



The VOTER

June-July 2013 VOL. 60, ISSUE 3

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER —NWA WATER QUALITY & THE TALE OF TWO WATERSHEDS

OCTOBER – ECONOMIC AND CLIMATIC IMPACTS OF SHALE GAS DEVELOPMENT

NOVEMBER – LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

DECEMBER – HOLIDAY PARTY

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FROM THE LWVWC PRESIDENT

By Mary Alice Serafini

It has been a good League year. Many thanks go out to League members who have taken the lead in producing great programs and who have kept communications with our legislators open. We have enjoyed partnerships with the Hispanic Women’s Organization, NWA Mental Health America, First United Presbyterian Church and the Arkansas Public Policy panel. Members continue to show interest in getting to know the facts about public policy with a willingness to educate the public through our wonderful programs. Examples include a session on cyberbullying, public transportation, common core standards in education, immigration and initiated acts on the ballot in Arkansas. Our forums with candidates for office were informative and helpful as were the volunteers who showed up and staffed a table of League voter information at a number of events. Thanks to all who have contributed, thanks to new and renewing members for being a part of the League and thanks to the Officers and Board of Directors for your shared responsibilities and wonderful discussions!

THE ANNUAL MEETING

By Mary Alice Serafini

The LWVWC Annual meeting featured Representative Greg Leding of House District 86 as our guest speaker. It was an honor to learn of Representative Leding’s passion for collaboration with legislators and for speaking up for a number of issues that the League of Women Voters support. We admire his energy and hours and hours of working on legislation to speak up for good public policy and representation of members of his district.

The Annual Meeting gathering included a potluck dinner, selection of programs for the coming year and the election of officers and members of the board of directors. Program priorities include Fall Programs Northwest Arkansas Water Quality in Two Watersheds, Economic and Climatic Impacts of Shale Gas Development, and

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Spring Programs include Voter ID Requirements, Mental Illness and the Legal System, and Marshallese Population in NWA. Members also expressed a commitment to study and report on tuition rates for residents of Washington County for Northwest Arkansas Community College, Pre-Kindergarten Education in Northwest Arkansas, The Proposed “Fayetteville Library Expansion, Local Animal/Pet Concerns, and an update on the Regional Trail System (some of us will bicycle it and report back to the League).

Officers for the next year include President - Mary Alice Serafini, First Vice President - Karen Rollet-Crocker, Second Vice President - Carole Harter, Secretary - Nancy McCartney, Treasurer - Susan Rausch, Board Members - Dot Neely, Sally King, Joyce Hale, Lynne Seymour, Laura Kellams, Rita Officer, Libby Wheeler, Kelly King, Angela Danovi, Martha Ward and J.P. Peters. Next year’s nominating committee includes Jo Bennett, Mary Bess Mulholland and Bettie Lu Lancaster. Thanks to this year’s nominating committee of Genie Donovan, Judy Carey, Martha Ward and Anita Bukey.

We are looking forward to another active and productive League of Women Voters year!

TOP 10 REASONS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT LARGE-SCALE, CORPORATE HOG OPERATIONS

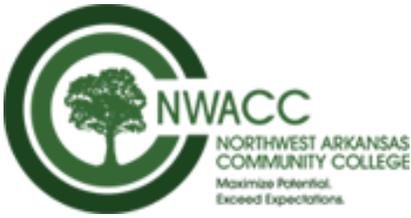
CONCERN #10.	Hogs stink.
CONCERN #9.	The work is not good for people.
CONCERN #8.	Piling up too much “stuff” in one place causes problems.
CONCERN #7.	Consumers have little if anything to gain.
CONCERN #6.	Continuing regulatory problems are inevitable.
CONCERN #5.	Hog factories destroy public confidence in agriculture.
CONCERN #4.	Future of the community is turned over to outside interests.
CONCERN #3.	The decision making process can rip communities apart.
CONCERN #2.	Hog factories degrade the productive capacities of rural people.
CONCERN #1.	Tomorrow’s problems are disguised as today’s solutions.

Reprinted excerpt with permission from John Ikerd, Agricultural Economist, University of Missouri.

“The primary advantages for rural areas in the twenty-first century will be the unique qualities of life associated with open spaces, clean air, clean water, scenic landscapes, and communities of energetic, thinking, caring people. Communities that sacrifice these long run advantages for short run economic gains may have a difficult time surviving in the new century.”

