



# The League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

www.lwvarwc.org

March, 2010 VOL. 57, ISSUE 2

## Calendar

**MAR. 8, Monday, 6:30, Board Meeting,** Joyce Hale's home, 285 W. Cleburn.

**MAR. 17, Wednesday, 6:30, Local Program Planning.** Barbara Taylor will host the membership at her home: 1599 W. Halsell Road, Fayetteville.

**MAR. 29, Monday, Women's History Banquet,** Clarion Inn.

## From Joyce's Desk

The LWVWC Board members were the invited guests of the Chi Omega Sorority on Feb. 13 to celebrate the LWV's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Mayor Lioneld Jordon read a proclamation declaring the day "LWV Making Democracy Work Day". It was a pleasure to share this milestone with a group of young women who are preparing their futures through education. Personnel Chair Natalie Peek extended the welcome.



Chi Omega member Rebecca Greenway, read the speech given by Arkansas suffragette, Florence Brown Cotnam, to the first national convention of the League of Women Voters in Chicago on February 14, 1920. In this she stated that with suffrage "we recognize and accept the responsibilities that have come to us with our enlarged opportunities, and pledge our best efforts to give our country what she needs above all things, *an interested and intelligent electorate.*"

This responsibility remains the LWV challenge today. I urge you to participate in program planning for next year. I hope you are *interested* in helping us select and develop local topics so that voters can make *intelligent* decisions in full knowledge of the choices and positions. See additional information about this activity later in the *Voter* and plan to attend.

## Arkansas's Contribution to Women's Suffrage Leadership – Florence Cotnam Part 1



The familiar names of Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are historic figures that will always be credited with leading the women's suffrage movement. But among the ranks were many whose contributions were necessary to achieve the final success. At the pinnacle of leadership from Arkansas was Florence Lee Brown Cotnam, who went on to become the first president of the League of Women Voters of Arkansas. From her biography in the *Centennial History of Arkansas* by Dallas T. Herndon, you see the influences responsible for forming the political and patriotic character she exhibited. After

describing the many family connections in positions of authority and military participation, the author stated "Mrs. Cotnam therefore comes of a family in which patriotism has always been a dominant force and citizenship a term representing high ideals of loyalty and service to the government."

Born in Virginia, Cotnam attended private and public schools but graduated from the Charnwood Institute in Tyler, Texas at sixteen. She went on to study dramatic reading in Chicago and Vanderbilt University. For many years she was widely known as a dramatic reader and her ability in this direction was a most valuable element to her public speaking. She campaigned under the auspices of the national American Woman Suffrage Association and traveled twenty-five states. Carrie Chapman Catt said: "All New Yorkers who knew Mrs. Cotnam's work among us appreciated its superior value. She filled a part which no one else could have occupied. I sincerely hope she will give herself to the cause for the rest of her life."

The following creed was written by Cotnam for the annual meeting of the Arkansas Equal Suffrage Central Committee in April 1918. It was published in the Arkansas Gazette and copied by New York and Chicago papers:

"I believe in the United States of America—the Mother of Freedom, and in her sons and daughters who have transmitted her spirit from generation to generation, undaunted, unconquered, unafraid.

I believe that the principles of self government upon which our nation was founded were conceived in the mind of God and confided to the American people as a sacred trust, enduring hardships and freely shedding their blood that we might have a heritage of liberty, have in turn made us the guardians of a nation's soul.

I believe that loyal service to my country is the highest service to myself, the honor of my country is my honor, her need my need, her danger my danger, her security my security, her happiness my happiness.

Then will I never bring reproach upon her by any act of mine, never endanger her by my folly; but so live that I may be worthy to be called an American and die if need be that her spirit may live."



**What is the 2010 Census?**

The Census is a count of everyone living in the United States. April 1 is the official Census Day.

**What does it ask of me?**

The Census asks: name, relationship, gender, age and date of birth, race, and whether the respondent owns or rents his or her home.

