

EQUALITY STATE VOTER

SPECIAL EDITION – 150 YEARS OF SUFFRAGE

December 10, 1869 – December 10, 2019

*By Robin Hill, LWVWY representative to the Governor's
Council on Women's Suffrage*

The big day is almost here so all eyes will be on Cheyenne December 10th. A Women's Suffrage Anniversary March starts at 8:00 a.m. at West 17th St. and Carey Ave. ending at the Capitol, where at 9 a.m. Governor Mark Gordon will proclaim Dec. 10 as "Wyoming Women's Suffrage Day." Tours, exhibits, and talks will take place throughout the day at the Capitol and Cheyenne Civic Center.

Cheyenne LWV Players

At noon at the capitol, five members of the Cheyenne LWV will present their original play "Wonderful Wyoming Women Voters." This play was premiered in Cheyenne during the summer festivities and was written by several long-term members of the LWV.

In the evening, the free showing of the Wyo PBS documentary on Wyoming suffrage will be accompanied by the world premiere of the new song by local composer Anne Guzzo, sung by the UWyo Women's Chorus, Bel Canto.

A complete schedule of all suffrage events is posted at <https://travelwyoming.com/suffrage-events>.

Continues through 2020

The Governor's Committee on Women's Suffrage would like to see the momentum of December 10 carry through the entire official span of the Suffrage Celebration, to next September. Mention the Suffrage Calendar to those who might have an idea for a project. Many programs are already listed, realizing our hopes of collecting local events and projects. Find it at the LWVWY website: wyowomensvote150.wyominglwg.org/PublicProjects

More copies of the LWVWY suffrage poster are printed and available on request. We also have two large banners printed from the poster, for parades or displays. The banner was featured as a contingent of Laramie suffragists marched in the Jubilee Days parade this summer.

Coins are for sale at suffragecoins.travelwyoming.com, as well as T-shirts and bags. Anyone can join the general-interest mailing list. As always, questions and requests may be sent to wyowomensvote150@wyominglwg.org.

At a Glance: LWVWY Upcoming Calendar

Tuesday, Jan. 7, 5:30 p.m.: LWVWY board, conference call (First Tuesday of every other month)

Thursday, Jan. 9 5:30: Fremont County LWV organizational meeting, Lander library

Monday, Feb. 10, 10 a.m.: Legislative session begins (<https://wyoleg.gov/>) ends Thur. March 12

Last weekend in April/first in May: State convention, Cheyenne (overnight both Friday and Saturday)

June 25-28, 2020: LWVUS National Convention, Washington, D.C.

August 18, 2020: 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment's ratification

Letter from the President

Winter Greetings!

Here's an action list for local leagues and members:

Matthew Link who presented a program on voting methods at the state convention is available to present the same program at local league meetings in **January**. His contact: info@wyominglwv.org. A video of the convention presentation is on the website.

The next census count will be April 1, 2020. LWVUS has a three-part program to encourage everyone to participate. The census counts determine funding for many different federal programs—libraries, senior centers, schools, roads, etc. Wyoming's receiving its fair share depends on its accurate count. Go to <https://www.lwv.org/other-issues/census> for more information. Many Wyoming counties and communities have Complete Count Committees. Is your league represented? What could you do through the League or independently? Contact Sid Walter if you'd like to work on this.

The board approved these legislative priorities at its September meeting:

Federal: Voter protection, census, redistricting.

State: Funding state government, Medicaid expansion, election Integrity. We remain committed to paper. Volunteer to work for one of these goals at info@wyominglwv.org.

All members are welcome to attend the state board conference calls. Access information, agendas and documents for the meetings are posted at wyominglwv.org/private/state_private/Materials_yyyymmdd. Approved minutes are in a separate folder. Email info@wyominglwv.org for user name and password.

People Powered Fair Maps (PPFM) is a national campaign by the LWV to encourage, support and advocate for fair redistricting nationally. Though we have just one congressional district (again the census determines the number of districts), Wyoming LWV has committed to advocate for fair redistricting at the federal and state level. Lynne Ipiña attended a training and will be sharing material. We are committed to taking action. Volunteer at info@wyominglwv.org.

Remember that LWV is open to everyone 16 and older. Citizenship is no longer required. Caring about our democracy is. Willingness to learn is. Talk up LWV wherever you go.

Thanks to

- § Karen Jerger and Sandy Shuptrine for attending the Interim Joint Corporation committee meeting in Jackson and reporting on it
- § Kelley Pelissier and Marguerite Herman for attending joint committee meetings in Cheyenne
- § Robin Hill for her dedication to the Wyoming Women's Suffrage Celebration
- § Linda Barton for her work to organize a LWV of Fremont County. There will be public meeting Thursday, Jan. 9, 5:30 p.m., at the Lander public library to introduce the League. Please encourage your Fremont County friends to attend. There's a Facebook page too with additional information.
- § Campbell County LWV for judging the Making Democracy Work nominations. The winner will be announced later.
- § The Cheyenne League for its educational and delightful play.
- § Our new members. We welcome you.

