



# The VOTER

November-December 2013 VOL. 60, ISSUE 5

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League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

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CALENDAR

**NOVEMBER 18 (MONDAY) • 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM • LWVWC LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON** • Washington County Extension Auditorium, 2536 N. McConnell Avenue, Fayetteville, AR 72704. *OPTIONAL* Light Lunch \$10. RSVP by November 14, 2013: [\(479\)927-9800](tel:4799279800) or [lkellams@aradvocates.org](mailto:lkellams@aradvocates.org) • Page 1

**DECEMBER 4 (Wednesday) • 7:00 PM • LWVWC & MARSHALLESE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION** • The Lodge, Butterfield Trail Village, 1923 E Joyce Blvd, Fayetteville • Page 2

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## FROM THE LWVWC PRESIDENT

By Mary Alice Serafini

The League took off in a roar with a great forum on our watersheds with experts from Northwest Arkansas. This was our membership renewal and recruitment event. Well, we recruited some new members, but are still waiting for member renewals. Be sure to send your renewal in now while it is on your mind! In October, the League collaborated with the LWVAR, OMNI Center, Ozark Headwaters Group of Sierra Club and Arkansas Interfaith Power and Light to host Deborah Rogers, investment banker and economist, who updated us on Shale and Wall Street. She spoke to our interests and pushed our thinking to national and state areas of concern. Thanks to the great efforts of League members who shared the responsibilities for both September and October LWVWC events.

Speaking of events, members are urged to challenge their friends who are concerned about state issues by inviting them to the Legislative Luncheon on November 18. Already, One Book One Community has provoked thinking about mental health issues that could be improved through proactive legislation in the Arkansas State Legislature. We want all voices to be represented on a variety of issues, so come and talk with your legislators! In December, we are honored to spend an evening with members of our community from the Marshall Islands. It will be festive with the intent to build better understanding and relationships. Please come and enjoy this event, coordinated by an amazing number of individuals!

We greatly appreciate the efforts of LWVWC members who assisted with the Owl Creek Elementary School Student Council elections and invite all members to pursue opportunities with the League to develop well-informed voters of all ages and all walks of life.

## 2013 LWVWC LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

By Mary Alice Serafini



Citizens of Washington County, including members of the League of Women Voters, will have the opportunity to talk with our legislators on Monday, November 18, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Washington County Extension Service Auditorium, 2536 North McConnell Avenue, in Fayetteville.

This is a great opportunity to connect with our legislators and update them on public policy and issues that are important to the League and our community. If you are planning on attending, you have the option of making a reservation for a light lunch at the cost of \$10. The meal purchase is NOT required. You are most welcome to come, even if you are not planning on eating lunch. RSVP's are requested for lunch reservations by calling Laura Kellams at (479)927-9800 or [lkellams@aradvocates.org](mailto:lkellams@aradvocates.org) by November 14. Get your questions ready and please join us for a great exchange!



## MARSHALLESE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Washington County

**DATE:** Wednesday, December 4, 2013

**TIME:** 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** The Lodge, Butterfield Trail Village, 1923 E Joyce Boulevard, Fayetteville

Members of the League of Women Voters are invited to share refreshments with some of our local Marshallese. Traditional Holiday songs and dances will be performed, and cookies will be provided.

Our party has been planned with the help of Consul General Chong Gum and Albious Lator of First Marshallese United Church of Christ, along with members Grace Donoho, Karen Rollet Crocker, Bettie Lu Lancaster, and J.P. Peters.



Albious Lator  
(Photo Source: Jones Center)

A short slide show will describe the Republic of Marshall Islands and why its citizens have chosen to migrate in large numbers to Northwest Arkansas. The Marshallese population here is estimated at 8,000 to 10,000. There are only two consulates in the U.S.; one is in NWA, and the other in Hawaii.

Our members will listen to the aspirations of Marshallese youth to continue their education beyond high school. Our scholarship contributions will allow students to attend college and training schools that will improve their job opportunities.

