

http://www.lwvutah.org

The League of Women Voters of Utah

230 W. 200 South, Suite #2114 Salt Lake City, UT 84101

(801) 272-8683 Email: office@lwvutah.org

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June 2019

2020 Centennial Convention to be Held in Moab



by Carey Dabney, LWV-Grand County President
The League of Women Voters of Grand
County had a successful year with
programs and events that covered
everything from the surprise legislative
mandate to change our form of county
government to recycling and the carbon tax
and finally to Better Boundaries.

This year kicks off the centennial anniversary of both the 19th Amendment and the formation of the League of Women Voters in 1920. In keeping with our theme of "Service to County and Service to Community," we have a number of activities planned for our members and the community, beginning with an old member-new member potluck scheduled for September to bring us all together to learn about upcoming programs, events, and volunteer opportunities.

Those volunteer opportunities include recruiting for committee chairs to oversee our volunteer and community outreach efforts for the following committees:

- Speakers Bureau
- · DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion)
- Environmental
- Legislative
- Census/Voter Registration
- · League Studies (Consensus and Educational)
- Student Engagement

At 75 members strong, we look forward to hosting the Centennial LWV State Convention on Friday-Saturday, May 1-2, 2020. We are already planning this event as Moab has become a world destination and we need to get hotel information out to you as soon as possible. Stay tuned!

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Delegates Got League Off to Good Start

by Vickie Samuelson, LWVUT Co-President

Our 2019 Annual Convention has now passed but we have a lot of work ahead of us as a result of the good work that was accomplished. The Davis League was our host League and they did an outstanding job with the location, food, and speakers.

Friday night was a social with nibbles and drinks and the guest speakers from the Utah Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC). JPEC was established in 2008 to provide voters with valid information about each judge's performance so they can make informed decisions when voting and provide judges with useful feedback about their performance so they may become better judges and promote public accountability of the judiciary while ensuring that it continues to operate as an independent branch of government. They also have a Court Observation Volunteer Program. You can find them at judges.utah.gov.

Saturday was our day of work for the upcoming year. Delegates approved a bylaw change to allow the state board greater flexibility in adding board positions as needed to facilitate state level advocacy in emerging areas. Our Program for 2019-20 was approved. You can read about it in Nickie Nelson's report in the Voter. Instructions to the board include setting up a committee to go over the bylaws, update Impact on Utah Issues, and create a five year strategic plan.

We voted in our new board members that were presented by the nominating committee chairperson Peggy Carrico:
Catherine Weller Co-President Utah (2019 to 2021)
Julie DeLong Dir.of Local Leagues (2019 to 2021)
Shelly (Michelle) Jackson Dir. Voter Services (2019 to 2021)
Wendy Molteni Dir. Development (2019 to 2021)
With our bylaws change we were able to add a new position, Environment Director, with a nomination from the floor for Carol Straughn to fill that position. The nomination passed so her term will be 2019-21.

We would also like to thank our outgoing board members for all the hard work they have done for the League of Women Voters Utah. Jane Harrison, Janice Gygi and Kathy Fitzgerald. We would also like to say goodbye to Trixi Sieger and wish her all the best in her new chapter of employment life.

One other exciting thing that happened was that we had members from all five of our local leagues — Davis, Grand, Salt Lake and Weber — present for Convention. Thank you all for supporting the work that the League of Women Voters does.



Local League Presidents

Davis County
Nickie Nelson
nickie.nelson@gmail.com

Grand County
Carey Dabney
dabney.utah@gmail.com

Salt Lake
Kathy Biele
president@lwvsl.org

Weber County
Terri McCulloch
weberpresident@lwvutah.
org



League Members Learn About Tax Issues

by Emily Walsh, LWV-UT Legislative Action Committee Director
Thanks to all of the observers who helped cover May Interim meetings.
Your efforts are essential to planning for and acting on bills for the 2020
General Session. We are on KRCL 90.9 FM's RadioActive at 6 p.m. with
Legislative Interim information on Tuesday and Wednesday of Interim
week. Listen for the League's next updates on June 18 and 20. We have a
new addition to the Legislative Action page on Iwvutah.org — the bill
tracker has been replaced by items of interest. Interim Items of Interest will
consist of links to committee meeting materials of interest to the League. I
hope you find this new feature useful.

