



WASHINGTON STATE

VOTER

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Barbara Seitle, President
Claudia Downing, Editor

Columbia River Water Issues

No review of water policy and water resource management in Washington State would be complete without consideration of the Columbia River and its tributaries. Two thirds of Washington falls within the Columbia River basin as do parts of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and British Columbia. This fourth and final article in the state water study review of current water issues and the Leagues positions on water resources will address the impacts and resource management issues of the Columbia River.

The Columbia River basin covers approximately 260,000 square miles. The headwaters are in British Columbia and in its 1214 mile course from the Canadian Rockies to the Pacific it falls an average of 2 feet per mile. The last 300 miles of the river form the border between Washington and Oregon. The Columbia has twelve major tributaries including the Snake and Willamette and 14 dams on the mainstream 3 in Canada and 11 in the US.

The Columbia River is a critical natural and economic resource in our state and in our nation. The EPA lists the Columbia River as one of our "Nations Great Water Bodies" joining the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, South Florida Ecosystem, Long Island Sound and Puget Sound.

The League of Women Voters of the US published a study in 1959 titled "The Great River of the West". This study is available on the LWV web site (www.lwwva.org). Easily readable, this comprehensive report gives a dated but remarkably informative overview of the maze of federal, state, interstate and international agencies, compacts and agreements that have jurisdiction or influence over various phases of water resources development in the Columbia River Basin. This complicated governance structure has changed little in 47 years since this Regional League study was completed.

The Bureau of Reclamation is the single largest water user on the Columbia River mainstream and is allocated about two thirds of the water from the river. The Seattle League "Know Your Columbia River Basin Study" of 1959, also available on the League web site (www.lwwva.org) succinctly describes the goals of the Bureau in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers to "prepare a comprehensive survey of the Columbia River Basin, which includes proposals for the total development of the River in cooperation with the Corps". At the time of the League's 1959 overview there were 21 projects including the Yakima, Okanogan and Columbia Basin projects. Grand Coulee Dam was the flagship of these projects, designed to reclaim 1 million acres of land in south central Washington and provide power for the regions industry, agriculture and domestic needs.

The current work of the Bureau of Reclamation and other jurisdictional agencies within the Columbia Basin Project include storing and carrying water for irrigation, producing electricity, controlling floods, providing recreation, regulating streamflow and providing water for cities, industries, navigation and endangered species. The Bureau analysis of the yearly value approximates; \$630 million from irrigated crops, \$950 million from power produced, \$20 million flood damage prevention, \$50 million recreation: representing 3 million visits.

Currently WA State Department of Ecology reports that water rights for approximately 4.7 million acre-feet of water diversions from the Columbia River are held in the state. Of these water rights approximately 91% go to irrigated agriculture and 9% to municipal, industrial, domestic and other uses. Water demands from the Columbia River come from every sector of the economy, these varies requests cover each beneficial purpose identified under state Water Rights as a legitimate use for the public's water resource.

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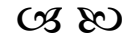
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UPCOMING EVENTS

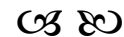
January 19 Lobby Day
April 22 Good In Government Event
June 21-24 LWVWA Convention



CALL TO CONVENTION 2007

**Date: June 21-24, 2007
Place: Heathman Lodge
Vancouver, WA**

Details to follow



**Spring *VOTER* Deadline
March 9, 2007**

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.

The *Washington State VOTER* is published quarterly by the League of Women Voters of Washington, 4710 University Way N.E., Suite #214, Seattle, WA 98105. Yearly subscription is \$10.00. Members of the League of Women Voters of Washington subscribe through their annual dues. Call 206-622-8961 for a local League in your area.

Send address changes to the League of Women Voters of Washington, 4710 University Way NE, Suite #214, Seattle, WA 98105.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Did you know that when a legislator receives 10 messages on a given subject, she/he begins to notice? Think of the impact your League could have on issues of importance to all of us. Just 10 of your members sending a message to your legislators! That is just one of the bits of information we learned at Action Workshop in November.

How will you know when to send those messages and what to say? Subscribe to the Legislative Newsletter. The Legislative Newsletter is produced every Friday afternoon and can be sent to you electronically (free) or by mail. You will learn which bills we are supporting and which ones we oppose or take no position on. You will learn which legislators may need nudging from you (10 messages) to help us with an issue.

