



July/August 2011 Stillwater Voter

Kirsten Tautfest, 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 **Helen Jordan** at*

372-6420.

SLWV Calendar*

Date/Time	Place	Description
July 11th (Mon.) 7 to 9 p.m.	Home of Deanna Homer 2105 E. Marcus Ave.	SLWV Book Discussion - <i>Every Last One</i> by Anna Quindlen (Contact Person: Karen Melcher)
July 12th (Tues.) 11:30 to 1 p.m.	Freddie Paul's Restaurant 1707 E. 6th	SLWV Noon Meeting - City councilman Joe Weaver will do a question and answer session on the city budget. (Contact Person: Nancy Andrews)
July 16th (Sat.) 10:30 a.m.	Tulsa League's office, 3336 E 32nd St., Suite 1B	LWVOK: First state board meeting of this term (See article on p.2) (Contact Person: Karen Melcher)
July 28th (Thurs.) 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	Stillwater Public Library Board Room	SLWV Board Meeting (Contact Person: Kirsten Tautfest)
August 8th (Mon.) 7 to 9 p.m.	Home of Karen Melcher 523 S. Ridge Rd.	SLWV Book Discussion - <i>Green Gone Wrong</i> by Heather Rogers (Contact Person: Valerie Zayat-Bloodgood)
August 13th (Sat.) 10 a.m. to Noon	Girl Scout Stapley Campground in Helen Gorin's Nature Center (air conditioned!)	SLWV Kickoff Brunch! Bring a covered brunch dish and a friend. Speaker: Wanda Johnson talking about the Girl Scout Camp. Directions: Highway 51 west, turn south on Redlands Road. On Redlands Rd. drive about one mile, then turn east at the campground gate. Helen's Nature Center will be on the right hand side. Just a short distance. To carpool: Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Stillwater Surgical Center, across from Arvest Bank, on West 6th (Hwy 51). (Contact Persons: Board Members)
August 25th (Thurs.) 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	Stillwater Public Library Board Room	SLWV Board Meeting (Contact Person: Kirsten Tautfest)

Inside this issue:

Our Flag

LWVOK board mtg 2

Membership

LWVUS Educ. study 3,4

Dues form 5

Water study

Voter Service 6

LWVUS study guide

*League-sponsored items are in bold.

SLWV Calendar *continued...*

NOTE: No LWVStillwater regular membership meetings on July 26th, August 9th, or August 23rd.

Our Flag

On June 14th, League members and guests heard a presentation on the American flag from local Boy Scout troop members. Many of us were shocked to learn that the story of Betsy Ross is more of myth than is at least based in some fact. We also learned that there are very strict proportional size guidelines in the US Code concerning the manufacture of the official flag. Veteran's groups also offer postcards that can be sent to your neighbors and businesses who are seen flying a tattered flag.

Be sure to come to the next luncheon. A member will be assigned to write up an article for the Voter for the September issue.

—Kirsten Tautfest

An invitation

The Board of Directors of the Oklahoma state League of Women Voters (LWVOK) invites interested members from any/all of our local Leagues and members at large (MAL) to attend our board meetings this term.

Interesting, challenging, and exciting things are coming up these next two years, and the state officers NEED input from as many members as possible in order to do the best job for our organization and for the citizens it serves.

The first state board meeting of this term is scheduled for **Saturday, July 16th**, in the Tulsa League's office, 3336 E 32nd St., Suite 1B, at 10:30 am.

Issues we will be addressing this term include a two-year comprehensive, statewide study of water use, protection, management, conservation, ownership &

quality. We will also conclude the study on Instant Run-off Voting (IRV) this fall. There is to be a national study on education--details forthcoming, and last but certainly not least, we will be implementing the "Voter411.org" website for Oklahoma.

There will be periodic notices, supplying information and suggesting "Avenues for Action" on timely topics that fall under the scope of our established program positions.

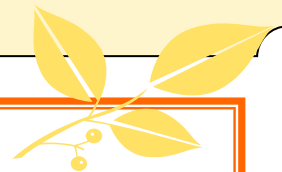
We sincerely hope that each of you will join us on as many levels as possible. You are welcome at our meetings or contact us at other times with your ideas and comments.

