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

# The *Fresno* **VOTER**



Wednesday, September 3

Lunch & Learn

Mental Health

In Fresno County

See flyer page 5



Sunday, September 21

League presentation

UU Church, 9 a.m.

Tuesday, September 23

Regular Board Meeting

5 p.m., League Office

Wednesday, October 22

Lunch & Learn

Mental Health Services

In the Schools

Migrant Ed Office

More info to follow

Tuesday, October 28

Regular Board Meeting

5 p.m., League Office



***Hear Ye,***

***Hear Ye!***

We've been waiting ...  
and hoping... and now it's  
really here!

## **LWVF has been declared an official 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization by the IRS.**

Recently the IRS published information about a three-page stream-lined application to qualify as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit. Thanks to our Treasurer Terri Figgs and the foresight of your Board of Directors, we applied successfully. What this means to you is that donations and membership dues are now tax deductible and we no longer have to make checks payable to LWVUS Ed Fund. What this means to LWVF is that we have the ability to have local control over our funds with less complex accounting.

***Of course, we hope this will encourage increased membership and gifts to our League.***

# President's Message



One would think that in the doldrums of a hot summer, the pace of LWV events would be slowed. Not so for our League.

Recently, and with just a few days notice, we were asked by the new director of Stone Soup to move to the office next door. True to the nature of Leaguers, volunteers moved all but the big, heavy pieces and after they were moved, volunteers came back and put everything away, sorting and organizing as they went. We now have a leaner, meaner but cleaner, more organized, freshly painted, beautiful office, complete with wonderful pictures and award plaques on the walls. We invite you to stop in when you have a chance. It was a hectic but good move for us.

Our advocacy and education activities continue at a busy pace, and along with all of that, we are beginning to focus on the issue of League sustainability in both financial and membership terms. We have already begun to address financial sustainability with the creation of a reserve fund to be more certain of funding our important work. When we attended the National Convention we realized that the issues of an aging membership and a lack of membership diversity are not only our problem but are affecting many Leagues all over the nation. We know that something must be done to ensure that the vision and goals of League can be carried on into the future.

We are beginning to work on a strategy to try to correct these problems, and a first step is to work with Fresno State officials to investigate intern and mentor programs for students. League members have a lot to offer young people of all backgrounds, and we can get the word out about all of the great things we do. We are looking to expand our social networking capabilities to facilitate these efforts. If any of you have thoughts pertaining to these issues, we welcome your ideas.

These are challenging and exciting times, and I hope the League can have a positive impact for the common good, now and for many years to come.

*Nyla*

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

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

**Volume 73, No. 9 Editor: Francine Farber**

## Member News

### New Members

**Marta Frausto**

**1122 West San Gabriel  
Fresno, CA 93705**

**Deborah Kemp**

**2424 East Fir**

**Fresno, CA 93720**

**deborahk@csufresno.edu**

**Connie Young**

**4442 North Van Dyke**

**Fresno, CA 93705**

**225-2547**

**cyoungnr@sbcglobal.net**



to our generous donors for the Carrie Chapman Catt Fund, the Board Leadership Circle, and the Presidents Circle. ***You made our Reserve Fund a reality!***

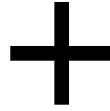
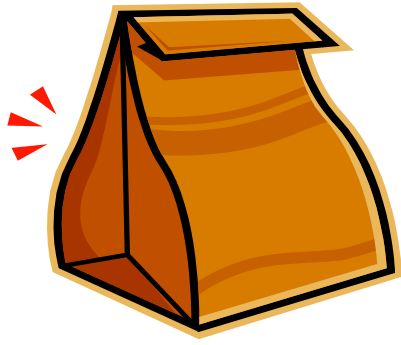
**We gratefully accept contributions for the Reserve Fund, memorial and celebratory gifts. Please remember LWVF in your estate planning. No more separate Ed Fund. All dues and contributions are tax deductible.**

