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The Voter September 2019

Edited by Jogee Detchemendy

Upcoming Events:

- Neighborhoods, USA (NUSA) is hosting its 45th annual conference May 20-23, 2020 here Little Rock, Arkansas, where it will showcase the theme of **Neighborhoods: Fabric of our Communities**. NUSA provides its members with the tools and training to improve and maintain great neighborhoods. These workshops provide an education for anyone who is committed to community improvement.

NUSA's Program Development Committee is seeking proposals from the best and brightest to present workshops on a wide range of topics related to neighborhoods. Proposals are due Sunday September 15. To get more information or to make a proposal [click here](#).

- Monday, September 16: LWVPC General Meeting, Fletcher Library 823 N. Buchanan, Little Rock. Little Rock Police Chief, Keith Humphrey will speak on "Crime in Little Rock." Doors open at 5:30 and speaking will begin at 6 pm. Members and the public invited to attend.
- Tuesday, September 24: National Voter Registration Day. See next page for more details.
- Thursday, October 10th: Women2Women Conversations Tour will be at the Little Rock Club, 400 W. Capitol Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72201. W2W is a foundation dedicated to engaging women across the country in a discussion about shared concerns and goals. Their goal is to build upon local networks creating change in communities, and making sure leaders in Washington hear women's voices. VIP Wine Reception begins at 6 pm and the Panel Discussion begins at 6:45. The event costs \$20.19. To get more information about the event and to purchase your ticket [click here](#). To volunteer to work the LWVPC table at the event, please contact lwvpc@lwvpc.org.
- Monday, October 21: General Meeting, Fletcher Library, 5:30, Program TBA- Possibly Tenant Habitability or Redistricting Amendments
- Tuesday, November 5: ELECTION DAY

Upcoming Events continued on next page.

- Thursday, November 14: Issues That Matter Forum. Topic: 2020 Census. Sponsored by CALs, KUAR and LWVPC. Nixon Library, 703 W. Main St., Jacksonville. Volunteers needed.
- Tuesday, November 19: Membership Join, Renew, Donate Party at Jay Barth and Chuck Cliett's Home from 5:30 to 7:30. Details to Follow, but mark your calendars! (There will be no general meeting this month.)

September 24th is National Voter Registration Day:

League members, Maria Jones, Katherine Pope and Scharmell Roussel are working on National Voter Registration Day with the Pulaski County Clerk's Office, the New Young Leaders Council and the AAUW Little Rock Branch. For Voter Registration Day, September 24, the plan is to have three sites in Central Arkansas, a high school, a college campus and a community location. Pulaski County Clerk, Teri Hollingworth plans to visit each site during the day. The name of this initiative is "Pop Up Voter Registration". We will need many volunteers for this important project. Please email lwvpc@lwvpc.org or call Maria at 501-416-7225 if you are available on the 24th.

Announcements:

- 22 League members and guests attended the August Drinks and Dialogue "All About Human Trafficking." The speaker Casonia Vinson from PATH (Partners Against Human Trafficking) spoke on what PATH is doing to help victims of human trafficking here in Arkansas and listed signs to look for in potential victims. Photos below by Pat Landes. Top left: Carol shakes hands with D&D speaker Casonia Vinson. Top right and bottom: discussion.



Announcements continued on next page.

For a list of warning signs or to donate to PATH (a faith based organization), please click this hyperlink to PATH's website: <http://pathsaves.org>. Another great non-profit organization working to help victims of human trafficking in Arkansas is Children's Advocacy Center of Arkansas. For more information or to donate, please click this hyperlink to CACA's website: <https://www.cacarkansas.org/default>.

Special thanks to Rebecca Zimmermann, Julie Weaver and Pat Landes for organizing this event.

- On August 22, the LWVPC co-sponsored a forum "[Issues That Matter: The State of Education in Arkansas](#)" at the Dee Brown Library along with CALS And UALR public radio. Per President Carol Young, "It was a breath of fresh air from five well-qualified people, who are heavily involved with education in our city and state." The panel consisted of Dr. Mike Mills, UCA professor of Education, Stacy McAdoo, Arkansas Teacher of the Year, John Bacon, CEO of eStem Public Charter School, Dr. Ginny Blankenship, Education Policy Director for Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, and Ricardo Gomez, a Central High School senior.

The main points reiterated by all five panelists were that students need to be respected, treated with humanity, and cultural and community differences need to be recognized. All agreed that standardized testing does not reflect what students are actually learning, and have nothing to do with preparing a student to be successful in life.

Special thanks to all the League members who volunteered to help at the forum. Carol said, "I think everyone who attended left with a larger measure of hope for public education in our state." If you missed the program, you can listen at the KUAR website by clicking the above Issues That Matter hyperlink and then clicking the play button at the top of the screen.

