



Stillwater Voter

A Publication of Stillwater League of Women Voters

Trish Emig, President

March/April 2008

Marlee Pierce, Editor
Carol Stone, Distributor

President's Message

Trish's Last President's
Message
Happy trails to you, until

we meet again. Happy trails to you, keep smilin' until then . . . Hey, it has been fun . . . sometimes. It has been VERY BUSY . . . all the time. I

made a pact with myself when I accepted the office back in 2007: I said that I would not work on Saturday or Sunday, but would wait

(Continued on p.2)

This newsletter is supported by member dues. Complimentary copies are provided to interested parties.

*If you are interested in joining the League, please contact **Gloria Hesser** at 624-0337.*

Stillwater LWV Calendar

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|--|--|
| Mar 11 (Tues) 11:30 AM - 1 PM Perkin's Family Restaurant | Karen Waldron , Lincoln Academy Location Change! |
| Mar 16 ~ 22 | SUNSHINE WEEK! ~ Government Transparency |
| March 20 (Thur) 6:30 - 8 PM | Board Meeting - Stillwater Public Library |
| Mar 25 (Tues) 11:30 AM - 1 PM Location: TBA | City Solid Waste Management ~ Tentative |
| Mar 28 (Fri) 9:30 AM - 4 PM OSU - 206 Edmon Low Library Break from 12:30 - 2 PM (see www.library.okstate.edu/Govdocs/WaterResources.htm) | Oklahoma Water Resources & Legislation Jeri Fleming , OK Water Resources Research Institute & Marilyn Jacobs , OK Dept. of Libraries, & Steve Beleu & Clif Broadworth , OK Dept of Libraries |
| April 7 (Mon) 7 - 9 PM Location: TBA | Book Discussion (<i>Vanishing Act</i> by Jodi Picoult) |
| April 8 (Tues) 11:30 AM - 1 PM Perkin's Family Restaurant | Presentation by CASA Staff Location Change! |
| April 17 (Thur) 6:30 - 8 PM | Board Meeting - Stillwater Public Library |
| April 24 (Thur) 6 - 8 PM Highland Park United Methodist Church | Annual Meeting & Potluck Supper! Scout Room |
| April 29 (Tues) 11:30 AM - 1 PM Perkin's Family Restaurant | Doug Hamilton , OSU Biosystems Dept. "Chicken Litter Waste" |
| May 5 (Thur) 7 - 9 PM Brenda Bose's Home | Book Discussion (<i>The Road</i> by Cormach McCarthy) |
| May 13 (Tues) 11:30 AM - 1 PM Perkin's Family Restaurant | Legislative Update Location Change! |

Message....(continued)

until Sunday night to pick up the pace again. Mostly, I have honored this self commitment. That's why you still see a sane person in your midst.

We've accomplished a little bit. And there's more in store if a group of you will step forward and pick up the baton. Karen and Deanna have agreed to remain on the board. And a few others have agreed to join them towards furthering voter education and voter registration during the most important general election campaign in our lifetimes. It's aligns itself right there along with ending the Vietnam War.

The board members with whom I was privileged to serve were outstanding. That helps a lot. Your future board members will continue to need your help to keep the Stillwater League program strong, vital and exciting. I will be there to help them. I hope you will join me in the effort.

Thank you, League members, for caring, for working hard, and for being the most intelligent, spirited group of women I've ever had the fortune to work beside.

Trish Emig

Henderson Reports at January Meeting

Dr. Tammy Henderson, Director of the Gerontology Institute at Oklahoma State University, presented the January 8 noon program. She gave an interesting and informative account of a research study with displaced families of the Katrina hurricane in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. The researchers conducted per-

sonal interviews for demographic information, health and psychosocial functioning, social support resources, family decision-making, and family functioning.

Several concerns and policy issues were identified from the study. A lack of preparedness by governmental agencies was evidenced by the placement of more than one group in the same trailers/communities, inadequate basic resources, and the use of military officers to address a disaster. Multiple moves required of the displaced persons resulted in a lack of health and contact information at various locations, and there were inconsistencies in the understanding and implementation of FEMA regulations and assistance.

