



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MOORE COUNTY

bulletin

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President's Message

Friends,

As we close the 2009-2010 League year, I want to say it has been a great time for our League. We have grown with new members and completed many activities for our League. Our program speakers shared informative ideas that impact us as community members. Our Lunch with Legends was a HUGE success again, thanks to Mary Lou Bernett and Ginger Finney as well as Tom Bernett for organizing it as well as presenting an outstanding program. I, along with many members who attended, look forward to next year's "three outstanding women".

Next year looks promising with many things to do. We will hold a candidates' forum for the November elections; still participate in our local festivals; delve into new studies from our proposed programming; possibly re-create Civics 101-the League Way; continue outreach within our community for new members and many more activities. I hope many of you will assist with these efforts as well as attend the events. It takes ALL of us to represent our outstanding League.

There are many of you to thank for making things happen in our League--too many to name individually. I personally want to thank everyone for participating in any of our activities representing our League. PLEASE continue to support us in every endeavor.

I hope you stay cool over the summer and relax. Remember, you are cordially and encouraged to participate in your Board's Retreat on Tuesday, August 3, 2010 at Beacon Ridge Golf and Country Club. This is the time your Board lays out the plans for the coming new year. Your participation is always welcome!

Again, thanks for a most successful year--stay cool and relaxing. It has been a pleasure working with you!

Sincerely,

Jo Nicholas





September luncheon meeting

Place – Table on the Green
Midland Country Club

Date – Tuesday, September 21
Registration starts at 11:30

Your Telephone Tree Caller will call you!
If you are not called by Friday, Sept. 17 call
Charlotte Gallagher at 944-9611 to make a
reservation.

PROGRAM FOR THE SEPTEMBER LUNCHEON MEETING

TIM LEA

CHAIRMAN, MOORE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October luncheon meeting

Place – Table on the Green
Midland Country Club

Date – Tuesday, October 19, 2010
Registration starts at 11:30

Your Telephone Tree Caller will call you!
If you are not called by Friday, October 15,
call Charlotte Gallagher at 944-9611 to make a
reservation.

SPEAKER FOR THE OCTOBER LUNCHEON MEETING

TO BE ANNOUNCED

LUNCHEONS: the luncheon price is **\$12** per person.

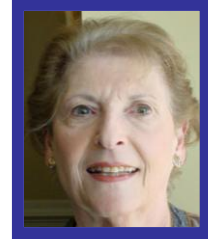
This is payable by check only, please. It would greatly expedite the check-in process if you would write your check for \$12 made payable to LWVMC prior to your arrival. Check-in begins at 11:30 A.M. The restaurant charges the League for ALL luncheon reservations. If you need to cancel, please call Charlotte Gallagher (944-9611) by 12 noon on the Saturday prior to the luncheon meeting. If you cancel after Saturday noon, you will be billed \$12.





The History of Opinion Polls

Selma Schwartzbach



The first known example of an opinion poll was a local straw poll conducted by The Harrisburg Pennsylvanian in 1824, showing Andrew Jackson leading John Quincy Adams by 335 votes to 169 in the contest for the United States Presidency. Such straw votes gradually became more popular, but they remained local, usually citywide phenomena. In 1916, the Literary Digest embarked on a national survey (partly as a circulation-raising exercise) and correctly predicted Woodrow Wilson's election as President. They mailed out millions of postcards and simply counted those that were returned. They were able to call the next 4 elections.

In 1936, however, the Digest came unstuck. Its 2.3 million "voters" constituted a huge sample: however they were generally more Affluent Americans who tended to have Republican sympathies. The Literary Digest was ignorant of this new bias. The week before election day, it reported that Alf Landon was far more popular than Franklin D. Roosevelt. At the same time George Gallup conducted a far smaller, but more scientifically-based survey, in which he polled a demographically representative sample. Gallup correctly predicted Roosevelt's landslide victory. The Literary soon went out of business, while polling started to take off.

Things went wrong in 1948 when they reported that Thomas Dewey would defeat Harry S. Truman. Major polling organizations, including Gallup and Roper, indicated a landslide for Dewey.

Do All Polls Accurately Report Responses or Do Some Create Them?

Unfortunately, there are no policing mechanisms in place to help readers or viewers distinguish between different polls.



Over the last decade public opinion polls have become a standard feature of American newspapers. Most newspapers buy syndicated polls from such organizations as Gallup and Harris and readily accept polls from external sources. Many metropolitan newspapers have been conducting polls themselves; researchers have described how a small daily conducts its own weekly public opinion surveys.

