

The Helena Voter

League of Women Voters
of the Helena Area

January 2013 Voter
Volume 46, Number 1

President's Message from Barbara Martin

The snow is falling and Arizona is calling, and it's time for the change of guard, so Joy will be our noble leader until spring with lots of help from Rita Blouke and Sue Hoell.

This has been an exciting and busy year to date. The good news —it will continue.

In September we focused on voter service. Mait, Ellen, Julie and I registered voters on Nation-al Voter Registration Day. Barbara Harris appeared on the KBLI "Coffee Break" radio show to talk about voting issues. Diane created an excellent guide for voters targeting absentee voting that she sent to the *Independent Record* and the county election office.

In November Patty Dahl from Rocky Mountain Development Council talked about early child-hood education, Head Start and the services it offers, and the impact of early childhood interventions. Claudette Morton reported on education. (*See her report on next page.*)

In December local legislators Mary Caferro and Steve Gibson visited with us about upcoming legislation on voting and election laws, campaign finance and good government.

In January we'll have an update on the legislature, and in February our meeting will be on healthcare. On March 10-11 we will host the state League convention here in Helena. (See article on page 4.)

We are pleased to welcome five new members: Janet Braico, Nikki Whearty, Gail Hewitt, Carol Seaman and Mari Katherine Hodges!

I wish you all a happy and prosperous new year.

Barbara

Education Report

by Claudette Morton

The Board of Public Education has made significant revisions to the school accreditation standards including test scores as a part of the requirements for schools to be accredited. The Office of Public Instruction piloted the ACT Plus Writing last year and will be giving the test to all juniors this year. Finally, the legislature is in the process of determining the costs of the revised accreditation standards, the Common Core and the Common Core Assessment.

Board of Public Education:

Significant revisions in the accreditation standards.

Office of Public Instruction:

Piloted the ACT Plus Writing to Gear-Up Schools last spring and will require all schools to give the test to all juniors next year.

Determining the technology needs for testing Montana students on the Common Core in 2014.

Legislature:

is in the process of determining the costs of the accreditation standards, the Common Core and the Common Core Assessment.

Note: Local League member Claudia Morton is a Montana native with bachelors and masters degrees in theatre, and a doctorate in education from the University of Montana. She began her education career in higher education, moved to public schools and then to the Office of Public Instruction where she was the English language arts specialist and wrote four Mellon grants for school college collaboration. After eight years she became the executive secretary to the Montana Board of Public Education, where she guided the work to create the first student standards and coordinated them with new teacher education standards. She was associate professor and director of rural education at the University of Montana-Western. She returned to Helena in 1996 and began a non-profit called the Montana Small Schools Alliance to help small schools meet state and federal mandates. She retired in 2010 and now does some consulting, but enjoys going south during the legislature, working in her garden and spending time with her family.

Membership Dues

If you haven't yet paid your League dues, now is definitely the time to do it. Please write out a check for \$45 (a little more if you can afford it) and mail to Marcy McLean, 9 Reeder's Village Dr., Helena MT 59601.

New League Member Introductions

Janet (Jan) Braico was born and raised in Great Falls. She graduated from Great Falls High School in 1964 and attended MSU in Bozeman, graduating in 1968 with a BS degree in home economics education with a minor in health education and an elementary education endorsement. Her teaching experiences have been in suburban Minneapolis, Helena (CR Anderson) and Jefferson County (Montana City School). Her love of the MSU Bobcats is sincere and strong. Realizing that there are Grizzly fans in the Helena LWV, she promises to bring cookies to the League meeting following any encounter with the Grizzlies that the Bobcats *do not win*. Her reason for joining LWV is to assure that each eligible member of our community has the opportunity to vote, they understand the issues that are being voted on, and they have a clear understanding of the views of each candidate for office.

Mari Katherine Hodges returned to Helena in 2008 after concluding a fairly eclectic career. She married shortly after college and spent three wonderful years in Hawaii, after which her husband was transferred to the Pentagon in Washington, DC; the move there decided her career objectives. She attended Georgetown University Law School, and after graduation started working on Capitol Hill for various lobbying firms. Politics proved less than inspirational, so she gave up lobbying and any political aspirations to become a university professor and librarian, and in the process acquired three more master's degrees and enjoyed a 30-plus-year career working at three universities: Marymount University (Arlington VA) and the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University (Philadelphia PA). When she left Drexel she found her true passion when she went to work part time at The Athenaeum of Philadelphia cataloging rare books from the 15th and 16th century. She currently resides in her parents' old home on the upper west side of Helena and spends her time on traveling, her pets, her garden, cooking, knitting and sewing doll clothes for her middle granddaughter.

State League Convention

Our local League will host the LWV-MT convention here in Helena on March 10 and 11.

We'll meet in the early evening on Sunday, March 10 at Plymouth Congregational Church on Winne Ave., where we'll host a casual dinner on Sunday and have a short orientation on lobbying.

Monday morning, March 11, we'll meet in the Montana Historical Society auditorium for coffee and orientation. The room will be open and available to

League members throughout the day. League members will attend hearings or visit with their legislators.

At noon on Monday we'll have a catered lunch in the auditorium with a speaker, followed by the convention in the afternoon.

Depending on the number of League members attending, we'll need volunteers to be bed and breakfast hosts. Sue Hoell has agreed to lead the organization of the convention. If you're willing to be a B&B host or to help with the convention, or would like information about attending convention events, please email Sue at s1hoell@msn.com.