



The League of Women Voters Washington County

NOVEMBER 2006, VOL. 53, ISSUE 4

CALENDAR

November 13, Monday, Board Meeting, Joyce Hale's home, 285 W. Cleburn, 6:30 p.m.

November 15, Wednesday, Monthly Member Meeting. "Managing Our Natural Resources for Conservation," led by Karen Rollet-Crocker. Community Room, Fayetteville Public Library, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. See Voter story below.

November 20, Monday, Public Hearing by the Arkansas Pollution, Control and Ecology Commission concerning proposed changes to Arkansas' Water Quality Standards. 6:00 p.m., Terrace Room, Clarion Inn. The LWV supports the protection of Arkansas' Extraordinary Resource Waters.

FROM LIBBY'S DESK

If the Voter is late this month, it is my fault. I and the other member of the Ukrainian Planning Committee are still in recovery after a wonderful but exhausting visit by some very special Ukrainian professionals (all men!) eager to learn about our local government. We are now working on final reports and thank-you notes to so many in the community who helped make this visit a success. There are too many League members to name who contributed food, hospitality and talent to the program. Thank you all as your involvement enriched this hosting experience.

To Bettie Lu Lancaster and Cathy Boyd, who bed and breakfasted our visitors, we are indebted. Many thanks to the committee that made the Ukrainian Hosting Program possible. They are Mary Alice Serafini, Steve and Jeanine Neuse, Karen Minkel, Nancy McCartney, Sally Kelley, Bettie Lu Lancaster and Margaret Clark. Each planned and carried out parts of this program, and they are still working on the follow-up. See article below for a description of this wonderful week.

Mary Dillard continues to organize the last of the candidate forums, which are being aired on the Government Cable Channel. The forum of Lindsley Smith and Cephus Richard, moderated by Bettie Lu, was taped on October 20th.

We are very excited that our League's nomination of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association for an ENVY Award has made the final round in the selection process. See

Joyce Hale's article below. And thanks are due to Joyce, who wrote the nomination application.

Finally, be sure to mark you calendar for the monthly membership meeting on Wednesday, November 15th. We are beginning our theme of the year, "Smart Growth" with an innovative look at how to identify significant areas that need conservation in our rapidly growing county.

UKRAINIAN HOSTING PROGRAM

The best way to summarize the visit of our four Ukrainian guests, their facilitator and translator, in the Open World Hosting program is to share some of the quotations heard during their stay in Arkansas. We were fortunate to have engaging young men whose interest and questions brought out the best in our presenters. Heard during the week: "I feel like a celebrity." A comment by Yuriy, who spent Friday at a Downtown Fayetteville Partners' retreat and then was greeted at the Farmers' Market on Saturday by many of those who had attended the retreat.

"In Arkansas, someone found guilty of a felony cannot even vote. We have a Prime Minister in the Ukraine who has been in jail twice."

"It's the culture. What we lack is the trust and faith you have in your political and legal systems. We have the mechanisms, but not the culture." (Anatoliy Boyko)

Vitaliy was most impressed by the Jones Center, funded by the estate of a man who made money in the trucking industry. "You Americans not only LIVE well, you PASS AWAY well." Another quote regarding the Jones Center: "We need to work on our oligarchs who made fortunes in the collapse of the Soviet Union to donate money to community development."

"You Americans work hard to make a living, then, when you retire, instead of relaxing, you work hard as volunteers to better your community. This is not the case in our country, and it is something we need to encourage." A tribute to the LWVWC, I think.

"To have groups in the community meet together to discuss how to make the community better is awesome. At home, it is every man for himself."

"I looked on the internet about Arkansas before I came and was dismayed. I thought I was coming to the end of the earth. What a wonderful community this is!"

From this all-male delegation who had to find something to take home as souvenirs to wives and children: "I've never been shopping so much in my life. I'll need to get into therapy for this addiction when I get home."

That a cultural exchange occurred between our League and the Ukrainian visitors was evident at the farewell dinner at Joyce Hale's home. Joyce's 10 year old granddaughter, Halely, greeted the Ukrainians at the front door. She was in native dress and held out a tray of bread and salt, the traditional Ukrainian welcome. No matter how modest the home, bread and salt are always available to guests. These men were moved – and speechless.

Thanks to all who made this hosting experience a special event for our League.

LWWWC Nomination

AWARD UPDATE: League members are waiting with great anticipation for the winner of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality's Envy Award announcement. This is the second year for ADEQ to solicit statewide nominations for examples of environmental excellence in five areas: Innovation, Green Government, Environmental Education & Outreach, Environmental Improvement or Enhancement, and Sustainability.

Our nominee, Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, was named a finalist in the Innovation category for their unique method of assessing and ranking landscapes needing preservation. We have been notified that FNHA and League representatives are invited to the awards luncheon November 4th where there will be the public announcement of the awards. We especially applaud the work of Karen Rollet-Crocker for her enormous time contribution to this project. A special thank you goes to Mina Marsh for her guiding hand in making the League's nomination a convincing and professional document.

Development pressures have changed the landscape in NW Arkansas at a rate that now has the public's attention. Perhaps this award will bring needed information to other communities facing the same problems of rapid growth. Watch for more details of this announcement and other winners after the awards luncheon.

Joyce Hale

Mapping Our Natural Resources for Conservation

The League of Women Voters of Washington County will sponsor a session on mapping our local natural resources for conservation at the Fayetteville Blair Library on Wednesday, November 15, from 6-7:30 pm.

For the last year, Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, a local volunteer

organization, has been conducting a hunt for the most highly ranked natural sites in and around Fayetteville. The study area goes beyond Fayetteville's planning area and includes the Illinois and White River sub-watersheds and nearby communities. To create a detailed map that identifies and ranks top sites, the study has used Geographic Information Systems from The Nature Conservancy, the advice of a Science Advisory Committee, and a public questionnaire. Top ranked sites are from the broad study area, the City planning area, the City, and each ward. Members of FNHA and the Landscape Architecture Department have begun to analyze these sites 'on the ground', assessing vegetation types, natural features that allow a glimpse of the unique qualities of the region, and recreational possibilities of walking and hiking.

The study has already contributed to the 2025 City Plan for Fayetteville. Most importantly, it will help FNHA create a 'short list' that will provide focus to future conservation efforts. This includes working with specific landowners to develop conservation easements, helping neighborhood and community associations conserve land, and working with city leaders to guide land use policy.

The discussion will describe what criteria was used to find the best conservation sites, identify examples of clusters that have the most highly ranked sites, and discuss the benefits of land conservation to the public, individual owners, and developers.

Funds for this project were provided in part by the Arkansas Forestry Commission's Urban Forestry Program and the U.S. Forest Service.

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