**How long will it take?**

10 minutes, 10 questions

**Can my information be shared?**

No. Your information is safe and protected and may not be used against you.

**When does it take place?**

March 2010: Forms are mailed to your residence.

April 1, 2010: Those who haven't mailed in their census form will be visited by a census worker to have information collected.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- The United States was the first nation to make a census mandatory in its Constitution.
- The first census was in 1790. It took eighteen months to complete the door-to-door count of 3,929,214 persons.

**Why is the Census important?**

Every year, more than \$400 billion in federal funds is awarded to states and communities based on census data. That's more than \$4 trillion over a 10-year period.

Census data guides local decision-makers in important community planning efforts, including where to build new roads, hospitals and schools.

Census data affects your voice in Congress by determining how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives.



## March 17 LWVWC Program: *Planning for Future Programs*

Where:

Barbara Taylor's House  
1599 W. Halsell Road, Fayetteville.

When:

March 17 at 6:30pm

On March 17<sup>th</sup> the League's annual ***Local Program Planning*** meeting will be held at Barbara Taylor's house between 6:30- 8:30 pm. Barbara is kindly letting us 'borrow' her lovely house for the evening. The address is **1599 W. Halsell Road, Fayetteville.**

The purpose of the meeting is for the membership to develop topic areas for future programs of study. These programs are the basis for future advocacy and are an essential part of the League's work. The issues can be drawn from current events such as political, environmental, or social issues. This current year we have had a bit of everything. We started with a review of the electric grid and production from across the state. I think we were all a little surprised at how much there was to know. The Foster Care program chaired by Marge Zinke took place in November. What an incredible panel Marge and committee assembled. During January we had a mini health care summit, and last month Judge Marilyn Edwards came and spoke primarily about County budget structure and problems. Both programs were informal and the panelists and audience relaxed and had a good exchange of information and ideas.

The attendees of this upcoming March meeting will have an opportunity to shape the programs for next year. Every League member is welcome to present their favorite *burning issue* in an informal way to the rest of the group. A lively discussion will follow where everyone is encouraged to participate. Other members, who share a similar interest, will take part and help to flesh out the idea. By the end of the evening a few good topic areas will begin to take shape.

The March meeting is essentially the first step. In May during the annual meeting, the ideas that develop out of the March meeting, will be presented to the membership and voted on. During the voting process people can sign up to help and form committees. Last year this proved very successful.

Once a topic idea is approved by the membership at the annual meeting, the Chairperson, with the help of a small committee, will take the lead and develop it into a public program. We realize that for some this may seem like a daunting task. However we want to reassure that brave person you won't be alone. The League is happy to offer support in many areas. First we have a step by step document that helps guide the process [Check-off List Guideline](#). Additionally, the League is responsible for arranging the meeting place and taking care of overhead equipment etc. and refreshments. The League is also responsible for the publicity and can help with visual aids and designing the graphics for a flyer if need be. Joyce Hale, as League President, will be glad to make contact with the 'experts' if it is felt necessary. Most importantly all the board members are ready to help.

The format for the program can be flexible. There is no right way to hold a program. The program can involve showing of a film or reviewing of a book followed by a discussion group. Or the meeting can consist of a panel discussion with one expert or multiple experts assembled to discuss a range of issues surrounding a single topic with public comment afterwards. A more relaxed format could consist of a free flowing discussion centered on one study topic to be held around several large tables. The study materials for any program will be posted on the League's web site prior to the meeting. It is also possible to invite another interest group to participate and in this way extending the reach of a public program to a wider audience (i.e. Sierra Club or Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families). I hope everyone will come. Please contact me if you have any questions at bafarle@uark.edu.

**The Women In History** banquet, is March 29th, 6:00 p.m. at the Clarion. Tickets are \$20.00 and need to be purchased by Monday, March 22. They are available by calling Mary Bess Mulhollan at 442-7333, or e-mailing at [marybess@cox.net](mailto:marybess@cox.net), or from the person who is representing your women's group.

