



## *WATCHDOG*

### *Spring Issue – 2015*

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#### **Message From the President**

I hope the mild winter finds everyone well and ready for spring! As usual, the Weber League continues to be involved in registering voters at local high schools, attending community meetings, and holding meetings to educate members and other citizens.

We owe a huge thank you to Marcia and Bob Harris for hosting the holiday social. The turnout was great, the atmosphere was wonderful, and it was so nice to visit with people. Marcia is always so giving of herself to support us, and the League appreciates her very much!

In January, we met and reached consensus on the state tax study. I have included the results in this newsletter. Leah Murray presented information on campaign finance in our February meeting. We tried a different approach in March as it was difficult to find a non-biased speaker to address online education. We were given articles to read, started with a quick synopsis, and then addressed some questions. It was very informative and actually a good way to involve members.

The annual meeting will be held on Monday, April 13 at 6:00 at Harley and Bucks. We would love to see everyone come and visit and plan for the upcoming year. It is great to see people attend meetings, and the board feels fortunate that our members consider it important to donate that hour a month.

The state convention this year is in Moab on May 15 and 16. (Grand County League). We have budgeted money to send people and there is no limit on the number of delegates. If you are interested in attending, please let me know.

I want to thank everyone in the League who makes our presence in Weber County known. As someone said when we left the last meeting, “I just love to come to these meetings and talk with intelligent people who honestly care.”



## CONSENSUS ON TAX STUDY

**1. Should we continue to support the position of imposing a severance tax on non-metaliferous mining? Should we encourage the legislature to raise severance tax rates?**

- We believe that coal is a very dirty industry, and while profitable for the state, requires money to help keep the environment clean.
- We believe that there should definitely be a severance tax on coal. Since most other states have a tax on coal, we cannot understand why we can't be competitive in our pricing.
- We believe that we need to raise our severance tax rates. Utah needs more income, and this would be a good place to bring some funding into the state.

**2. Should earmarks be highly limited and transparent? Should earmarks be subject to sunset provisions?**

- We believe that earmarks should be highly limited and very transparent.
- We believe there must be a logical relationship between funds that are earmarked and how the funds will be used.
- We believe that all earmarks need to be subject to sunset provisions.

**3. Should taxes be favored over fees for government services? Should fees be considered with taxes when discussing government revenue?**

- We believe that as current fees go back to the entity that assesses them, if they were reduced or eliminated, that funding would have to be replaced with taxes.
- We believe that if something is for the public good, it should be funded with taxes. If it provides benefit to a specific business or person, fees should be used for funding.
- We believe that the transparency level needs to be raised concerning the usage of money gathered from fees.
- We believe there should always be an alternative for payment of fees if people cannot afford them.

**4. Should transportation be funded by transportation related taxes and user fees or should transportation, as a public good, also be subsidized by general fund revenues (sales tax)?**

- We believe that the gas tax needs to be raised to fund transportation.
- We believe it would be too complicated to fund transportation by taking money from many other sources.
- We believe that transportation should be subsidized if necessary.
- We believe that gas tax should be indexed to rise with inflation.

**5. Should the tax rate be adjusted and stay a single rate or should we revert to a graduated tax rate?**

- We believe that a graduated tax rate would be fairer to all income levels.
- We believe that the funding for public education has radically decreased due to the single rate income tax and the graduated tax would help address that problem.



**6. Should the legislature cap the percentage of income tax revenues going to higher education?**

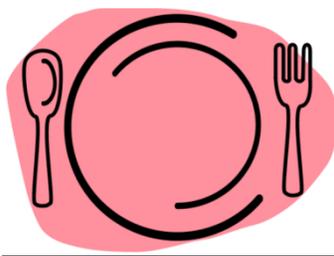
- We believe that there should be a cap placed on the percentage of income tax revenues going to higher education. Many higher education institutions receive income from donations and grants.
- We believe that we must start at the pre-school level and focus our attention on public education to improve learning outcomes in Utah.

