



Oct 2009 Stillwater Voter

Gladeen Allred-Struthers,
President

A Publication of Stillwater, Oklahoma,
League of Women Voters

Marlee Pierce Posto, Editor
Carol Stone, Distributor

This newsletter is supported by member dues. Complimentary copies are provided to interested parties. If you are interested in joining the League, please contact Gladeen Allred-Struthers at 372-7238.

SLWV Calendar

Wed., October 7, 8:00 p.m. OSU Seretean Center — Montana Repertory Company will perform *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Mon., October 12, 7:00 p.m. — Book discussion group: *Loving Frank* by Nancy Horan.

Leader: Judy Clay

Location: Karen Melcher's home, 5235 Ridge Rd.

Tues., October 13, 11:30, (note location) Marshall Dillon's Steakhouse, White Barn Estates. The entry drive is just west of the intersection of North Jardot and East Lakeview. — A discussion of modern-day slavery. (Meet at 11:30 to eat; program starts at noon. Contact person: Beulah Hirschlein). See article on p. 5

Thurs., October 15, 7:00 p.m. — SLWV Board meeting at the Stillwater Public Library, meeting room 138. All members are welcome to attend. (Contact Person: Gladeen Allred-Struthers).

Sat., October 24: UNITED NATIONS Day

Tues., October 27, 11:30, Perkins Restaurant — Speaker: Dr. Ann Caine, Superintendent of Stillwater Public Schools. (Meet at 11:30 to eat; program starts at noon. Contact person: Karen Melcher). See article on p. 5

Thurs., October 29 - Viewing of the movie "To Kill a Mockingbird," OSU Student Union Theatre.

Mon., November 9, 7:00 p.m. — Book discussion group: *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court* by Jeffrey Toobin.

Leader: Avis Rambo

Location: Trish Emig's home, 2724 North Monroe.

Sat., December 12, 10:00 a.m.—Noon — LWVStillwater Holiday Brunch

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Footnote to calendar: Dates for LWVS-sponsored events are in bold.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Our League is growing. We would like to welcome several new members with talents to contribute. Be sure to get to greet them at our next meeting. New members are:



- **Nancy Andrew , PO Box 2292, 918-533-1228** - Nancy recently moved here from Miami, OK where she taught at Commerce High School.
- **Valerie Bloodgood, 18595 Chisholm, 372-5994** – Valerie is Activities Director at the Renaissance of Stillwater.
- **Linda Burks, 914 S. Shumard Drive, 377-8395** – We welcome Linda back. She is a licensed psychologist with a private practice in Stillwater.
- **Mavonna Ellis, 1616 South August, 564-0656** – Mavonna is a psychotherapist at North Care Center.
- **Lynn Malley, 5203 West 3rd Place, 564-3310.** We welcome Lynn.
- **Jeanne Schroeder, 921 Edgemoor, 377-5403** – Jeanne retired from OSU where she taught English as a second language and French.

We invite you to become involved as we seek to promote political responsibility through informed citizen participation, taking action on selected issues.

—Gladeen Allred-Struthers, president

Stillwater League of Women Voters recently presented a \$500 donation from the Helen Gorin Memorial Fund to Skyline Elementary School for their Rainwater Harvesting and Garden Project. The project is designed to teach students sustainable agriculture. Helen Gorin served many years as chair of Water Resources on the Oklahoma League of Women Voters Board. From left are Alice Richardson, LWV treasurer; Leann Cain, kindergarten teacher; Denise Ferrell, art teacher; Sharla Lavern, OSU Extension Engineer and project manager for Sustainable Stillwater; Ryan Blake, Skyline Principal and Annie Ortiz, 4th grade teacher. The project has been funded through a grant from the Oklahoma Resources Board.

—Gladeen Allred, 612-6330



Meeting report: Getting OKC transportation ONTRAC

ONTRAC (Oklahomans for New Transportation Alternatives Coalition) representative Mary Francis joined us for our September 8th luncheon at Marshall Dillon's Steakhouse. Francis spoke about where they are on the Union Station versus the Crosstown Expressway reconstruction project.

