



WASHINGTON STATE VOTER

Summer 2005
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Barbara Seittle, President
J.C. Sears, Editor

Five Resolutions Passed by Delegates at Convention '05

Ex-Felons right to vote

Whereas, the League of Women Voters supports the right of all citizens to vote

Whereas, the League of Women Voters of the United States and state Leagues throughout the country support full voting rights for ex-felons

Resolved, that the League of Women Voters of Washington send to the Governor and Secretary of State notice of our support for full and automatic restoration of voting rights for people with felony convictions upon release from incarceration.

Anti-racist language

Resolved, that the state and local Leagues evaluate their positions, policies and practices to change their language and behavior from non-racist to anti-racist – a stronger, more active position.

Working with marginalized communities

Resolved, that the League of Women Voters of Washington review its 2006-2007 legislative action agenda to give careful attention to working on issues we share with communities of color and marginalized communities. These issues may include, but are not limited to, education, civil liberties, incarceration rates, health and environmental justice. We encourage our lobby team to participate with relevant caucuses such as Equitable Opportunity Caucus.

Funding public education

To Washington State Legislative Leaders:

Whereas, the LWVWA recognize that good public education is critical for all children especially for children who are ethnically and socio-economically diverse and for children whose needs are not being met

Whereas, the LWVWA believes that such public education is critical for an informed, involved public, for effective functioning communities, for economic development and business success and for the future of the state of Washington

Resolved, that the LWVWA urge the state legislature when providing educational funding, to pay special attention to the needs expressed in the Multi Ethnic Think Tank report.

Opposition to use of torture

Based on positions of League of Women Voters of the United States, LWVWA opposes the use of torture and rendition (moving detainees to countries known to practice torture) by the United States Government and/or its agents. Such acts are violations of United States law and international treaties to which the U.S. is a party;

Resolved, that LWVWA shall issue a press release announcing this statement;

Resolved, that LWVWA asks LWVUS to publicly state its position on torture and rendition; and

Resolved, that LWVUS urge Congress to appoint an independent, bipartisan committee to investigate alleged incidents of torture and abuse committed by the U.S. in detention and interrogation facilities.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government 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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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- August 12, 2005** - Retreat, LWVWA State Board
 - October 22, 2005** - Action Workshop, Bellevue
See enclosed flyer
 - November 12, 2005** - Women Engaging Globally,
9 - 1, Kane Hall, U.W.
 - June 10-13, 2006** LWVUS Convention -
Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Don't forget** to check out your local League's websites at www.lwvwa.org

**Fall VOTER Deadline
September 9, 2005**

Board Splinters

July, 2005

- Judy Golberg was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the board for her leadership as president.
- Approved a letter to Doug Sutherland, Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands, from LWV/King Co. South, urging the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to lease the "Maury Forty" to King County in perpetuity, and that it be maintained as a natural area.
- Election Reform has been a major issue. See the Study article, this issue.
- Good in Government luncheon will be sponsored by LWVWA this fall
- Approved: that LWVWA cooperate with the Washington State Auditor's Office to help present public forums in August and September to obtain opinions from citizens about what is expected in performance audits by providing that office a list of local Leagues and encouraging those Leagues contacted to participate.
- Consensus for the Tax Study - see Study article this issue.
- Online websites are being maintained by a team.

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Local League leaders and delegates met for Convention at Seattle University the last weekend in June. The theme of Convention this year was “Diversity: Changing the Status Quo”, and we learned from an inspiring group of presenters how each of our Leagues can network with organizations representing multi ethnic and socially diverse communities to our mutual benefit. Find the list of organizations represented in the Convention wrap-up article. See also the Resolutions passed by the delegates. Make a few phone calls in your own area and network locally. We will all be enriched by the opportunities working with these organizations will provide.

Please consider the four studies that were approved at Convention and are described in this *VOTER*. The study work will be done by committees to be made up from the general membership. We all benefit when committee membership is representative of the whole state. We need to understand the issues statewide in order to produce an effective study. In short, we need you! If you have any interest in or, perhaps, have participated in a local study on any of the topics, please contact the State League Office at lwwa@lwwa.org or 206-622-8961 or 1-800-419-2596 and volunteer.

