

VOTER

NOVEMBER 2008

AMARILLO LEAGUE OF WOMEN

VOTERS

Margaret Peebles, Editor

<http://lwvtexas.org>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

♠GREENERY DELIVERY

Help needed to deliver
Christmas Greenery
December 1-8, 2008

Please call Janette Kelley 373 0855

♠League Christmas Party

Friday, December 12, 2008

All LWV members and their spouses are invited to the LWV Christmas party on Friday, December 12 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Parking is plentiful.

Location: 12 Cambridge - Bishop Hills

DIRECTIONS:

Turn off Tascosa Road into Bishop Hills onto Judd (There's only one way in and one way out of Bishop Hills so don't worry about turning in the wrong place.)

Go straight on Judd until the road dead-ends on Lancaster and then turn right.

Continue straight on Lancaster until you come to an intersection and then turn left onto Cambridge.

Continue straight on Cambridge once you've made the turn. Our house is about 4 houses down the road on the right. It's 2 story with white trimmed windows and has a large circle driveway in the front. People are free to park either in the circle driveway or on the straight driveway adjacent to the house.

Invitations will be mailed out the last of this month.

♠No December Board Meeting

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm always amazed at how people view the League. A couple of years ago I signed up for the early shift in the office on Election Day. When I got there about 8:30 I found this angry message on our answering machine: "Where are you? Why aren't you there to answer the phone? In Ohio where I come from the League of Women Voters runs the election."

How about this message: Could the League of Women Voters help me get an invitation to the Obama inauguration in Washington?

I overheard a particularly interesting phone call between Lou Ann and a caller who was concerned that someone had gone into a nursing home and registered his father who had dementia. When the unknown person came back with the ballot the man remembered enough to tell his son he had voted, but he couldn't remember who he had voted for. The son was puzzled about how that could have happened, so he called us.

What we actually do seems big enough. It is interesting how some people think our work is even more grandiose. I cannot praise our Board enough for all their hard work this fall.

Mina Fields Johnson

Amarillo League of Women Voters Environment Committee WATER FORUM 2008-2009

All the water that will be, is. Faced with the prediction that the world's population will increase to nearly eight billion by 2025 those of us

now on spaceship Earth must take notice. Water, so necessary for life, is a limited resource. The League of Women Voters has a history of studying complex topics, reaching consensus and advocating for acceptance of their positions. The Public Library is an ideal partner in the current endeavor. They provide research assistance, resources, and space. Both the League and the Library invite all the citizens of the Panhandle to join us as we inform ourselves and attempt to find practical answers to the wisest possible management of water resources in our area and for the planet as a whole.

The book discussions will be promoted and presented in cooperation with the Amarillo Library. Books listed below have been chosen by the League of Women Voters Environment Committee in cooperation with the Amarillo Library representative Stacy Yates. The discussion group will meet on Saturday afternoon.

Books:

The Worst Hard Time by Timothy Egan

Date: 1-10-09

Place: Central Library

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Discussion Leader: Janette Kelley

Ogallala Blue by William Ashworth

Date: 2-14-09

Place: Central Library

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Discussion Leader: Mina Johnson

Blue Gold by Maude Barlow & Tony Clarke

Date: 4-11-09

Place: Central Library

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Discussion Leader: Pam Allison

SPEAKERS:

Environmental Flow: Laura Mabry, Texas Living Waters

Date: March 9, 2009

Place: Southwest Library

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The Ethics of Water Use: Darryl Birkenfeld,

Ogallala Commons

Date: May 12, 2009

Place: Southwest Library

Time: 6:30- 8:30 p.m.

This is confirmed and League Board approved agenda for spring 2009.

Ideas for further study should be submitted to me at tonyak@wtrt.net.

Tonya Kleuskens, Environment Committee Chair

November Water Forum Report

On Saturday, November 1, the Amarillo League and our co-sponsor, the Amarillo Public Library held the second in a series of public forums pertaining to our League's local study of water issues. We were privileged to have as our speaker the Assistant City Manager of Amarillo, Mr. Jarrett Atkinson. In his very interesting, informative slide presentation, Mr. Atkinson discussed a range of topics relating to Amarillo's water supply, its sources, the underlying infrastructure, the principal users, the well fields in which we own water rights, and the outlook for the future. He also explained the differences and relationships between the various groups, boards, and agencies that determine how our groundwater is managed. An able, engaging speaker, he graciously allowed the audience to interject questions during his presentation so that we were able to obtain a more precise understanding of the complexities involved. At the close of his slide presentation, he addressed some of the questions that had been submitted to him in advance by the Environment Committee; other questions had already been addressed during his presentation. For two hours he kept the audience fully engaged and probably could have continued to do so quite a while longer if time had permitted.

Following are just a few of the many facts he presented:

Where does the water go?

Irrigated agriculture (#1 economic factor of the entire High Plains) 87%

Municipal (all of the Texas Panhandle municipalities)	5%
Livestock	3%
Manufacturing	2%
Power generation	1%

In 2000, the last year for which full statistics were available, irrigated agriculture in 21 counties of the Texas Panhandle used 1,695,031 acre feet of water. Primary crops were corn, cotton, milo, and alfalfa. In contrast, the City of Amarillo used 53,439 acre feet, and livestock (including commercial feedlots, swine, dairies, etc.) used 38,197 acre feet.

