



Stillwater Voter

A Publication of Stillwater League of Women Voters

Dottie Goss,
President

June 2005

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Convention Report

2005 LWVOK Convention

This is normally a President's Message column, but I am writing for this issue at the request of the exiting Board, to share my observations from the LWVOK Convention last month and my perspective as a freshman member of the State Board.

We had six delegates from Stillwater: Sunny Choi, Dottie Goss, Karen Melcher, Marlee Pierce, Alice Richardson, and Esther Winterfeldt.

Paul Richardson attended as a non-delegate member. Our LWVUS liaison Marlys Robertson came from Boulder, Colorado for the Conference, and her presence brought much energy.

The PMP (per membership payment) to the State was voted to be increased by \$2 to \$15, for which we were already well prepared, thanks to Alice Richardson's planning ahead. The membership dues notice is included in this issue.

We also voted for a new program to study the problems specific to the incarceration of women, especially regarding the restoration of voting rights and re-integration of recently released women into society.

There were two women from Tulsa at the reception who have been released from the prison. They are working with the Tulsa LWV on getting voting rights restored of the

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Articles for the next issue of *Stillwater Voter* are due by June 24.

They are subject to modification to fit the space.

This newsletter is supported by member dues.

Complimentary copies are provided to interested parties.

If you are interested in joining the League, please contact **Dottie Goss** at 372-8180. ♦

Stillwater LWV Calendar

June 11 - 13 Washington, DC	LWVUS Council
June 16, 7:00 p.m. Stillwater Public Library	SLWV Board Meeting
June 18, 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. Southern Woods Park (11th & Hester Streets)	Juneteenth Celebration, Sponsored by Southern Woods Community Association (Contact Person - Birdie Neal)

Note: We do not have a lunch meeting or evening meeting in the month of June.

Convention Report (continued)

ex-offenders who are released early. We learned that one does not get one's voting right back until the full sentencing period has passed, even though one gets released earlier through good behavior. It was interesting listening to the various issues that the ex-offenders face once they are back in society.

Barbara Wilson, a member-at-large from Ada, became the new LWVOK President. Karen Melcher and I will serve on the State Board for the next two years. My first assignment is to rebuild the website and maintain it. I am working on it now, and hope to open the site to the members by August.

At the Convention, by talking to the other delegates, I learned that all of the local Leagues would like to get something out of the State League, just like our Stillwater LWV does, in return for the dues that we send to the State LWV. Some of the active local Leagues feel that they could use the funds much better to do necessary work than funding the State LWV if they do not receive much service.

Lack of communication between the local Leagues and with the State League seemed to have been the major source of inefficiency. We found that Tulsa LWV had done excellent work on the State Questions last November, for example, and we had looked for the information elsewhere without any luck.

We are hoping that the website will be one of the tools that will help us work more

efficiently. We are hoping it will also be one of the services that we provide local Leagues, because we will facilitate the local LWV sites if the local LWV wishes.

Karen and I will do our share in restoring confidence in the State League. But we will need the help of our membership. We can make suggestions to the State Board for better programs or frugal operation, but we cannot do that if we don't have a workforce

that will back our suggestions.

In general, it was a convention that generated more hopes than doubts for me about the State League. Karen and I look forward to getting to work.

Our first Board meeting is in Bartlesville in August. We will keep you posted on the activities. Help us help the State League, which in return, helps us do our local work.

Sunny Choi

Juneteenth Celebration

Celebration Of Freedom

The Southern Woods Community Association (SWCA) will be hosting its annual Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, **June 18, 2005** from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Southern Woods Park (11th & Hester Streets) in Stillwater.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with the news that the war had ended and that all slaves were now free. More information on Juneteenth can be found at: <http://www.juneteenth.com>.

The SWCA is celebrating its freedom from slavery but also the rights we have today as American Citizens such as voting and to also be a part of a Democratic Society. Many people of many races, creeds, and colors fought for our free-

doms that many take lightly. We don't want to ever forget those who fought for freedom in the past nor those who continue the cause of freedom today.

The SWCA plans to have music and food. We will also have speech excerpts by the Mt. Zion Youth department.

The SWCA was established in 1998, to promote unity in the neighborhood, and establish communication between the neighborhoods as well as with government agencies, among other objectives.

For more information concerning the activities for the event, contact me at 377-8729.

