



The League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

<http://www.lwvarwc.org/>

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Calendar

JUNE 21, Mon., 7:30, Board Meeting, Kelly and Steve Zega's home at 1532 E. Columbus Circle, Fayetteville (More information will be sent to board members.)

From Joyce's Desk

Normally you would expect things to slow down as we conclude our LWVWC program year, but things have gotten even busier for me. Because of the LWVAR state study on land conservation, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) asked me to come with a board member from the Ozarks Regional Land Trust to discuss land preservation relating to climate change. I thought I was coming to a group representing every state, but when I arrived, those attending the Fly-In to Washington D.C. were only from states with close and influential House and Senate races. Senator Blanche Lincoln was at the top of the list because of her chairmanship of the Agriculture Committee and the control it holds over tax credits for conservation easements.

The first day immersed us in briefings on the impact already felt by wildlife as climate conditions change, the difficulty projecting what should be done, and the challenge to secure funding and spend money in a way that yields the greatest long term protection. There was sadness in having to accept that efforts to save some endangered species must be abandoned, that salt water was invading marshlands as sea levels rise, and that warming would advance northward at a faster rate than plants or animals could migrate or adapt. With government facing extreme economic restraints and ecological disasters, the NWF was reaching out to "home folks" to go talk to their representatives, hoping we would have greater influence.

The second day was busy seeing every one of Arkansas's delegation or their staffs. It also turned out to be the day when Congressman Mike Ross was to vote in the Energy and Commerce Committee on whether gas companies would be required to give full disclosure of the chemicals they use. Because of the League's involvement with the Fayetteville Shale, this was of keen interest. Problems in the bill's wording blocked forward movement. I appreciate the individuals who came forward at my request to contact Congressman Ross even though there was no action taken. Keep your powder dry because it is likely to pop up again when we least expect it.

While I was not representing the League at the appointments, I was proud to have the League recognized by NWF for our conservation work and given the opportunity to advocate for action on the energy bill, as many groups including LWVUS advocate for better energy policies.

Continuing a to Look Back on History during the League's 90th Anniversary

In reading contemporary accounts of the suffrage era, multiple sources of opposition are clear as many reform issues emerged together... anti-slavery, temperance, and suffrage. The following is from THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA, Volume 23, published by Dodd, Mead & Co. in 1918:

“The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of rising humanism in which a number of courageous and gifted women came to the front. Their first task was to secure for their sex facilities for higher education as an absolute condition of intelligently sharing in the world's work. Later they enlisted for the anti-slavery and the temperance campaigns, although the more conservative among their male allies, with society in general, were shocked by the appearance of women as speakers or delegates. Yet slavery and intemperance were not the only evils which stirred the awakening social consciousness of women. Here and there even in these early decades a clear voice was raised for political liberation

The year 1848 marks the beginning of an organized movement for equal political rights. At a convention called by Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others, a strong ‘Declaration of Sentiments’ or list of grievances, drafted by the callers of the convention and modeled on the Declaration of Independence, was signed; and resolutions were adopted setting forth the remedies required to redress such wrongs.

In the opening years of the twentieth century the extension of the ballot to women came to be looked upon less as a question of abstract or natural right, and more and more as a many-sided practical problem in which the welfare of society was deeply concerned. Discussion became more tolerant and serious, with constant appeal to facts. Many states which did not grant full or partial State suffrage to women gave them a vote in local affairs.

It has often been asserted as an objection to equal suffrage, that women make small use of the ballot when they get it. However unfair or irrelevant it may be, suffragists did not fear the test of the relative number of eligibles making use of the ballot. Everywhere enfranchised women were taking a surprisingly active part in the elections; and it was a significant proof of the stimulating or socializing effect of the equal participation of the sexes in public affairs that generally the average percentage of men voting rose after women went with them as full active citizens to the polls.

It was asserted by the anti-suffragists that women voters had not improved the laws or the social conditions in the suffrage States. Suffragists did not expect an immediate revolution; did not hope to correct all the man-made blunders in law or politics; nor promised as a return for the grant of the ballot to make no similar errors. The extension of the suffrage to each ‘lower’ religious, economic, or racial class of men has never been conditioned by a pledge to make better laws than those made by the men already enfranchised. Nevertheless, no well-informed, disinterested person can doubt that women actually improved law and government in the suffrage States.”

June Board Meeting to Consider Special Event

Normally the LWVWC Board takes a vacation in June and July, but a special meeting on Monday, June 21, at 7:30 is being called to do a few housekeeping duties that didn't get covered at the annual meeting last month. In addition we will watch the HBO premiere showing of the documentary, *GasLand*, at 8:00 pm. The producer of this film, Josh Fox, filmed in many states including Arkansas. He is now planning to schedule three days in Arkansas for public screenings later in the summer. If there is interest after seeing the HBO showing for LWVWC to help organize an event while Josh Fox is in town, a committee is needed. Sierra Club will be involved and would like to partner with the League.

This Sundance Film Festival winner has been creating a great deal of interest at screenings around the country as more concern develops over the environmental impacts of natural gas and the lack of protective regulations. The problems parallel much of the situation occurring in the Gulf disaster. *GasLand* was recently sold to HBO for broader distribution and may be seen at several time slots on HBO starting June 21.

If any member is interested in the Fayetteville showing, where the producer will be in attendance for a Q & A session, please call Joyce Hale at 527-2777.

