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## **The Voter June 2020**

Edited by Jogee Detchemendy

### **League of Women Voters of Pulaski County Annual Meeting Agenda June 15, 2020**

Call to Order  
Establishment of a Quorum  
Appointment of a Recorder  
League 2019-2020 in Review  
2019-20 Budget Presentation  
Election of Leadership Team  
Adoption of the Program of Work  
Concurrence of RVC  
Other Business to come before the Membership  
Adjournment

\*Nell Matthews will send out a Zoom link to members only to attend the meeting.

### **Leaguer's Lives**

**By Ruth Bell and Carol Young**

Our deepest sympathies go to Susan Inman after the loss of her sister. We are thinking of you and your family.

Congratulations to NELL MATTHEWS on being recognized by the VIPS (Volunteers In Public School) Board for her many volunteer hours devoted to LRPS children. Among other activities, Nell has devoted much time to teaching children to play chess, setting up chess clubs and facilitating chess tournaments. Nell and other VIPS Award winners were saluted for adding so much to LRPS student learning experience. Well done, Nell.

# THANK YOU CAROL YOUNG!

By Jogie Detchemendy

Please join me in thanking Carol for being our Convener for the past 5 years. She was also our Convener in the 90s for several years. She has spent countless hours registering people to vote, organizing meetings, coordinating debates and public forums, doing speaking engagements, facilitating discussions, answering emails, writing articles for the Voter, and so much more. She still plans to be a very active member of the League but is stepping down as our leader. There have been times when the League would have ceased to exist if not for Carol taking charge. She is invaluable to the LWVPC and her leadership will be greatly missed. Thanks for all your hard work Carol, you are amazing!



## Annual Report July 2019- June 2020

By Carol Young

This is my last report of this kind to the League of Women Voters of Pulaski County. And it has been an unforgettable year, for me, the League, and the entire world. I am always amazed when I reflect back on all the LWVPC does in a year, and this year is no exception. Even when we were faced with the Corona Virus Pandemic, we managed to finish strong.

**July-** Our General meeting featured City Attorney, Tom Carpenter, who talked about how city governance could be changed. Germaine Swinton, Pat Landes, Rebecca Zimmermann and I began our involvement with the Census 2020. I attended the Citizen's First Congress update as a state league member, and I urge our local league to join CFC for 20-21. It is a good affiliate for us.

**August-** Instead of a general meeting, we had a Drinks and Dialogue at South on Main on Human Trafficking. We co-sponsored the Issues the Matter Forum on Public Education in Arkansas. It is archived at KUAR, and is worth a listen. Several members participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Suffrage Sprint and Stroll, sponsored by the Arkansas Women's History Institute. Our member, Danielle Butler, is the current AWHI president.

**September-** Little Rock Police Chief, Keith Humphries was our speaker for our general meeting. Katherine Pope led our participation in National Voter Registration Day, where we registered voters at Central High, Shorter College and the Job Corps Center. Nell registered voters outside Verizon Arena prior to the RBG event.

**October-** State convener, Nell Matthews presented a program on the Non- Partisan Redistricting Amendment, which we hope will be on the ballot in November. Several members attended the unveiling of “Every Word They Utter”, the sculpture commemorating women’s suffrage in Arkansas and the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Little Rock City Board member, Dr. Dean Kumpuris thought the League should have a stake in the fundraising effort for this piece, located in the Vogel-Schwartz Sculpture Garden in the River Market. Several members attended the Arkansas Period Day Rally, on the Capitol Steps organized by member Katie Clark. And we collected menstrual products at a general meeting.

**November-**We had a beautiful Join, Renew, Donate Event at Jay Barth and Chuck Cliett’s home. Jay gave a wonderful description of why the League is such an important leader in our county. We co-sponsored an Issues that Matter Forum in Jacksonville on the 2020 Census. We also had our first member to be elected to office in quite a while, Denise Ennett is now State Representative for House District 36.

**December-** Our general meeting was on Immigration and the path to Citizenship. Our speakers were Patrick Galleher and Jennifer Verkamp-Ruthven, from Catholic Charities of Arkansas. Also, member Jay Barth was appointed by Mayor Scott as Little Rock’s first Education Chief Officer.

**January-** We hosted the Pulaski County Election Commission and Director of Elections, Bryan Poe, at our general meeting. They discussed the acquiring of new voting machines, and other voting topics. For the first time, the League was asked to participate in the MLK Day Parade. We teamed up with AAUW and AWHI, to build a float. Several members marched and handed out candy attached to Redistricting information cards. I met with members Janna Knight and Lupita Chevarria, and on another occasion, I went with Carol Silverstrom to a Southwest Community meeting, both were to find ways to engage with the Latinex Community. We also began the first Finance Letter Writing Campaign in several years, chaired by Ruth Bell. We have 25 non-member donors supporting our goals. And, for something completely different, we were asked to register voters at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre’s presentation of the play, *Ann*.

