

LWVN VOTER 5-2017



LWVN
P.O. Box 720621
Norman, OK 73070
norman.ok.lwvnet.org

STEERING COMMITTEE

Sandy Bahan
President
360-1060
sbahan@aol.com

Lois Hilbert
Secretary
321-4592
lois9@cox.net

Joyce Collard
Treasurer
310-4939
jcollard3@cox.net

Phoebe Schmitz
Membership (off board)
364-4493
phoebeflute@hotmail.com

Doris Kupfer
Web Manager
973-8945
Kupfer_doris@yahoo.com

Helen Duchon
Facebook, Voter Editor
329-2485
hduchon@cox.net

Marj Greer
321-9678
mgreer22@live.com

Eva McGinnis
329-0503
evalmcginnis@gmail.com

Nadine Jewell
405-517-4854
jerrynadine@live.com

Annual Meeting

Saturday • May 20, 2017 • 11:30 AM

Memorial Presbyterian Church; 601 24th Ave., SW, Norman

Agenda

Welcome and introduction of speaker - Sandy Bahan

“Civic Engagement and the role of the League in the 21st Century”

Kara Joy McKee, Oklahoma Policy Institute's Outreach Specialist

Business Meeting

Nominating Report:

Nominees for Steering Committee:

Sandy Bahan
Joyce Collard
Lois Hilbert
Helen Duchon
Doris Kupfer
Phoebe Schmitz (off board)
Marj Greer
Eva McGinnis
Nadine Jewell

Budget Report – Joyce Collard

Report on informal audit
Presentation of Budget for 2016-2017, See Attached

Local Program Positions

Suggested Changes & Additions, See Attached

President's Report

Suggestions for the Steering Committee

Adjournment

Annual Meeting Luncheon

May 20, 2017; 11:30 am

Memorial Presbyterian Church Bring a salad or dessert.

“Civic Engagement and the role of the League in the 21st Century”

Kara Joy McKee is a native Normanite and an OU graduate. As the Oklahoma Policy Institute's Outreach Specialist, she coordinates the Together Oklahoma coalition and works to make it easier for all Oklahomans to advocate for sensible public policies.

She has been active for years as a social justice advocate. Kara is a graduate of the Tulsa YWCA Groundwork program that helps white people address internalized racism, is a founding member of the Norman Racism Response Crew, and in 2011 she was honored with the City of Norman's Human Rights Award

President's Report - 2016-2017

This past year was a busy time for the Norman League!

We hosted two **Hot Topic Lunch discussions** on the “Ten Commandments” State Question, two Hot Topic Lunch discussions on financing state and municipal government, an evening Forum on the “Right to Farm” state question, a Hot Topic Lunch on the Storm Water Utility proposal for Norman, and a Hot Topic Lunch with the Mayor on the “state of the city.”

Additionally our members spent two months at the central library in Norman **registering voters** for the Fall election, we helped distribute the Oklahoma Voters' Guide for the state League of Women Voters, and we held a legislative candidate forum in the Fall and a city council candidate forum in the early Spring.

Our members participated in the state League's **State Questions** Summit in June and we co-hosted two local Forums on the state questions with several statewide organizations.

In October and November our members participated in the state League's **Fiscal Policy Study**

In November, we hosted the state LWVOK League's Advocacy meeting.

Sandy Bahan, President

Update Fiscal Policy Study

From October Through December the Norman League of Women Voters met several times to study the State League's Fiscal Policy Position and recommend changes or updates. The study materials, prepared by the State League, gave participants a very thorough background on the issues confronting the state. Judy Reynolds, a member of the committee that put together the study materials and the consensus questions, led the local League discussions. A summary of the LWVN consensus report follows. The full report sent to LWVOK along with related materials can be found on our website, http://norman.ok.lwvnet.org/public_interest.html

The passage of **State Question 640** severely limited the state legislature's ability to raise or lower tax rates. This in turn has made it extremely difficult for the legislature to meet its constitutional obligation to submit a balanced budget each year and to fund core state services. These core state services include public education (pre-K through Higher ED and VOTech), public safety, our court system (including drug courts), public health, child welfare, transportation (including public transportation), elections, and protection of the environment.

