



**February 2009
President's Letter**

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Have you been listening to our legislative update on KCPW/KPCW each weekday morning? Many members and non-members have expressed appreciation for the informative briefing (some legislators say it's the only way they can keep up on what's happening because they're so immersed in their own bills). The KCPW update at 8:35 each morning (88.3 FM) summarizes activities of the previous day. The KPCW update at 8:13 a.m. provides information about action for the current day.

LWVUS has changed the Council meeting scheduled for Washington, D.C., in June. We are not immune to economic problems, so rather than spend money on a face-to-face meeting, the always-innovative League will have a virtual Council meeting instead. Stay tuned for details.

The League's Lobby Corps is on Capitol Hill daily, tracking the action in numerous committees and on the floor. They report back via email to the entire Lobby Corps and any interested individuals (members or not). Sandy Peck uses this information to create the script for her daily radio updates. Although this is a state League activity, most of our corps members are from Salt Lake. If you'd like to help, call Kathy Dorn (277-0897) or the League office.

International Women's Day is March 5 and will be celebrated by the Girl Scouts of UTah that evening starting at 7 p.m. The Girl Scouts have been so gracious in letting us use their Salt Lake facility for meetings (day and night) without charge. Please plan to attend the Women's Day gala at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 231 E. 100 South, that evening. We hope to have many members representing the league.

Sunshine Week will be held at the Main Salt Lake Library on March 23. This will be an opportunity to view the webcast from Washington, D.C., and to hear about a mystery — why hundreds of Utah citizens, including students at many colleges and universities, didn't receive their voter pamphlet from the Lieutenant Governor's Office. Who's responsible? That's what we're researching now. Plan to attend. It promises to be quite an evening.

— Joyce Barnes

Hinckley Forums Present

Transparency in Government
Initiative
Friday, Feb. 27
9:40 a.m.
Mayor Ralph Becker,
Salt Lake City
Joel Campbell,
Associate Professor,
Department of
Communications,
Brigham Young University
Senator Wayne Neiderhauser,
Utah State Senate
Ed Rutan,
Salt Lake City Attorney

SUSAN FOLLETT, 425-640-0760,
newdirection59@yahoo.com
311 Creamery Lane, Hoytsville, UT 84017



Meet Our New Members

Susan is a native Utahn and graduated from Bountiful High School. For many years she had her own Cosmetology salon in Salt Lake. In 1997 she moved to Summit County. She has worked in the Summit County Sheriff's office and was elected County Clerk of Summit County. At the moment she holds the position of Vice Chair of the Summit County Democratic Party. Susan devotes lots of time to volunteering for non-profits – the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Make A Wish and the Boy Scouts – to name a few.

NADINE GILLMOR, 435-783-5250, ngillmor@allwest.net
P.O. Box 130, Oakley, UT 84055

Nadine grew up in Roosevelt but moved to Salt Lake in 1952 where she helped start the Salt Lake County Democratic Party. In 1983 she and her husband moved to Oakley to continue the ranching started by his family two generations before they took over. Nadine helped move the 10,000 mother sheep up and down the mountains. She is a Foundation Board Member of UVSC (now Utah Valley State University in Provo) and she has set up scholarships at Utah State. She also works for 4H in Summit County.

SARA JONES, 801-944-9991, sarajones2008@hotmail.com
8581 Escalante Dr. Sandy, UT 84093

Sara moved to Salt Lake from Kentucky six months ago. In Kentucky she was teaching World Politics at Morehead State University – a position she held for three years. Sara graduated from UC in San Diego with a degree in Political Science and went on to do her graduate work at Claremont Graduate University. She taught high school in California before moving to Kentucky. Missing the west she moved to Salt Lake where she is now the Director of Educational Excellence and Community Outreach at the Utah Education Association.

LAURA SAGERS, 801-539-8848, laura.sagers@IMAIL.ORG
510 11th Ave, Salt Lake, UT 84103

Laura grew up in Lawrence, Kansas. She got a degree in Political Science from Utah State and later worked as a pollster for Dan Jones. After starting a family, Laura decided she was really interested in nursing and took nursing at Westminster College. She is now a nurse at Primary Children's Hospital. Laura has two daughters and a son and two grandchildren. In what little spare time she has, she enjoys reading, knitting and cooking.



