



<http://www.lwvutah.org>

The League of Women Voters
of Utah

3804 Highland Drive, Suite 8-D,
Salt Lake City, UT 84106

(801) 272-8683
Email: lwvut@xmission.com

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Ask Not What Your League Can Do For You



by Jenn Gonnely, LWVUT Co-president

I was behind a Subaru the other day that was plastered with bumper stickers. You know the sort. It appeared that there was not a cause that this particular driver could not get behind. Many of the causes I also find myself drawn to, and this car had one of my favorites: "Be the change you wish to see in the world" - Gandhi.

What a wonderful man, Ghandi. To say so much in so little that it actually fits neatly on a scrap of paper 4 inches by 12 inches that can be just as neatly attached to the the back of any bumper in hopes that those who read it will head it's advice and change the world.

The funny thing is that while Mahatma Gandhi said many impactful and beautiful things, he never said that. What he did say was far more complicated and perhaps a bit more impactful. The closest thing to the aforementioned bumper stick that Gandhi said was:

"If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. ... We need not wait to see what others do."

Politics right now is a bit like the bumper stickers we see everywhere. Short, neat little statements that attempt to wrap things simply and influence others to take action. I wonder how often this approach works? I suspect, but cannot cite figures, not very often.

Sometimes the League can feel the same way. It never seems like we can register enough people. The League should register more people to vote. We need a greater, more diverse membership. The League should find a way to attract younger and more diverse members. It seems like too many people don't know what the League does. The League should get better press and media coverage. People need to turn out to vote and have all the information they need

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to make an educated choice. The League should find out why people choose not to vote. The League should cover more races in the Voters Guide. The League should have analysis of all the three constitutional amendments in the Voters Guide.

You might have noticed a pattern here. Above is a small selection of statements I hear all the time from League members across the state. Please, do not get me wrong, I love to hear all the hopes and aspirations everyone has for this wonderful organization. I also know that there are many who work tirelessly towards this end. I am just suggesting that in this last push up to Election Day that we each be the change we want to see. Take a friend or a neighbor or three to vote on Election Day. Teach someone to register to vote. Bring someone, anyone, but especially someone who doesn't look like you to a League event. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper encouraging people to vote and maybe pointing them to the Voters Guide. Lastly, in the year ahead, when you come up with a great idea, and I know you will, about what the League should/could do better, ask yourself this simple question: "What can I do to get this started or help it along the way?"

Thank you again to all the many volunteers who have gotten the League through another successful November election cycle. It is time to buckle up for the 2015 legislative session. And don't forget that famous quote adapted from John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your League can do for you. Ask what you can do for your League."

May Utah Felons Register to Vote?

by Lynda Sayge, Salt Lake Member, Utah Board –PR co-chair

To register to vote in Utah, you must:

- Be a citizen of the United States of America
- Have Resided in Utah for 30 days **before** the election
- Be at least 18 years old, on or **before** the next election
- Not be a convicted felon currently incarcerated for the commission of a felony

So the answer is yes, felons are allowed to vote in Utah after they have served their time of incarceration.

A felon's eligibility to vote is set individually by each state. You can see the varying degrees as established below:

20 states - Term of Incarceration + Parole + Probation

13 States & DC – Time of Incarceration (UTAH)

11 States – Some felons may vote depending on the state, crime committed, time elapses since completions of sentence and other variables

4 States – Term of Incarceration + Parole

2 States – Convicted felons may vote by absentee ballot while in prison

Utah League Co-presidents

Lola Britton

lolabritton@comcast.net

&

Jenn Gonnely

jenn@gonnely.com

Executive Director

Emeritus

Sandy Peck

sandypeck@xmission.com

Office Manager

Tina Hose

lwvut@xmission.com

Questions are floating around the Utah State Legislature all the way to the U.S. Congress regarding the rights of voting for convicted felons. Since felon voting rights vary state to state, some argue the federal government should step in.

