

League of Women Voters of Salt Lake
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The Salt Lake Voter

Pat Nielson, President

Gigi Brandt, Editor

February, 2005

February Unit Meetings Election Systems Study, Part II

The Major Election Systems study of the Metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona, League of Women Voters will provide the material for Part II of the SLLWV Study on election systems. All Salt Lake League members will receive a hard copy version in the mail. Ann O'Connell has further information on page 3. Ann will attend all unit meetings as a resource.

Concurrently the Utah Legislature continues in session moving toward the ending date of March 3. The League Lobby Corps is on site every day and welcomes people to observe. Call Kathy Dorn at 277- 0897 or attend the Legislative Caucuses at 9 am on Saturdays in the League office.

Happy 85th Birthday, LWV!

The League of Women Voters celebrates its 85th birthday on February 14.

The League was established after women received suffrage with the passage of the

Nineteenth Amendment of the US Constitution. League founders wanted to be informed about issues when they cast their ballots.

Legislative Wrap-up March 9, 5:30 PM Old Farm Community Center 601 East 4110 South

The annual Salt Lake League Legislative Wrap-up is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, at 5:30 pm. Two Utah legislators and our own Sandy Peck will comment on the 2005 session of the Utah Legislature which ends March 2.

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President's Letter

Pat Nielson

The Utah State Legislature convened three weeks ago, January 17, 2005. Each year I approach the 45 day session with high expectations of prudent fiscal funding and thoughtful decision making. This year I had high hopes for a fresh slate with a new governor and thoughtful funding of critical programs because we have a budget surplus. I'm still waiting for prudent and thoughtful.

So, let's go on to other trends. The Legislature seems to be in full support of phasing out the five per cent corporate income and franchise tax, *HB78*. Beginning in 2007, corporate income tax will be reduced by one per cent per year, until 2012 when the tax is gone. Meantime, public education will lose \$3 million in 2007 and increase to a potential loss in 2012 of \$200 million. Can that loss be retrieved? If so, how and at what cost to whom? Utah Issues Budget Analysis estimates that it will take the creation of 75,000 NEW jobs in 2007 to restore lost public education funding from income tax revenue for that year, a daunting prospect at best. Economists remain split on whether or not new businesses will be lured to Utah as a result of decreased corporate taxes. Utah is one of the four lowest corporate income tax states.

On the other side of the coin we have *SB139*, Minimum Wage Provisions. This bill PROHIBITS counties, cities, and towns from awarding additional points to a contractor who pays wages that exceed federal minimum wage when that contractor is bidding on a job. Thus, the winning bid could be higher than the lowest bid. Salt Lake City is the only entity to propose, for themselves, such a plan. This bill has been described by some as a "race to the bottom."

Somewhere in the middle of these proposals is a good news funding bill, or so it seems.

HB188 creates a program to enhance the compensation of new teachers and provide money for teacher mentoring programs. The goal is for beginning teachers to earn \$30,000. To earn this salary, they will work approximately 20 additional hours annually. Mentor teachers will be paid a total of \$2,900,000 from the WPU in 2005-06. Total fiscal note is \$21,290,000. Unfortunately, there is no specific source for the two combined programs except the WPU. So where and how will salary improvements, health care, and special programs be funded?

Frankly, *HB78* really doesn't make sense to me. *SB139* interferes with local control and places workers at the lowest income level. Does that make sense if cities make a choice? Lastly, I support more money for public education and to find ways to recruit and retain teachers. From whence will the money come?

Each of us must stand up for what we believe is smart, savvy, and benefits the people. If you or I find some legislation that makes no sense, we have a responsibility to speak up and or to ask questions and to EXPECT thoughtful answers.

Do you have additional thoughts? Please let me know. Pat Nielson, President 583-6932

Barbara Ehrenreich Keynotes U of Utah's Women's Week

Author Barbara Ehrenreich will be the keynote speaker at the annual University of Utah's Women's Week on Wednesday March 2, at 10:am in the University of Utah's Olpin Union Building. A book signing will follow.

Ehrenrich is the author of *Nickel and Dimed*, the result of her experiences working at minimum wage in different jobs in different areas. The book is must reading for those

who are interested in social policy. For information about other events in Women's Week, February 28-March 4, call 581-7569 or visit <http://www.womensweek.utah.edu/2005/index.html>

Election Systems Study

By Ann O'Connell

The Metropolitan Phoenix Major Election Systems study should arrive at about the same time as the hard copy version of the Voter. All Salt League members will receive a study hard copy by mail. There are 21 pages of actual text. If you do not have the leisure time or the scholarly bent to read them all, I suggest the following course of attack. If you are clear on the definitions of plurality and majority voting and understand how an instant run-off election might be run, then skip those sections. Then ask yourself how detailed an understanding of the various systems do you really need to decide if you would **or would not** want the LWV of Utah or perhaps the LWV of the US to have a position which would allow us to work toward experimenting with some forms of proportional representation. I use the plural here because different election systems may be more or less suitable for different levels of government. And we always need to design our position statements carefully.

