



# The VOTER

March 2013 VOL. 60, ISSUE 2

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League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

P.O. Box 4, Fayetteville, AR 72702

www.lwvarwc.org

CALENDAR

**MARCH 11 (Monday) – 5:30 PM - LWVWC BOARD MEETING** at home of Joyce Hale, 285 W. Cleburn, Fayetteville.

**MARCH 13 (Wednesday Before Spring Break) – 6:00 – 8:00 PM – ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING** at home of Mary Alice Serafini, 3305 N. Summerhill Drive, Fayetteville. (See “2013-2014 LWVWC Program Plans”/Karen Rollet-Crocker page 2)

**MARCH 14 (Thursday) – 6:00 – 7:30 PM – NW ARKANSAS PUBLIC TRANSIT FORUM** in the Walker Room of the Fayetteville Public Library, 401 West Mountain Street. (See “Transportation in NW Arkansas . . .”/Karen Rollet-Crocker page 3).

**MARCH 25 (Monday) – 6:00 – 8:30 PM WOMEN’S HISTORY DINNER** at The GuestHouse Inn (Former Clarion Inn), 1255 S. Shiloh Drive, Fayetteville. Contact Carole Harter at 640-8336 or [caroleharter@gmail.com](mailto:caroleharter@gmail.com). (See “Women’s History Dinner/Carole Harter page 5).

**APRIL 24 (Wednesday) – Dinner/5:30 PM** (Reservations contact: Melanie Deitzel/FUPC Office Manager (479)442-4411), **Program/6:00 – 8:00 PM – IMMIGRATION UPDATE** by Professor Elizabeth Young at the Fayetteville First United Presbyterian Church (FUPC), 695 E. Calvin Street.

**MAY 15 (Wednesday) – 6:00 – 8:00 PM – ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER** at the Fayetteville First United Presbyterian Church, 695 E. Calvin Street. Speaker – Arkansas State Representative Greg Leding reflecting on the 89<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

ARTICLES

**FROM THE LWVWC PRESIDENT/Mary Alice Serafini** (page 1)

**KEYSTONEXL PIPELINE MUST BE STOPPED/Joyce Hale** (page 3)

**ADVOCACY FOR MENTAL HEALTH/Libby Wheeler** (page 4)

**LWVWC NEW OR RENEWING MEMBERS/Susan Rausch** (page 5)

## FROM THE LWVWC PRESIDENT

By Mary Alice Serafini

Members are engaged in a diverse set of issues, both in advocacy and in study. February's panel on the Common Core Curriculum Standards was very educational and insightful with experts from Fayetteville and Springdale school districts as well as the State Department of Education. Other members are studying and advocating for better conditions and treatment of incarcerated individuals with mental illness.

As always, we continue our interest in natural gas drilling and its impact on the environment and health. With the General Assembly underway, activating our members to oppose the Voter ID laws is helped by our engagement with the Public Policy Panel. We all are concerned with health insurance coverage for all individuals, so we are watching the debate on Medicaid as we move forward. Make sure your voice is heard as we send out notifications for action!

We look forward to Program Planning, the Panel on Transportation Funding, and the Immigration Update during March and April.

Finally, the following e-mail was received this week: " Congratulations to the League of Women Voters of Washington County who won one free registration to the LWVUS convention in Dallas, Tx in 2014. Congratulations to the Leagues who are building League capacity and welcoming new members. Cheers!"

## 2013-2014 LWVWC PROGRAM PLANS

By Karen Rollet-Crocker

The Annual LWVWC Program Planning Meeting is set for **Wednesday, March 13 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM in the Fayetteville home of Mary Alice Serafini at 3305 N. Summerhill Drive.** LWVWC members and individuals engaged in public discourse will find common ground and interest in programs proposed for the 2013-2014 League year. The program topics (listed below) have great potential to generate committees to organize presentations and raise local awareness concerning important issues. This meeting will also include a review of our Program for Action, which was last updated in 2011-2012, along with a review of our stands and commitment or non-commitment to the study of new issues. Please join us in the planning of an engaging and informative slate of presentation topics. Additional suggestions for programs are welcomed, even if you are not available for the gathering on March 13. Send your recommendations to Karen Rollet-Crocker ([krollet@uark.edu](mailto:krollet@uark.edu)) or Mary Alice Serafini ([ma@maspeaks.com](mailto:ma@maspeaks.com)).