While many welcome this development, others have been quick to criticize. Polls have been condemned as a form of “checkbox” journalism. This “manufactured news” it is said neither accurately reflects opinion nor impresses the public. Other critics have stated that polls are taken too seriously, consequently altering public opinion and political processes.

The most fundamental criticism of polls is that they can deceive as well as inform. Pollsters know that survey results can be altered by subtle changes in question wording, by differences in interview methods or by sampling different populations. The public might assume “scientific” survey results without asking if the questions were loaded or samples biased.

For a price, political candidates, interest groups, and activists can get their hands on a powerful and far reaching tool to spread their message: a public opinion poll. Polls were once so costly and labor intensive that only well - financed companies could afford to conduct them. But today, anyone with a couple hundred dollars can hire a polling company to field questions to a sampling of strangers.

Organizations can instruct pollsters to ask specific questions, phrased in a way that will yield the responses they want. In cases where the results are not as revealing, these organizations can still control their message by publicizing their interpretations in releases or blogs. New technology has made polls faster to produce, cheaper to fund and easier to circulate. The 24 hour news cycle and online media have made it harder for people to distinguish between “good” and “bad” polls and to discern when polling data is being manipulated for political gain. (South Carolina Bush poll)



Many polling firms have found new ways to cut costs by employing interactive voice response technology. Rather than pay people to conduct polls over the phone, a pre-recorded voice instructs participants to dial corresponding digits when answering a series of “yes” and “no” questions. We also have polls conducted over the internet, as well.

With the great number of polls released each day it becomes difficult to tell which rely on sound or shoddy methodology. Pollsters are not always open about how they conduct their polls. News outlets don't bother to ask. Groups that commission polls are themselves not concerned with methodology in so far as the results help advance their agendas. Internet polling results and the Interactive voice response polls have eliminated the human voice and there is little way of telling if the respondent is taking the poll seriously or, in fact, is who they claim to be.

Many computer surveys violate a core principle of solid public opinion polling by not choosing participants at random but rather it is the participant who chooses whether to take the survey, often in return for prizes. Polling experts such as the Gallup and Harris organizations are concerned with how questions are phrased and what it means that the results are being used for political gain rather than as an honest assessment of public opinion.

The following are examples of the types of polls and biases in use. The next time you are involved with a poll, you might want to try to identify which of these are being employed.

Tracking Polls: Used to estimate trends.
Uses new data then throws out old.





Non-response bias: ~~Some people do not answer calls from strangers or refuse to answer the poll.~~ Those who answer may be markedly different in their opinions than the others. Page 7 July 2010

Response Bias: Answers given by respondents do not reflect their true beliefs and may be deliberately engineered by unscrupulous pollsters in order to generate a view to agree with their clients.

Coverage Bias: Use of samples that are not representative of the population as a consequence of the methods used. Telephone sampling has a built in error because today many people have only mobile phones and pollsters cannot call mobile phones because it is unlawful to make an unsolicited call to phones where a phone owner may be charged to taking a call.

Wording of Question: the order in which questions may be asked and the number and form of alternative answers. For instance, you may be asked about a person who may be described as “the leading candidate” indicating a subtle bias. Issues may be dealt with in a similar manner. One positive way to control for bias is to rotate the order in which questions are asked or to split -sample by asking one group one set of questions and another group a different version of the same question.

The Shy Tory Factor: If an opinion or political stance is popular in your area you may just want to go along with the crowd but not actually believe in your response. It refers to a factor found during English polling.

Push Poll: Opinion polls which try to get you to respond in favor of their client.

All over the world there are many notable polling companies some being: AC Nielson, George Gallup, Franklin and Marshall College Poll, and Harris/Decima. Many newspapers and TV stations have their own polling organizations, as well.

Organizations will try to influence not only the public but public officials thru polling on any hot topic in their geographic area. Developing a Bandwagon effect, the Underdog effect and the Boomerang effect can indicate how polls can directly affect political choices of the electorate.

Polling in all of its forms can be an insidious way of controlling our thoughts from everything such as which type of salad dressing is the most desirable to which form of government is actually preferred depending on how the question is asked and who the respondent is.

Sources:

Jeanna Bryner, Senior Writer, Live Science.com

Wikipedia, Opinion Poll

Pew Research Center

Emma Dumain, Congress.org “When Polls are Weapons”

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, “The Spiral of Silence”



**LWVNC Council
Little River Resort
April 17-19, 2010**

My perspective,

Mary Lou Bennett

The best part of the Council from my point of view was meeting “leaguers” from across the state. The attendance was quite varied with 10 Leagues representing both “ends” of the state and plenty in the middle.

