



VOTER

Summer 2011 The League of Women Voters of Washington, 4730 University Way NE, #720, Seattle, WA 98105 Linnea Hirst, & Kim Abel : Co-Presidents
Vol. 53, No. 2 Tel: 206-622-8961 FAX: 206-622-4908 (outside toll area: 1-800-419-2596) email: lwwa@lwwa.org Myra Howrey, Editor

LWVWA State Convention 2011

The League of Women Voters of Washington met in convention at the Shilo Inns and Suites, Richland, Washington from May 20-22, 2011. Sixteen local leagues and 55 delegates (including 9 state board member) were present for the opening plenary session. Attending convention as well were Norm Turritt (LWVWA liaison from LWVUS board of directors) and Marcia Merrins, also a LWVUS board member. Welcoming remarks were made by Marilyn Perkins, LWV Benton Franklin president and John Fox, Mayor of Richland.

The opening plenary session involved much convention business, including the roll call of local leagues, presentation of current program for re-adoption and the proposed new program, Nominating Committee report, Bylaws Committee report, Budget Committee report, Treasurer's report, and notice of intent to propose a non-recommended program item. Marcia Merrins made a statement for the LWVUS clarifying ads run by the LWVUS in Massachusetts and Missouri, which had caused concern in state and local leagues, because of the impression of partisanship and the lack of transparency in funding.

After a break, workshops on varying subjects were held: League basics, Lobbying, Voter Service/Voter Registration, Coalitions, Program Planning, Writing Ballot Issue Positions, League Discussion Lists/Websites/Social Media, and Civil Discourse in Partisan Times.

During Friday night dinner, local league awards were presented: 1. Citizen Award: Mason County LWV County Budget Study Committee for "engaging your community in dialogue around an issue of local concern." 2. Voter Award: Sue Lean, Thurston County League member for "enhancing voter participation." 3. Diversity Award: LWV of Tacoma-Pierce County for their three simultaneous candidate forums on Aging and Disability Issues, put on at three different

locations in Pierce County, with first-time use of real-time captioning and American Sign Language interpreters.

Saturday plenary session began with an explanation of the proposed Bylaws changes which had to do with voting by email and which were necessitated by applicable RCW. Kim Abel expressed the need for further clarification by the Attorney General's office. There was a motion to consider the non-recommended program item: 'Concurrence with LWV of Seattle Privatization position.' Following were presentations by Mike Schwenk, Vice President, Battelle on *Science and Public Policy: Why They Are Inseparable*; and by Kathy Hibbard, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory on *Climate Change and Humans: What is Our Future?*

During Saturday lunch, the Dorothy Roberts Award was presented to Elizabeth Davis (see photo) which was then followed by Jill Conrad, Tribal Affairs Program Manager for the Department of Energy speaking on *Future of the Columbia River*.

After lunch, and a budget discussion, there were workshops on: The League, Non-partisanship and Elections in a New Era, presented by Marcia Merrins, LWVUS and various other workshops on: membership, the Education Fund, Fundraising, Publicity and Moderator Training. (Continued on Page 6)



Elizabeth Davis, LWV Whidbey Island, accepts the Dorothy Roberts Award from President Linnea Hirst for her years of service to the State League

Co-President's Message
by Linnea Hirst and Kim Abel

Hi from the presidents' corner. (And the apostrophe is in the correct place—where there was one president, now there are two.)

It's a mystery—a very nice mystery! The LWVWA Ed Fund received a surprise check recently from an anonymous donor through the Seattle Foundation. We don't know whether it came from a League member or from someone in the general public, but whichever, we thank the donor and want her/him/them to know we very much appreciate it and will use it well, for general program support as the donor instructed.

The Conservation District study report is nearly ready for distribution. It's an excellent report, one you will appreciate receiving. Each local League will be mailed some print copies, and the report will also be put on the LWVWA website. The state board will distribute discussion and consensus questions after our August 5th board meeting and retreat.