It was determined that HUD was not involved in addressing housing needs. FEMA used travel trailers for temporary housing for up to 18 months and discontinued several forms of assistance six months after Katrina. The units were found to have high levels of formaldehyde. There was, further, a lack of housing for disabled persons. There were also challenges in getting insurance companies to pay premiums. Persons also faced daily hassles such as transportation, securing food, propane purchases, and coping with the loss of household and personal items.

Even with the tremendous problems, people coped and, in the main, adjusted to the situation and even retained positive attitudes. Dr. Henderson recounted the story of an individual who refused to evacuate and was rescued but spent two days on the Causeway Bridge before being rescued and taken to her daughter's home in Baton Rouge. She ended by indicating

this story was typical of many residents the researchers interviewed.

Esther Winterfeldt

Book club report: *Savages*, by Anne Nelson

(added note from Trish)

"It was the hope of the participants that the play would be brought to Stillwater. Anne has promised that she would attend if we are successful bringing the play to one of the local theatres. Hopefully, the League membership will have an opportunity to meet and visit with Anne. Gerry has copies of *Savages* if any of you wish to read the play. "

A play, *Savages*, by Anne Nelson was chosen by the book club for the January meeting. Members took turns reading excerpts from the play and discussed the similarities between the Philippines and Iraq.

The playwright, daughter of League member Gerry Nelson, was born in Fort Sill, OK and graduated from Stillwater High School where she first became fascinated with the Rough Riders from Oklahoma and the story of the war of 1898.

Savages is based on the true story of Major Littleton Waller, a marine who was court-martialed in the Philippine-American War (1899-1906). Waller, who had just been through many forms of hell at the front and is desperately ill, is awaiting his verdict from the court which had been ordered by General Chaffee, Gov. of the Philippines. Cpl. John Hanley, who was assigned to care for Waller, is struggling to understand the conflict. (Hanley's character was based on Rough Rider Billy McGinty from near Ingles, OK, (who is featured at

Book review...(continued)

Museum southeast of Stillwater).

The playwright describes the play in the New York Times review as "a tragedy about well-meaning people on all sides, as well as some monsters, making decisions that drag society deeper into a place that serves no one." And "The play is about clashes of culture: civilian and military, American and Asian, and all the misunderstandings, both comic and tragic, that result."

Gerry Nelson

Focus group report: meeting with the Stillwater Police Department

On February 11th, a small group of Leaguers met with Police Department Director Norman McNickle, Chief Ron Thrasher and Christy McKinnes to participate in a community focus group at the request of Director McNickle. The group had been conducting a series of focus groups throughout the Stillwater community to determine the priorities of Stillwater citizens regarding law enforcement. The focus group began with Chief Thrasher asking the group to reach consensus on these questions:

- o What is the most important service the PD (police department) provides to the community?
- o What do you appreciate regarding the "nice to do" services (non-emergency services) that the PD provides?
- o What is the minimum number of uniformed officers which need to respond to a call out during any 24 hour period?
- o What is the minimum number of uniformed officers which needs to respond to an emergency call in any 24-hour period?
- o In emergency situations that

require two officers, how many should respond?

- o What services would you like the PD to do more of?
- o What, if any, ideas do you have for the PD to save dollars?
- o How many undercover officers to investigate drugs does a city the size of Stillwater need?

After reading the above questions, you can well imagine that the responses from the participating Leaguers were all over the board! To summarize our overall response, however, it was obvious that the League members present wanted our safe community to continue to be safe, that we wanted the officers serving the community to have adequate resources to be safe, and that we appreciated the current job that Stillwater's PD was doing.