Currently, the plans for Crosstown Expressway call for the destruction of the existing tracks at Oklahoma City's Union Station. Union Station is one possibility of a centrally located intermodal transportation system to be developed for the OKC metro area. Intermodal transportation is defined as the movement of passengers from one mode of transport to another, typically taking place at a terminal hub designed for such purposes. The hub is foundation of system. Union Station is seen as the hub due to its preexistence and logical location of a hub.

In order to preserve Union Station as this vital hub, the Crosstown Expressway would only need to be moved 125 feet to the south. However, to date, ODOT "will not listen to reason" according to Francis.

What are the advantages of securing an intermodal transportation hub? Rail transit protects our trans-

portation and economic future from high energy costs. There is public demand for rail transit. Currently, there is federal support for rail transit. It would help Oklahoma comply with the stricter EPA ozone standards. Plus it would ensure Oklahoma City's future. Francis pointed out that Tinker AFB would be permanently taken off the base closure list if it could be easily accessed by rail. Otherwise, it may be closed and consolidated with Salt Lake City's AFB, which is accessible by rail transit.

The full plan involves the building of light rail, which is usually electric trains, much like the trains used in a subway system. The cost of building such a system in Oklahoma City is estimated to be \$40 million to \$50 million per mile. This would be used in conjunction with a regional rail on existing tracks – diesel engines that would share the tracks with freight trains and be scheduled around freight traffic. Both of these would tie into a possible trolley system (allegedly the old trolley tracks still exist!) and a surface bus system.

A question was asked about the nature of a challenge filed with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission regarding stopping the Crosstown Expressway project from proceed-

ing until it is relocated. The filing involves a safety issue. Hazardous freight must be rerouted due to the cutting of the lines that would occur under the current configuration. The east-west freight traffic would have to be redirected on the much busier Packing Town Lead, a north-south track. The N-S track currently has an average of 40 trains per day traversing it, before adding those along an east-west reroute. Trains would have to stop and wait for tracks to clear. The waits could be long. More trains would cross streets. Hazardous freight would be stopped long enough for leaks to occur, endangering citizens, including a daycare and a senior citizens center. Or it could potentially be a target for vandals, thieves, and/or terrorists!

At the last board meeting, our local board approved a resolution to support the Norman chapter in their fight to get the Crosstown relocated to preserve Union Station's viability and its original purpose: a beautiful and well-situated hub in the center of an intermodal transportation system.

More information on this issue can be found online at www.ontracok.org.

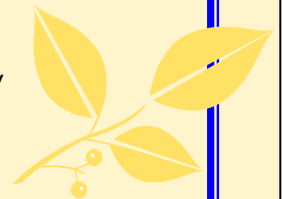
—Kirsten Tautfest

Voter Service

The "Lights on Stillwater" celebration was held on August 27, 2009 on the OSU library grounds.

Nelda Sander, Deanna Homer and Dorothy Egbert staffed the LWV table. Approximately 40 applications were completed including some as changes of address.

—Dorothy Egbert, dorothy051@sbcglobal.net



Meeting report: Sept 22 discussion on trash pickup

The noon meeting on the second Tuesday of the month is designed to be more discussion than presentation. The topic was the Automated Trash Pickup (ATP) Pilot program, following up on Ralph Kinder's previous presentation. Being the creative League members we are, when the person expected did not come, the discussion was taken over by the members. [Note: Ralph Kinder is no longer the person in charge of the new trash program and due to miscommunication the new person in charge did not come.]

Pat Jaynes was in the pilot program area for automated trash pick up and she talked about how easy the program was for homeowners. On the appointed trash day the containers are placed on the road, but right next to the curb, so the truck can pick up the container. Pat found it easy to implement the new program. One benefit is there is little or no trash blowing around the

neighborhood.

Karen Melcher added that, although originally it was thought that the money saved with the ATP would allow the city to move to a curbside recycling program, there is no plan to have curbside recycling. This led to a discussion of the recycling sites and how well-maintained and staffed the one on S. Perkins Rd. is, because some of the previous waste collection workers now work there.