Tax restructuring and equalization is a significant topic for state government this Interim. The Utah Legislature passed HB 495, the formation of the Tax Restructuring and Equalization Task Force, in March. The purpose of the task force as stated in the bill is to "study state and local revenue systems with the purpose of making recommendations to address structural imbalances among revenue sources." Additionally the task force is directed to "solicit public feedback and involvement, including coordination with individuals and entities with taxation expertise." Hopefully the task force will have posted a meetings list by the time this article is published. You can subscribe to updates regarding the task force and see who the task force members are on its webpage.

Why care? As for why you should care about tax restructuring: you will be paying the taxes. And if you have an interest in something that receives an appropriation from the legislature (air quality, art museums, domestic violence shelters, etc.) you should know that without a change to our tax system the Office of Legislative Fiscal Analysis (OLFA) estimates there will be no funds left over from the General Fund for appropriations by fiscal year 2021.

Through the League's partnership with the Family Investment Coalition (FIC, a group of social service advocates) we have been attending tax education presentations and discussions with the Office of Legislative Fiscal Analysts (OLFA), the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) and the Utah Foundation. The tax/budget problem is three-fold: a lack of flexibility due to earmarks, a misalignment with our current economy, and the budget's unequal distributed among income brackets. These meetings have been insightful and have produced great conversation with our partners, legislative staff and executive staff.

Earmarks and Education. Earmarks are when tax revenues are designated for a specific purpose. Utah has earmarks in code and in the constitution. The constitutional earmarks create what OLFA refers to as "silos" in their presentation on Tax Restructuring and Equalization. These "silos" make Utah's budget inflexible because funds may not be transferred

Utah League

Co-Presidents
Vickie Samuelson
& Catherine Weller
presidents@lwvutah.org

Executive Director
Emeritus
Sandy Peck
sandypeck@xmission.com

Voter Editors
Charles Bernard
Eleanor Sundwall
thevoter@lwvutah.org

Office Consultant
Peggy Carrico
office@lwvutah.org

from the Education Fund (income tax) or the Transportation Fund (sales tax and fees related to motor vehicles) to cover costs typically covered by the General Fund (sales tax). In 1996 Utah passed a constitutional amendment to allow higher education to receive funds from the Education Fund. This was meant to alleviate the very problem we once again face. Higher education has become increasingly reliant on the Education Fund since 1997. OLFA and GOMB estimate this coming fiscal year may be the last year higher education will receive any funding from the General Fund. Removal of these earmarks or "silos" will require the passage of constitutional amendments, one for the Education Fund and one for the Transportation Fund. It should be noted that the Utah League has a position regarding earmarks being subject to a sunset provision. This position supports another League position stating the tax system should allow "flexibility for financing future program changes."

When asked why education is continually underfunded despite surplus income tax revenue in the Education Fund, we were told by OLFA it is due to inadequate funding at the local level. We were also told local taxation would be studied to see how it contributes to the current state tax problem. Watch for more Truth in Taxation meetings by your local taxing entities.

Tax modernization and Service Economy. A "misalignment with the current economy" is what GOMB calls the second tax problem. OLFA calls it "a need for tax modernization." They are both referring to the change in purchasing preferences consumers have demonstrated in the 21st Century compared to the previous century. We are experiencing a shift away from a goods-based economy to a service-based economy. The state taxes extremely few services. If the state continues to do nothing to restructure Utah's sales tax to include services, this shift to a service based economy with result in a drastically diminished General Fund. While the League has no specific position regarding taxation on services it does have a position supporting a tax system "that provides adequate resources for government."

There is concern regarding what is known as "the final incidence of tax." The final incidence of tax is important because it illustrates who really ends up paying the cost of a tax. Using the 1 percent tax on health care premiums that the Legislature discussed during the session as an example: The initial incidence of tax was on the health insurance companies, but the final incidence of tax was in the increased premiums consumers would pay due to the tax being levied. Additionally, the study of final incidence of tax would take into account the pyramiding (or stacking) of taxes which business are concerned about. FIC was advised by an economist to ask the task force to study the final incidence of tax for all taxes being considered.

