



# Nov/Dec 2009 Stillwater Voter

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President

A Publication of Stillwater, Oklahoma,  
League of Women Voters

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*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

**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.

**Tues., November 10, 11:30**, (note: We're back at Hunan Restaurant) — Gloria Hesser, Payne County Commissioner will talk about county issues including fire protection services and, if committee work is finalized, ambulance services in the county, as well as other issues of interest.. (Meet at 11:30 to eat; program starts at noon.)

**Thurs., November 19, 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).

**Tues., November 24, 11:30**, Perkins Restaurant — Speaker: Dan Galloway, Stillwater City Manager, will talk and answer questions about the reorganization of the city departments and current issues before the city. This meeting will be at Perkins Restaurant with Mr. Galloway's talk beginning at noon, but come at 11:30 to order lunch and talk with fellow LWV members and friends.

**Sat., December 12, 10:00 a.m.—Noon**, Unitarian Universalist Church, 320 South Stallard St. — **LWV Stillwater Holiday Brunch**. (Members are invited to bring a plate of finger food to share.)

**Mon., December 14, 7:00 p.m.** — Book discussion group: *The Secret Live of a Critic in Disguise* by Ruth Reichl.

Leader: Carol Stone

Location: Brenda Bose's home, 2524 North Garfield St.

### Inside this issue:

New Members	2
Holiday Brunch	
National Programs	3
November Meetings	3,4
Slavery	4
School Superintendent	5,6

Just in time for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, LWV Stillwater will be selling 1-pound bags of Oklahoma pecans for \$10 per bag. These are large, shelled pecan halves of excellent quality that make great "made in Oklahoma" gifts. Half of the profit goes to the state League and half remains here with the local League. Please call or email Karen Melcher (405-377-3602 or kjmelcher@hotmail.com) or Trish Emig (405-743-4623 or trishemig@suddenlink.net) if you would like to buy some. Thank you, Karen



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Our Leagues continues to grow. We would like to welcome a returning member.

Gerald Frank 1115 S. Springdale Drive, 372-4844 We welcome back Gerald. He is a retired OSU Professor of Music.

Helen Jordan, Membership

## LWVStillwater Holiday Brunch

Stillwater League members will meet at the Unitarian Church, 320 S Stallard, for the annual holiday brunch. Members can bring a plate of finger food to share.

As has been the custom for the last several years in addition to enjoying being with fellow League members and enjoying holiday treats, LWV Stillwater members will discuss program.

In odd numbered years members traditionally review LWVUS programs (see list of current League programs on page 3) and decide if these programs should be retained, restudied, dropped or made an action priority. Members are also urged to suggest new programs for LWVUS to study. The program study suggestions of the Stillwater League will be combined with the suggestions from other local Leagues across the country to determine which programs the LWVUS board will recommend for consideration at the LWVUS convention in June 2010.

The League will talk about local program suggestions at the January 12, 2010, meeting.

—Karen Melcher

The following is a list of current League programs.

*Continued on page 3...*

## LWVUS PROGRAMS

### Representative Government

Election Administration\*  
 Citizen's Right to Vote  
 DC Self-Government and Voting Rights\*  
 Apportionment  
 Campaign Finance Reform  
 Selection of the President  
 Citizen's Right to Know / Citizen Participation  
 Individual Liberties  
 Reproductive Choice  
 Congress  
 Presidency

### International Relations

International Relations  
 United Nations  
 Trade

U.S. Relations with Developing Countries  
 Arms Control  
 Military Policy and Defense Spending

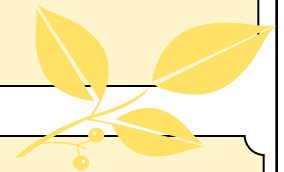
### Natural Resources

Global Climate Change\*  
 Resource Management  
 Environmental Protection and Pollution Control  
 Air Quality  
 Energy  
 Land Use  
 Water Resources  
 Waste Management - Solid Waste  
 Nuclear Issues  
 Public Participation  
 Agriculture Policy

### Social Policy

Education, Employment and Housing  
 Equal Rights  
 Fiscal Policy  
 Health Care\*  
 Immigration  
 Meeting Basic Human Needs  
 Child Care  
 Children at Risk  
 Violence Prevention  
 Gun Control  
 Urban Policy  
 Death Penalty

\*Issue Priorities



## LWVStillwater Programs in November

### County business on the agenda for November 10

Gloria Hesser, Payne County Commissioner, will be at the November 10th meeting at Hunan Restaurant. Hesser represents most Stillwater precincts on the County Commission and has responsibility for the Court House and County Office Building. She is on the committee studying local ambulance service and she hopes to have information to report at the meeting, but things are moving slowly. She will answer questions about rural fire service and other county business that the group wishes to ask about.

*Continued on page 4...*

November programs cont....

## City business on the agenda for November 24

Dan Galloway, Stillwater City Manager, will talk to the League about the recent reorganization of City staff. He is also willing to talk about other issues currently of concern to the City and its residents. He will answer questions about water, the Comprehensive Plan, and other city issues. The City wants to open communication with citizens by learning their concerns and also expressing the City's concerns to citizens.



## Modern slavery —a report on the October 13th meeting

On October 13, Leaguers gathered at Marshall Dillon's to view a portion of an ABC documentary on modern slavery. In the discussion that followed, Leaguers focused on the types of slavery present in the U. S. today.

Human slavery, also called human trafficking or forced labor, thrives in America and across the world. It is estimated that globally 27 million men, women, and children are victims.

