



KING COUNTY SOUTH VOTER

June 2009

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.

WE WILL CARRY ON!!!

Our members present at our annual meeting voted by secret ballot, overwhelmingly, to continue as a local League. We were encouraged by words from our state president, Barbara Seitle, that we could do it!

We were even so bold as to adopt two action items as well as retain all our local and King County positions.

- Work toward conformity in King County's recycling policies. Distribute excellent materials available on recycling.
- Study transportation safety and energy efficiency using Tacoma-Pierce County LWV's study on this subject.

For those of you that signed up to participate, in any way—kudos!!!

We are still without two members for the nominating committee and, most significantly, **a president**, or leadership team. We will be addressing that issue at the Board meeting on June 3rd.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our 38th annual meeting of LWV of KCS made a momentous decision to continue as a local League. Even as we were doing this, we were left with the problem of how we are going to function without a president. We have an excellent, committed Board for 09-10 and I am asking for a mentor from the state League to help us plan for the future.

June 3rd is the date for our Board meeting with new and old Board members. Anyone is welcome to attend and share their thoughts. It will be at the League office, 10-12.

I hesitated to urge you to pay your dues at the annual meeting in case we were to be no more but **NOW** they are due by **July 1**. A dues form is on page 5 for your use. The Voter editor (me) has Cleverly left the back blank!

On a different note, the LWV participated in an unusual event on May 13th. As a resident of south King County and a totally non-partisan Leaguer, I was appointed to the King County Blue Ribbon Committee to recommend an interim county executive. It took us 5½ hours to accomplish this. The League is not usually involved in candidate evaluations but this time the county was in a bind because the charter change that made all county officials nonpartisan failed to include a method to fill vacancies. The League is big on process and the president

of Seattle, Denise Smith, and I agreed that we should put our oar in the water on this one. (I made a fuss because there was no agenda—I got my way)

The one thing that spooked me was that everything I wrote down was subject to the public records act. Even doodles!! My notes are usually a mess and so I tried to write and spell reasonably. The committee recommended Charles Royer and Kurt Tripplett to the council with Royer as first choice. The county council ultimately selected Kurt Tripplett as interim.

This is my last message to you as president. I want to thank all the Leaguers who have served on the Board these four years and Leaguers that have worked so diligently to continue our mission. Our numbers are small but our hearts are big! Continue on? Yes, we can!

Becky

CALENDAR

- June 3: Board Meeting, League Office, 616 SW 152nd, Burien. 9:45-12 noon.
This is for NEW and PRESENT Board members, Unit Chairs, too.
A neutral 3rd party will help us organize to function without a president. Name TBD.
- June 1: Filing for August primary opens
- June 2: Public Hearing on King County Conservation District. See article.
- July 4: Independence Day
- August 5: Board Meeting, League Office, 616 SW 152nd, Burien. 9:45-12 noon.
Calendar Planning for the year.
- August 18: **Primary Election – Vote by Mail**

TELEVISION REVIEW

On 15th May, Bill Moyers interviewed Daniel Goleman, who wrote **Emotional Intelligence** and now **Ecological Intelligence**. Goleman discussed lifecycle assessment: what is entailed with getting a product into your hands (and some back-end info, like what percentage is packaging).

He suggests we use www.goodguide.com to look at the top ten things we buy, e.g., laundry detergents, assess the rating, and continue to buy that or try a different product from the list. Most importantly, tell each company you are buying/ not buying their product because of the product's impact (believe this can be done from the site). In looking at the supposed Walmart factor (purchase by price), they used shampoo as an example where the highest rated shampoo cost \$3 and the lowest rated shampoo cost \$16. Moyers interview is at <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/05152009/watch2.html>. Also, referenced 'Story of Stuff' is at <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>

Susan Sanders, in League

THE STATE WE'RE IN: WASHINGTON, 6TH EDITION

LWV of Washington has rolled out the new edition of our civics textbook. Edition #6 contains exciting new material on immigration, science and technology, globalization of trade and the Centennial Accord. The binding has been improved. It is now available and ready for readers of all ages but especially school children.

The text covers the basics of government and is illustrated with graphs, photos and drawings. It is the only book that describes current and historic tribal governance and their interrelationship with state governments and local government in Washington.

If you or any group you are involved with, are interested in copies of this book, there is an order form available on the state League website, www.lwvwa.org, or you may call the state office, 206-622-8961.

Our local League got many of our school districts to order Edition 5. With the new civics education law passed by the legislature, districts may want to update. Now that funding is so tight, perhaps a local service group in your area may be willing to buy a classroom set.

