



The League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

www.lwvarwc.org

January-February, 2011 VOL. 58, ISSUE 1

Calendar

JAN. 10, Mon., 5:30 pm, Consensus Activity for Child Poverty Issues followed by Board Meeting, Joyce Hale's home 285 W. Cleburn.

JAN. 11, Tues., Deadline to submit Women In History nominations. Contact Mary Bess Mulhollan at 442-7333 or check the LWVWC website for an application form.

JAN. 19, Wed., 6:30 pm, Fayetteville Streamside Ordinance, Washington Regional Education Center at Pat Walker Center for Seniors, 12 E. Appleby Rd., Fayetteville.

FEB. 14, Mon., 5:30 pm, Board Meeting, Joyce Hale's home 285 W. Cleburn.

FEB. 16, Wed., 6:30 pm, Eco-Logic Project, Washington Regional Education Center at Pat Walker Center for Seniors, 12 E. Appleby Rd., Fayetteville.

From Joyce's Desk

We are down to the wire on our membership recruitment period and find a significant drop in membership. Last January we reported 101 members to LWVUS. So far this year only 72% of the membership has renewed. Fortunately we have had ten new members, but this still places us at almost 18% below last year. Considering the complexity and number of issues that this economy, environment, and political climate bring, the League's challenge to educate voters has never been more important.

Please take this time to renew your membership, if you have not already, give a gift membership, or encourage a new resident or friend to join. As our representatives and senators gather for a new legislative session, you need to stay informed about this activity.

How often last year did you visit the LWVWC website? Sally Kelly continually updates information in a user-friendly fashion. Remember to share links with others who need some of the information available. We also have an updated state web site <http://www.lwv-arkansas.org/index.html>. Here you will see how to order the updated edition of *Government in Arkansas* by Douglas and Margaret Reed. This book, which sells for \$15.00 plus shipping, should be kept in mind for students taking civics or government classes.

Consensus Activity and Questions for Child Poverty Issues by Laura Kellams

At a meeting Monday, Jan. 10, the League will work to come to consensus on the best policy measures to reduce child poverty. While this meeting will be held in conjunction with our annual board meeting, all League members are invited and encouraged to attend. Come, have your say on what League priorities should be!

We are studying this issue because of the rapid increase in child poverty in Washington County and in our region. The number of kids who live in poverty (income of \$18,300 for a family of three) in our congressional district grew from 20 to 25 percent in just one year, from 2008 to 2009. Our region has the highest rate of uninsured children in the state.

Here are consensus questions we will consider on Monday:

1. Is there a link between child poverty and a lack of educational opportunity?

If yes, do you support advocating for Washington County lawmakers to:

- Place limits on school districts' ability to carry over state revenue that is supposed to be used for the benefit of low-income children?
- Expand access to quality early childhood education, as the Arkansas Better Chance program?
- Encourage the creation of after-school and summer programs?
- Support equal opportunity for higher education opportunities for undocumented immigrants?

2. Are there barriers that prevent families in poverty from seizing economic opportunities?

If yes, do you support advocating for Washington County lawmakers to:

- Expand access to subsidized childcare for all eligible, low-income working families?
- Establish a refundable, state-level, earned income tax credit?

3. Is there a link between physical and financial well-being for families?

If so, do you support advocating for Washington County lawmakers to:

- Expand school wellness centers in more schools?
- Reduce the number of uninsured children in Washington County by expanding ARKids First eligibility and making enrollment in the program easier for families?
- Establish health literacy programs?

January 19th Panel Discussion to Focus on Riparian Protection Ordinances by Barbara G. Taylor

A streamside, or riparian zone, protection ordinance is scheduled to come before the Fayetteville City Council in early February, 2011. To help inform League members and the public about the reasons for the Fayetteville proposal and similar streamside protection legislation, the League of Women Voters of Washington County has organized a panel discussion for Wednesday, January 19, 2011. The meeting will be held at 6:30 pm, in the Pat Walker Center for Seniors at the Washington Regional Education Center, 12 East Appleby Road in Fayetteville.

The City of Fayetteville is situated on two watersheds, one draining into the Illinois River, which flows into Oklahoma, and the other into the White River, part of the watershed of Beaver Lake, the source of drinking water for more than 250,000 people in Northwest Arkansas. The area is under scrutiny by Region 6 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) because of high levels of phosphorus in the Illinois River watershed, and Oklahoma has filed lawsuits over phosphorus in the river.