<b>PROPOSED 2013-2014 PROGRAMS</b>	
<b>TOPICS/ISSUES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Mental illness and the legal system	Mental Health America in NWAR is considering a program in the fall about the JEMI Task Force (Judicial Equity for Mental Illness) and the conditions that caused its forming* IF there is enough progress being made. Maybe this could be a collaborative program as several members from both LWVWC and MHA in NWAR are participating in the sub-groups formed by the task force. * A mentally ill person in prison in Benton County had pancreatic cancer and died there with no treatment for pain, etc. She apparently had no way to ask for help.
NW Arkansas Water quality issues	Two major NW Arkansas watersheds--the Illinois River Watershed, and the Beaver Lake Watershed. The Illinois River Watershed water quality concern has primarily been because of the designation of the Illinois River when it crosses the state line into Oklahoma. The Beaver Lake Watershed funnels into Beaver Lake, which serves 1/8 of the population of Arkansas. The quality concern is a major one, because if water becomes more polluted, it will be extremely costly to treat it for drinking water for so many people. Conserving the watershed is crucial to preserve water quality. These different issues of two watersheds could be discussed in a panel. Bob will help find people to be on a committee and also on the panel.
Arkansas Water quality issues	The Arkansas Environmental Federation is drafting a surface water quality standards bill that violates Federal Clean Water Act procedures for states and proposes to change the State Provision language re: streams' potential for use as public drinking water supply sources
Animal/pet welfare	Many people would like a 'no kill' policy for animal shelters, and wish there were a way to accomplish this. The public is typically very concerned about good treatment of pets by all owners. Increasing support for a city ordinance against allowing cats to roam outdoors. Recent studies document, for the first time, Roaming pet and feral cats cause significant degree of damage to birds and other wildlife (See <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-21236690">http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-21236690</a> )
Marshallese population in NWA	Interest in helping develop a working committee and a panel that suggests how to help this community. There is a large number of local social, cultural, educational, economic, and health issues related to this group. They were brought here to work primarily because they were able to come without visas. Originally many of them were displaced by atom bomb testing, and their health has suffered due to radiation. In spite of the fact that their population in NWA is the highest in the U.S., they are very marginalized and have no path to citizenship and voting.
Youth mental illness strikes and family support	In many cases, families become aware of serious issues when children are teenagers or in their early 20's. Families and relatives are in a quandary about what can be done, without much assistance available. Beth suggested that Mike Holloman from Springdale and Ozark Guidance might be good for a panel
Voter ID bill	Rita Officer suggested that if the ID bill passes, and money is made available for it to be implemented, this will be an important topic. She suggested that the Washington County Election Commission Chair might be a good speaker.
Pre-K education in NWA	What is the need for pre-K education in NWA? How many children are in pre-K? What are the legal and financial requirements for pre-K schooling? How does this education fit with family needs for child care? How does this education fit with public education goals?
Fayetteville Library expansion	There is a plan to go to the voters for more funding, and the League could analyze this request.
Fayetteville Trail System Update	Trail system is supposed to be completed by the end of 2013. Program could include tips for mature women determined to ride it. Possible speakers: Matt Mihalevich, Connie Edmonston

## Transportation in NW Arkansas: Where Do We Go From Here?

By Karen Rollet-Crocker and Dot Neely



The winter storm that visited Northwest Arkansas on February 20 led to the cancellation and rescheduling of the LWVWC Funding Public Transportation Forum. **The meeting is now set to take place in the Fayetteville Public Library Walker Community Room on Thursday, March 14 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM.**

Original panelist, Sarah Marsh/Fayetteville City Councilwoman, will not be available to participate on the rescheduled date. Fayetteville Mayor Lioneld Jordan and Jeremy Pate/Fayetteville Development Services Director, will join Jerre Van Hoose/Ozark Regional Transit and Christian Cortez/Community College Student and Transit User on the Forum Panel.

Arkansas voters passed a 0.5% increase in taxes to be used for transportation related projects in November 2012. Over \$80 million of estimated Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department turnback funds will be made available to Northwest Arkansas cities, along with Benton, Carroll, Madison and Washington counties in the next 10 years. View estimated annual and cumulative amounts due to Arkansas cities and counties on the "Issue #1 – Proposed ½ cent Temporary Sales Tax: Estimated County and City Turnback" Detail Report at [http://www.arkansashighways.com/2012\\_hcestax/CC\\_turnback.pdf](http://www.arkansashighways.com/2012_hcestax/CC_turnback.pdf).

According to the *Northwest Arkansas Transit Development Plan*, our existing transit system is inadequate to meet the current and growing transportation needs of the region. A more efficient, sustainable transit system, available to commuters, shoppers, and families in Benton and Washington counties, would be of great economic and social benefit to our Northwest Arkansas community. The City of Fayetteville will be leading an effort to encourage citizens to walk, bicycle, and take public transit. The future of our quality of life depends on reducing car traffic and air pollution now.



Please plan to attend this important discussion of Northwest Arkansas transportation issues, including use of tax funds for local transportation infrastructure enhancements, the increasing demand for transportation alternatives, the case for expanding mass transit, and ways to encourage our local city and county leaders to use part of their soon-to-be-available half-cent sales tax revenue to make alternative transportation a priority and to support improved public access to transportation.

