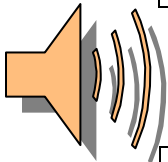




KING COUNTY SOUTH VOTER

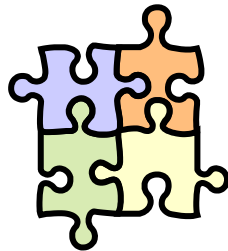
April 2010

LWV Mission: The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH?

RUMORS— By Neil Simon



Come and see the story pieces fall into place.

Annual Fundraiser
April 8, 2010
Curtain time: 7:30 p.m.
Goodies at 7:00 p.m.

Renton Civic Theater
507 So 3rd, Downtown Renton

\$17.50 pre-sale, \$20 at the door

Units

Health Care Reform

DVD Presentation
“Health, Money & Fear”

Update on Current Status
or
“What Happens Next?”

Reading Material:
“Health Disparities 101”
Part II

In this Voter

LWV Mission: The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Theater Party

This is our primary fund raiser for the year. Join the fun.

Neil Simon assures us of a good time. We are co-sponsoring with Renton AAUW so we should have a lively group

PRESIDENT PRO TEM MESSAGE

Note from Exiting Prez...

I will end my two month term and board tenure urging you to be at the annual meeting prepared to serve on a league committee or volunteer as a resource person for one of the units. The League has been a strong advocate for almost a century. Don't disappoint those strong women who worked so hard to get the vote and organize the League of Women Voters! This year, try to be at unit discussions, attend special events and be aware of happenings in your community. Make your voice heard as a voice of reason among the many lobbyists out there: phone or e-mail your state legislator, congressional representatives and local commissions. Write a letter to the editor or on Facebook or Twitter. Send a thank you note to Becky and the board members who have dedicated several years to maintaining the League and to our new member who took on a board position in her first year with us. With high hopes...

Sincerely, Irene Peyton

P.S. Please change my e-mail address to irenepeyton@yahoo.com and my phone to 1-253-344-1545. We are at Village Green, 35405A First Ave S, Federal Way, WA 98003.

NATIONAL PROGRAM GO-AROUND

Remember trying to figure out what to study on the national League level? Submittals had to be in by March 1 and here is what we submitted: (Thanks to the excellent work done by MaryEllen Hamblin)

STUDY OF FUNCTIONS & CONTROLS ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO DELINEATE THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD, THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK AND THE SECURITY AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION RELATIVE TO THE BANKING INDUSTRY AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

Scope: Review possible corrections in these systems to more clearly reflect the needs of a post progressive economy with sufficient structures to guarantee accountability and economic stability. The Glass-Steagall law or equivalent legislation should be examined.

Note: There was strong support for reviewing our national Education position but we were not allowed more than one item.

To find out what the units said for local program, watch for your Annual Meeting Kit, due out at the end of April.

B. Income, Housing, and Environment

Disparities can be linked to factors that are both inside and outside of the health care system. Disparities in health care have been known to be linked to income levels, adequacy and safety of housing, employment status, education level, lifestyle choices, environmental conditions, and social conditions.[8] Barriers that may prevent traditionally underserved populations from entering the health care system may include lack of resources, cultural norms that discourage medical treatment, and prior negative experiences with medical treatment. Additional systemic barriers to seeking health care may include lack of providers, lack of transportation, no or poor health insurance coverage, or legal or other barriers to receiving public aid.[9] Nearly one half of Hispanic adults (45%), along with 41% of Asian American adults and 35% of African American adults, report that they have difficulty in paying for medical care. These difficulties have led 30 percent of African Americans and 25 percent of Hispanics with chronic conditions to forgo prescription drug purchases.[10] In the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on minority health, the GAO reported that some people who are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP do not enroll because they cannot understand the complex eligibility criteria and enrollment process. This may be an explanation as to why one in three Hispanic children that are eligible for Medicaid and SCHIP are not insured.[11]

