



The Norman VOTER

Spring 2012

LWVN

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League of Women Voters of Norman

Established in 1925

Help set the League's course for the coming year.

Salad Luncheon and Annual Meeting

Saturday • May 19, 2012 • 11:30 AM

Memorial Presbyterian Church

601 24th Ave. SW

Bring your favorite salad or dessert to share. Drinks provided.

Our Speaker

Marion Hutchison

President of OnTrac & President of Titan Energy Corporation

“Rail Transit: Ensuring Our Economic and Transportation Future”

Business Meeting

1. Treasurer's Report:
2. Nominating Committee Report: Anne Million
Nominees for Steering Committee:
Cathy Buchwald, Ruth Loeffler, Joyce Collard, Lois Hilbert, Mary Francis, Helen Duchon, Nance Ross, Marj Greer, Sandy Bahan, Barbara Robinson and Phoebe Schmitz
Call for Steering Committee nominations from the floor.
Election of Steering Committee
Volunteers for Nominating Committee for 2011-12
3. Budget: Report on informal audit.
Adoption of 2012-2013 Budget (July 2, 2012 – June 30, 2013) Page 3
4. Local Program. See pages 4-6.
Reaffirm or Change of Scope (takes 2/3 vote)
5. Suggestions for the Steering Committee
Hand in Interest Sheet, Page 7
6. Adjournment

Note: Minutes from last year's Annual Meeting were approved at the July 2011 Steering Committee meeting.



Ken Kominski, Director of Utilities, Sept 22, 2011, pointing to the Little River Watershed for Lake Thunderbird. "Water quality standards will require combined application throughout the watershed of

- Voluntary fertilizer reduction (20 **tons** of phosphorus per year, is transported to the Lake);
- Vegetative filters and wetlands; and
- Water quality detention basins."



Susan Connors, Planning & Community Development Director for the City of Norman, gave answers to a list of "Hot Topics" on city planning, April 11 at Interurban Restaurant. "The last complete zoning ordinance for the City of Norman was in 1954. Now its a little out of date." "Farm of 158 Acres, held for 'sentimental value' by Kent Connally, owner, is now re-zoned PUD. 44.5 Acres are in the Riprian Flood Plain of the Little River Watershed."



City Hall Chamber was packed to see the LWV Candidates Forum, March 12, for Wards 2, 4, 6 and 8. (Cathy Buchwald, front, right.)

Presidents' Message

The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all.

—John F. Kennedy speech at Vanderbilt University,
May 18, 1963

Citizen Education/ Voter Service is the first role described in the statement of the League of Women Voters' Mission and Roles. This role has dominated the activities and events of the Norman League during the 2011-12 year.

- At our June 2011 Annual Meeting, the speakers introduced members and guests to the new voting machines to be used in Oklahoma.
- During the year, we have heard speakers at two Forums on water quality and supply and held a Consensus Meeting on Ranked-Choice Voting.
- We also hosted a Candidate Forum for City Council candidates and a Hot-Topic Luncheon on City Planning.
- We provided current, accurate voter information through our web site.
- Finally, we provided voter education for the OU population through flyers and news articles.

The Steering Committee also has been busy reviewing program positions, compiling and reviewing member survey results, and writing the LWV Norman Policy on Nonpartisanship. We conducted an Education Study which was reported to the League of Women Voters US for the national study. Steering Committee members published issues of *The Voter*, and organized all of the educational events and efforts listed above. Several Steering Committee members represented the Norman League on State League committees and studies.

As this election year continues, the work of the Norman League will continue to heed President Kennedy's warning and fight voter ignorance to ensure the security of all. Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome. We thank you for your support, and we hope to see you at our meetings and events during the 2012-13 year.