Members of the Legislative Action Committee have questioned whether service taxes adversely affect seniors. Our friends at AARP say, according to their studies, taxes on services do not disproportionately impact the

Donors Honor Roll Spring 2019

The League of Women Voters of Utah expresses its deepest gratitude to all of our generous donors. Our amazing work is accomplished by hundreds of hours of volunteer labor with the invaluable help of our part time office manager, but we depend on our loyal donors to pay office expenses like phone, computers, office rent and salary. Thank you to this month's donors:

Gigi Brandt
Maxine Haggerty
Janice Miller
John Weisheit
Mary and Evert House
Eggal Foundation
Barbara Ross

— Kathryn Fitzgerald, LWVUT Development director

senior population. The tax is spread through senior households the same as it is through the general population with higher income households paying more service tax than lower income households.

What the service tax rate ends up being will be one of the last things decided after all taxable services have been determined. The legislature may have to adjust the rate a few times to find the appropriate rate. When OLFA was asked how difficult it was to determine the service tax rate the reply was, "do you know how much you didn't spend on taxes for services?" It's a point well taken.

Fairness is subjective. This problem of unfairness in taxation is one that the League needs to closely watch. The League has positions opposed to most regressive taxes and positions promoting progressive tax structures. According to the GOMB presentation on tax-reform lower income households currently contribute a greater percentage of their income to the General Fund than higher income households do. However, higher income households carry a greater percentage of the Education Fund. It seems unwise and unfair to saddle lower income households with a greater portion of the General Fund. It has been suggested that a tax on services would shift more of the tax revenue for the General Fund to higher income households. A tiered income tax structure, something the League advocates for, appears to not be on the table. The change in 2008 to the flat income tax rate is interpreted to be a mandate from the people and a tiered income tax structure is perceived to not be politically feasible.

Food tax. Another interesting point on the issue of fairness is the sales tax on food. There seems to be consensus that increasing sales tax on food does not solve the problems created by earmarks or misalignment. The question regarding sales tax on food is whether it is fair to give higher income households a tax break on food when they could comfortably afford to pay it. State grocery tax rebates have been mentioned. These tax rebates refund sales tax on food to lower income households. Our friends in FIC point out that there are some problems with this concept. The first being food is a daily expense while tax rebates tend to be a once-a-year event. The second problem being that nearly a third of low-income households don't file taxes. The League has a position in opposition to sales taxes on food and will be consistent regarding our advocacy on this point.

Get involved. Please, get involved in the Task Force's town hall meetings throughout the state! Make your voices and perspectives known in their meetings. Help your community be aware this is happening and how it will impact them. At this point it is unknown if it is politically feasible for the Legislature to hold a special session to restructure taxes. We will have to watch as the Interim progresses. The first report due from the task force is in the Revenue and Taxation Interim Committee Wednesday, June 19.

If you would like to join the Legislative Action Google Group to participate in

Trying Out RCV

Did you know that two municipalities in Utah are trying out Ranked Choice Voting this year? Sadly, many cities and towns opted out of this exciting election experiment.

Hooray for Vineyard and Payson — both Utah County municipalities.

The Salt Lake League will be bringing you a Mock RCV election in August. Comparing the results should be interesting as there are presently eight candidates for mayor in the city.

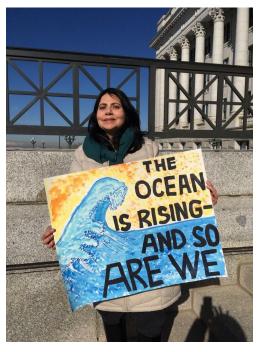
We'll be telling you about other mock elections planned throughout the state. Get ready for real reform!

Here's the latest news:
https://fox13now.com/201
9/04/12/only-two-cities-ha
ve-signed-up-to-participat
e-in-utahs-ranked-choicevoting-experiment/

observing or to get reports on all of the committees we observe leave a message at 801-272-8683 or email actioncorps@lwvutah.org.

A Climate of Change Comes to Utah

by Carole Straughn; LWV-SL Natural Resources Climate Subcommittee Chair When I moved to Utah 10 years ago, I found it no easier to talk about global warming here than in my native Oklahoma. Now it seems almost normal to bring up the subject.



After I'd been here a few years, I watched a committee at the state Capitol hear testimony on a bill that would have reassured state employees that they could use climate change projections in planning policy. The room was packed, and folks who wanted to testify lined the aisle from the door to the speaker's table. Dozens spoke in favor of the bill, but after just one contrary opinion from a powerful lobbyist, the committee chair cut off discussion and the bill was dismissed.