**Please send dues/ donations to Terri Figs**

**Treasurer, LWVF**

**1345 Bulldog Lane**

**Fresno, 93710**



**LUNCH**

**&**

**LEARN**

At the **MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP**

featuring

**Dawan Utecht**

Director, FC Department of Behavioral Health

**Irene Takahashi**

Division Manager, Children's System of Care

- ◆ **Wednesday, September 3 \* 11:30 a.m.—1 p.m.**
- ◆ **Blue Sky Wellness Center Meeting Room**
- ◆ **1617 East Saginaw Avenue, Fresno**
- ◆ **From Shaw, south on Blackstone, right on Saginaw**
  
- ◆ **Free and open to the public**
- ◆ **Bring your lunch**
- ◆ **Snacks and beverage will be served**

Need more info? Call 226-5455



Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Fresno

## *Mental Health*

by Francine Farber



## *Education*

by Kay Bertken



Laura's Law, which has been adopted by a number of California counties, showed its controversial side at the August meeting of the Mental Health Board. **The Law provides for a judge to order an evaluation and treatment of a person who has displayed a serious mental health condition.** If the individual refuses to comply, there is no legal consequence. There is not yet a move to adopt it in Fresno County.

However, advocating for the law, a parent of a son who had been treated and evaluated in New Jersey under a similar law said that her adult son did not realize there would be no consequences, complied with the court order, and has had great personal success. **But a state advocate for the mentally ill opposed such a law because it may infringe on individual rights.** In addition the cost of operating the program may come out of Mental Health Services Act funding but must not be taken away from any current mental health service provided to children and adults. An issue was also raised about the ability of the court system to deal with Laura's Law referrals, both in terms of caseload and financing.

Presentations were also made about two Department programs. The Integrated Discharge Team is an innovative program designed to reduce multiple frequent uses of Emergency Departs, Crisis Stabilization Centers and Psychiatric Inpatient Facilities through use of multidisciplinary resources. Three important factors for clients were determined to be a significant support person or system, a primary care facility, and an identified pharmacy. **These factors helped reduce re-hospitalizations, homelessness, crisis episodes and arrests, with positive effects continuing and even increasing beyond a six-month period.**

The second program presented, Community Gardens, is dispersed throughout the County, serving unserved and under-served families who may suffer from symptoms of early onset non-serious mental illness. The gardens are culture-specific and provide opportunities to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers in a non-threatening therapeutic milieu.

The Fresno Unified School Board is back in session. Many students returned to new buildings or construction projects funded by the 2010 passage of Measure Q. West Fresno students attended their own neighborhood middle school for the first time in 40 years. Demolition has begun for new construction at Bullard, McLane has a new building going in and Hoover's new pool design is at the State Architect awaiting approval. **In addition to numerous other projects, new shade structures have gone up at several middle schools and a gym is going in for the middle school students at Baird.**

Extensive public comment at the first Board meeting of the year concerned the choice of an Anglo teacher to teach the African American history course at the new Gaston Middle School in West Fresno. African American, Hispanic and Southeast Asian speakers all criticized the district for not finding an African American teacher for the course. Southeast Asian parents also voiced their desire for a Southeast Asian history course. The speakers were unanimous in their opinion that students need to be able to identify with their teacher, especially in this course. **Although the hired instructor received public support in the news and opinion pages of the Bee, including from the Gaston family, no one spoke in support of the District's decision at the meeting**

There was a presentation on water saving measures instituted by the district, which has targeted a 20% decrease in its water use. Last year the district used 625 million gallons of water, equating to about 44 gallons per day per student and staff member.

The district is repairing water lines and air conditioning units, most of which rely on water cooled "chillers." It is installing low flow toilets and showers as schools undergo modernization and is looking for ways to retrofit fixtures in all of the schools. **An effort to educate students in water savings and a 24/7 hotline for the public to report any water issues on the campuses have also been instituted.** The district has recently removed water-hungry redwoods from McLane and replaced them with more drought tolerant trees.

The City of Fresno has published its draft general plan update for public critique. The transit section contains two objectives, each with its own set of implementation policies.



A careful read of the transit section reveals that the language is tired, copied from previous years, and replete with phraseology that is often empty of content. In some cases, policies that belong with one objective are placed with the other. Bus Rapid Transit, which should have a prominent place in the transit analysis, receives only a brief mention well away from the section devoted to transit.

Second, and more critical, not a single policy contains performance measures by which to determine progress. This absence indicates a lack of commitment to basic transit service.