Sincerely,
Cathy Buchwald and Ruth Loeffler
Co-Presidents, 2011-12

League of Women Voters of Norman
2012-2013 Proposed Budget
July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013

	Current Budget	Proposed Budget
	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	7/1/12 – 6/30/13
Income		
<i>Who's Who</i> Sponsor	200.00	100.00
Member Donations	400.00	300.00
Member Dues	2,185.00	2,400.00
Misc.	0	0
Total Income	2,785.00	2,800.00
Expenses – Operating Budget		
State and National Per Member Payments (PMP)	1,915.00	1,896.00
State/National Conventions & State Council	50.00	187.00
Workshops, Training, Travel	50.00	50.00
VOTER Printing & Postage	60.00	65.00
<i>League Easy Web</i>	200.00	200.00
<i>Who's Who</i> Printing	200.00	100.00
Supplies, Postage, & Copies	70.00	60.00
Post Office Box Rental	40.00	42.00
Voter Service / Citizen Education	100.00	100.00
Miscellaneous	100.00	100.00
Total Expense	2,785.00	2,800



Current Fund Balances

Operating Fund as of 3/31/11	1,844.30
Education Fund	1,732.90
Certificate of Deposit	1,451.65 (1,480.83 at maturity Nov. 2013)

League of Women Voters of Norman Local Program Positions 2009–2010

Section I. City Planning

The LWVN supports the concept of city planning, with the following policies and approaches.

A. Zoning

1. Strict procedures for rezoning and stronger provisions for protesting rezoning.
2. A professional city planner and an adequate and qualified staff.
3. Long-range planning for the location of parks and schools, with adequate access by streets and paved routes for pedestrians and bicyclists.

B. Sidewalks

1. Sidewalks should be required by ordinance in new subdivisions, except that the sidewalk requirement may be waived in industrial subdivisions, with the exception of the perimeter, if the developer can demonstrate that the sidewalks will not contribute to the health, safety or welfare of the public in those areas.
2. Sidewalks should be built in existing areas to the greatest extent possible with special emphasis on providing access to schools & recreation facilities.
3. The City should adopt an aggressive attitude in initiating sidewalk construction.

C. Bicycle Routes

1. Bicycle routes should be studied and implemented whenever feasible, with the idea of bicycle riding as a recreational activity as well as an alternate means of transportation.
2. The League also favors upgrading the City's current bicycle safety programs and stricter enforcement of bicycle safety provisions.

D. Parks

1. The LWVN supports long-range planning for the acquisition and development of new and existing parks in Norman to better meet the needs of the community with endorsement of the following policies:
 - a. Neighborhood parks of ten acres as a desirable goal.
 - b. First attention to acquisition and development of multiuse parks in areas most in need.
 - c. Adjoining park-school site development with school board cooperation.

E. Housing Supply

1. The LWVN recognizes the need for low-income housing and supports the concept of public housing equitably distributed in Norman.

2. In order to ensure adequate low and moderate income housing in Norman, the LWVN recommends as a priority, providing incentive for private enterprise to obtain this goal, and the use of federal housing programs that allow the greatest possible freedom for local decision making.

F. Protection of land in the Little River Watershed

The LWVN believes that the Little River watershed is an environmentally sensitive area that must be protected.

1. The League recognizes that uncontrolled development in the watershed could allow hazardous pollution of Norman's water supply.
2. De-annexation of land in environmentally sensitive areas would end Norman's control over its land use; therefore, de-annexation of land in the Little River watershed should be considered with great care.

G. Public Transportation

In order to reduce highway congestion, fuel consumption and vehicular pollution, and to provide better access to housing, jobs, recreation and medical care, the LWVN advocates the development and maintenance of energy-efficient and time efficient public transportation systems within the City of Norman and connecting with other communities in Oklahoma.

Priority should be given to government-funded transportation projects that are directed toward better public access to fuelefficient transportation and the reduction of single occupancy vehicles on the roadways.²

H. Traffic

The LWVN believes the City should provide for safe bicycle traffic and encourage a pattern of development that facilitates public transportation and diminishes automobile congestion.²

Section II. Infrastructure

The LWVN believes that a modern, properly maintained infrastructure is essential for health, safety, and positive economic life of the community. Since lack of attention over many years to Norman's existing infrastructure, inadequate planning during rapid growth and inadequate resources have resulted in a crisis situation, the LWVN encourages compliance with a master plan that would assure citizens that all problems will be addressed in an orderly and timely manner. The plan would:

- A. Include repair, maintenance, and expansion of the sanitary sewer system and of the water supply system.