The full article can be found at <http://www.ssu.missouri.edu/faculty/jikerd/papers/TOP10.html>

About John Ikerd: John is emeritus professor of agricultural economics at the University of Missouri, where he was active from 1988 to his retirement in 2000. He coordinated the state’s Extension programs in sustainable agriculture. He championed on-farm research and critical evaluation of the impacts of farming systems on farm families and rural communities. Dr. Ikerd has spoken passionately and often to many groups since his retirement to improve understanding of, and support for, a “new agriculture” that brings life socially, economically and spiritually to rural North America.



A CONVERSATION WITH NWACC HAS BEGUN

By Joyce Hale

Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) is expanding with bricks and mortar into Springdale with dedication of a new facility to be built near the Arvest Ball Park. The area’s growing population is thinking more and more about improving services on a regional basis to create greater efficiency and cost savings. Improving tuition rates by expanding the in-district status might be a possibility. NWACC has become a regional institution with students primarily from Benton and Washington County, but tuitions are 66% higher for those outside the Rogers and Bentonville School Districts. Few people are aware of this difference or why.

NWACC - Fall 2012 - Spring 2013 - Summer 2013 Hourly Tuition Rate				
For each Credit Hour	In-District Residents Rogers and Bentonville School Dist.	Out-of-District Residents Benton Co.	Contiguous County Washington Co. Residents	Out-of-State Residents
1 Hour	75.00	122.50	122.50	175.00

The LWVWC approved a request at the Annual Meeting to begin discussions with NWACC and all interested parties to see if it is feasible to move toward equalizing the two-county tuition rates to increase student accessibility. Joyce Hale and Carole Harter have met with Jim Hall, NWACC’s Executive Director of Government Relations, to learn more about the history and if there was interest and what would be required to expand the in-district designation. Hall indicated that this was a good time to begin this conversation as they will soon have a new president, Dr. Evelyn Jorgenson, six new board members, and a number of new programs to develop along with a greater physical presence in Washington County. This is a complex and controversial issue, but worth investigating if it would help student accessibility and support greater economic development.

Any LWVWC members who are interested in being part of this project over the next year are encouraged to contact Joyce Hale.

ARKANSAS PUBLIC POLICY PANEL CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF PROGRESS

By Joyce Hale

In 1963, a diverse group of women saw the need to help facilitate integration throughout Arkansas. This organization was The Panel of American Women. Their efforts evolved into a progressive coalition of 56 statewide organizations now known as the Arkansas Public Policy Panel and their political arm, Citizens First Congress.



panel participants: Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Etnar, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Phillips, Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Griffin.

The League of Women Voters of Washington County joined this coalition to be better informed on legislation related to our Program for Action. We salute APPP’s 50 years of growth and work to bring social change to the citizens of Arkansas.

Members of The Panel of American Women

LWVWC 2013-2014 PROPOSED PROGRAMS RANKED

By Karen Rollet-Crocker

Programs proposed for the 2013-2014 League Year were ranked by League members on a scale of 1 to 10, with "1" indicating program topics of highest priority and interest and "10" signifying topics of least priority or interest. Lowest total scores denote programs of highest rank. The following table lists, in order of highest to lowest rank, program score totals, titles, names of respective program planning team volunteers.

LWVWC 2013-2014 PROGRAM RANKINGS		
TOTAL SCORE	TOPIC	TEAM
69	Voter "ID" Requirements	J.P. Peters, Kelly King, Rita Officer, Betty Lu Lancaster
	Funding & implementation discussion w/Washington Co Election Commission Chair & other election officials	
84	Mental Illness and the Legal System	Rita Officer plus others working on this subject
	Mental Health America/NWA & the Judicial Equity for Mental Illness (JEMI) Task Force	
105	Economic and Climatic Impacts of Shale Gas Development	Joyce Hale & others
	Looking beyond the usual environmental concerns	
111	Northwest Arkansas Water Quality in Two Watersheds	Karen Crocker, Angela Danovi, Susan Rausch
	Current and future water quality concerns in the Illinois River and Beaver Lake Watersheds	
122	Youth Mental Illness and Family Support	Rita Officer plus others working on this subject
	Panel discussion re: dealing with mental issues presenting in late-teen/early adult children	
126	Marshallese Population in NWA	J.P. Peters, Grace Donoho, Karen Crocker, Betty Lu Lancaster
	Local social, cultural, educational, economic, health, marginalization, no path to citizenship, voting concerns	
ALTERNATE PROGRAMS		
124	Pre-Kindergarten Education in NWA	Genie Donovan
	Need for, current enrollment, legal & education requirements for P-K, family child care needs, fit w/public ed goals	
126	The Proposed Fayetteville Library Expansion	
	League study of voter funding option	
162	Local Animal/Pet Concerns	Beth Barham, Kelly King
	'No Kill' animal shelter, "Roaming Pets"/Feral Cats, Owner Pet Abuse	
165	The Regional Trail System Update	
	Late 2013 trail completion target date & trail amenities. Possible speakers: Matt Mihalevich, Connie Edmonston	

HAVE YOU MISSED ONE OF THE LWVWC PROGRAMS?