And let us continue to work on our strategic plan and our goals:

- to be more visible in our local communities;
- to increase the membership that is so vital to our organization;
- and to reach out and work with organizations that have similar goals for good government, quality education, health, the environment, and social justice.

I look forward to working with all of you.

Barbara Seitle
bseitle@whidbey.com

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON
AWARDED GRANT FOR A PUBLIC FORUM
"WOMEN ENGAGING GLOBALLY"**

SAVE THE DATE - Saturday, November 12, 9:00am to 1:00pm at Kane Hall, University of Washington

LWV has joined forces with the Center for Women Policy Studies, and the Women's Environment and Development Organization, to engage influential U.S. women as advocates for U.S. foreign policy that promotes human rights, economic development, peace and security, and sustainable development. Seattle is one of eight cities in the U.S. participating in this effort. Our focus will be on Poverty, Globalization and Trade. Most of the world's poorest of the poor are women. Women make up the vast majority of both low-wage workers and consumers. The forum will examine how current U.S. macroeconomic policy impacts women at home and abroad.

Convention 2005

DIVERSITY: Changing the Status Quo

Judy Golberg

LWVWA's convention was held at Seattle University, June 24-26, 2005 with 120 voting delegates and guests. The weather was welcoming as was Seattle itself! Our thanks to Lael Braymer, Nancy Eitrem, and all the other hard working Seattle League members who organized the event.

Four new studies were approved: Growth Management (2-year study); Election Reform (2-year study); Transportation position update focusing on the ferry system (1-year study); Water position update (2-year study). If you have interest in participating with any of these studies, please contact Barbara Seitle, at lwwwa@lwwwa.org.

Other business conducted included:

- Concurrence with the LWV/Seattle's position (updated) on Drugs
- Approved \$1 increase in PMPs
- Approved 2005-2007 LWVWA budget
- Elected a new slate of officers, board and nominating committee
- Announced the winner of the Dorothy Roberts Award to Jocelyn Marchisio
- Membership awards went to:
 - For Leagues over 50 members – Seattle;
 - For League under 50 members – Cowlitz County;
 - and for a Unit at Large – Skagit County
- Local League awards were given to:
 - King County South - Voter Award;:
 - Benton-Franklin Counties - Citizen Award;
 - Jefferson County UAL - Diversity Award
 -
- Invited to Ellensburg for Council 2006 - June (1st weekend)
- Invited to Clark County (Vancouver) for Convention 2007

Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos (37th District) spoke on education and WASL scores disaggregated by race, and how apparent it is we are not reaching the children of color.

Convention 2005, continued

Building Communities and Allies: Nadine Shiroma and Doreen Cato provided ideas for identifying and reaching out to marginalized communities; how your goals intersect with theirs; and how to become a catalyst for action. Round-robin discussions were moderated by Dorry Elias Garcia, of the Minority Executive Directors Coalition, with Lua Pritchard of the Korean Women's Association; Shelly Seacrist, NAACP; Claudia Kauffman, Muckleshoot Tribal Council Representative; Ed Davila, Hispanic/Latino Commission as panelists.

Sarah Diefendorf, LWVUS Board and Liaison to Washington, presented slides and talked about her visits abroad training trainers in areas of voting rights, women's rights, and citizen activism.

The Multi Ethnic Think Tank - Equitable Opportunity for All: Dr. Thelma Jackson, Foresight Educational Consultants, Suzi Wright, Legal Analyst for Native Tribes, Dr. Andrew Griffin, OSPI, and Uriel Iniquez, Washington State Hispanic/Latino Commission presented their ideas on the education system and how it might change to better meet the needs of all children. Workshops were also held on Training the Trainer, Future Speaking, Tax Education Program and the Education Fund / The State We're In.

Cathy Allen, of The Connections Group, and five young women, gave us an idea what younger people think about when considering joining a group such as ours: another new perspective to consider when we are looking for new members!