The discussion and consensus questions are on the back of the first sheet under the table of contents. I suggest you first discuss if you want to take up the discussion questions first. You can use the discussion questions to direct your own reading. They are very much like the suggestions I made above. Remember that the board will be able to make a better decision if you tell them exactly what you want. Please answer the questions but if they don't quite suit your

purpose contribute your own thoughts and wording.

If you think this material is too long, keep in mind that I have ruthlessly pared down the 60 page Phoenix study. The original included a section on the Electoral College and some wonderful statistics and examples from Arizona. I did retain a few of the examples because I thought they were so helpful. I intend to bring some additional graphs and schematic diagrams from the Phoenix and other studies to unit meetings to help clear up confusions.

I cannot resist pointing out that the study notes that the State of Arizona has adopted the Tucson plan for public financing of elections we studied years ago and the result has been a larger and more varied candidate pool which makes alternative voting systems more significant. (I keep reminding you not to get off topic in this discussion but there I did it myself.)

The following are positions from the Metropolitan Phoenix and Washington State Leagues. My intent is to give you two examples of the various wordings and styles that can allow different Leagues to be active in the same areas of election reform.

The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Phoenix (LWVMP) believes in the election system principle of greatest voter representation. The League further maintains the hope that election system reform that provides a stronger voice for the greatest number of voters would have a positive effect on voter participation. Therefore, the LWVMP:

1. Supports changing the present election systems so that they more accurately represent the wishes of voters.
 - a. Adopting the Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) system for single seat races.
 - b. Adopting proportional representation for multi-seat races; specifically systems such as Approval Voting, Cumulative Voting, Limited Voting OR Single Transferable Voting (STV)
2. Believes that education of the voting public is important to election systems.
3. Supports giving Arizona voters the option of more choices among election systems.

LWV of Washington

Supports adoption of election methods that produce proportional representation when electing representative government bodies such as councils, legislatures and Congress.

Supports the concept of a majority vote requirement for winners of single office such as major or governor, as long as it is achieved using a voting method such as the Instant Runoff Vote rather than a second separate runoff election.

Supports state election laws allowing for more options for alternative election systems in governmental jurisdictions at both the state and local levels.

Believes that consideration should be given, when evaluating election systems, to how well they promote "representative-ness," [sic] citizen participation and accountability.

I hope our members have a stimulating discussion and feel no pressure to come to any conclusions. We can reserve judgment until we have done more study. Or perhaps we are ready to make a decision now.

oconnell@xmission.com

277-9046

Utah LWV Legislative Action

Enclosed with this Voter is the LWV Utah Legislative Tracking sheet.

US Diplomacy in the Middle East Lectures

The Middle East Center (MEC) February and March lectures in the "U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East." series are:

February 17: Ambassador Martin Indyk, director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy and former Under-secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs under President Clinton.

March 2: Hisham Melhem, veteran Washington correspondent for the leading Lebanese daily newspaper *As-Safir*.

March 9: Ambassador Dennis Ross, counselor and Ziegler Distinguished Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and former presidential peace envoy to the Middle East and former member of the policy planning staff at the U.S. Department of State.

Each free lecture, followed by a question-and-answer discussion, is scheduled from 3 until 4:30 p.m., in the Dumke Auditorium in the Museum of Fine Arts. For more information on the lecture series, call the Middle East Center at the University of Utah at 801-581-6181 or visit <http://www.mec.utah.edu>.

The Middle East Center is also sponsoring a film series. Professor Laurence Loeb will lead discussions of their social context after the showings. The films are shown at 6 pm in the Utah Museum of Fine Arts Dumke Auditorium. For more information call 581-6181.

The films are:

February 9: *A Summer in La Goulette* (Tunisia)

February 23: *Wedding in Galilee* (Palestine)

March 9: *Leila* (Iran)

March 23: *A Wife for My Son* (Algeria)

State of the Community Luncheon

Patrick Shea, former director of the Bureau of Land Management under President Clinton, will be the featured speaker at the Annual State of the Community Luncheon, April 14th at the Little America Hotel.

Former Governor Olene Walker will receive the Leagues Community Service award.

Thanks to Xmission
(www.xmission.com) for its donation of
ISP services to LWV

February Events

Friends of the Library Books and Authors Series

Salt Lake City native Rocco C. Siciliano will relate the experience of writing his autobiography *Walking on Sand: the Story of an Immigrant Son and the Forgotten Art of Public Service* on Sunday, February 13 at 3 pm in the Gould Auditorium of the Marriott Library. Siciliano served in the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations and is known as a dedicated public servant. He funds the annual Siciliano Lecture at the University of Utah.