“Felon voting has not been regulated federally although some argue that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act can be applied to felon disenfranchisement and that Congress has the authority to legislate felon voting in federal elections.”

Unable to spur state lawmakers to action on the subject, in June of this year, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul was to introduce federal legislation that would restore voting rights to some convicted felons who have completed their sentences. “It’s the biggest voting rights issue of our day,” Rand Paul told David Gregory on NBC’s Meet the Press. “We think there may be a million people who are being prevented from voting from having a previous felony conviction”.

A large role of the LWVUtah is to register eligible voters and I hope the above provides needed information to help you towards that goal. More information on voting rights for felons can be found at <http://felonvoting.procon.org>.

Reforming Money in Politics : A LWVUS Priority

by Gigi Brandt, Program V-P

The role of money in politics is talked about frequently. Daily reports in the media discuss the money spent in elections, perhaps to the point that many citizens feel powerless and shut the information out. Since the Citizens United decision in 2010, the amount of money poured into elections without much oversight and disclosure is staggering. But although lip service is paid to the problem, little positive has been accomplished.

The National League is committed to a strategy (“achieve incremental reforms where possible in the short term and build support for public financing as the best long-term solution”) which has been running into barriers erected by the Supreme Court and a dysfunctional Congress. LWVUS published a primer, *Money in Politics: Developing a Common Understanding of the Issues*, that can be downloaded from the LWVUS site

<http://www.lwv.org/content/money-politics-developing-common-understanding-issues>.

The primer is a substantial document, 47 pages. It is not a study but serves as a starting point for this important discussion. Leagues may want to use part of it as a program material. Proposed relevant information about legislation current to the May 2014 publication date is included.

If members are interested in joining an informal committee using the primer as a starting point, contact Gigi at gigibrandt@xmission.com.

SL Voter Services Evaluates Voter Registration Drives

by Carole Straughn, Voter Services Co-chair

Local League Presidents

Cache County
Joan McLean

jmclean@cc.usu.edu

Cedar City
Barbara Prestwich
barb.prestwich@hotmail.com

Davis County
Nelda Bishop
nelda@xmission.com
& Kathy Stockel
khs_nodak@yahoo.com

Grand County
Cynthia Smith
cjs@manzasprings.com

Salt Lake
Janice Gygi
janice.gygi@uvu.edu
& Karen McCoy
mcfro45@msn.com

Weber County
Terri McCulloch
terrimcculloch@aol.com

The Salt Lake team has registered 539 voters since the drive began in June. Of these, 187 were registered at Naturalization Ceremonies; 352 at other venues.

We are looking at which venues yield the best return for volunteer hours expended. We roughly estimate that Naturalization Ceremonies, coordinated by Jane Nelson, yield about five registrations per volunteer hour, Salt Lake Community Colleges yield three per hour and Pioneer Park yields 2.5. Smaller farmers markets and community events do not appear to justify the effort.

Promising venues were the Poplar Grove Community Fair, the Clean Air Fair on Library Square, a Cyprus High School Vote18 class led by Jenn Gonnely, and efforts at the Crossroads homeless program and Utah Valley University led by Jenn and Lola Britton. Jenn and Lola wanted their tallies included with the SL League work as an affirmation of support.

A notable breakthrough was the agreement between the Salt Lake League and Salt Lake Community College for the League to register voters at key traffic areas on the various campuses, as well as to offer volunteer opportunities to students. The working agreement was researched and negotiated by Naomi Franklin and signed by Janice Gygi. The Voter Services project is now listed on the SLCC website of the Thayne Center for Service and Learning.

Participate in Mountain Accord Events

by Anne Zeigler

A Proposed Development for the Wasatch Canyons forum held on September 18 at the Main Branch of the Salt Lake City Public Library was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake. Our purpose was to introduce Mountain Accord and its goals for the Wasatch Canyons between Parley's Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon, east to Park City and on the east side of the Wasatch. The four panelists at the forum are key players in four areas of concern: environment, recreation, transportation, and economy. They included Laura Briefer, Environment; Natalie Gochnour, Economics; Will McCarvill, Recreation; Jon Nepstad, Transportation; and David Whittekiend, Forest Service. Program Manager Laynee Jones served as Moderator.