**February-** Several members met with Mayor Scott to listen to his ideas to increase citizen participation in local issues, and to remind him that we would help with forums and publicity for issues that we support. Then we held our exciting 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party at Hillcrest Hall. Pat Landes, Nate Coulter, Community Bakery and several others made the evening special. Also, in conjunction with our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary which happens to be on Valentine’s Day, we registered voters at Hall High School, and gave out mini birthday/valentine cupcakes to those who registered. For our efforts, we received a \$ 200 grant from LWVUS. We used that money to purchase a year of Zoom. Katherine Pope headed up a voter registration at Episcopal Collegiate High School, in conjunction with our partnership with the county clerk’s office to hold drives in every high school in the county. Several members staffed our table at the Old State House for Women’s History Month, and I spoke to two meetings of the Jr. League of Little Rock

**March-** Just when we were hitting our stride, our efforts were curtailed by Covid-19. I made written comments to Metroplan, asking them not to approve funds for the 30 -Crossing Project. We also upgraded our website and email system. Many thanks to our web gurus, Clint and Michelle Rhoden.

**April-**Jogee published a fact filled Voter explaining that we would be using Zoom meetings starting in May. Pat Landes provided Zoom basics, and reminded us that we could still contact all of our elected officials, and let them know how we wanted them to act during this crisis. I also wrote an article looking towards the future of the League.

**May-** Our Zoom meeting was very well attended. Our speaker was member, Susan Inman, who explained the absentee voting process in Arkansas, and how we needed to plan for Covid's effect on the November General Election. Soon after that meeting, Susan, Nell Matthews and I joined a coalition with Indivisible, Arkansas Advocates, Citizens First Congress, and the NAACP, asking the governor to drop the excuses for absentee voting, and for the Secretary of State to use his 4.7 million dollar CARES Act money to provide postage paid absentee application return envelopes and pre-paid ballot return envelopes. The Leadership Team and Pat Landes began the transition from my leadership to a new Leadership and Committee structure.

**Ongoing Activities-** the Leadership Team met quarterly, (by 3 different methods!), and had many email chains to facilitate the work of the League. Jogee Detchemendy did an amazing job with the Voter, and when her little leaguer, Vivian, came on the scene, Danielle Butler took over for a few months. Ruth Bell managed all the Observers, and represented the League at numerous meetings herself. A new member Pamela Whitaker jumped right in and took over from Denise Ennett as our ViPS representative.

Our observers monitored meetings of Pulaski County Quorum Court, Pulaski County Election Commission, Little Rock Planning Commission, Little Rock City Board, Jacksonville City Board, and Central Arkansas Water Board, and, when indicated, spoke at them in support of LWVPC positions.

We also had a dedicated Program Committee this year, chaired by Carol Silverstrom, which took much of the burden off the L.T.

Norma Johnson monitored the Community Advisory Board, and other aspects of the state takeover of the Little Rock School District. And our Treasurer, Devita Harden, kept up with membership and the money, a very important job.

All in all, it was a very great year for LWVPC. Thanks to everyone who registered voters, called, emailed, wrote letters to elected officials, helped with the forums, observed an elected body, planned parties, tabled at events, brought snacks, and attended the monthly meetings. I hope you felt a part of this very highly regarded, 100-year old, grassroots organization, which believes all citizens play a critical role in democracy.

**Proposed LWVPC Program of Work for 2020/21**

## **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, using alternate training formats for Covid19 environment
- c) Vote 411
  - i) Publish all races in Pulaski County- if there is a committee of at least 3 members
  - ii) Solicit sponsorships/partnerships with media outlets
- d) Candidate forums in cooperation with other groups- Develop alternative formats for covid19 environment
- e) Conduct public forums in conjunction with UALR Public Radio and CALS

## **2) Membership**

- a) Membership Committee: Develop a plan to grow /retain membership
  - 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
  - v) continue to support maintenance and development of livable communities
- c) Present monthly programs for members and public to inform them of topics of interest and identify opportunities for action
- d) Increase utilization of messaging to members regarding action needed and League work on the national and local levels

## **LWV of Arkansas Study and Action Items (separate from LWVPC but we could aid in these efforts):**

- 1) Support of the non- partisan redistricting amendment**

- a) Mail out postcards
- b) Circulate petitions (as Covid-19 protocols allow)

**2)Conduct a study on the Open Primary amendment (Rank Choice Voting) and vote whether or not to concur with other state league’s positions.**

## **Education Information**

**By Norma Johnson**

There will be a (9 member) school board election this November and now the district has 9 zones, not 7. Everyone should be paying attention of whom may be running in their zone.

