

50 YEARS OF A GREAT IDEA...

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FAIR LAWN, 1937-1987

Twas way back in 1920, in Chicago it began.
Yes, the League of Women Voters met to organize and plan.
At the time the right to vote was new for people of our gender,
And though Leagues were limited at first in service they'd render,
Like - how to make the most of the ballot - newly won.
Later, Leagues began to question how government was run.
And on local, state, and national- all levels they'd inquire,
And to foster all improvements, that was early League's desire.

All through the 1920's, many issues then were raised.
Child labor laws and minimum wage - the Leagues were never fazed.
Then came the 1930's, some of us remember breadlines,
And the League helped Social Security; League of Nations
was in the headlines.

In the 40's and the 50's, there was war and we came out of it.
Social services and education were big issues -
there's no doubt of it.

Civil rights and ERA, urban policy- League's mission
In the 1960's and the 70's was to firm up our position.
And now in the 80's, voting rights we're still pursuing.
Control of arms and defense spending- their stands have been
League's doing.

That's a general, but brief report of the League of Women Voters.
We've done more for our country than have Ford and General Motors.

And through all the years we've covered, the League sprang
up in our land

Then, in 1937, Fair Lawn joined the growing band
Of conscientious women who all wished to lend a hand
And on issue after issue, we were there to take a stand.

If a group of active women can be said to have a "style,"
Then the Fair Lawn League adopted theirs from our founder,
Kathryn Lyle.

Kay set the pattern for us in her dedication then.
Now we follow in her footsteps again and yet again.

In the early years, agenda items set the boat arocking
We supported VD testing for food handlers- that was shocking!
We studied council-manager, 'twas a new way for our town.
In 1948 it became a new jewel in our crown.

A single tax assessor and civil service for our borough
These were items in the 40's and our studies all were thorough.
We encouraged the development of a Mental Health facility.
Now we're proud of the success it adds to Fair Lawn's credibility.
We've investigated changes and improvements for our schools-
Like the long-range building program- that required lots of rules.
We rang doorbells and encouraged votes on every referendum.
If we had problems seating kids, we hoped this would end 'em.

We worked for summer programs, not to just make up a grade,
But for credit and enrichment so that interest would not fade.
An important contribution is our booklet "Know Your Town."
It's a precious publication for each resident to own.
It's available throughout the year for citizens to buy,
So if perchance you do not have one, call a member -
you'll see why.

It contains all sorts of data about Fair Lawn, old and new.
It's our history and our structure and our services, too.
We hope that since you people know the details now about it,
You surely know that there's no way that you can do without it.

In protecting our environment the League has done its share,
And in all of our positions we have shown our savoir faire.
Local problems, state and national- we knew all the yeas and nays,
And for worldwide situations, Fair Lawn's consciousness
we'd raise.

We're concerned about our water and the air pollution too.
We would never litter Fair Lawn- no, of course not, nor would you.

For years the Fair Lawn League stood out as the Master Plan's
defender,

And each time a crisis started, it was there on our agenda.
We studied high-rise buildings, both commercial and for residence.
The conclusion that we came to under several League presidents
Was that high-rise did not fit into the spirit of our town;
That was not the way for Fair Lawn to be "up" instead of down.
We believe in saving park land, and we're firm in our stand.
We've investigated places that we think should stay as planned.

We were pioneers in many things and it helped our town stand tall,
Like registering voters without a trip to Borough Hall.
We first were doing this job down at Memorial Pool.
Now we work outside Grand Union, we're successful as a rule.
So if you see us sitting there before Election Day.
And your registration's doubtful, sign to vote,
that's the League's way.

The Fair Lawn League enlightens us before all our elections
So that Fair Lawn's band of voters know, when making its
selections.

How to judge the many candidates, examine all conditions,
So each person's vote is based upon intelligent decisions.
Before elections, Candidates' Nights are a valuable opportunity
To demonstrate yet one more time our service to the community.
We've an informed electorate, and that's what really counts.
We hope that as the years go by, involvement surely mounts.

League members went ahead and were elected in our borough
To the Council and the Board of Ed- and who knows what tomorrow.
Jamie Fahs and Charlotte Wentworth, Ruth Page, Kay Lyle and
others,

Flossie Dobrow, Robert Gordon- all our sisters- and our brother!
Marge Bornstein, Helen Sherer, Mary Burdick join the list.
We are proud they've been a part of things that never should be
missed.

We've explored so many causes, took some stands and made some gains,
And we've even lost some big ones, but a watchdog League remains.
Some things that we supported- well, they failed, but we grew strong.
We can face the possibility that sometimes we were wrong.
We supported fluoridation and an indoor swimming pool,
But these really got us nowhere. Anyway we kept our cool,
And when housing for our seniors was defeated all the way,
We just said "Well, that's democracy" and went on to the next day.

Throughout the years we worked with many slogans- good and true
Like "Woman's place is in the House - and in the Senate, too."
The newest one is powerful- it's simple and it's short.
It tells us, friends, "Democracy is not a spectator sport."

And now we've reached the golden year, we're 50 years young now.
And each year it seems there's more to do and we'll get it done
somehow.

Our town's a pretty good one, but we've problems large and small,
And through future years we'll be there and be carrying the ball.
We'll continue as a watchdog 'cause that's what Leagues are for.
We will monitor the crisis, since that's our very core.
But we need cooperation from the citizens-at-large.
We don't sit and watch the hangings just like Mme. Defarge.
We are in the thick of action- we consider every question,
And we need the voice of those of you who'll make a good
suggestion.

So we really want you joining us, the fee's not very big,
If you're looking in your pocket, you will not have far to dig.
We can have a super future, things in town can be real nifty.
So join the League and let's move on to reach another fifty.

Evelyn Berger
Member, LWV of FL