Additional minutiae: There are 3 sizes of trash containers and one is provided per household but more can be purchased.

Comments were made about the challenges the older neighborhoods, with poorer streets and curbs, may present.

A person who needs their trash taken to the road can ask for that service from the city. Is there an extra fee?

Jean Bird, our favorite Leaguer from Ohio, was back to enlighten us about various trash programs in the Columbus area, including the wonderful facility in Medina County, trash pickup being contracted out and the waste disposal sites getting trash from other states, the capturing of methane gas from landfills and the trash to energy emphasis in Ohio. Of course, along with all of the trash collection/landfill programs is a continuing emphasis on recycling. The new Ohio goal is for 90% of the population to be familiar with recycling. Thanks Jean for being with us; we always appreciate your thoughts and humor.

We are excellent at filling in time with discussion and offering opinions!

—Kay Murphy



Hazardous-waste collection day

807 S. Perkins Road, City Convenience Collection Center
October 24 from 8 am until 1 pm

Stillwater residents may drop off unwanted electronics and household hazardous waste free at 807 S. Perkins Road on October 24. The waste will be collected from 8 am until 1 pm. Items such as unwanted pharmaceuticals, pesticides, household cleaning products, oil, mixed fuels, antifreeze automobile batteries and rechargeable batteries will be taken. In addition, electronics such as televisions, computers, stereos, microwaves are accepted. Those wanting information on which items will be accepted should call 533-8482 or visit stillwater.org/environmentalprograms.

This is the first year that the City of Stillwater Environmental Programs has combined the electronic and household waste collection days. This event will help residents to get rid of dangerous and unwanted items as well as preventing these items from getting in the waste stream. The event was organized by Lou Ann Snoddy, environmental programs manager.

—Karen Melcher

LWV Stillwater Programs in October

Modern Day Slavery Examined October 13

Modern Day Slavery: What does it look like? Where does it exist? How many are affected? Why should we care?

These are some questions we will consider at the October 13th noon meeting at Marshall Dillons.

We will have time to view part of a DVD entitled *A Tale of Modern Slavery* originally shown on ABC's Nightline. A quotation from the program indicates "Slavery is the graveyard of human rights – a denial of civil, political, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights."

Come join the discussion on this important topic.

—Beulah Hirschlein



Meet Stillwater Public Schools' Superintendent October 27

Dr. Ann Caine, Superintendent of the Stillwater Public Schools, will speak to the LWV Stillwater on Tuesday October 27 at noon at Perkins Restaurant. This will be Dr. Caine's first visit to the LWV since she came to Stillwater to become Superintendent a little over a year ago.

Dr. Caine manages a school district with over 5000 students, the majority of whom are in the elementary grades. She also oversees a budget of about \$34 million. The main sources of revenue are from the state (41%) and from local property taxes (28%). Around 88% of the expenditures of the school district is for salaries. This will be an informal presentation and members should be able to ask Dr. Caine any questions they may have about the school system, budget, future bond elections etc.

—Karen Melcher

A letter from our treasurer:

September 23, 2009

Dear Members – Occasionally, we are asked to explain why so much of our local dues are sent to LWVUS as "Per Member Payments" (PMP) each year. (Currently \$29.20 of our \$50 membership dues goes to LWVUS as PMP.) I recently received information which explains how the PMP is used and thought you might be interested in it:

WHERE DOES THE LWVUS/EF BUDGET GO?

(PMP covers 23% of these costs)

SERVICE TO LEAGUES: Each year, League staff respond to over 30,000 general emails and telephone calls from members and leaders in need of assistance or guidance. The Membership Recruitment Initiative has strengthened the direct connections and support between national, state and local Leagues as well as strengthening the capacity of the Leagues to be more visible and recruit new members. The LWVUS is also creating new training materials and new plans to conduct training on such topics as leadership, board development, membership recruitment and retention, strategic planning, visibility, advocacy and voter service.

Continued on page 6...

Per Member Payment cont...

LWVUS staff works with Leagues and League members to continually update our membership database. We also offer training for all Leagues on use and updating of records in the database. Additionally, LWVEF administers a state and local League grants program, so that local and state Leagues can collect and use tax deductible money for their work.