An improved transit system is vital to Fresno's well being. In a comparison with five peer transit systems, Fresno scored the greatest number of passenger trips per hour – 50% higher than the average of the six systems! This reveals that there is a large demand for transit in Fresno, which of course is not surprising considering the extent of poverty here. The League recommends that the

city improve its standard transit service to better serve a large transit-dependent population. More funding should be sought, and the city should focus on providing service where the greatest demand exists rather than on trying to provide broad, citywide coverage.

In support of this improvement, the League of Women Voters recommends a thorough revision of transit objectives and related policies in the general plan update. In this "recast" prepared by the League, objectives and policies are correctly matched, reworded policies dominated by action verbs, and – most important – measurable performance indicators appended to all but two policies.

### Proposed Policies by LWVF

- ◆ The city shall allocate 30% of all federal, state, and local transportation funds to transit for capital investment, operations, and maintenance.
- ◆ The city shall impose impact fees on each new development to pay for transit services to the site of the new development.

## WATER BOND NEWS

by Diane Merrill

Legislation was signed by Governor Brown on August 13 to place a **\$7.5 billion water bond** measure on the November 4 ballot. The water bond is numbered **Proposition 1** and allocates the following:

- ◆ \$ 2.7 billion - surface water and groundwater storage measures
- ◆ \$ 1.5 billion - protection and restoration of rivers, lakes, and watersheds
- ◆ \$ 900 million - groundwater clean-up and sustainability
- ◆ \$ 810 million - drought preparedness
- ◆ \$ 725 million - water recycling
- ◆ \$ 500 million - clean-up of small community drinking water supplies
- ◆ \$ 395 million - flood management

LWV California president Helen Hutchison commented, "When we're talking about something as fundamental as water, we need a bond that will truly benefit all Californians. This proposal ...insists on a competitive process for funding surface and underground water storage projects and legislative oversight of the spending."

Another issue of concern is making sure that any bond proposal would not be used to support Governor Brown's proposal for tunnels to convey water under the Delta for delivery to the Bay Area, Southern California, and western San Joaquin Valley agriculture.

### Priorities

**Clean and Safe Drinking Water -- \$1 billion**

**Regional Self-Sufficiency -- \$1.5 billion**, water conservation, efficiency, recycling, runoff recapture.

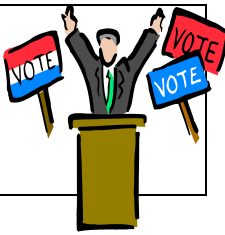
**Watershed Protection and Water Quality -- \$1.1 billion** Includes a stipulation that funding may not be used to buy water or for inter-basin transfers.

**Water Supply Reliability -- \$2.4 billion** to fund groundwater cleanup and sustainable groundwater management and allocates \$1B for competitive surface and ground storage projects, with Legislative appropriation.



# Voter Services

by Liz Shields



September 23 is National Voter Registration Day. There will be voter registration tables set up at Fresno State, Fresno City College, Reedley College, Fresno Adult School and DeVry University. There should be a good response due to the upcoming election.

Election Day, November 4, is fast approaching. The final list of six propositions for the ballot has been approved but not yet available from the Secretary of State.

- ◆ Proposition 1 (formerly Proposition 43) recently amended by the State Senate proposes a \$7.5 billion bond issue for water projects in the state.
- ◆ Proposition 2 (formerly Proposition 44) proposes an amendment to the Constitution for stabilizing future budgets by increasing potential savings to a “rainy day” fund from 5% to 10% of the General Fund.
- ◆ Proposition 45 deals with insurance rate increases requiring public notice.
- ◆ Proposition 46 seeks to monitor substance abuse, asks the Medical Board to take steps to address the problem and increases the cap on damages for medical negligence to over \$1 million.
- ◆ Proposition 47 seeks to reduce the penalty for most nonviolent crimes from a felony to a misdemeanor with the savings to be used for crime prevention and support programs in K-12 schools.
- ◆ Proposition 48 seeks to ratify gaming compacts with local North Fork Mono Indians and with the Wiyot Tribe.
- ◆ The state League is supporting propositions 2 and 47. They have not taken positions on the other propositions.

