



The League of Women Voters Washington County

June 2009, VOL. 56, ISSUE 4

PROGRAM CHOICES FOR 2009-2010

At the Annual Meeting in May, members were asked to help choose program items for 2009-2010. They were also given the opportunity to volunteer to help with the program of their choice. The result of members choices are:

- 1. LWVAR State Study**—Marge Zinke, chair
12 individuals choose this as 1st or 2nd choice
Members volunteering to help are Barbara Farley, Laura Kellams, Betty Solis, Wanda Stevens and Libby Wheeler
- 2. LWVUS National Action on Health Care Reform**—Mary Alice Serafini, chair
18 individuals choose this as 1st or 2nd choice
Members volunteering to help are Genie Donovan, Mary Fitzpatrick, Bettie Lu Lancaster, Nancy McCartney, Linda Ralston
- 3. LWVWC Local Study on Transportation**—Karen Rollet-Crocker, chair
8 individuals choose this as 1st or 2nd choice
Members volunteering to help are Molly Rawn, Marion Orton
- 4. LWVWC Membership Recruitment Meeting/Swepco's Rate Raise**—Joyce Hale, chair
Member volunteering to help is Barbara Farley

If you would like to help with any of these studies/meetings, please call Barbara Farley, 443-1588 or bafarle@uark.edu

The dates for the meetings have not been set. Watch for the calendar in the August *Voter*.

President's Report
LWVWC Annual Meeting
May 21, 2009

This is the second time this week that I have spoken at a dinner, and my first sentence is the same - remembering someone important to an organization. The first was Mary Burton for Mental Health, but Mary was also a long time member of our Washington County League. Tonight it is Louise Kraemer we remember, who graciously volunteered to be our president this year with lots of board support. If you remember our annual meeting last May, the slate of officers presented by the nominating committee did not include a president as no one agreed to take the responsibility. Mary Alice said we could not leave until we had president, and Louise accepted with the promise of much board

help. As a result, an agenda committee was created from the 5 past presidents on the board, which met with Louise the week prior to the board meeting. Louise had to resign in December because of poor health and died in Cleveland, Ohio, in January. She was an accomplished woman, a professor of biological sciences at the U of A, an environmental activist, the mother of four, and a friend to many. We remember Louise Kraemer for her service to our League.

It is active citizens willing to volunteer time and to study issues of local concern who are the backbone of this League of Women Voters of Washington County. And I think it is most effective to review this year by recognizing the people who made it happen.

This was an election year, and Voter Service Chair **Bettie Lu Lancaster** organized numerous candidate forums – from school board candidates to those for Mayor of Fayetteville; from County Judge and JP's to Fayetteville Alderman and state legislative candidates. The combining of the Mayoral Forum with our fall membership meeting was a success judging by the large crowd in attendance. Once the lucky candidates were elected, Bettie Lu oversaw the updating of the League's *Guide to Elected Officials* and the distribution of half of the 10,000 copies printed. (So we have more if you need them.) Kudos to Betty Lu – and to all those who were moderators, timers and question formulators for these forums.

Joyce Hale organized and collected information for the State League Study of Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements. State Leagues reached consensus, and Joyce led the advocacy of this issue into enacted legislation by the Arkansas General Assembly, ably aided by our speaker, Representative Ulvalde Lindsey. *This is League at its best* – study an issue, reach a consensus, advocate and see legislative action on it. Joyce also organized with the Beaver Water District last August a League sponsored statewide meeting on *The Use of Conservation Easements as a Watershed Protection Tool*, which involved national speakers, 8 organizations and 63 delegates. Impressive. Most important for me, Joyce vacuumed so that board meetings and the holiday party could be held in her house, not mine.

Program Chair **Karen Minkel** oversaw all programs and arranged our panel discussion on transportation. She led the follow-up transportation discussion group, which helped update our stand on transportation. She has focused on more in-depth studies and discussions, which have strengthened the stands we take. And sometimes she brings her daughter, Ariana, to meetings, which gives us all hope for the future.