It's amazing, when we get a bunch of League members in a room, how fast and furious the great ideas flow! New board member, Karen Kiessling, Pullman League, was in Seattle recently and held a membership committee meeting for all who could heed her call. You'll all be hearing soon from Karen and others about that meeting and those ideas and meetings yet to come.

Since that meeting, Laura (our new staff) has set up a membership discussion group on the web so those interested in membership can now sign up and "talk" to each other to get good ideas and advice, as well as to give some. She can set up as many groups as we need, so weigh in on what you think would be a helpful group discussion for you in your work.

You'll also be hearing from us soon about board training. We're going to send out a "Survey Monkey" query to local League boards on what if any board training you would like from state board. We would love to come meet with you and do some training, but only if you want us to! Also, if you're a fair distance, we hope you'll want us to come before the weather becomes a problem.

The 2011 Convention Minutes are posted on the LWVWA website (members section). (There's a separate convention article elsewhere in the VOTER.)

**League of Women Voters of Washington
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2011-2013**

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Laura Cava Northrop, Administrative Director
Lonnie Johns Brown, Lobbyist

U.S. House of Representatives, HR 672, the attempt to terminate the Election Assistance Commission, was defeated thanks to LWV response throughout the country. But the battle rages on, so keep watching for requests for your action!

There are two national studies coming to all local Leagues this year. The Education report is finished and on the LWVUS website, ready for our attention. Deadline for us to report back with our local consensus is end of November—and that means getting done with discussion in time for your local board to consolidate your replies before sending in your League's decisions. [LWVUS Education Study Leader's Guide now available here.](#) In the coming weeks, look for a series of five *Voter*-ready papers to publish in your *Voters*.

The other study, on Privatization, is nearing completion, and you'll get word when it's up and ready for us. That report on our local consensus is planned for the end of March. Both are very important, and we all need to find space in our calendars to do our grass-roots work in time to be included.

**LWVWA WEBSITE
LOOK FOR IT**
www.lwvwa.org

Spotlight on Local Leagues



Ann Murphy, President, **LWV Spokane Area**, awarded a 50-year certificate and letter from LWVUS to Marguerite Cooney at their Annual Meeting on May 12th at St. Andrew's Church. Betty Banks, former Treasurer, also a 50-year member, died this spring. Her certificate was sent to family in the area.

Sue Lean, **LWV/Thurston County** will receive the R. Lorraine Wojahn Award presented by the Washington State Historical Society on June 18, 2011 at the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma at a noon luncheon. As a tireless Washington Women's History Consortium Advisory Board leader, Sue brought her extensive knowledge of women's history and her enthusiasm to the Washington Women's Suffrage Centennial. Reaching out to many groups, she enlivened the 2010 commemoration through costumed events, parades, and colorful programs. The award is for outstanding volunteer service advancing the work of the Washington State Historical Society and the Consortium by the Washington State Historical Society Board of Trustees.



Above are pictures of local league award winners at the State Convention: Tacoma-Pierce, Mason, San Juans, Bellingham Whatcom, and Clallam.

GOOD IN GOVERNMENT AWARDS

The League of Women Voters of Washington established the Good in Government Awards in 1995 to honor individuals and organizations that advocate for better government in the public interest. The award speaks to the basic principles of the League and who we are as an organization

In the past we have honored such luminaries in the state as Bill Gates Sr., Fred Haley, Patty Murray, the Tacoma News Tribune and many others. It was a delight, at our recent state convention in Richland, to honor several local people who made a difference in their communities. They helped model and sustain the democratic principles embodied in our constitution.

This year we honored Zona Lenhart who, in her capacity as Franklin County Auditor, spent much of her career protecting every citizen's right to vote, one of the League's principles. She was the first in the nation to pilot an online ballot project for the disabled, military personnel, overseas workers, and senior citizens. Zona was often quoted in saying, "Even small counties can lead," and under her leadership she proved that they not only could, but did.