LEAGUE COMMUNICATIONS: through the use of emerging technologies, we are now able to provide a great deal of information through electronic and online means. The attractive monthly electronic newsletter *League-Voice*, weekly electronic Leaders' Updates, and our website are key sources of information for League members and supporters. Our website, www.lwv.org, features an enhanced "For Members" section.

LWVUS also provided various publications, including membership brochures and cards. We also supply "how to" materials for League leaders.

ADVOCACY: The LWVUS lobbies Congress and the Executive Branch on League positions – for all of us. We keep you informed and up to date on the issue areas that have been designated by the LWVUS Board as legislative priorities. We distribute action alerts and support both our Washington-based Lobby Corps and our 70,000 nationwide, electronic Grassroots Lobby Corps. We also participate in various coalitions to monitor legislative action and encourage grassroots action.

EDUCATION: The LWVUS/EF has been hard at work on a broad range of projects in the areas of: voter education and outreach; election reforms, the judiciary; global democracy; transparency and open government; the red-blue divide and civic engagement. The League's efforts in these areas have helped state and local Leagues work on these issues in their communities. The League also continues to provide voter information online via the League's website and the League's enhanced one-stop-shop for election information, *VOTE411.org*, for which Yahoo! provides pro bono server support.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: Visibility, reputation, credibility, and action are some of the intangibles that generate positive responses to the League and our work. These occur through communication efforts of the LWVUS staff, including press releases, letters to the editor, press conferences and speeches on our priority issues and our education and civic engagement activities.

CONVENTION AND COUNCIL MEETINGS: *Convention* is the time for members to make changes to the LWVUS bylaws, debate and vote on the biennial program, elect members of the LWVUS Board of Directors, and adopt the LWVUS budget. It also provides League members the opportunity to come together to discuss League success stories, network, receive recognition for programs, sell products, and meet members of the LWVUS Board and staff. Virtually all 30 LWVUS/EF staff members are involved throughout the year in the preparations for this event. This year, for the first time ever, the LWVUS *Council* meeting was held virtually and all Leagues were invited. This event allowed League leaders the opportunity to participate in a web conference, receive important updates from the LWVUS president and others, approve the LWVUS budget, and raise issues important to the membership in their states.

WHAT ABOUT THE REST?

- Additional functions to help run the national office, such as accounting, fundraising, technology management, handling of mail and other administrative functions are also important parts of the workings of LWVUS. These too are funded in part with PMP.
- How do we pay for the remaining 77% of costs to run LWVUS? The rest of the money comes mainly from grants and developing funding streams such as direct mail, some corporate contributions and from major donors.

Continued on page 10....

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MEMBERSHIP DUES NOTICE

Membership dues for the 2009-2010 year are due by August 1 and will be delinquent after October 31.

Please fill in this form and send it with your check made payable to League of Women Voters of Stillwater to: Alice Richardson, LWV Treasurer, 1023 South Western Rd., Stillwater, OK. 74074

Name of member(s) _____ Home Phone _____

2nd member in same household _____

Address _____ Work Phone (optional) _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

e-mail address _____

(check one:) For LOCAL use only _____ For LOCAL & NATIONAL use _____ (see below)

*Membership new to LWV (first year only) (**\$25.00**) _____

*Regular membership dues (7/1/09-6/30/10) (**\$50.00**) _____

*2nd member in same household (**\$25.00**) _____

Member Contribution _____

Less full-time student credit (**-\$12.50**) _____

Total Enclosed

=====

NOTE: Dues and contributions to the LWV are NOT DEDUCTIBLE as charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Please advise us if you are interested in making a tax-deductible contribution to the LWV Education Fund.

At the April 22, 2004 annual meeting, the Stillwater LWV members present requested that we give each member the opportunity to determine how her/his personal e-mail address would be used by the LWV. Therefore, please indicate your preference:

If you check LOCAL use only, we will use your e-mail to inform you of local events and other items the local board feels would be of interest to you. We do not share this information with other organizations without your consent.