Several Resolutions were approved (See article in this issue)

The wine raffle prizes were given throughout convention. Total money brought in \$3,110.00. Thanks to everyone who donated prizes, purchased tickets, and helped take the prizes to the winners.

League members will be very busy during the next two years working on a variety of new studies. Please get involved and provide your perspective on these studies!

Thanks again to everyone who made convention a success. Congratulations to the incoming officers and board.

Delegates approve changes and additions to LWVWA positions

Election Laws and Procedures (1964-67, 2003-04)

The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that:

- The Voters Pamphlet performs a valuable service in promoting an informed electorate, and should be continued at state expense. The intent and effect of each ballot issue should be clearly set forth in language readily understandable by the voter. A clear distinction should exist between explanation and argument, and the term "official" should apply only to the former. Obvious untruths and emotionalism should be eliminated.
- Voting procedures should serve the voter with a maximum of convenience, simplicity and efficiency while insuring that the requirements of secrecy, accuracy and impartiality are maintained.
- Permanent, personal registration should be continued. Lists of voters should be accurate and current. Registration should be simple and convenient for voters while ensuring accuracy. Provision should be made for absentee registration when registration is otherwise impossible.
- Regular and full disclosure of campaign finances for both ballot issues and candidates is necessary before primary and general elections.
- Political parties should play an important role in election campaigns by recruiting, helping to finance, and campaigning for qualified candidates.
- Validation of excess levy elections should not be based on a percentage of voter turnout in a previous election. This permits those who do not exercise their franchise to vote to determine the outcome of an election. In order to authorize an excess levy, it should not be required that 3/5 of those voting on the proposition must vote in favor. Although there may be justification for requiring an extraordinary majority for voter approval when long-range or fundamental changes are involved, there is no justification when excess levy elections are necessary for maintenance of current services.

The League of Women Voters of Washington supports:

- Verifying the accuracy of election equipment by providing independent, voter verifiable ballots that can be recounted when a recount is needed.
- Automatic, mandatory audits of election results of randomly selected precincts.
- Extending HAVA deadlines, and the protection and provision of HAVA funds to states.
- The present system, allowing voters in most counties the choice of either voting by mail, or going to a polling place.
- Certification of Washington State election equipment using Washington State certification methods. Washington State should be able to certify and use equipment whether or not it is in use in another state.

Changes to LWVWA Positions, continued**Tax Structures (1959, 1965, 2005)**

The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that:

- Inequities in the distribution of the tax burden should be removed. Ability to pay is an important criterion. Flexibility and recognition of changing times and needs is important in tax policy. Only broad general principles of taxation should be included in the constitution. Income should be part of the tax base preferably through a graduated net income tax. The sales tax should not be levied on food. Business should be taxed on net income rather than gross receipts.

General Tax Exemptions (2005).

The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that:

- Any tax exemption proposal should be carefully evaluated for purpose, benefit and cost; and all tax exemptions should be periodically reviewed.

Property Tax Exemptions (1969)

The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that:

- Exemptions from property tax should be limited, but may be valid when used to further public policy such as encouraging education, cultural or humanitarian causes.
- Property tax exemptions should not be used to encourage location of industry or as a reward for public service. Property of private or nonprofit groups used for business activities should not be exempt.
- The state should assume the responsibility for revenue lost to local governments because of property tax exemptions granted by the state. Property otherwise exempt should pay for direct public services such as fire and police protection.
- When exemptions are used, the state must assure uniform application. Exemption provisions should be carefully and periodically examined. There should be a periodic inspection of exempt property to assure compliance with the law. Exempt property and its valuations should be listed. The list should be made available to the public.
- Property on which the tax is unduly difficult or expensive to administer should be taxed in some other way. For example: income tax on intangibles, excise tax on boats and cars. Ability to pay is an important criterion of the tax structure. As reform of the tax structure is considered, methods other than exemption should be investigated for the purpose of relieving the property tax burden on low-income families.