Hinckley Forums

The University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics offers ongoing forums on topics of political and social interest. Please visit their website:

<http://www.hinckley.utah.edu/events/forums/index.html>

WENDY ZEIGLER, 2557 Valley View Ave, Holladay, UT 84117

Wendy attended the University of Colorado and graduated from the University of Utah in Physical Therapy. She coaches Speed and Agility in children and young people. She is on the board of Utah Open Lands and has been active in the Friends of Avalanche Forecast. At present she is busy finding jobs and furnishings for a Sudanese family. Her sons are 14 and 16 years old. Wendy joined the League primarily to give financial support.

CARLA SOPHIA PITCHER, 435-347-8125; (cell) 435-631-0610

carla.pitcher@yahoo.com

7990 Meadow View Drive, Park City, UT 84098

Carla attended the University of Utah, Westminster and BYU. Her career emphasis has been on Business Governance and Government Interface. It was the suffering of children she witnessed that turned her into an activist. She has been an activist in the fields of international free trade, ethical business practices, human and civil rights and child labor. Carla enjoys reading, cooking international foods and Italian Opera. She has 2 sons.

ZITA BELL, 801-943-2422, zitabell@hotmail.com

7589 Quicksilver Drive, Salt Lake, UT 84121

Zita is a returning member of the League having taken a sabbatical for a few years. Zita attended the University of Utah, Harvard and University of California at Sacramento. She has degrees in Political Science and in Cognitive Language Development. Originally from Guatemala, Zita has lived all over the world as her father was a civil engineer. A naturalized citizen, Zita came to Utah in 1974. She currently works part time in the Brighton ticket office – this allows her lots of ski time. She has one son and two daughters.

WENDY SMITH, 801-253-9800 11281 Palisade Rim Drive, So Jordan, UT 84095

R. DOUGLAS JOHNSON, 435-656-1229, 1760 Towab Way, Ivins, UT 84738

Debate Electoral College

When the founding fathers made big decisions as they created our Constitution, little did they realize that in 2009 we would be debating whether or not to continue with the Electoral College. And I certainly did not think, eons ago in civics class, that I would be leading a group of savvy and sometimes sassy ladies and gentlemen in a discussion of this very convoluted topic!

BUT -- the topic is truly fascinating, frustrating and we're going to tackle it next week in unit meetings (See back page). Marie Fulmer is helping Sandy (and the rest of us, too) in the office. She will email you the material from LWVUS that we'll discuss.
PLEASE DO READ IT!

Redistricting Panel Proposal Resurfaces

Long a priority for the Salt Lake League, the process of redistricting is on the minds of Salt Lake County Council members, and the Salt Lake League has been watching closely.

Salt Lake League members have been attending a variety of local government committee meetings in January and February, and have covered several interesting topics. Perhaps the most interesting was the County Council's move to establish a non-partisan panel to recommend redistricting boundaries after the 2010 census. According to the proposal, it would have eight members, no more than three from each party and at least two representatives of voters from the general public.

Our League has always supported non-partisan boards to determine redistricting to avoid gerrymandering "safe" districts for one party or the other. As a result of this announcement, Salt Lake League president Joyce Barnes has proposed to County Mayor Peter Corroon and the County Council that a member of the League be selected for one of these public seats.

In other business, the County Council discussed continuing problems in the Planning and Development Division and purchasing property for open spaces, a long-term aim of the mayor.

At the Salt Lake City Council meetings attended by Leaguers in January, several items of interest came up: the renovation of the Gallivan Center, the Salt Lake City Librarian's annual report to the Council, the Jordan River Blueprint and the 2009 budget picture for Salt Lake City. The budget review was especially interesting as it detailed the sources of revenue for the city and its expenses. The bottom line was that revenue was down in every area except sales taxes on food sales at grocery stores. Council members were clearly hopeful that federal funds will be available from the stimulus package to keep afloat current maintenance projects, like sidewalk repair, and to help finance new projects like the Gallivan Center and trail construction along the Jordan River that have been approved but may have to be placed on hold because of funding shortfalls.

