



The VOTER

January-February, 2012 VOL. 59, ISSUE 1

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League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

P.O. Box 4, Fayetteville, AR 72702

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CALENDAR

JANUARY 12 – APRIL 11 Application period for Hispanic Women’s Organization of Arkansas Scholarship for Latino Students (See articles on pages 5 & 6)

JANUARY 24 (Tuesday) - 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. LWVWC MONTHLY MEETING AND PUBLIC PANEL DISCUSSION PROGRAM ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS in the Walker Room of the Fayetteville Public Library, 401 West Mountain Street (see “Emergency Preparedness . . . on page 2)

JANUARY 26, 2012 (Thursday) – DEADLINE for LWVWC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (Information/Form on page 7)

JANUARY 31, 2012 (Tuesday) – 9:00 - 11:00 AM ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & OUTREACH NETWORKING - at the Washington County Cooperative Extension Service, 2536 N. McConnell Avenue in Fayetteville (See “Environmental Education . . .” on page 8)

FEBRUARY 15 (Wednesday) – 6:00 PM, PRESENTATION ON IMMIGRATION LEGAL ISSUES IN NWA by Professor Elizabeth Young/Director of UA School of Law Immigration Legal Clinic in the Sanctuary of the First United Presbyterian Church, 695 Calvin St, Fayetteville, AR. **NOTE:** 5:30 PM Dinner (optional at \$6 per person) in Fellowship Hall prior to presentation. RSVP Required by eMail (wwreserve@fupcfay.org) or call 856-6247 (See “Immigration . . .” on page 2)

FEBRUARY 22 (Wednesday) – 6:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. LWVUS PRIVATIZATION STUDY in the Walker Room of the Fayetteville Public Library (See “LWVUS National Study . . .” on page 3)

MARCH 14 (Wednesday) 6:30- 8:00 p.m. – LWVWC Program and Study Selection for 2012-2013 in the home of Lynn Carver

From the LWVWC President

By Mary Alice Serafini

Being a member of the Washington County League of Women Voters continues to present opportunities and interesting connections. In December, we thought we would cook some tamales, have a party, and make some new friends. Much to our surprise and good fortune, Margarita Solorzano, Executive Director of the Hispanic Women’s Organization of Arkansas (HWOA), introduced us to some remarkable students with an incredible desire for education, as well as an incredible drive to register voters and do everything they can to make the DREAM act a reality. We learned so much and ended up with a challenge from a generous League member to match a gift of \$5,000 for scholarships for Latino students. This partnership with HWOA and Margarita resulted in \$10,000 for scholarships! Read more about this in Joyce Hale’s article “LWVWC Scholarship Fund Challenge is Met!” on page 6.

You won’t want to miss our January and February 2012 LWVWC programs. In January, we will hold a public panel discussion on Emergency Preparedness and what that means in citizens’ lives. You will hear the experts who live and breathe preparedness for our county, city, and university on a daily basis. In February, come participate in the LWVUS study on privatization of what we usually think of as government services. This study will inform us as voters about the good, bad and the ugly of privatization and help us to arrive at a consensus in April. Remember that the study process is how we become better informed voters and then help others to understand public policy.

Emergency Preparedness Panel Discussion By Ivy Mullen

The League of Women Voters of Washington County will hold an Emergency Preparedness Panel Discussion on Tuesday, January 24, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Fayetteville Public Library. The panel, consisting of five community experts on the subject, will present the local structure of emergency preparedness and what individuals can expect during emergency situations.

The panel will discuss the organization and effectiveness of local immediate response systems. Other topics include: the responsibilities of individual citizens, how families can prepare for emergencies, what local emergencies are likely to occur and how the city, county and University of Arkansas set priorities to assist citizens when an emergency occurs.

“Personal experiences with area tornadoes have really brought this issue to our attention,” says League Vice President, Joyce Hale, “And after the ice storm three years ago we saw how disruptive it was to local budgets.”