Following is information the PD provided to us:

- o Today, the Stillwater PD is authorized for a total of 71 sworn Police Officers (POs).
- o The last increase in police staffing was in January, 1999, when the City Commission authorized eight more sworn officers.
- o Taking into account initial training, injuries and military deployment, the Stillwater PD is currently down fifteen officers from its authorized head count.
- o The average response time for a Stillwater Police Officer to a citizen priority/emergency call for service is 4.76 minutes (non-emergency can be as long as 30 minutes).
- o Since 1999, Stillwater experienced an 18 percent increase in population with no increase in sworn POs.
- o Nationally, communities average 2.49 POs per one thousand citizens. Stillwater would need an additional 45 officers to meet the national average.
- o Oklahoma communities average 2.27 POs per one thousand

citizens. Stillwater would need an additional 34 POs to meet this OK average.

- o In 1999, the Stillwater PD responded to 32,757 citizen calls for service.
- o In 2006, the Stillwater PD responded to 40,017 citizen calls for service. This is a 22.1 percent increase.
- o Of citizen calls for service from 1990 to 2006, Stillwater Police saw an increase of 8 percent in serious crimes ~ including murder, rape, robbery, burglary, larceny, aggravated assault, auto theft and arson ~ and a reduction in clearance rates of serious crimes from 32 percent to 27 percent
- o In 1999, the Stillwater PD used \$270K in overtime to provide police service.
- o In 2006, the Stillwater PD used \$331K overtime to provide police service
- o The Stillwater PD maintains one of the "flattest" organizational structures (fewest number of supervisory and administrative personnel) of any City department its size.
- o Even so, at 3 AM citizens can expect to have four uniformed officers on duty that can safely respond to no more than two emergencies at the same time.
- o The PD's budget is \$2.7M of which 85 percent is allocated to personnel.
- o The POs work four ten-hour shifts in order to reduce overtime and to have more POs available for call out.
- o The PD receives 1,800 domestic violence calls a year.
- o The PD has a "reciprocal" agreement with the OSU PD; Stillwater POs respond as requested by the OSU POs, and many of the OSU student-related calls involve students residing in the community, not students residing on campus (campus dorms and apartments).
- o The Stillwater PD currently has only one (1) investigator (undercover PO).

Trish Emig

2008 Annual Banquet

What an incredible time I had at the Annual Banquet this year! Gerry and Dottie did an outstanding job putting together the decorations, the silent auction items, choosing the menu, AND inviting Dr. Crutcher. Thank you, dear Leaguers, for working so hard on making our annual event successful. AND, dear Alice was there, as she always is, collecting the silent auction purchases and settling our account with Meditations.

Dr. Crutcher's message was not surprising since many of us had kept current with the "state of the state" regarding health in Oklahoma. Our greatest problem is poverty, which often accompanies obesity and high tobacco use. These two culprits often lead to high sugar-diabetes rates, high coronary-disease rates, and high cancer rates. Thanks to the Oklahoma Child's Advocacy Center Institute and their loud advocates, our children are faring better than many Oklahoma adults because of the legislation that has helped Oklahoma children. Still, Oklahoma is suffering from poor education on how to care for themselves and from low incomes, which makes it difficult for Oklahomans to provide the nutrition and other services that they sorely need. We won't even begin to get started on the soaring medical costs and prescription medication costs.

So, although everyone who attended truly enjoyed themselves, our topic was an uncomfortable topic because the single citizen often does not know where to EVEN begin to untangle the current U.S. medical system web. Again, the quote (I don't remember who said it), "Think global, act local" is healthy advice in this situation. We must

continue to advocate legislation towards providing for health systems that are universal and affordable. We can begin by advocating against bills that will not move us this direction, and advocating for bills that do move us toward accessible health care for all people.

Your League board did a short post-critique of the banquet this year. Here are the results:

Things that Went Well

Nice atmosphere,
Food was good,
Auction had bountiful items,
People bid on the auction items, which made it more fun and interesting,
Several "new, potential" members attended.

Things to Consider Changing
Banquet committee size? --No, continue to keep it small to facilitate decision making,
More Leaguers need to contribute items, as they came from only several people,
Keep "community" invites to a minimum; we have mailed invitations twice and the response does not justify continuing the practice,
Make sure the NewsPress publishes the article; at a minimum, make sure it is in the Community Calendar.