The women being honored this year are Bonnie Cook, Denise Garner, Donna Stjerna, Dolores Stamps, and Doris Cassidy. All have been outstanding contributing women in Washington County for many years.

## ATTENTION: TO THOSE INTERESTED IN THE HEALTH CARE DEBATE

You can find the President's recent proposal on health reform on Health Care Reform Resources web page at <http://www.lwvarwc.org/healthcareresources.htm>. Originally created for the member meeting in January, this page of resources will be updated as needed during the health care debate.

Text, summaries, and comparisons of the major proposals are the first resources you will find on this page. If you wish to monitor developments yourself, you might check a couple of blogs listed in the Reports & Analysis section. They are Prescriptions (New York Times) and The Treatment (New Republic). Or check the websites of the non-profits studying health reform: Kaiser Family Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Commonwealth Fund. You can also find their newspaper columns and a lecture by Professor Rob Leflar and a PBS News Hour interview with Dr. Hershey Garner, our excellent speakers at the January meeting. There are also reports for more detailed study.

In the Arkansas section, you can find statistics and information related to health care needs in our state, an analysis of the Senate and House bills in light of Arkansas needs (by Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families), and the health care reform issue webpages of all six Arkansas senators and representatives.

The last section provides background information on health care reform. Learn about health care reform in other countries and the combination of models currently used in the United States. Or review the history of health care reform in the United States.

**SPECIAL ELECTION ON HMR TAX FOR PARKS AND RECREATION**

The following question will appear on the ballot for a special election to be held during the Preferential Primary and Nonpartisan General Election on Tuesday, May 18, 2010:

**FOR** proposed Ordinance No. 5305 amending Ordinance No. 3900 by authorizing and dedicating the revenue from the existing Parks Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Tax to be used for the development, construction and maintenance of city parks.

**AGAINST** proposed Ordinance No. 5305 amending Ordinance No. 3900 by authorizing and dedicating the revenue from the existing Parks Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Tax to be used for the development, construction and maintenance of city parks.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

On November 14, 1995, the citizens of Fayetteville passed Ordinance No. 3900 in a special election approving an additional 1% HMR tax for parks. Section 2 of the Ordinance stated that “proceeds of the additional 1% tax shall be deposited into a special fund established by the City to be used for the development, construction and maintenance of city parks. The funds shall be dispersed by the Mayor upon approval of the City Council.” In spite of this wording, the word “maintenance” was unintentionally left off the ballot. Therefore, the city parks administration has been unable to use any of the 1% HMR tax for maintenance of parks.

**REASONS TO VOTE FOR THE AMENDMENT:**

Since the passage of this tax, Fayetteville has increased park land and added amenities, trails and landscaping to its parks. The Parks Division now maintains 28 playgrounds, 8 tennis courts, 18 softball/baseball fields, 10 soccer fields, 36.5 miles of hard/nature trails, plus other recreational complexes. The increased acquisition of park land and trail system has also increased maintenance costs and placed a financial strain on the Parks Division.

A vote **FOR** the amendment insures that parks can continue to be maintained at the current level, by diversifying the stream of revenue and providing flexibility in the use of the HMR funds.

**REASONS TO VOTE AGAINST THE AMENDMENT:**

Given Fayetteville’s growth and the growth in the number of parks and recreation programs, more money is needed for operations and maintenance. However only 30% of the HMR Tax is spent on capital investment. Allowing this to be used for maintenance operations may make adding needed facilities very difficult. In 2001 we had 12 tennis courts and the Master Plan suggested we needed 32 for the 2001 population. We have 8 courts today. The Master Plan suggested 16 soccer fields. We have 11 soccer fields now, but need to replace 4 soccer fields by 2016 when the lease expires on the land. Today’s distance “behind” is significantly greater given the population growth since 2001.

A vote **AGAINST** the amendment is a statement that at least 20% of the Parks and Recreation expenditures should be dedicated to new facilities and renovation of existing parks.