**SUMMARY REPORT FOR LOBBY TEAM ACTIVITIES IN THE 2005
STATE LEGISLATURE**

Liz Pierini, LWVWA Action Chair

The State League Lobby Team, with more than twenty members, covered our main action areas this last session: Social Policy, Government, and Natural Resources.

Our experience was one of the best ever. Why such success? I think some of the reasons are:

1. **COLLABORATION.** We worked well with each other, sometimes sharing issues with two or more portfolios. We also joined with others in coalitions of like-minded groups.
2. **PERSISTENCE.** We know that often we must work for years to gain the changes we seek. Here are some examples:
 - a. after years of trying, Mental Health Parity, a main priority, became a reality;
 - b. after three years of trying, a law to protect children from unhealthy conditions in rental housing was passed;
 - c. also, long needed budget increases for early learning were significantly raised this year.
3. **GRASS-ROOTS LOBBYING.** The Natural Resources group listed the Senate and House members who would be deliberating on bills of high interest to League. Then they matched those members to their districts, and located constituents in those districts who would let their legislators know their opinions on the bills. These efforts helped to pass at least seven major natural resource bills League supported.

For more information on the Lobby Team, see issues of this year's Legislative Newsletters online contact Laura McCarty, *Legislative Newsletter* Editor at 425-513-8846 or mccarty.johnson@verizon.net

From the Action Chair, Liz Pierini: I want to thank every one for their work with the legislature --- to one and all, Thank You!

From the President, Judy Golberg: To our many knowledgeable and focused portfolio chairs, umbrella chairs, action chair, lobbyist, Legislative News letter editor, and all the other League members who attended lobby team meetings during the legislative session, and who lobbied their legislators --- my hat is off to you! Thanks for all you do to keep the League of Women Voters of Washington at the forefront of the Legislature's deliberations. You are the heart and soul of League.

A note from Liz Pierini: Several months ago I turned on the TV and saw Ann Aagaard sitting at a Swedish Hospital luncheon honoring one of the medical staff for winning a Nobel Prize in chemistry. The winner, Linda Bush, was a former science student of Ann's at Roosevelt High School in Seattle. In her speech, Dr. Bush remembered Ann as encouraging her interest in science and biology, and she said that Ann wrote in her year book that one day Linda would be known as a great scientist.

Circumnavigating Uncharted Shorelines

Peggy Toepel, LWV Snohomish County

When Everett undertook update of its Shorelines Master Program (SMP), from 1998 through 2001, **first-in-the-state** under new state rules, local Snohomish County League members participated in each phase of the public process. Besides charting a healthy future for local shorelines, Everett's SMP was about to set statewide precedent, so we, and other groups concerned for preservation of healthy shorelines function, knew that strong, clear, workable policies would be essential. The Shoreline Management Act seemed clear enough to us, but the City of Everett's interpretation seemed to leave troubling gaps in protection.

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Background – Everett sits where the Snohomish River enters Puget Sound. The City's waterfront was dominated for a century by log rafts, log yards, lumber/paper/pulp mills and railroad tracks, but is still in regular use by fish, crabs, osprey, waterfowl, migratory shorebirds, etc. The City has eagerly sought redevelopment of its vacant former industrial waterfront.

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Following the State Legislature's 1995 direction that local governments integrate their Shorelines Management planning with their Growth Management planning, Everett began overhaul and update of its original Shorelines Master Program by compiling a detailed scientific inventory for its 23 miles of shorelines. Although changes in state rules, and federal uncertainties about Endangered Species, caused delays and rework, the City completed an extensive SMP Update. By the time the State Dept. of Ecology (DOE) finished reviewing the Update, even the State's administrative rules for shorelines planning had been withdrawn, so DOE set aside its initial evaluation based on those rules, and accepted Everett's plan with very little change.

Setting sail – As citizens concerned for the long-term health of the shorelines, our main problems with Everett's SMP were:

- **over-reliance upon project mitigation**, to get ecological enhancement
- **setting of statewide precedent** for inadequate standards
- **allowance of over-intensive future uses** at vulnerable locations on our shorelines.

