



The Trumpet

Monthly Newsletter of the Ouachita Parish Women's Republican Club

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Happy New Year!

Monday, January 7
Regular meeting of OPWRC

West Monroe Convention Center
Buffet opens at 11:30 with meeting
12:00 - 1:00

GUEST SPEAKER



Mayor Staci Mitchell
The City of West Monroe

A Special Note:

We extend our sincere appreciation to Kandy and Dr. Clemens Soeller for graciously welcoming us into their beautiful home and for generously preparing the delicious luncheon for our pleasure. Thank you for your kindness during the holiday season. The occasion was delightful.

Members of OPWRC

Review of 2018. . . Programs and Projects

The Ouachita Parish Women's Republican Club produced an impressive list of accomplishments during the twelve months of 2018. Among the most notable achievements were: (1) *steady growth in membership*; (2) *the culmination of the Constitution and Founding Documents Project*; (3) *a significant increase in the endowed scholarship for ULM*, (4) *strong support for several Republican candidates*; and (5) *consistently high attendance at monthly meetings*. The club had a highly successful year.

Serving as leaders during the past year were Mickey Jackson, President; Donna Cathey, First Vice-President; Misti Cordell, Second Vice-President; Kenda Reed, Treasurer; Beth Correro, Corresponding Secretary; and Janet Knott, Recording Secretary. Past-presidents who provided tremendous support for the group include Verda Gates and Kay Kellogg Katz. Maydra Pomeroy, Regional Vice-President offered guidance and was an advocate for OPWRC with the Louisiana Federation of Republican Women. All of these women worked diligently to strengthen the Republican organization. OPWRC holds the distinction of being an *active group* within within our community. Elected to serve two years terms, the officers will retain their respective positions for the coming year.

Another vital group in OPWRC consists of the Standing Committee Chairs who get important tasks done efficiently and without recognition. Those who *made it happen* were project leaders: Misti Cordell, who chaired the successful Book Signing Fundraiser; Kathy Ray, Angie Hebert and Katie May who co-chaired the Constitution Project; Helen Homes who chaired the Literacy Project; Regina Wilson and Kandy Soeller, co-chairs for Hospitality; and Sherra Fertitta, who handled Public Relations. Co-chairing the annual Scholarship Luncheon at the beautiful Bayou Pointe Activity Center were Kay Kellogg Katz, Jan McDonald, and Charlotte Moore. Katz also coordinated Campaign Activities to keep members engaged in the process. Kay vetted the state and national candidates; and, she shared her insights through emails that kept us informed about political matters. Only upon request, the political *sage* provided candid advice to a few aspiring Republican candidates. Our members participated in several campaigns.

Programs in 2018



January: The featured speaker, **Louis Gurvich**, hoped to serve as Chairman of the State Central Committee for the Louisiana Republican Party. The Republican leader presented his 2020 Vision for the Louisiana GOP. "Lou" was elected Chairman at the February 24 meeting of the State Central Committee. Louis Gurvich's mission – to engage local Republicans in activities of the state political party. He hopes to increase registration in the Republican Party by 2020 and to elect conservative Republicans to all statewide offices. The successful businessman holds a law degree from Loyola Law School, although, he does not practice law. Gurvich is the President and CEO of New Orleans Private Patrol Service, Inc. and the Gurvich Detective Agency. The family business originated in 1930.



February: The *Forum* featured Republican candidates in for Alderman in the Municipal Election for the City of West Monroe. Participants in the forum were (left to right) **Ben Westerburg**, and **Tonya Hamilton**, speaking in lieu of her husband, **Thom Hamilton**. (Thom, a surgical nurse at Glenwood Hospital, was called on duty.) Standing beside Tonya is **Trevor Land**, who is also running for Alderman. Land is an electrical contractor and restaurant owner. At right, is **Staci Albritton Mitchell**, a professional photographer, business owner, and candidate for mayor. **ALL of them were elected!**



March: Guest speaker was **John Schroder** who was subsequently elected State Treasurer on March 24. The former state representative was campaigning to fill the unexpired term of John Kennedy who left the position of Treasurer when he was elected United States Senator. Ouachita Parish Republicans strongly supported Schroder in the runoff.