Your board also said that it was important for us to follow up with the potential, new members. Carol Stone is handling this for us. Thanks, Carol!

The League realized \$962.52, after our bills were paid, from this year's banquet. That's the most we have ever realized. Good for us!!

Trish Emig



Trish, happy 88th anniversary to the LWV! Please pass on to your members my thanks and appreciation for the great service that your organization provides to our community.

Kevin Clark

New and Improved City Hall Office Design

I just returned from collecting the candidate forum DVD from Patti Osmus, the Administrative Assistant for City Manager, Deputy Manager, Assistant Deputy Manager and Attorney. Dan Galloway, City Manager, provided me with a tour of the new office design. If you remember, the old offices were located up the stairs and to the right (in the southwest corner). Now, all of these folks are located on the first floor, northeast (behind and to the left) of the new and improved reception area just inside the City Hall door. John Dorman's office, the City Attorney, has always been located in this area. So now, the City leadership staff is located between John's office and Human Resources, which has gained the staff efficiency since they are in and out of each other's offices throughout the day.

When I entered City Hall, I was received with a friendly smile from the receptionist sitting behind the new reception desk. She directed me back to the new office locations. I was again greeted by a receptionist, who then checked to see if Dan was

City Hall...(continued)

available to visit with me regarding the new office layout. I was warmly welcomed by all of the City leaders. As a result of the conversion of a sparsely used, large conference room into the new design, now all of the staff is together and have even gained two smaller conference rooms. In fact, I was able to speak with each of them during my visit by just walking down the hall. (Mary was out due to a death in her family.) Mayor Roger and Dan had just completed a visit with an owner of a potential new business. The meeting had been in the conference room that was outfitted with a monitor for DVD tapes. Dan mentioned that the City map could easily be projected onto the monitor for discussion purposes.

Dan said that he is working with Media Relations to produce a video that will provide a tour of City Hall that can be accessed from the City's website. During the online tour, citizens will be able to determine where to go for specific City purposes. If you haven't been in the City Hall building for a while, go by and say "hey." Dan said that he is not "hiding" behind locked doors and would welcome a visit, especially if you have a question about City business.

Trish Emig

Advocacy Day at the Capitol

On Wednesday, January 30th, Karen, Pat, Peggy and I traveled to the Capitol for the LWVOK -sponsored annual Advocacy Day. The day proved to be one of the more informative Advocacy Days we've attended. In fact, we had difficulty choosing what we would attend from our many options.

The day began with a legislative briefing in the Senate Chambers. The potential legislation mentioned included:

- The Incarceration Process:
 - Currently before a pardon can be given, the Governor must review and sign off on each pardon, which can delay the pardoning process; there is an effort to remove the required Governor's signature.
 - Oklahoma prisons are out of bed space; there must be more bed space provided either through more privately-owned and -run prisons, construction of new state prisons, or more prisoners sent to out-of-state prisons.
- Tax Law:
 - There will be an effort to reduce income taxes by five percent or less. However, there was a feeling by the legislative staff that the current state expenditures would not allow another income tax decrease.
 - There is an effort to remove the sales tax on groceries.
 - There could be an effort to establish a sales tax holiday in August.
 - There is an effort to accelerate the phased-out Estate Tax cut that

was previously provided.

- There is an effort to pass the Dream Act legislation, which would decrease initial taxes for first time homeowners.

- The House will be pushing tax decreases previously provided to Special Interest Groups.

- Education Legislation will be focused on substantive changes and budget changes:

- There will be an effort to legislate school choice, or the ability to freely transfer students from private to home to public schooling.

- There will be an effort driven by the Rural School Caucus to reduce forced rural school consolidations.

- There will be an effort to raise the income cap for students to apply for tuition assistance in state schools. There is a dedicated funding source for this potential legislation.

- There is an effort to increase the bonus for individuals who participate in and are awarded the Master Teacher Certification.

- There is currently a Caucus formed regarding Pay for Teacher Performance (Cargill carrying the bill) as well as an effort to pass legislation for an "Across the Board" increase in teacher and administrative pay.

