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The Voter May 2020

Edited by Jogee Detchemendy

Big Change!

by Pat Landes

Starting this month our monthly membership meetings will be conducted through Zoom. Like many organizations, we are making this change in response to the current COVID-19 environment, and will continue to do so until further notice.

Thank goodness you don't have to be a tech wizard to use Zoom. We will be emailing you some handy tips to help you access and participate in our Zoom meetings. So, mark your calendars for Monday, May 18 at 5:45 pm for our May program. Be checking your emails for the Zoom invitation and tips, and make sure to promptly RSVP.

May Program: Increased Access to the Polls

by Pat Landes

Please join us on Monday, May 18 at 5:45 pm for an informative presentation on increased access to the polls through voting by mail, no-excuse absentee voting, and increased registration opportunities. The presentation will be made by League member Susan Inman.

Ms. Inman was Director of Elections for a former Arkansas Secretary of State, former member of the Arkansas State Board of Election Commissioners, founder and first president of the Arkansas County Election Commissions Association. She has volunteered with the US Department of State as an international election observer, observing over a dozen elections in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

Please note that the meeting will start 15 minutes earlier than usual in order to assist those that may be using Zoom for the first time.

LWVUS National Convention Update

by Carol Young

The LWVUS Board of Directors has decided that the 54th Convention will be a virtual one. There will be sessions over three days, June 25-27. Careful consideration is being given to making sure the sessions are available in all time zones. Pulaski County has two delegate spots available. Please contact Carol Young if you would like to be a delegate. Registration should be open soon.

Leaguer's Lives

by Carol Young

We haven't had this feature lately, but now, especially in these times of limited personal contact, it is good to keep up with our members. If you have news to share, please contact Joguee.

Congrats to our student member, Isabel Crawford who won third place in the Music Teachers National Association Brass Performance Competition, after winning first place at the Arkansas and Regional Division levels. Isabel is a junior at Central High School and plays French horn in the Central High Symphonic Winds group.

Congratulations to Nate Coulter, who was the Arkansas Democrat Gazette's High Profile on Sunday, April 12, 2020.

Congratulations to Sydney Rasch, whose picture was in the ADZ, being sworn in to the Missouri bar by Judge Chip Welch.

Our sympathy goes to Michelle, Clint and the Rhoden family, on the death of Michelle's mother, on April 4th. Our sympathy also goes to Lu Smith on the death of her daughter-in-law, Shirley Courtney on April 24th.

Membership Committee Formation

by Devita Harden

Dear League members,

I hope you are staying safe and guarding your health. As members of the League of Women Voters, we know that many of our successes are the direct result of the work done by members at the local level. The LWVPC Leadership Team (LT) values each of you and is thankful for the work you do for League.

In preparing for the future, the LT proposes the formation of a Membership Committee. The purpose of the committee is to develop and implement plans to increase membership and to strengthen the engagement of members in League activities.

If you would like to lend your time, talent and thoughtfulness to this endeavor or if you have questions please send an email to lwvpc@lwvpc.org.

Thank you.

Census 2020 Update

by Carol Young

Great News! Arkansas has passed the 50% response rate for the 2020 census. But in this time of Covid-19, we want to ensure that the count is safe and effective. How? Take a few minutes to participate, and then tell 20 other family members, friends, and fellow resident to do the same. There are 3 ways to respond: Online at My2020Census.gov. By phone at 844-30-2020 (a list of phone numbers in different languages is available at Census.gov). By returning the paper questionnaire that was mailed to each household.

Proposed LWVPC Program of Work for 2020/21

Each year at our Annual Meeting, we adopt the issues that we are going to study and/or advocate for in the next year. The Program Committee and the Leadership Team are presenting this proposed Program of Work to the membership so that members may offer opinions, additions or deletions prior to our June 15th meeting. Please respond to lwvpc@lwvpc.org.

- 1) Voter Service
 - a) Form action sub-committee to support state passage of no-excuse absentee/mail in voting process
 - i) Educate members and voters
 - ii) Encourage lobbying action by both members and voters
 - iii) Facilitate discussions regarding capacity of election offices, election staff and volunteers, post office, and other key entities necessary to support changes in the voting process re no-excuse absentee/mail in voting process
 - b) Voter Registration Committee:
 - i) Explore, develop (as soon as possible), and execute a plan to register voters when social distancing or isolation is present. (covid19 environment)
 - ii) Develop a plan by September 1 and partner with other groups to participate in National Voter Registration Day.
 - iii) Register additional 100 persons from an under registered population
 - iv) Host or co-host 1 training session for registrars
 - (1) Develop alternate training formats for covid19 environment
 - c) Vote 411
 - i) Publish all races in Pulaski County
 - ii) Solicit sponsorship
 - d) Candidate forums in cooperation with other groups
 - i) Develop alternative training formats for covid19 environment
 - e) Conduct public forums in conjunction with UALR Public Radio and CALS
- 2) Membership NOTE: Not sure of status of this.
 - a) Membership Committee: Develop a plan 1 to grow membership by end of fiscal year
 - i) Increase diversity by 3%
 - ii) Increase total membership by 5%
 - b) Have stronger engagement of members by offering programs of interest
- 3) Good government opportunities
 - a) Continue to increase the Observer Corps Committee
 - b) Take action on LWV public policy positions when appropriate, engage with governmental bodies, elected officials, and other stakeholders in the public interest on the issues and topics affecting Pulaski County”
 - i) Lobby for IWH (Implied Warranty of Habitability) aka Landlord Tenant Law
 - ii) Actively pursue the return of LRSD to local control
 - iii) Continue to monitor and comment on 30 Crossing
 - iv) Support efforts to protect the Environment
 - c) Present monthly programs for members and public to inform them of topics of interest and identify opportunities for action NOTE: Here would be a good place to show the calendar
 - d) Increased utilization of messaging to members regarding action needed and League work on the national and local levels