In addition we also honored two teachers in the Richland School District, Denise Rosenblum and Jacqueline Ives, who implemented the We the People program in the alternative River's Edge high school. They exemplify our principle that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government. This program involves the students in a competition based on their knowledge of the United States Constitution. Last year they finished second in the state competition, the first alternative school in the nation to win a district title and the first to take a platform spot at state. Three of the students made a presentation at the Saturday dinner.

LWVUS National Council, Washington D.C. 2011

Council 2011 Highlights

By Kim Abel

Your co-Presidents were so pleased to be able to attend Council this June. We learned many things: How to ride the Metro in D.C. How to navigate a Conference Center laid out like a navy ship. How extraordinary League members are across the nation (42 states attended).

Friday Night: After a welcome from Elizabeth McNamara, LWVUS president, we started with open mike time to speak to the National Board about the infamous ads! There was frustration, anger and positive feedback. Linnea read the LWVWA convention's resolution and also asked that all Leagues hear back from the National Board no later than mid-October regarding their discussion and development of a policy and procedure relating to this issue.

Saturday: Lots of learning happened this day, starting with thinking about the 100-year anniversary, how to find leaders, what kind of leader we are, asking the right questions, hearing from a pollster about where voters are on issues and how the LWV is a trusted voice, hearing how AARP has stepped up to social media and seeing a demonstration of the new LWVUS Facebook page and website - - ALL BEFORE lunch!

After lunch we settled down and began thinking about how Council can be a place to learn and put ideas into action by developing a plan for statewide implementation. We decided our LWVWA plan would be voter outreach—expanding voter information into counties where no Leagues exist (more later...) So we started four hours of intensive training, followed by hearing about some specific LWVUS information.

Then Linnea and I attended updates on: the Education Study—with responses due by the end of November 2011 and the Privatization Study, responses due by the end of March 2012.

On to Sunday: Sunday our delegation worked on our voter outreach plan before the short business meeting, then lunch. Just a word on that, every meal was networking, no speakers, just a time to connect and it was much appreciated. Sunday we also did a number of exercises where we worked in groups to answer questions National wondered about such as:

- Long Term Funding to Support the League at all Levels
- How League Adapts as We Go Forward Membership and How we Use Our Love of the League to Ask Others to Join and/or Support

Monday: As the last morning rolled around, it felt as if we'd been working together for a week, and we knew we had learned so much. The morning was spent finalizing our state's work plan and giving National a copy, followed by a review of what National had learned from us through computer input, then Guidance to the Board. We ended with an invitation from the DC, Maryland and Virginia Leagues to Convention 2012 in fabulous Washington, DC.

Our Next Steps: We plan on using our new skills and ideas as soon as possible, some as soon as the state board retreat on August 5th. We also plan to begin sharing our statewide voter outreach plan with all Leagues soon, if both state boards agree that we should go forward with it.

Thanks for your support of your state Co-Presidents, Kim and Linnea



Claudia and Margaret Colony, former LWVWA State President, look at some photos of past times.

Farewell Claudia!

League members gathered at the home of LWVWA President Linnea Hirst on May 27, 2011 for a retirement luncheon for Claudia Downing, longtime Administrative Assistant

to the League of Women Voters of Washington. A good time was had by all, as we bid Claudia farewell and visited with many league members we hadn't seen in a while.

Best wishes to Claudia and Scott as they begin the next phase of their lives. We will miss you!



Lael Braymer, Cheryl Bleakney, Peggy Saari, Betsy Greene and Myra Lupton enjoy Claudia's retirement luncheon.

Welcome Laura!

We are so pleased to announce that after upwards of 60 applications, and a review and interview process that identified many strong candidates, we now have our new LWVWA Administrative Director.

Her name is Laura Cava Northrop. She comes from a League family and is already at work using her considerable skills and abilities to assist the LWVWA.

Laura has a professional background in the non-profit and communications sectors, and is a graduate of Harvard University. She has been passionate about community building and civic engagement from an early age, and has recently been selected for appointment to the Seattle Women's Commission. She is excited to support the League's work in Washington State, and looks forward to meeting each of you.