Mountain Accord is a collaboration between public and private interests, including state and local governments, federal agencies, and business and grassroots organizations. There are 21 participants. County Mayor Ben McAdams is the current chair of Mountain Accord's executive committee.

"The goal of Mountain Accord is to enhance regional transportation systems, preserve the environment, strengthen the regional economy and ensure high quality recreational experiences. The overarching goal is to preserve the legacy of the Wasatch with a balanced approach".

Funding comes primarily from local and state governments. The state of Utah has contributed \$2.6 million, and each of the political entities involved kicked in various sums of money that equal about another \$1.5 million.

Mountain Accord wants your feedback. Save Our Canyons has been working on a survey regarding 12-month use of the canyons. Please go to their website:

Join Us for LWVSL's Holiday Social

Monday, December 1

Village III Clubhouse, 1525 E.
Vine Street, Murray

5 p.m. – Social

5:30 – Potluck Dinner

6 – Presentation by Michelle
Flynn, Associate Executive
Director of Programs,
The Road Home

The Road Home, which serves the homeless population of Salt Lake County, is the largest homeless shelter in the state of Utah. Their mission is to "help people out of homelessness and back into our community."

During the fiscal year 2013, they served 7,065 people, including 680 families comprised of 2,353 individuals, 1,342 of which were children.

For more information about The Road Home and the problems of homelessness in Salt Lake County, read the materials for the October LWVSL unit meetings, which can be found

on the website –

saltlake.lwvutah.org. Or

contact me

(Janice.gygi@uvu.edu), and I will send you a copy.

Bring your checkbook and a friend. We look forward to celebrating with you.

www.saveourcanyons.org. I encourage you to attend any Mountain Accord meeting as listed below:

Executive Committee Meetings at Salt Lake County Government Complex, 2010 So. State N4500

Nov. 10 – 3:30-5 p.m.
Dec. 8 -- 2:30-5:30 p.m.
Jan. 12 – 2:30-5:30 p.m. Park City
Jan. 26 – 3:30-5 p.m.

System Group Meetings at Sandy City, Multipurpose Room, 10000 Centennial Pkwy.

Recreation Oct. 29 (Wed.) 1:30-4 p.m.
Environment Oct. 28 (Tues) 1:30-4 p.m.
Economy Oct. 28 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Transportation-Oct. 29 9-11 a.m.

All meetings are open to the public. Other meetings (or changes) can be found on their website: www.mountainaccord.com Please let me know if you will attend any of the meetings. Anne Zeigler - abzeigler@centurylink.net

Fall Fete – A Lovely Evening with Friends and Guests!

by: **Karen McCoy**, co-president, LWVSL, **Kate Hancock**, development chair

On October 10 approximately 40 League members and their guests gathered at Millcreek Cacao Roasters to celebrate the annual LWVSL Fall Fete, enjoying great desserts, wine, and delicious chocolates. Every attendee got to participate in a chocolate demonstration and see how sustainable chocolate is produced. The Fete was successful in raising money, promoting our mission and bringing together new and old friends. We thank everyone for their gracious support in making this year's Fete victorious.

Additionally, we honored Sherilyn Bennion, a more than 40-year League member and advocate. Sherilyn's League activities in both California and Utah included various League studies and board positions. A retired journalism professor, she has been particularly interested in First Amendment and freedom of information issues such as open meetings, open records, and freedom of speech. She became deeply involved with GRAMA, Utah's government access law, and was often seen speaking publicly about access to government information. Thank you, Sherilyn, for your service and commitment to League issues.