How can your League get more involved? Join our Lobby Team by telephone. Every Thursday during the legislative session, members of the Lobby Team meet in Olympia to catch up on progress of bills we are supporting or opposing and to discuss strategy for moving forward. Are you Action Chair for your League? Transportation or Health Care, Education or Natural Resources Chair? If so, sign up for the Lobby Team Thursday morning conference call. Confer with our professional lobbyist and our volunteer lobbyists. Let them know how your membership feels about an issue and find out how you can help them. The calls will last about 45 minutes to one hour. You will receive instructions about calling in when you sign up. (Call or email the state League office)

What are our priorities for this session? One very exciting prospect we will play a major role in will be campaign finance reform. The time may be right for legislation that will allow for and encourage public financing for judicial races. And, perhaps, for local offices as well. In addition, we have a whole list of priorities for education, health care, the environment, children's issues – check out the list on page 5.

Please come to Lobby Day January 19. This year we will be in the Columbia Room in the Capitol Building. Meet the Governor at the morning session, and share lunch with your legislators. Let them know you are coming. South Sound Leagues are planning a wonderful day for us. It would be terrific to have a representative from each local League there. Need a place to stay overnight? Thurston County League will arrange for bed and breakfast for any League member who needs to come the day before. Contact Marilyn Funk at 360-357-7967.

And mark your calendars for April 22, 2007. That is the day of our Good in Government Brunch. See the announcement in this issue.

Barbara

bseitle@whidbey.com

ACTION WORKSHOP A SUCCESS

Discussion topics at the November 18 Action Workshop in Bellevue, attended by approximately 80 LWVWA members, were public campaign financing and judicial independence. Morning speakers were Bill Nerin and John King, Director and Policy Committee chair, respectively, of Washington Public Campaigns; the grassroots organization whose efforts to achieve public financing for all statewide and legislative positions in WA state LWVWA endorses. Bill Nerin showed a fifteen minute DVD, "Clean Elections: Changing the Face of America" that describes how full public funding works and how public campaign financing is effectively diminishing the influence of special interest money in the politics of Arizona and Maine. Bill provided the rationale for public financing, described the basics of a public financing system and offered examples of public financing successes in the states of Maine and Arizona. John described what happened with this issue in the 2006 legislative session and where he sees making progress during the 2007 session. In particular, substantial legislative momentum appears to exist for a bill that would create a public financing system for judicial positions in Washington state.

After a fine lunch, organized so that attendees could consult with portfolio chairs; Charlie Wiggins, attorney, former Appellate Court Justice and President of the Seattle Chapter of the American Judicature Society presented alternatives for reducing the amount of money raised and spent in Washington state judicial races. As one alternative, he described a public campaign financing system modeled after the system currently in place in North Carolina. Then, Representative Shay Schual-Berke (D), 33rd LD, outlined elements of a bill she plans to sponsor in the 2007 session that would create a public financing system for Supreme Court and Court of Appeals candidates. She stated that the goals of this proposed legislation are to stem the tide of special interest money in judicial campaigns, combat the perception or reality that special influences are politicizing the judiciary and to increase the transparency of campaign finances and voter understanding of judicial races. The final workshop speaker was Jack Smith, attorney and Seattle League member, who addressed the subject of alternative methods of electing judges.

With prospects favorable for legislation being enacted in 2007 that would establish a public campaign financing system for Supreme Court and Court of Appeals candidates in WA state, please encourage your state representatives now and throughout the process to support public financing. For more information on this issue and/or to obtain copies of the DVD mentioned above for unit meeting viewing, please contact Chris Chamberlin by e-mail, bcchamberlin@harboret.com or phone (253)-761-1376.

KUDOS FOR THE GMA REPORT

He called the state League's Growth Management report "seminal" in his column "How to Love Thy Neighbors, All 1.4 Million," in the Seattle Times on Sunday, November 5, 2006. Go to www.seattletimes.com/opinion (then type into the Search box: How to Love Thy Neighbor)

"He" is James Vesely, the Seattle Times editorial page editor. Vesely received our report on Thursday, November 2nd, read it, and called Barbara Seitle the next day to tell her it was the best explanation of the Growth Management Act that he'd ever read, and to interview her in preparation for his Sunday column.

If you haven't yet seen Vesely's column, you can find it on the Seattle Times' website. And if you haven't yet read the League's highly praised report, either call your local League office or go online to the LWVWA website. Each local League has a hard copy of the report, plus the report is online on the LWVWA website, www.lwvwa.org.