C. Health Care Provider Awareness and Sensitivity

Generally speaking, provider cultural competency allows health care providers to successfully interact with patients from a variety of ethnic and cultural groups. There are many factors that make up patients' cultural or ethnic identity including: their country of origin, the language spoken at home, their religion or spiritual traditions, family traditions, cultural diet and nutrition, traditional medical practices, or cultural attitudes about illness or death. Health care providers should be aware of potential cultural influences and be prepared to apply this knowledge in their patient care. Certain patient populations may have different names for diseases as well as different understandings of how illnesses start or may be treated. These cultural understandings must be addressed in the delivery of care if the provider hopes to have a significant impact on the health of the patient.

Clear communication between a patient and his/her health care provider is a critical factor in assuring appropriate treatment and ongoing care for any medical condition. Provider/patient miscommunication can lead to, among other things, a misdiagnosis of symptoms, inability to understand how to take medications or what the uses of the medication are, and inappropriate or complete lack of follow up care. The communication problems between patients and providers are often exacerbated by limited or no access to interpreters for speakers with limited English proficiency. Translation and interpretation tools for hearing and vision impaired persons may also be lacking.

Addressing Health Disparities

Health care reform should address barriers to quality care by focusing on a universal and equitable approach to providing affordable health insurance with a focus on preventive care, effective management of chronic conditions, and care coordination to all populations in the United States. Other steps to reducing health care disparities include focusing on training health care providers in cultural competency, recruiting a diverse health care workforce, eliminating language barriers in the health care setting, and coordinating community-based programs in health centers that target disparities. Evidence suggests that communication, trust, and understanding are greatly improved between a physician and patient when they share the same ethnic, cultural or primary language background.[12] Data collection strategies designed to capture and report health disparities data through the use of Health Information Technology are also a key step to increasing understanding of why these health disparities exist and monitoring their eradication.

Conclusion

Solutions to address health care disparities must be included in health reform legislation currently under consideration in the Congress. Many of the problems encountered by those populations that suffer from health disparities will not be automatically solved simply by increased access to care.[13] Addressing the health care disparities of the minority populations of the United States must be a deliberate priority of health care reform. Unless the root causes of the inequities are treated, individuals will continue to receive inadequate or no health care and the country will continue to face the increasing health care costs associated with disparities. Any health care reform legislation should do all that it can to improve health outcomes for everyone living in the United States, saving the U.S. health care system significant amounts of money along the way.

For more information, contact attorney Brad Plebani (bplebani @ medicareadvocacy.org) in the Center for Medicare Advocacy's Connecticut office at (860) 456-7790.

[1] Braveman, P, M.D., M.P.H., quoted in "International Perspectives on Health Disparities and Social Justice: Ethnicity and Disease, Vol. 17, Spring 2007. See, also, Braveman, et. al., "An Approach to Studying Social Disparities in Health and Health Care," "American Journal of Public Health", Vol. 94, No. 12 (December 2004).

[2] Goldberg, J., Hayes, W., and Huntley, J. "Understanding Health Disparities," Health Policy Institute of Ohio (November 2004).

[3] Id.

[4] Smedley, Brian M. "The Cost of Health Inequality." "InsightNews.com". 05 Oct. 2009. Web. 19 Oct. 2009.

[5] Waidman, T. "Estimating the Cost of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities," The Urban Institute, September 2009, available at http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411962_health_disparities.pdf

[6] Sack, Kevin. "Doctors Miss Cultural Needs, Study Says." "New York Times". June 10, 2009. 2&sq=Kevin+Sack&st=nyt>

[7] Id.

[8] Id.

[9] Id.

[10] Id.

[11] U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), "Health Care: Approaches to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities." (GAO-03-862R, July 2003)

[12] Kate Meyers, "Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities "(Oakland, CA: Kaiser Permanente Institute for Health Policy, 2007). Available online at http://www.kpihp.org/publications/docs/disparities_highlights.pdf.