Karen Melcher & Mary Jo Neal
Co-presidents, LWVOK 2011-2013

Membership

Welcome to new member!

Gerrit W. Cuperus has joined as the 2nd household member with Jill A. Boggs. Their other info remains what we presently have for Jill. (716 South Willis, Stillwater 74074, 377-1653; e-mail address available on the LWVStillwater roster).





LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Students who move from one part of the United States to another during their K-12 school careers are likely to encounter substantial variations in requirements for graduation. The Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI, 2010) stated: "We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Common standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students."

Currently, standards for student performance vary widely by state. The roots of current state-to-state inconsistencies lie in the fact that public education in the United States has traditionally been a local responsibility. However, textbook publishers have created something of a "de facto" national curriculum, based on market needs. Consequently, many textbooks from major publishers have reflected the curricular choices that were made by educational groups in the largest states. Some publishers do create textbooks and other curricula for smaller markets.

Rothman (2009) summarized the efforts of various groups to create common standards across the United States. Initial efforts to foster development of national standards and a related system of assessments in the core subject areas began in the early 1990's through awarding grants to a dozen national organizations.

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) launched the Common Core State Standards initiative in March 2009 after the nation's governors agreed in concept to adopt a uniform set of standards. The final report was issued on June 2, 2010 (NGA, 2010), and, by early 2011, 40 states have adopted the Standards. The adopting states are currently aligning them to their own state standards.

The Fordham Institute (Carmichael, et al. 2010) reported that the Common Core standards received high marks when compared to state standards across the country.

The Institute suggests that Common Core Standards represent an opportunity for creating consistency and raising standards in all states.

Assessments

The implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has created a 50-state and 50-test environment in public education. As a result state-to-state expectations and performances vary greatly. States publish annual reports of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which are required by federal law, but the meaning of "proficient" in those reports can vary widely from one state to another (Cronin, et al. 2007).

Larger testing companies market a variety of norm-referenced standardized tests. However, they are designed to rank students, rather than to determine how well students have mastered curricular objectives as criterion-referenced tests would do. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) publishes results that are technically adequate for state-to-state (and international) comparisons, but that assessment is not designed to produce individual student scores. NAEP requires a large sample of students to produce results. Most school systems are too small to qualify for testing that would produce local NAEP results. The tradition of local governance has led to inconsistent requirements and standards for student performance across the country. Thus, in 2010, the United States does not have a consistent set of academic assessments for grades K-12.

Two coalitions, together representing 44 states and the District of Columbia, won a U.S. Department of Education competition for \$330 million dollars federal aid to design "comprehensive assessment systems" aligned to the Common Core and designed to measure whether students are on track for college and career success. The awards, announced in September 2010, were divided between the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), comprised of 26 states receiving \$170 million, and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium that comprises 31 states and received \$160 million. At least 12 states participated in both coalitions and are waiting to decide which assessment system will best meet their needs. An advantage of having assessments that are used in more than one state is that results from all participating states could be compared.

Why not national standards or assessments?

The most common arguments against adopting the Common Core Standards for K-12 center on two issues:

Continued on p. 4 ...

1) the cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments and (2) the sovereignty of states in issues related to education and local control. Governor Rick Perry of Texas stated that the Race to the Top funding would only generate a one-time amount of \$75 per student, yet cost Texas taxpayers an additional \$3 million. A third argument is that the individual state standards might be more rigorous. However, states that adopt the Common Core are permitted to add 15 percent more in content.

Another concern is the potential to use scores from the student assessments as a major component of teacher evaluations and merit pay plans, an idea that has popular appeal. (*TIME*, 2010). In August 2010, ten of the nation's premier educational researchers (Baker, Barton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, Ladd, Linn, Ravitch, Rothstein, Shavelson & Shepard, 2010) co-authored a report that cautioned against relying on student test scores as a major indicator for evaluating teachers, citing the technical problems associated with using scores from standardized student assessments in value-added statistical models.

Does the United States need a national curriculum?