The LWVWA Summer *VOTER* of 2006 had a quiz on the GMA report. In case you didn't get them already, here are the answers to that quiz.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Bellevue – P 18 | 5. King County – p 24 | 9. various – p 38 |
| 2. Mercer Island – P 19 | 6. Okanogan County – p 30 | 10. Silverdale, Kitsap Co. – p 45 |
| 3. Clark County – P 19 | 7. Spokane – p 35 | 11. Okanogan County – p 23 |
| 4. Affordable housing – p 22 | 8. Clark County – p 36 | |

One of the quiz questions was: which of those counties has a "Farms Operation Acknowledgement Notification," which, in effect says to prospective buyers, don't buy here if you don't like the smells and sounds of farming? Given the answers above, you know it has to be Clark, King or Okanogan County. Which is it?

For all the already published questions go to the LWVWA website, www.lwvwa.org, click on Publications, click Washington State *VOTER*, then Summer 2006 State *VOTER*.

Quiz or no quiz, answers or no answers, growth is expected to come, the Growth Management Act—fixed or as is—will help steer that growth, and we as League members need to help fix and help steer. As always, we'll be educated, ready and there!



Fall Appeal Letter Response Shows that League Members Care! Thank You One and All!

Anonymous	Jean Carlson	Mary Lee Gowell	Pat Lein	Ruth Schroeder
Ann Aagaard	Lee Carpenter	Joan Green	Dave & Dorothy Lilly	Leroy Scott
Nancy Acheson	Maureen Carroll	Betsy Greene	Sally Mackey	Barbara Seitle
Catherine Ahl	Ed Chadd	Audrey Gruger	Mary Ellen Madison	Luana Sever
Margaret/Barrie Austin	Sally Chamberlain	Eileen Haas	Karen Madsen	Evelyn Sigler
Charles & Nancy	Chris Chamberlin	Shirley Haight	Wayne & Dorris Martin	Sarah Sloat
Bagley	Judy Chapman	Sharen Heath	Judith Matchett	Diane Slota
Patricia Ball	Mildred Chelemedos	Robert Hemphill	Charlene McKenzie	Kathleen Sommers
Sandy Barney	Patricia Clemens	Linnea Hirst	Pat Melgard	Alice Stolz
Emilia Belserene	Anne Conkle	William Hogan	Bert Metzger	Betty Sullivan
R.C. Bibb	Michael & Lucy Copass	Beverlee Hooper	Margaret Michaud	Phylliss Summers
Virginia Bigelow	Ty Cramer	Cynthia Howe	Alice Miles	Trudy Sundberg
Carol Bingham	Lois Curtis	Myra Howrey	Margaret Ann Miller	Joan Thomas
Martha Bird & Jim	Susan Daniels	Luanna Iverson	Sandra Nelson	Michael Thompson
Sharpe	Elizabeth Davis	Anne Jacobson	Louisa Nishitani	Andrea Tryon
Cheryl Bleakney	Marilyn Davis	Velma Jeremiah	Mariette O'Donnell	Joyce Veatch
Ann Bowden	Joyce Dennison	Lucy Johnson	Sara Orr Smith	Ginger Vetrano
Anne Bowden	Barbara Donnelly	Mary Johnson	Michael Osborn	Connie Waddington
Evelyn Boyd	Vicky Downs	Marilyn Johnston	Nancy Pearson	Joan Waldo
Ann Brand	Marilyn Erickson	Charles Jones	Marilyn Perkins	Linda Ward
Lael Braymer	Donna Ewing & Sue	Kristin Kennell	Mary Piette	Lucille Wellander
Helen Brewer	Minahan	Elizabeth Kerr	Gaye Pigott	Edward Wenk
Rosemary Brodie	Shirle Falk	Ruth Kirk	Nancy & I Mark Proulx	Elizabeth Widel
Christel Brunnenkant	Nancy Farr-Sekijima	Mary Kohli	Alexandra Pye	Jewell Woodward
Judith Buchan	Jane Field	Ellen Kritzman	Barbara Reid	Jane Young
Jean Burch Falls	Barbara Fithian	Hannah Kuhn	John Roberts	
Barbara Bush	Eileen Fox	Yvonne Kuperberg	Peggy Saari	
Katherine Buss	Vicky Friend	Jean Kyle	Dorothy Young Sale	
Patsy Campbell	Paula Garland	Charmian Lander	Pat Sandbo	
Sandra Canepa-Swan	Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis	Eleanor Laxdall	Cherl Schneider	

FREIGHT MOBILITY

Linnea Hirst

The League of Women Voters of Washington Transportation Committee met recently with Sean Ardussi, Puget Sound Regional Council Freight Mobility Planner, to discuss statewide freight mobility issues.