## MARION ORTON RECYCLING DROP OFF CENTER GRAND OPENING

by Sally King



Signage for the new North Street recycling drop-off facility.

League Members with Fayetteville Solid Waste & Recycling Mascot

LWVWC Members Adella Gray & Genie Donovan

Members of the League of Women Voters of Washington County gathered on October 26 for the grand opening of the Marion Orton Recycling Drop Off Center at 735 North Street in Fayetteville. Marion was a long-time League member, a Fayetteville city director and mayor, and a pioneer in environmental policy. Serving on the Pollution Control Committee of the City of Fayetteville, Marion took the lead in establishing a recycling center, which opened in 1971. She managed that center and encouraged the local, Arkansas, and national Leagues' interest and advocacy in recycling. Mayor Lionel Jordan, LWVWC President Mary Alice Serafini, and Waste Reduction Coordinator Brian Pugh were speakers. Read Mary Alice's remarks about Marion on the website, [www.lwvarwc.org](http://www.lwvarwc.org).

More photos at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/47765646@N03/sets/72157637356273256/>.



PBS KIDS Mascots at  
ArkanSalsa Fest

## ARKANSALSA FEST OneCommunity Reads!/UnaComunidad Leyendo! Kick-Off Celebration – *Partnership's goal Grade-Level Reading*

By Diana Gonzales-Worthen, PhD

*OneCommunity Reads, UnaComunidad Leyendo!* announced its kick-off celebration at OneCommunity's ArkanSalsa Fest held on Saturday, October 26. OneCommunity Reads' goal is to increase reading proficiency for children by third grade through engagement of the families in their children's education. When children read on grade-level by the third grade, they are more likely to graduate from high school and go to college.

To emphasize the importance of literacy, PBS KIDS characters Clifford the Big Red Dog, the Cat in the Hat, and Arthur participated in the ArkanSalsa History of Transportation Parade.

Springdale Mayor Doug Sprouse gave remarks during the opening ceremony of the festival at noon and proclaimed October 26 as "*OneCommunity Reads, UnaComunidad Leyendo Day.*"

Throughout the afternoon, festival attendees learned more about OneCommunity Reads and visited with numerous local educational initiatives in the ARVEST "Feed Your Brain" Kids Zone. AETN distributed over 600 books to children, the National Science Teachers Association facilitated Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) activities, bilingual water education passports were provided by Beaver Water District while "Rainger" Marshall of the Illinois River Watershed sang songs on water conversation and recycling. The Horse Tails Literacy Program, Ozark Mini Brass Band, pony rides led by clowns and other children's activities filled the Kids Zone.

Over 40 booths from non-profit organizations, local businesses and delicious food vendors filled the street and provided information and resources for the public. Three stages entertained festival-goers with live bands, salsa and dance performances and lessons. Competitive events included a 5K/1 Mile, Car Show and Best Tasting Salsa Contest. Music and Dinner on the ArkanSalsa Train concluded the Festival. Also, it is important to note that more than 20 sponsors and individuals supported the festival. Proceeds benefit OneCommunity Scholars and its literacy and leadership programs.

A partner with the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR), *OneCommunity Reads, UnaComunidad Leyendo!* is an initiative of OneCommunity and the Springdale School District to increase parent engagement and community awareness of the importance of grade-level reading in three elementary schools – George, Jones, and Monitor. About 30 percent of third graders in these three schools do not read proficiently at grade-level. Key components of OneCommunity Reads include *Parents Taking Leadership Action* and the *Feed Your Brain, Alimenta Tu Cerebro Summer Reading Club*.

**About OneCommunity** - OneCommunity's mission is to promote communities working together as one to enhance the quality of life of all people through the use of best practices and outreach services that improve health, education, and leadership skills. For more information about the organization, visit [www.onecommunityar.org](http://www.onecommunityar.org).