Birdie Neal,
President, Southern Woods
Community Association

We hope that the LWV members show good participation in this event, in a month when we don't have any other scheduled LWV programs. ♦

Adolescent Health

May Noon Meeting

Update on Teenage Health Concerns and Pregnancy

The LWVOK approved by consensus the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Issue in 1989. Karen Waldron, retired Nurse Practitioner from the Payne County Health Department spoke to those present at the May noon meeting. She broadened her topic to include health issues of adolescents in Oklahoma.

The health issues for adolescents in Oklahoma are compared to the national *Youth at Risk Survey*, conducted in 2003. Compared to the national data, 26% of boys in the state use smokeless tobacco (11% nationally); 39% use alcohol, compared to 29% nationally. More of our teenage males use tobacco and alcohol than the national norm. The figures are less for teenage females.

With regard to adolescent sexual behavior, one-half (50%) of high schoolers had had sexual intercourse by their high school graduation. The result of this sexual behavior is seen in the increase in number of cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea among 15 to 19 year olds. After an improvement in

our national rate of teenage pregnancy ten years ago, we are again 8th in the nation in teen birth rate, among 15 to 19 year olds.

As League members are aware, the result of the pregnancy means a greater likelihood of not finishing high school. In addition the children of teenage moms are twice as likely to experience abuse and neglect and to live in poverty. Federal policies about abstinence-based sex education, lack of funding for contraception and a continuing worry about offending the citizens of Oklahoma result in lack of accurate information (other than from their parents) being conveyed to teenagers.

Homicide and suicide swing back and forth as the second leading cause of death among teens in Oklahoma. Last year more than 600 adolescents attempted suicide and ended up hospitalized; 86 teens were successful at suicide.

The recent national publicity about obesity and the related health risks of high blood pressure and type II diabetes is repeated in Oklahoma. The number of adolescent males at risk for being overweight is 13%; 16% for females. Teens who are currently overweight

are 11% of the population (16% males and 6% females). All of these stats together show that for our adolescents, almost a quarter of the population is at risk for long term consequences for their health and longevity.

Karen Waldron mentioned programs for adolescents in Payne County that target health issues for teens, including Teen Health Conferences for middle school and junior high students, counseling with Lincoln Academy students, assisting teens with learning coping skills, anger management skills and refusal skills, among other things. Several community groups are involved in working with the health department on preventative programs, as well as assistance for those teenagers who become parents. Citizens interested in being a member of the Adolescent Advisory Board of the Payne County Health Department, are always needed.

Additional information and statistics were provided to each member in the *Healthy Transitions for Oklahoma's Youth*, published in 2004 by the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

Kay Murphy

LWV Council 2005

The theme of Council 2005 in Washington, DC, is *Engaging Your Community*. After all the League's efforts to *Engage Our Nation* in Election 2004, the focus now shifts to involving the local Leagues and the communities in other ways. Council 2005 will present ways to promote civic engagement and to strengthen our League. The dates are June 11 through 13th, and LWVOK President Barbara Wilson will attend it. ♦

We are looking for the old Stillwater LWV documents and memorabilia that we used at the 50th anniversary celebration. These are irreplaceable historical material. Please return them to Beth Thornton. ♦

Mark Your Calendar

Susan B. Anthony Trial

Bartlesville Women's Network is sponsoring *Suffrage Rally & Drama* on Saturday, August 27th.

This free event will start with the *Rally* at 10:30 a.m. at the Bartlesville Community Center, Adams Blvd. (Highway 60), downtown. Women and men from history will tell the story of the struggle for woman suffrage by word and song at this rally.

At 11:30, there will be a *March*, which includes a pa-

rade to Washington County Courthouse for the drama of *The Trial of Susan B. Anthony For The Crime Of Voting*. The cast includes District Judge Jan Dreiling as Susan B. Anthony and prominent attorneys as members of the jury.

The event will end with the *Reception* starting at 1:30 p.m. at the Community Center, where refreshments will be served.

If you come in costume, you will receive a commemorative button. For more infor-

mation, contact Becky Wallace at 918-336-0659. ♦

Stillwater LWV thanks Norma Earp, OSU Arts & Sciences Network Administrator and Manager, for facilitating the workshop in May. Sixteen members participated in the workshop, and each of us had his or her own workstation.

Thank you, Norma.

Sunny Choi



Stillwater League of Women Voters
A nonpartisan grassroots organization

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