As Sean reminded us, freight isn't a travel mode. Transportation systems exist for two reasons: to move people and to move goods. Goods move via trucks, trains, planes and ships. Those who focus on freight mobility look at roads, rails, airports and seaports, all the modes of freight transportation.

Some statistics of interest:

- Quotes from FAST Corridor publication:
- More than half the value of the exports leaving our ports are goods produced in Washington State.
- Nearly one in three Washington State jobs relates to international trade. Improvements to all modes of freight and goods mobility support local jobs and businesses.
- Puget Sound ports serve a national market. 65% to 75% of the international containers entering these ports are transferred to rail to supply inland markets beyond Washington State.
- Washington State's farmers and manufacturers profit from the lower cost "backhaul" trips for railroads and maritime shipping lines, which allow them to reach overseas markets at a more competitive cost.
- Together, the ports of Seattle and Tacoma comprise the third largest marine container load center in North America.

Other points made by Mr. Ardussi:

Container traffic is expected to double through West Coast ports in the next 20 years, the rail portion of that will double within the next 5 to 10 years, and overall, the railroad industry is not keeping pace with demand. They're adding capacity when they can, but they're a private industry and will do what's profitable.

A major question is who should pay for some major projects that need to be done, e.g. Stampede Pass? Stampede Pass needs to have its roof raised so double stack railcars can go through. It's an improvement that would benefit the state, but should public funds go to support private industry? (That brought up the point that the trucking industry uses public highways.)

The rail industry has the highest capital costs of all. For other high capital cost industries, costs are 4-6%

but for railroads, it's 18% of their total costs. They're still building out their system, purchasing right of ways, iron & steel, etc.

Another question is who should pay for the local impact for transportation needs of goods that are shipped on through to other parts of the country?

Freight rail must juggle its schedule around passenger trains, which have specific timetables. The freight lines have those scheduling problems anywhere along their routes where passenger trains travel, not just in the Seattle area; and the schedule in one area affects their trip plans in all the other areas. It's a bigger issue than most of the affected communities are aware of.

Rail is much cheaper, though slower, than truck shipment, but there are a lot of ag products that don't have access to the rails in the state. In those areas, farmers must do short haul shipments to get to the long haul shipping centers. The Walla Walla RailEx project hopes to solve some of this problem.

Air cargo is the most expensive and is used only for high value items needing timely delivery. Moses Lake airport has lots of capacity, but there's not a big supply of high value goods in that area needing air shipment. SeaTac, while more expensive, is near many distribution centers and near the ports.

In answer to a question about the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement in Seattle and its relationship to freight mobility, Mr. Ardussi said that shippers can't agree. Local fuel shippers are the most concerned about mitigation, less about tunnel and how much it costs. Shippers think the most important issue is probably how long the road will be closed for construction.

A list of organizations and current projects relating to this article can be found at www.lwvwa.org.

The Nominating Committee is looking for a few good persons!!

If you know of qualified persons who should be considered for officers and directors on the state board or who would like to serve on the next nominating committee, please contact Committee Chair Mary Kohli as soon as possible. makohli@comcast.net, 253-848-8428.

WASHINGTON LEARNS

Margie Reeves & Pat Dickason Co-Chair, Children Issues

Governor Christine Gregoire issued the WASHINGTON LEARNS committee report in mid November, 2006. The Report summarizes 16 months of work by the WASHINGTON LEARNS steering committee and committees focused on early learning, K- 12 Education and post secondary education and workforce training. The committees reviewed the entire education system, and established the over-arching goal: to develop a “world-class, learner-focused, seamless education system for our state” so that all citizens are provided high-quality lifelong learning opportunities.

The Report calls for changes to the entire education system, from birth through post-secondary education so the state can be competitive in the global economy. Five principles are outlined to guide development of the system:

- Share accountability for continuous improvement
- Tailor education to fit the needs of individuals.
- Bring creativity into the classroom.
- Engage parents, communities and private partners.
- Commit the necessary human and financial resources.

A new benchmark, the *Global Challenge States*, is proposed to make sure Washington remains competitive. The states included are the top 8 performers on the *New Economy Index*: California, Colorado Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia, and Washington.

