



The League of Women Voters of Washington County

September 2016 Vol. 64. No. 345

www.lwvarwc.org

Calendar of Events

September 22: Voter Accessibility – League members study and report on voter accessibility issues that should be discussed and addressed at the Fayetteville Public Library. 5:30 p.m.

September 30 and October 1: The Northwest Arkansas Gridiron, Professional Journalism Society and AAUW, Arkansas Public Theatre (Rogers Little Theater), 7:30 p.m.

October 5: Membership Meeting and Ballot Issues. 5:30 at the Fayetteville Public Library

October 11: Candidate Forum, AAUW and Delta Sigma Theta, 5:30 p.m. at the First United Presbyterian Church. County Judge, County Assessor, Mayor and City Council candidates are invited.

November 15: Election Analysis with AAUW at the First United Presbyterian Church at 5:30 p.m.

December 1: Holiday party at Butterfield Trail Village.

Voter Accessibility

Members of the League of Women Voters of Washington County are engaging in a member session to become the best informed voters of Washington County when it comes to voter turn out, voter registration, voter obstacles and voter accessibility.

Please join the lively discussion on Thursday, September 22 at 5:30 p.m. in the Fayetteville Public Library. The League will provide starting points for discussion and then will turn to you and the participants to add your experience and expertise.

Will You Be Ready to Vote?

League Seeks to Inform Public on Ballot Issues

The League of Women Voters of Washington County wants to make sure voters are well-informed of several issues they must decide on the November ballot. Though these issues often fly under-the-radar, if they succeed they change Arkansas statutes and even the state Constitution.

Among other issues, voters will decide ballot questions involving marijuana for medical use, limits on lawsuit damage awards and government-funded business development incentives. To share information on these issues, the League will host a forum on Wednesday, October 5th in the Walker Community Room at the Fayetteville Public Library. The program is from 6 - 7:30 p.m., with a membership mixer at 5:30 p.m.

Panelists explaining the issues include Kristin Higgins, a program associate with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Public Policy Center; Berni Kurz, staff chair of the UA Extension Service in Washington County; and Greg Harton, editorial page editor of the *Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Issues on the ballot this year include:

- two separate issues regarding medical marijuana (one initiated act and one constitutional amendment).
- a constitutional amendment that would limit damage awards in medical lawsuits.
- a constitutional amendment to allow certain companies to operate casinos in Boone, Miller and Washington counties.
- a constitutional amendment changing term length for elected county officials.
- a constitutional amendment setting the powers of the governor when traveling out of state,
- a constitutional amendment that would remove certain restrictions on government-funded incentives for business development projects.

The Division of Agriculture's Public Policy Center exists to provide Arkansans with timely, credible, unbiased and research-based information and education about public issues. The center's goals are to increase citizen knowledge, awareness and understanding of public issues; enhance public participation in decisions regarding public issues; and help citizens craft, evaluate and implement alternative solutions to public issues.

For more information on the forum, contact **Laura** Kellams, a League member, at (479) 445-8750.

Voter Registration Drive
Walmart Stores, Fayetteville and Springdale - September 16-18, 2016



Fei Rubinelli shares her tent

The League of Women Voters of Washington County was out there again the weekend of September 16-18. We were at the **Fayetteville Walmart store** on Mall Avenue Friday night, then at the **Springdale Walmart** on Hwy. 71 Saturday and Sunday.

For this drive we wanted to:

- diversify the audience we were reaching, try to connect with more people who were not already registered, and people from many backgrounds. The Fayetteville library is a great place to be, but we found most of the people there are already registered. We thought those coming to shop on the weekend when they are off work might be a good "hunting ground," and we were right!

- Try to locate somewhere where we would reach single moms, in particular. We thought they were probably too busy during the week to shop, so weekend times would be good ones for them. We didn't ask people whether they were single moms, but we did register quite a few young women with children in tow so hopefully we succeeded there, as well.