- The State League has been active in two areas: nonpartisan redistricting initiative and voter registration. Nell Matthews and Carol Young have attended the 3rd Annual 1.9 Mile Spring and Stroll and the RBG Lecture to register new or transplant voters. The party primaries and the nonpartisan judicial elections are Mar. 3, 2020. While new addresses may be filed right up to the voting day, the cut off for new registrations (out of state change of address counts as a new registration) is 30 days in advance or by Feb. 1 but because that falls on a Saturday, we believe the deadline is Jan. 31.

Additionally, LWVAR Leadership Team member Nell Matthews will participate in LWV US redistricting training in Washington DC in October. League Arkansas will work with leagues in all 50 states to establish nonpartisan redistricting commissions. More information will be posted on the LWVAR Facebook page and website located at my.lwv.org/arkansas.

- Thanks to all who contributed to the cost of the sculpture honoring the hundredth anniversary of women receiving the right to vote. It will be unveiled in the Sculpture Garden at the River Market at 11 a.m. October 10th. League of Women Voters Pulaski County's name will be on the plaque listing contributors toward the statue's cost. All are invited to attend the unveiling and hear public figures praise the work of suffragettes (many of whom went on to found the LWV).

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Congrats to League members Jay Barth and Denise Ennett!



- The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) announced that state education leader Jay Barth is a recipient of NASBE's 2019 Distinguished Service Award. This national award honors current and former state board members who have made exceptional contributions to education. It is given to three outstanding leaders each year and is the highest award NASBE can bestow on a state board of education member.

Jay Barth just completed a seven-year term on the Arkansas State Board of Education and was its chair for two years. Barth led Arkansas's effort to adopt next-generation science standards and championed reform of discipline practices, which culminated in state legislation to promote restorative practices. Barth headed NASBE's board of directors in 2017.

"Jay was instrumental in uniting the board during a politically contentious period," said Brenda Gullet, a former Arkansas state board member who nominated Barth. "The board functions better as a result of his efforts to revise board operating procedures, and he helped the board see the value in engaging families and the community in policymaking efforts. He is forever a champion for children, and his service to the Arkansas state board will have a lasting impact on every student in our state."

Barth is the M.E. and Ima Graves Peace Professor of Politics and director of the Arkansas Policy Program at Hendrix College and has received numerous awards for his research and teaching, which focuses on the politics of the South, state government and politics, LGBT politics, political communication, and the achievement gap in Arkansas.

- By a 57.8 percent vote, Denise Ennett won the special Democratic runoff for State Representative of District 36 to replace Charles Blake.

Ennett has a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Texas at Arlington and Master's Degree in Higher Education/Student College Affairs from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She has worked as a parent advocate and mentor for the Center for Exceptional Families which helps schools and parents provide high quality special education services to children with disabilities.

Congrats continued on next page.

She has also served as a long-term substitute teacher in the Little Rock School District. She was born and raised in District 36. She has been an active volunteer and board member in many organizations including the LWVPC where until her campaign began this year, she was a member of the Leadership Team and chaired our Voter Registration Committee.

On why she decided to run, Ennett said, “Running for office isn't something I ever planned to do. But like all moms, fighting for my children has opened up a deep well of strength in me and has pushed me forward into new arenas. I have learned that if we want real change, we have to step up to lead.”

Info from our Observers Corp:

Thanks to Kathleen Oleson, Mindy Morrell and Ruth Bell for the updates below.

- **Committee on Little Rock Governance:** This Committee, appointed by Little Rock Board and Mayor to study our city's governance structure and, if indicated, make recommendations for change, is in the last stages of their work. By the end of September, they hope to have their report ready for presentation to Mayor and Board. After the report has been received, Mayor and Board will decide what actions, if any, to take on its recommendations.
- **Metroplan:** This central Arkansas planning entity is in the final stages of reconstituting its Regional Advisory Committees. A project of Metroplan executive director, Tab Townsell, three RAC subcommittees – Livable Communities, Economic Vitality, and Transportation Systems – with 25 members in each, have been appointed. Members of the three sub-committees have met once, with two more meetings planned for this fall for orientation on the RAC responsibilities. It is expected that the sub-committees will begin their designated duties in early 2020. Citizen Advisory Committees are required by federal law for organizations such as Metroplan. The previous RAC was weighted with community activists. The newly recreated sub-committees who will report to the Metroplan Executive Board, contain employees of cities and counties that make up Metroplan, various interest groups such as chambers of commerce, recycling entities, and technicians with expert knowledge on the issues each sub-committee will deal with. Lay people with interest in or concerns about the issues the 3 sub-committees deal with are in the minority.
- **City Planning Issues:** Sometimes there is a time lag in city planning and zoning where lifestyle changes occur, but cities or counties are slow to incorporate those changes into local planning and zoning ordinances. Such seems to be happening in Little Rock regarding Airbnb short term rentals. Within the past few months the LR Planning Commission has heard 3 requests for rezoning to allow for Airbnb rentals. The City's ordinances have not been amended to deal with issues that kind of rental brings to city, so staff and Commissioners are asked to make recommendations and cast votes based on what the current (20th century) ordinances say.

