

**League of Women Voters of Salt Lake**

3804 Highland Drive, Suite 8-D  
Salt Lake City, UT 84106  
801-272-8683, [lwwut@xmission.com](mailto:lwwut@xmission.com)

# The Salt Lake Voter

**Joyce Barnes, Sharon Walkington, Co-Presidents**  
**Gigi Brandt, Editor**

## October, 2005

### October Unit Meetings

#### Human Rights in Post-9/11 Foreign Policy: An Unfolding Narrative

Most Americans were horrified when they saw the pictures of Abu Ghraib in 2004. Some were further horrified with the release of an administration memorandum which implied that the U.S. government could ignore the Geneva Convention when attempting to get information from certain enemy combatants. The news of prisoner abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan continues.

Since 9/11 and the “war on terrorism” there has been continuous dialogue about government policy along the security-civil liberties continuum. The October unit meetings focus on where the U.S. government policies and actions in securing information from certain “enemy combatants” fit on that continuum. In plain words, the October unit meetings focus on the promulgation and acceptance of the use of **torture** as official government policy as a way to treat certain “enemy combatants.” It is both an unfolding narrative and a dialogue.

LWV Salt Lake (along with the Chester County, Pennsylvania League) will use the Seattle LWV May 2005 study as our

October unit material. The Seattle study used material written by University of California Berkeley journalism Professor Mark Danner in a series of articles for *The New York Review of Books* now collected in his book, *Torture and Truth, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror*. Professor Danner gives access to all his writings at [www.markdanner.com](http://www.markdanner.com)

David Irvine will brief us at 4 pm on October 13 at Old Farm Community Center, 601 E 4110 South. You may have read about Mr. Irvine’s experience as a wartime interrogator in the *Salt Lake* (continued on page 6)

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## President's Letter

Congratulations, Leaguers, our Fall Fete was a great success. Thanks go to Norma Matheson for her generous hospitality, Phyllis Frankel for her organization, and the Salt Lake Board for their offerings of food and drink. Gina and Carolyn reminded us of some of the satisfactions we as League members have enjoyed while educating ourselves, the public and even at times, public officials. One of the most interesting comments of the afternoon came from Hostess Norma, who remarked that being a League member "was the best possible training for being a political wife." We might add that it is good training for any elected official.

We hope all members are planning to staff the Democracy Store at the Salt Lake City Main Library. Last year 65 volunteers were needed. This year the League has the space from October 11 until Election Day, November 8. League needs to sell the idea to the public that municipal elections are important because local government decides things like fire, water, garbage collection, police and many more services. We've told that should one become available, we'll have the use of the new voting machines.

Don't miss the October unit meetings on "Human Rights Post 9/11." LWV Salt Lake has borrowed the Seattle LWV's elaborate study, modified it, but hopefully not diminished in any other way. The November general meeting will look at who and how our natural gas and electricity rates are set.

We hope that you have been following the Legacy Highway news. Ann O'Connell has been our heroine in the efforts to modify the original plans to include some mitigation and protection of the Great Salt

Lake wetlands. Finally, there is an agreement—let's hope it holds.

Don't wait to be invited to a unit meeting; everyone is welcome at any of our unit meetings and at briefings. Sometimes unit hopping is not only fun but a real eye opener because there are so many points of view.

Joyce and Sharon

## Statement of Position on Alternative Election Systems

By Ann O'Connell, Study Chair

The Salt Lake Board has approved a position statement on majority elections and proportional representation. This is the culmination of a process that started a year ago. Units discussed the problems and strengths of our electoral processes and current two party political system. We articulated some goals for better campaigns and a more representative government. Then we discussed a range of electoral systems used in other democratic nations and in the United States, currently and in the past. I think it is fair to say we would like to make some changes in our current ways of electing our representatives. We now have a general statement of principles from which we can take action when the opportunity arises. I want to thank all of you who participated for the lively discussions. I never fail to be impressed with the thinking and knowledge of League members.

### **Consensus on majority elections for single seat offices and proportional representation for legislatures and multi-member bodies**

In 2004-2005 the League of Women Voters of Utah undertook a study of alternative elections systems. The Salt Lake League began identifying faults in the current political process: the dominance of big money, poor media coverage, voter apathy,

inadequate public debate, non competitive voting districts, and voter frustration with candidates and parties. We agreed that any changes in election systems should address these issues.