Several local LWV members helped form a coalition of citizens and established environmental organizations, for a joint *Appeal of Everett's SMP to the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board*. (Only persons or organizations that submitted specific testimony on the Record during the public process were considered eligible to appeal, and only those issues on which they testified. Because the public Record *pre-dated* formation of the coalition, two of our coalition's member organizations, on that record as having substantively argued certain key issues on their own behalf, also signed on as separate co-petitioners in the same legal action, to ensure sufficient legal standing for appeal of those issues.) We incorporated as Everett Shorelines Coalition (ESC) in July 2002 and filed our appeal, heartened by the filing of separate appeals by Washington Environmental Council (WEC) and the Tulalip Tribes that partially overlapped our own.

Learning the ropes – Although the Growth Management Hearings Board had issued helpful procedural instructions, embarking upon our first venture into environmental litigation as a coalition presented occasional hurdles, the first being the narrowing issues of concern to those of highest all round priority: we couldn't afford to argue all of them. Working in *consensus* mode stood us in good stead. Later, while scouring thousands of pages of the formal Records for documents best supporting our legal arguments, we were pleased to read that Dept. of Ecology experts had raised some of the same concerns and arguments.

Decision - Fast Forward: **in January, 2003, the Hearings Board Decision upheld several parts of the joint Appeal**, including the City's obligation to satisfy the Growth Management Act's "Best Available Science" requirement: this was gratifying, but the ruling left Everett's SMP Update still in effect, pending changes ordered by the Board. So our initial exhilaration was short-lived. The Hearings Board's sweeping interpretation of "integrate Shoreline Management and Growth Management requirements" alarmed the City, the Port, and the DOE: each promptly declared intent to Appeal the Decision to the Courts. So did WEC and Tulalip Tribes, to further press their original issues.

Blockade – Especially daunting: the City and Port, joined by pro-development groups, campaigned to convince the State Legislature to "fix" their problem (the Hearings Board's ruling), by "clarifying" (undoing) the 1995 stated legislative intent in directing local governments to integrate Shoreline Management and Growth Management requirements in their planning. The Legislature's hasty response (SHB 1933) did eliminate some procedural obstacles for future SMP change approval – and came dismayingly close to scuttling some important protections for Critical Areas within Shorelines jurisdiction! However, the legislature's action left both the Hearings Board Decision and Everett's SMP in effect, and nudged the contested portions of the SMP into legal limbo -- and the SMP **out** of its initial status as precedent setter for other jurisdictions updating SMPs!

Navigation lesson #1: Keep an eye out for obstacles not shown on your charts.

Course Option "A": Litigation ? - Appeals of the Hearings Board Decision went forward. Hoping to preserve what we had "won" under the Decision, our Coalition filed as intervenor, then settled in to wait through a *year* while four separate appeals (in different County Superior Courts) were consolidated into one combined appeal to the State Court of Appeals. In the meantime, the City narrowed the remaining contest by negotiating a separate settlement with Tulalip Tribes. And because *statewide precedent for shorelines planning no longer rested upon Everett's SMP*, the urgency of eventual Court ruling on the Appeal was diminished. Other organizations in our coalition concentrated their attention on other important issues. Our local volunteers worked on building community relations: with bike/pedestrian trail enthusiasts, Port of Everett, Everett's new mayor, and local stewardship projects, but always maintaining our vigilant Waterfront Watch over **all** Everett shoreline development proposals. (The outreach probably helped.)

Course Option "B": Negotiation? - Reconsidering the possible outcomes of the looming Appeals court battle, and the potential for further appeals and delays of shoreline development projects, as the scheduled court date neared, Everett reopened the option of negotiating settlement of WEC's Appeal issues. *A change of course!* In order to vacate residual litigation issues under the Hearings Board Decision if settlement of WEC's issues were reached, an accompanying built-in legal requirement for *consent of all parties* gave our coalition the option of a place at the negotiating table. Ann Aagaard, State LWV Chair for Shorelines and Wetlands, pointed out that we could expect settlement negotiations to take on a life of their own, for better or for worse, but at least decisions could be reached by participants knowledgeable about the shorelines in question, and motivated to reach agreement, rather than by a court having no particular familiarity with the shorelines or the issues. ESC elected to launch into joint negotiation.