Concerns about Air BNB rentals include: The City does not know how many are in the city, nor where they are located; the City does not know if Airbnb owners are paying all city, county and state sales taxes tied to lodging rental. Without that information, it is difficult for staff and commissioners to decide if Airbnb approval would add more traffic, noise, and infrastructure wear and tear on an area that already has two or three Airbnb rentals in the same block, or add pedestrians and patrons of local businesses to parts of the City with space and desire to accommodate them.

Observing Opportunities on next page.

LWVPC representative Ruth Bell asked Planning Commission to amend the city ordinances to include this use. She was told that action was a policy decision, which had to be made by the LR City Board rather than Planning Commission or planning staff.

FYI : Of the three applications mentioned above, one on Ringo St. was turned down as inappropriate in a residential neighborhood, two abutting applications in Hillcrest were approved.

Observing Opportunities:

Please click links for calendar of each committee's meetings. I am also putting names of current League members who observe these meeting. If you have any interest in observing these ladies would love your help! If there are any other committees/observation opportunities you would like to suggest to the League, please let us know and we will add it to the next newsletter.

[Volunteers in Public Schools](#)

Meets September to May on second Mondays at noon in the Fair Park Early Childhood Center on Harrison St. Contact Denise Ennett at 817.894.4628 or ennettdenise@gmail.com.

[Jacksonville City Board](#)

Meets first and third Thursday at 6 pm. In the City Hall Council Chambers at 1 Municipal Drive, Jacksonville. Contact Rachel Howell at 501.942.3086 (H) 501.580.2782 (C) or rachel_howell@yahoo.com

[Little Rock Planning Commission](#)

Meets every other Thursday at 3:30 for agenda meeting and the commission public meeting meets same day at 4 at Little Rock City Hall in the City Board Room. Contact Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net.

[Little Rock Board of Directors:](#)

Meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6 pm. Agenda Board (to look at the items that will be discussed at the next board meeting) meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 4 pm. Both meet at Little Rock City Hall, 500 West Markham Street, Board of Directors Chambers, 2nd floor, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351.

[County Planning Board](#)

Meets the 4th Tuesday of every month. Agenda discussion starts at 2:30 pm and actual meeting follows at 3pm. Held at Jeffery Hawkins Conference Room – Pulaski County Regional Center. 501 W. Markham Street, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351.

[Quorum Court](#)

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month for agenda and then the full court meets 4th Tuesday. Both meetings start at 6 pm at 201 S. Broadway 4th Floor Quorum Court Room. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351 or Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net

[Central Arkansas Water Board](#)

Meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 2 pm at the 221 East Capitol, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351 or Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net

Observing Opportunities continued on next page.

[Water Reclamation Commission](#)

Meets the third Wednesday of each month at 4 pm in Little Rock Wastewater Offices, 11 Clearwater Drive. Currently no one is observing so we need someone to volunteer!!!!

Pulaski County Election Committee

Meets at Pulaski County Election Commission, 501 West Markham St., Suite A, Little Rock. Contact Mary Wildgen at mzwildgen@ualr.edu

Little Rock School District

Meet 5:30-6:30 at 810 Markham, Little Rock. Contact Norma Johnson at norma_johnson58@yahoo.com

[MetroPlan](#)

Executive Committee meets at 501 West Markham St., Suite B, Little Rock on the 3rd Thursday of every other month from 10 am-12 pm. Board meets last Wednesday of every other month from 10 am to 12 pm. Contact Mindy Morrell at 501 951 7773 or mindymorrell@hotmail.com

[North Little Rock Planning Commission:](#)

Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 4 pm at North Little Rock City Hall.

[North Little Rock City Council](#)

Meets every other Monday at 6 pm at City Council Chambers at City Hall. 300 Main Street, North Little Rock. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting.

[North Little Rock School District:](#)

Meets the 3rd Thursday of every month from 5:30 to 7 pm at 2700 North Poplar St., North Little Rock Administration Board Room. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting.

[All Boards and Commissions for North Little Rock Government](#) are broken down at this link.

Leadership Team For 2019-2020

Ruth Bell- one year remaining. 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net

Jogee Detchemendy - new term. 662.312.9277 or jogeeduzzi@gmail.com

Devita Harden- Treasurer new term. 770.617.3096

Norma Johnson-new term. norma_johnson58@yahoo.com

Carol Young- President one year remaining. 501.680.3947 or cyoung8151@sbcglobal.net

League Links:

[League of Women Voters \(National\)](#)

[League of Women Voters \(State of Arkansas\)](#)

[League of Women Voters of Pulaski County](#)

*Special thanks to Michelle Rhoden for managing the LWVPC website.