

VOTER

NOVEMBER 2009

AMARILLO LEAGUE OF WOMEN

VOTERS

Margaret Peebles, Editor

<http://lwvtexas.org/amarillo.htm>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

♠ **Deadline for greenery orders**

Extended to Friday, November 6, 2009

*To order, you must call Janette Kelley at
373-0855*

*Then mail checks to Kay McMinn
3512 Kileen, Amarillo, TX 79109*

♠ **Greenery delivery volunteers**

*Volunteers will be needed to deliver greenery in
December!*

Janette Kelley 373-0855

♠ **Water meeting**

James Herring, Chm., Texas Water

Development Board

Power Point Presentation on

“Influence of Groundwater on Texas Planning and
Policy”

Date: Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Time: 6:30 pm

Place: Southwest Library, 6810 SW 45th

♠ **New citizens' ceremony**

Date: Monday, November 30, 2009

Time: 11:00 am

Place: Federal Court House, 5th & Taylor

*Volunteers needed: Call Margaret Peebles
356-8119*

♠ **League Christmas Party**

Date: Friday, December 11, 2009

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Home of Susan Smith

12 Cambridge

Directions:

Turn off Tascosa Road into Bishop Hills on Judd.
(There is only one way in and 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 have
made the turn. The house is about 4 houses down
the road on the right. It is a 2 story with white
trimmed windows and has a large circular drive.
Please feel free to park in the circular drive or in
the adjacent straight driveway.

President's Message

One thing that really upsets and depresses me is to
read most Letters to the Editor. Many writers are
not content merely to state their opinion and lay
out their case; they must attack and ridicule those
who disagree with them. I don't tune in to most
radio and TV talk programs for the same reason.
What I want to hear and read are fact-filled, well-
thought-out, researched presentations of the
issues, not sarcastic, venomous verbal attacks on
the integrity and intelligence of those who deign to
disagree with the writer/speaker.

What I value most about the League of Women
Voters is that members voluntarily put aside
partisan and ideological differences to work
together to learn the facts concerning key issues,
come to consensus to define League positions
when possible, and once those positions are
determined, undertake to educate the public in
appropriate ways. On those occasions when
members are unable to come to consensus on
particular issues, they “agree to disagree” and
move on to other areas where concerted action is
possible. Imagine what our society would be like
if our law-makers, media personalities,

national/state/local officials, and ordinary citizens were to adopt a similar method of dealing with issues and problems! Imagine how much more effective we all might be in solving local, national and world problems if we all actively sought to learn as much as possible about the issues, listened to all alternatives with an open mind, and refused to believe something just because “So-and- So said it, so it must be true,” or “I read it in the [insert the name of your favorite print resource], so there can be no doubt of its veracity.” What if every citizen refused to be led astray by cultural differences and political ideology and actively sought to determine the best course of action to benefit the most people in the most cost-effective way? What if each of us actually took seriously our civic responsibility to become informed voters, or indeed, even to vote? (Speaking of which, did we actually make it to the polls to vote on the proposed constitutional amendments? And before we went, did we actually make the effort to find out exactly what we were to vote on and the arguments both pro and con for each proposal?)

There are many important issues with which our region, our state and our nation will have to deal in the near future. Among them are the health-care issues so much in the news right now, environmental and climate concerns, finding ways to support a rapidly-increasing world population with diminishing supplies of fresh water, nuclear proliferation and how the US stance may have contributed to it, positive and negative aspects of alternative energy sources, and a multitude of others. Let us each pledge right now that we will assume personal responsibility for trying to determine the facts concerning these and other vital issues, that we’ll not just parrot what someone else may say simply because we admire or respect them or share their religious or political beliefs. Let us further pledge that on those occasions when we disagree with others’ opinions, we’ll do so respectfully—with facts, not vitriol.

Joyce Hinsley, President

Amendments Forum

The State proposed Constitutional Amendments Forum held on October 13 at the Downtown Library was very well attended. Our guest panel consisted of State Senator Kel Seliger and State Representative John Smithee. The panel explained each of the 11 amendments and later responded to open mike questions by the audience. League member, Pauline Robertson, introduced the speakers and served as moderator and League member, Ann Hicks, served as timekeeper. ***Voters Guides*** were available and distributed as well as the League’s ***Facts for Voters in Potter and Randall Counties***. Many thanks to everyone who helped make this very important League community activity a success. Informed voters make better decisions in the voting booth.