Our summary statistics this time around:

# volunteers:	14
# hours worked:	78, including organization time
# registration forms filled out:	54
# registration forms sent with patrons to fill out later:	approximately 10
# absentee voting forms filled out:	0
# of informational ½ handouts with links to voting information (see text at end of this report:	approximately 400
# of persons asking to be contacted with more information on the League:	6

The following persons volunteered their time, some serving more than one two-hour time slot. We wish to give them a heartfelt thank you!

Angela Danovi, Beth Barham, Carole Harter, Genie Donovan, fei Rubinelli, Georgia Ross, Julie Moody, Kiyah Moss, Laura Pasley, Macey Brooks, Nancy Kahanak, Nancy McCartney, Rita Officer, Vicki Kelley, Feti's husband helped with the tend and Laura Kellams helped with the tent.

Handouts used during the drive:

- Citizen's Information Guide prepared by the League
- League's Guide to Elected Officials
- a half-page handout with helpful information:

Our handout text:

Thank you for being a registered voter!

From League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR (<http://www.lwvarwc.org>)

- **Before October 10, double-check your registration and get your "precinct name" (a number) here:**
<https://www.voterview.ar-nova.org/VoterView/RegistrantSearch.do>
- **Vote early and save time during period of Oct. 24 – Nov 7 – two options:**
 - County Clerk's Office - paper or touchscreen
280 N. College Ave. Ste. 300 Fayetteville, AR 72701 – Third Floor – (479) 445-4116
 - Other locations - touchscreen only
Find locations here -- Please note dates and hours of operation will vary by location!

<http://www.co.washington.ar.us/index.aspx?page=778>

- **Going to be away? Vote absentee – get directions here:**
<https://www.co.washington.ar.us/index.aspx?page=372>
- **Prefer to vote on election day, November 8, 2016?**
 - Check your polling location by your “precinct name” / number here. You will also see at this site the precinct numbers of local officials for whom you may legally vote.
<https://www.co.washington.ar.us/index.aspx?page=886>
 - Make sure you take proper ID – find a list of acceptable forms here:
<http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections/pages/voterregistration.aspx>

(scroll down to “Identification Requirements”)

* Note that the County Clerk’s office also gave Beth a one-page sheet of information about locations/dates/times for early voting that we did not distribute but included the link in the handout information. Sally Kelley has also included it on our website. It’s useful to consult because the times vary across the different locations.

Observations from this drive:

- We reach a very different audience of people at Walmart than we do at the library. Unsurprising on the surface of it, but makes for a different experience when doing the registration.
- It would be extremely helpful to have more Spanish speaking helpers for any future drive in Springdale. We signed up quite a few Latino voters, many first timers, as well as many young people.
- It’s good to be sensitive to the fact that many Latinos are not currently citizens, but they appreciate being encouraged to vote “later,” when they are. This helps defuse the fact that undocumented persons are deeply distrustful of anything to do with government and so might resent us asking them if they are citizens.
- It’s important to ask young people if they are eighteen. Not all who are seem to realize they can register to vote. Again, if they say they are not then you can encourage them to vote “later.”
- Some young people commented that they “are not political,” but we stressed to them that their local elections are about who runs their local government, so exercising your right to choose doesn’t make you “political” in the sense of campaigning for a candidate or party but rather makes you a responsible citizen doing their due diligence. That argument seemed to reach more than a few.
- We had at least two persons with felony backgrounds who were not aware they could regain their right to vote and how to go about it. It seems this information is not being shared very well with the concerned public. There is information about regaining the right to vote in the notebook Beth compiled that is with the registration materials. But probably the best thing to do is to give people the websites with this information (Secretary of State and County Clerk – on the handout), and strongly encourage them to contact the County Clerk to get guidance on the process and follow through with the process directly with the County Clerk’s office.
- We had questions about Marshallese and Hmong voting, but the only thing really that matters for the voter registration form is whether they are citizens. If they are, they should know how to answer that question.
- Having an informational handout is very helpful to close a conversation with someone already registered. If they said they were, we would ask, “May I offer you this handy information slip with some links to information on early voting? It can be more convenient and faster to vote early.” Usually they act surprised and pleased, as you are giving them a small gift, and so they part saying, “Thank you!” which is a positive way to end with someone you approached.
- Friday night during the last hour, the skies opened and we faced a deluge. Beth and Rita had to retreat into the store and shut down the registration early to get out of the rain. Nonetheless, we took up a lot of forms there and it would be worthwhile returning to the Fayetteville store.
- At the Springdale store, we were in full sun a good part of the time and it was fairly hot. Fei Rubinelli was gracious enough to show up with a light weight tent which saved the day. (Laura Kellams had lent one to Beth ahead of time, but it was very heavy and Fei’s turned out to be easier to manage.) Thanks to both of them for that help.
- Vicki Kelley was nice enough to buy a chair at Walmart for volunteers to sit down. She has donated it to the League. Thanks, Vicki, for your generosity.