Candidate forums are scheduled for taping on October 13 and 14 at CMAC. The forums will include the “top two” voter getters in Congressional and State Assembly races, runoff candidates for Superior Judgeship #15, County Supervisors for District 1 and District 4, and candidates for three Fresno Unified Trustee Districts.

## County needs to develop new plan for indigent and unauthorized

by Richard Bertken, M.D.

The County Board of Supervisors voted recently to end its Medically Indigent Services Program (MISP). This could mark the end of at least four decades of beneficent, and likely cost effective, provision of comprehensive medical care to the medically indigent, including unauthorized immigrants.



The termination of Fresno County’s contract with Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC) for running MISP is not just recognition that the contract was made obsolete by the Affordable Care Act. The Act will provide insurance via MediCal or Covered California for 75% of MISP patients. The Board’s termination of the MISP contract is a clear statement that many months of negotiations between the County and the medical center failed to produce a budget for immigrant care that the supervisors would support.

*(continued on page 7)*

### Are you tech minded?

We are looking for one or two partners to join Board member Stephanie Frederick in receiving video production training from the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC).



CMAC runs free classes in screenwriting, production and editing. The training is professional and demanding and requires about 30 hours per month for six months.

Once people are trained, they are permitted to use CMAC's equipment; however, the equipment is in high demand and offered first to those who are taking classes. We anticipate that our members would be available to League to videotape Lunch & Learn meetings and other special events. If interested call Nyla at 439-9008.



## ***But Not Far***

We have moved our office into the main Stone Soup office where we also have the use of a larger conference room.

**Come see us!**

**It's more cheerful!**

## **Health Care** *(continued from page 6)*

Fresno was one of only a dozen or so of California's 58 counties to provide more than emergency care to undocumented immigrants. None of these other counties has withdrawn medical services for undocumented immigrants because of budget stress. Health officers from these counties cite a sense of moral imperative to provide care to their county's agricultural, construction, and service workers whose unauthorized immigration helps sustain their economies.

But it is also a political reality that, when faced with difficult decisions, the default action of government boards is to sustain the current situation. In the case of immigrant care, the decision has a powerful human face. Turning off chronic disease and specialist care has a different texture than never having offered it. It will sentence experienced working people to unemployment and occasionally to loss of independence, and the County's responsibility for this sad outcome will become evident to the public.

CRMC has produced a fact sheet showing that its annual cost of immigrant care as part of the MISP program was about 19 million dollars. But MISP was never an insurance plan with negotiated fees and cost controls. The medical cen-



## **LWVF to work with Building Healthy Communities on General Plan and city improvement advocacy**

by Mary Savala

The League has applied for a \$10,000 grant to work in collaboration with Building Healthy Communities (BHC), at the invitation of the California Endowment.

The mission of BHC is to improve access to medical care, affordable housing, education and recreation; to increase city funding for services and infrastructure operations and improvements in selected disadvantaged communities, especially southeast and southwest Fresno; and emphasizing city focus on existing communities rather than new development.

The collaboration is composed of the Leadership Council, FIRM, Interfaith Alliance, Central California Environmental Justice Network, American Farm Land Trust, West Fresno Concerned Citizens, Boys and Men of Color, Metro Ministry, Climate Change, Policy Link, LWVF, and others.

BHC has been listening to what disadvantaged communities want while helping them organize and develop their voices. BHC was one of the principal backers of Fresno's adoption of Scenario A Modified for the updated General Plan, and is now holding the city accountable for keeping promises made to maintain the present Sphere of Influence and to allow new growth only after certain conditions of infill development are met.

The BHC P platform is: 1) a strong city infill component; 2) changing city zoning which now places "business" parks (industrial sites) in neighborhoods already impacted by industry and segregates housing by income; 3) improving access to parks and open space in southeast and southwest neighborhoods; 4) defining priorities for investment; 5) improving transit.

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ter was given a chunk of money to practice a wonderfully unfettered style of care for MISP patients. An unauthorized immigrant care plan could be developed that would provide sufficient benefit limitations and cost controls to meet the County budget. This insurance model is used by several counties.

At this time the County, CRMC, and the public clinics all appear to be engaged in continuing discussions that appear to be moving toward the unauthorized immigrant care solution.

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*

**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. 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 - \$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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