**7. Should the current 5% corporate tax rate be raised?**

- We believe that the corporate tax rate should be raised.

**8. Should counties continue to be allowed to protest centrally assessed property valuations?**

- We believe it is fair to continue to allow counties to protest centrally assessed values.



## **ANNUAL MEETING**

Who: Everyone

When: Monday, April 13, 2015 @ 6:00 p.m.

Where: Harley and Buck's – 2432 Washington Boulevard

What: Elect New Officers, Approve Last Year's Minutes, and Give Input on Program for Next Year

Please plan on attending and bringing idea about topics you would like us to become involved in next year. The material you will need is attached.



## **NATIONAL STUDIES**

The National League has voted on an update to a previous study and a new study for us to participate in. The Money in Politics Committee will conduct an update of the League's position on campaign finance for the purpose of addressing the lack of member understanding and agreement as to whether financing a political campaign is protected speech under the First Amendment. This will involve reaching consensus on: (1) the rights of individuals and organizations, under the First Amendment, to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities; and (2) how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current positions.

The new study is a study of the process of amending the U. S. Constitution. All leagues will participate in reaching consensus and discussing these topics.

The National League also determined their priorities for the 2015 year. They are:

- First Tier: Voting Rights and Election Administration; Money in Politics
- Second Tier: Climate and Environmental Protection; Immigration; Health Care, including Reproductive Choice.



## **JOLENE JUNK**

We are very fortunate to have a great new member among us. Jolene was born as Jolene Wheeler in Utah in 1937 and attended schools here and across the country. She married Duane Roylance and became the mother of four great kids. Every job she had, Jolene did it with gusto. She peeled tomatoes for a local canning factory, was a soda jerk, became a library page during high school, worked as a medical transcriber during college, and went to being a mom. When her children had gone to school, Jolene worked as a Librarian at the old Carnegie Free/Weber County Library, a job she dearly loved. Her next journey involved real estate as she became a broker and owned the RE/MAX franchise in Ogden for 11 years, She then married Jack Junk, moved to Las Vegas, and opened a real estate office along with her husband's appraisal business. When her mother became ill, Jolene returned to Utah to be with her. At the same time, she became a medical transcriptionist from home so she would be available to help her mother. After retirement, she happily volunteered for both the Ethics in Government and Count My Vote campaigns allowing her to meet and talk with hundreds of interesting people. Jolene went back to school last year at the age of 76 and obtained another real estate license and loves working as a realtor again. She enjoys gardening, knitting, and studying politics, but hopes she can work forever as retirement does not suit her. We are very excited to have her expertise in our group.

## **CALL TO STATE CONVENTION**

Who: Any Member of the Weber League

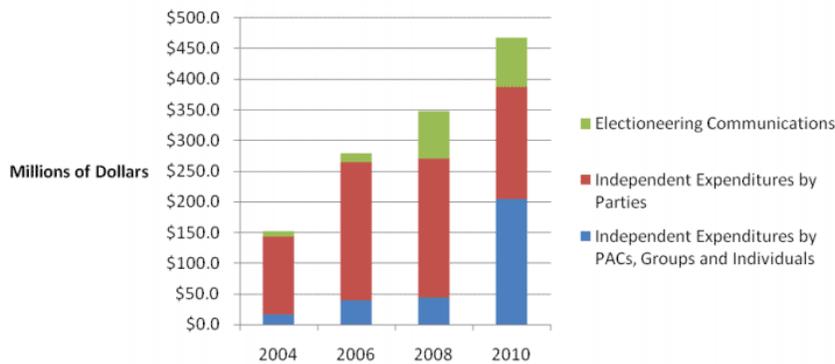
When: May 15-16, 2015

Where: Moab (Grand County League)

What: Dinner on Friday with a speaker and meeting on Saturday.