If you were unable to attend a League program this year but would like to have gone, there are some Youtube video recordings you should know about:

Oct. 16, 2012 – Panel on Cyberbullying http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLYet54HH_M

Jan. 23, 2013 – Panel on Common Core Standards

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmWHJAmE6k8&feature=share&list=UUwcZunxqSV3zcgvRJqBn-Qw>

Apr. 24, 2013 – Immigration Law Update <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqDGD7JV-ys>

NEW REGIONAL STUDY UNDERWAY: “THE NWA TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS”

By Karen Rollet-Crocker

The League of Women Voters of Washington County’s Program for Action supports public transportation. This support has become much more important due to the growth of population in the NWA area which has doubled from 1990 to 2010, expanding to 424,404. The need for more transportation has mostly been envisioned as cars requiring more roads. We have all seen more traffic jams on many of our major roadways and intersections.

Luckily, there is an available grant from the Federal Transit Administration to fund a study of potential alternatives to highways. For several years, the NWA public has been interested in a light rail system connecting major towns. Other possible alternatives might be bus rapid transit or personal rapid transit (to understand alternatives see nwarpc.org/NWA-Transportation/articles-of-interest/).

In 2012 the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission secured the Alternatives Analysis grant . The study is currently underway. As part of this study, it is requested that the public fill out a questionnaire to develop a “Locally Professed Option”. The questionnaire is at www.nwafgs.org. Options can include a no-build decision, a Transportation Systems Management (TSM), or some type of fixed guideway system. The study will also evaluate costs, benefits, and impacts of these alternatives. Solving traffic and mobility problems and deciding an investment strategy are a part of the final result.

A “Purpose and Need Statement” is listed at nwarpc.org/NWA-Transportation/purpose-need/. It is meant to justify the priorities of the transit alternatives as well as their environmental impacts. The purpose and need statements cover the following considerations:

- Local rapid population and travel growth solutions
- Congestion on I540 and connecting roadways cannot be adequately improved by adding capacity
- Even with better fuel economy and alternative fuel vehicles, there will be more fossil fuel use and more greenhouse gases and air pollution
- A choice for transit will improve quality of life and bicycling and walking to support transportation access
- Transit development will create “mixed use”, combining commerce and housing around stations
- Transit will give mobility to those who do not have autos such as young people, seniors, those who have disabilities, low income families, and those who do not want to own cars.

The League will keep track of this analysis. It is important to note that the analysis is a required first step to additional federal funding necessary for major transit projects such as light rail, bus rapid transit and other alternatives.

HOLT SCHOOL ELECTIONS

By Libby Wheeler

For the second year, Holt Middle School Counselor Jane Corrigan asked the LWVWC to help with its Student Council Election on May 7th. Lynne Seymour, Libby Wheeler, Karen Crocker, and Carole Harter volunteered the day of the election, along with three members of the County Clerk's Office, who provided the students the option of using voting machines or paper ballots.

Student Council members had already registered voters, and an ID card had been assigned to each student. Candidates presented their platforms at a school assembly, and each student had an evaluation sheet on which to write impressions of each candidate. So the students were well prepared for Election Day.

There were two election times: before school, 7 to 8am and 10:30am to 12:30pm during lunchtime. Many students came to vote on their own; others came as classes led by their teachers, who also voted. Holt students did the work of certifying names on the registration lists, asking each voter for an ID card and a signature, inquiring if a student wanted to vote by machine or on paper, and giving out the appropriate yellow or blue Popsicle stick, which reflected the voting choice. County clerk personnel helped those voting by machine understand the process, and those voting on paper had cardboard privacy booths in which to mark their ballots. Each student who voted received an "I Voted" sticker as they left the polling place. The student poll workers were well trained and efficient, and League members mostly directed traffic, counted the paper ballots, and commented on an illegal T-shirt worn by one of the poll workers, which supported a candidate. It was immediately covered up.

This is a fun, rewarding contribution our League makes to educating future voters. Holt Middle School deserves credit for this initiative, and an Owl Creek Middle School counselor has asked our League about possibly helping to replicate this program at their school.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY
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