

The Voter

The Co-Presidents' Report

Last Voter 'til 2010 - It seems strange to write these words before Thanksgiving. Save at least the Voter calendar so you'll be able to participate in the December and January events. After ORAU's Eric Abelquist speaks to Lunch with the League on December 1 and our Holiday Lunch on December 6, the League takes a short break. Our hardworking *Voter* editor, **Emily Jernigan**, will be able to catch up on the other things in her life.

Holiday Lunch - This is a wonderful way to start the Holiday Season on December 6. **Matt Shafer Powell**, WUOT News Director and Edward R. Murrow Award winner, will speak. Reservations are required (page 3).

"Communicating with your Legislators" workshop - Many thanks to Board member **Mary Ann Reeves** who coordinated this workshop by **Stewart Clifton**. Clifton also spoke to Lunch with the League and we'll publish his tips in the February *Voter*. They'll be fresh in our minds when the Legislative session starts.

Voting Technology Committee - We're sorry to lose **Al Denny** as chair of this committee. He provided valuable leadership for a number of years, and we thank him for all his efforts. We're pleased that League member **JoAnn Garrett**, former Anderson County Administrator of Elections, will chair the committee for the remainder of the League year. The committee will have new meeting times, and plans to have the Election Administrators from Anderson and Roane County as speakers.

Observer Corps - As part of the local program adopted last spring **Jesse Noritake**, First Vice-president, has organized the League's Observer Corps. The group had a get acquainted and orientation session, and its members are now attending city and county meetings. Thanks to all.

Then January! Look what's on our plate early in the new year: Lunches with the League on January 5 and 19 (page 4); Breakfast with Our Legislators kicks off on January 25; and a National Program Planning meeting chaired by Pat Petrie on January 26 (page 3). National Convention is coming in June to Atlanta, and our ideas are needed.

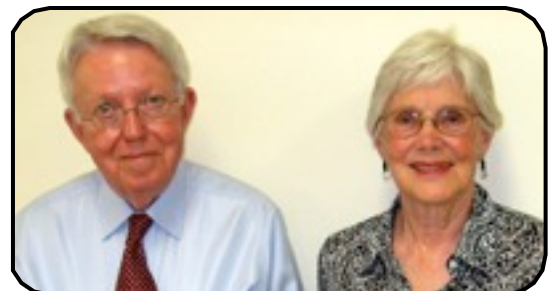
With our very best wishes for the Holidays!

Marty Adler-Jasny (483-9455) Norman Mulvenon (482-3153)
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Precision Printing and Graphics supports the League of Women Voters of Oak Ridge by printing and folding *The Voter*. Thanks!



Norman Mulvenon & Marty Adler-Jasny

League Committees:

Education Committee

The Education Committee met in November to plan direction for the upcoming year. They will study the Oak Ridge Schools math curriculum, changes in student testing and other topics

There will be no Education Committee meeting in December. The next meeting is Monday, January 11, 2010, at 2 pm in the Secret City Café. For more information contact **Ann McNees**, 483-9663.

Voting Technology Committee

The Voting Technology Committee will be meeting with **Mark Stephens**, Anderson County Administrator of Elections, at 3:15 pm, January 14, 2010, at the Local Oversight Committee office in Midtown Center (Wildcat Den) in Oak Ridge. He will discuss his understanding of the coming changes in voting machines, what problems he sees on the horizon and how the League can be of help to the election office in registering folks to vote, educating the voting public, etc. **JoAnn Garrett** is the new chair of this committee. Contact her for more information: 483-4466, garrett.joann@comcast.net



Charter Commission Study Committee

The Charter Commission will hold two more public hearings before beginning the process to determine final proposals for amendments to the Oak Ridge City Charter. The public hearing scheduled for November 30, 6-9 pm, will be held at the ORHS amphitheater. Citizens may offer suggestions for changes to the Charter pertaining to Articles V and VI. These articles address the city schools and the charter provisions for the role of City Manager. On January 25, 2010, the

Commission will hear ideas for any new Articles and Article I of the Charter.

The Charter Commission strongly urges the public to attend the hearings. After these hearings are held, the Commission expects to add suggestions to its idea bank. The Commission will then meet in March, April and May to discuss the ideas.

The League study committee will begin its work after final recommendations for Charter changes are made in late summer. We encourage all interested League members to follow the deliberations of the Charter Commission and prepare to study the pros and cons of its recommendations.

Up-to-date information about the Charter Commission (meeting times, minutes, contact information, etc.) can be found on the Commission website, www.oakridgecharter.com. **Karleen Richter**, 483-0022, richter0022@bellsouth.net



Interested in Great Decisions? Read on...

If there is enough interest, the League will again sponsor a Great Decisions discussion group in February and March. **Barbara Barrett** has agreed to chair the group again. Participants have in-depth discussions on a variety of foreign policy issues, using briefing papers developed by the Foreign Policy Association and other materials. The sessions begin in early February, at a time and place to be determined. In previous years they have been held weekly on Mondays at 10 am. All are welcome to join this short-term, very informative series of discussions. Call **Barbara Barrett**, 483-0015, for more information. She needs a general idea of how many books to order for the 8-session program.