Davis County League Keeps Busy

by **Nelda Bishop**, co-president, LWV of Davis County

The League of Women Voters of Davis County has been busy with voter service events this fall. We hosted three meet the candidates events for legislative

AAUW Legislative Preview Set

The AAUW is sponsoring a legislative preview Saturday, January 10 at the Girl Scout Building, 445 E. 4500 South. The Salt Lake League will be moderating the event and the public is invited. Light refreshments will be served at 9:30 a.m. and the program will begin at 10. They are waiting until after the election to invite two Republican and two Democratic legislators to speak and answer questions from the audience.

— *Anne Zeigler*

candidates in Davis County. At the invitation of Ann Johnson, our local paper, the *Clipper*, sent a reporter to cover one of the events, complete with a nice photo. We also hosted a school board reporter to cover one event, also with a nice photo. We also hosted school board meet-the-candidates events for the primary election. So instead of holding live events for the final school board election, Ann Johnson talked the *Clipper* into publishing answers to League questions posed to state and county school board candidates. The *Clipper* also published candidate answers to League questions for both county commission races.

Lessons learned: Having someone cultivate a relationship with the local newspaper editor pays off. We were able to get the *Clipper* to give us paid ads at a greatly reduced rate. So far, we have not had the same luck with the other local paper that covers the north end of Davis County, although they were very willing to publish an op-ed piece on registering to vote, using the League website for candidate answers, attending League meet-the-candidates events, and voting by mail, a Davis County pilot program.

More lessons learned: Hosting meet the candidates events at city halls eliminates hassle. Microphones are there already, the candidates can sit in council chamber seats, audience chairs are already there, people know where the event is, and, so far, all the city halls we used have been free. We used to partner with the PTA so we could use public schools for meet the candidates. Now, after a lawsuit for an injury, the Davis District would have required League to buy event liability insurance (\$300 for a two-hour event) if the PTA hadn't had insurance that would cover us. And for our last school board candidate event at a public school, we had to pay the custodian \$70 for a two-hour event.

We also celebrated National Voter Registration Day by registering voters at two high schools during lunch hour. Lesson learned: Spring would be a better time to register voters at high schools. Not many students are close to turning 18 in the fall. But we were visible anyway.

Grand County League Has Active Fall

by Cynthia Smith, League of Women Voters Grand County



The League of Women Voters of Grand County has hosted a

Candidates Forum every year since 1984. This year's was standing room only, with many people listening from the hallway. The Forum is televised on local TV a few days after the event, and available on a website, so everyone has a chance to hear the candidates speak.

A social followed the Forum, with attendees enjoying refreshments and mingling



Hinckley Forums

are held in Orson Spencer Hall, Room 255, at the University of Utah. All forums are free and open to the public and are sponsored by the Hinckley Institute of Politics and The Sam Rich Program in International Politics.

<http://www.hinckley.utah.edu/events/forums/index.html>

with the candidates. Barbara Browning and her team were responsible for the wonderful decorations.

So much about the voting process has changed with the new vote-by-mail elections that we have been busy for several months gathering information and publicizing the new requirements.

We hosted a voter registration booth at the City Market on four Saturdays, and one at the Moab Pride Festival. There was quite a bit of traffic at all events. We accepted the mail-in registration forms from several people, and turned them in to the County Clerk's Office. But the most questions came from people asking whether they were considered active voters and would receive a ballot in the mail. Using an Excel program written locally from the voter database purchased from the County, we were able to answer those questions. We also explained the on-line registration process to many people, as well as how to change their addresses on their driver licenses and voter records.

There is a lot of interest in the election this year, both because of the new voting system and some hotly contested races. We anticipate a very high percentage of voter participation for the same reasons.

Weber County' Public Forum Highlights Commission

by Terri McCullough, President, League of Women Voters Weber County

Here's an update on the Public Forum on Local Government sponsored by the Weber LWV and the Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics and Public Service on Wednesday, September 3. You may not be aware that there has been quite a bit of contention about the Weber County Commission and some of their actions. The event was moderated by Max Roth from Fox 13, and he was phenomenal. The panel members were Di Allison, Leah Murray, Adam Trupp, and Duncan Murray.

