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May 2020

Changes, Challenges Nothing New for League

By Kathy Biele, LWVSL President

And just like that, the world changes. Each of us, each of our families, our friends and our Leagues are dealing with a new reality called COVID-19, the global pandemic.

If you think about it, change is what the League of Women Voters is all about.

In our 100 years of existence, we have

gone from horseback-riding women in white to the strong and colorful activists of today.

Maybe we can learn something from our own past.

“The depression of the 1930s and the onset of World War II brought far-reaching change to the League. Membership fell from 100,000 in 1924 to 44,000 in 1934. The National League's budget was cut in half, necessitating a major reduction in staff and services to Leagues,” the LW-US website notes.

“Perhaps the most important change was that because of gas rationing, League members started meeting in small groups in their neighborhoods to discuss fundamental issues. These issues included the threat to democracy itself and the importance of the informed individual to the success of democracy. Grassroots activity thus was firmly institutionalized as a way of assessing concerns, studying and strategizing.”

That's a real “aha moment,” isn't it? We are facing nowhere near what

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the League faced back then. Still, we can learn from the past and re-dedicate ourselves to a stronger future. Our membership has not yet suffered in the pandemic. Our citizens are still motivated to defend our democracy, to vote and be counted. We just need to ensure that we stay the course.

Our small group meetings, whether official or informal, are a vital piece of the League puzzle, showing that intimate, personal contact is always effective. This is how we conduct studies, how we lobby the Legislature, and how we set the direction of our committees. We are not a large corporation whose agenda is set by a well-paid staff. The League of Women Voters is just that – a league: “a collection of people, countries, or groups that combine for a particular purpose, typically mutual protection or cooperation.”

I like to call members of our all-volunteer League “educational activists.” In Salt Lake, we are working to grow our small groups and activate a County Observer Corps. Our Observer Corps chair Shauna Bona has an actionable plan, which you’ll read about later in this Voter.

The pandemic has shocked us, but it hasn’t stopped us. We’re in this for the long game. While we have cancelled or postponed certain activities, we are still meeting on Zoom, by phone or Hangouts because defending democracy is important. And it’s more important now than ever.

Stay safe, wear a mask, disinfect, and keep the faith.

Candidates to be Profiled on Vote 4-1-1

By Michelle Jackson, LWV-UT Voter Services Director

The State League is preparing Vote 4-1-1 and anticipates that it will be live by the beginning of June, in time for the statewide Primary. The Primary is scheduled for Tuesday, June 30. Primary ballot races will be determined and certified in late April after each party hosts their (online) Convention.

The Vote 4-1-1 Committee is creating questions and will be sending them out to candidates in early May. Only candidates who have a primary race will be featured on the June Vote 4-1-1 website. Candidate responses will be posted on the site exactly as written by the candidate. As a concerned citizen who also wants to be an informed voter, you can urge your local candidates to respond to the League questions and have their responses included on the Vote 4-1-1 website. After Monday, April 27, you can view



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Primary races in your area on the state's website, vote.utah.gov. Please reach out to those candidates with a Primary race and encourage them to respond to our questions.

The site will be live in June at vote411.org/utah. Vote 4-1-1 is also the place to find out about any changes in Utah's election due to COVID-19. Many of these potential changes are being worked out at an anticipated special legislative session in mid-April. **That can be found at vote411.org/coronavirus.** Please help communicate any changes due to COVID-19, to other members of your community.

Vote 18 Moves Forward, Reschedules Classes

By Marilyn Brown, LWVSL Vote18 Chair

Our Democracy Class, Vote 18, needs your help! Please consider volunteering for two to four online Zoom meetings this spring and summer. The meetings will assess the current and future situation of Vote 18. We expect to plan for an invigorating autumn, when our fabulous trained volunteers can actually go to high schools to emphasize voting and register young voters.

This spring's classes at Judge Memorial, Rowland Hall, Sat Lake Center for Science Education, and West High are on hold. We look forward to providing these classes with mock elections during autumn of 2020. In the meantime, we are providing online voter registration information. We've connected with both Salt Lake Community College and the University of Utah to participate in autumn student leadership voting signups. We're also working on civics service-learning options for 2020-21 with these institutions.