LWVUS National Convention

On June 11-15, the League's 90th National Convention will meet in Atlanta, Georgia. Because Arkansas has already experienced the impacts of natural gas development in the Fayetteville Shale, we have been invited to participate in the Safe Mining and Drilling Caucus sponsored by the Tomkins County New York League. The objective is to get the convention's approval of a resolution supporting the removal of the oil & gas industry's exemption from adhering to the Safe Drinking Water Act and requiring full disclosure of the chemicals used in their drilling (and now cleanup) processes. Once this approval is granted, LWVUS will be free to watchdog related legislation and lobby for greater protection within Congress.

As one might expect, there are many other diverse topics that will be presented at caucuses and other sponsored meetings. Here is a sample of the subjects:

Educating Citizens about the LWVUS Immigration Position
Concurrence: Marriage Equality – Why is it Critical?
Motivating Women to Run for Office
Public Policy Statement to Encourage Access to Adequate Food and Water
Improved Medicare for ALL: We're Not there Yet
A Department of Peace Study
Use of the Internet and Technology in the League
Concurrence on the Updated Arms Control Position
National Popular Vote
How Can We REALLY Make Democracy Work?
Youth Engagement in Elections

So far three League members will attend from Arkansas. There will be a lot to absorb!

PROGRAM CHOICES FOR 2010-2011

Here is the result of the program poll taken at the Annual Meeting on May 13. Members suggested the topics at the Program Choosing Member Meeting in April. At the Annual Meeting, members were asked to rank the topics according to interest and to indicate those programs they would be willing to support. The following list is the result of that poll:

Ranked according to interest in attending the program:

1. Rising Child Poverty in NW Arkansas
2. Riparian Zone Preservation
3. First Responder Status
4. NWARDK Disabled and Public Transportation
5. Multi-jurisdictional Roundtable
6. Challenges for Hispanic Women Arriving in NW Arkansas

Ranked according to people wanting to help:

1. Rising Child Poverty in NW Arkansas, 7 people want to help
2. Multi-jurisdictional Roundtable, 5 people want to help
3. First Responder Status, 4 people want to help
4. Riparian Zone Preservation, 3 people want to help
5. Challenges for Hispanic Women Arriving in NW Arkansas, 1 person wants to help
5. NWARDK Disabled and Public Transportation, 1 person wants to help

Follow up to the League's April Panel on Transportation Planning

Attendees at our Annual Meeting were asked about their interest on continuing work on public transportation, with emphasis on needs for those who cannot drive due to disabilities. Members said they would support a program on the subject.

Interest in improving public transportation is high in the region. The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission is involved in the following efforts:

- \$101,742 has been received from the State Planning Funds 49USC5304 with a local match of \$25,436 for a total study cost of \$127,178 to complete a Transit Development Plan by November or December 2010. A consultant is currently being selected. There will be public input into this plan, so the League needs to stay in touch.
- A Long Range Transportation Plan for 2035 is underway, and NWARDP is asking the public to fill out a questionnaire online. Individual suggestions are welcomed at the end of this form. Look at the website, www.NWARDP.org
- Federal funds are available through the Federal Transit Administration under the Alternatives Analysis Program. The application is due July 12, 2010. The purpose of this program is to “assist potential sponsors of New Starts and Small Starts projects in the evaluation of all reasonable modal and multimodal alternatives and general alignment options to address transportation needs in a defined travel corridor”.

- A 2011 tax proposal is planned for the region that will support bus transit and may include other forms of alternative transportation. The Transit Development Plan will help define how the tax proposal will be structured.
- An additional exciting possibility is a new Federal Sustainable Community program under the Obama Administration that combines three agencies—Transportation, Housing and Environment. The guidelines are not yet published, but local planners are thinking about possibilities.

The Board of the League of Women Voters of Washington County has voted to send support letters as needed from our President for grants.

Karen Rollet-Crocker

HONORING MARION ORTON AT ANNUAL MEETING

When I moved to Fayetteville in 1969, my neighbor Peg Anderson introduced me to Marion Orton. I consider that one of my luckiest or unluckiest days because Marion was president of the League of Women Voters and she lost no time finding a job for me in the League. Since then my life has never been the same.

That's what Marion does. She changes people's lives. She is a ground breaker where she sows seeds to improve life for all of us in our community. She broke ground when she circulated the petition to eliminate the poll tax that placed a burden on prospective voters in the 1960s. She helped with the League-initiated summer school to prepare African-American students for integrated education.

She broke ground when she introduced Fayetteville to recycling when most of us had no idea what that word meant, managing the Fayetteville Recycling Center from 1970-1974. She continued her quest for a healthy sustainable environment serving on the City of Fayetteville Board of Directors for twelve years, 1969-1981. She was Mayor of Fayetteville for two years and a driving force behind the City Sign Ordinance that continues to enhance the beauty of Fayetteville. When the League needed a chair for an environmental study, Marion was called for. She led the battle for trees and landscape, water, wastewater treatment and parks management. The State League of Women Voters has also benefited from Marion's expertise serving on the State Board as Environmental Chair for the past several years. She also wrote the history of the League of Women Voters in Arkansas.

Marion's passion for informing citizens led her to help establish the Fayetteville Community Access Television station where for many years the League conducted its "Meet the Candidates" forums. She is an ardent believer in free speech and the public's right to express itself.

With all of these League activities, Marion found time to raise four children, two of whom are with her tonight—Lisa and Bill. I think she has lost track of the number of international

students she has housed and nurtured. She serves the cause of peace in Omni and the Presbyterian Church where we are meeting tonight.

Because of Marion Orton, all of us in Fayetteville and Arkansas are leading better lives and it gives me great pleasure to honor her tonight.

Genie Donovan

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