



<http://www.lwvutah.org>

The League of Women Voters of Utah

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May 2018

Convention a Time to Learn, Participate, Enjoy

by Peggy Carico, LWWUT Co-President



I hope you have marked your calendars and are planning to attend the League of Women Voters Utah Convention on May 11 and 12. One of the first questions I get about the League is what do you do. The convention is a great place to find out. Each year we gather members from across the state to set our statewide plans for the coming year. Here are some of the things you can expect.

- Hear our financial report and set the coming year's budget. We send out fundraising requests four times a year to our membership. Have you wondered what they funds are used for? Here is the place to find out and have in put.
- Elect officers. Each year we have people rotating on and off the board. The goal is to stagger the membership on the board so we can mix experience and knowledge. For instance this is my last year as co-president. It is how we grow and learn as an organization and as individuals.
- Review, design and approve the program for the coming year. I think of program as setting the priorities for spending resources—financial and time. During the first part of the Convention on Saturday you will hear the board approved program. Members in attendance on Saturday can bring forward new program ideas. Ideas could involve a study or could be a concentration of efforts to move something forward in the state. During breaks you can meet with other attendees and discuss the ideas and identify people who would want to help. In the afternoon

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we vote on the approved program and any recommended changes.

- Hear from board members on their portfolios—development, public relations, legislative action, voter services, program, and local League development. Hear reports from each of the local Leagues on what they have accomplished this year. A great way to hear new ideas and recognize all that has been done.
- Give directions to the board. It is a chance to tell us what you think we should focus on to make the League better.
- This year we will also have two special guest speakers. Karen Nicholson, LWVUS Board, will give us an update on what is happening at national. And we will hear from Better Days 2020. This group is preparing some big celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the ratification 19th Amendment on August 18, 1920. The League will celebrate our 100th birthday on February 14, 2020. We can work together to celebrate these important milestones.

All of that happens on Saturday, May 12, at the beautiful Utah State Capitol.

Don't forget about Friday. A great dinner with stimulating conversations and Rod Decker shares his insights about the Utah political scene. This event is hosted by the LWV of Salt Lake at the historic Peery Hotel.

Spending time with smart, informed people is my favorite thing about the League. Use this weekend to be involved and to be re-energized. You won't regret it.

[Click here to register](#) and get more details of the two day event.

Redistricting Efforts Have Just Begun

by Gigi Brandt, LWVUT Co-Vice President, Programs

Better Boundaries (including the League) did it! Almost 190,000 signatures for the redistricting initiative were submitted to county clerks on April 17 for validation. The clerks have one month to validate the signatures before the measure is placed on the November ballot. If successful, as I mentioned last month, the real work for the League—educating the public about the initiative—begins. Recent surveys have indicated that many voters are not familiar with the initiative — and frequently a voter who doesn't understand the initiative will vote no.

Fall will be busy. We will be educating our members about the



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redistricting initiative along with the provisions of the other three initiatives which also submitted 113,143 signatures and a proposed constitutional amendment. We will be registering voters and participating in candidate forums, and holding a 5-K fun run called the Gerry-meander.

The proposed constitutional amendment allows the Legislature to call itself into special session. It is a reflection of the tension in balance of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government. The amendment, along with the April 18 override session, can be viewed as the Legislature's attempt at overriding the executive branch powers. Get ready to review Civics 101 on the topic of the balance of powers as we discuss this issue.

Again, thank you to all League members who carried petitions and validated signatures. As Catherine Kanter, manager of Better Boundaries wrote on the day the petitions were delivered, "We could not have gotten to this point without the support of the LWV. First and foremost, you inspired me to become involved with this issue in the first place. The LWV has had a long and impressive history with redistricting reform. I admire your commitment to this critically important issue, and I'm so grateful you were willing to step up for Better Boundaries—early on and through today!" The League thanks Catherine, who has managed the Better Boundaries efforts.

