



The League of Women Voters Washington County

September-October, 2008, VOL. 55, ISSUE 2

Sept. 24, Wed., Mayoral Candidate Forum and Membership Meeting,

Fayetteville Public Library Walker Room, 6:00 p.m. This meeting is co-sponsored by the Library and will also be the annual Membership Renewal. (Story follows.)

Dates of other Government Channel Televised Forums (Story follows.)

Oct. 13, Mon., Board Meeting, Louise Russert-Kraemer's home, 1898 Mission Blvd.

Oct. 22, Wed., Monthly Member Meeting, Fayetteville Public Library Walker Room , 11:30 a.m. (Bring your own lunch). Transportation Plans for Northwest Arkansas.

NOTE: For more program details, League study materials, election information, and handy links to other sources, visit www.lwvarwc.org.

From Louise's Desk

September, 2008 greetings to you Washington County Leaguers! Even for those of us who have been around a number of decades, this is an unusually momentous time! It is also a good time to remember that whatever our personal, partisan enthusiasms, as members of the League of Women Voters we do not support individual candidates for public office. There are two imperative reasons why this is so: (1) A great strength of the League at the national, state and local levels, is that it does not allow for League backing of any individual candidate. (2) The great problems in our society are basically non-partisan and merit thoughtful, energetic study and discussion by ALL voters.

As the 2008-2009 President of the League of Women Voters of Washington County, I am impressed all over again with the energy and intelligence of our hugely busy preceding President, Joyce Hale. Her work this past year in the technological enormities of drilling for natural gas at an increasing number of sites in the Fayetteville Shale culminated in the excellent Symposium held at the Leflar Law Center at the University of Arkansas, which was co-sponsored by LWVWC and the Sierra Club. Subsequently, Joyce has been mightily involved in the Conference on Watershed Management held for invited guests at Mt. Magazine. LWVAR was asked

to sponsor this important Conference that met to plan the future use of water in Arkansas.

The seminal obligation of the League has always been Voters' Service. During the current tumultuous campaign year, we are indebted to our expert Voters' Service Chair, Bettie Lu Lancaster, who has organized extensive debates and forums for all candidates running for office at the local levels. And we are most grateful to Mary Alice Serafini who so skillfully coordinates state, local and national League activities as Chair of the State League.

So, fellow Leaguers, we're in good hands, but we also have important work to do! You could not be in better company for the task which lies ahead! [Join the League of Women Voters](#)

The League of Women Voters is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

www.lwvarwc.org

www.lwv-arkansas.org

www.lwv.org

YOU ARE INVITED

Annual New Member Reception and Fayetteville Mayoral Forum

Wednesday, September 24, 2008, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Fayetteville Public Library, Walker Meeting Room

The Washington County League of Women Voters and the Fayetteville Public Library will co-sponsor a Fayetteville Mayoral Forum. Candidates for mayor who will participate include Mayor Dan Coody, Alderman Lioneld Jordan, Walt Eilers, Steve Clark, Adam Fire Cat, and Sami Sutton. The forum will be moderated by Mary Alice Serafini, President of the League of Women Voters of Arkansas. The forum will be televised on the Fayetteville Government Channel.

Prior to the forum, the League invites anyone interested in membership to attend a prospective member reception from 6 to 6:30 p.m. Following the forum, the public is invited to participate in a reception with the candidates from 8 to 8:30 p.m. and explore membership opportunities in the League of Women Voters.

Please come, bring prospective members, enjoy refreshments, and learn about what the League is doing this year.

Membership Dues - Individual \$40, Family \$60 per year includes local, state, national
League of Women Voters of Washington County, P.O. Box 4, Fayetteville, AR 72702

Submitted by Joyce Hale

LWVAR's Next State Study

Notebooks have gone out to each of the state's Leagues to study the topic, [*Providing State Tax Incentives for Land Conservation*](#). A member in each League has received a notebook to lead the group's study. Individual members will be able to access the same information on the [LWVWC web page](#) once it is posted. For many years the League has taken strong stands regarding water protection with concerns for both quality and quantity. Conservation easements are considered to be an effective tool in protecting valued watersheds and working lands and forests. But without tax incentives, many landowners cannot financially consider this option. Since conservation easements are not a well understood property right, it is a good topic for examination.

Twelve states now provide conservation tax credits as an incentive to landowners who wish to protect farmland, forest, recreational sites, valued viewsapes, and historical sites. The action is voluntary and each case must be reviewed for its true conservation value. A conservation easement permanently removes any future development potential of a specified parcel. The land is then protected from the negative impacts of urbanization. As with any tax issue, there are advantages and disadvantages. Since the Arkansas legislature will be considering conservation incentives in the 2009 legislative session, the League must complete a study and arrive at consensus if it wishes to be part of the deliberation beyond individual's input.