Speaking at the panel will be Washington County judge, Marilyn Edwards, and emergency manager for the city of Fayetteville, Don Marr. Representing the Washington County Department of Emergency Management are John Luther, director, and Rick Johnson, deputy director. From the University of Arkansas will be Matt Mills with Emergency Management.

This event is open to the public and will be followed with an opportunity to ask questions.

Emergency Preparedness Panel Discussion

What would you do in the event of a wide-spread emergency?

Representatives of Fayetteville, Washington County, and the University of Arkansas will present information about potential hazards, the local structure of emergency preparedness, how priorities are set in an emergency situation, and individual citizen responsibility.

PANELISTS


Marilyn Edwards, Washington County Judge

Don Marr, Emergency Manager for the City of Fayetteville

John Luther, Director, Washington County Department of Emergency Management

Rick Johnson, Deputy Director, Washington County Department of Emergency Management

Matt Mills, Emergency Management for the University of Arkansas



League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

A Nonpartisan Political Organization

Tuesday, January 24, 11:30 – 1:00

Fayetteville Public Library – Walker Room

For additional information contact Susan Rausch – srausch@uark.edu

Immigration Legal Issues in NWA By Sally King



Professor Elizabeth Young, Director of the University of Arkansas School of Law Immigration Law Clinic (<http://law.uark.edu/prospective/jd/immigration-law-clinic.html>), will speak on immigration legal issues, especially those affecting undocumented immigrants of Northwest Arkansas at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, February 15 in the sanctuary of the First United Presbyterian Church of Fayetteville, Arkansas.

A dinner is available for \$6.00 per person at 5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall. Reservations for dinner may be made at wwreserve@fupcfay.org or by calling 856-6247. Reservations are required for dinner but not for Professor Young's talk. The First United Presbyterian Church of Fayetteville is located at 695 Calvin St., off of Old Wire Road. For more information, call Sally King at 521-5007.

LWVUS National Study on Government Privatization Proves to be Challenging by Joyce Hale

Is the current trend to shift assets and the functions of government into the private economy good, bad, or neither?

How do we judge if we should support or oppose this practice?

A shift toward government privatization has developed with the ongoing crusade for smaller efficient governments and increased interest in building private sector employment,. How does a person judge if this is a wise move or if hidden costs and inferior service will follow? What should be considered at the outset and will citizens benefit or simply pay as much or more for the same services out of another pocket?

On Wednesday, February 22 at 6:00 – 7:45 pm, the LWVWC will meet at the Fayetteville Public Library’s Walker Room to begin reviewing materials provided by the LWVUS Government Privatization Study Committee. The stimulus for choosing to study the Privatization issue is the concern that government privatization is taking place without a clear understanding of what that means or how it should be contracted, managed, and evaluated. The objective, as stated by those developing the study, is to **“identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector.”**

LWVWC members met previously to prepare for the study’s consensus questions. Due to the breadth and complexity of privatization issues and topics, LWVWC members decided that a meeting to review the study materials is needed prior to a public program or forum on privatization. The material review meeting would provide a venue where League members and all interested individuals of the general public could learn more on the subject to be better prepared to interact with knowledgeable guests at a future program.

The study materials are grouped into three categories (listed below) and available on-line at www.lwvarwc.org/privatizationresources.htm :

1. **Privatization Guidelines and Study Framework** – Procedural guide for conducting the study and preparing for consensus questions.
2. **Discussion of the Function of Privatization** – The public policy debate, legal frameworks, strategies for best practices, and information by state.
3. **Specific Applications of Privatization** – Examples having to do with railroads, public education, prisons, waste water treatment plants, public libraries, and Social Security.

It should be noted that the outcome of this study is **not** to declare privatization as good or bad, but rather to understand if and when it is appropriate for consideration and how it should be contracted if it is done.