Remember we budget money to help anyone who wants to attend. You can turn this into a short vacation as well in this beautiful part of Utah. Let Terri McCulloch know if you are willing to attend.

## Outside Spending in Congressional Races



### NOTES FROM CAMPAIGN FINANCE MEETING

The monthly meeting held by the Weber County League of Women Voters and presented by Dr. Leah Murray provided interesting and informative information concerning campaign finance. Some interesting highlights of the meeting were:

The history of the nominating cycle for the United States began with a congressional caucus (elected officials) selecting nominees for office. As years went by, it moved to party members selecting nominees at national convention. In 1968-1972, a shift towards primaries occurred with this procedure becoming law during that time. At this point, campaigning became a lot more important. Campaigning required money. Prior to primaries, individuals were involved in the selection of nominees, which did not require massive advertising. In 2012, the Presidential election involved spending \$7 billion dollars.

The Campaign Finance Law was enacted and implemented in 1972-1976 and did place some restrictions on a national level. On a state level, Utah ranks fourth from the bottom in effective campaign finance regulation. There are no limits in Utah for money donated to a political candidate. The state does have campaign finance disclosure laws requiring full disclosure of sources of income.

Some common misconceptions are:

- People often believe that money buys elections.
- People often believe that money buys legislative votes.

While these statements are repeated often, there is no real evidence that they are true. There are a great many instances where the person spending the most money was not victorious.

- There is voter fraud that happens at the polls.

There are no documented occurrences of this in Utah – with the exception of an older couple that did a vote by mail and then forgot they had done it and appeared at the polls to vote.

The following websites provide information on campaign financing and funding:

- [www.cfinst.org](http://www.cfinst.org)
- [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)

2015																								
January			February			March			April															
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
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27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	

### DATES TO REMEMBER

April 13, 2015 – Annual Meeting – Harley and Bucks – 6:00 p.m.

May 14-15, 2015 – State Convention – Grand County League (Moab)

May 11, 2015 – Membership Planning Meeting – 6:00 p.m. – Marilyn’s Club House

# ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WEBER COUNTY

ANNUAL MEETING

April 14, 2014

Sonora Grill

**Present:** Terri McCulloch, Susan Skordos, Marilyn O'Dell, Evelyn Bertilson, , Heather Hill, Jenica Jacobsen, Marcia Thomas, Eloise Runolfson, Marcia Harris, Linda Mitchell, Joanna Prasher, Di Allison, Leah Murray, and Jenn Gonnely

## **Minutes**

There were no changes to the minutes from last year's and they were approved.

## **Budget**

We received financial statements from Evelyn Bertilson.

It was moved to accept the budget with one change which was a typo.

## **Nominating Committee**

The candidates were nominated and elected as follows -

President – Terri McCulloch

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Susan Skordos

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Leah Murray

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President – Marcia Harris

Treasurer – Evelyn Bertilson and Marilyn O'Dell

Secretary – Heather Hill

Nominating Chair – Lou Shurtliff

## **Website**

The website is up and running and looking good thanks to Jenica Jacobsen. It is at: **[weberleague.org](http://weberleague.org)**.

## **State Convention**

The State Convention is on May 9 and 10 starting at 6 pm on May 9 for appetizers and a speaker and continuing to Saturday at 1 pm. The speaker is George Pyle, editor of the Salt Lake Tribune. Fifteen members can attend. The cost is \$55 for both days and \$30 for Friday night at Willow Creek Country Club, 8505 Willow Creek Drive in Sandy. Please contact Terri if you plan on going.

## **Suggestions for Programs for Next Year**

There are no studies coming from the State this next year.

Some of the suggested studies for Weber County LWV are:

- public lands
- prison locations
- legal requirements for a public issue bond vote
- Medicaid expansion
- count my vote and effect on elections
- water usage

- local, sustainable food
- preparedness
- Jennifer Morrell as speaker. She is Weber County election officer
- how to access campaign finance information of county officials

### **Debates**

There are only four possibilities for debates: District 18, House Legislature 7, County Attorney and County Recorder.

