



# The Voter

## *The League and "Real" Facts*

Joye Montgomery

Fake news! What is fake news? How does it affect our democracy? Has it changed Americans' faith in their government and mainstream media? What can we as citizens do about it? What does the LWVOR do to help? Fake news has been in the headlines almost daily since the campaigning began for the 2016 election, making these questions a necessary consideration for any involved American when they listen to, read about, or hear a news story.

Fake news is defined as information published under the guise of being authentic news. A more detailed definition comes from PolitiFact: "Fake news is made-up stuff, masterfully manipulated to look like credible journalistic reports that are easily spread online to large audiences willing to believe the fictions and spread the word.\*"

There are different types of fake news. Stories, rumors and articles can be intentionally deceptive – stating something as fact when it is not. Humor, as satire, portrays news to be funny or entertaining. A story out of context can be passed along without the full text. Large-scale hoaxes can be reported before they are investigated fully. Newspapers and TV news shows are more likely to slant reporting of "real" facts whenever there is bias.

Social media as a news outlet has made access to all types of stories faster and easier. It is quicker and cheaper than the communication avenues of the past. It has also allowed fake and misleading news to reach greater numbers of people. Fake news stories are usually sensational stories which run the gambit from plausible to outlandish. When the stories are spread, they can polarize groups, discredit officials, and upset the governing process. What we believe affects how we vote, what we advocate for, and how we view fellow citizens.

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### *Connect with Us*

Website: [lwvoakridge.org](http://lwvoakridge.org)

Facebook: [League of Women Voters of Oak Ridge](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofWomenVotersofOakRidge)

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**Emily Jernigan, Voter Editor**

**Marian Varner, Webmaster**

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How, as individuals, do we discern what is truth from what is not? Can the League of Women Voters offer some clarity?

The National League of Women Voters is dedicated to ensuring that all eligible voters have the opportunity and the information needed to exercise their right to vote. Fake news and how it affects voters has become a point of concern for Leagues across the United States, prompting many Leagues to present panel discussions and forums looking for ways to help voters decide what is real and what is fake.

While the Oak Ridge League has not dealt specifically with fake news, its normal outreach through the publication of *The Voter* presents an excellent path to reality. The Observer Corps consists of LWVOR members who attend public meetings such as city councils and commissions, county commissions, school boards and special committees. We then publish their reports in *The Voter*. Although they are not official minutes, the reports describe important votes, discussions and observations, offering the reader some insight into what is happening on these boards. LWVOR puts on Breakfast with the Legislators during months when the Legislature meets. This offers current legislators the opportunity to make statements on issues and answer questions from the audience. Candidate forums offer a direct path to candidates seeking offices. Audience members present questions while listening to and observing the candidates. The general public is always invited to the LWVOR events, while being a member of LWVOR entitles you to receive a copy of *The Voter*. Dig for the truth and question the source! Seek reliable sources that clearly help cull out the untruths that bombard us daily. If a story or idea is worth repeating, take the time to check it out with the aid of fact checking organizations like [FactCheck.org](http://FactCheck.org), [Snopes.com](http://Snopes.com), the [Washington Post](http://Washington Post)

[Fact Checker](http://Fact Checker), and [PolitiFact.com](http://PolitiFact.com). Then share only the stories and events that you know are true, from responsible sources or personal involvement.

\* PolitiFact.com is a project operated by the Tampa Bay Times, in which reporters and editors from the Times and affiliated media, fact check statements by members of Congress, the White House, lobbyists, and interest groups.

*Editor's note: Joye Montgomery is 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the LWVOR board. Since we do not currently have a president, board members will be responsible for the column traditionally prepared by the president. Thank you, Joye.*

## League Committees

### Education Committee



**Harriett McCurdy** and **Carol Plasil** are the co-chairs of the Education committee. Brenda Parker, who chaired the committee for many years, has helped Harriett and Carol get started in their new roles. Under Brenda's leadership this committee has primarily followed the progress of education related bills in the Tennessee Legislature, and has taken action in support of the League's positions. The committee will have plenty to do this fall as the bills to institute a voucher program for the Memphis area move on to the 2018 session.

Since the committee's focus is the work of the State Legislature, this group will resume meeting in January once the Legislature is in session.

In the past, the Education committee has met once a month in the Secret City Café of Methodist Medical Center, usually at 2:30 on 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month. Day and time may be adjusted to suit interested members' schedules. All members of the LWVOR are welcome to join. Please contact Harriett McCurdy at 481-0249, [mccurdy46@hotmail.com](mailto:mccurdy46@hotmail.com), or Carol Plasil at 483-4871, or [carolplasil@comcast.net](mailto:carolplasil@comcast.net) for more information.