## OWL CREEK STUDENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

By Libby Wheeler

Three League members, Holly Baskey, Anita Bukey and Libby Wheeler helped with the Owl Creek Middle School's Student Council elections on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Because of the demographics of the School, which has one of the highest percentage of free and reduced lunch students in Fayetteville and a high transient population, it was decided to hold the election in the fall so currently enrolled students could vote. Prior to our arrival, the candidates had filed to run, were coached on how to present their platforms to their peers, which was done during a week at lunchtime, and had made campaign posters. Being enrolled in the school automatically registered each student to vote.

When we arrived on the 30<sup>th</sup>, tables were arranged in the cafeteria where the voting took place. Voting was done alphabetically, so when students arrived by class at their predetermined time, there was little congestion. Jennifer Price from the Washington County Election Commission was there with privacy voting booths, the box to put ballots in, and stickers that said, "I VOTED." League members helped students find their names on the roster so they could sign in and then handed out the ballots. Holly stayed and helped count the ballots with Owl Creek counselor, Mary Martin, and teacher/ student council advisor, Abby Land.

The election was well organized and the students enthusiastic. League member, Karla Bradley, a teacher at Owl Creek, told me that many of her students showed up the next day still wearing their voting stickers. It's never too early to start voter education.

## RECAP OF DEBORAH ROGERS'S SHALE AND WALL STREET PRESENTATION

By Joyce Hale



The League of Women Voters of Arkansas was first in studying the impact of shale gas development in the Fayetteville Shale play, but the focus was always on the environment and public health. Now there are a growing number of researchers and financial analysts whose findings show a much different economic picture than the one portrayed by the gas industry. Researcher/analyst, Deborah Rogers, founder of the Energy Policy Forum, was the recent guest of LWVWC, Sierra Club, OMNI, and the Arkansas Interfaith Power and Light. She gave presentations at the Fayetteville Rotary Club and a public program at the Pat Walker Senior Health Center.

Ms. Rogers delivered a fast paced explanation of the flow of capital that supplied the drilling frenzy, the role that Wall Street has had in gas prices, the impact of foreign investment and sales, and the question of whether there is a one-hundred year supply as claimed by the gas industry.

The following is a summary of her main points:

**RESERVES** – People who are counting on natural gas to supply cheap energy for 100 years are going to be badly disappointed. Companies have over-estimated recoverable reserves on an average of 100% and in some cases 400-500%.

**RAPID WELL PRODUCTION DECLINES AND COMPANY LOSSES** – Rather than having a productive life of 30 to 50 years, today's horizontal hydro-fracked wells are not expected to produce beyond 7 to 10 years. Companies are now writing off major losses leaving stockholders in the lurch.

**INVESTOR HYPE AND FOREIGN INVESTORS** – As production quickly drops at one play, companies quickly shift to better producing areas to maintain stockholder interest. Foreign companies are encouraged by banks holding gas industry loans to infuse capital by buying U.S. gas leases.

**WASTEFUL FLARING** – Over production of dry gas has driven its price down below production costs. This has led to wasting the gas by flaring in order to get to more valuable oil in the same well.

**LOSS OF CONFIDENCE** – Fund managers and individual investors are reacting to environmental and insurance risks and increasing production costs by moving to other investments.

**EXPORTING LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS (LNG)** – As drilling operations continue to lose money, producers are anxious to see gas export facilities permitted so that sales to foreign countries will bring two to three times the price in the U.S. This will drive up energy costs to U.S. consumers.

A video of Ms. Rogers presentation is being prepared and will be available on the LWVWC website as soon as it is ready. For a detailed account of Ms. Rogers' information see her report, *Shale Gas and Wall Street: Was the Decline in Natural Gas Prices Orchestrated?* <http://shalebubble.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/SWS-report-FINAL.pdf>.

## TWO VIEWS OF THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

By Joyce Hale

According to the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, "the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a vehicle for Asia-Pacific-wide economic integration, which will strengthen U.S. ties to the robust economies of the region. The goal is to include additional Asia-Pacific countries in successive clusters to eventually cover a region that represents more than half of global output and over 40 percent of world trade."

