



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

The Lexington Voter

May 2010

The League of Women Voters of Lexington

President's Message

Dear Fellow Members:

Have you thought about asking a friend or relative to join the League with you? It is time to re-new memberships—for your convenience a form is enclosed with this newsletter—so why not make it two instead of one?

The primary candidate forums which are now running on Channel 20 are just one example of the work we do. We plan to sponsor similar informative sessions in the fall. But it takes human resources to carry out these and many other activities. Fresh faces add new vitality to any organization and with more members, we can do more to fulfill our mission.

Don't forget—your membership includes local, state, and national levels making it a real bargain. Renew now and bring a friend in with you!

Tammy Fagley

WELCOME...to new member **Lynn Flynn**, who attended the Annual Meeting at the invitation of Cindy and Richard Heine and signed up on the spot. Lynn says she is looking forward to working with Voter Services and participating in the *Dinner and Democracy* evenings. (See how easy it is to ask a friend?)

Notes from the Past...

Throughout this 90th year it seems appropriate to explore the people and events that have made the League what it is today. It is fitting at this time to recognize the contributions of our own members who have given so many years of their energy and wisdom to the League.

Members of Lexington LWV Give More than 50 Years of Service



Jay Ogden and Ruth Straus were honored at the April 17th Annual Meeting.

A highlight of the LWV Annual Meeting was recognition of members with half a century of dedication to the League.

Jay Ogden joined the LWV in 1948 while **Ruth Straus** first joined in 1946 with a subsequent two-year break; so both are in their 62nd year of membership. Both joined in other cities but have been long-time members here in Lexington.

Both ladies were given red rose corsages and encouraged to add their stories to the local LWV history to be compiled this summer by League intern Helen Sauer.

Fifty-year members unable to attend the celebration are **Edna Elias, Amanda Elliott, Charlotte Finucane, Janet Gleeson, Jean Hinchcliffe** and **Martha Jane Whiteside**.

In Memory

Elaine Adland, a fifty-year member of the League of Women Voters, died Sunday, April 18th. She was 92 years.

What Is the Health of our Democracy....

A report by the national LWV filed in 2005 found that “the foundations upon which American democracy was founded are crumbling.”



- ◆ Low voter turnout (39.9% of registered voters did not cast a ballot in 2008 general election) suggests citizens do not see the relevance of government to their lives.
- ◆ In 1996 the two major political parties tripled special interest contributions. (NOTE: The January, 2010, Supreme Court decision that government may not ban corporate political spending in candidate elections overruled two important precedents about First Amendment Rights.)
- ◆ More than three out of four Americans believe they do not have enough accurate information to participate at the voting booth.
- ◆ Elected officials do not adequately represent the diversity of voters they represent. (111th Congress includes 93 women, 41 African Americans, 29 Hispanics, and 12 Asians)
- ◆ Civic participation—measured by attendance at a town meeting on town or school affairs—continues to decline each year.

So is our democracy healthy? In a word, no. We, as citizens (and members of the LWV), have a responsibility to revitalize our democratic system. We must make our government more accountable, more responsible and more representative. We must provide the information, skills and civic organizations essential to effective participation. **And we ourselves must participate fully and actively.**

....So What Can We Do about It?

Through our League of Women Voters membership we are part of a non-partisan organization that is whole-heartedly political and works to influence policy through advocacy. We belong to a grassroots citizen network that is directed by the consensus of members nationwide.

Here are a few specific ideas about how **YOU** can impact the health of our national democracy through your affiliation with the LWV:

1. Fill out the enclosed membership form for 2010-2011 and return it to the LWV address with your check immediately.
2. Support the Education Fund which allows us to publish and distribute informative civic resources and also challenge students to examine issues and write about them in our essay competition.
3. Check out the national website for up-to-date information on issues and League positions on them—www.lwv.org.
4. Look over the member roster for friends and acquaintances. Think about League activities as a way to stay in touch with them.
5. Participate in LWV activities—learn about community issues through *Dinner and Democracy* evenings; volunteer to help register new voters at a naturalization ceremony; attend a candidate forum; offer to be a League monitor at a public meeting; come to just one board meeting.
6. **Share the VOTER with a friend and encourage her/him to join with you. (Think of the impact if each of us did just this one thing!)**

As you can see, democracy is built (and maintained) person by person. If the health of our system is to improve, it is up to all of us. Let's pay our dues, participate in some way in the work of the League, and reach out to others to share our League experience. We **CAN** make a difference!