Monthly Meetings

In alignment with this year's Program of Work, these are the planned monthly meetings.

May: Access to the Polls: Including no excuse absentee voting, same day registration and vote by mail.

June: Annual meeting via Zoom

July: Landlord-Tenant. Speaker will be Lynn Foster

Aug.: Voter registration for November - how to and LWVPC action

Sept.: Summary of all ballot initiatives and proposed action

Oct.: National LWV Platform, outcomes of convention

Nov.: Fake News - this is one of the topics that has been rescheduled

Dec.: Holiday Party

Jan.: Summary of state legislature processes & how a bill becomes a law

Feb.: LWVPC program planning by members

March: Metroplan- What is it how does it work?

April: Quorum Court

May: Post Legislative Session Review- maybe invite a Democrat and a Republican, and an Independent or third party elected representative.

Tech Challenges for Parents and Students in Little Rock School District

by Norma Johnson

Challenge: What should we do if WiFi is slow or we don't have internet access at all?

Solution: Check out other options for free/low cost internet here: <https://www.lrsd.org/Page/4947>. Local hotspots are also available outside libraries and school sites.

Challenge: We don't have a Chromebook or there aren't enough Chromebooks for multiple students in one family. What should we do?

Solution: Chromebooks are distributed at each school site. Please contact the principal at the school where your student attends and they will be able to help with getting additional Chromebooks. List of all schools' phone numbers and email addresses can be found on each school page.

Challenge: What should I do if my child has technical problems?

Solution: Please visit <http://help.lrsditech.org> for technical support.

Challenge: What should I do if my child needs homework help?

Solution: Please visit <http://www.lrsd.org/amihelp> for homework help.

Challenge: What should a student do if the platform times out before work can be uploaded?

Solution: Students should consider composing answers in a word document then copy and pasting answers into Edmentum. The issues arise from internet connectivity.

City of Little Rock and AirBnB

by Ruth Bell

Late last fall, the Little Rock Board of Directors asked their staff to look at Airbnb type use in the City and make suggestions on how to integrate that rental use into the City Ordinances. The request was spurred by applications to the Planning Commission from individuals in Hillcrest and areas close to the State Capitol to be allowed to host short term renters of the Airbnb type.

When the Planning Commission heard those applications, LWVPC expressed concern because the City did not know how many rentals existed in the City nor where they were located. They could not confirm that city lodging taxes were being collected for the rentals. Without knowing their location, there was no way to estimate the number of rentals in a particular block, subdivision, or ward. Without that information it was very difficult to determine if such overnight or weekend rentals might limit the enjoyment of their homes by other residents in that neighborhood.

City staff made their recommendations to the LR Board in late April of this year. The recommendations include requiring off street parking for short term renters, premises inspection by the Fire Marshall, provision of fire extinguisher, two exits to property, prominent display of address of rental for renter's information in case of an emergency, annual cleaning of fireplaces by a professional, code changes to set up complaint procedures for renters and neighbors, and owner obtaining either a Special Use Permit or Planned Zoning Development classification for the property. City staff plan to make these recommendations known to the public, to seek comment on them, and to bring these possible ordinance changes to the City Board in autumn of 2020.

LWVPC observer of LR Planning Commission has the following concerns: enforcement of the revised ordinances would be complaint driven, no dollar amount of penalty for not meeting ordinance requirements is specified, no limitation on density of the use is listed. Her greatest concern has to do with the data the City used to determine how many rentals of this sort are in the City. Only three of the businesses that use the Airbnb model were cited as sources for their figure of 305 rentals in Little Rock. At least three other widely used rental sources of this sort were not contacted about the number of rentals they might have in Little Rock.

**For information on observing opportunities please see prior Voters which are located at our website.
*Special thanks to Michelle Rhoden for managing the LWVPC website.**

Leadership Team 2019-2020

Ruth Bell- one year remaining. 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net

Jogee Detchemendy - new term. 662.312.9277 or jogeeduzzi@gmail.com

Devita Harden- Treasurer new term. 770.617.3096 or devita467@gmail.com

Norma Johnson-new term. norma_johnson58@yahoo.com

Carol Young- President one year remaining. 501.680.3947 or cyoung8151@sbcglobal.net

League Links:

[League of Women Voters \(National\)](#)

[League of Women Voters \(State of Arkansas\)](#)

[League of Women Voters of Pulaski County](#)