Hinckley Institute Programs

Kuwait - U.S. Relations,

February 11, 9:40 AM

A talk by His Excellency Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al Sabah, Kuwait's Ambassador to the US

Money and Politics: A Look Back, A Look Ahead

February 22, 9:40AM

A discussion with: Dr. Dan Jones, Interim Associate Director, Hinckley Institute of Politics; Kirk Jowers, Deputy General Counsel, Campaign Legal Center; Dr. David Magleby, Dean, BYU College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences; Commissioner Michael Toner, Federal Election Commission

Through a Foggy Lens: The Role of TV in Modern Campaigns

Hinckley Institute of Politics

February 23, 10:30 AM

A Discussion with: Charles Firestone, Director, Aspen Institute Communication and Society Program; Meredith McGehee, Director, Media Policy Program at the Campaign Legal Center

All programs are at the Hinckley Institute of Politics Caucus Room (Orson Spencer Hall 255) and are open to the public.

Wallace Stegner Center Symposium Private Property and Nature Conservation: Land Ownership in the 21st Century March 4-5, 2005

The tenth annual Stegner Center symposium will explore the relationship between land ownership and conservation in the American West.

The program includes historians, scientists, planners, legal scholars, and attorneys from many institutions. The Saturday program will focus on private land conservations in Utah.

The Stegner Center is located at the S. J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah. The cost of the conference is \$80 if registered by February 18, \$100 on February 19 and after; \$40 for faculty, staff, students, and seniors by February 18, \$50 after. For a full program go to http://www.law.utah.edu/pdf/stegner/stegner_symposia_10.pdf To register, call 585-3440.

<p>State of the Community Luncheon April 14, 2005</p>

Quote of the Month....

“ As he begins a second term, President George Bush faces daunting global economic challenges. It will not be easy to meet them successfully ...Most important his administration will have to increase

vastly the emphasis it places on international economic policy in general.

...The need for a broader foreign policy that focuses more attention on economic growth and development becomes even more urgent when the interests and goals of other nations are taken in to account. Washington may be obsessed with fighting terrorism, but economic and social advancement matters more to most other countries.

...the currents of globalization are moving fast, and the longer the administration subordinates international economic policy, the more difficult the subsequent challenges will become.

The rise of China and India, the problem of Europe's competitiveness, the unrest in Islamic society around the world, the imminence of aging as a major global issue, the spread of infectious diseases across borders—these are just some of the trends that accelerated during the first Bush administration. At some point, the absence of involvement commensurate with U.S. power and U.S. interests will take its toll on the United States and the world. “

Jeffrey E. Garten, “The Global Economic Challenge,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2005, pages 37-38, 48.

Mr. Garten is the Dean of the Yale School of Management. He has also served in the Nixon, Ford, Carter and Clinton administrations.

US High School Students Uninformed on the First Amendment

Results of a two-year study of high school students in 544 high schools find that students are uninformed about the First rights-- freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, of assembly and the right to

petition the government for a redress of grievances.

For example, nearly three fourths of the students either didn't know how they felt about the First Amendment or admitted they took it for granted. Seventy-five percent of them thought (erroneously) that flag burning was illegal; 50 per cent believed that the government can censor the internet, and more than one third of them felt that the First Amendment goes too far.

These results are not only disturbing; they are dangerous,” said Knight Foundation President and CEO Hodding Carter III. “Ignorance about the basics of this free society is a danger to our nation’s future.”

The survey suggests that education about the first amendment rights would be known if they were taught in the classroom. Not surprisingly the more the students were involved with student journalism and exposed to the First Amendment and used new media in the classroom, the more they were cognizant of the amendment rights.

“High school attitudes about the First Amendment are important because each generation of citizens helps define what freedom means in our society,” the report reads.

The two-year, \$1 million research project, titled “The Future of the First Amendment,” was commissioned by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. To learn more, visit www.knighfdn.org.

February Unit Meetings

Unit Topic: *Election Systems, Part II*

- February 22 **Challengers:** 12 noon
 Pat Eager's
 2229 Westminster Ave
 Marelynn Zipser 578-2069
 Bring sack lunch
- February 23 **Bench Bunch:** 9:30 AM
 League Office,
 3804 Highland Dr.
 Carolyn Dunn 278-9409
- February 24 **Library Unit:** 12 noon-1 pm
 Main Library –Room 3 Level 3
 210 East 400South, SLC
 Alice Steiner – akarsteiner@aol.com - 363-9193
- February 28 **Old Farm Day** 10:AM*
 *Note new time for this meeting only
 Old Farm Community Center
 601 East 4110 South
 Anne Zeigler – 944-4163
- University Unit** 12 noon
 Hinckley Institute, Rm 255,
 Orson Spencer Hall
 Phyllis Frankel 582-8957
- Night Owls,** 7 pm
 Sharon Walkington's
 999 South 15th East
 583-2284

*LWV Utah Legislative Action Caucuses,
 February 5, 12, 19, 26, 9 AM at the League
 office.*

If you cannot attend your regular unit meeting,
 we encouraged you to attend any of the units
 listed above.