The LWVSL believes a majority vote should be required to elect a candidate to a single seat position. We think that using an instant run-off system to select a majority candidate would support League goals of a more robust political debate, higher voter turn-out, and fewer wasted votes. (However, this preference does not preclude the League from supporting other means of achieving a majority where appropriate.)

The LWVSL supports experimentation with proportional representational systems to achieve League goals of improved depth and tenor of political debate, accountable election officials, competitive elections, legislative bodies that reasonably mirror the electorate, and a higher level of citizen participation.

Since the election study was a Utah League of Women Voter's study, this statement of position will be forwarded to the LWV Utah board to be considered in the Utah LWV formulation of a position statement.

### **Voter Service News**

**By Jennifer Napier-Pierce**

Don't know much about this fall's elections? Elections in non-presidential election years don't get as much media attention, but local elections affect you and your neighborhoods in very direct ways.

The LWV Voter Services wing has been busy trying to get the word out about the upcoming municipal elections.

Starting October 10, the League's "Democracy Store" will open at the City Library, 200 E. 400 S., in downtown Salt Lake City. You'll be able to get candidate information, find out where to vote, register to vote and even test-drive a voting machine. The store will be open every day through Election Day, November 8. If you have a couple of spare hours and would like to help staff the store, call Phyllis Frankel at 582-8957 to volunteer.

It is also debate season and Voter Service is helping moderate and time debates for local communities, including South Jordan and West Jordan. Please spread the word about these and other candidate meetings to your friends and neighbors. After the October 4 primary, information about the remaining candidate's positions will be posted on the League's web site, [www.lwvutah.org](http://www.lwvutah.org).

And the League continues to distribute voter registration materials at the monthly Naturalization Ceremonies for new U.S. citizens.

If you are interested in helping with these activities please call Jennifer at 583-6853 or Shari Sowards at 582-6295. .

### **Member News**

**Anne Zeigler** and the seven other members on the Canyon Racquet Club Super Senior Team (all over 60 years old) will compete in the first Super Senior national tennis competition in Palm Springs this month. Their team defeated teams from Colorado and Idaho to earn their place.

Speedy recovery to Irene **Sweeney** who broke her hip recently.  
Member address/telephone changes:  
PollyHough 262-2088  
e-mail [dawn654@msn.com](mailto:dawn654@msn.com)  
Melissa Larsen 915-9782

### Board Briefs

#### September 26 Salt Lake Board Meeting

- The November program will consist of a general meeting featuring a panel on utility rate regulation
- The receipts for the Fall Fete were over \$1400
- The Holiday Social will feature Midvale Mayor Joanne Seghini discussing teen pregnancy
- The date of the Community Luncheon will be April 12. University of Utah Biology Professor Fred Montague will be the speaker; the community award will be presented to Claire Geddes.

Thank you, **Kay Brim** and **Mary Buchanan** for help in assembling *The Voter* and **Pat Klentzman** for office chair repair.

### Tax Reform Task Force Hearings

The legislative Tax Reform Task Force has been working all summer on legislation to change income, property and sales taxes and reform Redevelopment Agencies. After developing recommendations at scheduled meetings on October 5 and October 12, they will present them to the interim Revenue and Taxation committee on October 19.

Then public hearings are scheduled. We urge you to attend and voice your concerns! (See the next Utah Voter for more background information)

- October 19 5:30 pm Salt Lake City  
Capitol Hill House Bldg Room 135
- October 20 7:00 pm Ogden  
Weber County Library  
2464 Jefferson Ave
- October 25 12 noon Vernal  
Western Park, 300 E 200 South
- October 25 6:00 pm Price  
County Commission Chambers  
120 E Main
- October 26 6:00 pm Provo  
Dixon Middle School  
750 W 200 North

- October 27 12 noon Cedar City  
City Chambers, Old Post Office,  
10 N Main
- October 27 6:00 pm St. George  
County Commission  
197 E Tabernacle St

### October-November Events

#### Ninth Annual Siciliano Forum Lecture Smart Mods: The Impact of Ubiquitous Instant Access on Social Networks and Social Relations November 10, 12-2 pm

Dumke Auditorium, Utah Museum of Fine Arts

Howard Rheingold, one of the world's gurus of cyberspace and digital culture, is the lecturer. An author, journalist and editor, he is also a visionary, a futurist and a synthesizer of today's ever changing communications applications.