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE CONSENSUS

The LWVUS Board held a virtual (computer-based) Board meeting on Monday to test run the technology we will be using on June 13 to conduct the 2009 LWVUS Council. I am happy to report that the technology worked well and I am confident that we will have an interesting and smooth-running virtual Council.

One of the items the Board considered at the Monday Board meeting was the results of the consensus process on the NPV compact study. On the recommendation of the Program Planning Committee and the NPV study committee, the Board approved the following statement of position:

"The LWVUS affirms its support of the direct election of the president and abolition of the Electoral College, but the LWVUS has no position on the National Popular Vote Compact as studied in 2008-2009."

The Committee's report on the consensus process is available on our website. [Click here](#). Many thanks to the members of the National Popular Vote Compact Study Committee, led by LWVUS Board Member Carolie Mullan, for their hard work on this study.

Copied in part from the National President's Message for the week, 5/18/09.

(Aren't we clever? Just what our League reported! Ed.)

MAURY ISLAND

Excerpted report by Ellen Kritzman on the Preserve Our Islands meeting held in May:

Eleven and a half years ago Lonestar/NW Aggregates/Glacier NW and now Cal Portland said they would have all the permits and be mining in 90 days! Over a decade of a David vs Goliath battle.!

First regarded a NIMBY issue, Maury Island is now recognized in the region and state on a scientific basis, especially on endangered species-first salmon, then Orca, now, rock fish. It is part of the state effort to save the Sound.

There is a federal lawsuit appealing the Army Corps permit. Under the lease received in December, Glacier began pile driving. Winds, snow, protestors and Sand Lance spawning allowed only 4 pilings and a small platform to get done by January. The appeal will be heard in the US District Court in July. A quick decision is expected. This is the first case filed since the Orca listing as an endangered species.

A brief will be filed by the end of May on an appeal to be heard before a State Superior Court judge in July. The lawsuit claims the lease issued by the Department of Natural Resources, under Doug Sutherland, does not meet the conditions established in the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve Management Plan.

The Preserve Our Islands (POI) group feels both the federal and state lawsuits are strong. For example, it is documented that noise may harm Orca, drive them away (Federal violation). Glacier said that they would watch and if they saw Orca, they would stop work. POI monitored the workers, who had their backs to the whales when they came. The Orca turned, left and didn't return all season.

A favorable outcome on even one of the appeals could be enough to overturn the Corps permit. Appeals are expected, however.

POI is an all-volunteer organization. Contact them at www.preserveourislands.org to see how you can help, financially or in person.

Ellen Kritzman

Dues are Due!!!!

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS KCS
PO Box 66037
SEATTLE WA, 98166-0037
206-243-7161**

**Renewal
2009-2010 Dues**

JOIN US AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE, ZIP CODE _____

TELEPHONE (INCLUDE AREA CODE) _____

ANNUAL DUES

	INDIVIDUAL	HOUSEHOLD
SUSTAINING	\$75.00	\$112.50
BASIC	50.00	75.00
LIGHT	35.00	52.50

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO LWV-KCS AND MAIL TO; P O BOX 66037, SEATTLE, WA 98166-0037

DUES \$ _____

VOTING DISTRICTS

DONATIONS (always appreciated) _____

US _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Wash. State _____

King County _____

**If you wish to receive LWV Voter and Study Material
by e-mail:**

E-mail address: _____

League of Women Voters of King County South is a 501 (c) 4 organization and donations are **not** tax deductible.

NEW

To make a tax deductible contribution, prepare a **separate check** made out to

LWV of WA Ed Fund

Memo: **For Account of LWV of KCS**

King Conservation District- Remember this?

King Conservation District sets dates and locations for district-wide public comment sessions

District seeks input in advance of 2010 special assessment

RENTON— The King Conservation District (King CD) will hold a series of six public comment sessions in May and June to provide input on conservation priorities and programs that would be funded by the reauthorization of the district special assessment.

The King CD (www.kingcd.org) provides conservation information and technical assistance programs to all landowners within the district's boundaries (most of King County) on a voluntary, non-regulatory basis. It provides grants for conservation projects and programs, and initiates community outreach activities including workshops, education programs, site visits, farm plans, and consultation on land, water and wildlife management.

The King CD is funded by a \$10 per parcel/per year assessment within the district's boundaries and expires on December 31st, 2009. The assessment provides approximately \$6 million annually to the District. This funding has been allocated to support good stewardship practices by private landowners through King CD education workshops and site-specific consulting, and for natural resource conservation projects in partnership with King County and its cities. For the past decade, King CD has supported salmon recovery work within the District.

"We are inviting landowners, residents, member jurisdictions, and organizations that operate within the boundary of the district to share their ideas about their natural resource conservation needs and work accomplishments of the District" said King CD Executive Director Jeffrey Possinger.

