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April 2020

COVID-19 Affects Everything, Including League Events



By Catherine Weller and Vickie Samuelson,
LWVUT Co-Presidents

Because of the COVID-19 emergency, we have cancelled state League in-person meetings through the end of May. The League's special anniversary performance of Four Women Talking About the Man Under the Sheet at Salt Lake Acting Company has been postponed. Our meetings for April and May, including the state League convention, will be electronic.

"Electronic!" You say, "How will that work?" The state League has subscribed

to Zoom, an electronic meeting and webinar system. It allows members to phone in or join via their computers. The League will issue the convention handbook about two weeks in advance of Saturday, May 2 along with an abbreviated schedule for our online convention. This will ensure League members have plenty of time to consider the business beforehand,

Moving the League convention to an electronic format was not an easy decision for the board; we did not make it lightly. We discussed a number of options and listened to feedback from local League presidents. Because we can't know when the coronavirus emergency will end, it's hard to schedule for a later date. Additionally, local Leagues need to be able to schedule their annual meetings and create their calendars for the year in a timely manner. Though convention will be radically different this year, it is an opportunity for us to learn new ways of setting priorities and of communicating with one another.

The health and safety of the members of the League and our larger community is of the utmost importance to us. During the COVID-19 challenge, the League of Women Voters of Utah will follow the

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recommendations of the [Utah Coronavirus Task Force](#), the [CDC](#) and of the [LWVUS](#). The outbreak is an emerging and rapidly evolving situation. We will continue to monitor developments and act accordingly.

You can find more information about COVID-19 on the CDC website. For breaking news on COVID-19 in Utah, follow the [Utah Coronavirus Task Force Twitter feed](#).

Rather than meet in person, the Salt Lake League recently conducted a [Facebook Live](#) event for its Legislative Wrap-up, and it is still available online. All of our leagues are looking at virtual opportunities to stay in touch with our members during the crisis.

National Convention Registration Continues Cautiously

By Catherine Weller, LWVUT, co-president

The LWVUS has opened [registration](#) for its 54th annual convention, June 25 to 28 in Washington, D.C.

The national convention is a bracing whirl of events that include plenary business — approval of bylaws, budget, program and officers — caucuses and workshops, and a lobby day. This year's plenary will also include the proposed concurrence on voting methods studied by several Leagues across the nation including in Utah. The



League has also arranged for a special ticketed performance of the [Capitol Steps](#). An at-a-glance schedule can be found [here](#).

The cost to [register for the convention](#) is \$360 before June 1 and \$410 after. This pricing does not include fees for lobby day, the [Capitol Steps performance](#) or a Saturday night pre-gala reception.

If you'd like to take advantage of this opportunity to meet and connect with League members from across the nation, please contact your local League president. Each local League is allotted a number of voting delegates based on its size. Delegate appointments are made by each local League's president.

Update on Potential Impact of the Coronavirus (from the LWVUS):

Please know that LWVUS' first priority is the health, safety and well-being of everyone involved with the Convention. While the risk of contracting the coronavirus in the U.S. is low, we are monitoring the situation closely and will follow the advice of the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Should the situation change, we will issue periodic updates, as necessary.



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Work Has Just Begun on Redistricting Commission

By Gigi Brandt, Redistricting & Money In Politics Adviser, LWVUT

The Utah House passed the compromise Independent Redistricting Commission bill, *SB200* on the next-to-last day of the session. The bill represents a compromise worked out by Sen. Curt Bramble and Better Boundaries members Jeff Wright, Rebecca Chavez Houk, Noah Rosenberg, and Bryson Morgan.

The Legislature was going to pass a commission bill. The choice facing Better Boundaries was to walk away and let the GOP majority pass the bill they wanted or to compromise to keep important components. Neither the legislative leadership nor Better Boundaries got all they wanted. As Wright, one of the co-chairs of Better Boundaries, said, it was not perfect but good.

The important facts of *SB200* compromise are:

Proposition 4 contained required standards for both the Commission and the Legislature to follow. The Legislature did not want to be bound by the standards in Prop 4 and originally proposed that neither the Commission nor the Legislature be bound. The compromise requires the Commission to define and adopt standards, which include preserving communities of interest following natural geographic or manmade features and boundaries, minimizing the division of municipalities and counties, and prohibiting incumbents, candidates or political parties to prepare maps, which apply the standards to the extent practicable.

The requirement of a super majority of five commission members to recommend any map was eliminated. However, three members of the commission may vote to require the commission staff to evaluate maps to determine whether the maps comply with the adopted and required standards.

The work of the Commission will be held in the public view. The Commission will present its maps to the Legislative Redistricting Committee in a public meeting(s).

Commission funding and staff:

Commission will have its own staff and one million dollars is appropriated.