Amarillo's water use in 2007 was approximately fifteen billion gallons, or about 46,000 acre feet, some 41,000,000 gallons per day. The amount includes water sent to Canyon (about 2% of Amarillo's total water in 2007) and some to Palo Duro Canyon. Other users and approximate amounts include the following:

Residential use: approximately half (52%);	
commercial users:	20%;
Industrial uses:	17%;
City irrigation:	3%;
commercial irrigation:	3%;
AISSD irrigation:	2%

The amount used by Amarillo in 2007 represented a downward per capita trend from previous years and a 13.9% reduction from 2006. The 2.4 billion gallon one-year reduction in pumped water would cover a football field to a height of 10 miles or would fill the entire city of Amarillo to a depth of 10".

Surface water in Texas is held by the state for use as granted by the state. All rights to surface water in Texas have already been granted. Texas is the only state that has the rule of capture (the landowner may capture and produce as much as he can use, provided that the water is not used negligently, wastefully, or with intent to harm one's neighbors). The rule of capture is the only means that allows rights of ownership; the ownership of water is unique to Texas and is the

factor that has allowed Texas to be a national agricultural power.

The Texas Water Development Board is primarily a planning agency with scientific and research responsibilities. It is not a regulatory agency. The Panhandle Water Planning Group (Groundwater Management Council #1) is one of sixteen groundwater management areas created in 1997 by Senate Bill 1 in response to a state-wide drought. It includes all of the Texas Panhandle except Collingsworth County. Representatives from statutorily-defined interest groups have the responsibility and statutory obligation to devise a common long-term goal for water management in a given area, stated in terms of rolling 50-year periods (for example: 50/50, or a goal to have 50% of available ground-water left after 50 years). It is not a regulatory body.

Groundwater conservation districts have the power to regulate and enforce water usage in their area, but not all groundwater is located in a conservation district (water in Oldham County and in some areas outside the Amarillo city limits, for example). Amarillo has water rights in three different groundwater conservation districts. We expect the remaining public forums and the moderated book discussions that will be held in alternate months beginning in January, 2009, to be enlightening and thought-provoking experiences. Please plan now to attend as many as you can.

Joyce Hinsley, 2nd Vice-President (Program)

Greenery Sales

This has certainly been a busy year. Fund raising efforts will soon be coming to an end for this year. Thanks to all of you for your help especially Sue Howard, who helped me get out our bulk mailing for the greenery sale. Christmas Roundup very graciously gave us a place to try to sell our greenery items. Those helping us staff our booth, set it up, and take it down were: Pam Allison, Barbara Cheek, Laksmiwati Cortes, Lou Ann Garrett, Ann Hicks, Kay McMinn, Pauline Robertson, and Isabell Thompson.

Janette Kelley, 1st Vice President

AWN Career Achievement Awards

Amarillo Women's Network is soliciting nominations for its annual Career and Lifetime Achievement Awards. Anyone can nominate a woman in the Texas Panhandle, and nominees do not have to be members of AWN. The deadline for nominations is December 12.

Career Achievement Awards will honor women who have achieved a major career advancement, recognition or "first" in their profession within the 2008 calendar year. One Lifetime Achievement Award is given each year and honors a woman who has achieved milestones in her profession or career over an extended period of time. This award recognizes women whose accomplishments transcend or do not fit the Career Achievement category. Examples include philanthropy, community service, professional/career achievement and entrepreneurship.

For a nomination form and instructions, visit the AWN website at www.AmarilloWomensNetwork.org or contact Amanda Clark at amanda_bleu@hotmail.com or 631-2900. Or contact me at 373-8289, and I'll mail you a form. Awardees will be honored February 5, 2009, at a reception.

Previous winners include LWV members Myrna Raffkind, Pauline Robertson, Susan Coleman, Sonya Letson, Pattilou Dawkins, Claudia Stravato, Marilyn Van Petten, Debra McCartt and Letitia Goodrich.

--Lou Ann Garrett
ladgarrett@nts-online.net

VOTERS GUIDE REPORT

The *VOTERS GUIDE* is the most important work of the League as perceived by the public. The voting public is dependent upon the League to

provide insightful questions for our local candidates to answer that reflect what the candidates believe in and what they will do if elected. Many thanks to the members who formulated questions and proof read the finished *VOTERS GUIDE*. Distribution Chairman, Alan Abraham did an outstanding job getting the *VOTERS GUIDE* out in Amarillo and Canyon. Special thanks to all league members who helped with distribution, questions, and proof-reading.

Also thanks to those who "staffed" card tables and registered voters this year and those who met and greeted new citizens with black ink pens and voter registration cards. The League is informally contacting the federal court to see if new citizens can be sworn in October so they will be able to vote in National elections.

Barbara Cheek, 3rd Vice-President (Voters Services)

STATE LEAGUE WEBSITE

Did you know that you can read the latest Amarillo League *VOTER* on the INTERNET? You can access the state website at <http://www.lwvtexas.org> and go to the bottom of the home page. Under READ, you have two options, the Texas State Voter and local leagues. When you click on local leagues, Amarillo is the first choice. You can see our environment study calendar, our current *VOTERS GUIDE* and our current local *VOTER*. The state website has current state league information. Our thanks to membership chairman, Susan Smith for getting our league on the INTERNET and keeping information up to date. *VOTER* will list this website in our header.

Margaret Peebles, Place 3 Director/VOTER editor

MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS** is open for membership to all citizens (men and women) 18 years of age or older. Its purpose is to promote the informed, active participation of all citizens in their government. It does not support or oppose any political party or candidate but does take action on issues after study and consensus by its members.

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The hard work and dedication shown by your League is what keeps our organization strong and well respected.

Amarillo League of Women Voters

P. O. Box 19333

Amarillo TX 79114-1333

TEL: 806 372-5438

Dues are as follows:

\$60.00—single membership

\$90.00—family membership

\$35.00—student membership

To join, please send your check made out to Amarillo League of Women Voters to Kay McMinn, Treasurer, 3512 Kileen, Amarillo, TX 79109.