How different things seem now! As League Legislative Action Committee (LAC) members observed in interim committee meetings last month, state

officials seem comfortable mentioning climate whenever it is appropriate.

For example, I heard Kathleen Clark from the Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office tell the Interim Committee for Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment that climate change is one of the reasons we need to rewrite the roadless rule for national forests in Utah. Our forests are changing, she argued, so we need access to manage them. That would mean clearing out dead, diseased, and beetle-damaged trees to prevent wildfires like Dollar Ridge, Coal Hollow, and Brian Head.

Then again, LAC member Norma Wills reported free discussion, led by Rep. Raymond Ward, R-Bountiful, on electric vehicles and charging stations. He reviewed the history of alternative fuels and concluded that electric vehicles (EVs) seem the most promising option. (Notably, he stressed that global warming due to burning fossil fuels is established scientific fact.) He suggested that Utah might want to promote the usage of electric cars by increasing the number and distribution of charging stations and tweaking the current program that allows some electric cars access to

Voters Guide Coming Soon, Needs You!

Leaguers, we need your help to populate our exciting Voters Guide - Vote411! This amazing online application allows voters to personalize their ballots and get up-to-date information on their candidates.

Candidates may even use the video function to answer League questions on the issues, as well.

Can you call a candidate in your area to inform them of this electioneering tool?

Candidates, why not give us a try? This is a national tool used by politicians throughout the United States. Check out Vote411.org.

Please let us know if you can help or would like to participate in Vote411.

Contact Jane Harrison at jane.friendly1@gmail.com

HOV lanes (C-decal). Discussion centered on whether the state should be subsidizing EVs or letting market forces operate. The committee voted to open a bill file to explore modifying the C-decal program. Also, the committee will request a report on EV charging stations that were funded during the 2019 session.

Although the Utah carbon tax was not put on the Legislature's interim study list, somehow, buried in a massive appropriations bill, there was hope. In SB003, Item 218, there is a \$200,000 appropriation to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute "for the development of an air quality and climate research study to be delivered no later than December 13th 2019." It was Rep. Brad Wilson, the Speaker of the House, who made the request.

The changing climate is no longer a taboo subject, but rather a matter connected with the shared values of almost everyone we meet -- and discussion is inspiring action.

Utah, U.S. Leagues Support Passage of For the People Act

by Catherine G. Weller, LWV-UT Co-President

The League of Women Voters of Utah has been asked to join the national League's targeted multi-state campaign to promote a Senate hearing for H.R. 1, the For the People Act in the U.S. Senate. Utah is joining 14 other states in the campaign because Sen. Mitt Romney, R-UT, is a member of a committee with jurisdiction over pieces of the legislation. The state League presidents have written letters to the editors of newspapers in densely populated areas of the state, will meet with Sen. Romney or his staff during the May recess, and will coordinate a Utah League postcard campaign by mid-June. LWV-UT has been awarded a pass-through grant to cover expenses associated with the campaign.

H.R. 1, the For the People Act, is one of the most sweeping pieces of election reform legislation written in decades. The LWV-US was active in its writing and promoting its passage through the House of Representatives. H.R.1 will improve American elections by making them more free, fair, and transparent to all citizens. Provisions include voting reforms such as same day and automatic voter registration, independent redistricting commissions, restoration of the Voting Rights Act, and strong provisions to improve campaign finance transparency. As one of the nation's first and leading voters' rights organizations, the League of Women Voters is proud to support this legislation addressing critical parts of our core mission to empower voters and defend democracy. Utah League members should watch their email inboxes during the next month for an Action Alert outlining ways to participate in promoting this important legislation.



Hinckley Forums

are held in the old College
of Law Building, 332
South 1400 East, Bldg. 73
Room 101, in the Moot
Courtroom, at the
University of Utah. All
forums are free and open
to the public and are
sponsored by the Hinckley
Institute of Politics and
The Sam Rich Program in
International Politics.
http://www.hinckley.utah.e
du/calendar/

Salt Lake Kicks off 100 Years Celebrating Women

by Jeanine Kuhn-Coker, LWV-SL Vice President of Program

Salt Lake League members came to the May program planning meeting fortified with ideas. We decided to kick off our 100th anniversary program year on Saturday, August 24 by hosting a celebration at Mestizo Coffee House. We will highlight the date (August 26) that women gained the right to vote and hear about important women in Utah history from Linda Hilton. Various activities will be planned throughout the year to celebrate the League's 100th Anniversary.