The online Rock the Vote curriculum from which our Democracy Class originated and which we refer to others has dropped its original curriculum and now offers three lesson plans: "Who Decides Voting Rights," "The History of Voting," and "The Truth about Voting." Rock the Vote's current emphasis has moved from the importance of voting to issues about voter rights and suppression. Our national LWV.org website partners with RTV; the website allows any of us - individuals, teachers or groups - to sign on for the curriculum. Contact marilyn.bown@yahoo.com for more information.

Two Teachers Nominated for Harvard Civics Workshop

By Jeanine Kuhn-Coker, LWV-SL President-Elect

The Salt Lake League has nominated two teachers, Jenny Nicholas and Holly Reynolds, to attend a Harvard Civics Workshop designed to hone teacher skills in civics education at the high school level and give youth



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civic engagement a punch-up! Do we need to punch up civics education?

“Many are aware of the abysmal performance of Americans surveyed about civics-related topics,” one teacher wrote. “Thirty-seven percent can’t identify rights protected by the First Amendment, only 27 percent can identify all three branches of government, and 53 percent incorrectly believe immigrants do not have any constitutional rights if they are here illegally (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2017). This poor performance has unfortunately lasted through generations of American students, who have not been effectively taught about their government. “

These two teachers, both from West High, wrote essays highlighting the importance of civic education for young people in preserving our democracy and strengthening the political process in our country. The teachers will go through a vetting process with members of the Case Method Project before being accepted. All expenses are paid for attendees of the workshop and the Salt Lake League will provide a stipend for airfare.

The workshop will take place Sunday-Tuesday, August 16-18 either online, in-person, or through some combination of the two. While it is everyone’s hope that the workshop will be held in-person, the Case Method Project team is working actively with the Harvard Business School and with teachers across the country to develop best practices in virtual instruction so that regardless of the format, the Case Method Project will be able to deliver professional development programming of the highest quality.

Earthquake, Virus: Earth-Shaking Events for Inland Port

By Ann O’Connell, LWV-SL Natural Resources Chair

The Earthquake and Building on a Fault

The recent earthquake has provided more evidence for the argument that the Northwest Quadrant is not suitable for more building and population growth. Our recent seismic event was not even close in magnitude to what the experts predict for the Wasatch Front in the future. There was no serious liquefaction as far as I know and there has been very little talk of the Kennecott tailings pond which looms ominously over the area. You can expect “Stop the Inland Port” to make good use of these ominous natural consequences of a more powerful earthquake.

Salt Lake County Elections Coming Up!

The Primaries are scheduled for Tuesday, June 20, and the League of Women Voters wants to have information on the candidates ready to help you make informed decisions.

[Check here](#) to view all the candidates who will appear on the ballot. Do you have some ideas about what questions you’d like them to answer?. If you can help us, email our Voter Services Chair Jane Harrison at jane@lwvsl.org.

Coronavirus and Public Participation

The effort to stop the port will now work to publicize how the Inland Port board appears to be using the current outbreak of COVID-19 and attendant lock-down to obscure the adoption of the Inland Port Board's business plan. The plan is to be proposed to the Inland Port Board at its May meeting and adopted in June. If we are still in even a modified lock-down mode in May, which is not improbable, this could not be described as a process friendly to public participation. League members should be prepared to attend the May meeting, even if only virtually (if that mode of attendance is offered) to express dismay at the timing of the proceedings.

League Encourages Climate Activism at Fair



By Helen Moser, LWV-SL Membership Chair
The Salt Lake League had the pleasure of participating in the 7th Clean Air Solutions Fair, sponsored by CATALYST Magazine. The fair was held on Saturday, March 7 at The Gateway. The goal of this annual community event is to help Utahns discover new tools and skills that will result in better air quality for all — and to inspire us to choose cleaner air options in our daily lives. “Fresh Ideas for Fresh Air! Leave with Pollution Solutions!”

Although we were in terrific company with over 40 community allies and other exhibitors displaying an array of creative clean air solutions, fate conspired against us as many Salt Lake residents, reacting to Gov. Gary Herbert's announcement of Utah's first coronavirus case, stayed home that day. Still, with the concept of “social distancing” just beginning to enter our collective vocabulary, a number of climate stalwarts and their families chose to attend and stopped by our booth.