The local school board in the fall would be interesting.

Voter's guides are very helpful.

Weber State University is working with Debate Commission to hold debates.

### **New Membership Orientation**

This will be held Wednesday, May 14 at 6 pm at Cherrywood Clubhouse. This would be a good time to bring potential new members to learn about the League. The address is 1120 Canyon Road.

### **Mentoring Program**

Weber League has participated and is doing well with the program.

### **Overview of the 2013/2014**

Terri read her report which will also be read the State Convention.

### **Local Government Study**

The committee has met and will meet again to discuss the Local Government Study.

In 1981 the Weber County League recommended there should be five commissioners.

There have been five counties in Utah that have changed their form of county commission in the past few years. The committee is Marcia Harris, Leah Murray, Di Allison, Terri McCullough, Evelyn Bertilson, Lou Shurtliff, and Marilyn O'Dell.

There are two options: 1) an in-depth study to work toward a change in local government structure 2) a more down and dirty version with a goal of getting people's attention. Committee Members will continue to determine the direction desired by our local league.

### **Evelyn Bertilson on Support Our Libraries**

There will be an informational meeting at the main library April 21 at 7 pm about the bond election for the funding Weber County libraries.

### **Di Allison**

Di brought information on Broads for Wilderness. It is their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary so membership is \$25.

She also said she has been appointed by the Utah Governor to be on JPEC (Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee) in which they are gathering information on judges. This entails court room observations following training. Please contact Di if you are interested.

### **Jenn Gonnely**

Jenn is president of the Utah League of Women Voters this year. She talked about both the State Convention and the National Convention in Dallas June 6-10. There is space available so if you are interested contact Jenn at the state office.

### **Past Year Wrap Up**

Terri McCulloch read her wrap up of this past year for the Weber County League of Women Voters. We all agreed it has been a good year with many discussions and consensus questions answered. A copy is attached.

Terri McCulloch was lauded for her work as President and given potted herbs as a token of our appreciation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Submitted by,

Heather Hill



### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Second Vice-President – Leah Murray

Third Vice-President – Sarah Lovato

Treasurers – Evelyn Bertilson and Jolene Junk

Secretary – Heather Hill and Marcia Thomas (1 year)

**WEBER COUNTY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	Budgeted 2014-2015	Actual 2014-2015	Proposed 2015-2016
<b>OPERATING COSTS</b>			
Meeting Space Donation	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Corporation Renewal			\$10.00
<b>BOARD &amp; COMMITTEES</b>	\$150.00	\$30.00	\$100.00
<b>CONVENTION DELEGATES</b>			
State Convention	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$120.00
National Council	\$0.00	\$0.00	
<b>LEAGUE FINANCIAL SUPPORT</b>			
State Payment (\$10/member)	\$260.00	\$250.00	\$280.00
National Payment (\$31/member)	\$806.00	\$806.00	\$868.00
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>			
Picnic	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Annual Meeting	\$60.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>			
Directory	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
<b>VOTER SERVICE</b>			
Web Site	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Meeting Handouts	<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>\$94.44</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	\$1,551.00	\$1,230.44	\$1,603.00

<b>INCOME</b>	Budgeted 2014-2015	Actual 2014-2015	Budget 2015-2016
DUES	\$1,035.00	\$1,265.00	\$1,265.00
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
EDUCATION FUND TRANSFER	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FUND RAISERS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$413.00	\$5.00	\$350.00
INTEREST	<u>\$3.00</u>	<u>\$2.71</u>	<u>\$3.00</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	\$1,551.00	\$1,272.71	\$1,618.00

America First Account 2/28/15

    Checking                   \$ 4,793.19

    Savings                   \$ 650.81

Education Fund Balance       \$ 1,651.93

Total Available Cash         \$ 7,095.93