The Salt Lake League will also host a Defending Democracy Fun Run on Saturday, September 28 at the Peace Gardens with the hope that Leagues statewide will host similar runs in their areas. Some other issues that programs will focus on include election reform, an effort to switch to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030, Vote 411 training, and a coalition to talk about the Olympics. Possible studies include updates on Know your County and to a previous water study. The Salt Lake League will also be conducting a Mock Rank Choice Vote online prior to the primary and will be participating in the Westside Coalition Mayoral Debate in June (see "Mayoral Forums Need Volunteers," p8). We have a busy year in store and look forward to celebrating!



The Salt Lake League ventured into the realm of fun runs last year after being inspired by the success of a 5K in Asheville, N.C. We have no doubt it helped push our redistricting initiative across the finishing line.

This year, we're Defending Democracy. We'd love it if every league in the state held a similar fun run. For information and help in planning, just ask Rachel Ridge at 5k@lwvsl.org. We're here to help - and Defend Democracy!

Salt Lake League Takes Go-See Recycling Tour

by Jeanine Kuhn-Coker, LWV-SL Vice President of Program

On May 15, the Salt Lake League carpooled out to the Salt Lake City Landfill for a go-see tour. We had a fun group of 32 attendees eager to learn about recycling and general landfill information. The landfill, comprising 550 acres, opened in 1991 and is scheduled to close in 2065, when the land will be turned into a golf course, park, or other scenic public offering. Their motto of "Reduce, Re-use, and Recycle" is incorporated throughout their facility, as they accept electronics, concrete, asphalt, dirt, carpet, mattresses, tires, green waste, and paint, among other things. We learned many interesting facts about the logistics of a landfill, one of the



Thanks to the Girl Scouts of Utah for their generous in-kind donations to the League of Women Voters of Utah and the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake.

most interesting being that landfills are monitored for 30 years because of methane and leachate water released from trash decompensation. They have a system of pipes to collect the methane which they sell to power houses. Everyone agreed that it was a very informative and successful tour.



Mayoral Forums and Inland Port Meetings Need Volunteers

by Ann O'Connell, LWV-SL Environment Chair

The League is assiduously non-partisan and never supports or opposes candidates, but it would be naïve for either Salt Lake League or Utah League members to ignore this season's Salt Lake municipal elections. The candidates in all the Salt Lake races have already discovered that the inland port is a critical if not the defining issue, even to the extent that at least one candidate has made an about-face on the port.

At this point there are three mayoral primary candidates meetings: Thursday, June 13 at the Utah State Fairpark 6-9 p.m.

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake and the Westpointe Coalition.

Wednesday, June 26 at the Downtown City Library, 210 E. 400 South 6:30-8 p.m.

Sponsored by the Alliance for Better Utah

Tuesday, July 16 at the Marmalade Library, 280 W. 500 North, SLC 6-8 p.m.

Sponsored by the Stop the Polluting Port Coalition

Salt Lake City League members are encouraged to volunteer for the June

League Still Champions 19th Amendment

Tuesday, May 21 marked 100 years since the U.S. House passed the 19th Amendment. The suffragists likely only celebrated for a brief moment, though—they had their sights set on the Senate next. We know this because they achieved passage in the Senate just over two weeks later.

Right now, LWV is championing a bill in the House that proposes to honor these inspirational women on state quarters. One side of the coin will feature a 19th Amendment icon, and the other will feature a noteworthy woman selected by each state and U.S. territory. Please contact your representative to urge them to co-sponsor H.R. 1923, the Women's History and Nineteenth **Amendment Centennial** Quarter Dollar Coin Program Act.

—Chris Carson, LWVUS

13th candidates meeting. Members of other local Leagues would be very welcome too. All of the forums/debates will be difficult to manage because of the large number of declared candidates, who number nine. But the League will set the standard for others to follow - if all of us pitch in. If you have never done a LWV candidates meeting, look for information in this this Voter and on the League website. Email us with any questions or concerns at president@lwvsl.org.

Inland Port. The Leagues of Utah and Salt Lake are working hard to follow the inland port process. It is not easy. The Inland Port board meetings must be public. A meeting schedule for the year has been available on the official website. So far, the public has been allowed to speak at the end of each meeting. However, agendas and locations are not available until a few days if not just the required 24 hours before the meetings. Unfortunately, the locations are often obscure and parking and building access can be an adventure. It is important that the League of Women Voters speak publicly on the barriers to public participation – one of our core issues.