- There is an effort to lengthen the school year by adding hours to the day.

- There are efforts to deregulate the public schools due to burdensome state requirements.

- Election and Ethics Reform:

- There is an effort to better clarify the Initiative Petition process.

- There is an effort for a citizen to be able to remove his or her signature from a document (petition) that s/he has signed.

- There is legislation regarding providing the Ethics Commission more authority; currently, the Commission only has the power to write the rules, not to enforce the rules; also, the Commission has proposed a \$100 combined lobbyist amount (e.g., Retired Teachers Lobbyists total would only be \$100 rather than each Retired Teacher Lobbyist spending a total of \$100) from the previous \$300 ceiling amount.

- There will be legislation pushed to require Voter I.D. at the polls.

- Immigration:

- There will be an effort to not make the current Immigration Bill any more restrictive than it already is.

- There will be an effort to make English the State of Oklahoma's spoken language.

- Social Services:

- There currently is an effort to consolidate some agencies (i.e., state law enforcement agencies).

- There is an effort to repeal the Central Purchasing Act because it is so costly and delays the purchasing process; also, as part of this legislation, Senator

Advocacy....(continued)

Coffee is proposing the establishment of an Office of Accountability.

- Environment:
 - There will be legislation to encourage state agencies to recycle and to GO GREEN.
 - Lance Cargill is carrying a bill regarding the control of pricing of petroleum products.
 - The State will be hosting the Southeast Interstate Convention in July in OKC. Senators Winchester and Branam are looking for volunteers to help with the convention.
- Health Care (currently, there is no major legislation in this area):
 - Medicaid was revised 3 years ago.
 - All Kids Act was passed last year.
 - The Insurance Commission received a national grant to conduct research on the uninsured and under-insured.

Question:

-Is there a proposal to review the impact gaming is having in Oklahoma?

Answer: No; however, the mental health agencies are very interested in the impact of gaming.

Other topics of the day included:

- Tips on lobbying
- Increasing the number of your supporters in appointive leadership positions
- Overview of the legislative process
- Domestic violence and sexual abuse
- Children and early childhood development
- Aging, health and mental health
- Corrections and incarceration of women
- Issue advocacy via the internet
- Building and working in a coalition
- Getting your supporters elected to public office

The Stillwater contingency stayed through the end. It was an exciting day, and there was a talkative car on our return trip to Stillwater!

Trish Emig

Advocacy Reports

Submitted by Pat Jaynes:

The session "**Overview of the Legislative Process**" was instructed by Dr. Rick Farmer. Dr. Farmer is the Director of Committee Services,

Oklahoma House of Representatives.

This session, subtitled "What They Didn't Teach in Political Science 101," was rich in information about the legislative procedure. Dr. Farmer pointed out several items:

- o the party majority organizes the body, i.e. rules,
- o there are many gatekeepers,
- o the process is low and deliberate. This is difficult for those of us who want ACTION NOW! However, law making takes a long time. This is because to pass a bill, there must be approval of at least eight bodies including:
 - o the Speaker of the House,
 - o 50 percent +1 of the Committee initially hearing the Bill,
 - o 50 percent +1 of the House,
 - o being processed by the Senate which has a similar process as the House,
 - o a Conference Committee,
 - o as well as the Governor, among others.

The process is complicated. No wonder some of the bills we advocate for never make it into law. Additionally, there are always timelines to meet and if the bill gets "stalled" in one of the committees and doesn't surface by the designated time, the bill dies. To follow a bill, you can learn how to track the bill on the internet (easier said than done). However, League members will find a wealth of information on: <http://www.lsb.state.ok.us>.

We all came away from the Advocacy Workshop with the "Guide to Effective Citizen Lobbying" which was last revised in 2006. You all probably have one of these tucked away somewhere. So dig it out and dig into the legislative process and get YOUR bill passed!