While the current EPA focus is on regulating point sources of pollution, such as wastewater treatment facilities, the city has been equally concerned about nonpoint sources of pollution, such as run-off from lawn and golf course fertilizers, farm and domestic animal manure, pollutants from parking lots, and sediment from construction sites and unpaved roads. The City of Fayetteville made a five-year commitment in 2006 to spend \$200,000 a year to reduce nonpoint pollution; its 2009 Nutrient Management Plan, funded in part by the Beaver Water District, is designed to reduce sediments and nutrients from nonpoint sources.

If both point and nonpoint sources of nutrients such as phosphorus are not addressed, Fayetteville and other cities in Northwest Arkansas face the possibility of having to meet higher standards of wastewater treatment and expensive water treatment facility upgrades. The EPA, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and others agree that it is more cost-effective to prevent pollutants from entering streams, rivers and watersheds than it is to remove them.

A significant amount of sediment and nutrient removal is accomplished by healthy riparian zones, the areas along streams and rivers throughout watersheds. These areas can provide water filtration, temperature management, erosion control, floodwater management and wildlife habitat when best management practices are used.

The Fayetteville Streamside Protection ordinance promotes healthy riparian areas. It was developed after a review of scientific literature and riparian zone ordinances from other communities and in consultation with the EPA, the Beaver Water District, the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, the City of Fayetteville Environmental Action Committee and the Green Infrastructure/Land Use Committee of the Fayetteville Forward Economic Accountability Council. During 2010, two workshops were held to help citizens understand riparian buffer zone science and the ordinance's policy goals, the city conducted an on-line survey to gather citizen input, and a question-and-answer session was held for affected property owners.

This League's January 19th panel discussion will focus on the proposed Fayetteville ordinance and the reasons for its proposal, the economic implications of riparian protection, and the possibility that the Fayetteville ordinance could be a model for other area cities.

Panelists will include Robert Morgan, Ph.D., Manager of Environmental Quality for the Beaver Water District; Sarah Lewis, Ph.D., Ward 4 Representative to the Fayetteville City Council; and Karen Minkel, Director of Strategic Planning and Internal Consulting for the City of Fayetteville.

The public is invited and encouraged to attend this important environmental forum.

A copy of the proposed Fayetteville ordinance, a fact sheet prepared by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, and a citizens' guide to best riparian management practices can be found on the city website, www.accessfayetteville.org; search for "Streamside Protection Ordinance."

A 2005 EPA study on the effectiveness of riparian buffer zones can be found at: www.epa.gov/nrmrl/pubs/600R05118/600R05118.pdf.

A study released in December, 2010, of the overall quality of water in Beaver Lake, our drinking water reservoir, entitled "Constituent Concentration, Loads, and Yields to Beaver Lake, Arkansas, Water Years 1999-2008" can be found at www.bwdh2o.org.

Issues and Plans for Public Transit in Washington and Benton Counties by Karen Rollet-Crocker

In April 2011, the League of Women Voters of Washington County will present a panel on the need for public transit, especially for those with disabilities. We hope that League members will study this issue this spring in preparation for our panel.

Transit Development Plan - This past Fall 2010, Washington County League of Women Voters member, Karen Rollet-Crocker served as the LWV Representative on the Advisory Committee for a *Transit Development Plan*. The planning process was impressive. It included staff and public input, bus rider surveys, and current bus service. Future planning is based on 'latent demand' such as low income areas, population growth areas, and businesses with major numbers of employees. The planning process was funded by the State of Arkansas and developed by Connetics, Inc.

Funding Issues - Our public transit systems are at a major crossroads. Both Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) and Razorback Transit will face a federal/state funding reduction when the population of NWA goes over 200,000. The recent census revealed that this has already happened. Basically our bus systems have two categories of funding, “operating costs” and “capital funds”. Capital funds for facilities and equipment (e.g. bus purchases and maintenance) will still be paid by federal and state funds, but operating costs for personnel (e.g. staff and drivers), that have previously been paid with outside funding, will no longer be paid by this source. The shift will happen in the next year or so.