[13] "Ensuring that Health Care Reform Will Meet the Health Care Needs of Minority Communities and Eliminate Health Disparities". Rep. Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, July 2009.

Clarifying Landlord/ Tenant Issues Forum – March 16, 2010

The forum was recorded by Public Access TV and broadcast times will be available on Ch 77 when editing is done. Web access is pugetsoundaccess.org. Becky Cox introduced the forum speakers and read the written questions.

Patty Dudley, Executive Director of **King County Dispute Resolution Center** (<http://www.kcdrc.org>), explained that her organization provides interest-based mediation services to individuals, neighborhoods, etc. on a wide variety of issues: the parties draw up a contract and talk through the issue to understand what each side really wants, which is not often apparent at the outset. The mediation is confidential (no public record) and is not money-focused, but a legal contract is produced and signed by the parties(and that contract is twice as likely to have compliance as a court decision). Mediation is not employed for most landlord/ tenant issues because those parties want to know their 'rights', which is the purview of the other forum's

organizations. Two examples: tenant wants damage deposit returned and has cleaned rental property but landlord's definition of clean differs – mediator can help each talk through and agree to the definition and a satisfactory outcome. A more classic example might be two children who each want the orange, which could be given to one or split between the two – mediation might uncover what each really wants, namely one wants the rind for a science project and the other wants the fruit to eat. Mediation may be a more satisfying method of dispute resolution, when appropriate, than a win/lose legal course.

KCDRC also provides forty hours of training three times a year for those who want to learn mediation techniques for personal use, and offers an apprenticeship to those who want to become professional mediators.

Funding for KCDRC is provided through private and public support: \$11 of every King County small claims filing goes to

KCDRC. KCDRC will soon have an office in the Federal Way city hall to provide better access to South King County residents.

Tim Seth, President of **Washington Landlord Association** (<http://walandlord.com>), described the organization as historically serving landlords and managers, but recently adding a tenant arm – questions by tenants are answered gratis whereas there is a cost for answering landlord/ manager questions. The association focuses on landlord/ tenant statutes and is involved with legislation. The primary law governing landlord/ tenant rights is WA State RCW 59 (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=59>), but there are also federal laws defining assistance/ service animals and housing discrimination and more (Fair Housing Act administered by US Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/FHLaws/index.cfm>) and city/ county laws. An example of local law is Seattle’s modification of State law “either landlord or tenant may terminate an agreement with 20 days notice and no reason given”; in Seattle, the landlord must have a reason (just cause). WA State currently defines a service animal as having had training, whereas HUD includes “animals that provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability”. Bills in the 2010 WA legislature to bring our laws in line with federal law did not pass. Mr Seth gave a real-world example of a conflict: Person 1, with an animal allergy, rents an apartment in a complex that advertises ‘no pets allowed’; Person 2 requires an assistance animal and wants to rent an apartment in that complex. By law, Person 2 may not be discriminated

against, and WA legal advice is “to let the tenants work it out themselves”, which is not a clear resolution to the problem.

The representative from the **Tenants Union of Washington State** (<http://tenantsunion.org>) was ill, and Miriam Helgeland gave a few points she remembered from a previous lecture: don’t sign a lease until certain because it is a legal contract; it is not legal to charge a renter to be on a list of potential renters; and always deliver communications to a landlord in writing (requests for repair, etc.) with photographs where appropriate.

Stephen Freeborn of **Freeborn Law Offices** (<http://freebornlawoffices.com/>) Get things documented, mediate when possible and take cases to court only as a last resort, as you lose all control of the outcome because the judge makes the decision for you. He explained some of the areas that cause conflict:

A 20 day notice-to-vacate deals with month to month tenancies. Such being the case, each month is a separate tenancy period and runs from the first day of the month to the last day of the month. Either the tenant or the landlord can terminate the tenancy upon giving 20 days prior notice to the other (in writing) - and do so without the need to give any reason (unless the tenancy is within the Seattle city limits). Therefore, in order for the 20 day notice to be effective, it must be served upon the other party (landlord serving tenant or tenant serving landlord) at least 20 days before the end of the tenancy, i.e., end of month. For example, let’s use March: there are 31 days in March. As such, a 20 day notice must be served no later than the 10th of March (you don’t count the day of service, so the notice becomes effective on the 11th day. $11 + 20 = 31$. Try February

(assuming it's not a leap year): There are 28 days in February, therefore, notice must be served on or before the 7th day. Notice becomes effective the day after service, add 20 days, and if it's on or before the 28th, notice is good.