- B. Resolve current and prevent future drainage problems.
- C. Address street modernization.
- D. Enforce City codes.
- E. Be environmentally sound and fiscally responsible with bond issues presented at regular intervals for major projects, and continued allocation each year within the operating budget for smaller capital projects of highest priority.
- F. Reduce maintenance costs by replacing inoperable systems.
- G. Set priorities in the order in which repairs and improvements are made.

Section III. Municipal Services and Finances

The LWVN believes that city government should be efficient and economical, that the government should retain competent personnel, insure clear assignment of responsibility, and secure adequate financing. The following points should be considered:

- 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 (police, fire, emergency medical service), sanitation (responsible solid waste pickup/disposal), water (safe drinking water and sewage treatment), infrastructure planning and maintenance (streets, sidewalks, lights, signalization), and community amenities (parks, recreational facilities/programs, museums, libraries), and as many recycling centers in Norman as practicable, with continued support of curbside recycling. 1
- B. **Amenities** such as parks, recreational facilities, and cultural institutions should be recognized as important in maintaining a sense of community.
- C. **Funding:**
 - 1. The League believes city services and programs should be funded through a combination of sales taxes, bonds, and user fees.
 - 2. Shared funding could include privatizing some elements of city government with retention of responsibility for:
 - a. Establishing clear criteria, oversight, and periodic assessment of how well citizens are being served, and
 - b. Making sure citizens are not losers in the process.
 - 3. Capital needs of Norman are too massive in cost to be addressed by the general fund alone

and should be funded through General Obligation Bonds.

- 4. The general fund and user fees collected in enterprise funds can more appropriately be used to support administration of city government and ongoing maintenance needs in sanitation and the infrastructure.
- 5. Sales tax revenue should be reserved for items in the general fund.
- 6. Some services necessary to insure the general health, safety, and well being of the community should be the responsibility of city government and must be made available even if they do not pay for themselves.

D. Adequate City Staff

Adequate staff is necessary to oversee the management, planning, and orderly development of the community.

- 1. Professional planners and engineers are needed to insure continuity of programs.
- 2. City Council policy makers must acknowledge their responsibility to provide for an adequate staff to meet city needs.

Section IV. County Services and Finances

- A. The LWVN encourages the **modernization of bookkeeping and record keeping** procedures by Cleveland County.
- B. The LWVN encourages the use of the county's share of **road-users** tax money for the benefit of ALL residents of the county, including the improvement of city streets where legally possible.
- C. The LWVN will continue to monitor the functioning of county government including the **organization, finance, and accountability of funds.**

Section V. Equality of Opportunity

The LWVN will continue to support effective procedures to ensure non-discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

Section VI. City of Norman Growth and Development Plans

The LWVN is dedicated to monitoring growth and development plans for the City of Norman. The Norman ComPlan was replaced by the Norman 2020 Plan and later by the 2025 Plan. Topics of concern to the League include growth management, traffic management and flow, neighborhood protection and city housing needs.

The following areas are of concern, and should be monitored:

A. Zoning Changes:

1. The Planning Commission should review the policies of the 2025 Plan before accepting zoning change requests.
2. Requests for changes should be turned down if they clearly do not fall within the guidelines of preventing urban sprawl, balancing development on the east and west as much as possible, and protecting plans made for the central business/residential area.
3. All requests for demolition of property should be accompanied by any desired change in zoning, or the city should be assured that there would be no change. Demolition requests that call for changes in zoning should then be accepted or refused depending on their nature, plus an inspection of the property. The city needs to pass an ordinance allowing it to be more aggressive in removing derelict buildings and trash or trashy and unsightly items.
4. Requests for changes in zoning also should be made public with signs posted and notice in the newspaper. There should be a much larger area involved in protesting/accepting zoning changes.

B. Definition of “Neighborhood”:

The LWVN defines a “neighborhood” as an area that may have physical boundaries, such as a major street, or boundaries with cultural/social-economic characteristics; and it may be residential or commercial. A neighborhood may have a different definition depending on the interest of the individuals in it. It may be a small area for a neighborhood watch or a larger area when considering a wider interest, and these areas may overlap.