The LWVWC November program is on land preservation. After a public presentation, the League will go into a consensus discussion. Members will be alerted when the materials are available on the web page and encouraged to review them before the November program as was done in preparing for the Immigration Study and Fayetteville Shale Study.

State Study Materials Coming Soon!

All Leagues in the Arkansas will soon be reading the materials for our next state study: [*Providing State Tax Incentives for Land Conservation.*](#)

Urban sprawl, lost farmland and wetlands, forests conversion and threatened watersheds are land use issues which concern many people. Some states facing these same problems are offering conservation tax incentives to protect natural resources. This study looks at the use of conservation easements with state tax incentives as an option to create a more sustainable future.

Be on the lookout for an email to link you to the study materials. Reading them will prepare you to take part in the November 17th program and consensus activity.

LWVUS National Convention

Thanks to the generosity of LWVWC, I was able to attend the LWVUS National Convention in Portland, Oregon, June 13-17, 2008. About 1,000 members attended and participated in the very orderly process of moving the organization forward through bylaws revisions, budget approval, presidential reports, great keynote speakers, program determination and election of officers and the Board of Directors. There was also time for recognition – the new League of Benton County (which the LWVWC greatly supported and continues to collaborate with) as well as the LWV Education Fund Pass Thru Grants Global Democracy Civic Hosting of Ukraine Visitors by LWVWC and Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: Promoting a Fair and Independent Judiciary by LWVWC and LWVBC. When I saw this in writing, I took note of the incredible determination and commitment that this represents of LWVWC members and leaders.

Program is always a passion for LWVWC and the National Program that was voted on and passed for the coming two years includes:

1. Retaining all current LWVUS positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy.
2. A Health Care Program to educate members and communities in order to be better prepared to do health care advocacy as needed. A task force will be formed to work on this program.
3. A Multi-Level Education and Advocacy Campaign to promote solutions to global climate change.

4. A study of the advisability of using the National Popular Vote compact among the states as a method for electing the President. Carolie Mullan has been charged with this study so watch for early action on this one.

In addition, the following organizational proposals were adopted: 1. A resolution procedure shall be proposed by LWVUS for discussion at Council 2009 as a possible rule for Convention 2010. 2. Within 12 months, LWVUS redesign its fundraising requests so they cannot be misconstrued as membership recruitment or dues notices. Be it further resolved that: LWVUS enlist the help of representative state and local Leagues to review or revise any fundraising or recruiting letters. 3. Adoption of a Per Member Payment of \$28.00 for FY 2008-2009.

The election of Officers and the Board of Directors includes the election of Stephanie Johnson, LWVAR First Vice President and former LWVAR President!

I found the caucus on Health Care Reform well organized and invigorating. The Leagues behind this had good strategies to move the cause of health care reform to the forefront of the national agenda. Other workshops included a helpful session for the presidents of state leagues, a session on working with the media and an outstanding session on Citizen Diplomacy. I hope that my experience at the national convention will be helpful to Washington County as well as the LWVAR. Thank you for the opportunity to attend and represent Arkansas and Washington County.

One final word, building our membership is of great importance. President Mary Wilson challenges us to grow our membership and to always convey a consistent message that works.

“The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join Us in making democracy work!”

In the words of President Wilson, “Use THAT message. It works!”

I encourage everyone to read more about the LWVUS National Convention on the website www.lwv.org, choose “FOR MEMBERS” and then choose “Council and Convention”(no password or login required).

Mary Alice Serafini, President, LWVAR

Mark Your Calendars!

The League of Women Voters of Arkansas' Convention will be held in Fayetteville the weekend of April 25-26, 2009. We need good attendance from our League so please save the date.

How Should Northwest Arkansas Spend Its Transportation Dollars?

Dr. Steve Luoni from the University of Arkansas [Community Design Center](#), Jeff Hawkins, [Executive Director of the Regional Planning Commission](#), and Mike Malone, Executive Director of the [Northwest Arkansas Council](#) will comprise a transportation panel on **October 15** at the [Fayetteville Public Library](#). They bring differing perspectives to this topic. Dr. Luoni recently completed a comprehensive study on the feasibility of light rail in the region, while Mr. Malone successfully lobbied for state legislation that will enable the region to form a Regional Mobility Authority, which allows regions to enact a tax to fund desired transportation projects. The Northwest Arkansas Council has been especially supportive of a western bypass. The Regional Planning Commission completed a transportation master plan two years ago after soliciting public input throughout the region. Come hear how they would spend dollars for transportation projects and why. **The panel will begin at 11:30 a.m.** Brown bag lunches are welcome.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

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