Laura Cava Northrop talks with Judy Golberg, LWVWA Convention Chair.

LEAGUE WEBSITES AND LISTSERVE RESOURCES

www.lwvwa.org, The League of Women Voters of Washington web site provides tools to get involved in the democratic process. Some of the pages are:

Positions, Action and Advocacy—information on League issues, legislative priorities and state government links.

Local Leagues—links to their pages

Members only—accessed with user name: lwvwa, and password: voter. Includes lists of state board members, local League leaders, policies and procedures, bylaws, guidelines for Leagues and the Civic Engagement Project papers.

www.washingtonvoter.org. A nonpartisan website for Washington state voting information and elections (a project of LWVW Education Fund). Includes information about registering to vote, a candidates' page and ballot issues page.

www.vote411.org, --non-partisan election information (also from LWV Ed Fund).

www.secstate.wa.gov The Secretary of State's website, with extensive information on voter registration as well as a list of candidates who have filed, initiatives filed, and a state voters' pamphlet.

LWVWA LISTSERVES

LWVWA Online Discussion list—**lwvwatopics** is open to League members. The idea is to share ideas and information and to ask questions; for example, action alerts, state board updates, initiative campaign updates, internet sites. How to subscribe: send an email message to lwvwatopics-requests@lwvwa.org with "subscribe" in the subject line.

How to post a message: lwvwatopics@lwvwa.org.

(State Convention 2011 continued)

At dinner on Saturday evening, the Good In Government Awards were presented to Denise Rosenblum and Jacqueline Ives, two teachers in the Richland School District, who implemented the *We The People Program* and have run it for the past eight years and to Zona Lenhart, Franklin County Auditor. Following the GIG award presentations was a *We The People* presentation by students of Denise Rosenblum and Jacqueline Ives.



Denise Rosenblum and Jacqueline Ives, along with some of their students, accept the GIG award from Linnea Hirst.



Zona Lenhart accepts her GIG Award

Lura Powell, Chair, Washington State Redistricting Commission then spoke on *Washington State Redistricting*. Sunday morning plenary session began with the adoption of program. All current positions were re-adopted. Convention delegates adopted the proposed update on the 1977 Energy Position, EN-6. The non-recommended program item was also adopted. The 2011-2013 Budget was adopted as were the Bylaws changes. Officers and Directors were elected.

Two resolutions were passed by delegates.

Resolution 1—Submitted by Toni Potter

Whereas, Our democracy is in peril. The Citizen's United decision of the US Supreme Court said that corporations have the same rights as natural persons to free speech, including political speech. This allows corporate entities to spend unlimited amounts to influence election outcome and lawmaking.

Whereas, The LVW of US has made it clear that the League's position is to change this.

Therefore be it resolved the President of the LWV of WA appoint a committee to gather supplemental material particularly as it applies to WA state to send to all local Leagues along with suggestions about how to disseminate this information beyond League members to the general public.

Resolution 2—Submitted by delegates from Kitsap, King County South, Pullman, Seattle and other local leagues

WHEREAS, ARTICLE II, SECTION 1 OF THE LWV BYLAWS STATES: "The purposes of the LWV are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues," and

WHEREAS, ARTICLE II, SECTION 2 OF THE LWV BYLAWS STATES: "The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate," and state and local leagues use this to establish our credibility in sponsoring candidate forums; and

WHEREAS, The LWV has long championed Campaign Finance Reform and deplored the recent Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court, and yet LWVUS did not promptly divulge the true source of over a million dollars in funding to pay for these ads, thus opening up the League to criticism; and

WHEREAS, delegates to the 2010 national LWV convention did not change the long-standing tradition of the League of Women Voters to take action on our positions not personalities, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON AS FOLLOWS: We request that the LWVUS adhere to the high principles of our 91-year history, to continue to be strong and visible in advocating for our positions, but to refrain from running negative public ads targeting individuals.