Behind the Scenes at LWVOR

Two, four, six, eight - who do we appreciate?

Blanche Dresner is the new League representative on the Anderson County Health Council Board. She replaces **Diantha Paré** who has moved from Oak Ridge.

Lou Arnold has agreed to be the Observer, with **Kathy Olsen**, for the Environmental Quality Advisory Board, replacing **Judy Mason**. Judy had a conflict with another city board on which she serves.

Did you notice those articles in the newspaper on topics like Constitution Day? We can thank **Maureen Hoyt**, the League publicist for general information, for writing them. **Robin Toth** does all the publicity for Lunch with the League.

Brenda Hackworth will be welcoming visitors and members as a new Greeter for Lunch with the League. Since she won't always be available, we still need a few more helpers.



Holiday Lunch - Sunday, December 6

12:30 pm Flatwater Grill Event room

Reserve by Wednesday, December 2

Matt Shafer Powell, WUOT's award-winning News Director and Oak Ridge resident, will speak about his feature story, *My Life, My Vote*. Lunch begins with social time (cash bar or soft drinks) followed by lunch at 1 pm. The cost is \$25.

The menu includes vegetable soup, Salmon Niçoise or a vegetarian alternative, rolls and butter, Red Velvet or Chocolate Cake, tea, coffee, soft drinks.

Your invitation is in the mail. Contact **Maryann Mulvenon**, mulvenon@juno.com, 482-3153 to reserve your spot for this festive event.

Membership Notes

New & Renewing Members - Thanks!

Anne Adamson
1078 W Outer Drive
Oak Ridge, TN 37830
865-483-0176

Please contact **Janis Williams**, keeper of our membership records, 483-1219, or shri@prodigy.net, with membership corrections and updates.

Breakfasts with Our Legislators Series Begins in January

The Breakfasts with Our Legislators series begins on Monday, January 25, 2010, at 7:30 am in the Social Room of the Civic Center.

The League, with cosponsor **WSI Oak Ridge** (formerly Wackenhut Services, Inc.), hosts the discussions with our area Tennessee legislators. Well-attended by city and county officials, and the public, the breakfasts provide a forum for reports on legislative action of interest to community members, and for feedback by the citizens.

Subsequent breakfasts will be held on the last Monday of every month when the legislature is in session.

National Program Planning

Every two years local Leagues submit suggestions for new studies and/or position changes for consideration at the national convention. Save Tuesday morning, January 26, from 10-12 for this important planning program. We'll have coffee and cake in the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church Social Hall and ponder the national program. We need our ideas in the mix.

Our report is due to the National Board by March 1. **Pat Petrie** will chair the committee.

Lunch with the League



Our final Lunch, on December 1, features **Eric Abelquist**, Executive Vice President of Oak Ridge Associated Universities. He will speak on "ORAU: Innovation at the Nexus of Science Education and Workforce Development."

We start 2010 on January 5, with **Dr. Gene Caldwell**, retired pediatrician, former state representative and co-chair, with Dottie Thompson, of the Emory Valley Center Capital Campaign. His topic is "Emory Valley Center: A Secret in the Secret City, Revealed."

January 19, "Arrowheads, Fossils, Mummies, Mussels, and More" will be **Dr. Jeff Chapman's** topic. He is director of UT's McClung Museum.

Lunch with the League is cosponsored by ORNL Federal Credit Union. Lunch begins at 11:45 am; the program begins at noon. Box lunches from Nature's Marketplace are available on a first-come basis for \$6, or you may bring your own lunch. Beverages are provided. Meetings are free and open to the public, with no reservations needed.

Open vs Closed Primaries

A State study on Open vs Closed Primary Elections was adopted last spring. As information from the State becomes available, we'll print it in the *Voter* for your consideration.

Current League Position: LWVTN supports, "The principle of closed primaries by state statute, and administration of all primaries by duly constituted election officials."

Definitions: Closed and Semi-Closed Primaries: A closed primary allows only members of the party to vote in a primary election. Semi-closed primaries bar members of opposing political parties, but non-aligned voters may participate.

Open and Semi-Open Primaries: An open primary allows any registered voter to vote in any one primary. The semi-open primary requires voters to publicly declare to election officials which party primary they want to vote in, and has separate ballots for each political party.

I want to join the League of Women Voters

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State and Zip _____

Phone (Day / Work) _____

Phone(Evening) _____

Email _____

Individual annual dues _____ \$50

Household annual dues _____ \$75

*Donation to Education Foundation \$ _____

*Make a separate, tax deductible check payable to LWVEF

Please send this form and your dues, payable to:

LWV of Oak Ridge

P.O. Box 4073

Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Other Systems: Political primaries are not the sole means used to select candidates. Caucuses are still used by some states (most famously Iowa), and the candidatures for many minor, local elected posts are still given out as political party plums by party leaders. (Information from ehow.com).