There's always something of interest going on at local government meetings. If you would like to join the local government Observer Corps, please let me know: Kathryn.Fitzgerald@yahoo.com.

Sunshine Week Kicks Off Friday, March 20

A panel of experts from around the country will kick off a lively discussion from Washington, DC about open government and secrecy - the problems, the impact on communities, and what the public can do.

This year's event, "Opening Doors: Finding the Keys to Open Government" will feature two panels: one consisting of Congressional and Administration policy-makers who will discuss how the government and the public can make the federal government more open and one consisting of individuals with expertise in making government information available in a useful format online.

The event will also be available as a live webcast from the Center for American Progress. About 24 hours before the event, you will have the opportunity to test the webcast, and call someone to help with any technical difficulties.

You can watch the webcast on your own, or with a group. The panel discussions will be shown at locally hosted discussions in communities across the country.

In each segment, opportunities will be available for audience questions from all participants.

Guess Who's on Facebook?

Check out our group on Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com> - and search for League of Women Voters of Utah. We post Legislative updates and action items, as well as participate in discussions.

And don't forget our website — both the Utah League's (<http://lwvutah.org/>) and the Salt Lake League's (<http://lwvutah.org/salt-lakecounty.html/>)— for updated information.

GIVE THE GIFT OF LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP!

The gift of membership to the League of Women Voters is an excellent way to introduce friends and family to issues that matter to everyone living in the Salt Lake City area. Since the beginning, the League of Women Voters has believed that active and informed citizens are vital to the health of democracy. Help support the League's mission by giving an annual membership to someone you care about.

Simply fill out the coupon below (or go online) and return it to the League office with dues payment of \$50 (\$10 for students). We will send a welcome letter to the new member(s).

Recipient Name _____

Recipient Address: _____

City: _____ State _____

Your Name: _____

Your phone: _____ email: _____

First national Sunshine Week

“Your Right to Know” was launched in March 2005 and will be celebrated in 2009 from March 15-21. Sunshine Week’s intent is to raise awareness of the importance of open government to everyone in the community, not just journalists. Sponsors are the American Association of Law Libraries, American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries, American Library Association, Center for American Progress, League of Women Voters, National Freedom of Information Coalition, Open-TheGovernment.org, Public Citizen, Special Libraries Association, Sunshine Week, and the Sunlight Foundation.

Obama: Transparency a Touchstone of Presidency FOI orders herald new standard of openness, end to era of secrecy

“Let me say it as simply as I can: Transparency and the rule of law will be the touchstones of this presidency,” President Obama said on his first full day in office.

And then he walked the walk — big time.

Obama followed through on his campaign pledges to promote greater government transparency by issuing several directives on openness and accountability. Among them were a memorandum on the Freedom of Information Act, an executive order overturning limitations on release of presidential records, and a memo on government transparency directing the creation of an open government directive within 120 days.

“The way to make a government responsible is not simply to enlist the services of responsible men and women, or to sign laws that ensure that they never stray,” the president said. “The way to make government responsible is to hold it accountable. And the way to make government accountable is make it transparent so that the American people can know exactly what decisions are being made, how they’re being made, and whether their interests are being well served.”

Commenting on his FOIA memorandum that will overturn the doctrine of withholding information promulgated by former Attorney General John Ashcroft, Obama noted, “For a long time now, there’s been too much secrecy in this city. The old rules said that if there was a defensible argument for not disclosing something to the American people, then it should not be disclosed. That era is now over.

“Starting today, every agency and department should know that this administration stands on the side not of those who seek to withhold information but those who seek to make it known.”

Recognizing legitimate withholding such as privacy and national security, Obama added that, “the mere fact that you have the legal power to keep something secret does not mean you should always use it. The Freedom of Information Act is perhaps the most powerful instrument we have for making our government honest and transparent, and of holding it accountable. And I expect members of my administration not simply to live up to the letter but also the spirit of this law.”