Here are some comments we received afterwards from volunteers:

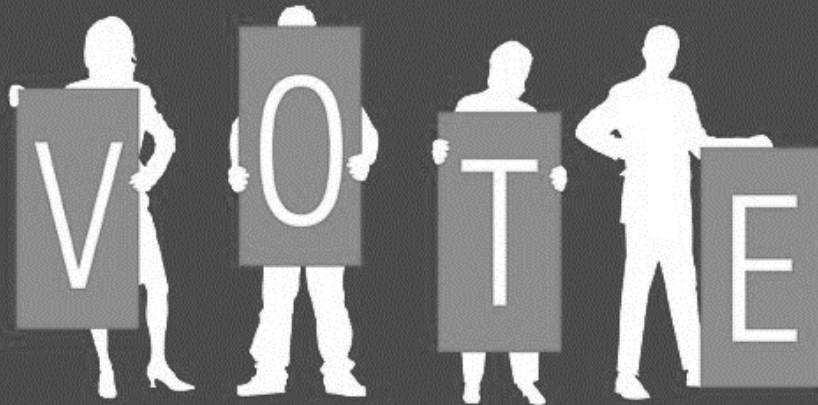
From Julie Moody: I just read your summary sent out to the League. During the two hours Macey, Genie, and I were at the Fayetteville Walmart on Friday (before you and the rain came), one of the people we registered had just received her citizenship. I thought that was pretty cool! Feel free to add it to your summary.

From Rita Officer: We had a fun and productive day on Saturday at Walmart in Springdale. Counting our brief but rained out registration in Fayetteville on Friday we have registered 23 brand new voters!, some in their 30's and 40's who had never voted before. We shook their hands and congratulated them. On young man who moved here from Puerto Rico and can now vote in Federal Elections. We help 13 update their registrations. We gave out all the slips we had on early voting and people were so appreciative. We had many tell us that they were working on getting their citizenship and we encouraged them. We were able to tell a number of people with a history of felony convictions how to regain their voting rights and the hope they showed was very touching. Many first time voters expressed confusion regarding how to get factual information regarding the Presidential race. The people we signed up are not the people who typically come to the Farmers Market or the Library and so we were where the League needs to be, encouraging people, educating as much as possible.

From Beth Barham: Thanks to all of our terrific volunteers. I am now calling you "The Intrepids." You brave rain, sun, tents that have to be put up and taken down, handouts to cut up, miscommunications, you name it! And we can really tell we have made an impact this weekend.

Respectfully submitted July 17, 2016 by Beth Barham, drive organizer.

The League of Women Voters of Washington County knows that
YOUR VOTE COUNTS!



(sometimes it takes a four-letter word)

**The League of Women Voters of Washington
County believes in one four-letter word:**

VOTE!

*The Northwest Arkansas Gridiron gives you lots of reasons to
exercise your right to vote, so,*

VOTE! It Counts!

**League of Women Voters of Washington County,
www.lwvarwc.org**

Let your voice be heard:

The public can input their opinion about the monuments proposed for the capitol grounds?

[From Arkansas Business by AP](#): Martin has also set up a hot line for people to call about the proposals. That phone number is [501-683-6589](tel:501-683-6589).

Thank you Martha Ward for this information!

The League of Women Voters is a multi-issue organization, whose mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in the government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY
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Nonprofit organization
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