Barbara Cheek, 3rd Vice President, Voters Service

Final Water Program Set for November 10, 2009

James Herring, Chairman of the Texas Water Development Board will be the final speaker in the Water Study. He will present “The Influence of Groundwater on Texas Water Planning and Policy” on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at the Southwest Branch Library. Please plan to attend and bring interested friends and neighbors.

This will be an interesting and worthwhile program. Mr. Herring is president and CEO of Friona Industries, L. P., in Amarillo, the fourth largest cattle-feeding operation in the United States. He is a director and past president of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, past chairman of the Amarillo Area Foundation, and has served on other civic and industry boards. The Texas Water Development Board’s mission is to provide leadership, planning, financial assistance, information, and education for the conservation and responsible development of water for Texas.

Final book discussion

The environment Committee has held the final book discussion in cooperation with the Amarillo Library on October 10, 2009. Eighteen members and guests met at the Southwest Branch Library to discuss Sandra Postel's *Pillar of Sand: Can the Irrigation Miracle Last?*

League member Beverly Gattis led the discussion beginning with a brief overview of Postel's description of humanity's history with irrigated agriculture. Postel states, "In short, our irrigation base is showing numerous signs of vulnerability just as we are about to become more dependent on it. Many of the same insidious threats that undermined ancient irrigation civilizations—including salt, silt, neglect of infrastructure, regional conflict, and unexpected climate change—are rearing their ugly heads." Gattis pointed out Postel's observation that "the societies of the Fertile Crescent committed ecological suicide by destroying their own resource base." The discussion group explored the development and history of irrigated agriculture in the Panhandle region, and ended by considering the collective view regarding why conservation practices are important. Gattis offered that she cares "because it is my home and I love this place, and because an ethical human life considers the generations to follow."

Tonya Kleuskens, 2nd Vice President, Program

League Observer Corps Stays on Top of Things

Since September 1, 2009, the Amarillo League has been present at a variety of area public meetings and officials are getting to know us and beginning to recognize some of the issues important to us. Eight observers have worked several venues as diverse as the Pantex "superfund," downtown revitalization, County Commissioner courts, water conservation sessions, and every single Amarillo comprehensive planning session open for public participation. Not only are officials learning more about the League, the League is getting more and

more familiar with the community's elected and appointed officials.

You are welcome to join the Observer Corps by simply letting a board member know of your interest or by calling the Corps' coordinator, Alan Abraham (355-1637). Currently, there is a need for persons interested in how the extension to the Texas grid for wind farm electricity will be developed in the Panhandle. The placement of transmission lines and eminent domain issues will be in the public eye for some time.

One final note, the Amarillo Globe News has altered its public meetings notification format. What was called "On the Agenda" and appearing in Sunday's edition, is now headlined as "Calendar" and includes information under three separate categories, Entertainment, Community and Public Meetings. You will find this useful information on page two of section one, running each day from Sunday through Wednesday. It is the kind of format that helps Observers stay "on top of things!"

Alan Abraham, Director Place 1, Observer Corps

Updated "Facts for Voters" published

Once again, the people of Potter and Randall counties can have at their fingertips the phone numbers and addresses for elected officials they might wish to contact with a question or an opinion, thanks to the Amarillo League's newly updated brochure "*Facts for Potter & Randall County Voters.*" A big "Thanks!" goes to FirstBank Southwest and Dennis Falk for again underwriting the printing of 12,000 copies of this handy resource!

"*Facts*" lists elected officials who are on policy-making bodies – Amarillo and Canyon city commissioners, Potter and Randall county commissioners, Amarillo and Canyon school board members, Amarillo College Board of Trustees, state legislators, and our representatives in Congress, as well as governor, lieutenant governor, the President and Vice-President. It also includes party chairmen, information on voter registration and contact information for the voter

registrars in both counties.

