

## Memories of the League of Women Voters from current lifetime member, Kay Keskinen

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Hi, Joan. What a nice surprise to receive a lifetime membership to the League (at least I know now my dues will be paid on time). Fifty years do go by fast. If I may, please, your kind comments about me prompted me to think about what I have done for LWVM in the past 50 years. Let me reminisce a bit.

I could not vote until I turned 21, and I think when I turned 21 was about the time 18-year-olds could vote. I had always admired the League of Women Voters and wanted to belong and become an informed voter.



Luckily when I started to work in Computer Services at the UI in the summer of 1972, one woman I worked with was active in the LWV, Moscow. Her name was Madeline (Mad) Martin, and another woman named Mallory Blank stopped by often to see Madeline on some project. I learned it was for League, and Mad encouraged me to come to a meeting. What a room full of role models there was for the Moscow League! And one can never forget the first time they met Janet Fiske.

I joined the league, and soon I was a director on the board for a few terms and chair of the Observer Corps for a few years (I went to a lot of city meetings and reported back to League). My notes say I was an Equal Rights Specialist 1979-81, served on some study committees, and volunteered for another term as a director after I retired from the UI in 2003. I was then webmaster from 2004-2017. I took that over from Karen Falke (who took it over from Joan Klingler but I think she and I coordinated a lot of the League's web site content).

The Moscow League used to do fund raising by going to Moscow businesses; we would go in pairs and tell them about the services we offered the community (mostly voter information), and ask for contributions. Boy, that was awful, but I learned a lot about asking for money. We mostly got turned down, and some not so nicely.

I was one of those to have a video camera early, so in the 1980s I started recording our candidate forums (okay, "fora" is really the plural) for broadcasting on public access TV. I went to the local TV cable company and learned how to add titles and edit. I did that for a number of years, and later for a few years I was the moderator for the candidate forums.

In the early 1970s the Moscow League had three meeting groups: noon, afternoon, and evening. So when one was involved with a study, one had to present it three times. In the mid-70s Betsy Thomas (league member and director of the Women's Center at the time) and I led a study group on housing. We wrote an article in the campus "Argonaut" after asking students to show us their apartments, and at least three did. Boy, did they live in cr\*ppy conditions. I led a portion of a national league study, but I cannot remember the topic, just that every study had three presentations and League members expected you to know your stuff.

I wish I had a nickel for every bag of peas and lentils I packed at Janet Fiske's house. What a hoot that project was. I sold a lot of those boxes of peas and lentils and also bought quite a few.

I moderated some League study findings. I remember at least one was held at Amy Ford's house and a later one was in the Good Sam meeting room (editor's note: that was the national league's study on Immigration). And I've made some League presentations, including one on conflict management.

The Moscow League gave me a good foundation for being politically knowledgeable, as well as active. For a term or two I was a substitute for Norma Dobler (Norma was a former league member) when she served in the Idaho Senate. Luckily, she never missed a session, and I wasn't needed in Boise. She also asked me to serve on one of her campaign committees. One gets a darn good reputation when one is active in League.

Although, currently I am not very active in League, since September, 2003 Friendly Neighbors (at the 1912 Center in Moscow) takes lots of my time. I instruct seniors on computers and put together their newsletters (editor's note: Kay thinks she has logged in over 12,000 volunteering for this organization.) I have written many grants for Friendly Neighbors and often refer to information in the Moscow League's Poverty Study.

I am honored that fifty years of paying dues gets me a lifetime membership with free dues. Though one is "excused" from paying dues at fifty years, it doesn't mean one cannot donate. I look forward to finding a nice place to hang my League Lifetime membership certificate.

--Kay Keskinen

*Editor's Notes:* In 2002 Kay received the [Virginia Wolf Distinguished Service Award](#) from the Women's Center at the UI. It should be noted that between 2002 and 2022, a span of twenty years which included twenty community or faculty awards, *twelve women who received the award were current or past members of the LWV Moscow.* (I bet you didn't know that.)

In 2019, Kay was named the recipient of the Sheikh Community Unity Award. "Keskinen's credentials include being a certified mediator through the [Idaho Mediation Association](#) and a volunteer mediator for the [Latah County Court Assistance](#); founding the Palouse Center for Conflict Management Inc., working with the Friendly Neighbors Senior Organization; and working at the Moscow Senior Center," The award, given every two years, is bestowed by the [City of Moscow Human Rights Commission](#) and named in honor of Ismat Ara and Abdul Mannan Sheikh. Since 1981 she has been a member of the [American Institute of Parliamentarians](#). In 2011 she received the US President's Call to Service Award for reaching 4,000 hours volunteering with the Friendly Neighbors Senior Organization.

*Fun Facts:* Kay enjoys horseshoe pitching. She is a three-time Idaho women's state horseshoe pitching champion who is currently ranked #41 (August, 2020) among the top 100 female pitchers in the country and is the editor of the "Four Dead" newsletter of the Idaho State Horseshoe Pitchers Association. She also follows professional baseball (Go Yankees!) and she and Joan Klingler (who was born in Boston and roots for their rivals--Go BoSox!) enjoy some good-natured rivalry.

The original PDF certificate from the LWVUS president to Kay is attached.

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