Note added by Karen Melcher:

What I learned was that the power in the Oklahoma House lies with the House Speaker. The Speaker determines the committee chairs, and even which bills those committees will discuss and consider. If the speaker dislikes a bill, it will never be considered regardless of the bill's popularity with other legislators or the public. Some speakers in the past have been more willing to give more power to the committee chairs and even to the legislators of the opposition party. In recent years, many fewer bills have left committee

to be debated on the House floor. This makes for a more streamlined and efficient system, but some members of the public and some legislators miss the floor debates. We will see how a new speaker handles his power.

Submitted by Trish Emig:

The session "**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**" was facilitated by Jan Peery, Executive Director of the YWCA of Oklahoma City. She began the session with several statistics:

- o 53,000 Adults and Children are in shelters due to domestic abuse,
- o 61 percent more (7,700) needed access to shelters but there was no more room available,
- o \$35M has been slashed from the budget for Victims of Violent Crimes,
- o \$2.1M has been slashed for legal aid and another \$1.7M has been slashed from the Health and Human Services budget.

Regardless of political beliefs and background, domestic violence unifies various groups under one flag. Senator Leftwich's Bill (SB2007) was to provide 30 days of unpaid leave to victims of abuse. The employer was provided the relief to hire temporary labor during this leave, plus make the working environment safer for other employees for the 30 day period. SB 2163 was to provide monitoring devices for tracking purposes of those who had a court order filed against them. And SB 2171 was another monitoring bill for similar purposes. Senator Leftwich is also a proponent of the 52- weeks Batterers Program being required to be taken. However, Senator Leftwich does not want the Judge to rule the sentencing and fines until AFTER the offender has completed the 52- week program. Senator Leftwich also stated that 73% of Oklahoma has 3 or fewer law enforcement officers per 1000 citizens. There are usually no dollars in the rural communities to train law enforcement officers. Currently, in many communities, the officers are trained for fewer hours than the federal guideline, which is to provide a minimum of 40 hours of training. The training is mostly lacking in the mental health areas, and, due to increased drug trafficking, mental health is an area of training that law

Advocacy....(continued)

enforcement is asking for.

In the same session, Pam Maisano, Executive Director of Oklahoma Conference of Churches and a lobbyist, talked about how the immigration law is putting numerous immigrant women in danger of more abuse because they fear seeking help.

Submitted by Trish Emig:

The over-arching idea that came out of the session **"Increasing the Number of Your Supporters in Appointive Leadership Positions"** was to associate one's self with "movers and shakers" if one wishes to serve on a state commission or board. There are more than 2,000 gubernatorial appointees and more than 350 boards or commissions to serve on. Due to term expirations, vacancies due to resignations, retirements, deaths, or newly created boards or positions, there are almost ALWAYS positions available. Boards are created by state statute, federal statute, or by executive order. Some boards are

entirely appointed by the Governor, some are appointed by a combination of Governor, Speaker, Pro Tem and other state officials, and some are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Appointees serve either at the Governor's pleasure, coterminously or in a fixed term (1~10 years). The Governor has final decision-making regarding the appointments; hence, Governor Henry has an office, under Toni Mitchell, Director of Appointments for Governor Henry. The "Application for Gubernatorial Appointment to a Board or Commission" is on Governor Henry's website (<http://www.gov.ok.gov>), or the application can be obtained by calling 405-522-8804. There also is a list of openings on various commissions by accessing http://www.gov.ok.gov/docs/new_appointment_application.pdf. The application must be completed and mailed, along with a current resume, to: Office of the Governor, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd, Suite 212, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

Submitted by Karen Melcher:
The workshop **"Children and Early**

Childhood Development" was led by Anne Roberts, Executive Director of The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA), who presented the priorities that the Institute was to lobby for this session. Representatives Anastasia Pittman and Jeanne McDaniel took a break from a budget meeting to give us a feel for how these priorities would be handled. Because the League at the state and local level has decided that children's issues should be one of its priorities, League members were interested in both learning how the OICA advocates and how the legislators try to balance funding and other factors with regard to child care, education, health, etc. Anne Roberts stressed that advocacy by letters and phone calls are important, but that face-to-face visits are most effective.