League members have delivered copies to the Amarillo Public Library and its branches, the Canyon Public Library, West Texas A&M University library, Amarillo College library, Amarillo Senior Citizens Center, Wesley Community Center, the South and North YMCAs, DPS drivers' license bureau, FirstBank Southwest, voter registration offices in both counties, Potter County Central Jury Room, the Craig and Park Central retirement facilities, and to organizations that different members belong to. D.J. Stubben of Welcome Pardner! is also distributing them through her residential mailings free of charge as a public service. Throughout the year we will be giving them to new citizens on the day of their naturalization ceremonies, along with voter registration cards and a League pen. And we are in the process of contacting high school government teachers to provide brochures for their students.

Special appreciation goes to Sue Howard for chairing the updating project and her committee of Laksmiwati Cortes, BJ Oppermann and Margaret Peebles. BJ, Lou Ann Garrett and Joyce Hinsley all helped in the distribution. We encourage any League members who would like to take some of the brochures to their club, church, office or other organization to do so. Just stop by the League office at E.27th and Wilson (Habitat headquarters) and pick up a packet or contact Lou Ann at 373-8289.

Although the information included in "Facts" was current in early summer, by the time typesetting and printing was finished later in the summer, two changes had occurred in Potter County party headquarters. Please note that the new Democratic Party chairman in Potter County is Toby Lankford, 540 W. Central, Amarillo 79108, ph. 677-4907, and e-mail tlankford01@yahoo.com, following the resignation of Abel Bosquez to run for the legislature. And Potter County Republicans have a new office at 3014 SW 26th, Suite 4000, 79109, in the Cedar Forum.

Lou Ann Garrett, Director, Place 4 Publicity

Memorial: Elizabeth Scott

League member Elizabeth Scott passed away Sunday, October 25, 2009. Mrs. Scott lived in Amarillo for 58 years and was married to Edward Riley Scott, Jr. for 43 years. Elizabeth was the sister of past League president, Mina Johnson. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. She loved teaching and was passionate about reading and possessed a true love of learning. Memorials may be made to Edward and Elizabeth Scott's Presidential Honor Scholarship, WTAMU, PO Box 60766, Canyon, TX 79016; the Amarillo Area Breast Health Coalition, PO Box 1400, Amarillo, TX 79105; or as a memorial in Elizabeth's name to our Amarillo League of Women Voters.

League Member Honors

Debra McCartt

Amarillo Mayor Debra McCartt was inducted as the 2010 president of the Texas Municipal League on October 23, 2009 during the league's annual conference. The TML is an association established in 1913 that presses issues important to municipalities on the state and federal levels.

Mayor McCartt has adopted a platform of encouraging cities to work together. The TML Deputy Executive Director, Karla Vining, is quoted as saying: "Mayor McCartt wants to emphasize the importance of regional cooperation among cities. She's very proud of the fact that the cities of the Panhandle come together to accomplish great things." Mayor McCartt is the first woman to serve as mayor of Amarillo.

Claudia D. Stravato

Former head of Planned Parenthood, now Texas Panhandle Family Planning and Health Center, Claudia Stravato, has received one of only 10 Community Health Leader Awards given each year by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is named for the man who built the global pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson. The total award is \$125,000. \$105,000 of the money is for an honoree's special project and \$20,000 is for personal use. The prestigious award has been given for over 15 years.

Claudia's work with Peer Educators, the Male Health Center and mammograms for the uninsured are the areas the program cited in conferring the award. Claudia's special project will be an innovative program to prevent teen pregnancy which is a serious problem in the Panhandle.

The Amarillo League of Women Voters would like to congratulate our members, Debra McCartt and Claudia D. Stravato, who have won outstanding honors and recognition for their work.

Thanks to the Amarillo Globe News for the information in the preceding three articles.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

The **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS** is open to all women and men who subscribe to the League's purpose and policy.

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The hard work and dedication shown by our 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:

\$65.00—single membership

\$97.50—family membership

\$40.00—student membership

The Amarillo League of Women Voters supports member- scholarships. If you cannot afford regular dues—please call Mina Johnson, Chair of the Scholarship Committee at 373 6976 for details!

To join, please send your check made out to Amarillo League of Women Voters to:

Kay McMinn, Treasurer.
3512 Kileen, Amarillo,
TX 79109.