The speakers were informative and interesting, but I especially enjoyed the “one on one” conversations with the other members. Each League works and strives to meet the same basic goals, raising money, encouraging new members, and continuing to reach out to their communities, just like we do in Moore Co. We all work in these areas with varying degrees of success and new ideas are the catalysts to reaching our goals.

My favorite part of the weekend was on Sunday when we met in small “round table” discussion groups. Two of the three groups were led by other Leaguers and were especially informative and enlightening

The roundtable discussion regarding the ERA amendment and why the Henderson County League has decided not to pursue this issue was both interesting and a bit sad. Although I personally never needed a Constitutional amendment to know that men and women should be treated equally, I am painfully aware that it was not going to happen without a law....remember, it took 75 years just to get our right to vote.... The discussion centered primarily on the fact that many young women today don't necessary realize how “unequal” they are until they hit glass ceilings, etc. When some of us in the group were young adults there were still many limitations on our choices, even though we all were able to vote. Although several of those doors have been opened for women today, there are many that remained closed in the most basic areas of life, equal pay for equal work being among the top concerns. It was agreed in our group that we would continue through the blog to keep the ERA issue alive and in front of people and hopefully some young women will rally to the cause and we can bring it to the NC legislature for ratification in the future.



During lunch on Saturday, I was discussing membership with two ladies at my table. They were relating a story of meeting some young ladies in their community and informing these gals about the League. They were telling the ladies what the League is about and what our purpose is. They were also talking about the merits of League membership, and the response from the young women was “that sounds great, we’ll probably join the League when we’re older”. - Ahem. Do you think there might be an image problem as it relates to younger women in our communities?

This was addressed at length during Sunday’s roundtable discussion on membership. Many great ideas were shared:

- have an occasional evening meeting so that members who work during the day can attend
- invite potential members to a recruiting event
- arrange for long time members to mentor new members to help them learn about the group
- make sure that new members are contacted to participate

These were just a few of the many good ideas shared at our table. The ladies were enthusiastic and more than willing to share their ideas and help with any League that requested it.

It is always fun and informative to meet the people around North Carolina who share the same passions as I do, as well as learning how they participate to make that passion come alive. So, LWVMC, thanks in advance for sending me to be one of the representatives to the National convention in GA – I can hardly wait to meet new people and get new ideas from League members from all over the country! (And sell more scarves and make lots of money!)



LWVNC Council
Little River Resort
April 17-19, 2010

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MOORE COUNTY



erspective,

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July 2010

Mary Lou Bernett and I attended the LWVNC Council this April. I felt the speakers at the Council were the best of all the League meetings I have attended here in NC.

There were 29 total, with 10 Leagues represented at Council. It was held at the lovely Little River Country Club. We were welcomed by the Mayor of Carthage.

Basically the business was approving the budget. But the speakers and roundabouts (small discussion groups) made the event stand out in my mind. All of the speakers might be good as program for our monthly luncheon.

State Budget and Taxes. The first speaker was Rob Thomas, from Together NC. He showed slides about the State's \$20 billion budget. This budget year, a shortfall of \$400 has accumulated, as the entitlement programs have grown but revenue has decreased. The temporary tax package and the federal stimulus will end in 2011.

Mr. Thomas reported of the income collected for the state budget, 32% comes from personal income tax, 23% from sales tax, 23% from property tax and 4% from corporate taxes. NC is promoted as 'a good state to do business in' due to the low corporate taxes. The sales tax is only on items, not services at all. Sales tax affects the lower income heavily and in a recession, people buy less goods, but may continue to use services. Taxes should be adequate, stable and sustainable and also fair. He suggested a broader base of taxes, such as including services. As the adjournment date of the State legislature is July 4, the budget will be presented to the Governor soon.

Then, Dr. Kathy Shea, a pediatrician who when on to study Global Changes, spoke. She gave a very scary scenario of how the course of diseases, such as malaria, has travel more northerly as the climate is warmer. Also, less frost in places, does not kill bugs that carry diseases. She also would be a good speaker for our luncheons.

Climate Change. After lunch, we were shown the short CD from Oxfam, entitled, ‘Sisters on the Planet’, how four different women from different parts of the earth adapt to climate changes. From the Oxfam handouts, “people living in developing countries are more than 20 times as likely to be affected by climate –related disasters, as people in the developed world.. At the same time, they are least able to cope with these disasters.” The CD is upsetting and touching, and certainly very appropriate to show at a luncheon meeting.