The Weber LWV is updating their 33-year-old study on the structure of local government, which stimulated some community members' minds – as well as our own. We began working on the revision and have ended up meeting frequently about the study as well as how we could initiate the change in government. With the community members on board, it soon became an all out plan for how to get an initiative on the ballot to develop a study committee (the first step in change). The panel forum grew from there and kept expanding into getting a co-sponsor and really publicizing it. We have had many articles and letters in the local paper on the event and the topic.

Di Allison, former State and Local LWV President, talked about our previous study and the current update. Leah Murray, current Weber LWV Vice-President and professor of political science, discussed the different forms of local government in Utah. Adam Trupp, who is with the Utah Association of Counties, outlined the forms that have been approved by the legislature for Utah. And Duncan Murray (attorney and city manager of South Weber City), outlined the steps in making a change in the structure.

We then opened it up to the public for comments and questions. The number of

LWVSL General Meeting Coming

There will be a LWVSL general meeting on November 17 on early childhood education at the Girl Scout building from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The panel members are: Brenda VanGorder, Director, Preschool, Granite School District; Terry Haven, Deputy Director, Voices for Utah Children; Joanne Milner, Education Partner Coordinator and senior adviser to Mayor Ralph Becker; and Bethany Hosking, owner and director of Learning Tree Learning Center.

participants we had during this part was fantastic. Excellent questions were asked, and since all Weber Commissioners were present, Max invited Kerry Gibson (chair of the Weber County Commission) up to join the panel. That brought out quite a few comments, and an excellent discussion was held. We adjourned at 8:30 p.m. and there were no injuries or fatalities from the event.



This was one of the best activities we have participated in. We increased media coverage 100 percent and at the same time discussed a controversial topic for our county in a civilized manner.

The Weber County League also sponsored our annual membership

social and had a presentation by the local police concerning community policing. The county is divided up into regions and there is a police officer assigned to each area. They do not take routine calls that are dispatched, although they can help if they are available and in the area. The concept behind community policing is that a relationship is developed between the local police and the citizens of the community to which they are assigned. The officers learn what types of activity are prevalent in that area and the community recognizes the police as a part of the local team. It was reported that this concept had been very successful and crime rates in many neighborhoods had decreased. It has also improved the perception of the police in Weber County.

The Weber County League had a successful National Voter Registration Day this year. Leah Murray set up voter registration at Weber State University using students to help register people. She also set up League members at the local libraries. We were able to register over 100 voters this year, which we felt was a success.

Partisanship a Question in Amendment A

by Sandy Peck, LWVUT Executive Director Emeritus

The LWVU Board of Directors at their last meeting discussed possible League positions on three constitutional amendments proposed on the November 4 ballot. Or lacking a position, what information about the amendments might be useful to League members. We were especially interested in Amendment A regarding qualifications of State Tax Commission members, since it bears on the nonpartisan nature of the League.

According to the state Voter Information Pamphlet, "Amendment A to Article XIII, Section 6 removes the current limitation in the Constitution that no more than two [of the four] members of the Commission may be appointed [by the Governor with consent of the Senate] from the same political party.

Under this Amendment, it is possible for all or a majority of State Tax

Voter Information Easy to Find

The State of Utah voter information website contains a trove of information including voting districts, information on referenda and initiatives, and election results. Voter registration is active on the web site until seven days prior to Election Day.
vote.utah.gov

The Utah League's Voters Guide is available online at
<http://lwwutah.org/votersguide/>

Commission members to be from the same political party.”

The question is, would the Commission then be “non-partisan” in the sense that political party affiliation could not be a qualification, or actually partisan in that all members could be from the same party?

Also in Amendment A:

Article XIII, Section 6 already says Tax Commission members shall be appointed by the Governor with consent of the Senate for *terms* of service provided by statute. If the amendment passes, *qualifications* of the Commissioners would be set in statute as well, that is by the Legislature.

