

LWVWA State Council 2010

Members of the League of Women Voters of Washington met in Bellingham for our bi-annual State Council Meeting from May 21 through May 23, 2010. Delegates stayed at the Best Western Heritage Hotel, with meetings held at the YWCA building in downtown Bellingham. We enjoyed a wonderful banquet Saturday night at the Bellwether Hotel on Bellingham Bay where we heard from Rep. Kelli Linville (D-42) and chair of the House Ways and Means Committee.

LWV Bellingham Whatcom County was our host and did a fabulous job in organizing the meeting sites as well as the workshops and presentations. Eighteen out of 20 leagues were in attendance, along with 9 state board members as well as members of the state education fund.

The meeting began with a presentation of league basics by Linnea Hirst, LWVWA President. Her remarks paid special attention to the difference between voter service and action as it relates to ballot issue forums. As we all know, league does take positions on some ballot issues, but has to take special care not to inject our opinions into voter service events, where both sides of any issue have to be scrupulously presented.

Ann Murphy (LWV Spokane Area), Catherine Ahl (LWV Kitsap) and Mendy McLean-Stone (LWV Whidbey Island) then participated in a panel discussion on what league members experienced in public meetings and how they responded to concerns about civil discourse. All three presenters talked about specific events and how they dealt with potential issues of disruption.

Two seminars followed, one having to do with League Easy-Web and Facebook and the other, in four parts, dealing with an update of *The State We're In*, a short presentation on the CEP project in Spokane, a panel discussion of membership issues, and an update of the Conservation Districts state study.

After Lunch, the entire group attended a workshop on civil discussion, communication skills for more productive discussions and neutral issue framing, presented by Mary Dumas.

Sunday morning provided an opportunity for delegates to National Convention to caucus before we all left Bellingham for our drives home.

At the state board meeting on Friday night, there was a lot of discussion about communication between the state league and local leagues. Some felt there was too much information given to local leagues and some felt there was too little information. The state board will be looking very closely at this issue in the coming months. Delegates also expressed interest in more networking possibilities between local leaguers, which is something we hope to provide at next year's state convention in Richland.



Bellingham leaguers are acknowledged at State Council for receiving one of four awards from LWVUS for their work on Civic Engagement

President's Message *by Linnea Hirst*

When I was a kid, I went to a couple of conventions. So I can knowingly assure you is that League conventions are a LOT more interesting than chicken hatchery conventions. In fact, League conventions are awe-inspiring, energizing and intellectually challenging.

There were nearly 800 of us, including 22 delegates from Washington—or as we needed to say in Atlanta, from Washington state. And the Washington delegates were stars of the convention!

Ellen Berg, Seattle League, was the instigator two years ago to get our 1983 Arms Control position updated. She and her national taskforce spent two years working on the issue, brought the results to the convention—and succeeded. President Mary Wilson called for a voice vote: the “ayes” were loud, and there was total silence for the “nays”. TOTAL SILENCE!

Nora Leech, Seattle League, proposed a non-recommended national study on Privatization. It passed with a healthy margin—and for the first time in some time, national has two studies to work on.

Susan Eidenschink (Tacoma/Pierce LWV) and Lou Templeton (Clallam County LWV) worked hard with Leaguers from various parts of the country on a resolution to the national board to push for single-payer. That passed, too!

And, as many of you know already, the Bellingham/Whatcom County LWV won one of the four national awards. Theirs was for their work on Civic Engagement.

We can all be very proud of the truly inspiring group of ladies from Washington!

Here are a few of the comments from our Washington delegation:

‘I saw a renewed energy...from the mix of men, younger women and the passage of TWO studies, the League is rising!’

‘The caucuses, all very informative and challenging: safe drilling & mining, marriage equality, arms control, climate change, privatization...and for at least one local League, will give them material for their Voter for at least a year.’

‘The panel of past LWVUS presidents was inspirational and made us proud to be part of the League. Their experiences that sometimes called for extraordinary

League of Women Voters of Washington Officers and Directors 2009-2011

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courage to “do the right thing” infused us all with great pride that we are a part of an organization of movers and shakers.’

‘One of the most striking parts was the exposure to the breathtakingly broad variety of issues our states face and already done studies on. Most of those issues are not Washington issues, but we learn about other’s concerns to better us all.’

‘How encouraging it is to have League members rallying for internet access! We’ve come a long way, baby! Social media opportunities are staggering. There were participants who posted convention highlights to Facebook and others who then tweeted the posts.’

‘Inspiring and re-energizing. I feel connected to national and fired up to do great things.’