C. Development Planning:

1. Commercial development should be planned.
2. Businesses in residential areas should be restricted to those useful to a majority of the residents.
3. A new classification of “neighborhood business” should be developed, or only “special use” permits that revert to residential when sold for any other purpose should be issued.
4. Neighborhood businesses would include grocery stores, laundromats, beauty shops, and others that Norman residents might approve.
5. Protection is needed for a neighborhood when a property is sold so a business considered inappropriate to the area cannot buy and use the property.
6. New areas being developed could include plans for these “neighborhood businesses” as a part of the overall plan.
7. Care should be taken not to zone and use land that is best left for a greenbelt area.

- ¹ Language added to Section III. Municipal Services and Finances A. at the 2006 Annual Meeting: “*and as many recycling centers in Norman as practicable, with the future goal of having curbside recycling.*”
Curbside recycling began in Norman in March 2008, which prompted a change in wording at the 2009 Annual Meeting to: *and as many recycling centers in Norman as practicable, with continued support of curbside recycling.*
- ² New wording for Section I. City Planning **G. Public Transportation** and Section I. City Planning **H. Traffic** approved at the 2007 Annual Meeting.

The Future of Norman's Water

by Roger Frech

Professor Emeritus, University of Oklahoma, Dept. of Chemistry

Present Sources of Norman's Water

The primary sources of Norman's water are Lake Thunderbird and city wells that tap into the Garber-Wellington aquifer. In times of drought, Norman also purchases some water from Oklahoma City to meet its needs. The lake is also the primary source of drinking water for Midwest City and Del city. Title to the lake, dam, and piping to the water treatment plants of the three cities is held by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District is responsible for the lake, dam and piping under the federal law that authorized the lake and created the conservancy district. The three cities are limited in the amount of water they can remove from the lake under the authorizing federal law. Norman's annual average share of the water is 8.45 million gallons per day.

Issues of Water Quality

1. Arsenic in water wells.

In 2006 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lowered the allowable standard concentration from 50 parts/billion (ppb) to 10 ppb (one ppb is analogous to one second in 31.5 years). As a result Norman lost the use of many of its wells that tap into the Garber-Wellington aquifer. Arsenic seems to be more concentrated in the western part of the aquifer, where Norman's wells are located. Arsenic occurs in the wells because the aquifer is not pure sandstone. Water in the aquifer flows over rocks containing arsenic, dissolving some of the arsenic. It is possible to remove the arsenic by treating the water, but it is an expensive process.

2. Chromium 6 (Cr-6).

The EPA has established a maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Cr-6 that allows 100 ppb in drinking water. The EPA may lower this limit sometime in the future, and in that case Norman will lose the use of more wells. Cr-6 in drinking water reacts in the stomach and is converted to less harmful

forms of chromium. However, in large doses, Cr-6 has been implicated in stomach cancer. A map published by the Environmental Working Group shows chromium concentration data for 32 U.S. cities based on a single sample test per city. Norman's sample had the highest chromium concentration (12.9 ppb), although this is well below the current MCL of 100 ppb. There is intensive on-going research to examine the effects of long-term chronic exposure to small amounts of Cr-6, but those studies are not yet finished. A ten-year study of the incidence of stomach cancer in Cleveland County shows that the rate is slightly smaller than the state-wide rate over the same time period, but the numbers for Cleveland County are too small to draw firm conclusions. (Cleveland County with a population of 255,000 in 2010 had 5.5 cases/100,000 people.)

3. Toxic Blue Green Algae (cyanobacteria)

occurs naturally occur worldwide in surface waters and can quickly turn into a bloom in warm, relatively calm water with large amounts of nitrates and phosphates. The big concern for Lake Thunderbird is the influx of nitrates and phosphates from runoff of water into the lake from the surrounding land. The Storm Water Master Plan sought to help limit nitrate/phosphate influx by providing for a natural filtration system (buffer zones) to reduce this influx. Dr. Frech thinks the changes that weakened this portion of the Storm Water Plan were not particularly helpful for the future of the lake.

Blue Green algae blooms can produce toxins that attack the nervous system and the liver, although the most common problem is significant skin irritation. These toxins, of which there are at least 50 variants, get into the water when the cell walls of the cyanobacteria that produce them rupture. Unfortunately, the toxins are very stable. The blooms can be safe one day and toxic the next. The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality tests for chlorophyll-a in the lake, which is a measure of the level of algae present. The Norman water treatment plant could treat the water at the plant an algal bloom produces toxins, but the technology to remove these toxins is expensive.