Following Resolutions and Direction to the Board was an Invitation to the 2012 State Council by members of LWV Pullman. Several local leagues are interested in hosting the 2013 State Convention.

Many thanks and much appreciation go to the Benton Franklin County League and especially to Judy Golberg, Convention Chair for a fabulous and well organized convention.

(Please note that a copy of the complete State Convention 2011 Minutes is posted on our website under the Members Only section.)

Washington State Conservation District Study

The study of Conservation Districts in Washington State is complete. This study gives Local Leagues an opportunity to obtain general information about Conservation Districts in Washington State and to investigate the way the Conservation District (CD) in which you live (or is near where you live) helps to preserve natural resources. This information will be great to share with League members who live in other areas of the state. Our state is very diverse. CDs in different parts of the state have different missions as the needs of land-owners change with the natural resources in their area. CDs, also, work closely with other state and federal agencies to help preserve natural resources. CDs partner with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Ecology, and other organizations. Pooling expertise, funding, and personnel allows for so much more action on the ground than any one agency could provide alone.

Hopefully, each Local League will schedule consensus of the Conservation District study during the first part of this league year, so information from Local Leagues can be compiled and shared at the 2012 LWVWA Council.

Hard copies of the Conservation District Study are available from the LWVWA office, funded by the LWVWA Education Fund. A file of the study is available on the LWVWA website, www.lwvwa.org.

Susan Eidschink
susaneiden@harbornet.com

WASHINGTON NEWS SERVICE (WNS) LWVWA Convention – May 2011

WNS is a news service concerned with getting stories on progressive topics aired by radio stations throughout the state. Some stories are also released for print media. WNS produces real news stories, as opposed to advocacy pieces, and strives for balance in its reporting. Media professionals who work for WNS write the stories.

Membership contributions from a variety of nonprofit organizations support the service. Organizations join because they see a benefit in getting issues of concern to them aired and in getting their organization's name before radio audiences.

The LWVWA Education Fund has a membership in WNS, which it shares with LWVWA and with participating local Leagues. Local Leagues participate in two ways: they send an annual monetary contribution and they are encouraged to propose story ideas.

A contribution of \$50 is typical for an average-sized League, although larger and more affluent Leagues contribute more. The contribution can be paid directly out of local funds on deposit with the LWVWA Education Fund. This year, local Leagues will be solicited in early autumn, close to the time of the October 1st WNS membership renewal date. Local Leagues may want to budget now for their fall contribution.

Any participating League can suggest a story idea. Often the WNS producer suggests a story to us. Next, WNS interviews a League leader with expertise on the story topic.

Stories can spring from any activity in which your League is engaged. It's essential, however, that they have an angle that makes them of interest to a statewide audience. It's also helpful if your subject is timely -- meaning that it can be linked to news that is breaking on the state or national scene. Whenever your League has a story idea that seems to meet these criteria, LWVWA community relations chair Lucy Copass can help bring it to the attention of WNS (see Lucy's contact information below).

Examples of stories produced by WNS that originated with local Leagues include a story about the Instant Runoff Voting ballot issue in Pierce County, with information supplied by Susan Eidschink, at that time vice-president of her local League; a story about registering veterans at V.A. hospitals, inspired by a project of LWV King County South, for which Becky Cox was interviewed; and a story about Conservation District Elections, with quotations from Jay Bollman of LWV Tacoma-Pierce County.

WNS produces, on average, 9 or 10 League-related stories every year, each aired by approximately 40 radio stations throughout the state. Some stations broadcast a story several times, meaning that the stories, collectively, get aired hundreds of times.

Lucy Copass
LWVWA Community Relations
lucyco@speakeasy.org 206-232-7687

Alert - Medicare is being threatened

Most of you have heard about the effort in the Ryan Budget Proposal to change Medicare from a defined benefit program to a defined contribution program. Supporters argue that beneficiaries will have more choice and our healthcare will not be controlled by the government. The truth is that Medicare patients have more choice in choosing providers in the current system. Worse, though, is this would lead to the privatization of the program and create a two tiered system for seniors as the cost of insurance premiums would increase at a greater rate than the subsidies from Medicare. Overall, access to affordable quality affordable healthcare would be reduced for seniors.