April: **U.S. Congressman Ralph Abraham** spoke to members about the importance of the mid-term elections. The well informed statesman provided multiple examples of defensive rebuilding that are important to the security of our nation. Congressman Abraham shared his views on many issues of interest within the Fifth District. Abraham won a landslide re-election to the House. His intellect and humble demeanor render Abraham an effective leader on the state and national levels.

MAY: **Sheriff Jay Russell** provided a special presentation for OPWRC members as he updated an approving audience concerning the new OPSO facilities to train all law enforcement personnel for the 12 parishes of northeast Louisiana. Sheriff Russell explained the importance of communication and coordination of efforts between the various law enforcement agencies within a hundred miles radius of Ouachita Parish. He shared the benefits of shared procedures in the apprehension of suspected criminals. His presentation included



slides and members of the audience received booklets with pictures and further information. No local tax dollars were used to build the facility since funding was generated through federal grants.

JUNE: **Michael Echols**, Member and President of the Monroe City Council, spoke about Downtown Development in Monroe. With a diverse business background, Echols heads Business Development for Vantage Insurance. His prior experience in finance, investments, and construction provides him with a unique skill set for planning and coordinating projects. Echols indicated his appreciation for the historical and cultural structures in the downtown area. He is passionate about restoring remnants of the past and preserving the legacy for future generations.

JULY: **Michelle Hirstius** entertained our group with her stories about the creation of clever, patriotic characters within her storybooks. The club voted to purchase copies of her top seller, **One Flag, One America**, for placement in every elementary school library. Jan Clay and Walter Gates shared their vocal talents with beautiful renditions of patriotic songs at the July 1 meeting. Everyone left with feelings of pride and patriotism for America. This was an unusual agenda for OPWRC; however, there was a lot of audience participation. The author reported to us that she had never spoken to a more responsive group.





AUGUST: A.G. Crowe, candidate for Secretary of State, was our speaker. The resident of Pearl River served 16 years as a Senator and later founded the Records Depot, a storage facility for records. Crowe presented his views on the qualifications for Secretary of the State. His greatest concern is keeping our elections fair and honest. Also speaking at the meeting was Monroe City School Board President, **Bill Willson**, who was unopposed in the Fall election. **Vickie Dayton**, a long time member of that Board spoke as well. She urged members to make calls on her behalf to their friends and family who live in her district. Unfortunately, she did not win the election. We sincerely appreciate her years of service to public education and to the Monroe City Schools.



U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D. visited northeast Louisiana later in the same week. OPWRC co-hosted the noon event with the West Monroe-West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce. The luncheon was well attended by a large number of our members.



SEPTEMBER: Mayor of Turkey Creek and a candidate for Secretary of State, **Heather Cloud** spoke of her bad experience with voter fraud during a previous election. She believes that corrupt local officials still affect the outcomes of some elections within the state. Cloud spent thousands of dollars to win her case in the Courts. She was elected Mayor in the new election. Republican candidates for the Ouachita Parish School Board also spoke to the rapt crowd. Member, **Shere May**, and Associate Member, **Scotty Waggoner** won seats on the Ouachita Parish School Board. President of the Board, **Jerry Hicks** was unopposed in his district.



OCTOBER: Candidate for the Second Circuit Court of Appeal, **Judge Sharon Marchman**

shared an exemplary resume of judicial experiences and explained her conservative basis for rendering opinions based on Constitutional Law rather than "legislating from the bench." As the only Republican candidate seeking the post, Marchman garnered strong support within OPWRC although she did not win the race. Sharon will seek re-election for her current position as a District Judge in the Fourth District in 2020.



Kyle Ardoin, candidate for Secretary of State, while serving in that capacity, hoped to fill the unexpired term of Tom Schedler. Ardoin presented his sound qualifications based upon the years of experience in the department. Although he has been a key employee in state government, Ardoin had not sought public office until the seat was vacated by Schedler's resignation.