If you are late with the service, say you serve on the 8th or after (remember the 20 days begins running the day after service), add 20 days and it comes out that the 20th day falls AFTER the last day of the month (using February as an example). If this happens, the notice is good for the last day of the NEXT month, and the tenant can stay until the last day of the following month - of course the tenant still has to pay rent and meet the other obligations. If the notice is served by a tenant on the landlord, and tenant is trying to terminate the tenancy so he can move, for whatever reason, same rules apply. If the notice is untimely, tenant is obligated for the next month's rent - even if the tenant moves.

Landlord/ tenant law addresses "possession", once an agreement has been signed, as the tenant becoming the pseudo-owner as long as s/he meets the agreement, and the landlord may not enter the premises without notice nor too frequently. But, the landlord should be 'hands on' and check the property and complex occasionally to ensure common areas, e.g., night lighting, functional and tenant is maintaining the rental adequately. Normal maintenance, e.g., batteries in the smoke alarm, should be handled by the tenant.

A written walkthrough, signed by both parties, is required in order for a landlord to collect a damage/ security deposit. Normal 'wear & tear' is not what a deposit covers. Once tenant vacates, the landlord has 14 days to state, in writing, why a portion of the deposit is not to be returned,

else tenant may claim entire deposit regardless of damage.

Mr Freeborn, as well as the other speakers, stressed that everything should be in writing. Email/ Fax is ok if save paper proof. If receive voice mail from other party, can write to that party " I received your voicemail today, which stated ..., and my response is ...".

For failure to pay rent, a landlord may deliver a '3 day notice to pay or vacate', but if the landlord accepts a partial payment from the tenant, this process is nullified, and would have to start again. (Landlord can deliver by hand, or tack to the property, but if mailed, mail should be certified.)

The forum speakers also responded to questions from the audience: Leases are a binding contract between the parties who signed, so a married couple who sign a lease and then become divorced, are each still legally responsible for the rent. Four roommates, who each sign the lease, are responsible for the rent regardless if one moves out. Landlord will try to get rent from remaining three, who then must pressure one who left. Leases seldom specify 'no sublet', so new fourth renter might be acquired. Landlord Assn recommends mo-to-mo rather than lease because situations change, and the lease contract is not as valuable as it seems. All recommend mediation in these cases.

Communication (in writing) is key – tenant shouldn't assume landlord knows of problems, and many problems can be avoided by supplying information in a non-adversarial way.

Mold, while a current hot button, must be pre-existing to force landlord to fix, and is difficult to prove. If a water pipe in an

upstairs apartment breaks, causing problems for the downstairs tenant, the landlord is likely not responsible. Tenant insurance would cover this, and is inexpensive, and should be considered.

There are various timelines for a landlord to fix problems, once in writing: emergencies, e.g., hazard, must be started in 24 hours, lesser items have a longer window. The landlord's effort should be in good faith.

Evictions do not affect a credit rating/ score, but do affect the credit screening report. 2010 WA legislature did not pass

bills to allow one renter screening report to be used for any rental application within 60 days. Landlord Assn was in favor of the bill because see no reason why potential tenant should pay multiple times.

Once an arrest is made for illegal activity, e.g., drug manufacture/ sale, a landlord could lose the property if does nothing.

Notes submitted by **Susan Sanders**.