Holt Middle School Student Council Elections

By Mary Alice Serafini

Holt Middle School is conducting student council elections in May. In preparation for these elections, the League has been asked to serve on a committee to familiarize students with the voting process. Students will learn how to register to vote and participate in a simulated election with equipment from the Washington County Election Commission. J.P. Peters, Libby Wheeler and Bettie Lu Lancaster are attending committee meetings this spring and will keep us informed of the students’ progress.

Major Issues Are Being Raised About Transit Versus Highways In Northwest AR

By Karen Rollet-Crocker

Transportation alternative planning is moving ahead for Northwest Arkansas. However, some local organizations and officials are focused primarily on their desire for future highways. The Washington County League of Women Voters and the National League have both continuously supported the need for public transportation.

LWVWC SUPPORTS ¼ CENT SALES TAX PROPOSAL FOR OUR LOCAL BUS SYSTEM DUE TO LOSS OF FEDERAL FUNDING

Former League newsletter articles and panels have outlined the need for ¼ cent sales tax for the ORT local bus system because of a loss of federal funding. An excellent study and plan sponsored by the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission was completed last year by national consultants. (See <http://www.lwvarwc.org/transportationresources.htm>).

A ¼ cent sales tax has been proposed for Washington and Benton County. The Washington County Quorum Court County Services Committee approved and forwarded on to the Quorum Court this sales tax for consideration in January for putting on the ballot. If it passes the Quorum Court, it will be placed on the primary ballot on May 22, 2012 for a decision by the public.

Recently, Mary Alice Serafini, President of the Washington County League, forwarded to the Advocates for Public Transit a supporting statement for publication. She said: “In light of curtailed Federal funding previously supporting Northwest Arkansas’s public transit, the League of Women Voters of Washington County supports the proposed quarter cent sales tax to maintain and expand public transportation options. The League believes that public transportation addresses the needs of people to get to jobs, essential services, their homes, and after school programs while being an energy efficient, environmentally sound,” and economically responsible alternative.

On Tuesday, January 11, Mike Malone, president of the Northwest Arkansas Council, asked the Quorum Court Finance Committee to reject the election. His reasoning was that the tax was not for a two county plan, and additionally, that transit needs should be funded in conjunction with highway needs. He said that transportation funding should be done through the Northwest Arkansas Regional Mobility Authority. Unfortunately for public transit, both the Council and the Regional Mobility Authority have consistently put public transit at the bottom of their wish list.

A DIFFERENT TAX FOR BOTH TRANSIT AND HIGHWAYS HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY THE NWA COUNCIL AND NWA MOBILITY AUTHORITY. HOWEVER, PUBLIC TRANSIT IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THEIR WISH LIST.

To give an example, the NWA Council’s recent publication, *Greater Northwest Arkansas Development Strategy* (<http://www.lwvarwc.org/transportationresources.htm>) states that “The broad spatial location of the region’s communities and the lack of a dominant metropolitan core have contributed to a number of challenges, including limited airport access, *inefficient public transit, poor walkability*, and dispersed entertainment and retail amenities.” (NWA Council Article p. 8) In spite of this lack, the report’s infrastructure strategies only mention promoting and supporting “*high impact interstate and highway infrastructure investments*”. (NWA Council Article p. 8). The report also notes that the NWA region has *lower per capita income than comparable regions* and that there is *a relatively large uninsured population and “working poor”* (NWA Council Article p. 4). Public transit could definitely help this population, but the need for low cost mass transit is not mentioned.

WESTERN BELTWAY IMPORTANCE OVERRATED

Two other studies, headed by the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, are underway. One, the “Western Beltway Study” was described in the October 2011 League Newsletter. An \$80,000 earmark from our congressmen required this study. On November 18, an

NWA TRANSIT vs. HIGHWAYS (Continued)

unfortunate headline in the *Northwest Arkansas Times* trumpeted “Study: Bypass Necessary”. The article overrated the near future need of the Beltway. Expansion of other highways and transit is much more important. Also, other less expensive and more sustainable alternatives could solve transportation needs for the growing population in the western parts of our two counties .

