

# VOTER

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARKANSAS**

*Political . . . Nonpartisan ... Local . . . State . . . National*

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## From the President



Members of the League of Women Voters throughout Arkansas are remarkable individuals. When the call came to step up and make their presence known in the state by revitalizing the Board, members came and got the job done. When members were invited to increase their knowledge of the League of Women Voters through training from national board director Carolie Mullan, twenty-two members showed up and experienced five hours of intense training. As a state League, we study important state issues and strive to make our impact on public policy through visibility and advocacy. We can support local leagues as well by combining resources for candidate forums and voter education at the state level.

As a result of the LWVUS training, the priorities for the LWVAR are much clearer. The 2007-2009 goals include a focus on advocacy and a process to activate our membership as advocates on state issues. Other goals include development of leadership in the state and local Leagues, offering support on structure, policy and procedures and training and orientation of League leaders. Visibility is a high priority, hence the articulation of board members who are focused on communications and advocacy to assure a higher level of visibility in the state.

With these goals in mind, the state League will continue to promote our publications, particularly Government in Arkansas, and increasing membership at the local level. Together, we can move forward and achieve the impact we desire. Together, we can all follow through on our commitment to voter education and impact on public policy by shouldering responsibilities and keeping one another informed. We look forward to another League year as membership efforts are launched this fall and the national study on immigration is processed at each local league. Watch for more information on the state studies and enjoy the energy of the interests of your League at the local level.

Yours truly,  
Mary Alice Serafini,  
President, LWVAR

### *Inside this Issue*

Report Convention 2007.....	Page 2
Scenes from Convention .....	Page 3
Board Revitalization 2007 .....	Page 4
Immigration Study Info .....	Page 5

Membership Count.....	Page 5
Education Update.....	Page 6
LWVAR Hall of Fame '07.....	Page 7
Local League Highlights.....	Page 8-9



## LWVAR Convention 2007

The League of Women Voters of Jonesboro hosted a lively Convention in April of 2007. With the support of Carolie Mullan of the League of Women Voters of the United States, conference delegates and attendees were focused on working to impact public policy and carrying out the mission to impact voter education. Highlights of the Convention began with the wonderful warm welcome from Jonesboro President Sue Garrison who also introduced keynote speaker Martha Shoffner, Arkansas State Treasurer. A former legislator, Ms. Shoffner shared her life as an elected official and the impact she has been able to have in her present role. A fan of the League of Women Voters, Ms. Shoffner shares our interest in accountable governance and was able to put this in a practical context. In addition, luncheon attendees were welcomed by Jonesboro Vice Mayor Harold Perrin who read a declaration from the Mayor commending the League for all its past work. The luncheon, held at the Holiday Inn of Jonesboro, provided a perfect forum for members and guests to renew old friendships and make new ones.

The highlight of the luncheon was the induction of six women into the League of Women Voters of Arkansas Hall of Fame. (See related article).

Participants were treated to an interesting afternoon of workshops on topics dear to the hearts of League members. Dr. Rick Grippo, Professor of Biology at Arkansas State University presented Sustainability: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Dr. Charles Hartwig, Professor of Political Science at Arkansas State University addressed the UN Millennium Goals with members. Two other topics were addressed by League members. Joyce Hale of Washington County gave a PowerPoint presentation on "State Tax Credits as an Incentive for Conservation Easements." Fairfield Bay member Dot Lishok offered relevant information in a talk entitled "Drilling for Natural Gas in the Fayetteville Shale and the Impact on the Environment."

The Convention was an important time to re-invigorate the state League. With no slate of officers or board members offered by a nominating committee, the Board of Directors were charged with reconstructing the officers and the board members at a special meeting to be called in June. Action, however, was taken on program priorities for the coming years. At the national level, Carolie Mullan encouraged and challenged all Leagues to participate in the Immigration Study which is currently underway. It is our good fortune that Carolie also chairs this study and pointed us to the wealth of resources available to Leagues throughout the country. At the state level, the following studies were approved for 2007-2009:

- State Tax Credits as an Incentive for Conservation Easements.
- The Environmental Impact of Drilling for Natural Gas in Arkansas

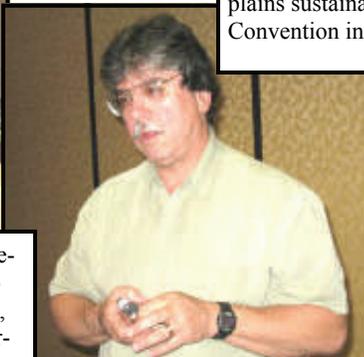
In addition, the LWVAR will update its study and stand on Arkansas laws regarding violence against children as well as the stand on water quality.