Things in Prop 4 that were omitted in compromise (some in response to legislative claims they were unconstitutional):

1. Right of action
2. Requirement that Office of Legislative Research staff the Commission
3. Role of the Chief Justice
4. Requirement that Legislature vote on Commission maps



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The Work Ahead

As we know from the November visit of the California Redistricting Commissioners, the work has just begun. If the California experience is valid, political forces will work to undermine the process. The League and the Better Boundaries coalition members will need to monitor the process of the appointments to the Commission, the meetings of the Commission, and to ensure the public's participation in the process. There will be a very compressed time frame to accomplish this. The Commission can begin work on Monday, Feb. 1, 2021. The Census data is likely not to be released until the end of March, and the work has to be finished by September.

As most of you know the Utah League has had a position favoring an independent advisory redistricting commission since 1980. Now that goal is realized, we need to work hard to see that the Commission is successful.

Spring Orientation and Brunch - Postponement



By Helen Moser

In accordance with CDC guidance to cancel or postpone in-person events of 50 or more people, the LWVSL has postponed our Spring Orientation and Brunch. Initially scheduled for early April, the Orientation will be rescheduled to a later date once restrictions are lifted and it's prudent to resume in-person meetings. In the

interim, the Membership Committee will be in touch directly with new members to provide resources that enable them to get acquainted remotely about the history, mission and work of the League as well as share with us their interests. Stay tuned for more information, and thanks for your understanding!

Weber Investigates New Horizons in Health Care

By Terri McCulloch, LWV-Weber president

The Weber League sponsored a meeting explaining what Weber County is doing as part of the Utah Alliance for the Determinants of Health. The Alliance is a new collaboration formed to promote community health, improve healthcare access, and decrease costs through two pilot programs in Ogden and St. George.

Angela Choberka, league member and city council representative, is spearheading this project in our community.

Do you Zoom?

If you don't now, chances are you will use the electronic meeting platform soon. The state League will use Zoom for its board meetings and for this year's annual convention.

Zoom is an online audio and video conferencing system that allows for screen and document sharing. It's easy to use on either a phone or a computer without a lot of software installation. You have the flexibility to join with audio and video or just audio. But note, our computer needs a microphone at least to join a Zoom conference.

It's easy to get started with Zoom right now. Here are some videos on the Zoom site that will help you familiarize yourself with the system.

[Joining a Meeting](#)

[Joining and Configuring Audio and Video](#)

[Join a Test Meeting to familiarize yourself with Zoom](#)

I look forward to seeing you on Zoom soon.

**Catherine Weller,
co-president/LWVUT**

“Emerging evidence indicates that addressing key primary social determinants of health—determinants including housing instability, utility needs, food insecurity, interpersonal violence, and transportation needs—can improve and well-being [sic] while lowering healthcare costs and making healthcare more affordable,” the website said. This concept intertwines with the project on intergenerational poverty, homeless services, schools, and all agencies working toward improving society.



There can be as much as 10 years' life expectancy difference in cities located in the same geographic area. This is caused by education, poverty level, and household income. Statistics show that the lack of high school or college education and working at minimum wage jobs, causing families to live in poverty, can make the difference between longer and shorter life expectancies. Contributing to a longer and more enjoyable life are 30 percent genetics, 10 percent health care, 20 percent social/environmental factors, and 40 percent individual behaviors. The last two make up 60 percent of things that affect lives. Those two things are all within a person's grasp to control. Currently, medical services make up about 90 percent. That leaves 10 percent to focus on healthy behaviors.

Primary social determinants consist of interpersonal violence, food insecurity, utility needs, housing instability, and transportation. Where a person stands in each of these areas determines a person's ability to live a healthy life. Secondary determinants include education, family and social support, income and employment, and healthy behaviors. These are not basic needs but help a person to realize their full potential. Developing these areas instead of relying on health care services is key to improving life.

This organization has community health workers who screen at-risk people for where they stand in the spectrum and provide help through local services – mental health, housing, meeting basic needs – and work with many agencies in Weber County to tie services together.

It is exciting to see how the services that provide help in our community have ways of working together to help people who are at risk. And it is refreshing to see this becoming a pattern. As a physician once said, “I don't have problem patients, I have patients with problems.” Addressing these will decrease health care costs and help promote positive lives.

2020 Convention in Moab Cancelled

The LWV of Grand County and LWVUT have cancelled the state convention in Moab this year due to the COVID-19 virus. The alternate plan is for LWVUT to hold the business portion of the meeting electronically on Saturday, May 2.

If you have made hotel reservations, please contact your hotel directly. As of a few days ago, all lodging in Moab was ordered closed to tourists for the next 30 days, to be re-evaluated after that. The links to lodging included in a previous article include the Bowen Motel

<http://www.bowenmotel.com/> and other lodging at <https://www.discovermoab.com/hotels-and-motels/>.

Please stay sane and stay safe. We look forward to hosting you in Moab in 2021!

**Carey Dabney, president
LWVGRC**

2020 Legislative Session a Wrap

By Emily Walsh, Legislative Action Committee Director

The 2020 Legislative Session went by quickly. THANK YOU to everyone who participated this session by observing committees, testifying, strategizing, doing outreach, advocacy or directly lobbying your own legislator. I hope you realize you made a difference this session. The League of Women Voters of Utah is dedicated to making a long-term difference in Utah and this takes time.