Individuals interested in providing comments can attend any number of the public comment sessions or may submit comments in writing by June 5, 2009 by email to comments@kingcd.org or standard mail at:

King CD Board of Supervisors
Attn.: Public Comment
1107 SW Grady Way, Suite 130
Renton, WA 98057

For more information on the King CD and the public comment process visit www.kingcd.org

As one of 47 conservation districts in the state, the King CD is a natural resources assistance agency authorized by the State of Washington and guided by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Public Hearing that is coming up: Written comments due June 5th.

- **ISSAQUAH:** Tuesday, June 2, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- Issaquah/King County Library, 10 W. Sunset Way, Issaquah WA 98027

A Short History of Major Changes in the U.S. Health Care System

A Short (Ed) History of Major Changes in the U.S. Health Care System since 1994: Costs, Coverage and Quality

By Doris Isolini Nelson

The healthcare system in the United States has undergone major changes since 1994 after the defeat of President Clinton's effort to create a national system. "Over the last few decades, American health care has radically changed. A system that was largely not-for-profit has become a field where the profit motive and market forces affect every decision."¹

The defeat of comprehensive health reform shifted the effort of cost control to the private sector. One major change, called "managed care," promised to control costs, provide good coverage, provide quality health care and eventually cover everyone. Have these promises been kept?

Has Managed Care Controlled Costs?

Before 1995 the great majority of employer plans were traditional indemnity-insurance paying a fee for service and allowing access to any doctor, paying whatever the doctor or hospital required. In 1978, 95 percent of Americans with employer-sponsored coverage had fee-for-service plans. In 1998 only 14 percent were enrolled in such plans.

This drop was accompanied by an increase in enrollment in a wide variety of managed care insurance plans, including Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs) and Point of Service plans (POSs). These plans controlled costs four ways:

1. limiting the choice of doctors by paying the total fee only if the physician was in the plan's network;
2. requiring patients to see a primary care doctor before obtaining a referral to a specialist;
3. requiring prior permission by doctors for admission to hospitals, diagnostic tests or medical procedures; and
4. negotiating predetermined fee schedules for physician payment which have been discounted from the usual fees.

For about five years, the total national expenditure for health care declined (1993 – 13.7 percent of gross domestic product [GDP]; 1998 – 13.5 percent of GDP).² There is disagreement among analysts about the major cause for this decline. Some say it is due to managed care's effectiveness in using cost control methods or marketing strategies that led insurers to underprice their products in order to expand market share. Others say that it was due to the one-time major shift from fee-for-service plans, which cannot be repeated.

In 2004, the National Coalition on Health Care (NCHC)³ reported that since 1998 not only premiums but also the rate of increase in premiums had escalated. "What makes recent increases in premiums especially striking is that we have been in a period of low inflation."³

In 2009, the NCHC reported three key facts:

Since 1999 employment-based health insurance premiums have increased 120 percent compared to a cumulative inflation rate of 29 percent and cumulative wage growth of 34 percent during the same period.⁴

Since 2000, the average employee contribution to company-provided health insurance has increased more than 120 percent. The average out-of-pocket costs for deductibles, co-pay for medication and co-insurance for physician and hospitals rose 115 percent.⁵

Total spending in 2007 was \$2.4 trillion – 17 percent of GDP. "...the United States has \$480 billion in excess spending each year in comparison to Western European nations that have universal health coverage. The costs are mainly associated with excess administrative costs and poorer quality of care."⁶

Have Managed Care Plans Provided Good Coverage?

Most people would define "good coverage" to include preventive, primary care, hospitalization, mental health, dental and vision as well as prescription drugs – without deductibles and little or no co-pays. Rising costs for health services have led health insurance companies to market new products to younger and healthier enrollees where risks are low and profits high. Some of these plans have moderate deductibles but limited benefits, e.g., \$10,000 maximum benefit cap. Other plans may have more comprehensive coverage but with high deductibles, e.g., \$5,000 for an individual; \$10,000 for families in-network (double if out-of-network).⁷ Thousands of plans now exist that lower premiums by reducing benefits and raising deductibles and co-pays.

Doris Isolini Nelson (LWVCA) is a member of the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force.

Produced by the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force, 2009

To be continued in August Voter. Information can be found on the National website, lww.org, if you can't wait.

New-Old Board Meeting, June 3rd

All Welcome

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Voters: The primary is August 18th. There may be local issues on the ballot, e.g. Burien annexation vote. There will be **no July Voter** so it is up to you to be informed in August. Any requests for Voters Service should be directed to our office.

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