



The League of Women Voters Washington County

January, February 2009, VOL. 56, ISSUE 1

Calendar

January 12, Monday, 6:30—Board Meeting, Joyce Hale's home, 285 W. Cleburn

January 21, Wednesday, 6:30—Monthly Member Meeting, Joyce Hale's home,
285 W. Cleburn, Consensus on State Study (Tax Incentives for Land
Conservation)

February 9, Monday, 6:30—Board Meeting, Joyce Hale's home, 285 W. Cleburn

February 18, Wednesday, 6:00—Monthly Member Meeting, Fayetteville Public
Library, Walker Room, Foster Care in Arkansas.

From the Fill-In President:

Our LWVWC was very fortunate that Louise Kraemer volunteered to be president for the 2008-9 year. Unfortunately, Louise had to resign in December due to ill health, and she is now with family and receiving medical attention at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. We appreciate Louise's service and wish her a speedy recovery and return to Fayetteville. If you would like to send a card to Louise, mail can reach her at 20 Parton Court, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022.

I (Libby Wheeler) agreed to serve out the rest of Louise's term, which ends in June. The Nominating Committee will be looking for a new president as well as other officers and board members in the coming months. Please be responsive to their calls. Serving as an officer or board member is fun, a good way to meet interesting people and to keep abreast of what's going on in Fayetteville and Washington County.

Interesting programs have been planned for this winter and spring, including one on foster care in our area and one on local markets. At the January meeting, we will reach consensus on the LWVWC's study on conservation easements. The board looks forward to seeing you at League programs in the 2009. Happy New Year!

February Monthly Meeting

The February Monthly Meeting of the Washington County League of Women Voters will be a fact finding informational program on Foster Care in Arkansas. The meeting will be held on February 18, 2009 at 6:00 PM until 7:30 PM in the Walker Room of the Fayetteville Public Library. The meeting is open and the public is welcome.

A distinguished panel of speakers will present in-depth information about child care:

Pat Page served as Director of the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in the Department of Human Services, from October 2006 to October 2008. Pat began her career in child welfare as a Foster Care Specialist in Washington County. Pat has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville with a major in Social Welfare, An MSW from Florida State University and a J.D. from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Pat retired in October of 2008.

Laura Kellams is the first Northwest Arkansas Director of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. She was a reporter for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette for more than 11 years, covering politics, government and regional affairs in a 12-county region. Laura has a journalism degree from the University of Arkansas. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families has just made public a study entitled An Analysis of the Arkansas Child Welfare Crisis.

Keith Vire has a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation, a MSE in Special Education and a B.D.E. in Special Education. He was Executive Director of Benton County Adult Development Center, Rogers, Arkansas and Executive Director of Abilities Unlimited, Inc. of Fayetteville. Keith currently serves as CEO of Arkansas Support Network, Inc. and is Chair of the Governing Board of Ozark Guidance. Keith has been President of a number of statewide and local organizations concerned with disability and low income issues. Arkansas Support Network and Ozark Guidance provide therapeutic foster care.

The panel moderator is Lynn Donald-Carver, who is Program Director for Arkansas Support Network, Inc. and supervises their Family Support Programs. Lynn has worked for over 20 years in the disability field and with a number of groups and organizations on children's issues. She is a past president of the board and current board member of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families and was recently co-chair of the Governor's Task Force on Best Practice in After School and Summer Care. Lynn was recognized in 2002 as the National Child Advocate of the Year by the National Association of Child Advocates.

Note: The League does not have a position on the child care issue but the members have shown considerable interest in the topic, especially after the program on child care last year. Having a speakers panel with the knowledge and experience to help us to understand the problems in the foster care system, to explain the corrective measures that are being proposed and instituted and to answer the hard questions is a rare privilege. Not only will this meeting provide the kind of information we need when deciding on our study topic for next year, it should be extremely interesting and timely.

Women's History Banquet

The Women's History Banquet will be March 30th at the Clarion. The committee is hoping to have most of the nominations in by Jan. 16th, so that we can have time to get more information if we need it on some of the nominations. This is the second year that we have asked people to fill

out a nomination form for someone they think deserves the award. We thought it was very successful last year. We had many more nominations to consider from different areas of Washington County.

If you need a form to nominate a person call or e-mail Mary Bess Mulhollan at 442-7333, marybess@cox.net or Bobbie Nell Templeton 442-9412, bnmtemp@aol.com.

State Study Concludes

Guidelines for the state study, *Providing State Tax Incentives for Land Conservation*, have been available since summer and the LWVWC program in November featured a panel to discuss both support and opposition. Leagues throughout the state have met to review the materials and discuss the consensus exercise. LWVWC has made these materials available at <http://www.lwvarwc.org/lwvar/lwvarconservationstudy.htm> as well as in a notebook on reserve at the Fayetteville Public Library. A copy of the summary guide was mailed to those not receiving their Voter electronically. If anyone has questions, please contact Joyce Hale, 527-2777 or joyhale43@sbcglobal.net.

The consensus meeting will take place Wednesday, January 21, 6:30 at Joyce Hale's home, 285 W. Cleburn, Fayetteville. Barbara Taylor will facilitate the discussion by reviewing a brief summary and developing discussion to establish the LWVWC positions. The following statements are being considered by all state Leagues for Consensus, No Consensus, or Disagree:

1. Arkansas should offer state tax incentives to protect the following types of property:
 - a). farmland with significant agricultural production value,
 - b.) forest land valued for timber production and/or watershed protection,
 - c.) watersheds that have significant impacts on water quality and quantity,
 - d.) wildlife habitat needed to provide stability for threatened species,
 - e). historic sites with cultural significance.
2. If Arkansas establishes a land conservation incentive program the guidelines should define property eligibility more strictly than those provided by the Federal government. (See Internal Revenue Code, Section 170(h) in materials for this information.)
3. The "Highest and Best Use" of land should consider conservation values that cannot be measured in financial terms.

4. A property owner's decision to conserve land should not bind or encumber future owners.
5. Persons or organizations eligible to hold donated conservation easements must demonstrate transaction transparency, the capacity for competent stewardship and some level of accreditation before receiving approval for tax credits.
6. Instruction approved by professional licensing boards should be required for Certified Public Accountants, attorneys, real estate brokers, financial advisors, estate planners and land appraisers before they are permitted to advise clients regarding the use of conservation easements.

SAVE THE DATE!

Our LWVWC is hosting the State League Convention here in Fayetteville the weekend of April 24-26. The committee planning the Convention has reserved the Fayetteville Library for Saturday's events, which will include a buffet luncheon, tour of the library and several informative program sessions. Saturday evening we will congregate at the Fay Jones home of Sandy Edwards for wine and hors d'oeuvres and a catered dinner. This is planned as a social evening where we can get to know colleagues from around the state. Sunday morning we'll convene at the Extension Office for a light breakfast and the business meeting.

We are hoping to keep the cost of this event minimal and will offer out of town guests home stay if they wish. Five rooms have been reserved at the Cosmopolitan for those who desire a hotel. We will begin the program planning this month and would appreciate any suggestions you have as to speakers and topics. We are also looking for volunteers to house guests and prepare something for breakfast on Sunday morning. Please contact Libby (glwheel@prodigy.net) if you can help in these areas.

Most of all we'd like your attendance, especially on Saturday. Our League is the largest in the state, and we need a good showing of our members to support this state League event. Please plan to attend.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

Post Office Box 4
Fayetteville, AR 72702
Voice Mail: 479-575-1841
<http://www.lwvarwc.org>

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