We tracked 131 bills during the legislative session. We had positions supporting 82 of those bills and opposing 4 of them. The Utah Legislature voted in line with the League's positions on 56 percent of bills on which we had positions. The remaining 45 bills were either of interest (but we had no position), or we became neutral due to the ways the bills were modified. Our bill list is an important resource for indicating where we may need to do future studies. Watch for those recommendations at convention.

Enjoy the month of April as we take a break from the legislature. If you would like to join the Legislative Action Google Group to participate in observing or to get reports on all of the committees we observe call 801-272-8683 or email actioncorps@lwvutah.org.



(From left) Ann Johnson, Margie McCloy (editor), Helen Moser, Norma Wills (Chair), Anders Hart, and Nancy Wingelaar

Clean Energy Study Nears Completion

By Carole Straughn, Natural Resources Director, LWWUT

Since being tasked at last summer's LWWUT Convention with a two-year study of Utah's Transition to Clean Energy, the study team has often felt their project as tantamount to "Boiling the Ocean" or "Solving World Hunger." The educational first phase of the study is expected to run to about 70 pages, and an executive summary will serve as an index to the findings.



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This year's study focussed on ways to promote renewable resources for Utah's electricity supply, including securitization of coal plant debt, carbon pricing, the Community Renewable Energy Act, and replacing the rural fossil fuel economy with diverse income streams like regenerative agriculture. In the coming year, the team will consider further topics and the questions of whether additional positions need to be developed through consensus.

The team has been scheduled to present its results in a panel discussion hosted by LWVSL, Wednesday, April 15, 6-8 p.m., at the Girl Scout Offices, 445 E. 4500 South, SLC, or online, if COVID-19 precautions are still needed. In addition, the team would be happy to discuss its work with any of the state Leagues, units or other groups.

League M&Ms — Get Yours While They Last

By Nicola Nelson

Have you seen our custom-printed centennial M&Ms? These were our gifts to Utah legislators on our Day of Action, Friday, Feb 14. The League logo is printed on one side and "100 years" on the other.



We have extras available for purchase; eight tins for \$25. The label can be customized. Great for panelist gifts, League event favors, etc. Contact Nickie Nelson at nickie.nelson@gmail.com or 801-231-7326 for more information.

Students Stepped Up at Marriott Library Event

By Helen Moser, LWVSL Membership Chair

The League of Women Voters participated in a student voter registration event sponsored by the University of Utah Marriott Library to commemorate the many accomplishments of women over the years.

Passing of a League Member — Eleanor Willhard

Eleanor Willhard — A longtime League member from Bountiful passed away in February at 89 years old.

Reading her [obituary](#) brought back many memories and smiles.

Eleanor was part of a cohort of spirited, opinionated, and

irrepressible Bountiful League members many years ago. That small

group produced LWVUT presidents Lynette Wilson, Alice Griffiths and Nancy Carter. Eleanor wrote many

Letters to the Editor of newspapers. She served her community and her church in many ways.

Gigi Brandt, Redistricting & Money In Politics Adviser, LWVUT

Those include the 150th anniversary of Utah women being first in the nation to vote as well as the 100th anniversary of the League's founding in support of the Women's Suffrage Movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment.



The Library's Marketing and Public Relations group provided snacks and giveaways to entice students to stop by, learn about the League, and register to vote. More than 100 University students and staff took time to join the festivities. Thanks to the awesome League volunteer team who donned their suffragette sashes and ensured success of the event. Marilyn Bown, Pam

Grant, Linda Menasco and Norma Wills assisted students in registering to vote and changing addresses while sharing information about our history, mission and breadth of work. Sana Muller, the leader for our soon-to-be-launched UofU Discussion Unit, took time to greet each student and impress them with the merits of joining the League.

Results were outstanding: 19 new voter registrations were processed; 47 students expressed interest in joining the proposed unit; 15 signed up to receive news on the League; and three media spotlights were provided to get the word out about League efforts to promote civic engagement!



Our sincere appreciation to Heidi Brett and Jordan Hanzon with the Marketing and Public Relations group for their skillful planning of all logistics and promotion of the event with students and local media. Not only was their effort impressive to commemorate this historic milestone by finding creative ways to boost student participation in our democracy, they also provided their own laptops to support online registration and joined in helping address student questions on the voting process. We look forward to collaborating again with the Marriott Library in an additional student voter registration event planned for mid-September.

State of the Community Luncheon Postponed

The League of Women Voters was looking forward to hosting our Centennial State of the Community Luncheon in April. But out of an abundance of caution, we have decided to postpone our 28th annual event. This year, our keynote speaker will be Erika George of the University of Utah S.J. Quinney School of Law. We will be honoring outgoing Rep. Patrice Arent and former YWCA CEO Anne Burkholder. We also expect to commemorate the life of Norma Matheson.

Stay tuned for more information on this much-anticipated event, tentatively on Thursday, August 13.

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