Navigation lesson #2 - Changing tack can speed forward progress.

Calmer waters – From the start, the negotiating atmosphere was cautiously optimistic and cordial, by comparison to argument in Court. The City's adversarial stance during the original Growth Management Board Hearing was left behind, replaced by collaborative search for terms of agreement. Unlike a single Appeals Court session, instead of arguing all issues together, we examined each of our complex and interdependent issues in depth, building upon successive areas of agreement. Gaining familiarity and optimism over months of meetings, phone conferences and email exchanges, we'd revisit, refine, and recombine draft solutions – all very time-consuming, but yielding clear and detailed agreements.

Navigation lesson #3 - A positive attitude can help calm choppy waters.

Each issue was whittled down toward implementing details, such as best mechanism for encouraging Restoration or Conservancy on private lands, specific requirements for future monitoring of mitigation sites, etc., and lastly (and knottiest), precise language for the legal agreement itself.

Sharing responsibilities and Slipping Schedules - WEC took the lead on science-based standards for Buffers, Restoration, and Mitigation; ESC pressed for limiting allowable future shoreline uses to those that would be compatible with known opportunities for future ecological restoration (on-site or adjacent). The City provided detailed maps, clarified the extent and limits of City authority over private lands, and drafted SMP changes to incorporate new and altered provisions. With four major issues to settle, and often six or more participants' schedules to match up, the targeted completion date slid repeatedly: first from June 2004 to end-of-July, then to Sept. 1st, to October, and, to accommodate last-minute tangles over Everett's and DOE's respective jurisdictional authority, the final signatures took place in December 2004 (weeks *after* ESC's long-planned public celebration of the Settlement!

Navigation lesson #4 - Negotiation doesn't necessarily save lots of time or money, but the best course is not necessarily the shortest transit between start and finish points..

The Toll, and the Reward - The negotiation process demanded much of all of us: patience, diplomacy, perseverance, sense of humor, trust -- and more patience (especially when surprise extra change proposals threatened derailment of the whole Settlement). But in the end, our reward for staying the course includes:

- **strengthened shorelines protections**, as sought by WEC and ESC and directed under the Hearings Board Decision, **plus**, the Agreement clarifies how they'll be implemented and incorporates new mechanisms to promote habitat restoration. It is clearer and more explicit than if decided in the Court of Appeals; it supports the Hearings Board's sound judgment regarding our issues; and the City has its SMP changes already cleared for acceptability by the DOE.
- WEC and ESC get **a seat at the table, in special planning** for Everett's Marshland district, which is being re-designated to preserve existing agricultural use and encourage rehabilitation of some prior fish and wildlife habitat.
- The privilege of collaborating with a respected state level environmental organization (WEC) in problem solving, and, possibly, **encouragement to other local groups to persevere**. By working together, we can help make our communities better for all.

DELEGATES TO CONVENTION '05 APPROVE FOUR NEW STUDIES

ELECTION REFORM

Scope and focus: A two-year state study that would continue examination of our election system and of ways to improve it. All issues involved in improving elections in Washington State, status of the state's implementation of the Help America Vote Act, and changes made by the 2005 Legislature.

Outlook for Work: Identifying election problems and evaluating proposed solutions. These would include: Registration issues; Enforcement issues; Equipment issues; Procedural issues; Election certification process; Vote counting standards; Machine or hand recounts; Guidelines for ballot remarking; Provisional ballots and absentee ballots; Personnel issues including citizen observers; Other issues.

Consideration of new concepts: These would include: Primary Election issues; Electoral College issues; Other concepts.

Broad involvement by interested members throughout the state will be encouraged, following up reported problems in their own, and perhaps, neighboring counties. Much committee communication could take place via email.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN WASHINGTON STATE

Scope and Focus: A one year study which would inform League members, legislators and the general public about the Growth Management Act in Washington State. Topics would include:

Background—how we got the Act and what it was intended to fix.