If you check LOCAL & NATIONAL use, we will forward your e-mail address to the LWVUS, where it will be used to send you news from the national headquarters on a more timely basis than the quarterly publication. The national league could share this information with other organizations. Also, in the past, we have received notices that there have been unauthorized use of these addresses from LWVUS. If you have anti-spam and virus protection on your computer, this might be of minimal concern.

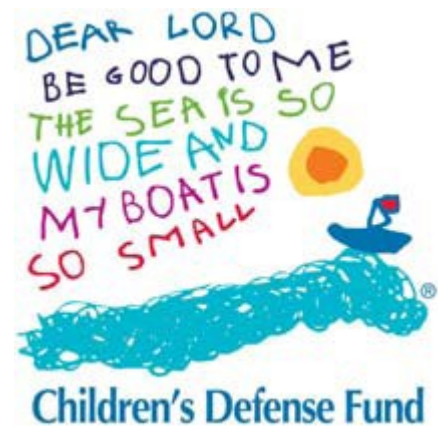
*** At the April 24, 2008 annual meeting, the Stillwater LWV members present approved increasing our local annual dues from \$45 to \$50. Of this amount, \$44.20 is allocated to LWVOK and LWVUS for per member payments during the current fiscal year. The budget for 2009-2010 which is included in the Annual Meeting Voter for April 23, 2009 was approved on that date.**

Children's Defense Fund

Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Fact-sheet: Oklahoma

March 2009

The Children's Defense Fund Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Campaign is a national and community crusade to engage families, youths, communities and policy makers in the development of healthy, safe and educated children. Poverty, racial disparities and a culture of punishment rather than prevention and early intervention are key forces driving the pipeline.



Poverty

Poor children lag behind their peers in many ways beyond income; they are less healthy, trail in emotional and intellectual development, and do not perform as well in school. The challenges that poor children face accumulate and interact, casting long shadows throughout their lives. Every year that we keep children in poverty costs our nation half a trillion dollars in lost productivity, poorer health and increased crime.

In Oklahoma among all children, 2 in 9 (22.5 percent or 198,555) are poor.

For Asian/Pacific Islander children, 1 in 11 (9.1 percent or 1,155) is poor.

For White, non-Latino children, 1 in 5 (18.0 percent or 106,785) is poor.

For American Indian/Alaska Native children, 3 in 10 (29.4 percent or 21,458) are poor.

For Black children, 3 in 8 (37.4 percent or 9,850) are poor.

For Latino children, 2 in 5 (39.6 percent or 39,733) are poor.

In Oklahoma, a baby is born poor every 37 minutes.

A White, non-Latino baby is born poor every 66 minutes.

A Latino baby is born poor every 3 hours.

An American Indian/Alaska Native baby is born poor every 7 hours.

A Black baby is born poor every 10 hours.

An Asian/Pacific Islander baby is born poor every 2 weeks.

Health Care

The United States is the wealthiest nation in the world, yet children's health status in our country is among the worst in the industrialized world.

In 2007, an estimated 119,000 children (12.6 percent) were uninsured in Oklahoma.

In 2006, 4,503 babies (8.3 percent) were born at low birthweight in Oklahoma. This included:

6.6 percent of Latino babies.

7.9 percent of White, non-Latino babies.

15.4 percent of Black, non-Latino babies.

21.5 percent of two-year-olds in Oklahoma did not receive all recommended immunizations in 2007.

Early Childhood Education

Studies reveal that those enrolled in high quality early childhood education programs are more likely to complete higher levels of education, have higher earnings, be in better health and be in stable relationships, and are less likely to commit a crime or be incarcerated. Yet many children are not enrolled in these programs.

In the 2006-2007 school year, 15.8 percent of 3-year-olds and 90.0 percent of 4-year-olds were enrolled in state-funded preschool programs in Oklahoma.

In 2005-2006, 13,474 children were enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start in Oklahoma. Of these:

13.1 percent were Latino.

17.7 percent were Black, non Latino.

44.6 percent were White, non-Latino.

Education

Attainment of a high school diploma is the single most effective preventive strategy against adult poverty. Yet a significant number of

students do not graduate on time with a regular diploma.