Others of us do the work that keeps this organization going. **Barbara Farley** attends to meeting reservation details and contributes good sense to all issues, which I really appreciate; **Nancy McCartney** dutifully takes our minutes and provides tablecloths and witticism; and **Mary Fitzpatrick** keeps the books and deals with the IRS. **Carolyn**

Madison has rounded up about 107 paid League members and is always on the lookout for more – she’s always at the door; **Sally Kelley** maintains our website and talks about things like U-Tube and Facebook – take a look at the LWVWC website - she does a great job. **Marge Zinke** organized a program panel on Foster Care in Arkansas, which was so well received that it was voted a state study for next year, which she has graciously agreed to chair; **Karen McSpadden** has been our photographer and pulled together and moderated our program on Local Markets; **Mary Bess Muhollen** was our representative to and co-chair of the Women’s History Month Banquet and always provides culinary input when needed; **Karen Rollet-Crocker** shared her graphics talents in ads and posters, her environmental insights and her chairs and tables; **Genie Donovan**, who headed the finance drive and coordinates The Voter, board orientation, tablecloths, and provides wisdom to all we do; **Judy Carey**, our social chairman, who makes all new members feel welcome and gave support, balance and joy to this president, who always wanted to do everything on the cheap; **Marion Orton**, who charmed Jim Lindsey into donating \$500 to cover state convention costs, who videotapes our programs and who holds the history of our League in her head; and, finally, **Mary Alice Serafini**, who is State League President but always keeps her feet grounded in and contributes to our Local Washington County League.

I want to close by thanking all of you who attended and contributed to the LWVWC’s hosting of the State League Convention in April. So many of you attended, provided food for Sunday morning’s breakfast and made our out-of-town guests feel welcome. The convention was truly a success, and we are so fortunate to have such dedicated League members in Washington County.

Thank you for allowing me to complete the presidential term of Louis Kraemer.

Libby Wheeler

State Convention 2009

The League of Women Voters of Washington County hosted the State Convention for the League of Women Voters of Arkansas. An exceptional event, Mayor Lionel Jordan proclaimed April 25, 2009 the League of Women Voters’ Day. Special guests, Carolie Mullan, LWVUS, Liaison to LWVAR and Douglas and Margaret Reed, Editors of Government in Arkansas were introduced at the gathering which took place at the Fayetteville Public Library. Dr. Marty Matlock challenged attendees to view water quality as a global need and responsibility, pointing out how far we need to go to end poverty around the world through improved water quality. The second keynote speaker, Dr. Theo Colborn, led the 40 attendees through the process of natural gas production,

pointing out the enormous number of unknown chemicals that are involved and the unknown impact and consequence on the environment. Saturday also included the induction of seven new League members into the 2009 Hall of Fame (see related stories) and a gourmet dinner at the home of Sandy Edwards in the evening. All in all League members connected on issues and interests across the state and were ready for training and program selection on Sunday morning.

LWVUS Board Members, Carolie Mullan offered practical training in how to run a League and keep it vibrant as well as an update from the national organization. The two advocacy priorities for LWVUS include health care reform and global climate change. State Senator Sue Madison updated League members on the last legislative session which triggered lively discussion and interest.

LWVAR Program priorities for the next two years include: 2009-2010 a study of Foster Care in Arkansas, chaired by Marge Zinke. 2009-2010 advocacy for health care reform based on LWVUS stands. 2009 publication of the updated edition of Government in Arkansas. In 2010-2011, there is interest in a study of state commissions and agencies. Some unique partnerships were created to develop an information paper on school finance policy and its impact on the future of public education in Arkansas and a paper on food supplies in Arkansas.

New officers and board members were elected for 2009-2011.

The League of Women Voters of Arkansas thanks all members of LWVWC who contributed their time and effort for such a successful state convention. We are especially grateful to Libby Wheeler for chairing the convention committee and stepping in as president as well! Your volunteer efforts, the treats, the sponsorships, the meals and hospitality were appreciated by all and truly made this a spectacular convention.