Obama also pledged to hold himself “to a new standard of openness. Going forward, anytime the American people want to know something that I or a former President wants to withhold, we will have to consult with the Attorney General and the White House Counsel, whose business it is to ensure compliance with the rule of law. Information will not be withheld just because I say so. It will be withheld because a separate authority believes my request is well grounded in the Constitution.”

While Obama indicated that these directives were just a start and “will not by themselves make government as honest and transparent as it needs to be,” he did call the

OFFICERS**Program Planning Postponed**

1st VP Program
TBA

Education
Patti O'Keefe

Local
Government
Kathryn
Fitzgerald

Natr'l Resources
Polly Hough
Ann Wechsler

Social Policy
Millie Peterson

2nd VPs
Voter Service
Mary Fogg
Ruth Gardner

Public Relations
Sue Lind
Missy Bird

SL Voter
Katharine Biele
Pat Klentzman

3rd VP
Organization
Anne Zeigler

Membership
Phyllis Frankel
Margo Thurman

Arrangements
Mary Buchanan

Secretary
Linda Johnson

Treasurer
Stuart Gygi

On the schedule for February unit meetings were discussions of state and local program making – as well as the LWVUS “Electing the President.” At the February 9 board meeting, however, the Salt Lake board decided to postpone program planning. For the League of Women Voters of Utah, the February date seemed less than opportune for effective discussion since the Utah Legislature is only half way through its annual deliberations.

The League of Women Voters at all levels—local, state, and national—is proud of its grassroots, bottom-up program making process. Our members tell their respective boards about their interests, not the other way around. For members, participating in program making is one of the most important League functions. League programs are limited only by our imagination about problems and our womanpower. That being said, the process can be bewildering to new League members and frustrating (as well as stimulating) to more experienced Leaguers.

To get this input, Leagues have experimented with various formats from scheduled unit meetings, general meetings and individual worksheets. The most memorable program planning meetings from my more than 40 years of League membership in two states have been general meetings where members could “brainstorm” together..

So, the Salt Lake League has postponed its program making meeting for now. A later date will allow for more issues debated during the Legislative session to be part of the discussion. As you read the newspapers during the session be thinking about the statewide issues you would like the Utah League to study, discuss, and take action on.

— *Gigi Brandt*

actions “the beginning of a new era of openness in our country.”

Of course every beginning sometimes has a little trouble getting started: None of the presidents remarks, memorandum or directives had been posted to the fancy new White House Web site or blog that evening.

The National Security Archive was among those posting the documents.

And the Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France Presse refused to distribute White House press office photos of the president's first day in the Oval Office after news photographers were denied access.

But, for now, observers hope this is a normal learning curve and not the first act of “transparency theater,” a term coined by John Wonderlich of the Sunlight Foundation.

— from the Sunshine Week home page

http://www.sunshineweek.org/sunshineweek/obama_foia

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*The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization
that encourages informed and active participation in government.*

FEBRUARY UNITS – SUBJECT: NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

- FEB. 23**
(Mon.) **GIRL SCOUT HEADQUARTERS**
445 East 4500 South
Monday –11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Lunch after meeting @ Anna's
Anne Zeigler – 944-4163 Unit Chair
- FEB. 23**
(Mon.) **NIGHT OWLS**
Monday, 7:30 p.m.
Home of Judi Short - 862 E. Harrison
Judi Short, Unit Chair - 487-7387
- FEB. 25**
(Wed.) **BENCH BUNCH**
League Office, 3804 Highland Dr.
Wed. - 9:30–11 a.m.
Carolyn Dunn, Unit Chair – 278-9409
- FEB. 26**
(Thurs.) **MAIN LIBRARY – 210 East 400 South, SLC**
Thursday, 12-1 p.m./lunch at Madeline's @ 11:15 a.m.
Conf. (Room D) Level-1
Kathy Dorn – Joyce Barnes, Co-Chair – 277-0897

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