#### The Middle East Lecture Series: Challenges Facing the U.S. In The Middle East

*Democratization of the Middle East and  
American Foreign Policy"*

October 12, 3 pm

Dumke Auditorium, Utah Museum of Fine Arts  
Rami G. Khouri, Editor-at-Large of *The Daily Star*, Beirut, Lebanon will present.

#### Hinckley Institute of Politics

*U.S. - Saudi Arabia/Middle East Relations*  
October 19, 8:35 am \*

Les Janka, Founder, Council for American-Saudi Dialogue; Senior Staff Member of the National Security Council and Special Assistant to Dr. Henry Kissinger under Presidents Nixon and Ford; and Deputy Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs under President Reagan will be the speaker.

### ***U.S. – Chinese Relations***

October 21, 10:45\*

His Excellency Zhou Wenzhong, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the United States will speak.

\*Lectures are in the Hinckley Caucus Room, 255 Orson Spencer Hall, University of Utah.

### **LWVUS Homeland Security Projects**

LWVUS and other groups have been active in the continuing discussion about security and civil liberties. The October *National Voter* will focus on civil liberties. LWVUS has also released *Local Voices: Citizen Conversations on Civil Liberties and Secure Communities* which outlines recommendations from the League's eight-month initiative to foster public dialogue about the balance between civil liberties and homeland security. The latest LWVUS project is "How Homeland Security is Working at Home." It includes a questionnaire addressed to community agencies that are responsible for emergency preparedness as well as a list of those agencies that might be queried. In the announcement, Xandra Kayden, LWVUS Board and Civil Liberty Liaison, noted that "Protecting communities against a terrorist attack or a natural disaster comes down to the same basic actions."

Since woman power is a precious commodity in the Salt Lake League the Salt Lake League Board has not decided whether to participate in this effort. Members who would like to participate in this project should contact the office. The Preview Forum, who provided LWV Salt Lake with the September unit material, has a new series, "What We Know About You: Privacy, Security, and Community Concerns."

According to their website, "The government tracks your library books, the post office videos your movements, airport security screens your carry-on, your coat and even your shoes. Post 9/11, many people clamored for more government surveillance. So Congress passed the Patriot Act. Many citizens believed that giving up some privacy to gain more security was justified."

"But what if that data collected about you—from the government, the pharmacy, and the petition you signed—is sold to marketers, or politicians, who use the information to "sell" a product (or a candidate) tailored to your interests? What is the impact of less privacy on our community?"

For more information, go to the Preview Forum Website, [www.previewforum.com](http://www.previewforum.com)

### **Louisiana League Helps Victims**

The LWV of Louisiana Education Fund has announced The "Bucks 4 Books" program to purchase educational materials for displaced K-12 students from the four Gulf Coast States ravaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. One hundred percent of the money received will go for purchases.

To learn about the League of Women Voters of Louisiana Education Fund "Bucks 4 Books" program, please visit: <http://www.lwv-la.org>

Editor's note: Messages from Louisiana League members on the president's e-mail list serve have been informative and poignant. The article by a licensed psychologist which accompanied the "Bucks 4 Books" notice is worth reading. I will forward it to members if they contact me: [gigibrandt@att.net](mailto:gigibrandt@att.net).

**Thanks to Xmission  
([www.xmission.com](http://www.xmission.com)) for its donation  
of ISP services to LWV**

**October Units** (continued from page 1)  
*Tribune*. KUED (Channel 7) has scheduled  
"The Torture Question" on Frontline  
October 18 at 9:00 p.m.

On October 5, the U.S. Senate voted 90-9 to  
attach a rider to regulate the detention,  
interrogation and treatment of prisoners  
held by the American military. Senators  
Bennett and Hatch voted with the majority.

LWVUS League President Kay Maxwell  
sent a letter to Congress supporting the  
rider. Her letter can be found at  
[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

**Vote  
November 8**

*Thanks to our contributors*

Justin Kreek  
Sue Gordon  
Genevieve Atwood  
Joyce Barnes  
Nanette Benowitz  
David Blackbird  
Gigi Brandt  
Jo Brandt  
Kay Brim  
Pat Brim  
Robert Cheney  
Sandra Everett  
Holly Esslinger-Porter  
Dee Faules  
Mary Fogg  
Anita Gander  
Sue Gordon