Statistics: As of February, 2008, 25 states hold closed primaries, 17 hold open primaries (Tennessee is one). Eight states have other systems, some examples:

In California, Parties may allow voters who decline to state their party affiliation to participate in their primaries. Democrats currently allow registered Democrats and independents to vote in their primary. Republicans currently have a closed primary. In Idaho, Democrats have an open caucus; Republicans have an open primary. In Illinois, voters must vote in primary of same party as last primary the voter participated in. Iowa holds closed caucuses, but voters may change registration at polls. (Information from fairvote.org).



Fall Conference Report

Fall Conference: late October, great weather, beautiful foliage, stimulating speakers and interesting League members from across the State. We give many thanks to Katrina Gay, Henderson, TN, LWV, who wrote this report for their *Voter*. We've edited it for ours:

Immigration in Tennessee: Alma Vasquez, a staff liaison for the Tennessee Immigration Rights and Refugee Coalition, wove stories of her personal encounters to illustrate the realities of many immigrants in our state. She addressed legal vs illegal immigrant status, challenges for employers and the issue of documented vs undocumented. Wait periods are long for those petitioning for legal status to enter the U.S., lasting anywhere from three - nine years, and the process is costly, starting at \$3,000 for visa processing. Vasquez made it clear that immigration law is complex, the issues diverse and, therefore, solutions are not as straightforward as one might expect.

Growing Your Membership: Dr. Joe Corso, ETSU Professor of Political Science, presented a thought provoking session on the changing social and communication patterns of our communities. Dr. Corso shared his personal perspective and spoke to what the League has been (middle class women's group with civic and social goals leaning to formal processes), what we are now (structured, less social and more political with more identified issues and advocacy oriented), and to what we are likely to become (less consensus driven and more single issue oriented as well as diverse). Using the recent Presidential campaign as a metric, Dr. Corso promoted using new ways of connecting, relating and marketing to suggest new ways of thinking about the League's future. (Oak Ridge note: more electronic communications are in our future as younger members join! We do well in that our meetings are open to the public, broad-based, and get excellent media coverage. We email the *Voter*

and are experimenting with additional electronic member communications.)

Legislative Update: The Tennessee LWV lobbyist, Stewart Clifton, updated us on the 2009 General Assembly and offered insights for planning priorities for 2010. The coming year will likely feature a struggle for limited funding. 2009 saw a \$1B deficit, matched again in 2010, requiring another \$1B round of budget cuts and reductions in services. Victories for 2009 centered on judicial selection and environmental legislation.

State of Health Care in Tennessee: Dr. Amal Khoury, Department of Health Services, Administration, ETSU College of Public Health, provided data and statistics on health care. (We've asked for a copy of her excellent talk.) Health care represents 16% of the U.S. GDP; 75% of American bankruptcies are the result of medical bills - and many of these are individuals who are insured. Summarizing the presentation is a challenge. Interesting highlights center on women and health care: self-insured plans charge women more for the same coverage than men; and women are more likely to be vulnerable to the threat of becoming uninsured as many are insured through a spouse's plan or are working in jobs that do not pay enough to afford insurance copays. One picture of the reform effort was outlined, and the audience left knowing more about current legislative processes.

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Snow Policy

In case of inclement weather that closes the Oak Ridge schools, League meetings for that day are cancelled. If it is a public meeting, we'll try to get word out through the media, but check the schools first. If the schools are just starting late, we'll continue with our programs. Most of all - be safe and use your best judgement.



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Calendar

November

30 Charter Commission 6 pm, Public Hearing, Oak Ridge High School Amphitheater

December

1 Lunch with the League* 11:45, lunch; 12-1: Eric Abelquist, Executive Vice President, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, 'ORAU: Innovation at the Nexus of Science Education and Workforce Development'

6 Holiday Lunch Flatwater Event Center: 12:30, Social Time; Lunch, 1: Matt Shafer Powell, WUOT News Director

8 No Board Meeting

January

5 Lunch with the League* 11:45, lunch; 12-1: Dr. Gene Caldwell, pediatrician, former state representative and co-chair, Emory Valley Center Capital Campaign, 'Emory Valley Center: A Secret in the Secret City, Revealed.'

8 Charter Commission 1 pm, Municipal Building Training Room

11 Education Committee 2 pm, Secret City Café, Methodist Medical Center

12 Board Meeting* 11 am - 1 pm

14 Voting Technology Committee 3:15 pm, Midtown Community Center, LOC office, 102 Robertsville Rd.

19 Lunch with the League* 11:45, lunch; 12-1: Dr. Jeff Chapman, director, UT's McClung Museum, 'Arrowheads, Fossils, Mummies, Mussels, and More'

25 Breakfast with Our Legislators 7:30 am, Social Room of Oak Ridge Civic Center

25 Charter Commission 6 pm, Public Hearing, Municipal Building Courtroom

26 National Program Planning 10 am - Noon, Social Hall, Unitarian Universalist Church

* Unless otherwise specified, Lunch with the League is in the Social Hall, Unitarian Universalist Church, Oak Ridge Turnpike at Robertsville Road. Board Meetings are in the Board Room, Second Floor, TN Bank, Rutgers Ave at Illinois Ave