- Specific components of the Act, such as goals, planning requirements, enforcement, etc.
- An assessment of how it's worked around the state—successes and challenges.
- Case studies illustrating key issues.
- Current controversies and what's being done about them.
- Comparison with other states.

Rationale: League has never studied growth management per se. Our most recent positions derive from looking at Land Use and Planning in 1986, and from agriculture, transportation and economic diversification within the past couple of decades. Our members need current knowledge and applicable positions in order to advocate effectively on growth management issues in their communities and at the state level. Our study could also serve a very useful function as a primer on the GMA for state legislators, very few of whom really understand the history or purpose of the Act. Almost no legislators in office today were in the Legislature when the GMA was enacted in 1990-91, and all could use a factual, neutral report on the topic.

UPDATE STUDY of LWVWA TRANSPORTATION POSITION
with a FOCUS on the WASHINGTON STATE FERRY SYSTEM

Scope and Focus: A one-year study to update LWVWA positions to include a segment specifically on the Washington State Ferry System and how it is integrated into the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Background: How we acquired the Ferry System and how it became part of the Highway System. How have the definition of the WSF and funding policies changed over time. Key Issues and Controversies. An assessment of current State policies and funding of the WSF within WSDOT structure and budget.

Rationale: The League has never studied the Ferry System, yet it is the major means of transportation between the West Sound and the rest of the State. It is the only means of transportation from and to a number of islands in the Puget Sound. It delivers the mail, goods and services including medical as well as people in private vehicles and walk-ons. Yet there is no mention of it in our positions even though the system is an extension of our highway system.

Many of the current controversies over fares and services arise from a lack of clear definition and collective understanding by legislators and the public about the ferry service within overall transportation policies and funding patterns. We, in League, need to take the lead in educating ourselves, the public, and governing bodies about this vital service, and we need new positions to do so.

Outlook for work: Most of the work can be done by e-mail. Information can be gathered primarily from government sources. We anticipate that members who live in areas most affected by ferry service would be interested in working on this project.

WATER UPDATE

Scope and Focus: Adoption of a two-year study to inform members, legislators and citizens of the challenges confronting water in Washington State as a multi-use quantity – adequate supply flow for fish, sufficient supply for agriculture, its importance to our economic stability, threats to water resources, conservation as a supply enhancement. The first year of the study to be informational.

League of Women Voters of Washington's

ACTION WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 22, 2005

St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 2650 – 148th Avenue SE, Bellevue

**Registration (\$20) begins at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and rolls
Program 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Listen to and Meet with Expert Speakers (TBD)
Hear from League Portfolio Chairs on Upcoming Legislation
and**

**Enjoy a delicious lunch of salads, home-baked bread and desserts
provided by members of League of Women Voters of Seattle
Eastside Units**

Be sure to attend this important workshop!

Directions: From I-90 East or West, take the 148th Avenue SE Exit. (Exit is east of 405.) Head north or in the direction of the City of Bellevue on 148th. The major landmark in the area is the Mormon Temple on 148th SE, with a high tower that can be seen for miles. It is practically a next-door neighbor of St. Andrew's. Drive past the Temple on 148th. You will see a fire station and a sign pointing to St. Andrew's, 2650 – 148th Avenue SE. Turn right onto the driveway into the parking lot and St. Andrew's property. Further landmark: across 148th, on the west side of the street is Bellevue Community College.

Action Workshop REGISTRATION FORM October 22, 2005

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Pre-registration is required.