As it happens a statute, SB 19 that spells out detailed qualifications and terms has already passed the 2014 legislature.

Qualifications. SB 19 directs the governor when appointing a tax commissioner to get a list of names from the State Bar, organizations representing CPAs and property appraisers who practice in the state, and national organizations that offer professional certification based on experience, education and testing in the areas of property, sales and income tax. SB 19 also requires commissioners to have knowledge of tax administration or tax compliance, executive and administrative experience, and substantial knowledge and expertise in the theory and practice of one or more of property, excise, income, sales or corporate taxation.

These seem like excellent qualifications. But couldn't they be required of candidates from all political parties? The argument in favor in the VIP by three former Tax Commissioners says the amendment “will ensure that the governor is able to appoint the most qualified people available.” Aren't there qualified people in all parties?

Terms of Service. SB 19 also specifies the terms of service for commissioners: “The term of office shall be for four years and expire on June 30 of the year the term ends.” Also, “The governor shall stagger a term so that the term of one commissioner expires each year.” The governor and Senate could be appointing a new commissioner every year. Maryann Martindale of Alliance for a Better Utah pointed out to me the possibility that a potential commissioner friendly to a particular piece of tax legislation therefore could be appointed after every General Session. This would seem to increase the influence of the party in power over tax policy.

What role does party affiliation really play in the deliberations of the Tax Commission?

The Voter Information Pamphlet argument in favor (by three former Tax Commissioners) is that

“The Commissioners . . . perform as judges on people’s tax issues. . . .

Functioning as a judge is difficult to reconcile with a partisan appointment; Utah’s Tax Commissioners should be selected based on academic qualification and relevant experience. “



Welcome Our New Office Manager

Beatrix “Trixi” Seiger is joining The League of Women Voters of Utah, filling the position of office manager.

Her first day is Monday, November 10. She enjoys serving and taking part in enriching the community she lives and works in as a citizen, parent and woman voter.

Trixi has worked for years with nonprofits, and we are delighted to welcome her to LWVUT. Please introduce yourself and welcome Trixi on your visits to the League office. Tina Hose will be providing very valuable on-the-job training with Trixi during November and December.

Trixi has a 4-year old son, Rowan. She likes to travel, attend theater and dance performances and camp. She and husband Kevin have just celebrated their 11th wedding anniversary. Kevin works for Utah Clean Energy.

The Rebuttal to that argument (by a legislator and Democrat) is that

“ . . . it offers no evidence that the current balanced approach is not working for Utah . . . Unless you believe that one political party has a monopoly on qualified individuals. The facts are that Utahns with the necessary academic qualifications and relevant experience can be found in multiple political parties.

“ . . . Millions of dollars are on the line when the Tax Commission hears cases from large corporations protesting their tax assessments, and decisions made by the Tax Commissioners in those cases affect your property taxes. . . .”

“ . . . Guaranteeing that people from more than one political party sit on the Tax Commission is a constitutional check on power. It prevents this powerful government agency from being dominated by a single ideology. . . .”

It is certainly true that Democrats and Republicans often differ on tax policy. And many – especially Democrats – argue that the differences should be represented. However, according to [Utah Political Capitol](#) early on two other “former commissioners, Mark Buchi and Roger Tew, told the Revenue and Taxation Interim Committee that at no point in their long service on the commission did debates have a hint of partisanship, furthermore, the two felt that the requirement that commissioners be from different political parties was an artificial constraint. . . .”

What do you think?



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Power Plant Comment Deadline Extended!

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has extended the deadline for public comment on the proposed regulation to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants. The new deadline is December 1. League members wishing to comment on the proposal can send comments using the [LWVUS action alert!](#)

League of Women Voters of Salt Lake
3804 Highland Dr. Suite 8-D
Salt Lake City, UT 84106

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization
that encourages informed and active participation in government.

Early childhood education

LWV of Salt Lake
General meeting
November 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Girl Scout building