A digression: I looked "suffrage" up. Did it come from "suffer"? Online sources disagreed, so I turned to my compact Oxford English Dictionary—that's the one with the miniscule print. The ninth definition is "a casting of a vote; voting; the exercise of a right to vote; election by voting," first found in 1665. The eleventh is "the right or privilege of voting as a member of a body, state, etc." The first citation is the U.S. Constitution in

1789. They have different Latin roots; there was a voting tablet, called a “suffragium” compared with “sufferer,” “before + bear.” (Compact OED, p. 3143 and Random House College Dictionary, revised ed, p. 1313).

See you at a suffrage celebration,

Susan

(Susan Simpson, Laramie, was re-elected State President for the LWVWY at convention 2019)

Campbell County News

Sue Knesel

Campbell County League of Women Voters has held planning meeting this fall. We are having a community program December 10 to celebrate Wyoming Women’s Suffrage, details below. January we will offer a public program about ranked voting, February a community program about Harry Truman to celebrate President Day.

December 10 Program: **The State of Equality; Wyoming Women Get the Vote**

On Tuesday, December 10th at 7:00 p.m. the Rockpile Museum and the Campbell County League of Women Voters invite the public to this free screening of the soon-to-be-released Wyoming PBS documentary, ***The State of Equality; Wyoming Women Get the Vote.***

Join in the celebration of the signing into Wyoming law on December 10, 1869 – women of Wyoming had the right to vote, run for office, they could own property, have any job they wished, own a business, earn equal pay, and manage their own finances. This was 50 years before the rest of the country recognized women’s right to vote.

The Campbell County Historical Society will have their newly published book available:

***Wyoming
Home of the Women’s Vote
55 Amazing Campbell County Women***

The cost is \$15 and includes a deck of cards with each book purchased. Special “Amazing” guests will be in attendance and available to sign your book!

More information:

Rockpile Museum: Stephan Zacharia 682-5723

CC LWV: Judie Semple

Cheyenne League News

Kelley Pelissier

The Cheyenne *A League of Her Own* acting troupe presented a second presentation of its “Wonderful Wyoming Women Voters” on September 17 in front of a sold-out crowd at Laramie County Community College as part of the Chambers Speakers Series. Two historians (Mike Kassel and Rick Ewig) augmented the performance with a follow-up discussion. Troupe members and play authors Mary Guthrie and Rosalind Schliske have applied for a copyright for the play, and it will be available others to use with a suggested donation to the League of Women Voters. The Cheyenne Troupe will present the play on December 10 on Wyoming Women’s Suffrage Day in Cheyenne.

On Thursday, October 10, County Clerk (and Cheyenne League member) Debra Lee made a presentation at the Laramie County Library on "How We Vote," which included an overview of how we vote in the U.S. and internationally. Voter registration was also available during the program. League members assisted in the presentation, and member Rosalind Schliske created a PowerPoint in two distinct parts, with one tracing the history of voting in the United States through its laws and technology. It includes an excellent suffrage video done to a Lady Gaga song as well as funny video on youth voting and an NPR video on why we vote on Tuesday. The PowerPoint could be used to provide an informative and entertaining program on voting in the United States. League members were in attendance to provide assistance and information.

On October 19, several women representing Cheyenne suffragist celebrants traveled to Laramie to march in the UW homecoming parade to commemorate its theme, "Breaking Through" – a shout out to women's suffrage.

On November 5, the Cheyenne League partnered with the Laramie County Library to host the first "Speed Repping" event at which elected officials were available to speak to constituents in brief, timed one-on-one conversations. This turned into a very successful event with 12 elected officials attending, including Governor Mark Gordon, Cheyenne Mayor Marian Orr, State Senators Affie Ellis and Tara Nethercott, State Representatives Sara Burlingame and Sue Wilson, County Commissioner Linda Heath, City Council member Jeff White, Laramie County School Board trustees Marguerite Herman, Christy Klaassen, and Richard Wiedersphan, and Laramie County College Trustee Brenda Lyttle. Around 35-40 residents turned out to have 4-minute discussions with their elected officials.

The Cheyenne League also participated in a Naturalization Ceremony on November 18 at which 19 new United States citizens took the Oath of Citizenship from U.S. District Judge Nancy Freudenthal. League members presented each new citizen with a copy of the U.S. Constitution and rose.