Make your check payable to LWVWA and mail to: 4710 University Way NE, #214, Seattle, WA 98105

For more information: 206-622-8961, 1-800-419-2596, lwwwa@lwwwa.org

Registration Deadline: October 19, 2005

Report from LWVUS Council

Laura McCarty, LWV/Snohomish County & LWVWA Board Member

As LWVWA's delegate to the LWVUS council (my first), I had few expectations as I arrived in the steamy District of Columbia on the weekend of June 11. By the time I left - with stacks of papers and (as the post-conference press release said) my head full of "important ideas for our League to use in reaching out to engage our community here in Washington" - I had gained valuable perspective on the condition of the national league enterprise and that of some of the other state leagues. An alphabetical "roll call of states" during the Saturday afternoon plenary (one of three held that weekend - see interactive.lwv.org/Council for slide presentations used in the plenaries), in which each representative had one minute to talk about their state league, gave all attendees very brief snapshots of recent accomplishments in leagues across the U.S. In the end, I chose to use most of my "roll call" minute to talk about the marketing program for our publication *The State We're In*. I also had several opportunities later to talk about the accomplishments of LWVWA's lobby team.

Unlike national convention, but much like our own state league's biennial council meeting, LWVUS's council is held every year in which the organization's biennial convention is not called. It is a smaller gathering than either the national or state convention: at this particular council, 48 states and a dozen big-city leagues were represented, mostly by their presidents, to make a total of about 130 people. Official delegates were joined by the LWVUS staff, boardmembers, and committee chairs, plus observers and guests. From Washington state, Seattle League's president Nancy Eitrem and independent observer Patti Drogseth attended. Over a period of two and a half days, in addition to the usual networking over food and drink, we took care of pressing national league business, attended leadership-building workshops and caucuses, heard some excellent panel discussions, and listened to our eminent banquet speaker David Gergen, a White House advisor in the Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Clinton administrations. Gergen is currently the editor-at-large at U.S. News & World Report, and the director of the Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Gergen offered the opinion that League's most significant role in the U.S. today is not in its involvement with elections, but rather in aiding in the depolarization of our society by building common ground based on League issues addressing the common welfare. Two book titles he mentioned in the course of his speech were *The Right Nation* (Micklethwait and Wooldridge) and *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Warren).

Sitting to my left at the Sunday evening banquet was Teena Halbig, the incoming co-president of the League of Women Voters of Louisville (Kentucky). She and I compared League involvement with land-use issues in our two states. Because we met at council, the opportunity exists between now and the summer 2006 (June 9-11) LWVUS convention in Minneapolis to bring forward a proposal relating to land-use at that convention, by joining forces (if we choose) with Teena and several others whom I met during the networking periods inserted into the intensive council schedule. Although the national League's presidents' can reach each other by email, nothing can replace the face-to-face of council.

With a third of the staff it had five years ago, and a 2005-2006 budget of \$3.8 million (not including LWVEF reimbursements), the national League organization appears to be wringing as much advantage as it can out of computers and telecommunications technologies. Council attendees got a preview of the new, but yet-to-be-released, LWVUS website. Discussion in hallway, caucus, and plenary touched on hopes and concerns for DNet, websites, blogs, membership databases, PayPal, and so on. My strongest impression was that the national league office is a powerful reserve of expertise in areas such as development and coalition-building, some of which derives from LWVUS's being physically located in Washington, D.C.

The council schedule was rounded out by two excellent panels on Monday morning: a panel of civil liberties experts, and then a three-person panel of national, state, and local league presidents including Nancy Eitrem. Throughout the council, we had been urged to focus our leagues "outward" and to "engage the community" with a flexible approach to league process. This also includes engaging with people in other countries with the national League's global democracy programs. Council indeed left me with much to think about.

State Auditor asks for Leagues Help

In April of this year, the State Legislature passed ESHB 1064, which gave the Auditor's office new and expanded authority to audit state government. Before they complete their audit performance planning, they wish to hold a series of forums around the state to find out what citizens think about how state government serves them. They have asked the League to help with this process, forums being one of those things League does so well. The State League Board took this up at the board meeting June 24, and decided this was a good opportunity for local Leagues. We therefore agreed to forward contact information for local Leagues to the Auditor's office. We announced this decision to the delegates at Convention. They hope to conduct the programs in August and September. If you are contacted by the Auditor's office about a forum, we hope you will be able to accommodate them, and help to set it up, host, or even act as moderator. If you are contacted, please let the League office know.



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