Civil Discourse Breeds Better Understanding

by Tina Hose, LWVUT Membership and Leadership Coordinator

"Civility costs nothing and buys everything."

- Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 17th century British adventuress

As has been discussed by your Local League Membership and Leadership Coaches, the "democracy space" has become more crowded. While the growing number of organizations with missions similar to the League is exciting, it can make it difficult to be heard. It may feel like civility is becoming the exception instead of the rule in today's political climate.

How our message on issues is delivered can have as much impact as the message itself. We know relationships are critical, because people must come together to fix problems and create compromise on issues. There must be mutual respect between parties to enhance strong dialogue. Civil discourse, debating (not arguing), and listening to the other side are critical to building trust. While we all know this, it can be hard in practice.

Borrowing from the League's partner, the National Institute for Civil Discourse (<https://nicd.arizona.edu/>), here are several simple reminders on how to achieve a positive, respectful conversation:



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1. Go into the conversation or meeting with an **open mind**. Your initial attitude will set the tone for the entire conversation.
2. **Listen carefully and respectfully**. The most important thing you can do is listen to the other person. Their opinion is valid, just like yours. This gives you an opportunity to better understand the background of that viewpoint. Work on being patient; let the other person finish talking.
3. Don't be afraid to **ask questions**. As noted above, it's not only that we make the point, but *how the point is made* is critical. Ask questions in a respectful manner. This is one of the best ways to find common ground.
4. **Avoid name-calling and other disrespectful actions**. If the speaker said something that offended you, discuss this calmly and explain why. This is an opportunity for both of you to learn. And be aware of your own non-verbal reactions as the person speaking to you can react negatively in return, feeling uncomfortable or disrespected.
5. **Accept differences**. Sometime you must agree to disagree. And that message too should be delivered calmly and respectfully.

Opportunities for civil discourse are primarily about building relationships. By presenting ourselves in a civil manner, listening respectfully and staying open to conversations with others, we position the entire League for success in the future.

We're not alone. The LWV of Portland, OR, and LWV San Luis Obispo, CA have brought the importance of civil discourse home to their members and communities. Portland's website has video highlights of their October 2017 Civil Discourse Panel discussion. San Luis Obispo has created a Civil Discourse Action Team and has published handbooks on civil discourse related topics.

Agriculture Study Soon to be Ready

by Marilyn O'Dell, Agriculture Study Committee

A year ago while in Germany on a family trip, I was surprised to find myself at the edge of an unbroken farm field only about a block and a half from the developed area where I was staying. Nothing broke the field of grain except a small grove of trees. There were no buildings in sight with the exception of the next village so far away that I could barely see it.

When our study committee starting discussing farmland preservation, that sight came back to me. I started looking for information about how Germany, with a much greater number of people per square mile than the United States, preserves farmland. An official German publication stated that Germany lost only 1.2 percent of its farmland between 1999 and 2007. The quadrennial U.S. Census of Agriculture showed a 7.6 percent

Donors Honor Roll

The League of Women Voters of Utah expresses its deepest gratitude to all of our loyal donors. Our amazing work is accomplished by hundreds of hours of volunteer labor with the invaluable help of our part time office manager, but we depend on our generous donors to pay office expenses like phone, computers, office rent and salary. This month we thank

Anne Zeigler
for her continued support
of the LWVUT.

— Kathryn Fitzgerald, LWVUT
Development Director

change in farmland in Utah between 1997, when land in farms was 12.02 million acres, and 2007, when it was 11.09 million acres. Germany is a very different country with a different climate, economy and culture, but the difference is significant.

A friend living in Ogden but born and raised in Germany told me that individuals cannot buy farmland in Germany to build a house. If a town or village has no more land for homes that municipality can buy farmland immediately adjacent to their boundaries, install infrastructure and sell it for homes.

Committee member Jan Striefel has researched the programs available to keep land in agriculture in Utah. Some programs have a goal of keeping land in agriculture temporarily while others put the land in a permanent conservation status. Most programs require that the owner receives compensation—often in the form of reduced taxes. One of the programs with the most potential for more permanent preservation is called Transfer of Development Rights, but it has not been used much in Utah.