Submitted by Karen Melcher:
In this workshop **"Issue Advocacy Via the Internet,"** Heidi Johnson, special Projects Consultant, Oklahoma State Senate and Sara Clough, Oklahoma Journal Record, helped participants learn how to follow bills through the Legislature.

Book club report: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle. A Year of Food Life*, by Barbara Kingsolver (and family)

February's book discussion continued the theme begun earlier with the reading of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, a theme that concerns choosing food in a manner that is good both for the environment and our bodies. Noted author Barbara Kingsolver and her husband and two daughters set out to live a year on food produced locally, for the most part. Did they succeed? Of course, but in doing so they found joy (in the companionship of meal preparation and joining together at mealtime, for example), they found energy in the challenge (try raising and processing your own turkeys, for example), and they found a new way of thinking about food (they didn't even note

in their journal when the year was up!). The book is an easy and enjoyable read: Barbara Kingsolver is a skillful storyteller and easily encircles the reader in her frame of reference. Plus, the book is cleverly compiled, including narrative by the author, recipes and perspective from the college-aged daughter, and insight and drier data from the husband. The recipes are helpful because they combine ingredients from our gardens that are available at the same time as each other. The informational panels provide useful websites, among other things. If you are interested in delving into some of the information available on eating local food-stuffs and its advantages, visit some of these sites: www.100milediet.org/, www.ediblecommunities.com/, www.farmtoschool.org/, and the book's own site, [m/, and our local food coop, \[www.oklahomafood.coop\]\(http://www.oklahomafood.coop\).
Marlee Pierce](http://www.animalvegetablemiracle.co</p>
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The United Nations Refugee Program

This is a message for book club members who were moved by the plight of refugees in our last book, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. At the end of the book, Khaled Hosseini makes a plea for donations to the United Nations Refugee Program (UNHCR) to help the Afgan refugees. Here are some addresses to help. If you wish to donate on line with a credit card the address is www.unhcr.org/donate. If you wish to mail in a donation send it to US for UNHCR, 1775 K St #290, Washington DC 20006. World wide the United Nations is trying to help 33 million refugees in 110 countries.

Karen Melcher

City Council Forum

I appreciate all the help I received with the City Council Candidates Questions and Forum. Karen got together with Shirley, Pat, Joyce and me to determine the questions, and Karen delivered them to one candidate. She also contacted Beulah to be moderator, and thanks to Beulah for an outstanding job. Thanks also to Marlee, the experienced timer, Kay and Beth, the screeners, and Nelda, Carol and Thora for passing out and collecting the question cards. Thanks to Doug for providing the perfect name signs. Thanks also to the many members who attended. We also need to thank Mary Rupp for arranging for the Council Chambers and the video people. I think the Forum went extremely well and I'm so relieved since it was my first to

organize. Everyone was so willing to help and that made my job that much easier.

Deanna Homer

News Bulletin_League of Women Voters of Norman_January 31, 2008

Oklahoma Ethics Commission votes to change gift rules

__On January 25, 2008 the Oklahoma Ethics Commission passed a \$100 gift limit per lobbyist principal (lobbyist employer) to each legislator. This move reduces the limit from \$300. The change amends rules 257:23-1-2(b) to (e). If the legislature does not act to "disapprove" this change by the end of the legislative session, it will stand.__Dr. John Wood, Political

Science Professor at Rose State College, presented a paper entitled "Facts About Lobbying in Oklahoma" at a public meeting of the League of Women Voters of Norman on January 29, 2008. Dr. Wood reported that he provided information to the Ethics Commission that resulted in reduction of the gift limit. According to his research, there are approximately 700 lobbyist principals in Oklahoma. He said that under the \$300 rule the total amount in gifts could potentially reach \$31,290,000 (700 lobbyist principals x \$300 x 149 legislators). The new \$100 rule reduces the potential amount in gifts to \$10,430,000. To help keep these amounts in perspective one might consider that the total annual payout in salaries to legislators in Oklahoma is \$5,721,600 (\$38,400 x 149 legislators).



Stillwater League of Women Voters
A nonpartisan grassroots organization

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