## KeystoneXL Pipeline Must Be STOPPED!

By Joyce Hale

*TransCanada, a company determined to exploit one of the world's dirtiest fuels, is seeking U.S. permission to construct a 1,179 mile pipeline through the heart of America risking contamination of the Ogallala, Arbuckle-Simpson, Antlers, and Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifers. Extracting and processing oil from tar sands is a giant step in the wrong direction to meet global energy needs and climate protection. Many of the contamination problems we have come to recognize about natural gas drilling repeat themselves plus some are even worse.*



### 1. Leaks and spills are inherent pipeline dangers.

Everyone is familiar with oil spills and their devastation on coastal areas, but the same damage often occurs on land. Predictions that TransCanada's Keystone 1 pipeline would spill once in 7 years was badly underestimated when 12 occurrences happened the first year. Operation and construction failures resulted in a 2010 rupture spilling 843,000 gallons in Michigan's Kalamazoo River. Government records show that in a 5 year period pipeline incidents resulted in 68 deaths and \$2.67 billion in property damage.

**2. Eminent domain inflicted on U.S. landowners by foreign interest should not be tolerated.** Pipelines address domestic needs and benefit all by providing utility services. Giving rights of condemnation to foreign companies, whose only interest is to exploit the shortest route to world markets, shows disrespect for sovereign rights and benefits greed rather than need.

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**KeystoneXL Pipeline Must Be STOPPED! (continued from page 3) . . .**

- 3. Job studies indicate possibilities for employment reductions rather than an overall gain.** Cornell University's Global Labor Institute Study, *Pipe Dreams*, anticipates increasing fuel prices in the Midwest due to pipeline spills, pollution and the rising costs of climate change. Even one year of fuel price increases as a result of Keystone XL could cancel out some or all of the jobs created by the project. Workers in the green economy provide more opportunity for sustainable jobs and are hired from local labor pools.
- 4. Tar sand is targeted for export.** TransCanada's KXL pipeline will not reduce American dependence on foreign oil. The pipeline will carry tar sands from Alberta, Canada to foreign/domestic owned refineries in Port Arthur, Texas to be sold on the global market to the highest bidder. As an insult to injury, this location is a Foreign Trade Zone and the company can operate tax-free!
- 5. Water contamination is an unacceptable risk.** The KXL pipeline threatens aquifers supplying water to millions of people living across parts of six states. The majority of this region is experiencing severe long-term *extreme* and even *exceptional* drought conditions. Water is extremely scarce in the Simpson-Arbuckle Aquifer and the No. and So. Canadian Rivers, which feed Eufaula Lake. Domestic use and agricultural businesses depend on drinking water, irrigation and livestock watering and should not be threatened by contamination. Tar sands must be heated and diluted with liquefied gas products to make them flow. They contain elevated levels of many known carcinogens and toxins, which can leach into groundwater.
- 6. The KXL pipeline will allow for greater tar sands extraction and increase the potential for global warming.** NASA's leading climate scientist, Dr. James Hansen, has called the KXL pipeline "a fuse to the largest carbon bomb on the planet." Hansen has said that if all the carbon stored in the Canadian tar sands is released into the earth's atmosphere, it would mean "game over" for the planet. The importance of moving rapidly away from continued use of fossil fuels is important, but this particular fuel is the worst of the worst.
- 7. The pipeline violates tribal sovereignty.** The Indigenous Environmental Network has drafted the Mother Earth Accord with traditional treaty councils to oppose the Keystone XL pipeline and preserve the integrity of First Nations and tribal lands across Canada and the United States.

## **ADVOCACY FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

**By Libby Wheeler**

The League of Women Voters of Arkansas conducted a study of mental health in our state in 2002. The resulting consensus included: cooperating with other groups to reduce stigma; educating that mental illnesses are treatable; advocating for adequate funding for community mental health centers; working for insurance parity; and supporting innovative mental health programs.

A task force, Judicial Equity for Mental Illness (JEMI), has recently been formed in Northwest Arkansas. One of the working groups of this task force is looking into the establishment of mental health courts in our area, which fits into our League's support of innovative mental health programs. A planning grant is currently being written for Benton County to assess the need for such a court and its relationship with its existing drug court. Contacts have also been made with our new Washington County drug court judge, Christi Beaumont.

Mental health courts are part of the model of problem solving courts (like our existing drug courts) that combine judicial supervision with community mental health treatment and other support services for the seriously mentally ill who have committed non-violent crimes. Judges make the decision, usually in conjunction with mental health professionals, on who can participate in a mental health court, which is voluntary. The goal is to shorten jail time and divert the seriously mentally ill offenders to community services for treatment. Ideally the defense counsel, prosecutor, case managers, treatment professionals, and probation officers work together on an intensive program of determined length, monitored by the judge, for the participant. The judge decides if the program has been successfully completed or if incarceration is necessary.