Five major initiatives with specific strategies are proposed to produce results that bring Washington closer to the goals of the report. Early Learning is highlighted as a “smart investment” with the years from birth through eight depicted as the “learning to learn” years. Math and Science competencies are seen as critical skills for Washingtonians to compete in the global economy. Students need stronger, more creative preparation in these areas. Personalized Learning will help every student succeed, and technology will allow schools to be redesigned to support individual learning styles. College and Workforce Training opportunities must be increased to meet workforce demand so Washington citizens can compete in a global economy and contribute to the quality of our communities. Quality and Accountability policies are expected to yield results, and continuous monitoring and reporting will keep quality high and citizens informed and participating.

The WASHINGTON LEARNS principles and initiatives are designed to transform the entire education system. The next phases of work include developing a more meaningful and comprehensive accountability system, redefining basic education and designing a funding structure to support the new system, and designing a ten-year implementation strategy. The Steering Committee will continue to meet to provide oversight.

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Paramount Duty – Ample Provision

Catherine Ahl, Education Portfolio

Article IX of the Washington State Constitution states: “It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex.” LWVWA’s Education positions support full funding of basic education by the state. The 1977 and 1983 Doran decisions stated that the legislature must define and fully fund basic education (including special education, remediation, bilingual, and transportation) through regular and dependable tax sources and must not rely on local levies. Because of this background and because of the lack of funding in the 13 years since passage of Ed Reform in 1993, the LWVWA Board voted in January 2005 to participate in a school-funding lawsuit.

In the summer of 2005 a coalition was formed to pursue the issue: Network for Excellence in Washington Schools – Keeping Our Promise to All Children (NEWS). In addition to LWVWA, members of NEWS include WA State PTA; Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle; WA State Special Education Coalition; school districts of Chimacum, Bainbridge Island, Bellevue, Edmonds, Omak, Pasco, Peninsula, Seattle, and Snohomish; Washington Education Association; and others.

Following passage of SB 5441 in the 2005 Legislature, the filing of the lawsuit was put on hold. SB 5441 authorized a comprehensive K-12 finance study with interim reports by Nov. 15, 2005 and June 16, 2006 with a final report by Nov. 15, 2006. The bill also included studies of Early Learning and Higher Education, and the Governor named the group of studies “Washington Learns”. NEWS held a press conference in October 2005 and announced that its members would monitor the meetings of WA Learns, with the hope that a comprehensive K-12 funding plan would be in the final report. If not, then a lawsuit would be filed.

Things have moved slowly over the last year. WA Learns has done its work; I attended several of the K-12 subcommittee meetings and the Steering Committee’s public hearing in Olympia. At both the last meeting of the K-12 subcommittee and at the public hearing, a plan to restructure K-12 financing was presented. Unfortunately, the WA Learns final report released on November 13 did not contain the finance plan. The report proposed that the WA Learns Steering Committee continue meeting for two more years to come up with a finance plan to be implemented over ten years. This does not meet the mandate of the Constitution or the needs of our children now.

The NEWS Executive Council, of which LWVWA is a member, continues to communicate with the Governor’s office and legislative leaders. Although litigation is always the last resort, there may be no other option.

Continued from page 1

Governor Gary Locke's 2002 Columbia River Initiative was a coordinated response to the water management controversies and conflicting views on best use of the Columbia River water resource. The competing water demands of power generation, agriculture and growing communities were exacerbated by the endangered species listing of several species of Columbia River salmon.

The CRI process convened stakeholder groups, contracted for independent studies, held public hearings and proposed major changes in water policy. Shortly after taking office in 2005 Governor Christine Gregoire suspended the rule making under the Columbia River Initiative at the request of legislators and interested parties concerned that rule making was proceeding before funding and management issues were addressed adequately.

Governor Gregoire appointed a group of elected officials and department heads, the Columbia River Task Force, to study the long-standing water management stalemate on the Columbia, and develop legislation to address these management issues and the funding necessary to do it. The resulting legislation was ESSHB2860 a monumental bill passed overwhelmingly by legislature and signed by Governor Gregoire in February 2006.

Reference and links to the Columbia River Initiative and the Columbia River Management Program are on the DOE web page www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/crwmp.html. Several independent analyses of the Columbia River were done during both the Columbia River Initiative and Columbia River Task force processes. These economic and scientific analyses are also available on the DOE web site. Many of the concerns raised in these analyses are obviously still relevant. Potential impacts identified include a minimal effect on flood control or navigation, a negative effect on hydropower, a positive impact on the agricultural economy and a negative effect on fisheries and passive use values tied to salmon and steel head runs as well as the risk of violating mandates of the endangered species act. These and other potential negative effects and how they would be addressed were key factors in reaching compromise with the final bill.