The U.S. Department of Education presents the view that, since the developers of the Common Core Standards and the proposed assessments have been groups with state representation rather than the federal government, neither program is a federal initiative. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, March 13). In March 2011, the Albert Shanker Institute issued a call for common curriculum guidelines (Albert Shanker Institute, 2011; Gewertz, C. 2011, March). This document voices the concern that common assessments are being developed from the common standards with no curriculum in between. In May 2011, another group published an article with a different view: "Closing the Door on Innovation: Why One National Curriculum is Bad for America" (2011), discussed by Gewertz, C. (2011, May). The article also cites the prohibition against a federal curriculum contained in the 1965 ESEA.

References

- Albert Shanker Institute. (2011, March 7). A call for common content: Core curriculum must build a bridge from standards to achievement. Retrieved from <http://www.ashankerinst.org/curriculum.html>
- Baker, E.L., Barton, P.E., Darling-Hammond, L., Haertel, E., Ladd, H.F., Linn, R.L., Ravitch, D., Rothstein, R., Richardson, R.J. & Shepard, L.A. (2010, August). EPI briefing paper: Problems with the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers. Retrieved from Economic Policy Institute: http://epi.3cdn.net/b9667271ee6c154195_t9m6iij8k.pdf
- Carmichael, S. M., Martino, G., Porter-Magee, K. & Wilson, W.S. (2010, July). The state of state standards--and the Common Core--in 2010. Retrieved from http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2010/201007_state_education_standards_common_standards/SOSSandCC2010_FullReportFINAL.pdf
- "Closing the Door on Innovation: Why One National Curriculum Is Bad for America." Retrieved from http://www.k12innovation.com/Manifesto/_V2_Home.html
- Common Core Standards Initiative. (2010). Common Core Standards Initiative. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org>
- Cronin, J., Dahlin, M., Adkins, D. & Kingsbury, G.G. (2007, October). The proficiency illusion. Retrieved from <http://www.edexcellence.net/publications-issues/publications/theproficiencyillusion.html>
- Gewertz, C. (March 7, 2011). Leaders call for shared curriculum guidelines. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/03/09/23curriculum.h30.html?tkn=SONFPm%2FzvbaH3lJupk0%2FYdzDaTb700ajGL04&cmp=clp-edweek>
- Gewertz, C. (May 9, 2011). Conservative 'Manifesto' Blasts Shared Curriculum, Tests. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2011/05/conservative_manifesto_blasts.html
- Rothman, R. (2009, December 19). Common Standards: The time is now. Issue Brief. P.5. Retrieved from <http://www.all4ed.org/files/TheTimeIsNow.pdf>
- TIME. (2010, September 9). TIME poll results: Americans' views on teacher tenure, merit pay, and other education reforms. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2016994,00.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010, March 13). Elementary and Secondary Education: ESEA reauthorization: A blueprint for reform. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/index.html>

Produced by the LWVUS The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education

© 2011 by the League of Women Voters of the United States

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MEMBERSHIP DUES NOTICE

Membership dues for the 2011-2012 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 (7/1/11-6/30/12) (**\$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, \$45 is allocated to LWVOK and LWVUS for per member payments during the current fiscal year. The budget for 2011-2012 which is included in the Annual Meeting Voter for April 21, 2011 was approved on that date.**

Water Study

Gladeen Allred-Struthers and Valerie Bloodgood have volunteered their time over the next two years to serve as Stillwater's representatives for the water study committee at the state League level. If you are interested in helping them, please get in contact with them.

—Kirsten Tautfest

Voter Service

Lights on Stillwater is coming up on Wednesday, August 24 from 7pm to 9pm. The rain date is August 31.

It will be on the OSU Library lawn. We will have a table to register voters and hand out League literature. Nelda Sander will bring the materials for the table. We can use helpers. Anyone willing to help can contact Deanna Homer (377-0918) or Nelda Sander (624-8452).

—Deanna Homer, Voter Service Chair

LWVUS Education Study Update

The Leaders' Guide for the study, *The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education*, is now available at '<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=PubEdStudyLeadersGuide>' along with background papers. A series of five Voter-ready papers is available; see p. 3 for the first one, "Common Core Standards".

—Editor's note: Kay Murphy says the information about completing a study is excellent for the newer League members.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF STILLWATER**

Stillwater Voter
1114 West Frances Ave.
Stillwater, OK 74075

How to contact us

Article submission

Marlee Pierce Posto : marlee.pierce@gmail.com

Subscription issues

Carol Stone : costone@hotmail.com