Bottom line:

We need to take a prevention-minded approach to algal blooms by lowering the amount of nitrates and phosphates that get into the lake.

Is Bottled Water the Answer?

Studies done on bottled water indicate that **between 25% and 40% is simply bottled tap water**, with no additional treatment.

FDA regulates bottled water:

- *60-70% of this water, including flavored water sold in the US, is exempt from regulation.
- *Laboratories testing the water don't need to be certified.
- *Testing is done annually, in general.
- *Water may contain small amounts of E. coli or fecal bacteria.
- *No mandatory reporting of test results/violations.

EPA regulates tap water:

- *Testing must be done in certified laboratories.
- *Testing must be done once/quarter for most contaminants.
- *Water must contain no E. coli or fecal bacteria.
- *Test results/violations must be reported to state or federal officials.

Quantity

Norman Utilities Authority keeps track of "Average Water Demand" and "Maximum Daily Demand".

Options for the Future Supply of Water for Norman

In 40-50 years we will need additional water equivalent to another lake the size of Lake Thunderbird (or larger).

1. Augment Lake Thunderbird from other existing lakes or reservoirs.
2. Build an additional reservoir.
3. Some form of water reuse program.
4. Purchase water from OKC.

Problem with option 1: – Federal legislation currently does not allow us to use "out of basin" water (water from outside the basin that drains into Lake thunderbird). There are now bills in the US Senate and House of Representatives that would authorize the use of "out of basin water".

The price for either option 1 or 2 would be very expensive.

It is not clear if option 3 would have a large enough impact on future water needs.

Option 4 would be an uncertain supply of water, particularly in times of severe, prolonged drought.

Sandra Postel in "Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity" made an excellent point. She said:

"We have been quick to assume rights to use water, but slow to recognize obligations to preserve and protect it. In short, we need a water ethic, a guide to right conduct..."

The Future of Norman's Water by Roger Frech

Professor Emeritus, University of Oklahoma, Dept. of Chemistry, gave a talk Feb. 27, 2012, to a LWVN-sponsored meeting, using much of this information.



Prof. Emeritus Roger Frech •
University of Oklahoma recognized his teaching and research talents by appointing him as a Presidential Professor in 1997 and a David Ross Boyd Professor in 2009. In 1998 he was named, "Oklahoma Chemist of the Year", by the American Chemical Society. He has served as a board member of the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District since 2009. The COMCD governs Lake Thunderbird use including water supply for three cities: Norman, MWC and Del City.

**Most Important Issues for the LWVN to take action on
in 2012-2013**

(Possible actions include: candidate forums, letters to the editor, public forums with a speaker, hot topic lunch, joint meeting with another organization.)

Please mark issues in order of your preference, 1 to 10 (1 is highest preference).

_____ **City Government**

_____ **City Storm Water Plan**

_____ **Corrections (including Juvenile Justice)**

_____ **Education**

_____ **Health Care**

_____ **Immigration**

_____ **Norman water quality and supply**

_____ **Trails and greenbelts**

_____ **Transportation**

_____ **Other topic(s)** _____

I will help with _____

Voter Service: Please check areas you are willing to help with.

_____ **Forums for Candidates**

_____ **Voter Registration**

_____ **Issue Meetings**

Name _____

NOTE: If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting, please print and mark this form and mail to

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORMAN

P.O. Box 720621

Norman, OK 73070

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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

Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a voting member of the League. Associate membership is available for students not yet eligible to vote.

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For updates on LWV activities go to <http://norman.ok.lwvnet.org>; click "Meetings and Events"; call one on the Steering Committee (page 1); or check our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Norman-Oklahoma/



2012 Election Schedule

March 6	Tue.	7 am-7 pm	President Preferential Election
Apr 3	Tues.	7 am-7 pm	Norman City Wards 2, 4, 6, 8 Election
May 19	Sat.	11:30-1 pm	LWVN Annual Meeting Memorial Presbyterian Church
June 26	Tue.	7 am-7 pm	Run-Off Ward 8; State & County Primary Election
Aug 28	Tue.	7 am-7 pm	State & County Run-Off Election; City of Norman Transportation Election
Nov 6	Tue.	7 am-7 pm	Presidential, State & County General Election

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