# Scenes from Convention 2007

From left: Jonesboro Vice Mayor Harold Perrin, Arkansas State Treasurer Martha Shoffner, and Jonesboro President Sue Garrison (below)



Arkansas State University Biology Professor, Dr. Rick Grippo, explains sustainability to Convention in Saturday



President Serafini (right) presents Hall of Fame plaque to recipient Barbara Weinstock, Jonesboro at luncheon, Saturday.

Jonesboro President Garrison discusses his UN talk with ASU professor Dr. Charles



President Mary Alice Serafini (center) presides over Sunday's business meeting, along with Treasurer Linda Okiror (right) while Secretary Sue Garrison takes notes.

Below, Carolie Mullan addresses Sunday session as Garrison takes notes.



(from left) Phyllis Leslie, Dot Lishok, Sue Garrison, Pauline Novak visit at the Presidents' Breakfast Sunday morning.

At right, conventioners (from left) Libby Wheeler, Serafini, Marion Orton, Garrison, Linda Okiror, Olga Berg enjoy local Jonesboro restaurant Saturday night



Joyce Hale delivers session to Saturday afternoon convention.



At right, convention attendees stop en route home for an impromptu picnic. From left, Nancy McCartney, Marion Orton, Joyce Hale, Libby Wheeler, Sue Garrison, Linda Okiror, Genie Donovan



# LWVAR Board Revitalization

Following Convention, members of the Board of Directors met on June 23 to reconstruct the Board of Directors. With a focus on impacting public policy and voter education, new officers and board members volunteered to share responsibilities to move the state League forward. In order to assure shared responsibility, each board member has an area of responsibility and a supportive and active committee established. Any League member can become a committee member by contacting the committee chair. Officers and board members are as follows:

**President:** Mary Alice Serafini;  
**First Vice President:** Stephanie Johnson  
**Second Vice President:** Linda Okiror;  
**Treasurer:** Don McMillan;  
**Secretary:** Sue Garrison.

Areas of responsibility and the assigned board members and committee members are as follows:

**Advocacy:** India Olean Brown, Chair.  
**Committee Members:** Stephanie Johnson and La Quita Saunders.  
**Bylaws Review and Revision:** Delores McMillan.  
**Committee Members:** La Quita Saunders and Marion Orton  
**Communications:** La Quita Saunders  
**Education:** Delores McMillan.  
**Committee Member:** Dot Lishock  
**Environment:** Dot Lishock.  
**Committee Member :** Marion Orton  
**Finance Drive:** Pauline Novak and Kathleen Velek.  
**Committee Member :** Stephanie Johnson  
**History:** Marion Orton.  
**Committee Member:** Libby Wheeler  
**Membership:** Luanne Weir  
**New League Development:** Gwen Millager  
**Nominating:** Sue Garrison.  
**Committee Members:** India Brown, Pauline Novak, Kathleen Velek, Libby Wheeler  
**Office Management:** Vacant  
**Voter Service:** Patty Sullivan  
**Committee Member:** Phyllis Leslie

## Why Don't You Volunteer for a Committee Today?



## LWVUS Immigration Study Set for Fall

The League of Women Voters of the United States has launched its Immigration Study. The following timeline and a wealth of resources can be found on the LWVUS website, [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). This information does not require a log in or password. We are grateful to our League Liaison from the national board, Carolie Mullan, for putting the study in motion and explaining it clearly at our training in July.

### Timeline:

- September 2006 to January 2008: Local Leagues help educate members and communities about immigration issues.
- September 1, 2007: Consensus questions and a Leader's Guide are sent to Local Leagues

- September 2007 to January 2008: Local Leagues take consensus.
- February 1, 2008: Deadline for the LWVUS to receive consensus response forms.
- February 1, 2008 to March 20, 2008, the LWVUS Immigration study uses consensus response to form the LWVUS position.
- Late March/early April 2008: the LWVUS Board adopts the position.