Many kudos to the awesome team of Sande Nelson, chair, Susan Sanders and Miriam Helgeland for pulling together a great panel for this forum. They also made the arrangements, handled logistics and fed us PIE!

BOOK REVIEW

Barcott, Bruce. *The Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw: One Woman's Fight to save the World's Most Beautiful Bird*. 2008, Random House paperback, 313 pp.

Printed reviews use descriptions such as a "thrilling [mixture] of adventure, nature writing and biography" (NY Times Book Review); a "stunning and significant piece of environmental journalism" (USA Today); "a sympathetic saga of eco-activism with a cast of unforgettable characters" (Natural History); "a real page turner of narrative nonfiction that is hard to put down" (Booklist).

I found these no exaggeration. The central character (and I do mean character) is Sharon Matola, the unconventional and much beloved Zoo Lady of Belize. She goes into battle mode when a multinational corporation conspires with local government entities to build the Chalillo Dam and flood the nesting grounds of the last scarlet macaws in the country. The fight goes beyond the Belize Supreme Court, all the way across the Atlantic to Her Majesty's Privy Council ("five elderly white lords"), upholding the last ties of colonialism for small Caribbean countries like Belize. Barcott's writing is superb, following all the twists and turns of the case, and packed with informative background research. It's a good read.

Submitted by Ellen Kritzman

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STATE AND NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Both state and national Leagues are printing League information on-line on the League websites. If you are using a computer, be sure to check both of the sites for up to date information. The suspension of printing of the Voters is due to an unprecedented lack of funds at both levels. Websites are lwvwa.org and lwv.org.

(Don't type in a .com address-I did that once and wondered where in the heck I was! Ed.)

SINGLE-PAYER VASHON, WEST SEATTLE/BURIEN

There are a number of SP events and meetings happening in the next few weeks. A good summary of most of them can be found at the current HCFA-WA Single-Payer Action Teams Update here: www.healthcareforallwa.org/action-team-updates/

PLAN AHEAD NOW

The Board decided at the November meeting that there **WILL** be unit meetings even if we are having a special event. Here are the proposed unit topics for the rest of the year and our special events.

May: Annual Meeting, May 15, 2010, 10:00 to 2:00 pm. **NO Unit Meetings** this month..

May 21-23: LWV of Washington Council Meeting, Bellingham. Delegates will be Mary Ehlers and Becky Cox

June 2: Organizational Meeting for LWV of KCS (No meeting in July)

June 11-15: LWV of US National Convention, Atlanta, Georgia.

WHO KNEW?

The Battle Over Rare Earth Metals

Rare earth metals are important to the world's ability to pursue a low carbon future because many of the enabling technologies, such as wind turbines, advanced automotive batteries, energy efficient light bulbs, and solar panels require these select materials for

their manufacture. For national defense purposes, a proposed bill in the US Congress entitled the Rare Earths Supply-Chain Technology and Resources Transformation Act of 2009 (RESTART ACT) reads that, "Many modern defense technologies such as radar and sonar systems, precision guided weapons, cruise missiles, and lasers cannot be built, as designed and specified, without the use of rare earth elements (REEs) and materials produced from them." In short, rare earths are important not only for the production of environmentally sustainable products and technologies but for national defense as well. Rare earths elements are, alas, limited in their distribution. While the United States owns at least 15% of the world's REEs reserves, it now depends nearly 100% upon imports for rare earth elements, oxides, and alloys because there are virtually no active REE producers in the United States. More than 95% of all REEs for world consumption are produced in China.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/01/business/global/01minerals.html? r=1>

<http://worldfocus.org/blog/2009/09/01/china-rides-green-revolution-limiting-export-of-rare-metals/7070/>

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/news/japan-moves-on-rare-earth-metals/story-e6frg90o-1225808869751>

http://smarteconomy.typepad.com/smart_economy/2009/09/the-real-reason-for-the-war-in-afghanistan-control-of-rare-earth-metals-in-afghanistan.html

Submitted by Susan Sanders

ACTION STEPS FOR REDUCING CARBON

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is the number one cause of greenhouse gases and air pollution in the Northwest. What can you do?