Janice and Stuart Gygi  
Emily Hall  
Brent Hortin  
Pat Jarvis  
Pat Kirk  
Elaine Larson  
Norma Matheson  
Chriss Mecham  
Nancy Melling  
Charlotte Newman  
Pat Nielson  
Wilma Odell  
Lauren O'Malley  
Dorothy Owen  
Sandy Peck  
Helen Peters  
Joyce Rapp  
Gina Rieke  
Judi Short  
Shari Sowards  
Irene Sweeney  
Sharon Walkington  
Mitchel Walkington  
Joan Welsh  
Nancy Young  
Anne Zeigler  
Marelynn Zipser  
Mary Zuchetto

**A New School Configuration?  
Salt Lake District Studying Grades 1-8**

The Salt Lake School District is considering  
creating one or more elementary-middle  
schools from grades K-8. Clayton and  
Hillside Junior Highs are on the drawing  
board to be rebuilt or retrofitted as part of  
the district's rebuilding program. The six  
Hillside feeder elementary schools have  
been requested to have community study  
groups look at the proposal, reporting to  
the Board in December.

Several school districts in the nation have  
gone to the K-8 configuration. The district  
cites higher test scores, improved student

behavior, smoother transition into high school, offering more options to school district patrons, and stemming the current loss of district students in the transition from sixth grade to junior highs (e.g. competing with private schools) as reasons to look at K-8 schools. The experience in Philadelphia and Denver in providing K-8 schools has been positive. Part of the improved results has been attributed to smaller schools and smaller class size.

The public has long been aware of the academic and social problems with middle school. A recent study by the Rand Corporation compared the well-being and achievement of middle school age youth in 12 countries. Only 27 percent of American middle schools achieved proficiency in math, 32 percent in science and 33 percent in reading. American students reported more isolation than their counterparts and that their classmates were not kind, helpful or accepting.

The District website, [www.slc.k12.ut.us](http://www.slc.k12.ut.us) has a great deal of information about K-8 schools.

### **Quote of the Month**

“A striking cautionary note regarding America’s current path is provided by Britain’s loss of military and political primacy in the twentieth century; that development followed a shift from creditor to debtor status. Similarly, a prolonged decline in the dollar’s value and increasing indebtedness will erode America’s

dominance in political and security spheres. These trends threaten the dollar’s role as *the* global currency that facilitates international trade and finance, something the United States has gained immeasurably from over the years. A weaker dollar also reduces American leverage in international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Finally, a diminished U.S. currency means that each dollar’s worth of military and development assistance has less impact at precisely the time when the nation faces the greatest challenges. Those threats we ignore at our own peril.”

Menzie D. Chinn, “Getting Serious about the Twin Deficits, “Overview”, Council on Foreign Relations, September 29, 2005. The entire study can be found at [www.cfr.com](http://www.cfr.com)

### **Religious Discrimination in Head Start?**

According to a New York Times editorial (September 28, 2005) House Republicans in the Head Start legislation have included a provision which would allow religious groups to sponsor Head Start programs license to discriminate by not hiring other qualified individuals who do not share the same religion and to disqualify parent volunteers who are not of the same faith. In the past the Senate has blocked similar legislation.

[lwvut@xmission.com](mailto:lwvut@xmission.com)

OCTOBER UNITS – SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN POST 9/11

- October 24      Old Farm 11:00 – 12:30 PM  
Old Farm Community Center  
601 East 4110 South  
Anne Zeigler – 944-4163, Unit Chair
- October 24      University Unit 12 Noon – 1:00 PM  
Hinckley Institute, Rm 255, Orson Spencer Hall  
Phyllis Frankel – 582-8957, Unit Chair
- October 24      Night Owls, 7:30 PM  
Marilyn Smith - 4213 S.Quinette Lane  
Judi Short, Unit Chair - 487-7387
- October 26      Bench Bunch-9:30 AM  
League Office, 3804 Highland Dr.  
Carolyn Dunn, 278-9409, Unit Chair
- October 27      Challengers 12 Noon – bring sack lunch  
Home of Pat Eager – 2229 Westminster Ave  
Marelynn Zipser - 578-2069, Unit Chair
- October 29      Library 12 Noon – 1 PM  
Main Library - Conference Room D, Level 1  
210 East 400 South, SLC  
Alice Steiner, Unit Chair – [akarsteiner@aol.com](mailto:akarsteiner@aol.com)  
363-9193

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

- October 13      Unit Briefing 4 PM  
Old Farm Community Center  
601 East 4110 South