The success of the Columbia River Management Program depends on our ability as a state, its citizens and stewards of the river to identify potential impacts of our present day solutions and effectively mitigate them to limit further damage and where possible enhance the river and river basin. In order to evaluate these issues League member today like those in 1959 must be familiar with the Columbia and its role in our economy, culture and lives and the interwoven governance structure that was established to protect this great national treasure.

Denise Smith, Water Resources

League positions on the Columbia River:

COLUMBIA RIVER TASK FORCE (1980)

- Wise planning for the use of water in the Columbia River Basin requires an inventory of the basin water resources. This inventory should include water related information such as ground and surface water sources, viable water rights, current use and projected future needs. The information should be readily available to the concerns agencies and the general public.
- Minimum instream flows should be established as a public right and maintained on all streams in the Columbia River Basin.
- (The position on Minimum Instream flows was recently expanded to include all major river basins in the state at convention by a vote of the assembly)

Exciting Lobby Day Anticipated

January 19, 2007

Special events, exhibits and a beautiful room in our state Capitol building promise to add interest to our Lobby Day this year.

An exhibit co-sponsored with Women's History Consortium including *Women's Suffrage in Washington, Women's Rights Movement of the Late 20th Century, Elected Washington Women, Women's Clubs and Organizations, Expanding Participation of Women in Modern Society* will be on display. This one of a kind exhibit is being developed for us but will be used at a wide variety of events over the next year. In addition the room will be "wrapped" with a tapestry depicting the Lewis and Clark Expedition hand woven by a group from Vancouver, WA.

Speakers will include Governor Christine Gregoire, and topics will range from reduction of toxins in our environment to education and health care access. A buffet luncheon with our legislators promises an opportunity to discuss our issues with the decision-makers. Please see the flier in this *VOTER* for more information.

Special Suffragettes will be on hand to describe their history and answer questions.

Members of the LWV Thurston County are offering bed and breakfast. Contact Marilyn Funk for reservations: 360-357-7967, bfmz@comcast.net

Priorities for a Healthy Washington

The four environmental priorities for 2007 have been selected by the executive directors of the participating organizations, and have been approved by the LWVWA Board of Directors. These organizations will be working together and speaking with a unified voice in Olympia as we seek passage of this legislation. Your help is essential in contacting your own legislators urging their support. Keep updated on events in Olympia through the Legislative Newsletter (via email or regular mail). For further information about these priorities, contact Elizabeth Davis, Natural Resources Committee chair, elizabethd@whidbey.com or 360-331-4184.

Save Our Sound

Puget Sound's water and wildlife are in trouble. We want to leave our children the legacy of a clean and healthy Puget Sound, but that takes money and clout. We need increased funding and a new Puget Sound agency created in 2007 that will take leadership, maintain oversight, and hold accountable those responsible for results over the long term. And we need bold action this year to prevent and clean up water pollution and protect and restore habitat.

\$100 Million for the Wildlife and Recreation Program

Preserve 133 places for parks and wildlife across the state by increasing our two-year investment to \$100 million. As our state's population grows, so too does the need for recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and farmland. We have an opportunity in 2007 to protect those places that make Washington special and enhance our much-envied quality of life.

Eliminate Toxic Flame Retardants

Serious health concerns - for children and wildlife- are linked to industrial chemicals used as flame retardants known as PBDEs. High levels of these chemicals have been found in Washington residents, Puget Sound orcas and salmon, and the Spokane River. These chemicals should be banned in favor of safer effective alternatives already in use so we can have fire protection without poisons.

Clean Air – Clean Fuels

Washington can become a dynamic, competitive leader in growing the clean fuel industry. The 2007 Clean Air/Clean Fuels package encourages energy independence by providing incentives for Washington farmers to produce the most promising new biofuel feedstocks; reduces fuel consumption and costs for state fleets; protects our kids by cleaning up dirty diesel school buses; promotes advanced vehicle technology; and helps the state guard against health threats from global warming.

