

April 2007

League of Women Voters of Norman

Established in 1925

LWVN

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Norman, OK 73070
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COMMITTEE**

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360-0419

Elizabeth Pierce
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Thinking “Outside the Box”

A Brain Storming Meeting for
All Members

Saturday, May 5, 2007
9:30 A.M.

Home of Phoebe Schmitz
1316 Vine Street in Norman
(four blocks south of Lindsey Street and
two blocks west of Berry Road)



The Steering Committee needs your ideas for the Norman League to continue. Our membership is decreasing, and many of our current members are long-time Leaguers who worked hard to support the League for years but are now interested in other activities.

What do you want the League to do for you and our community?
How would you like to participate in the organization and its activities?

Co-President’s Message

by Phoebe Schmitz

Democracy works when people claim it as their own. –Bill Moyers

Last December Bill Moyers spoke to a gathering in New York. One of his main ideas was that the freedoms we treasure today – the eight-hour day, free trade unions, old-age pensions, clean air and water, safe food – “were born of centuries of struggle by untold millions.” He pleaded for each of us to keep one idea from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address alive – to repeat it to every corporate executive – to every candidate for office – to every school-child – America leaves no one out.

Perhaps our own local City Election this March is one example where enough of the citizens felt “left out” by some of the candidates running for office, and these citizens worked very hard to help get candidates elected who they believed would listen to them and their concerns.

Update on Touch-screen Voting Machines

Last October the League had an “Issue” meeting on touch-screen voting machines and the problems many states were having with them because of their unreliability and lack of a paper trail in the 2004 presidential election. Here is an update on what Florida is doing to prepare for the 2008 elections.

It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error. It is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error.

—United States
Supreme Court
1950 Ruling

According to the New York Times in February this year, Florida’s Governor Charlie Crist is planning to replace the problematic touch-screen voting machines with paper ballots to be counted by scanning machines. It will cost the state \$32.5 million to make the change. When asked how he felt about changing millions of dollars worth of new touch-screen machines, Gov. Crist said, “The price of freedom is not cheap. The importance of a democratic system of voting that we can trust, that we can have confidence in, is incredibly important.”

There are some voting experts who believe this move by Florida, as well as some new federal voting legislation, may help get rid of touch-screen machines, eventually. Rep. Rush Holt, Democrat from New Jersey, has plans for a bill which would require nationwide use of voting machines with a paper record. His bill would authorize \$300 million in federal money to upgrade machines and strengthen the requirement for touch-screens which are still in use to have a printer. Some election officials think it would be difficult to make these changes in time for the 2008 presidential election.

A March *New York Times* article talks about the maker of Electronic Systems & Software sending a memo to Florida election officials in 2006. This memo was not made public until March 2007. ES&S pointed out in the memo that a software upgrade was required but would not be ready before the September primary in Florida. They warned that election officials should post a warning sign at polling places to let voters know that they needed to press the screen for several seconds for their vote to register.

The election supervisor in Sarasota, Florida, where 18,000 votes were lost by the ES&S machines, decided not to post any signs. In the 13th Congressional District race (which included these 18,000 votes) between Christine Jennings (D) and Vern Buchanan (R), Christine lost by 400 votes and has filed a lawsuit.

A computer scientist expert on e-voting machines, Avi Rubin of John Hopkins University, said that this kind of problem “happens only some of the time under certain conditions...and is hard to detect.”



December 11, 2006 Meeting with Paula Roberts

Alice Ewing



LWV Loses Life Member

Honorary Life LWV member Alice Ewing, who had been a member for over 50 years, died on March 13, 2007 at the age of 99. Alice was born in Boone County, Missouri, attended several one-room rural schools, received an A.A. degree from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri and completed her A.B. degree at the University of Missouri. She and her husband moved to Norman in 1960, where she lived until her recent death. We send our sympathy to her daughter in Norman and to all her family members.

The League had a very successful luncheon Issues Meeting last December 11, with Cleveland County Election Board Secretary, Paula Roberts, as speaker at Memorial Presbyterian Church. We were joined by several members of Common Cause, an organization that is also very interested in Oklahoma's voting machines and voting process.

According to Paula, Oklahoma has an excellent voting machine system, but the machines are 14 years old and can't be replaced because the company that made them is now out of business. The State Election Board set up a committee to look into new voting machines. The committee includes election officials, handicapped individuals, librarians and public members. They are looking for a similar machine to the optical scan with a paper ballot machine that we currently have. Oklahoma has had the optical scan with paper ballot in all 77 counties since 1992.

In the 2000 presidential election, Oklahoma had no problems with voting or counting ballots, but several other states had big problems. The federal government responded to those problems by passing laws (HAVA) with "one size fits all" mentality. Oklahoma voting officials were told they didn't do provisional voting adequately and didn't provide independent voting for handicapped voters. Oklahoma did provide provisional voting. If someone's name was not on the precinct list and they had an ID, they were allowed to vote. If handicapped couldn't get to their voting place, precinct officials went to them. In last November's election, Oklahoma allowed handicapped voters to use touchtone phones in every precinct.

Paula Roberts spent over an hour giving us helpful information and answering audience questions. We appreciate her willingness to come and to share her expertise with us.

Remember to Vote May 8

The Norman League has a position in favor of curbside recycling and encourages you to support this service for Norman. The wording in our Local Program Positions is as follows:

Section III. Municipal Services and Finances

- A. The League supports the concept that municipal government should supply its citizens with **basic services** that provide for the health, safety and welfare of citizens including public safety, sanitation, water, infrastructure planning and maintenance...as many recycling centers in Norman as practicable, **with the future goal of having curbside recycling.**



League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Any citizen over 18, male or female, may become a voting member of the League. Associate membership is available for younger people or non-citizens.



May 8

Congratulations to Cindy Rosenthal

Congratulations to Cindy Rosenthal on being elected Norman's new Mayor. Cindy has several years of experience as a City Council member and has served on about every city committee. She will serve, not only as an experienced, knowledgeable mayor, but also as one of integrity and high ideals.

(Editor's note: I may be wrong, but I believe that June Benson was the only other woman mayor in the city's history.)

LWVOK Convention May 18-19

The League of Women Voters of Oklahoma will celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the state in the original capital, Guthrie, on Friday May 18 and Saturday May 19, 2007 during their biennial convention. Tours of the city will begin at 2 p.m on Friday, followed by dinner at Stables restaurant at 7. A special presentation of a readers theater performance bringing to life several notable women in Oklahoma history will conclude the Friday evening program. Saturday's agenda includes a business meeting, election of board members, and two workshops. This is a historic time to be in the first state capital city of Oklahoma and League members are urged to attend this meeting.

Guthrie is an interesting small city. Lodging for the convention includes the Best Western and the Townhouse motels. More choices are available at www.guthrieok.com. See the Spring 2007 issue of your *Oklahoma Voter* for more details.

See you at Phoebe's on May 5

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