The League's clean air solution, “Become a Climate Activist” packet was a hit with attendees as was our children's corner, where young and old could learn about elections and voting. Many took advantage of the opportunity to learn about the League's strong position on climate change and wrote postcards to Sen. Mitt Romney thanking him for joining the bipartisan

Try Your Hand at Drawing Utah's Congressional Districts!

If you need another activity as you stay at home, consider trying your hand at drawing lines for Utah's congressional districts. The Utah Foundation website has a map drawing activity that lets you do just this!

The activity as well as a report on Senate Bill 200, the revision of the Prop 4 initiative, can be found at <http://www.utahfoundation.org/redistricting>.

— **Gigi Brandt, LWV-UT Redistricting & Money In Politics Adviser**

Senate Climate Solutions Caucus. “Most people were indeed shocked to learn that Senator Romney was aware of climate change, and were thrilled



to compose their own postcard thanking him,” said Carole Straughn, LWV-Utah Natural Resources Director. “Folks who signed included Inland Port opponents, urban gardeners, beekeepers, recyclers, and a young teenage boy who thanked the Senator for thinking of his future.”

In addition to Carole, a special thanks to Naomi Franklin, Norma Wills, and Dhati Oommen who shared information about the League’s advocacy for clean air, registered new voters, assisted folks in determining their representatives, and helped them take the first step in becoming climate activists!

Utah Selected to Help Advance ERA

By Vickie Samuelson, LWV-UT Co-President

The national League and selected state Leagues will join forces to undertake an in-state advocacy and lobbying campaign aimed at removing the ERA deadline by passing S.J. Res 6. So: we will be reaching out to our Sens. Mike Lee and Mitt Romney.

The reason Utah was selected was because we have an Equal Rights Amendment in our state constitution. “The rights of citizens of the State of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex. Both male and female citizens of this State shall enjoy equally all civil, political and religious privileges.” (Article IV, Section 1, Page 16)

The selection of our state comes with a grant of \$5,000, a task list of events to which we can add if more ideas come forth, and a deadline for activities that is flexible for now. That said, we all know we are not in normal times so we need to think outside the box for activities and events.

This will be a statewide effort so I will be reaching out to all our local Leagues’ presidents for ideas for individual areas. I will also report to you the information that comes out of the Zoom virtual meetings with the National League and what the other states are doing. If you have any

Stanford Study Supports Mail-in Ballots

Vote-by-mail “has no discernible effects on either partisan turnout or election outcomes. It is remarkably neutral in its partisan effects.”

[Read more ...](#)

questions or concerns please contact me at presidents@lwvsl.org.

Convention to Change, Adapt to Challenges

By Catherine Weller, LWV-UT Co-President

To comply with state, county and municipal stay-at-home orders, the League of Women Voters of Utah has moved its 2020 convention from Moab to Zoom, an electronic meeting platform. The annual convention will be held electronically on Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Electronic meetings require organizers and attendants to behave differently, so the organization as a whole will need to change how it does its business during convention. How long we meet, our breaks, and how we communicate in the meeting will all change slightly. This is to both ensure efficient communication and to prevent the burnout that can accompany a lengthy online meeting. Rest assured, we will take breaks just like we do when we meet for convention in person. We'll also have breakout rooms available for members to discuss issues during breaks and scheduled discussion times. Documents will be available in the meeting space and will be distributed in advance.

Please note, you can join a Zoom electronic meeting via computer or phone, even a landline.

Things that will not change this year are the actual business of convention. Members will adopt the budget, program and board of directors for the 2020-2021 League year. An agenda, all pertinent documents, the convention workbook, and login instructions will be emailed to convention attendees. I urge everyone to review these documents in advance.

If you are not familiar with Zoom, there are a number of resources you can consult in advance of the convention. The Zoom site has an introductory page, Getting Started, [here](#). You can read about joining a Zoom meeting and watch a video [here](#). Test your connections and practice joining a meeting by using Zoom's [Join a Test Meeting](#) function. Finally, there are numerous video and written resources on Zoom's [Support page](#).