LWVUT does not have a policy on farmland preservation. Our land use position states that we support “management of land as a finite resource”. Our study, “Agriculture in Utah,” will give League members an opportunity to review what programs are available for farmland preservation as well as other impacts of local food production. We expect to have the study ready for a meeting to discuss consensus this fall.

Grand County Fundraiser Mixes Fun, Politics

by Barb Lacy, LWV-Grand County Co-President

LWV of Grand County Silent Auction, our annual fundraiser, was held Saturday, April 14, in conjunction with the City of Moab Art Walk. Dozens of local business donated goods and services for the Silent Auction such as massages, bike rentals, and guided field trips. Moab City Mayor Emily Neihaus, a LWV member, donated a lunch with the mayor. Members donated a variety of items that we put on the “buy it now sale table.”

We made over \$2,000 which will fund our candidate forums in the fall.



Cynthia Smith has chaired this event for many years and is expert at pulling together a team of volunteers — more than 20 this year — to collect donations, set up and complete sales.

How do I?

...print documents for League work I do?

If you have less than 50 copies to print, you may come to the office and use the computer and printer. We also have envelopes for mailing. If you have a printing job larger than 50 copies, please take your order to Alphagraphics (3350 S. 2300 East), remembering to let Alphagraphics know which account to bill under—LWVSL of LWVUT. If you pay for the documents, please attach a receipt to our reimbursement form and then mail or drop this off and we will issue you a check. If you need stamps for small batch mailing we may have some on hand in the office but in general, please purchase stamps yourself, attach a receipt to our reimbursement form and then mail or drop this off at the office. We will issue you a check.

— **Trixi Sieger, Office Manager**

Darcey Smith (photo above), winner of the bid for a bike rental, stands with a young man new to the area who won a lunch with the mayor.

Davis League Looks at Population, State Issues

by Kathy Stockel, Davis LWV Co-President

The Davis League of Women Voters has made the last several months count, with activities focused on local and state politics.

LWV-Davis board members, concerned about air pollution, traffic, housing, and infrastructure, met with Davis County Commissioner Bret Milburn to discuss concerns about the effect on our county of the planned Inland Port in the northwest quadrant of Salt Lake City. We plan to invite legislators from Davis County to participate in a public panel discussion of how to handle the economic and population growth in our county and keep it a good place to live and raise our families.

LWV-Davis and friends participated in the March for Our Lives rally for sensible gun regulation.

LWV-Davis members Emily Walsh, Nickie Nelson, Kathy Stockel and Peggy Carrico joined Vickie Samuelson, Kathy Fitzgerald, and Ann O'Connell in a Legislative Wrap-up. Ann Johnson hosted our new member orientation where we talked about the many avenues members can follow to become involved and contribute according to their interests and time.



The Davis League Annual Meeting will be on Saturday, June 2, when we elect officers and plan our program for another year of Davis' monthly insightful, interesting, and topical speaker programs.

Weber Reviews the Legislative Session

by Susan Skordos, Weber County League of Women Voters

The Weber and Davis County Leagues of Women Voters met with the Legislative Action Corps of the Utah League of Women Voters for a Legislative Wrap-up. The meeting at the Weber County Library Pleasant Valley Branch included Legislative Action Corps Directors Nickie Nelson and Vickie Samuelson as well as Ann Johnson, Peggy Carrico, and Marilyn O'Dell.

There were 735 numbered bills presented during the Utah Legislative session of 2018. More than 25 bills concerned the controlled substance database. This information is to remain private with a warrant needed to

We're Blogging

Check out what's going on in our community through the eyes of League members. Our observers - legislative and local - offer their perspectives on what's happening at city councils, in school boards and other meetings.

Go to the League website — lwwutah.org — and find the drop-down menu called Get Informed.