It is also important that League members remember that although only an official designee of a League can testify using the League name, all members should take responsibility for speaking for themselves – as citizens, constituents, residents, or someone with expertise or a pertinent observation or experience. Have you seen similar inland port situations? Can you testify on the questionable economics of exporting fossil fuels? Is air quality particularly critical to your health? Remember, in the case of the Inland Port board meetings, all testimony becomes part of the public record which can be used for future procedures, protests, and court actions.

Having said all that, we must await future developments as unfortunately, the Inland Port Board has postponed the Board meeting scheduled for May. No excuse was given but the last meeting was disrupted by a demonstration, or rather the Board felt they could not continue the meeting. No League member was there to give an eyewitness account but evidently the Inland Port Board does not know how to proceed. The League can only wait for future developments.

If you want to be kept up-to-date on the Inland Port, please join the League Inland Port Google Group. Send an email to oconnell@xmission.com.

Salt Lake League Holds Spring Orientation

by Helen Moser, LWV-Salt Lake Membership Chair

The LWV-Salt Lake Spring Orientation, held April 27 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, was a great success with 17 new and prospective members in attendance along with existing members. Armed with newly piloted overviews detailing the work and related activities of each committee, directors engaged attendees in discussions about how best to align their interests with volunteer opportunities.

LWV Supports Centennial Quarter Dollar

LWVUS sent a memo to all members of the U.S. House asking them to co-sponsor H.R. 1923, the Women's History and Nineteenth Amendment Centennial Quarter Dollar Coin Program Act. This legislation is a bipartisan measure to honor women in every state across the country by proposing a series of quarters, beginning in 2021, that would feature a 19th Amendment icon on one side. On the other side, a noteworthy woman from every state would be highlighted. Each state and U.S. territory would select one of its outstanding women to be honored in this series. The legislation is sponsored by Representatives Barbara Lee (CA-13) and Anthony Gonzalez (OH-16). Please contact your Representative and urge them to cosponsor this

legislation.

These conversations yielded 37 critical volunteer sign-ups across nine

committees. This will enable the Salt Lake League to further tap into the terrific skills and talents of members who are ready to contribute to the League mission through their direct involvement.

We are excited by the diverse backgrounds these individuals bring to the table. Students, teachers, lawyers, athletes, a social worker, activists, and others; they all share in their passion for key issues and a desire to channel their experience into action with the League.

Special thanks to the staff at St. Paul's and the many members who contributed to the success of this event including: Kathy Biele, Marilyn Bown, Jesse Cox, Carolyn Erickson, Kathy Fitzgerald, Janice Gygi, Carol Jenson, Debby Larsen, Jill

Lesh, Linda Menasco, Jane Nelson, Melissa Nelson-Stippich, Ann O'Connell, Susan Parker, Rachel Ridge, Vickie Samuelson, Trixi Sieger, Carole Straughn, Norma Wills, Anne Zeigler, and Hope Zitting-Goeckeritz.



#19thAt100 Social Media Day – June 4

Mark your calendars: Tuesday, June 4, is the 100th anniversary of the US Senate approving the 19th Amendment. The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History is leading an effort to share stories and images on social media using the hashtag #19thAt100. We will be mindful to explore the full story of 19th Amendment, in all of its complexity—recognizing that it was an incomplete victory and for many women the fight for suffrage continued. Please join LWVUS and sign up your League to participate.

Utah League Welcomes Peggy Carrico as Office Consultant



Please join us in welcoming Peggy Carrico as Office Consultant to the Utah and Salt Lake Leagues. A longtime member of the League, Peggy has served as past LWV-UT Co-President and is currently the secretary/treasurer of LWV-Davis County. She retired from a career in healthcare administration and currently serves on the board of the Volunteers of America.

Many different roles have been discussed when talking about growing the League image and the

office. When Trixi Sieger recently left the Office Manager position, it seemed a good time to assess the existing model and explore other possibilities.

Peggy will work closely with the Utah and Salt Lake presidents to put together the next job description and ensure the necessary work is done in the meantime. Peggy will be in the office Monday and Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.. She can be contacted by email at office@lwvutah.org or via the office phone at 801-272-8683.