



January 2010 Stillwater Voter

Gladeen Allred-Struthers,
President

A Publication of Stillwater, Oklahoma,
League of Women Voters

Marlee Pierce Posto, Editor
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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., January 11, 7:00 p.m. — Book discussion group: *The Weather Makers: How man is changing the climate and what it means for life on earth*, by Tim Flannery.

Leader: Beth Thornton

Location: Gerry Nelson's home, 1008 West Eskridge Place.

Tues., January 12, 11:30 a.m., (Hunan Restaurant) — Stillwater League members will meet to discuss Local Program. (Meet at 11:30 to eat; program starts at noon.) (Contact Person: Karen Melcher).

Thurs., January 14, 7:00 p.m. (Note location: Café Bella) — SLWV Board meeting; all members are welcome to attend. (Contact Person: Gladeen Allred-Struthers).

Thurs., January 21, 5:00 p.m., Stillwater Public Library Auditorium — Annual Reception for elected officials hosted by the League and Friends of the Library. (Contact Person: Karen Melcher).

Tues., February 9th: Stillwater School Board Election. Look for questions to the candidates in the NewsPress and the Stillwater Journal sometime in the 2 weeks before the election. A forum is also being planned.

Thurs., February 18. — Please join your fellow leaguers and friends at the Annual Banquet on **Thursday, February 18th, 2010 at Meditation's**. The Silent Auction, an important fund raiser for the local League, begins at 6:30 p.m. and dinner and our guest speaker follow at 7 p.m. Our banquet speaker will be Mr. Lance Robertson, State Director, OKDHS Aging Services Division, and his topic will be "Building on the Promise of Home and Community Based Services." Reservations for dinner will be due to Alice Richardson by February 12th.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



We would like to welcome all of our recent new members. They are,

Colleen Fleming, - 553 Greenbriar Court, Stillwater, OK 74075-1635; email: cflem-ing12@suddenlink.net

Ruby Nofziger - PO Box 2223, Homer, AK 99603 - (907) 235-6774 (she formerly lived in Stillwater and probably there is no local league there)

Barbara Stadler - 913 West Lakeridge Avenue, Stillwater 74075 - (405) 624-2176

—*Helen Jordan*, Membership chair



January 21 Reception for Elected Officials

The League and the Friends of the Library will hold their annual reception for elected officials at 5 pm on January 21 in the Stillwater Public Library Auditorium.

The reception is open to the public and is an opportunity for all Stillwaterites to meet their legislators, city councilors, city department heads, school board members, and county commissioners. The legislators will have a chance to let us know about the hot issues anticipated in the upcoming legislative session. In the past we have had a good turn out from both elected officials and the general public. Please encourage others to attend.

In addition, the candidates running in the school board and city council elections will be invited, giving residents a chance to meet them.

Food will be provided by the League and the Friends of the Library.

—*Karen Melcher*

For January 12, 2010: Local Program Issues

The Stillwater LWV Board wants input from members on local program. Whether you are a new member or a long-time member, we need to know what you want from the League and which programs and issues you would be willing to work on. We will meet January 12 at 11:30 at Hunan Restaurant to look over our existing local program positions and to talk about possible new local programs. These program items will be voted on at our annual meeting in April. Please come and join our discussion to let us know what you want the local League to study and what kind of action you feel the League should

take locally.

Our 2008-2009 program positions cover the following topics on City Government

1. Open Meetings
2. Conflict of Interest
3. City Council and Advisory Boards
4. Long Term Financial Obligations
5. Comprehensive Community Development Plan
6. Law Enforcement

7. Parks and Recreation

8. Local Zoning Code Enforcement Procedures

9. Local Education policies regarding general policy, the local School Board, and Student Expulsion and Suspension Policy

For more information consult your LWV Stillwater Year Book. If you do not have a year book, contact Kay Murphy for a copy.

—Karen Melcher

Ambulance Service in Transition

—a report on the November 10th meeting



On Tuesday, November 10th, Gloria Hesser, county commissioner, chatted with League members about county issues. She opened up by discussing what county government does and what the taxes provide for from both the sales tax revenues and the ad valorem tax. She stated that the county budget is put together by a budget board of the eight elected officials. They design the budget and then present it to the Board of Commissioners who approve it or send it back.

However, the burning issue of the day was the pending restructure of the ambulance service. With the

City of Stillwater breaking the ambulance service from Fire Department control and putting it in the hands of the newly formed Hospital Trust, this puts those outside the city limits at risk for losing access to reliable ambulance service. Hesser stated that meetings have been taking place for five months in anticipation of this move and these meetings had nothing to do with the city disbanding the service as of December 31, 2009. The establishment of a trust relieves the city or county from any related liability. The liability thus stops at the trust and the government bodies cannot be sued in relation to anything op-

erated by the trust.

At this stage, Hesser stated that requests for proposals have been sent out and returned. From those, the companies are selected for actual estimates for service to the western half of the county, and estimates have been received. The cost issue is still just that, an issue. It is possible that the City of Stillwater and CREC may opt to add a fee to electric bills. The payment of this assessment would be optional, per statute. Even with the optional aspect to the fee, other communities have had success with this way of funding the basic costs of run-

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ning an ambulance service.

It is clear that we are in a state of transition with the way ambulance service is provided to our commu-

nity. The best thing to do is stay in contact with your community leaders to let your voice be heard. Hopefully, you will never have to use an ambulance, but it is com-

forting to know that it will be there when you or your loved one does need it.