### Partner-in-Education Committee

Kay Moss has assumed the chairmanship of the Partner-in-Education committee from Carol Plasil who chaired it for many years.

### Lunch with the League



On **September 19** Chief **Jim Akagi**, Oak Ridge Police Department, will discuss "Current Law Enforcement Issues in Oak Ridge."

On October 3, Jessica Steed, Chair, Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation (ORPSEF), will talk about "ORPSEF and Its Work with Oak Ridge Schools."

On **October 17**, **Marc DeRose**, Executive Director, Explore Oak Ridge (formerly Convention and Visitors Bureau), will tell us about "Current and Future Initiatives to Promote Tourism and Business in Oak Ridge."

Lunches from the [Soup Kitchen](#) are available for \$8. Lunch with the League is open to the public. Reservations are not required, and we provide coffee, water, and tea. We thank [Sweet Cafe](#) in Norris for providing lunches for several years. Lunch with the League is at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike.

### National Voter Registration Day

Every year millions of Americans find themselves unable to vote because they miss a registration deadline, don't update their registration, or aren't sure how to register. The goal of National Voter Registration Day is to make sure everyone has the opportunity to vote.

National Voter Registration Day was first observed in 2012 and has been growing in popularity every year since. Held on the fourth Tuesday of September, National Voter Registration Day will be observed on Tuesday, September 26 this year.

Our League will participate by registering voters at Roane State Community College Oak Ridge Branch from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Students, faculty, and

the general public are invited to stop by and register or pick up a Mail-In Tennessee Application for Voter Registration for a friend.

For more information about registering to vote or elections, you may contact the Anderson County Election Commission website at [www.acelect.com](http://www.acelect.com); the Roane County Election Commission website [www.roaneelections.com](http://www.roaneelections.com); or the Knox County Election Commission website [www.knoxcounty.org/election](http://www.knoxcounty.org/election).

~Mary Uziel

### Observer Corps

*LWVOR members attend meetings and report their observations of the meeting they attend. These notes are not official minutes. Contact the specific committee for official information. Longer versions of some of these reports may be posted on our website.*

### Roane County Commission

*August 14, 2017, meeting*

Thirteen commissioners were present.

Hearing of Delegation:

Roberta Dennis of Rockwood talked about the poor road conditions addressed previously. Helen Ray addressed again the condition of a bridge in her neighborhood as well as mosquito problems. William Kotul stated that he has lived in Pioneer Village for 19 years and showed photos of bad road conditions. He stated that propane and oxygen services, as well as UPS and US Mail deliveries, are not performed due to road conditions. He thanked five commissioners who actually made a visit in a four wheel drive. As previously mentioned, it is a private road that was constructed over twenty years ago by a contractor who left the area long ago. Therefore the county is not responsible for its upkeep.

Tim Smith lives on a private road and said it is the responsibility of the landowner(s) to keep the road maintained. He said he would be affected because if the roads are repaired crime would increase.



Sharon Brown, resident of Pioneer Village for 25 years asked for herself and 10 neighbors for help with their road repairs. She also stated that there is crime at present. Truman Ledgerwood, also of Pioneer Village, stated that police do not come up because of the impassable roads.

Bud Stringer said the conditions would force him to borrow a horse because he would not ride his own.

Albert Tate lives 1,000 feet from Tiger Haven and is concerned about diseases like lyme and malaria that might be transmitted from the animals. Toby Rhinehard, owner of Tiger Haven, addressed the issue about the effects of all the urine runoff on the environment.

County Executive:

Ron Woody addressed highlights of budget and stated that no tax increase is anticipated.

New Business:

A resolution was passed that the county adopt portions of West Williams Road, Lake Overlook Road, and Bournemouth Road of Pioneer Village into the Roane County Roadway system. A number of citizens were present and applauded the decision of eleven in favor and two negative votes. This has been a longtime plea of the taxpaying citizens who were caught up in a fraudulent contractor issue. Many of them are old and of very modest means. Several commissioners stated that they would be ashamed if the county would not come to their aid.

Eight additional resolutions of county business were unanimously passed.

*~Hella Peterson, Observer*

**EQAB**

*July 6, 2017, meeting*

Board Members Present: Rhonda Bogard, William Dean, Darcie Holcomb, Robert Kennedy, Kaela O'Dell, Jan Lyons, High School Representatives Tripp Chinn and Sujithkumar Adithyan.

Board Members Absent: Jianqiu Zheng

City Staff Liaison: Sandy Sexton

Visitors: Kathryn Olsen (LWV), Ellen Smith (City Council)

A workshop, Ash Tree Demise, is scheduled for August 29 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the UT Arboretum. The workshop is jointly sponsored by the City of Oak Ridge, EQAB, and the UT Arboretum. The public and municipalities are invited to attend.