The Cheyenne League is now planning for the 2020 Wyoming League of Women Voters State Convention. Dates have not been determined yet, but it will be in late April or early May. The format will be changed somewhat from the past to accommodate a tour of the renovated State Capitol Building on Friday afternoon, followed by convention beginning Saturday morning instead of Saturday noon, ending Sunday at noon. Delegates will be encouraged to share rooms to help with the 2-day stay needed for convention.

Laramie News

Susan Simpson and Judy Knight

Laramie's board continues to meet on the first Monday of the month with a break for the holidays. Member Matthew Link presented a program on alternative voting methods in November. Brownies, chocolate chip cookies, lemon bars, and macaroons were the choices for voters in the mock election. Lemon bars won most of the votes in three of the four different methods for counting votes. No campaigning was allowed in the polling place, and the voters (audience) did not get to see the choices (AKA meeting the candidates) beforehand. Had that been the case, the sticky and gooey lemon bars might have lost out to their more presentable fellow candidates.

The board will be hosting a public meeting in the spring with our Laramie High School government teacher Meaghan Todd who attended a weekend training at Harvard University this summer, for LWV-sponsored training on using case studies to engage the audience in government topics. LWVWY nominated Ms. Todd as our teacher-representative to join those from other Leagues across the country.

Members can gather weekly at The Rising Café in the Laramie Plains Civic Center on Wednesdays at 4 p.m. to whenever we decide to leave for unscripted conversations and opportunity to connect with each other. You're all invited.

Esther Morris: What you didn't know about her—and more

Judy Knight

Despite all we think we know about Esther Hobart Morris it turns out there is a lot more to her story that has now been revealed by Utah author Kathryn Swim Cummings. Her book: "Esther Hobart Morris: The Unembellished Story of the Nation's First Female Judge," came out this year, just in time for Wyoming suffrage events.

This well-written biography reveals much about Mrs. Morris, including her early life, her first marriage to a civil engineer and his untimely death about two years later. She was left to make her own way with an infant son, Archibald Slack (who later became the editor and publisher of the *Cheyenne Leader* newspaper).

We know about her second marriage to semi-successful investor John Morris in Illinois, birth of twin boys, and eventual move to South Pass City to join her husband who was often away from home. And we know that she has been elevated to almost mythical status – some would say a status she didn't deserve.

What we didn't know was the fundamental role her sons played in her life story, and the near total lack of support from her husband. Esther's oldest boy, Archie, and one of the twins, Robert were her advocates, without which her story would be quite different. The former swore her in as the Sweetwater County Justice of the Peace, and the latter was her court clerk. And that just the beginning of the new bits of info about her.

I found it fascinating to learn how connected she was to the suffrage movement through contacts with friends and relatives active in the movement from coast to coast. While we now downplay her role in bringing woman's suffrage to Wyoming, it turns out that she was much more tuned in to the cause than some would give her credit for.

Cummings has unearthed photos of Esther that I had not seen before, along with others of her family, friends and the places where she lived. I recommend it highly to League members and anyone interested in Wyoming history. She was much more than the first female judge in Wyoming—this is the story of one woman who came to Wyoming late in life and who succeeded despite the dramatic twists and turns her life took.

Copies of are for sale at the Carriage House Gift Shop at the Laramie Plains Museum, 603 Ivinson Ave., and are also available at on-line booksellers. But it's a good one to ask your local bookseller to stock.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WYOMING – 2019-2020
Bolded Text Is Revised

Officers		
President 2019-2021	Susan Simpson*	president@wyominglww.org
Vice President 2018-2020	Kelley Pelissier*	VP@swyominglww.org
Secretary 2019-2021	Judy Knight*	secretary@wyominglww.org
Treasurer 2018-2020	Katie Morgan*	treasurer@wyominglww.org
Elected State Board Members		
2019-2021	Jim Brown *	
2018-2020	Margaret Brown	mld@wyominglww.org
2019-2021	Marguerite Herman	
2019-2020	Sherry Lowell	
Appointed State Board Members		
2019-2020	Jamie Egolf	
2019-2020	Sid Walter	

*Members of Executive Committee

ff Board Roles		
Wyoming Voter Publisher	Mary Bower	
State MLD Coach and Cheyenne	Margaret Brown	mld@wyominglww.org
League Web Team/Wyoming Women's Suffrage Celebration	Robin Hill	info@wyominglww.org wyouwomensvote150@wyominglww.org
Local MLD Coach: Laramie	Cindy Elrod	
Legislative Liaison	Marguerite Herman	LegLiaison@wyominglww.org
LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS/Representatives		
Campbell Co.	Sue Knesel	campbellcty@wyominglww.org
Casper	Jim Brown	casper@wyominglww.org
Cheyenne	Patt Hays	cheyenne@wyominglww.org
Laramie	Lynne Ipiña Nancy Lockwood	laramie@wyominglww.org

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