Currently, local funding for ORT is a 30% municipal match, decided upon by each City Council. The tight economy has led some City Councils to threaten withdrawal of funding. The new *Transit Development Plan* suggests that the ORT system fill the primary needs of a growing population. A new source of funding is required to keep our bus system and expand it in the future. The ORT Advisory Board has suggested a ¼ cent sales tax.

Community Support - It is hoped that the new *Transit Development Plan* will give our communities direction and help convince the public to support the maintenance and improvement of the transit system. If the system is more extensive, then the service will be higher for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) riders.

Americans with Disabilities Act - The *Transit Development Plan* did not address disabilities, due to the fact that the Americans for Disability Act has major requirements for any public transit system that uses federal funds, which are not well known to most of us. It is clear that, if the system expands, so will the services offered to those with disabilities. Requirements were enumerated at an informational meeting hosted by ORT and Razorback Transit. Meeting attendees included several riders who required disability access, representatives who handled disability ridership, and Karen Rollet-Crocker/League of Women Voters Representative. A series of notes on specific requirements for America with Disabilities Act have been posted on the LWVWC Website (www.lwvarwc.org).

Supplements to This Article - PLEASE GO TO THE LWVWC Website (www.lwvarwc.org) to access the **Table of Contents** for the *Northwest Arkansas Transit Development Plan Final Report/December 2010* along with the following **selected section summaries**:

- **Table of Contents**
- **Executive Summary** in which three levels of planning are suggested: 1) Near Term, 2) Short Range, 3) Long Range
- **Potential Transit Service Needs Summary**
- **Service Plan Recommendations Summary**

For the complete *Transit Development Plan* with maps please go to <http://www.ozark.org>

Fayetteville Shale Update... the Ongoing Saga by Joyce Hale

Interest in the production of natural gas continues as state agencies take a look at the rules governing past production and consider updating regulation of high pressure, slick-water, horizontal hydrofracking (fracking). The Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission, which is the official permitting authority to establish a natural gas well, has recently inflicted a large question mark over what had first been reported as full disclosure of the chemicals used in the fracking process. Federal exemptions from the Safe Drinking Water Act have allowed chemical manufacturers proprietary secrecy of fracking ingredients. Individuals, who worry about water contamination and health risks, have been faced with spending thousands of dollars in an effort to identify ingredients they suspect are contaminating their water wells.

Recently a proposed rule change was thought to identify all chemicals but disclosure was limited to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), which are known to lack full disclosure. The League of Women Voters of Arkansas joined with the national Sierra Club and other groups and individuals to submit comments stating that greater disclosure was needed. In a surprise move at the AOGC public hearing, a draft with completely new wording was introduced. This prevented those attending from having sufficient time to consider changes and determine if they were acceptable. The AOGC then gave its conditional approval and released press statement that implied full disclosure had been established. The media then began claiming that Arkansas was one of the first states to provide chemical full disclosure.

If a commissioner does not request reconsideration of the new rule before June 10, it will pass without further public input on January 15. Unfortunately, there are still great gaps in naming all toxic ingredients. Companies are permitted to ask for proprietary protection that allows non-disclosure. Further identification must be given, if required for medical treatment, but secrecy is still maintained. Only authorized medical personnel and the Director of the AOGC are approved to have the information. This is much less than what those concerned about health and safety thought was being achieved when the favorable news articles went out.

Now the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is rethinking what the requirements should be for the design and management of waste pits. This can impact more than gas wells, but they are the area of greatest concern. It is critical to carefully specify designs and procedures named in general rules. Once they are approved they are routinely granted without public input.

As we approach the new legislative session, we should be ready to act in support of legislation that will require industries to produce natural gas in a safer, cleaner way. Other states with a longer history have made some of these needed changes and we should adapt what is appropriate to Arkansas. Stay alert to improvements that need grass roots support to be successful. You will be getting action alerts when the time is right to encourage our representatives on this topic and others that impact the stands we have taken.

Holiday Social Enjoys Lovely New Accommodations by Joyce Hale

For those who were unable to attend the Holiday celebration at the lovely new Lodge facility at Butterfield Trails Village, you missed an enjoyable event with good food, visiting, and some hands-on crafting. Several dozen tree ornaments were molded earlier out of a homemade play dough recipe to give those who wanted to lend an artistic hand a chance to paint them for children at Jones Elementary School. These decorations along with food items, books, and toys were collected for gift sacks that each child could take home. Money was also donated to help with the project.