According to a UC Berkeley study in 2004, there are five main sectors of activity: prostitution and sex services – 45%; domestic service – 27%; agriculture – 10%; sweatshops or factories – 5%; restaurants and hotel work – 4%; and the remainder coming from sexual exploitation of children, entertainment, and mail-

order brides.

Recent U.S. headlines informed readers of sensational cases, for example: In late August we saw "Sex Trade Ring Busted in Houston," "U.S. Pedophiles Nabbed in Cambodian Sex-Tourist Sting," and in late October we saw "50 Children Rescued from Prostitution in National Sting."

In late October the first annual statewide conference on human trafficking was held in Tulsa. The conference was organized by Oklahomans Against Human Trafficking (OATH) Coalition. Mark Elam is the OATH coordinator. He may be reached at [markelam07@yahoo.com](mailto:markelam07@yahoo.com)

For more information Leaguers may access numerous internet sites. A brief but comprehensive

overview of the human slavery topic, authored by Stephen Lendman, research associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization, may be found at <http://www.countercurrents.org/lendman060309.htm>

—Beulah Hirschlein

## Education Update

### Dr. Ann Caine, Superintendent of Stillwater Public Schools

### October 27, 2009

The Tuesday noon discussion and question and answer with Dr. Ann Caine was very well attended and the audience (us) had excellent questions and demonstrated that we are concerned about the SPS and education.

Dr. Caine is in her 31<sup>st</sup> year of teaching (and she considers everything she does as a superintendent teaching) and her first superintendency. She is very pleased with the members of the Board of Education she is working with and also with her administrative personnel. It would appear that she is a delegator, not micro-manager, and expects her personnel to do an excellent job without standing and looking over their shoulders.

Right now the district is working on a 10 year plan, and as part of this, the long-range planning committee is gathering information about needs to be addressed in the next bond issue in 2011.

There are 5 district goals that will guide decisions and actions by the administrative personnel and Board right now. They are:

1. Improve student achievement
2. Hire the best personnel – that’s everyone: bus drivers, cafeteria workers, teachers, etc.
3. Take care of our facilities
4. Continue to preserve our fund balance, and
5. Increase communication.

- Further information would be that Dr. Caine believes we should set the bar high and shoot for perfect test scores. And if the goals are met, a monetary reward would be appropriate for those directly involved.

- Under personnel, it was reported SPS has under a 7% turnover rate with their certified teachers (that’s very low!) She also pointed out we have many teachers with doctorates and 30+ years of teaching.

- Because of funding, we have not maintained our facilities very well and now have major issues to work on. Hamilton Field was a WPA project; it needed to be replaced. Three elementary schools are 60 years old. Lincoln Alternative School is over 100 years old and has been remodeled; she would like to see it restored to its original state. So – facilities are major concerns.

- SPS, as other state agencies, have been mandated to take a 5% cut every month, and this will continue at least until June. We have about 3 million in our fund balance (10%) and need to maintain this level.

- As always, communication is **very** important. She reported that she does TV, radio interviews, talking to groups, and anything else media-related to be

in touch with the community. Email address is: [acaine@stillwater.k12.ok.us](mailto:acaine@stillwater.k12.ok.us).

As we moved to questions and answers many other items were addressed.

*Why do we have this new stadium?* Dr. Caine talked about the new stadium, as well as other facilities, and marketing them to outside groups. She would like to see the rent from them go back to the school/building and this requires a policy change. Right now rent goes into the general fund.

*Did the SPS get stimulus money and how was it allocated?* Stimulus money was used to increase the success of our students by additional staffing. Remedial teachers were hired, another social worker is in place and the Title I schools have assistant principals to deal with problems and issues inherent in their student populations. The contract for any of these stimulus money positions clearly states that when the money ends, the position ends.

*What is our graduation rate?* How the state calculates the graduation rate is interesting and not very accurate. Only 10 people dropped out of the high school last year but the state system says we have an 80% graduation rate. [It is too complicated to explain here.] Dr. Caine has spoken to policy makers about this.

*Continued on page 6...*

Education update cont....

*State testing was another question and along with that, NCLB (No Child Left Behind). Students must pass 4 of 7 areas before graduation; Algebra I and English II are mandated. After that there are choices on the subject areas.*

*What are the issues with teacher salaries? The current impasse only allowed limited information to be given. We are fortunate to have one of the highest net assessed value rates in the state. (Just ask her, her home here cost more than what she sold in Moore.) The negotiations center around salary itself and three issues on language/ wording. She plans to publish the pay scale in the NewsPress as soon as there is a contract, hopefully in the next two weeks.*

*What is our English as a Second Language program? How many teachers do we have and how big is the program? This population has doubled this year; we have over 45 different languages in Stillwater and the Asian community is our largest. The program must be equitably distributed between all of the schools therefore the teachers and program are stretched thin.*

*What do you plan for the future? There are a lot of questions being asked and considered but no answers as yet. This is where the 2011 bond issue study will be working.*

*What was the impact of the removal of the land and property in the Athletic Village on our ad valorem taxes? Little or no impact was the response. Our net assessed value increased 7% this year.*

*Where is the teacher supply lacking? English as a Second Language and Special Education.*

*What are the volunteering opportunities in the SPS? She isn't sure and you would need to talk to the building principals about options.*

*Do you have an adequate substitute pool? We always need subs.*

And the questions went on and on after we officially finished.

It was easy to see that Dr. Ann Caine's emphasis on "communication" is her style, expertise, and forte. She was excellent in communicating with us and in turn responding to all of our questions. Stillwater Public Schools was fortunate that she came to our community as Superintendent.

—Kay Murphy



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF STILLWATER**

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