NOVEMBER: Representative Rick Edmonds, a candidate for Secretary of State, spoke at the OPWRC meeting in an effort to win the approval of undecided voters on the day before the election. While the conservative presented some relevant ideas, he did not garner enough votes to win. Sharing the podium with Edmonds was **Captain Jerome Casey**, new leader of The Salvation Army in Monroe. Casey has held the new post for only six months; however, the Captain has made extensive improvements to the homeless shelter. He has been an effective ambassador for the Salvation Army which had been closed prior to his arrival. Although his devotion to the Christian mission of the organization clearly radiates, Jerry credited the community spirit of compassion as he pointed to the generosity of local donors and their willingness to serve those in need. He reported the Shelter has approximately 100 beds at the present time. OPWRC members brought paper goods for the shelter. Kathy Ray agreed to collect items for the Salvation Army and deliver them to the shelter each month. The facility serves residents two meals daily.



DECEMBER: Dennis Epps, Chancellor of the Louisiana Delta Community College, was guest speaker for a crowd of cheerful Republicans. Epps explained the economic benefits to be derived from attending a community college - for the students, employers, and taxpayers. He provided an overview of course offerings that lead to associate degrees or certifications in lucrative careers. Epps offered statistical data to support the case for community colleges. He suggested members visit the campus to become more informed about the affordable educational opportunities that are available to area students.

Roger Villere, GOP Chairman (retired), stepped to the podium to promote the *Southern Republican Leadership Conference* which will convene in New Orleans for January 18-19. He urged interested members to register early to insure space. The long list of invited speakers included many VIP Republican figures.

Outstanding Projects in 2018



The Ouachita Parish Women's Republican Club purchased 30 copies of the children's book, *One Flag, One America*, in July when Michelle Hirstius, spoke to our club. **Senator Mike Walsworth** offered to purchase additional copies to insure this book was placed in every elementary school library within Ouachita Parish. **Donna Cathey** delivered the books to parish and city school board meetings.



Donna also presented a framed copy of **the Bill of Rights** to the school superintendent following her explanation of the **Constitution Project** which is an ongoing effort to teach students about the history of the founding documents which formed our government. Co-chairs for the Constitution Project, **Katie May, Kathy Ray, and Angie Robert** also conducted student art and writing competitions for middle school students. **The trio personally delivered framed copies of The Bill of Rights to 15 local high schools.**



OPWRC hosted a **luncheon and book signing event** featuring authors, **Corey Lewandowski** and **David Bossie**, as they toured the state to promote their best seller, *Let Trump, Be Trump*. With only three weeks to organize the event, **Misti Cordell (chair)** exceeded all expectations when she packed a spacious Vantage Banquet Room with Republicans. *At \$50 a ticket, the fundraiser was successful but the publicity was priceless.* Our liberal, Gannett newspaper posted a front page feature story with additional pictures on page 2. Local television coverage was extensive with impartial and factual reporting of the news story.

Setting Flags on the Graves of our Veterans was a project that touched so many of us.



Members drove in caravan to Rayville where they turned southward to reach the Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery on Highway 15. Project Chair, Donna Cathey, sorted 300 American flags into smaller bundles. There were 239 graves established during the first year. Stuart Cathey taught us the proper procedure for setting a flag in front of the marker. The maintenance crew removes flags after the Memorial Day observance and replaces them on Veterans' Day.

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The 2018 Scholarship Luncheon was co-chaired by Charlotte Moore and Jan McDonald. Regina Wilson created the lovely table décor honoring victims of 9/11. Treasurer Kenda Reed served as banker for ticket sales. The venue was the Bayou Pointe Event Center. President Nick Bruno held a press conference to announce that our endowment earned interest which



increased the principal to \$113,000. Once again, the Luncheon (\$7 per person) was a financial success. We presented a check to the ULM Scholarship Foundation for \$ 2,300. Ayanna Ester was selected as the 2018 recipient. She is the first member of her family to attend college. An honor student, Ayanna is a senior majoring in social services. The selection committee was chaired by Jane Ellett and coordinated by Kay Kellogg Katz.

Note: There were many other projects conducted by OPWRC members during 2018. However, limited space prevents the inclusion of every project. Since this document contains so many photos – some members may be unable to open it. Copies will be available at the meeting.