Most of the regular July meeting was devoted to editing the draft of the 2015 Major Milestone Status of the Oak Ridge Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP was first adopted in 2010. The status report will include the original CAP, with item-by-item goal achievement.

*~Kathryn Olsen, Observer*

**Anderson County Charter Commission**

*May 1, June 5, and July 13 meetings*

During the May meeting Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank and Chief Jailer Avery Johnson gave a brief overview of the duties and responsibilities of their respective offices, and responded to questions from commissioners. Following adjournment of the meeting, commissioners toured the Anderson County Detention Facility.

In June and July the Commission heard more reports from Anderson County elected officials and department heads including Finance Director Natalie Erb, District Attorney Dave Clark, and Human Resources Director Russell Bearden.

The Commission passed a motion at its June 5 meeting to send a resolution to the Anderson County Commission requesting an extension until August 1, 2018. This would allow the Charter Commission more time to complete its review of all components of Anderson County Government. The resolution was passed by Anderson County Commission on June 19.

The August meeting of the Charter Commission was canceled.

*~Bob Smallridge, Observer, Commission member*



## Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission

*August 17, 2017, meeting*

All commission members were present. Staff members Jordan Clark and Kelly Duggan were present as well as Brian from Public Works and Kathryn Baldwin.

A rezoning request for 7.436 acres on South Illinois and Tulane, from RG-1 and O-2 to UB-2 was withdrawn at the request of the developer. The parcel is part of the AMSE property recently transferred to the city and then sold to TN Oak Ridge Illinois LLC. The developer plans to resubmit the request as UB-2 PUD (a planned unit development.)

The Preserve at Clinch River, Phase 8, Section "O" is 92 acres, largely undeveloped and unimproved, with one house completed. The developer has submitted a new plat consolidating the lots into 6 large lots and converting Boxberry Road from a public road to a private road and providing a private force main sewer line for these lots. The developer established a Maintenance Fund, and the Homeowner's Association will be responsible for maintaining the road and sewer line. The planning commission accepted the water lines and electrical infrastructure and released the surety bond and waived the warranty.

City Council has approved the preliminary master PUD plan for Azalea Place. The developer has submitted a site plan for approval of the assisted living facility as part of the plan. The height of the building is 39 feet, which exceeds the 35 feet max height since it is next to a R-1-C residential area. The Planning Commission approved the modification of the height requirement since the building is on a downward grade from the residential area.

The commission considered and passed two Zoning Ordinance text amendments, which will be submitted to City Council. Currently airports are

allowed in the IND-3 zoning district as a special exception requiring Board of Zoning Appeals approval. The amendment places airports into the principal permitted use category and would not require BZA approval, but there will still be opportunity for public input when the IND-3 district is created and again when the site plan is submitted.

The other amendment passed is to the Zoning Enforcement section of the Zoning Ordinance. In accordance with state law, Oak Ridge established an Administrative Hearing Officer (AHO) to hear cases regarding violations of building codes and property maintenance. This year the state law was amended to allow the AHO's jurisdiction to include violations of the Zoning Ordinance. We amended our Zoning Ordinance to allow violations of the Zoning Ordinance to be heard by the AHO. This will allow for a faster enforcement process with potentially larger penalties for violations.

The commission adopted TDOT's Consultant Selection Policy which will allow the City to initiate the process for selecting a consultant for architectural, engineering, and right-of-way services for the Rails-to-Trails project.

The commission adopted a resolution of appreciation of Kathryn Baldwin for her 16 years of service as Community Development Director.

The Planning Commission is holding the next Blueprint Open House on Thursday, August 24 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Jefferson Middle School gym. This meeting is for the residents of Emory Valley/Briarcliff and the Park Meade/Rolling Links areas. Residents have received postcards inviting them to the meeting, and we encourage them to share their concerns, suggest improvements, and talk with their neighbors.

*~Claudia Lever, Observer, Commission member*



### **Local Program 2017–2018**

As part of its ongoing local program, the Oak Ridge LWV provides voter education and registration, candidates’ forums, other forums on public issues, and programs such as Breakfast with our Legislators and Lunch with the League. In addition, the League takes action when appropriate based on current local, state, and national positions and, after study and consensus, on newly identified local study items.

The local study and action program for 2017-2018:

#### **Education**

Study and monitor the quality of the Oak Ridge Public Schools, especially as impacted by local, state, and federal mandates and community factors; emphasis should include State and Federal standards, alternatives to public education, school security, and Oak Ridge Preschool. Monitor the financial impact of school vouchers and other cutbacks to education on the local schools and community.