NEW STUDY ON TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS IS UNDERWAY

In the span of time since interest in public transit such as rail, bicycle, bus, ridesharing, and pedestrian access has come to the fore in our region, NWARPC has been applying for a grant entitled “Transportation Alternatives Analysis”. In October 2011, after three years of trying, the NARPC received it. A grant of \$200,000 was awarded by the Department of Transportation for a “Northwest Arkansas North-South Corridor Transportation Alternatives Analysis.” Currently, a team is putting together a scope of work, and will chose consultants for the planning. Additionally, this grant is listed as part of a new partnership between three federal agencies: DOT, HUD, and EPA, that will encourage community sustainability. The grant may give our region an opportunity for future planning projects that direct our efforts to become a ‘green region’.

HOLIDAY SOCIAL PREP AT LWVWC/HWOA/LATINO STUDENTS’ TAMALE MAKING PARTY

by Joyce Hale



Sharing the experience of preparing and eating food proved to be a great ice breaker. And there’s hardly any other food item better suited for a group to prepare than tamales, which are also traditional Latino holiday fare.

HWOA director, Margarita Solorzano, called upon her scholarship students to gather with League members at the home of Joyce Hale on Sunday, December 4th to help make the tamales. Margarita also asked her students to share their insights regarding the purpose of the DREAM Act and the struggle undocumented students were having in getting their education, establishing careers, and contributing back to their communities.

LWVWC members and Latino students rolled up their sleeves, washed their hands, and got better acquainted as they worked, visited, and laughed side-by-side in a highly-efficient tamale assembly line. Two hundred and fifty tamales were produced, in advance of the December 14th Holiday Social, where they were enjoyed by members and guests of LWVWC and the Hispanic Women’s Organization of Arkansas.

The Holiday Social was well attended with over fifty participants, in spite of stormy weather. Abundant holiday fare was enjoyed, musically accompanied with traditional English and Spanish carols performed by Steven Skattebo and his wife. Luis Aguilar, a former scholarship recipient, spoke about his life experiences as an undocumented immigrant (having been brought to the U.S. by his parents when he was a child) and his efforts to find a way to citizenship.

Inspired by the quality of students and their struggle to be contributing citizens, a LWVWC member offered a \$5,000 grant for scholarships and issued a LWVWC/HWOA Scholarship Grant Fund Match Challenge. The initial \$5,000 donation was to be matched by other League members and HWOA supporters before year’s end. The social concluded with holiday spirits soaring and plans to continue working on common goals into 2012.



LWVWC SCHOLARSHIP FUND CHALLENGE IS MET!



Pictured from left to right:

- Rafael Arciga - HWOA Board Member and past HWOA Scholarship recipient
- Margarita Solorzano - HWOA Executive Director
- Joyce Hale - LWVWC Member
- Anne Yancey - HWOA Board Member
- Mary Alice Serafini - LWVWC President
- Luis Aguilar - HWOA Scholarship recipient

Hispanic Women's Organization Of Arkansas Successfully Matches a \$5,000 Donation in Record Time by Joyce Hale

The League of Women Voters of Washington County, in partnership with the Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas (HWOA), is proud to announce the achievement of a \$10,000 fund raising goal to provide scholarships for deserving Latino students. The Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas appealed to local donors, including other LWVWC and HWOA members, to meet the challenge of matching a gift of \$5,000 offered by a League member. With this accomplishment, the League advances its program interests to assist students in their educational process and to increase voter participation and knowledge among new citizens.

December 2011 League activities, planned in collaboration with the Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas, afforded League members opportunities to get to know students in the community who are pursuing a variety of educational interests. These students are determined to achieve high levels of education, to become a part of the voting process, and to work for the passage of the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors). League members recognized their incredible desire to be well-educated actively engaged citizens and developed an interest in supporting their educational pursuits through personal donations.

