoted to a palette of transportation matters – most counties have no such measure.

But our roadways are still in terrible condition. Why aren't Measure C Extension tax proceeds being used to fix them?

The Measure C Extension law that voters approved in 2006 consists of five major, complementary transportation programs in addition to a small administrative and planning component:

- ◆ Public transit throughout the county (24% of funding)
- ◆ Street maintenance, cyclist-pedestrian trails, ADA compliance (e.g., scooped curbs) (35%)
- ◆ Freeway interchanges, airports, enhancement of commute corridors (30%)
- ◆ Relocation of BNSF rail line and creation of cyclist-pedestrian trail through City of Fresno on the vacated BNSF right of way (and if rail line relocation is not

possible, construction of underpasses and overpasses to relieve congestion) (6%)

- ◆ Transit-oriented development, school bus replacement (3.5%)

Because the tax proceeds are allocated to each program by law, they cannot be diverted from one program to another without an arduous and highly public amendment process.

Amendment is possible, since fiduciary duties include responsibly reacting to conditions that have changed since voters approved the Measure C Extension. A vigilant citizens' oversight committee monitors Measure C fund revenues and expenditures (the League of Women Voters is represented on this committee).

Since amendment of Measure C Extension is possible, why don't we amend it and spend more on road repair? Our elected representatives are well aware of the street-repair needs.

The problem is funding. Already, by law, a third of the Measure C Extension proceeds are spent on road maintenance. We cannot responsibly take funds away from transit, trails, vanpools, school-bus replacement (program categories designed to reduce air pollution), airports, and accommodations for the disabled – and attempts to divert such funds would be vigorously opposed. Thus there is very little else in Measure C that could be diverted to road repair. The reality is that our transportation needs exceed the proceeds of the present Measure C half-cent sales tax.

<p><b>Sat. Sept 17</b> Constitution Day CSU Fresno, Satellite Student Union 9 a.m.—Noon</p> <p><b>Sun, Sept. 18</b> Ballot issues presentation Unitarian Universalist Church Noon—1:15 p.m. 2672 East Alluvial</p> <p><b>Tues. Sept 27</b> Maddy Candidates Forum Parc Grove Commons Community Room 6—8 p.m. 2674 East Clinton Ave</p>	<p><b>Voter Services</b></p> <p><b>Sun. Oct. 2</b> Voter Registration CenCalVia Open Streets 11 .m.—3 p.m. Ventura St @ Cedar</p> <p><b>Tues. Oct. 4</b> Ballot Issues presentation NWPC 6:30 dinner, 7 p.m. Speak Toledo's 8 367 East Shaw</p>	<p><b>Wed. Oct 5</b> Walk &amp; Roll Candidates Forum * 7 p.m. Bitwise Auditorium, 700 Van Ness</p> <p><b>Thurs. Oct. 6</b> Engaging in Democracy—Panel Stone Soup Parents 10 a.m. speak: 11:15 lunch 1345 Bulldog Lane</p> <p><b>Thurs. Oct. 20</b> Ballot issues presentation Clovis Democratic Club Seven Restaurant, 25 Shaw, Clovis 5:30 Dinner * 6:15 speak</p>
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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**

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