The following organizations participate in Priorities for a Healthy Washington:

- American Rivers
- Audubon Washington
- Center for Environmental Law & Policy
- Climate Solutions
- Conservation Northwest
- Earth Ministry
- Futurewise
- Heart of American Northwest
- League of Women Voters of Washington
- Lutheran Public Policy Office
- The Nature Conservancy of Washington
- Northwest Energy Coalition
- People for Puget Sound
- Puget Soundkeeper Alliance
- Sierra Club Cascade Chapter
- Transportation Choices Coalition
- Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation
- Washington Conservation Voters
- Washington Environmental Council
- Washington Toxics Coalition
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition



WASHINGTON LEARNS

continued from p. 6

This Legislative session will see steps taken to implement specific strategies recommended by Washington Learns. An Early Learning strategy such as phasing in a five-star voluntary rating system to give parents better information about the quality of child care and early education programs and expands availability of high-quality early learning opportunities will result in more young children ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten. Now only 50% are ready according to a survey of kindergarten teachers in 2004.

Governor Gregoire will present an overview of Washington Learns at LWV Lobby Day, Friday Jan. 19th. For more detailed information, see the Report at www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov

LOBBY DAY 2007

Friday, January 19
Columbia Room, State Capitol Building, Olympia, WA

Check-in and Coffee 8:00 a.m.
Program 8:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Cost: \$20 includes lunch and printed materials

The goal of this Lobby Day will be to have 3 primary presentations about legislative issues as relate to League’s positions on Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. The day will also include an opportunity to hear from our State League’s Portfolio Chairs and our Lobbyist, Lonnie Johns Brown. All legislators will be invited to our luncheon where you will have an opportunity to talk with them about our issues.

The Program Includes

Governor Christine Gregoire will present an overview of Washington Learns.

Jone Bosworth, Director, Early Learning Department, will discuss the goals and purposes of this new department

Barbara Mertens, Assistant Executive Director, Gov. Relations, WA Association of School Administrators, *Washington Learns Plans for K-12*

Laurie Valeriano, Policy Director, Washington Toxics Coalition will discuss **Phasing out Toxic Flame Retardants (PBDEs)** and the report *Pollution in People*

Representative Eileen Cody, Chair, House Committee on Health Care (invited) will review the findings and proposals of the **Blue Ribbon Committee On Health Care**

Luncheon with Legislators 11:45—1:00

Plan now for afternoon appointments to meet with your legislators and attend committee meetings and hearings that interest you.

Directions: Take Exit #105 off I-5, follow signs to Legislative Parking lot, take shuttle bus to the Capitol Campus. Enter the ground level floor and follow signs to the Columbia Room (formerly the restaurant).

Bed and Breakfast: Contact Marilyn Funk, LWV Thurston County 360-357-7967, bfmz@comcast.net

LOBBY DAY REGISTRATION Friday, January 19, 2006 \$20.00

NAME: _____ Phone _____
ADDRESS: _____
Email _____

Lunch will be provided.

Make all checks for **\$20.00 payable to LWVWA**. Mail with this form to LWVWA, 4710 University Way, Suite 214 Seattle, WA 98105. Phone-206-622-8961 for more information

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: January 12, 2006. RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED.

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL LEAGUES

League of Women Voters of Kitsap County Civics Committee Activities - 2006

The Civics Committee of the Kitsap League was formed in February 2005. We agreed upon a primary goal to improve civic learning in Kitsap County. Of particular concern was the feeling that civics is no longer taught in the schools and the lack of interest and depth of knowledge of political issues among the general public.

Our first task was to gather background information to educate ourselves. This was done in a variety of ways: finding and reading curriculums, looking at websites, attending school board candidate forums and an advocacy training for youth and finally interviewing several people including Caleb Perkins, the head of Social Studies at OSPI; the political science teacher from Olympic College; the chair and coordinator for the Kitsap Commission on Children and Youth, and our local auditor.

At the same time we were gathering information we wanted to do something more pro-active right away. We decided to personally give each library in the county a copy of "The State We're In: Washington." Secondly, through one of the websites, we found a little booklet called "The U.S. Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It." We applied to the League's Education Fund to buy 100 so we could systematically give one to every student that we register to vote. In addition, we decided to do a little fun educating in our own local Voter by posing Constitution questions each month with the answer the following month.

We learned from the state League that TSWI had been accepted by OSPI as a recommended curriculum for their Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's) for civics. The League, however, still needed to write it up for the OSPI website. Our committee volunteered to do that job as part of our project.