These are unprecedented times requiring unprecedented measures. Change can be difficult, especially when it comes rapidly and during unsettling times. The need for the League's work hasn't abated even though our physical gatherings have. Potential changes in how legislation and voting may be done, shifting political and financial needs, and evolving medical and environmental challenges call for the League's



Hinckley Forums

The Hinckley Institute of Politics airs regular forums on KCPW 88.3 FM. One important forum deals with the historical and current state of voting rights in the United States. This history marks the expansion of the vote from the few to the many through political agitation and protest.

You can also listen to a forum on our changing demographics and the 2020 Census with League member Mallory Bateman.

[Listen here.](#)

diligent observation and thoughtful action. Our annual convention is how we ensure we can do that work in the coming year.

Ready to Engage Your Local Government? We Can Help

By Shauna Bona, LWV-SL Local and County Government Committee Chair

Salt Lake County may be under stay-at-home orders, but that hasn't stopped the work of its municipal governments. They are busy making decisions about transit, flood control, budgets, and many other issues that affect our lives. The good news is that in some ways it's now easier than ever to get involved.

Many local governments are using Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook for public meetings, meaning you can observe and even comment from home. If you are ready to connect with your city or community council, we in the League of Women Voters County Observer Corps are ready to help!

Here are just a few things you can do now:

- Look up your city or community council member and get their contact information
- Find out when, where, and how the council meets
- Learn how to access meetings online
- Send us a letter to your city or community council chair, introducing you and letting them know you will be observing meetings on behalf of the League. Our president, Kathy Biele, will sign onto the letter.

We are also working to develop an easy-to-use Google form so that you can capture and share important information as quickly as possible.

Now more than ever, we need to understand and influence the decisions of our local governments. If you are willing to become involved, please contact shauna@lwvsl.org.

Help Celebrate Earth Day 2020!

By Helen Moser, LWVUT Natural Resources Committee Member

Fifty years ago, the first Earth Day launched a wave of action, including the passage of landmark environmental laws in the U.S. The Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts were created in response to the first Earth Day in 1970, as well as the EPA. Although there have been significant efforts to roll back key environmental protections within the last

Community Luncheon Postponed

A virus has really changed our lives and schedules. The stay-at-home policy has had some positive outcomes in my life. I have found the unscheduled day rehabilitating. It is very quiet. There are numerous projects that I can now do with time on my hands. The only regret I have is that it has left an event which I look forward to every spring in limbo—The State of the Community Luncheon.

We did change the date from April 23 to Thursday, August 13 at the Grand America.

Stay tuned for more information as we come out of hibernation.

— Sue Lind, LWV-SL
Community Luncheon Chair

several years, we can't lose hope! Commemorate Earth Day by committing to learn more and take action every day to save our planet!

What can you do to get involved?



Participate in [“Uniting from Home.”](#) Citizens’ Climate Lobby’s virtual Earth Day event, on Sat. April 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. [Katharine Hayhoe](#), world-renowned climate scientist and host of the “Global Weirding” podcast, will be the keynote speaker. Learn about quick actions to address climate change and participate in one of four breakout sessions.

Take a few minutes to [calculate your carbon footprint](#) in the areas of home energy, transportation and waste. Learn ways to reduce your emissions

[Write your congressional leaders](#) to let them know you support this legislation.

Participate in [Loveland Living Planet Aquarium’s](#) virtual celebration of Earth Day. Sign up for [Earth Challenge 2020](#), and join other citizen scientists in monitoring and mitigating effects of threats to the environment and human health in our community. Bring the aquarium into your home through [educational videos](#). Discover ways you can make a difference, no matter your age.

Plant a tree! Learn the economic, environmental and social benefits of [planting a tree](#) from TreeUtah. Find tips on what to plant in Utah’s urban locations and how to care for your tree.

Take advantage of Dirt2Table’s [Celebration of Spring and Community Plant Sale](#). Check out their “Destigmatize the Dandelion” and “Adopt a Milkweed for the Monarch” campaigns as you look into creating your own edible landscape and supporting backyard food production.

Enjoy a compelling, short read - [The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go from Here](#) – by [Hope Jahren](#), an award-winning geobiologist. Gain an understanding of the scientific principles behind climate change and learn steps that what we, as individuals, can take to lessen our own impact.



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