It must have brought out the child in those who participated because several have asked for the recipe to make the Play Dough. It has a fine grain finish and dries hard without baking. Share it with others who have youngsters wanting something to do on snow days.

Baking Soda and Cornstarch Play Dough

2 c. baking soda
1 c. cornstarch
1-1/2 c. warm water

Mix baking soda and cornstarch in a pan. Add water and stir until smooth. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Remove from heat and pour onto a board to cool. Knead when it is cool. Store in a tightly covered container. (Food coloring may be added to water). Roll out to 1/4 inch thickness on a plastic covered surface. Cut out shapes using cookie cutters. Avoid getting layers too thick as it will have a tendency to crack when drying. Place cut-outs on a screen or rack with narrow wire spacing to allow drying from the top and bottom at the same time. Allow a day or two of drying before painting or decorating. Punch a hole for hanging while dough is still moist or carefully drill when thoroughly dry. Paint and glue sparkles for decorations. Spray with a clear sealer, if desired. Hang by a ribbon or cord.



Thank you to our members who have joined or renewed for the 2010-2011 fiscal year:

Bootsie Ackerman
 Fran Alexander
 Nancy G. Allen
 Lois Alward
 Mary Pat Anderson
 Sara Bartlett
 Leslie Belden
 Wanda Belzung
 Jo Bennett
 Hope Bradberry
 Karla Bradley
 Anita F. Bukey
 Judith Carey
 Robert Caulk
 Sara Caulk
Betty Cook-Rottmann
 Bethel Cunningham
 Betty L. Davis
 Jane Davis
 Mary Dillard
 Eugenia Donovan
Jenni Echols
 Colene Gaston
 Jay Hale
 Joyce Hale
 Margo Heinzelmann
 Dr. Peter Heinzelmann
 Patricia Hensman

Liz Howick
 Laura Hughes
 Dave Hunter
 Harriet H. Jansma
 Laura Kellams
 Sally Kelley
Joyce Kennedy
 Mary Lynn Kennedy
 John King
 Jesse Koeppel
 Dr. Bettie Lu Lancaster
 Robert B. Leflar
 Sarah May Leflar
 Rep. Uvalde Lindsey
DeDe Long
 Louise Mann
April Maranto
 Nancy McCartney
Ann Mesrobian
 Dr. Roger Montgomery
 Izola P. Morgan
 Kerry Mueller
 Mary Bess Mulhollan
 Dot Neely
 Jeanine Neuse
 Steven M. Neuse
 Linda Nicometo
 Nancy Owens

Dr. Janine Parry
 J. P. Peters
 Anna Pritchard
 Dr. Susan Rausch
 Molly Rawn
 Karen Rollet-Crocker
Healthier Schneller
 William Schreckhise
 Dr. James Scroggs
 Dr. Jane Scroggs
 Berta Seitz
 Phil Serafini
 Mary Alice Serafini
 Debra Sexton
 Betty Solis
 Wanda B. Stephens
 Dr. Barbara Taylor
 Bobbie Nell Templeton
 Mrs. Gene Terwaser
Gladys Tiffany
 Martha Ward
 Elizabeth Wheeler
 Jacqueline Williams
 Amy Wilson
Dina Wood
 Marge Zinke
 Dr. Otto Zinke
 UA Libraries - Serials

***New Members in Bold Font**

February Program Examines Energy Savings with Fayetteville's Pilot Study

EcoLogical Communities is an outreach program of the Applied Sustainability Center at the University of Arkansas. The goal of the program is to promote more sustainable choices on behalf of communities. The program is unique in many ways. It presents, for the first time, a dashboard for the city of Fayetteville showing how much energy it takes to run the city, how much water is used and how much trash is generated in one year. The program also offers tools for individuals to monitor their own energy and water use. In addition, there is a tool that residents can use to manage their commuting related expenses and carbon emissions. No one can solve all the world's environmental problems, but when each person does his or her part, and we add all of the savings together, it is easy to see that together, we can make a difference. Our choices matter. In EcoLogical Communities, there's a way to measure the difference.

Michele Halsell will review the city dashboard, personal dashboards, the eco-commuter tool, how to set your own energy efficiency goals and monitor your progress.

FOLD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY
Post Office Box 4
Fayetteville, AR 72702

Nonprofit Organization
U. S. Postage Paid
Fayetteville, AR
Permit #461