## **Observers Corps News**

**By Ruth Bell**

### **LITTLE ROCK CITY HALL**

Little Rock City Board recently approved amendments to some planning and zoning ordinances. Those changes included bringing language up to modern usage (they took out “floppy disks” for example), and allowing requests for variances to be approved administratively when there are deviations of up to 20% from height and area restrictions in City ordinances. For example, a building height of 56 feet could be raised to 67 feet after a review by city staff. Previously that variance request would have been heard by the Planning Commission. Mayor Scott said an ad hoc committee of people in the planning and development field “who understood different things that have been a positive and/or negative impact to growth and also sustainable development” met with city staff for a year and half to collaborate on updating the zoning ordinances. City Hall has not responded to a request by a reporter for names of that ad hoc committee’s membership.

Little Rock City Board and Planning Commission meetings have been moved to meeting room in Robinson Auditorium to accommodate social distancing requirements and facilitate Board and Commission members attending virtually. Citizens who wish to speak on an agenda item at either meeting may do so by calling City Hall or Planning and Zoning Dept. respectively at least one hour before start of the meeting and asking to speak. City staff will take cell phone contact information and contact the citizen to speak to the Board from his phone when his item of interest is being heard.

**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.**

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PULASKI COUNTY**

**Budget**

**July-June**

**Fiscal Year 2020-2021**

<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
Dues:		
Regular Members	75 @ \$50	\$3,750.00
Household	10 @ \$70	\$350.00
Lifetime	7	\$0.00
Development		
	Operating/General Fund from Donations	\$2,000.00
	LWVUS-Education Fund	\$1,500.00
	ARCF (LWV Endowment)	\$1,000.00
Grants from LWVEF		
	Educational printing	\$0.00
	Girls State	\$0.00
	Arkansas Women Leadership Training	\$200.00
	Voter Service Projects	\$1,000.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>		<b>\$9,800.00</b>
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>		
LWVUS Dues		\$2,900.00
LWVAR Dues		\$450.00
Donations		
	ACF Endowment	\$0.00
	LWV Education Fund	\$500.00
Operations		
	MyLo Web page	\$600.00
	Pay Pal	\$100.00
	PO Box	\$150.00
	Board Expenses	\$100.00
	Go Daddy Security	\$80.00
Member Communication		
	Printing & Postage	\$270.00
Development		
	Finance Drive( printing/postage)	\$300.00
Voter Services		
	Educational Printing-Guides	\$500.00



	Vote 411	\$1,000.00
	Other Voter Service Projects	\$1,000.00
	Amer.Legion (Girls State)	\$500.00
Meetings	local conferences	\$100.00
	State & National Convention/Council	\$1,000.00
	Local (Holiday, Annual)	\$250.00
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>		<b>\$9,800.00</b>

## **Leadership Team 2019-2020**

Ruth Bell- one year remaining. 501.225.2538 or [rfbell@aristotle.net](mailto:rfbell@aristotle.net)

Jogee Detchemendy - new term. 662.312.9277 or [jogeeduzzi@gmail.com](mailto:jogeeduzzi@gmail.com)

Devita Harden- Treasurer new term. 770.617.3096 or [devita467@gmail.com](mailto:devita467@gmail.com)

Norma Johnson-new term. [norma\\_johnson58@yahoo.com](mailto:norma_johnson58@yahoo.com)

Carol Young- President one year remaining. 501.680.3947 or [cyoung8151@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cyoung8151@sbcglobal.net)

## **Nominations for Leadership Team 2020-2021 to be voted on at annual meeting (must be voted on LWVPC members):**

Danielle Butler- Records

Jogee Detchemendy- Communication

Devita Harden-Treasurer

Norma Johnson- Voting

Pamela Whitaker

## **Nominations for Chairs for Committees to Work with Leadership Team 2020-2021:**

Audit Committee- Susan Leon

Communication Committee- Jogee Detchemendy

Finance and Membership Committees-Devita Hardin

Issues and Policy Development Committee- Corinne Kwapis and Becky Jackson

Observers Corps-Ruth Bell

Program Committee-Pam Whitaker, Carol Silverstrom, Nell Matthews, and Pat Landes

Records Committee- Danielle Butler and Carol Young

Voter Service Committee-Katherine Pope and Norma Johnson

Vote 411- Carol Young

## **League Links:**

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

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