To meet these constitutional obligations, the state should primarily **rely on personal and corporate income taxes**, with a lesser reliance on the broadest possible sales taxes and fees. It is important that the corporate income tax is raised and that the state should require combined corporate reporting to ensure the payment of multi-state corporations' fair share of taxes. We continue to support the **repeal of the sales tax on food purchases** and we propose an **increase in property tax (ad valorem) specifically for cities**. We also support the creation of a **local income tax to offset the loss to municipalities due to a reduction in sales tax revenue**. Ideally, a Constitutional amendment is needed to provide more progressive diversified revenue sources for municipalities to ensure the future economic stability of our cities.

The primary obligation of the state is to provide a **free, public education for all children** in Oklahoma.

One source of funding to meet this obligation is property tax from public service properties in the state. These should be collected on a statewide basis, then allocated to the various school districts on an equitable basis such as Average Daily Membership (ADM). Additionally, there should be a statewide distribution of the gross production tax revenue dedicated for common schools and this should continue with a GPT basic rate of at least 7%.

The state needs to create an efficient and meaningful **system for determining the funds** available for allocation each year. In creating such a system, the state should consider some or all of the following:

- Multi-year revenue and expenditure forecasts on a current service basis;
- Statutory definition of the purposes of the Rainy Day Fund, setting savings targets in accord with the Rainy Day Fund's purpose and projected tax volatility, and flexibility in setting a cap on the percentage of revenues to be deposited in the Rainy Day Fund.
- Regular review of the current dedicated or earmarked revenues by an impartial commission who works with the state treasurer and/or auditor to make a report and recommendations to the legislature and public.
- Regular review of the benefits and impacts of credits, exemptions and exclusions should be done by the Incentive Evaluation Commission who works with the State Treasurer to make a report and recommendations to the legislature and the public.
- The Board of Equalization should provide one unified certified revenue estimate in February for both the Executive and Legislative budgets.

Print a copy of the new **Who's Who** from our website http://norman.ok.lwvnet.org/files/Who_s_Who_March_2017.pdf

A big thank you to Republic Bank & Trust for \$250 gift to the Ed Fund for printing copies to be found at the Norman Public Library and our Hot Topic Luncheons and forums.

Edwin Kessler III

Ed was born December 2, 1928 and died February 21, 2017 in Austin, Texas. His Memorial Service was March 4, 2017 at the National Weather Center in Norman. He was a League member and contributed to our meetings.

Photo by Helen Duchon



Austin Kessler, Ed's son had opening remarks at his father's Memorial Service.

"My parents decided a long time ago that my father's epitaph would consist of two words: "He strove." Indeed he did! But he also succeeded. He was multi-talented and excelled in practically anything he set his mind to.

My father earned a bachelor's degree from Columbia College and a doctorate from MIT, both prestigious and highly selective schools. But he was a life-long learner and would learn from anyone. And he accepted all people as equal. He would don a coat and tie when he had to and he delivered more than his share of lectures, testimony, and presentations at conferences and in classrooms, at legislative hearings and in court rooms. But he was always more comfortable in boots and overalls digging in the dirt, growing organic tomatoes, cutting firewood, and feeding his chickens.

"My father was born in New York City and spent his early years there, but his family moved to his mother's home town of Corpus Christi while his father was stationed

Calendar

LWVN Annual Meeting

May 20, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm , Memorial Presbyterian Church.

LWVOK State Convention

June 3, 2017, Tulsa, OK

The Tulsa League of Women Voters will be hosting Convention at All Souls Church. We will go up the night before. Registration is \$40.

Contact Joyce Collard or Sandy Bahan for carpooling. See page 1 for phone numbers.

overseas during World War II. He never lost his New York accent, but he was greatly influenced by his time in south Texas. His love for the land undoubtedly derived in large part from the time that he spent on his grandfather's ranch. How his mother from Corpus Christi ended up marrying a New York lawyer is another story for another day. But with an interesting twist, history repeated itself when my father, after graduating from Columbia, returned to Corpus Christi to marry my mother, Lottie Menger, whom he knew from their high school days."

See <http://www.beckchapels.com/Obituary/DrEdwinKesslerIII>, for Ed's life, work and legacy.