By the end of the spring 2006 we had contacted all of our 5 school districts and had gotten a commitment from them to participate in a civics forum. After making these contacts, it became clear that each district was at a different place re: teaching civics education. It seems our timing for such a project was right in line with HB 2579

that was passed in the last legislative session stating that school districts must meet the CBA standards for teaching civics by school year 2008-9. Caleb Perkins was enthusiastic about being a presenter at the forum and a date was set for October 25, 2006. Each school district agreed to speak about where they are in meeting these requirements. We applied to the LWV Education fund, again, for a \$100 grant to help with the costs of the forum.

After almost two years of work a very successful 2 hour forum was held. Over 50 people attended. As a follow-up to this project the committee is now looking into working with one school district to develop a pilot project for reaching out to students on the importance of voting and participating in the political process. Anyone wanting more information can call the Kitsap League at 360-598-3508.



League of Women Voters of King County South Speed-dating with the candidates

Totally outside the box, "**Speed-dating with the candidates**" was an activity co-sponsored by LWV/King County South and South King Council of Human Services. The candidate and a few people sat talking at a small table. At a signal, the people moved to visit with a different candidate. Similar to the idea for meeting a potential date. It took place in a restaurant with FOOD available and several legislative districts were represented. A new format needing a bit of refinement but successful enough to try again according to Becky Cox, president of King County South.

Pierce County Voters Approve Instant Runoff Voting

Susan Eidenschink, Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow, LWV/Tacoma-Pierce County

Pierce County elected a Charter Review Commission in 2006. They, and the County Council, placed nine proposed charter changes on the November ballot. One concerned the use of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) for Pierce County Elected officials. Amendment 3, concerning IRV, passed, as did six of the other proposed changes.

This victory in Pierce County could lead the way for similar legislation to include IRV in other counties and cities in Washington State and serve as an example of more equitable voting for the entire state. IRV encourages voter participation because it allows voters to rank their choices of candidates. Whenever more than two candidates are running for an office, the voter can rank these candidates (first, second, and third choice.)

This type of voting ensures that the winner of the election receives a majority of the votes. The votes are tallied from the first choice votes, as they are in today's elections. If one of the candidates receives over 50% of the votes, that candidate wins. If no candidate receives over 50% of the votes, the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated and the second choice of the voters who cast their vote for that candidate is used in the second tallying of the votes. This procedure continues until one candidate receives over 50% of the votes.

In the November 2006 election, three other cities adopted IRV: Minneapolis (MN), Davis (CA), and

Oakland (CA). Prior to the November 2006 election, the cities of San Francisco and Burlington (VT) had received approval to use IRV and have used IRV in the past two elections. In both cities, there were fewer than 1% spoiled ballots.

Concerns about the difficulty of voters' understanding IRV have been expressed. Research from the experiences of San Francisco and Burlington indicates that, with voter education, IRV is not difficult for voters. Of course, we hope to help Pierce County in the task of voter education!

In San Francisco, IRV is used for Board of Supervisors elections only, so voters are using two different systems in the same election, also with little problem. Voters have expressed support for this voting method, and candidates concentrate more on issues than on negative campaigning. When issues are of prime importance in campaigns, minor political parties have more input, and thus, a wider spectrum of voters can express their opinions on issues.

IRV will be used in Pierce County in November of 2008. We hope to see increased voter turnout, decreased voter apathy, and more candidates. We are looking forward to being an example for the state of Washington on the advantages of Instant Runoff Voting.



GOOD IN GOVERNMENT BRUNCH WILLIAM RUCKELSHAUS TO BE HONORED

Sunday, April 22, 2007, LWVWA will honor William Ruckelshaus with our annual Good In Government Award. The event will be an 11:00 A.M. brunch at the Port of Seattle. Governor Christine Gregoire has been invited as the keynote speaker.

Mr. Ruckelshaus has held several government positions, including as the first Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Most recently, as a private citizen, he served on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, whose report presented to Congress in 2004 called for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy. He is currently chair of the Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

The Good In Government brunch is a major fundraising activity for LWVWA, and we hope to have a large turnout. Watch for more details in the coming months.

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO THE 2007 LWVWA LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

Written by League Lobby Team members the newsletter covers Health Care, Education, Global Climate Change, Children, Welfare, Shorelines, Growth Management, Tax Policy, Budget, Energy, Transportation, Reproductive Rights, Publicly Funded Campaigns and more. You'll receive information about pertinent committee hearings, status of bills and Action Alerts. **If you are willing to receive the newsletter via email it's free!** If you prefer to have it mailed to you there is a \$15 charge. Please specify which version you wish to receive - mail or email - and send your check in today.

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