Continue the Partner in Education program with the Oak Ridge High School Social Studies Department.

Monitor the potential changes in the Basic Education Program and the effect on Oak Ridge Schools.

Monitor issues associated with in-state tuition rates for advanced training and education for Tennessee high school and GED graduates regardless of their immigration status.

#### **Voting/Election Issues**

Track election law legislation.

Continue to monitor various methods of voting.

Cooperate with the Voter Services Committee.

#### **Action Groups**

Survey membership for areas of interest and develop corresponding action groups to educate

the public and take action, as appropriate, on League positions. This survey will include Climate Change, Education, Insure Tennessee, Immigration, Mental Health, Community Organizing, and other positions depending on member interests. These action groups will enter into partnerships with other organizations with like interests to share information and decide on action. The survey will also include areas of local interest where there are no League positions (e.g., review of small modular reactor programs and monitor implementation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park).

#### **Observer/Monitoring Corps**

Continue the Observer/Monitoring group, following the City Council, Anderson and Roane County Commissions, School Board, Planning Commission, Environmental Quality Advisory Board, Industrial Development Board, Land Bank, Senior Advisory Board, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, Anderson County Charter Commission, Healthy Families of Tennessee, and State funding resources for Roane State Community College. Educate the membership and the public as appropriate.

#### **Membership Notes**

Please contact Janis Williams, 483-1219 or [janisor@bellsouth.net](mailto:janisor@bellsouth.net), with membership corrections and updates.

#### **Bob Smallridge to Fill Vacant Seat**

Bob Smallridge was elected to fill the Anderson County Commission seat vacated by Myron Iwanski when he became interim County Trustee. Bob’s term will end August 31, 2018. He is a member of the LWVOR and an Anderson County Charter Commissioner, as well as an Observer of that board. Congratulations, Bob.



**BOARD MEMBERS 2017-2018**

President: vacant  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Betsy Smith  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Joye Montgomery – Fund Raising  
 Secretary: Kay Moss; chair, Partner in Education  
 Treasurer: Janis Williams  
 Directors – two–year terms  
     Mary Ann Reeves – Lunch with the League  
     Dan Robbins –Voter Service  
     Ruby Miller – Publicity LWL and BWL  
 Directors – one–year terms  
     Charlie Hensley – Voter Service  
     Christine Iversen – Climate Change  
     Cleva Marrow – Publicity Advisor  
     Harriett McCurdy – Co-chair, Education  
     Carol Plasil – Co-chair, Education  
     Emily Jernigan – Editor of the Voter  
     Mary Uziel – Internal Communications

**OFF-BOARD**

Claudia Lever – Voter Service  
 Marian Varner – Website, Facebook  
 Pat Bryan – Vote411  
 Peter Scheffler – Outreach  
 Doris Sklad –Special Events  
 Maureen Hoyt – Publicity at Large  
 Vacant – Observer Corps Coordinator  
 Nominating Committee for 2017–2018:  
 Peter Scheffler, Chair; Pat Bryan; Ann McNees

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government and works to increase understanding of public policy through unbiased studies of public issues. Attendance at LWVOR events is open to the public. Membership is open to both men and women. Please visit our website, [www.lwvoakridge.org](http://www.lwvoakridge.org).

***I want to join the League of Women Voters***

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (Day / Work) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual annual dues \_\_\_\_\_ \$60  
 Household annual dues \_\_\_\_\_ \$90  
 \*Donation to Education Foundation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Make a separate, tax deductible check payable to LWVEF*  
 Please send this form and your dues, payable to:  
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 Oak Ridge, TN 37831



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## **Calendar**

### **August**

**9 Board Meeting\*** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

### **September**

**12 Board Meeting\*** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**19 Lunch with the League\*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Chief Jim Akagi, Oak Ridge Police Department.  
Topic: "Current Law Enforcement Issues in Oak Ridge."

**26 National Voter Registration Day** 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Roane State Community College Oak Ridge

### **October**

**3 Lunch with the League\*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Jessica Steed, Chair, Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation (ORPSEF). Topic: "ORPSEF and Its Work with Oak Ridge Schools."

**10 Board Meeting\*** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**17 Lunch with the League\*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Marc DeRose, Executive Director, Explore Oak Ridge (formerly Convention and Visitors Bureau). Topic: "Current and Future Initiatives to Promote Tourism and Business in Oak Ridge."

\* Unless otherwise specified, Lunch with the League is at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike at Laboratory Road. Board Meetings are in the Main Conference Room, UT Resource Center, Rutgers Ave. at the Turnpike.