Hall of Fame

Two members of LWVWC were inducted into the 2009 Hall of Fame. Genie Donovan and Wanda Stephens were two of seven inductees honored by the League of Women Voters of Arkansas. Their stories and contributions to the League were compelling and also fun. Congratulations to Genie and Wanda as well as all the members of the Hall of Fame.

LEAGUE POSITION ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

League members are watching with great interest the national government struggle with the question of health care reform and may be wondering about the League's position. The following information is excerpted from a letter to League Leaders in the LWVUS "President's Corner."

"The LWVUS health care position as stated in *Impact on Issues* has not changed. The League favors universal health care to be provided through a national health insurance

plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums, commonly known as the “single payer” approach. But the League’s position is much more expansive than just favoring the single payer approach. We are concerned that health care reform include basic health care for everyone (currently at least 40 million people in this country do not have health care coverage): we support cost control measures; we believe in equitable provision of health services.

When the position was adopted in 1993, League members recognized that it could take several phases before we reached a single payer system. “As the United States moves toward a national health insurance plan, and employer-based system of health care reform that provides universal access is acceptable to the League.” (*Impact on Issues*, p. 69)

We now have the first serious opportunity in 15 years to make major reforms in the way health care is delivered in this country. . . Indeed several of the proposals currently being seriously discussed in Congress and by the Administration are also giant steps forward towards ultimately achieving a government-funded national health insurance plan. . . But the fact is that for economic and political reasons, now is not the time to be able to achieve single payer health care reform. Therefore, the LWVUS Board has chosen to take an advocacy strategy at this time that will take advantage of the opportunity to make real strides in those parts of our position that are key building blocks for when the time is right for the single payer approach. (LWVUS supports) coverage for everyone that includes the prevention of disease, primary care, acute care, long-term care, mental health care, and prescription drug coverage, allows for pre-existing conditions; computerization of medical records, a system-wide program to coordinate information and establish best practices including providing comparative data on treatments and medical outcomes; cost containment measures.”

NOTE: To join in advocacy on health care reform, go to lww.org, click on issues, and action alert/health care. Other important information on this subject can be found on this site.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES ALLOW THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TO SHINE

Given the time and effort we have put into studying issues and recommending policies, it is exciting to find that we are being approached for help in suggesting changes. One potential change involves individual wastewater treatment permits given by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) , and the other is in support of hiring a professional manager for the Boston Mountain Solid Waste District. Colene Gaston, a member of the League and Staff Attorney for the Beaver Water District, alerted us to a public hearing on June 1, 2009 that would receive comments on the reissuance of a General Permit that provides for discharges from individual domestic

wastewater treatment systems. At the Board meeting in May, we decided to comment on this reissuance based on our local stand for maintaining water quality and preventing contamination of aquifers and surface water. In cases where installation of an underground septic system is not possible, other systems must be used. ADEQ allows self monitoring, which can be inaccurate or incomplete. Also, every five years, these permits are automatically renewed.

Our comments, read by Joyce Hales at the Public Hearing in Little Rock, asked that ADEQ directly monitor these systems and require permittees to submit periodic Discharge Monitoring Reports to ADEQ. We also asked that each permittee apply individually for renewal, which would allow ADEQ to find out if the system is properly installed and operated. In addition, we requested that ADEQ require upgrades to these systems if better standards are available for improvement of discharge and effluent levels.

Louise Mann advised us that the Boston Mountain Solid Waste District was searching for a new manager. We are in support of a manager with an extensive professional background who can develop economical ways to maximize waste reduction, resource recovery, reuse and recycling using technology that is efficient and reliable with a satisfactory history of operation.

The League can shine by using our stands to affect local and statewide policy changes on which we have taken a stand. For these stands, look at <http://www.lwvarwc.org/programforaction.pdf>. We are asking that you keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities to write letters or give testimony at hearings. When you see an important issue arise, please pass this information on to Joyce Hales, our President for 2009.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY
Post Office Box 4
Fayetteville, AR 72702

Nonprofit Organization
U. S. Postage Paid
Fayetteville, AR
Permit #461

Voice Mail: 479-575-1841

<http://www.lwvarwc.org>