Fortunately, in Arkansas, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation has published two studies available on line on immigration in the state of Arkansas. Check out their website at [www.wrfoundation.org](http://www.wrfoundation.org).

## Strength in Numbers

As we begin a new year, it is helpful to remember that there is strength in numbers. As of Spring 2007, the membership count reported at Convention was:

### League Members in Local Leagues

Benton County	42
Fort Smith	27
Jonesboro	21
Pulaski County	85
Washington County	116
<b>Total League Members</b>	<b>308</b>

### Members at Large (MAL)

Fairfield Bay	12
Unassociated MAL	26
<b>Total MAL Members</b>	<b>38</b>

### Grand Total in the LWVAR 346

Each and every member is valuable to the League. Challenge yourselves to recruit and retain members as membership gatherings begin this fall. Check out the national website for some fresh ideas for membership recruitment.

## Education Funding Reform

On May 31, 2007, the Arkansas Supreme Court approved the state's system of financing public schools, thereby dismissing the 15 year old Lake View school funding case. In 2002 the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of Lake View stating that the Arkansas education funding system was unconstitutionally inadequate and inequitable.

In the high court's May 31st 11 page opinion the court commended the State Legislature's work and it's commitment to biennial educational adequacy review and making education the state's top funding priority. The opinion stated it is especially meaningful that the General Assembly has shown that "constitutional compliance in the field of education is an ongoing task requiring constant study, review, and adjustment."

The Legislature has committed to spending up to \$2.57 billion on education in 2008 and up to \$2.60 billion in 2009. This includes higher per-student funding, funds for higher teachers' salaries, aid for schools with non-English speaking students or below poverty-level students, aid for isolated schools, etc., etc. It also includes \$631 million to help renovate old and build new facilities.

After the high court's opinion was announced, Gov. Mike Beebe said he was happy with the result, adding that it is now up to the Legislature and future governors to make sure the state continues to adequately fund education.

It is also up to all of us as citizens to monitor how education funds are spent and let our legislators know that we expect continuing support for education, remembering that it is in the power of the next Legislature to reverse the progress which has been made.

—Delores McMillan, Education Chair

### Government in Arkansas

Government in Arkansas has been under review by the Arkansas Board of Education Textbook Selection Committee. We are awaiting the results of the review. Updated by Douglas and Margaret Reed of Arkadelphia and published as the seventh edition in September 2004, this book is a terrific resource in the classroom and for anyone who wishes to understand the structure and functions of the government of the State of Arkansas. In May, the Reeds and Shirley Jo Pine made a presentation to the Textbook Review Committee. This was followed by review by key classroom teachers and review committee members. In August, the Textbook Committee met to make their recommendations to the Board of Education. LWVAR now awaits their decision. If accepted as a state textbook, the Reeds will also include a teacher's edition to assure good use in the classroom. Small orders can be placed by calling the League office in Little Rock and larger orders can be ordered directly from the Book Depository in Little Rock. Check out our website, [www.lwv-arkansas.org](http://www.lwv-arkansas.org) for more information. There are currently 4,042 copies of Government in Arkansas available.



**Hall of Fame Inductees, 2007: Barbara Weinstock; Libby Wheeler, accepting for Wilma Sachs; Duane Boelter accepting for his late wife, Bobbie Boelter; Delores McMillan, Genie Donovan for Esther Clark; Pauline Novak for Katherine Howard**

## The League of Women Voters of Arkansas Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame inducted six remarkable women who demonstrated their commitment as participatory citizens to challenge and encourage others to be informed citizens. Their motivation to impact local, state and national public policy through voter education and advocacy was honored and greatly appreciated during the 28<sup>th</sup> Convention of the LWVAR. The inductees included:

- Bobbie Boelter, nominated by Fairfield Bay League, was honored for her achievement in organizing that league and leaving a lasting mark on members who continue to thrive on study, debate and advocacy of issues, issues, issues.
- Katherine Howard, nominated by the League of Women Voters of Fort Smith, and honored for her leadership in the League as well as her vast knowledge and activism in city government.
- Esther Clark reorganized the League of Women Voters of Arkansas in the 1950's and became the president of the revitalized League. Under her leadership local leagues grew and become secure. Interested in education and child welfare, she was nominated by the LWV of Washington County.
- Delores DeWitt McMillan is a current leader in the LWV of Fort Smith. Active in both the state and local league, she is a leader in voter education as well as engagement in city government structure and infrastructure issues.
- Dr. Wilma Cohn Sacks, nominated by the LWV of Washington County, was honored for her commitment to health and family planning information to rural women. As a League leader, she was a dynamic part of integration of the schools in Fayetteville. She also served as an active leader in LWVAR.
- Barbara Weinstock, nominated by the Jonesboro League, has been an active leader of many organizations, boards, committees and commissions in the state and county level. She currently serves on the Craighead Quorum Court. Her activism in the LWV of Jonesboro helped facilitate many changes in local public policy.

The League of Women Voters of Arkansas is honored to recognize these women and to share their impact on Arkansas through induction into the Hall of Fame. Other members of the Hall of Fame, previously inducted in 2005, are: Judge Bernice Kizer, Peg Anderson, Sylvia Swartz, Dorrie Swan, Lois J. Imhoff, Floy Looper, Marion Orton and Shirley McFarlin.

The LWVAR also acknowledges the work of La Quita Saunders for the editing and layout work on the Hall of Fame 2007 commemorative booklet.

**See individual pictures of inductees on page 9.**

## News From Around the State

### Fairfield Bay MAL Unit

The Fairfield Bay MAL unit started off the 2007/2008 year August 16 with a delicious Potluck Luncheon featuring guest speaker Shaun Connell of Fairfield Bay, the winner of the Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition. Shaun's speech entitled "Freedom's Challenge" was greatly enjoyed by everyone; it was easy to understand why he won the competition. It was with great enthusiasm and passion he shared with us his visit to Washington, D.C. where he represented Arkansas in the national Voice of Democracy competition.

The League has been busy working on the year's agenda. The first quarter will be spent researching Immigration and its impact on our counties.

FFB is also taking the lead in preparing the State Study recently approved at Convention 2007 on drilling issues. In furtherance of this, members India Brown and Dot Lishock will be attending a Symposium on Fayetteville Shale being presented by the University of Central Arkansas. There they hope to learn more about the discovery of the Fayetteville Shale and its effects on land owners, businesses and government.

### From Your Editor

Hope you enjoyed my first issue as *Voter* Editor. If you did not see information on your League's activities, it is because I did not have material to publish. Please have someone on your board designated as reporter to send me an article about your activities by the deadline requested. For the Fall issue, I am setting a deadline of October 15. You do not have to do a full story, just give me an outline of what you have been doing and I will be happy to write it up. Pictures are also welcome. Material should be submitted via email as an attached file to [lsaunders@astate.edu](mailto:lsaunders@astate.edu).

### Pulaski County

The summer heat did not slow down this League; after all, the hot issues were not waiting for cooler weather! In addition to the regular observations of the Little Rock Planning Commission by Ruth Bell and the Little Rock City Board of Directors by Kathleen Oleson, the League's Action Committee was busy with several important issues. These included the on-going negotiations by Central Arkansas Water (CAW) and the developers and landowners around Lake Maumelle, the request to increase the size of BFI Waste Management's solid waste landfill, the August special election to increase the power of the office of mayor of Little Rock, and the controversy surrounding the Little Rock School District.

Despite overwhelming public, and league, opposition, CAW decided in favor of developer Rick Ferguson's diversion ditch proposal and allow building and clear cutting of land within Critical Area A. LWVPC members were greatly disappointed that CAW chose to reach this settlement and plan to the fight for acceptance of the complete watershed development plan.

The LWVPC printed 4000 fact sheets describing the two choices voters were considering for giving Little Rock's mayor veto power and increasing the position to full-time. Many members walked door-to-door, or stood outside businesses, distributing the flyers.

This busy League is also currently planning a candidates' questionnaire for the contested area school board elections coming up September 18.