## ADVOCACY FOR MENTAL HEALTH (continued from page 4) . . .

In Arkansas, Jonesboro has the only mental health court, which serves Crittenden and Craighead counties. One LWVWC member of the JEMI mental health court group recently attended the quarterly meeting of those involved in the Jonesboro court and was impressed by the cooperation of all the entities involved. These include Mid-South (like our Ozark Guidance) for mental health and substance abuse counseling, Legal Aid, Arkansas State University for program evaluation, sheriffs, probation officers, a prosecuting attorney and more. It is truly the community effort, along with an exceptional judge, that makes this program work. The mental health court was started with a grant from the Department of Justice, and a similar grant for planning purposes is underway for our Northwest Arkansas area. LWVWC board members attending the JEMI project meetings are Libby Wheeler, Susan Rausch, Rita Officer and Lynne Seymour.

## WOMEN'S HISTORY DINNER MARCH 25, 2013

By Carole Harter

This year's dinner honoring "Women in History" for Washington County will be Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at The GuestHouse (formerly the Clarion Inn). Guests are invited to assemble at 5:30 PM with dinner served at 6:00 PM. The dinner is sponsored by Altrusa International of Fayetteville, Inc., American Association of University Women, Business and Professional Women, Delta Kappa Gamma-Iota Chapter, Washington County League of Women Voters, and Washington County Democratic Women.

This 15<sup>th</sup> annual event is honoring the following four women: Joyce Bunch, Ruth Cohoon, Ann Harbison, Carol Hart, and Lindsley Smith.

Tickets are available from most League Board members and Carole Harter ([caroleharter@gmail.com](mailto:caroleharter@gmail.com) or [479-640-8336](tel:479-640-8336)) for \$25.00. Deadline for buying your ticket(s) is March 18<sup>th</sup>.

## THANK YOU TO LWVWC MEMBERS WHO HAVE JUST JOINED/RENEWED FOR THE 2012-2013 FISCAL YEAR

(List Font Bold = New or Renewed since January 2013 VOTER)

<b>Fran Alexander</b>	<b>S. Nicole Ferguson</b>	Nancy McCartney	Dr. Jane Scroggs
Lois Alward	James (Jay) Hale	Mary Katherine McKinley	Berta Seitz
Mary E. Barham	Joyce Hale	Scotty McLemore	Mary Alice Serafini
Leslie & Ted Belden	Emily R. Hart	Izola P. Morgan	Phil Serafini
Wanda Belzung	Carol Harter	Mary Bess Mulhollan	Lynne Seymour
Jo Bennett	Betty Hayes	<b>Dot Neely</b>	Betty Solis
Brenda Boudreaux	Margo Heinzelman	Linda Nicometo	Wanda B. Stephens
Karla Bradley	Dr. Peter Heinzelmann	Cindy Nimmo	Beth Sylvester
Anita F. Bukey	Patricia Hensman	Rita Officer	Dr. Barbara Taylor
<b>Robert and Sara Caulk</b>	Liz Howick	Nancy L. Owens	Gladys Tiffany
Judith Carey	Eleanor Hughes	Pauline Parnell	Martha Ward
<b>Lynn Donald Carver</b>	Harriet H. Jansma	Kristen Parnell-Davidson	Alice Webb
Bethel Cunningham	Laura Kellams	Mary Jean Place	Elizabeth Wheeler
Betty L. Davis	Sally Kelley-King	Anne Prichard	David Williams
Jane Davis	<b>Joyce Kennedy</b>	Susan Rausch	<b>Jacqueline Williams</b>
<b>Angela Davoni</b>	Bettie Lu Lancaster	Maylon Rice	Amy Wilson
Don B. Deweese	Sherri Lewis	Karen Rollet-Crocker	Marge Zinke
Mary Dillard	Rep Uvalde Lindsey	Georgia Ross	Dr. Otto Zinke
Eugenia Donovan	Carolyn B. Madison	Dr. James Scroggs	UA Libraries/Serials Department
<b>Jenni Echols</b>	Louise Mann		

**LWVWC 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**

**Checks should be made payable to "LWVWC" & mailed to: LWVWC/PO Box 4/Fayetteville AR 72702**

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

- Voter Registration
- Help with TV Candidate Forums
- Help with Publicity, Displays, or Posters
- Assist with Mailings
- Assist with Telephoning
- Provide Food for Events
- Attend City Council, Planning Commission, Task Force, Quorum Court, etc. Meetings when needed
- 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: Social Policies \_\_\_\_\_ Voting & Governance \_\_\_\_\_ Environment \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ All League Concerns \_\_\_\_\_

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). \_\_\_\_\_

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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