- Keep the tires on my car properly inflated. Every gallon of gas saved reduced CO₂ by 20 lbs.
- Turn off your motor when in long lines. Ten seconds of idling uses enough gas to go a mile.

ELECTRONICS

- Turn off your television, DVD player, stereo and computer when you're not using them. Reduce carbon dioxide by 1,000 lbs a year.

SHOWERING

- Take shorter showers. Save 175 lbs of carbon dioxide a year for each person who reduces showers to 5 minutes or less.

- Install a low-flow (1.5 gallons per minute) showerhead to use less hot water. Save up to 250 lbs/year.

ON-LINE CALENDARING FOR THE LEAGUE

A Reminder

KCS now has an electronic calendar accessible by any league member on the internet. If you want to look at the calendar, type in the url:

www.google.com/calendar (to go to the website)
sign in (upper right corner) with: walwvkcs@juno.com
password: consensus

Mary Ehlers has agreed to be the "calendar master" so if you want her to add events or make changes please send her an e-mail (maryehlers@comcast.net) or call her at 253-941-1930.

We have not been overwhelming Mary with data to be entered.

TRYs Are Here

Seattle LWV, with the diligent help of our own, **Susan Sanders**, has launched the 2010 edition of **They Represent You**. A must have for everyone! Take them to your friends and organizations to which you belong. Call the office for arrangements to get them. Many thanks to Miriam Helgeland for picking up our supply.

We have received several calls from citizens who eagerly await their copies!!!

DON'T FORGET TO BUY YOUR THEATER TICKETS IN ADVANCE FOR SPECIAL PRICING. AND BRING FINGER FOODS FOR OUR PREPRANDIAL TREATS.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION PROCESS

Republicans have used it 16 times & the Democrats 6 times. Reconciliation will only work for a bill that has passed both houses—so the House has to pass the original Senate bill. The reconciliation bill, sometimes called the “sidecar” bill, then must pass both houses. The House must go first because revenue bills must originate in the lower chamber. According to the Senate Budget Chair, the “fix” needs to be on a limited number of issues that “score for budget purposes” because reconciliation cannot be used to pass a comprehensive bill that cannot be scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

Reconciliation requires a MAJORITY VOTE OR UP OR DOWN.

Submitted by MaryEllen Hamblin

CALENDAR

- Apr 7: Board Meeting, 9:45-12 noon, 616 SW 152nd, Burien WA.
President Pro Tem, Irene Peyton, 206-878-6977.
- Apr 8: **THEATER PARTY**, co sponsored with Renton AAUW. Location: Renton Civic Theater. **“Rumors” by Neil Simon.** Curtain time 7:30 p.m.
- Apr 8: Seattle 1st Thurs. Forum, 7:30 pm, **Town Hall, Downstairs, 8th & Seneca (note change).**
Topic: **Making Democracy Work**
- Apr 12: Highline Unit, League office, 616 SW 152nd, Burien, 1:30-3:30pm.
Chair: MaryEllen Hamblin, 425-255-6675. Topic: Health Care Status
- Apr 13: Enumclaw Unit, 7-9pm, Highpoint Village, Enumclaw
Topic: Health Care Status **Chair: Cathy Dormaier, 360-802-6799**
- Apr 21: Federal Way Unit, 7-9pm, Foundation House, 32290 1st Ave So, Federal Way.
Chair: Mary Ehlers, 253-941-1930. Topic: Health Care Status
- Apr 22: Vashon Unit, 2:00-4:00, Vashon Library. **Contact: Ellen Kritzman, 206-567-4837.** Topic: Health Care Status
- April 30-May 2: Household Hazardous Wastemobile, Vashon
Tjomsland Gravel Pit, 17001 107th Ave. SW. Time: 10 am to 5 pm.
- May 5: Board Meeting. President Pro-Tem, Becky Cox

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