### Jonesboro

The LWV of Jonesboro finished up 2006-07 working on the state Convention, which they were pleased to host. Members enjoyed greeting old friends from around the state. Jonesboro thanks everyone who assisted in that effort.

Fall will include focus on the immigration study from national.

## News from Around the State, continued

### Washington County

Preliminary activities before the regular fall programs have kept the Board of Washington County's LWV very busy. Besides the usual planning for the upcoming year, a Fayetteville School Board race with controversial issues drawing public attention has provided a good opportunity for this League to inform the voters through a televised candidate forum. The local Government Channel will broadcast the hour-long program 13 times before Election Day. In addition, members are manning an information table two Saturdays at the Fayetteville Farmers' Market to publicize the election, pass out voter brochures and promote upcoming League activities.

Members concerned about the dependability of computerized voting machines gathered at Joyce Hale's home to view the documentary, *Hacking Democracy*, which covers voting equipment irregularities and evidence of manipulation in Florida and Ohio. The film was made available to the head of the County Election Commission and a visit followed to discuss concerns with county employees responsible for voting machine programming, distribution, and tabulation. The Board voted to purchase a copy of the documentary for each of the Springdale and Fayetteville

Libraries and submit a press release to encourage viewing. Members displayed voter information at the Annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki Commemoration Peace Rally held on the University of Arkansas campus in August.

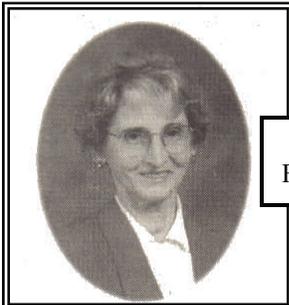
The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Secchi Day on Beaver Lake provided an opportunity for the LWVWC to display an educational booth stating the League's stands on water issues to participants. The Secchi measurement of the lake's turbidity was carried out by 200 volunteers at over 27 GPS site locations.

### Benton County

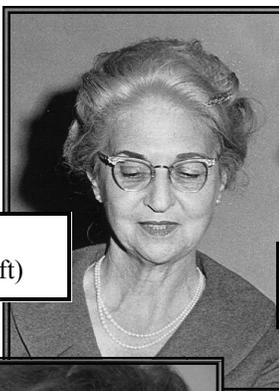
Benton County sent several members to the state board training session in Little Rock with Carolie Mullan in July and then held a member meeting to share what participants had learned. This was a "working" meeting for this still-young league to get organized.

Besides plans to share meetings with Washington County this fall over immigration, Benton Country continues to study Mental Health, gang prevention and the state highway and road system.

### Hall of Fame Inductees, 2007



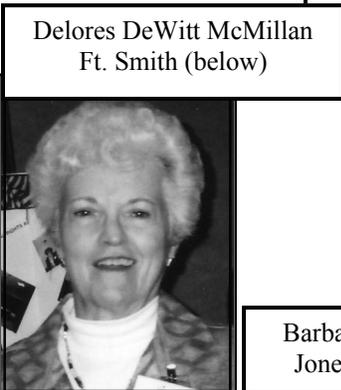
Bobbie Boelter,  
Fairfield Bay (left)



Esther Clark  
Fayetteville (left)



Dr. Wilma Cohn Sacks  
Fayetteville



Delores DeWitt McMillan  
Ft. Smith (below)



Barbara Weinstock  
Jonesboro (right)



Katherine Howard  
Fort Smith

## Upcoming Events

Early Voting Begins, School  
Board Elections .....Sept. 11

State Board Meeting .....Sept. 15

School Board Elections.....Sept. 18

School Election Run-off..... Oct. 9

Stories due to LaQuita  
for Fall Issue, *Voter* ..... Oct. 15

Early Voting Begins,  
Presidential Primary! ..... Jan. 29

Arkansas Presidential  
Primary Election ..... Feb. 5

## WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

AUGUST 26, 2007, MARKED  
THE 87<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE PASSAGE OF THE  
19<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT GIVING  
WOMEN THE RIGHT TO VOTE!  
WE OWE SO MUCH TO THOSE  
HARDWORKING  
SUFFRAGETTES!  
WE'VE COME A LONG WAY IN  
87 YEARS!  
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

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