The TPP is the cornerstone of the Obama Administration's economic policy in the Asia Pacific. It is poised to be the largest free trade agreement in the world. The region's markets are already key destinations for U.S. manufactured goods, agricultural products, and services suppliers. Trade expansion can benefit a

**TWO VIEWS (continued)**

country by supporting better jobs in the export sectors, expand the variety of products, and encourage investment and rapid economic growth.

Nineteen rounds of negotiations over five years have been held with representatives of Australia, Brunei, Chile, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the U.S. and Vietnam participating. It is now on an accelerated track with officials of the U.S. urging countries to reach an agreement by the end of the year. The Obama Administration is hoping to secure “fast track” authority from Congress and considers that vital for passage.



Strategy session photo of leaders from Trans-Pacific Partnership

In contrast to the idea that the TPP agreement will bring improved economics and other benefits to the citizens of member countries, groups like Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch and Sierra Club have concerns about non-trade issues that have leaked from the highly secret talks. Only five of the twenty-nine chapters have to do with trade. One example outside the realm of trade would be “investor-state” provisions. This would allow foreign corporations to challenge environmental, consumer and other public interest policies as barriers to trade if those conditions did not exist in their home country. TPP negotiators are considering a dispute resolution process that would grant transnational corporations special authority to challenge any federal, state or local law, regulation or court decisions in international tribunals that would circumvent domestic judicial systems. Tribunals would be staffed by private sector lawyers that rotate between acting as “judges” and as advocates for the investors suing the governments.

“Americans deserve the right to know what U.S. negotiators are proposing in our names,” said Arthur Stamoulis, executive director of Citizens Trade Campaign. ”In the absence of transparency on the part of our government, we have a responsibility to share what information we receive about the TPP with the public.”

“We are just beginning to analyze the new texts now, but they clearly contain proposals designed to give transnational corporations special rights that go far beyond those possessed by domestic businesses and American citizens,” said Stamoulis. ”A proposal that could have such broad effects on environmental, consumer safety and other public interest regulations deserves public scrutiny and thorough public debate. It shouldn’t be crafted behind closed doors.”

**WASHINGTON COUNTY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

**Current Membership 2013 – 2014**

Holly Basky	Nancy McCartney	Karen Rollet-Crocker
Genie Donovan	James & Jane Scroggs	Mary Alice & Phil Serafini
Joyce & Jay Hale	Dot Neely	Lynne Seymour
Harriet Jansma	Rita Officer	Gene Tweraser
Sally Kelley-King	J.P.Peters	Martha Ward
Sherri Lewis	Susan Rausch	Libby Wheeler
Carolyn Madison		

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR INCLUSION ON THE NATIONAL LWVUS ROSTER  
This will help reduce the membership committee's job of making personal contacts. Thanks.**

**LWVWC NEW MEMBER OR RENEWAL APPLICATION & INTEREST SURVEY FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ New/Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail (Please print carefully) \_\_\_\_\_

**DUES: Individual Membership - \$40 Family Membership - \$60 Student - \$20**

**Checks should be made payable to "LWVWC" & mailed to: LWVWC/PO Box 4/Fayetteville AR 72702**

Check LWVWC activities for which you may be interested in volunteering:

- Attend City Council, Planning Commission, Task Force, Quorum Court, etc. Meetings when needed
- Help with Publicity, Displays, or Posters       Assist with Mailings       Newsletter Writing
- Provide a Facility/Home for Meetings       Assist with Telephoning       Provide Food for Events
- Provide Transportation to Meetings       Help with TV Candidate Forums       Voter Registration
- Video Record or Photograph Activities       Lobby State Legislature       Other

I wish to receive calls to action on specific issues of interest:     Education     Environment     Governance & Voting  
 Social Policies     All League Concerns

I wish to limit my membership to receiving the newsletter. \_\_\_\_\_

I do not wish to join, but would like to make a contribution (any amount appreciated). \_\_\_\_\_

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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Fayetteville, AR 72702

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