Meeting this challenge will allow HWOA to continue assisting deserving Latino students to further their education. Since 2000, HWOA has awarded 216 scholarships worth \$123,500 to Hispanic students in the community. The majority of the recipients are the first in their families to attend an institution of higher education. HWOA's goal is to increase the number of Hispanic students that attend colleges or universities.

THANK YOU for YOUR SUPPORT

We are grateful to Fran Alexander for coming up with the idea of a challenge grant. Many small donations were given to make up the \$5,000 match, so whatever contribution you made, your generosity is greatly appreciated!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

By Susan Rausch

Thank you to our members who have just joined or renewed for the 2011-2012 fiscal year:

Fran Alexander
 Leslie Belden
 Jo Bennett
 Hope Bradberry
 Niki Cung
 Betty L. Davis
 Jane Davis
 Carol Harter

Patricia Hensman
 Dee Dee Long
 E. Meredith Long
 Senator Sue Madison
 Louise Mann
 Karen and Justin Minkel
 Ivy Mullen

Dr. Rita Officer
 Jimmie F. Peters
 Anne Pritchard
 Janet and CB Richardson
 Debra Sexton
 Jacqueline Williams
 Amy Wilson

National LWVUS increased the Per Member Payment (PMP). In order to offset the increase and allow local Leagues to keep their dues at the same level this year, the LWVAR Board voted to reduce the State membership fees from \$10.00 to \$5.00 per member.

If you still need to renew, the information (below) is requested.

New Member or Renewal Application & Interest Survey Form

Name _____ Date _____ New/Renewal _____
 Address _____ City/Zip _____
 Phone Number _____ E-Mail (Please print carefully) _____

DUES: Individual Membership - \$40 Family Membership - \$60 Student - \$20

If preferred payment is by check and delivery by mail, write check payable to "LWVWC" and send to the following address: LWVWC / P. O. Box 4 / Fayetteville, AR 72702

Check LWVWC activities for which you may be interested in volunteering:

- Attend City Council, Planning Commission, Task Force, Quorum Court, etc. Meetings when needed
- Voter Registration
- Help with TV Candidate Forums
- Help with Publicity, Displays, or Posters
- Assist with Mailings
- Assist with Telephoning
- Provide Food for Events
- Lobby State Legislature
- Provide a Facility/Home for Meetings
- Provide Transportation to Meetings
- Video Record or Photograph Activities
- Newsletter Writing
- Other

I wish to receive calls to action on specific issues of interest: All League Concerns _____
 Education _____
 Environment _____ Social Policies _____ Voting & Governance _____

I wish to limit my membership to receiving the newsletter. _____

I do not wish to join, but would like to make a contribution (any amount appreciated). _____

Memorial in Honor of Marion Orton**By Mary Alice Serafini**

Through the generosity of League members, friends of the League and LWVWC, the Board of Directors has proposed that a scholarship be awarded to a graduate student at the University of Arkansas who is engaged in research on an environmental issue. This scholarship of \$500 will be awarded to assist the student in their research. Candidate review is underway and hopefully will result in yet another way that League members support important research in honor of Marion and thereby increase our knowledge of environmental issues – just like Marion taught us to do!

Environmental Education and Outreach Networking Meeting**By Sophia Stephenson – Washington County Environmental Affairs & Recycling Educator**

Northwest Arkansas has many organizations and individuals working on environmental education and outreach. The networking meeting on Tuesday, January 31, 2012 from 9:00 - 11:00 am at the Washington County Cooperative Extension Service, 2536 N. McConnell Avenue in Fayetteville is to gather in one room so participants can meet face to face and learn about focus areas and programs offered by other individuals and groups. Often I am asked by teachers for a program that is outside my area. This will allow us all an opportunity to learn where we can direct those interested, excited teachers and members of our community. The first hour will be introductions. The second hour will be open networking. Please bring business cards, brochures, and any other relevant take-away materials. Please RSVP to Sophie Stephenson via eMail at sstephenson@co.washington.ar.us or phone at 479.444.1725 by January 24, 2012.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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