In 2007, a disproportionate number of Black and Latino fourth graders could not read or do math at grade level. In Oklahoma:

69 percent of White, non-Latino 4th graders cannot read at grade level.

85 percent of Latino 4th graders cannot read at grade level.

89 percent of Black, non-Latino 4th graders cannot read at grade level.

61 percent of White, non-Latino 4th graders cannot do math at grade level.

78 percent of Latino 4th graders cannot do math at grade level.

90 percent of Black, non-Latino 4th graders cannot do math at grade level.

Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely than their peers to drop out of school altogether. In Oklahoma:

For every 100 Asian/Pacific Islander students enrolled in the public schools, there were 1.8 suspensions.

For every 100 White students enrolled in the public schools, there were 3.9 suspensions.

For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled in the public schools, there were 4.0 suspensions.

For every 100 Latino students enrolled in the public schools, there were 5.3 suspensions.

For every 100 Black students enrolled in the public schools, there were 12.1 suspensions.

In Oklahoma, 7.6 percent of youths ages 16 to 19 were neither enrolled in school nor high school graduates.

Child Welfare

Children left with no permanent family connections or connection with a caring adult have no one to whom they can turn for social, emotional or financial support and face numerous barriers as they struggle to become self-sufficient adults.

In 2006, there were 11,816 children in foster care in Oklahoma.

In 2006, there were 13,414 victims of child maltreatment in Oklahoma.

Juvenile Justice System and Incarceration

States spend about 2.8 times as much money per prisoner as per public school pupil. Unless we focus our efforts on early intervention and prevention, rather than punishment, we are robbing thousands of youths each year of their futures and our country of vital human resources.

In Oklahoma, there were 20,192 juvenile arrests in 2007.

Of the 924 youths in residential placement in Oklahoma in 2006:

75 (8.1 percent) were Latino.

318 (34.4 percent) were Black, non-Latino.

399 (43.2 percent) were White, non-Latino.

There were 6 youths under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities in Oklahoma in 2007. Oklahoma spends 1.4 times as much per prisoner as per public school student.

Community Violence

The eight children and teens killed by gun violence each day in our nation is the equivalent of one Northern Illinois University shooting every 15 hours or one Virginia Tech shooting every four days. Yet, unfortunately, it takes tragic events like these to remind us that gun violence in America has reached an epidemic level.

In 2005, 35 children and teens in Oklahoma died of firearm injuries.

In 2007, 29.2 percent of Oklahoma's high school students were involved in a physical fight.

In 2007, 10.6 percent of Oklahoma's high school students were involved in a physical fight on school property.

In 2007, 7.0 percent of Oklahoma's high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.

In 2007, 22.3 percent of Oklahoma's high school students carried a weapon 2 or more times in the preceding month.

In 2007, 9.0 percent of Oklahoma's high school students carried a weapon on school property 2 or more times in the preceding month.

At crucial points in these children's development, from birth through adulthood, more risks and disadvantages cumulate and converge to make a successful transition to productive adulthood significantly less likely and involvement in the criminal justice system more likely.

We have no time to waste. It is time to step up and take action. Together, we can and will make a difference.

For more information on the *Cradle to Prison Pipeline*, please visit www.childrensdefense.org or contact Natacha Blain, Lead Strategic Advisor, at nblain@childrensdefense.org or (202) 662-3544.

Per Member Payment cont...

(Excerpts from material dated 7/22/09 received from LWVUS)

I hope this information is helpful to you. Please let me know if you wish further clarification on any of these topics.

Alice Richardson, Treasurer

President Obama's address to the United Nations

Eight Leaguers met to watch President Obama's speech to the UN General Assembly September 23 at Karen Melcher's. After the speech we agreed that we were happy to have a President who respects the United Nations and realizes its potential for solving world problems. We were also pleased that he stressed many issues that we Leaguers have a consensus on--human rights (especially the rights of women), nuclear disarmament, protecting the environment and cutting green house gas emissions, and the importance of achieving peace through mutual respect. Our concern was that having these goals does not mean that they will be obtained.

—Karen Melcher



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF STILLWATER**

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