—Kirsten Tautfest

City of Stillwater reorganization plan Dan Galloway, City Manager —a report on the November 24th meeting



Dan Galloway, City Manager gave a detailed explanation, with charts and handouts for us, on the changes in the Stillwater city government organizational structure. At least for me, I wondered how the old organizational structure had ever developed. It was not logical. "It didn't tell the public, the City Council or anyone else how the city was organized. It was misleading." (NewsPress article by Chris Day, 11/25/09)

First, a reminder. The City Council, as is true with other state government structures, is forbidden to make any contract for longer than one year. For this reason trust authorities have been developed. Stillwater has had the Stillwater Utilities Authority Trust and the Stillwater Public Works Authority. Connected to the city but not responsible to city government are the Stillwater Regional Airport Authority, Stillwater Medical Center Board of Trustees and the Stillwater Industrial Redevelopment Authority. In years past, the

Stillwater Golf Authority was developed to fund the upgrade and changes in Lakeside Golf Course. [This trust has since been dissolved at it was no longer necessary.]

The premise of the change suggested by the city staff was to clearly show which functions are directly responsible to the City Council, and their designee the City Manager, and that these functions are funded from the same source. In the new organizational structure for City of Stillwater General Government, everything under the City Manager is paid for by sales tax revenue. The City Manager is responsible to the City Council, but all of the individual departments in the city do not report directly to the council. In the new organization chart, budgetary and fiscal lines of responsibility are clearer.

The departments under the city manager are: information technology, human resources, marketing & public information, finance, parks

& recreation, policy, fire, transportation (headed by Ralph Kinder), development services, and library. (The Library Board has supervision and control of the public library.) Theoretically, you could ask for the expenses of any one department.

Besides cost, staffing can be viewed differently. For instance, the golf course staff previously was responsible only to their authority and only for the golf course. By placing the golf course under parks and recreation, the staff at the golf course could be pulled over to help out parks maintenance if there was a need for more tree and limb pick up after a storm (just an example).

The Stillwater Utilities Authority trustees and departments are not paid for with sales tax revenue but generate fees that provide their revenue. If someone wants to know "how much does it cost to run the recycling program," it is now potentially possible to know the answer to the question. Divisions under SUA are: electric, water utilities, waste management

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LWV of Stillwater Annual Banquet

We are all getting younger, as well as the population of the United States – right? Not true. Our country is getting ready to have a ‘bumper’ crop of older adults. *Project 2020* is a coordinated national long-term care strategy developed by the National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). The *Project 2020* focus is “Building on the Promise of Home and Community Based Services.”

Our banquet speaker will be Mr. Lance Robertson, State Director, OKDHS Aging Services Division. Robertson will be the person in charge of implementing the *Project 2020* in Oklahoma.

A career gerontologist, Lance was

at OSU for 12 years, where he co-founded the Gerontology Institute. He was also the Executive



Director of PartnerShips for Aging, the largest regional gerontology association in the U.S. In his current position since August, 2007, Robertson is responsible of a budget of \$230 million dollars (Medicaid and State) and oversees 17 major aging services programs. Included in the latter are the Older Americans Act

program and the *State’s Home and Community Based Services* Medicaid Waiver Advantage programs.

Beyond all of the credentials I could share about Lance, he is a warm, caring, nice guy; we are fortunate he looks over the programs for the aging in Oklahoma.

Please join your fellow leaguers and friends at the annual banquet on **Thursday, February 18th, 2010 at Meditation’s**. The Silent Auction, an important fund raiser for the local League, begins at 6:30 p.m. and dinner and our guest speaker follow at 7 p.m. Reservations for dinner will be due to Alice Richardson by February 12th.

—Kay Murphy

SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

Last year the Silent Auction at the annual banquet raised \$785, a record year. Can we top it this year? YES WE CAN! But it is up to you, Leaguers, to not only bring something for the silent auction, but also to bring your checkbook that night and bid, bid, bid!

What to donate? You might create food, crafts, or art items. Something with the League pecans, perhaps? Or would you like to offer new or lightly used items that you no longer need or use, such as books, videos, collector items or gift baskets? Show off your recycling

skills by creating something unique from something old. Or perhaps you have a service you’d like to offer such as catering or assistance with website creation. Pat Jaynes’ dinner is always a hit. We challenge you to do something similar. The greater the variety of offerings, the better.

The auction proceeds go to support the local program activities of the League, such as education for Voter Service, archivals, and other activities. So--put on your thinking cap and get those items or information on future services ready. Bring your items to the Banquet. If bringing something, please arrive a few min-

utes early so we can place it out and it can be available for folks to bid on during the cocktail portion of the banquet. Tables for displaying the items and bidding forms will be provided. If you have items, but will be unable to attend, call or text Kirsten Tautfest at 405-612-8558 to make arrangements for pickup and delivery to the Banquet auction site. Don’t forget to fill your pockets with money or bring your checkbook to purchase items others bring to the auction!

—Kirsten Tautfest

November 24 program cont...

and fleet, customer service and environmental services. SUA now has its own director – Dan Blankenship.

As always with Leaguers there were many questions and points to be made. Mr. Galloway patiently

and competently responded to questions and also mentioned that the organizational structure we had on paper in our hands was a working document. Hopefully it will be finalized in January, 2010.

If you would like to have a copy of Dan Galloway's handout, please let me know.

—Kay Murphy (372-9562)

LWV Stillwater's suggestion for LWVUS program adoption for the 2010 convention

In our December 12 discussion of LWVUS program, the Stillwater League agreed on two suggestions. One was that the national program on the environment be expanded to include the idea of sustainability. We will need some volunteers to write this proposal up and to monitor the LWVUS list serve for convention to learn about other Leagues interested in sustainability as a study. The second suggestion is to restudy water. Since we can only send in one program suggestion we will need to know which of these studies our League is willing to work on. Please call Beulah Hirschlein, Gladeen Allred-Struthers, or Karen Melcher if you will help develop these program ideas.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF STILLWATER**

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