Candidate Forums Provide Voter Information

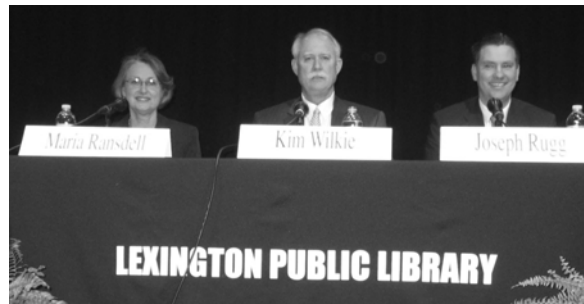


Urban County Council at-large candidates (l to r) Linda Gorton, Don Pratt, Ralph Ruschell, George Brown, Chris Hignite, Don Ellinger, and Steve Kay answered questions during the forum on Saturday, April 17. Absent were Kathy Plomin and Ismael Shalash.

The LWV provided opportunities for candidates appearing on the primary election ballot May 18 to answer questions and provide information in two days of sessions at the central branch of the Lexington Public Library. The sessions were all videotaped and are currently airing on the library's Channel 20.

There were sessions for candidates running for Council at-large positions, Senate District 12 Republican primary (Alice Forgy Kerr was absent but Andrew Roberts appeared); House District 45 Democratic primary (Matthew Vanderpool and Michael Coblenz), and District Judge Division 3. Jacob Hartlage withdrew from house District 88 Republican primary leaving Bill Farmer unopposed.

The League compiled questions which were drawn at random for the candidates to respond to. Vice President **Cindy Heine** moderated the sessions, keeping candidates and schedules on track.



Sunday, April 18 forum sessions included District Judge Division 3. Candidates are (l to r) Maria Ransdell, Kim Wilkie, and Joseph Rugg.

Isabel Yates Shares Lessons Learned during Lifetime of Public Service



Cindy Heine introduced former Vice Mayor of Lexington Isabel Yates at the LWV Annual Meeting held at Faith Lutheran Church.

Isabel Yates delighted League members with anecdotes about her life as teacher, mother, grandmother, entrepreneur, former urban county council member, and chairperson of the state parks foundation. She said she was raised in a small town by parents who believed that "you should be proud of the place you come from and the place should be proud of you."

When she and her family moved to Lexington in the 1980's she joined a friend to form a tour business which she said turned out to be a wonderful way to learn about Lexington.

When asked what she had learned in her years on the council, she quickly replied that "nothing is not controversial! No matter how thin the pancake, there are always two sides."

Ms. Yates is very proud of her work on the revitalization of McConnell Springs. This historic area with its natural water system of springs and pools has now become a unique feature of our downtown area.

She looks forward to the completion of the Pavilion on Cheapside and the Legacy Trail and plans to be present at the opening games of the World Equestrian Event in September. It is obvious that she thoroughly enjoys her adopted city and plans to participate in its activities for many years to come.

League members expressed gratitude for all of her years of service and the example she set as a volunteer who could accomplish great things through hard work and a positive attitude. She reminded us, "Volunteers can't be bought, hired or pushed. Just try to bring them along."

Remember to vote in the primary election Tuesday, May 18.



Complete information is available from the County Clerk's office at 859-255-VOTE.

<http://www.fayettecountyclerk.com>

The League of Women Voters of Lexington is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed, active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy

Return Service Requested

Lexington League of Women Voters
PO Box 22045
Lexington KY 40522

Calendar

LWV of Lexington Website: www.lwvlexington.com

Phone: 859-494-3203

NOTE: Board meetings are open to all MEMBERS; programs are open to the public

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| Saturday, May 15 | 10:30 a.m. | Lexington LWV Board Meeting and Brunch at Tammy Fagley's house, 3521 Laurenhaven Ct. |
| Tuesday, May 18 | | VOTE IN THE PRIMARY ELECTION |
| June 11-15 | | National LWV 2010 Convention in Atlanta, GA |

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