

LWVROMAFH Memoir Project

Interview with Georgeann Hall, 9/11/13, by Judy Rosenblatt

Before I joined the League, my impression was of educated women who cared about government. I was married and had two children at the time I called the Roseville League membership chair (Claire Nielson).

I joined a unit that also had Judy Rosenblatt as a member. At that time there were longer meetings than we have today with more in depth discussion. I enjoyed the people---and the free babysitting.

The League is more flexible now. There is no list of rules to follow all the time. We are able to do concurrence (agree with another League's position), instead of our own study, which didn't exist when I joined.

An important issue for me was low and moderate income housing in Roseville, for which we lobbied the city (and lost). I was on the local program committee. I remember Bernie Hilbert also being on the committee.

I became president of the Roseville League after making a deal with Carolyn Cushing that we would each serve three years. I went to the national convention in Atlanta and marched with Gloria Steinem for the ERA (which was very important to me).

In 1975 I was delivering flyers for a bond issue to fund a new village hall. The League made \$900 from the city for helping with the campaign and I was impressed. Another issue in which I was involved was getting voting locations. It was difficult because some people were concerned the "wrong" people would register and vote.

The goals and subject matter of the League are still the same, but the way we operate is different.

When I joined, League was 50% Republican and 50% Democrats. The issue of choice made some people leave, and some other issues on which the League took consensus also caused some division and some members to leave (a lot of them single-issue persons).

The League is respected for its candidate forums, although some Republicans say the League is all Democrats.

In the '70s, we were very active, For example, when we studied the Roseville parks we were told the bike trails were fine, but the League organized a bike ride in Acorn Park with press members present to demonstrate that the "paved" trails weren't so wonderful after all. A picture of me on my bike jumping a puddle, with arms and legs akimbo, appeared in the city newspaper.

Our study of emergency medical services for the city was very important. The fire department used station wagons to transport people to the hospital. The League was active in persuading the city council to contract with an ambulance provider for better service.

As far as Voter Service, I was the moderator of a candidates meeting that I had to shut down because the audience was rude and boisterous.

As far as a memorable person, there have been so many it's hard to pick only one or even a few. Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses.

The lasting importance of this organization is its advocacy after study and consensus. We're in the forefront, even with issues for which we've had positions for several decades already, for example organized trash collection. The classic story is that when I went to the national convention in San Francisco (late '70s), the body voted down study of health care reform because we would be offering too little, too late. The federal government was expected to move on the issue the following year.

Some people think the LWV is not friendly, because it is not social enough for them.

I was state League treasurer for six years and worked at the LWVMN office. I kept the Ed Fund books for 20 years, as a part-time volunteer.

In Roseville, I found the charter commission fascinating (to move from Plan B, which the League supported) to a charter government. The dialogue of pros and cons was fascinating to hear. League members were on the commission, appointed by a judge. The decision was to keep Plan B.

Everything is moving so much faster now because of the internet, social media, cell phones, etc., that issues and studies are concluded in a much shorter time span or have to be broken down into smaller pieces.

The question of bonding for a new fire hall in Roseville (a recent issue) was very interesting. I was appointed to the committee considering the issue. Information on the need for and operation of the fire department was new to me. I took away the conviction that we should support a new fire station based on our state and national positions on government. I convinced our local LWV Board to approve and the League testified before the city council. The council heard pros and cons and then approved the bonding.

I like to organize, delegate, keep meetings short. I don't like to write (when I was president I had Judy Rosenblatt write my president's column for the Voter). Local issues are where my heart is. I co-chaired two candidate races for city council---both of my candidates won.