Of additional concern is a bill, S.1042, that is being introduced in the Senate by Senator Murkowski. A companion bill, H.R 1700, is being introduced in the house. This legislation will allow physicians to balance bill (A practice of hospitals, clinics, doctor's offices, and other medical facilities to bill patients for the balance between what they want to charge their patients for services and what the insurance company has already reimbursed them. Balance billing is currently illegal to Medicare patients.) for their services over what Medicare pays. Dr. Don

McCanne of Physicians for a National Health Plan wrote in his Quote of the Day, "If physicians were allowed to bill for the balance of the charges, Medicare as we know it would be destroyed." This will decrease access to healthcare for seniors because of affordability. Under this proposed law, too many physicians would not see Medicare enrollees unless they could balance bill the patients for charges not currently allowed. Many seniors simply would not be able to pay the additional fees.

Many efforts are being made to undermine Medicare under the guise of "we cannot afford it." I would suggest it is a question of priority and political will. We need to work to protect this program as well as move on to ensuring that everyone has access to affordable quality healthcare.

July 30th is Medicare's 46th birthday. In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed Medicare into law. Medicare has served us well, and with our advocating for Medicare along with its improvement and expansion, Medicare will serve us for many years in the future. Let's celebrate Medicare's birthday on July 29th.

Susan Eidenschink,

susaneiden@harbornet.com

YOUR LEGACY FOR THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

by Linnea Hirst

At our state convention this year I had the opportunity to talk about a subject that is near and dear to my heart: the need to create sustainable funding for all levels of the League of Women Voters and give us the capacity to accomplish so much more.

During the recent financial disaster, philanthropy experienced its deepest decline ever recorded since 1956. It fell 2% the first year and 3.6% the following year of this recession. In 2010 Bill and Melinda Gates, and Warren Buffet challenged America's billionaires to donate half of their wealth to charity and 40 of them stepped up to the plate. Among the 40 who made the pledge, Pierre and Pam Omidya commented, "It's all about leaving a legacy of hope for those to come." David Rockefeller believes that, "Those who have benefited the most from our nation's economic system have the responsibility to give back to our society in meaningful ways." A young couple, Laura and John Arnold said, "We view our wealth in this light...not as an end in itself, but an instrument to effect positive, transformative change." And my favorite quote is from Michael Bloomberg, "If you want to do something for your children and show how much you love them, the best thing – by far – is to support organizations that will create a better world for them and their children.

During this same time period a global campaign to encourage women to donate \$1 million each toward nonprofits that help women and girls, surpassed its ambitious target, thanks in part to a handful of Seattle philanthropists.

There aren't many of us that fit in the above categories of giving, but if they can give, so can we.

At the state level, Karen Kiessling initiated the Legacy project in 2008 with Kay Buss as our poster child. Kay was a Life Member of the League and believed that this effort to give the state League a fund to keep it alive and healthy for the next hundred years is extremely important to its members. "The League is unique and must continue to do its work of promoting good government, open meetings, inclusive decision-making and honest actions on the part of elected and appointed officials."

Members of the League Legacy Associates include:

Lael Braymer
Karen Kiessling
Kay Buss
Nancy Pearson
Lee Carpenter
Barbara Seitle
Margaret Colony
Penney Van Vleet
Helen Eisenberg
Linnea Hirst

We will always need additional funds to continue our work at all levels of League and many of you have responded quite generously to our fall campaign and action letters for our current needs. You can ensure that continuity, and provide the funds to expand the work that we do and build a sustainable League of Women Voters by including the League of Women Voter in your will.

Put the League in your will and encourage other Leaguers to do the same. And then...let us know that you made this gift, which will inspire others to do the same. Always check with your lawyer on issues regarding your will or trust documents.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

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