And if you are any community members you know are interested in subscribing to the Salt Lake League's Weekly Briefing, let us know at commteam@lwwsl.org.

gain access.

The group was especially pleased by the passage of HB218, which allows an individual to register to vote when they apply for or renew a driver license or state ID. It also requires the county conducting an election by absentee ballot to provide a specific number of polling places on the election date.

The House Judiciary discussed abortion law limits. A woman seeking an abortion must view modules regarding the process and the unborn and she must be provided with information regarding attorneys who will promote adoption.

Incarcerated persons and the deaths of 24 inmates were a concern. Inmates must now obtain treatment for addiction or mental health issues, and reports must be publicized.

Health and human services will now allow a woman to get long-term contraception, such as an IUD. Also regarding health issues, HB195 allows individuals to try cannabis if they have a terminal illness and are six months from death. An addition to the cannabis debate was the passage of HB197, which could help people begin planting and harvesting cannabis.

Regarding revenue and taxation, income taxes were reduced from 5 percent to 4 percent. Property tax rates previously went down as property value went up. This will now stabilize to boost funding for education. Also discussed was the lowering of corporate tax, which advocates say will spur business and result in more taxes collected. However, this has not been the case.

The 2020 Census question about citizenship may result in people not completing the Census. Accurate counts of residents should be the goal, not whether people are citizens.

Members of the legislative corps were asked what they valued most about the legislative session. They were pleased with the availability of their political representatives and heartened by the number of bills passed regarding women.

The failure of a bill to keep firearms from people seen as an extreme risk was disappointing, as was the passage of SB234, the Utah Inland Port Authority. More information regarding Utah's 2018 Legislative Session is available on the [Legislative Corps' website](#).



Thanks to the Girl Scouts of Utah for their generous in-kind donations to the League of Women Voters of Utah and the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake.

Community Lunch Highlights Initiative Effort

The State of the Community Luncheon this year included a panel of expert observers who spoke about the many citizen initiatives racing to the ballot.

League member Gigi Brandt was recognized for her tireless efforts soliciting volunteers for the Better Boundaries Initiative and keeping the League informed on its progress. She has worked on many critical issues, including efforts to staunch the influence of money in politics. No important goal is ever realized without time and effort, she reminded the audience.

The panel, moderated by the Salt Lake Tribune's Jennifer Napier-Pearce, included Jason Perry of the Hinckley Institute of Politics, former University of Utah professor Tim Chambless, and Tribune columnist George Pyle. Despite the legal hurdles, many of the initiatives are expected to reach the November ballot. Luncheon Chair Susan Lind presented the panelists with the League's Making Democracy Work Award.



The Teacher and Student Success Act has reached an agreement with the Legislature to fund schools by passing a 10 cent gas tax in the next session.

The Direct Primary Election Act is working to create a dual system of signature-gathering and caucus support for candidates to reach the ballot.

Utah Decides Healthcare Act would place Medicaid Expansion of 150,000 more people before the voters.

The Utah Medical Cannabis Act seeks to allow more patient access to the drug.

The Utah Independent Redistricting Commission and Standards Act seeks to create an independent advisory commission to help with the federally required redistricting after each Census. The League has been actively supporting what is called "Better Boundaries," believing that every voter should have a voice in their government.

Thanks to Our Helpers, League Friends

Susan Lind, Chair applauded the Luncheon Committee: Judi Short, Nancy Melling, Nancy Wingelaar, Nancy Young, Linda Sayge and Linda Johnson for their diligence, generosity, creativity, and numerous talents in assisting with the success of this luncheon. She, also, commends League Members Melissa Nelson-Stippich and Shelly Pace for their special graphic art talents in producing a video, pins, invitations, luncheon website and weekly support on google docs. **Salt Lake County, Planned Parenthood of Utah, Zions Bank, the Salt Lake Tribune** are commended for their continued support of the Luncheon along with numerous others who generously give to the luncheon to help make it successful.

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