‘So many things interesting and inspiring, just to be in a room with so many intelligent, informed, determined and outspoken women was an incredible experience....! was just so inspired by the past presidents and everyone there who work so hard to maintain the core values of the organization and help make democracy work.’

‘I gained a renewed enthusiasm from listening to all the great work being done across the country.’

Polls still show that the League of Women Voters is the organization that people trust. Let’s all keep on working to keep us visible, valuable and worthy of the trust of America.

Spotlight on Local Leagues

The League of Women Voters of the San Juans at their annual meeting honored two special women. A lifetime membership was given to our member Joyce Harrell after 50 years of active membership in the League.



Then LWVWSJ's first annual "Woman Who Made a Difference Award" was given to Doris Estabrooks. Doris, who is not a League member, was honored for her persistent work since 2004 for a ban on the use of styrofoam food-to-go containers in San Juan County. The county council made this ban effective on Earth Day 2010, an occasion to celebrate along with her 88th birthday. If her work inspires you as it has the LWVWSJ, she will gladly share her enthusiasm and research sources in hopes that other Washington counties can be made styrofoam-free also. Her contact is granny@rockisland.com.

The League of Women Voters of Mason County has approved a new Study Group for 2010-2011 to gather information about the various county citizen advisory commissions, groups, and/or committees. This project is a logical extension of our "Know Your County" Study of the past several years. Our Study Group plans to ascertain for each advisory commission its purpose/authority, structure, meeting process, oversight, and member training. To that end, members will conduct research, interview relevant individuals, observe commission meetings, and request public records as necessary.

When the study is complete, we will share the information with the public as well as with the Board of County Commissioners. Because these advisory commissions are composed of county citizens and depend on the availability of those citizens to serve, it is extremely important that the people of our county are aware of these commissions and of vacancies and requirements when they occur.

Sandra L. Herndon
President, LWVMC

DON'T CALL US CONFUSED, CALL US ORGANIZED! The CEP and CEF Explained

The LWVWA Education Fund established the Civic Education Fund with a matching grant effort in 2008. At that same time, after the 2008 election, there was a lot of political energy among voters.

A joint committee of C3 and C4 board members conceived a project with the theme of Civic Engagement. The focus on taxes/budget for a specific project came out of that--hence CEP. The Civic Engagement Project is the only project associated with the acronym CEP.

The CEP has a "parent" project continuing under the leadership of the LWVWA C4 board. Numerous local Leagues, using the same theme of taxes/budget, can apply to the Civic Education Fund (CEF) for grants or they can help/volunteer with the state committee parent project. An example of the parent project is the video that was produced about taxes.

If a project is educating voters about taxes or the state budget, it's part of, related to, the Civic Engagement Project (CEP) and is eligible for funding from our Civic Education Fund (CEF). The Civic Education Fund has guidelines that cover applications for CEP projects and other types of projects as well.

The LWV Ed Fund Board is updating the documentation and fund application process this summer so stay tuned!

Kitsap League is working on a two-year study about the availability and accessibility of primary health care in their county from the providers' perspective. League members will interview providers of primary health care, dental care and mental health care as well as social service agencies. During the first year of the project the Kitsap LWV Health Care committee developed questionnaires and consulted with an epidemiologist from the Kitsap County Health District. Volunteers have been trained to conduct the interviews and they will be doing that during the summer and fall.

Other league members may contact Pam Hamom, Health Committee Chair if they would like to see the questionnaires or learn more about the interview process and procedures for the study.

pchamon@msn.com

LWVUS National Convention, Atlanta, 2010

As you can see from the President's note, conventions provide opportunities to learn and to be proud and energized by all that League members have done and plan to accomplish. On top of that business is done and is jam-packed into our plenary sessions. Below you will see highlights of what was passed out of plenary, but full information can be found at the National website, <http://www.lwvus.org>

Adoption of National Program for the 2010-2012 Biennium

New Study: The Federal Role in Public Education. The study would focus on the role of the federal government in education policymaking, with possible consideration of funding, common standards and/or governance relationships among all levels of the government. The scope will be dependent on available resources, including committee and LWVUS staff time.

New Study: Privatization: reviewing the policy to transfer government functions, services and assets to the private sector. (By Nora Leech, LWV/Seattle)

Concurrence to amend and update the **Arms Control** position (**much work done by LWVWA members, see article in this VOTER**)

Concurrence to add to **Selection of the President** identifying National Popular Vote Compact as a step to reach an amendment to the Constitution

Concurrence with the LWVMD & LWVME position on **Marriage Equality** to be added to the Equality of Opportunity position

Resolutions

- That LWVUS support lifting the travel restrictions for Americans going to Cuba.
- In support of safe drilling and mining for energy resources.
- Call upon the Senate to change its rules to limit the use of the filibuster
- That the LWVUS add the principle of TRANSPARENCY to the SARA Resolution, as adopted at the 2004 LWVUS Convention and amended

at the 2006 LWVUS Convention.