After lunch, we heard Adam Sotak, from Democracy NC describe the new law allowing **17 and 17 year olds to pre-register to vote.** The Voter Registration forms now have a new box where a young person checks. The new law was passed by wide margins, having both Republican and Democratic sponsors. When the young person is nearly 18, the Board of Elections verifies the registration form and sends the person their voter registration card.

Attendees were then broken up into small groups or ‘roundabouts’ for discussion of three items:

1. NC is one of the states that never ratified the **ERA** and the League of Henderson County was proposing that the State League take it to the NC legislature by 2011 for passage. However, there were only a few people who attended the caucuses on the issue, so they assumed there was no momentum at this time. They did invite League members interested in the issue to send information to the State League website.
2. **Print PR**, called ‘Toot your Own Horn’; Tom Burton, formerly of the News and Observer facilitated the group. (In our area, with local papers, we are very lucky that they have room for most of our submissions.) Letters to the editor are well read, and an occasionally op-ed piece, if the writer is an unexpected authority on the issue. ‘Blogs’ on issues are ways to mention the League position, so when people (including newspaper editors) Google that topic, the written League blog will come up and the League member will be an expert on the topic.
3. **How to Obtain and Maintain Members** was the final roundabout topic discussed. Jo Nicholas was a contributor in this topic and Carole Ellis was the facilitator. There were many ideas discussed.

At the end of the Council meeting, board members of our LWV of Moore County gave a repeat summary of the League’s Public Policy Positions. This was the program for our League luncheon earlier this year, titled ‘**Where we fit in the big picture**’. Barbara Farr, John Reagan, Mary Lou Bernett and myself read summaries about Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy that were found in the publication, ‘Impact on Issues 2008-2010’.

Such a good event; not enough time or paper to list it all. I have contact numbers on the speakers if we want to use them at future luncheon meetings.



TREASURER'S REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2009 - JUNE 10, 2010



Checking account balance as of July 1, 2009

\$ 2,393.13

INCOME:

Dues	\$ 2,992.50
Fund Raising:	
Lake Party	1,325.00
Lunch with Legends	4,530.00
Scarves Sold	315.00
Monthly Luncheons	4,021.00
Board Retreat	260.00
Transfer from Memorial Fund	274.10
CEF – Poverty Report	485.00
Voter Services	200.00
Transfer from Convention Savings	1,305.00
Interest – July through May	1.55

Total Income -

+ 15,709.15

EXPENSES:

Board Retreat	\$ 334.00
Monthly Luncheons	4,008.00
Fund Raising:	
Lake Party	875.00
Lunch with Legends	2,463.75
Scarves	626.85
Poverty Reports	446.92
Voter Services	811.10
Ruth Pauley Lectures	400.00
LWVUS – PMP	2,072.80
LWVNC – PMP	858.00
North Carolina Council	100.00
Community Outreach-Moore Co. NAACP	50.00
Publications-Bulletins, Programs & Directories	281.28
Issues Committee	161.30
Public Relations – Publicity	130.00
National Convention	1,305.00
Transfer-Checking to Convention Savings	1,010.00



Misc. Expenses-Office Supplies(copy paper,
cartridges, stamps) copies, box rent, etc. 802.20
Cash given to Jo Nicholas for change at
National Convention 100.00



Total Expenses -		- 16,836.20
Checking account balance as of June 10, 2010		\$ 1,266.08
Convention Savings as of July 1, 2009	\$ 2,959.13	
Transfer from checking	+ 1,010.00	
Transfer to checking	- 1,305.00	
Refund from LWVUS- Convention	+ 200.00	
Interest – July through May	5.75	
Convention Savings balance as of June 10, 2010		\$ 2,869.88
Certificate of Deposit balance as of July 1, 2009	\$ 4,290.87	
Interest – July through May	57.34	
Certificate of Deposit balance as of June 10, 2010		\$ 4,348.21
CEF balance as of July 1, 2009	\$ 1,959.40	
Poverty Report	- 475.00	
Donation	+ 10.00	
CEF balance as of June 10, 2010		\$ 1,494.40
Balance of all accounts as of June 10, 2010		\$ 9,978.57

FISCAL YEAR REPORT WILL BE PROVIDED AFTER JUNE 30, 2010

*Respectfully submitted,
Ginger Finney, Treasurer*

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.