-Call upon the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for bills that legislate for improved Medicare for all. (**much work done by LWVWA members**)

-The LWVUS further urges the legislative and executive branches of the federal government to immediately take all necessary steps to maximize to the extent practicable the ability and efforts of all relevant federal agencies and departments to take action, and to work with the U.S. coastal states and communities most directly and immediately affected, to respond creatively, efficiently and effectively to the environmental, health and economic crisis created by the oil flowing from the out of control BP oil well in the Gulf of Mexico and by the efforts to contain and disperse it.

Bylaw Changes

-Article III, Sec. 2 A (3), Membership, was amended by striking out the word HONORARY before the words life members. The bylaw will then read "those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues. (**Note: All Leagues must conform their bylaws to this change.**)

-Article IX, Sec. 4, Convention Powers, changing to a biennial budget starting in 2012.

-Article X, Sec. 1. Place, Date and Call of Council amended to allow virtual/online Councils.

PMP Increase Approved

Adopted a PMP rate of \$29.70 for 2010-2011 and \$30.00 for FY 2011-2012.

Election of Officers and Directors

Officers:

President: Elisabeth MacNamara; 1st Vice President: Judy Duffy; 2nd Vice President: Judy Davis; Secretary/Treasurer: Susan M. Wilson,

Directors:

Patricia Donath, Margaret Hawkins Hill, Mary Klenz, Janis McMillen, Marcia A. Merrins, Marlene O'Brien, Norman Turrill, Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti

Awards

LWV of Bellingham-Whatcom County **was awarded the Connection with Community Award** presented during the League's banquet dinner.

National Convention Success by Ellen Berg

One of the Convention highlights, especially for the Washington delegation, was the unanimous adoption of the update to the 1983 Arms Control Position. Among other things, the update mutes the position's Cold War rhetoric, acknowledges the post-9/11 need to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to non-state actors (terrorist organizations), and recognizes the contemporary need to staunch all weapons proliferation by limiting and monitoring the trade and transfer of weapons and their constituent parts.

The Washington League – and especially our International Relations (I-R) committee – can consider the adoption of the update at Convention, and the elevation of arms control to the LWVUS legislative watch list in March, to be a feather in our cap since it was we who began urging this three years ago. It is a saga worth recounting, because time and again we persevered at the insistence of just one or two people – showing that each of us can make a difference in League.

In February 2007 **Carol Goldenberg**, then I-R chair, insisted the committee respond to a request from Sam Nunn's Nuclear Threat Initiative and schedule a forum on nuclear terrorism in Seattle. Next, two unit chairs – **Margaret Austin** in Issaquah and **Janet Perry** in Seattle – petitioned LWVUS to let us lobby local and state leaders on arms control. This petition was denied. Then I-R member **Anita Warmflash** came back from summer vacation and said "I'm unsatisfied; nuclear terrorism is part of the problem but proliferation is just as important." So more work was launched – two I-R members, **Richard Clark** and **Carolyn Hale**, even attended a university course on arms control – and a program on proliferation was planned for Seattle opinion leaders. Following that program, LWVWA president **Barbara Seitle** suggested that we ask LWVUS to make arms control an action priority. Much discussion with a lobbyist

and a Board member at National revealed that they were worried about the position's being out of date. So it was decided to present a resolution to the 2008 Convention, asking for a task force to update the position. I, **Ellen Berg**, presented the resolution on behalf of LWVWA; unfortunately, it failed by a whisker. But we were prepared with a parallel Guidance to the Board which led to the creation of a task force on which I served.

Over the past year the task force posted a number of background papers on the website, wrote the update and accompanying pros and cons, and urged the Board to move for adoption of the update by concurrence at Convention. Following a comment period for members, and slight revisions, the Board decided to move the issue ahead as part of recommended program. The task force then began planning for a caucus and floor debate at Convention. I went to the LWVWA Council and recruited folks to come to our caucus – thanks to so many for doing so – and to flood the Pro microphones in the floor debate. The caucus was highly successful – but, happily, the floor debate fizzled. No one went to the Con microphones at all! The question was quickly called, and the motion to adopt the update passed with nary a No vote cast.

While this was just one of several accomplishments LWVWA had to celebrate that night, **Linnea Hirst** graciously invited the at-large members and Board advisors to the task force to join the WA delegation for wine after dinner. It was a very festive, happy moment – I was very happy that one other I-R member, **Elizabeth Davis** of Whidbey Island, was also there to savor it. But, as I hope is clear, much credit is due to many more as well.

Just one final word: the New START treaty with Russia is now before the Senate for ratification, and the lobbying staff is watching for the right moment to send a letter and possibly issue an action alert. Good job LWVWA – we made that happen!

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.

LWVWA Online News List—**lwvwanews** is a one-way list that sends to League members. The Legislative Newsletter is sent via the list as well as action alerts and other timely information. To subscribe: lwvwanews_lwvwa.org-request@lwvwa.org.

SISTERS ON THE PLANET

By Elizabeth Davis

"I ask Americans," a woman farmer from Eastern Uganda reported, "to help my community fight the climate change that destroys our houses, increases diseases and stops our children from attending schools."

"From using hand cranked radios that give advance warning of threatening storms to planting trees that protect water supplies," the woman director of Coastal Women for Change in Biloxi, Mississippi observed, "women on the front lines in the battle against climate change are fighting back, and we must help them. We must get through the noise in Washington and get Congress to help poor communities cope!"

Women from government, business, non-profit, faith, entertainment, and philanthropy gathered to amplify the voices of millions of women worldwide who are adversely affected by climate change. The Washington DC conference, *Oxfam's Sisters on the Planet Climate Leaders Summit!* convened just 36 hours after the Seattle League's March forum, *Women & Climate Change: Connecting Around the World*.

The DC event seeks comprehensive climate and energy legislation this year that builds the strengths of poor communities around the world to successfully adapt to the impacts of climate change. LWVWA President, Linnea Hirst, attended last fall. I was privileged to attend the spring event.

A woman farmer and activist from Peru described what has happened in her region: "Nature is disrupted. It rains when it shouldn't rain. We have freez-

ing temperatures when we shouldn't have freezing temperatures. Because our yields are down, it is difficult to feed our children."

Melanne Verveer, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, spoke cogently and clearly of the need for effective climate change/energy legislation. She said we must work both on the mitigation, reduction and prevention of emissions of global warming gases, as well as on helping people and communities cope with the devastating effects of climate change. Women are responsible for 80% of food production worldwide; two-thirds of the world's labor force are women, she noted.

Invigorated and informed by such presentations one day, we lobbied on day two with Senator Cantwell and her staff and with Senator Murray's staff. If you get a chance to attend such a gathering, seize it.

SAVE THE DATES!!

Action Events for the Coming Season

Action Workshop, Kennewick; October 23, 2010

Action Workshop: Bellevue; November 6, 2010

League of Women Voters' Day
(formerly *Lobby Day*) Olympia;
February 24, 2011

LWVWA WEBSITE
LOOK FOR IT
www.lwvwa.org

**YOU HAVE THE PROJECTS:
STATE LEAGUE HAS THE MONEY**
by
Penney Van Vleet, Development Chair

For the past year I have been privileged as a member of the Washington State Education Fund Board to review local League projects funded through your education funds deposited with the State League and Civic Education Grants. Many of them have been traditional projects such as your TRY brochures; Issue Forums on Health Care and Education; Candidate Forums; *The State We're In*, the civics book for local school districts; and the Civic Education issue on state taxes.

We know how busy and pressured you are in your multiple tasks in making "democracy work" in your communities; and as we reviewed your applications for these funds, many of them triggered our synapses and provided an "AHA!" moment. As you read through these projects we hope that they do the same for you; and we encourage you to apply for these monies to fund your great ideas.

Bellingham/Whatcom County organized a Civil Discussion Workshop where facilitators presented their ideas and shared techniques for meaningful public policy discussions between people with different views.

Kitsap County will archive their organization's historical documents at the Kitsap County Historical Museum. They are also planning a "Suffrage Celebration" for women in Kitsap County (invitations to diverse groups), an essay contest, and special displays at the Library.

San Juans purchased a portable PA system to be used at public meetings.

Tacoma/Pierce County organized a Sunshine Week meeting with a panel discussion on the importance of transparency in government. Another funded project was a visit to the Capitol for a class of fourth grade students. A third project was a forum sponsored by LWV and their state representative to identify key state and local government priorities.

Thurston County published a brochure on "Olmsted Landscape Legacy at the Washington State Capitol." Ten thousand copies were produced with assistance from the Department of General Administration, Washington State. An educational presentation and guided walk were offered.

Pullman is purchasing fans with the date, time and place of Candidate Forums on the back and the League logo on the front to be handed out during several local parades.

Snohomish County is also doing fans for several parades and their fans will contain info on "why we pay taxes." They will also present a skit on taxes and government services to several community civic groups.

Spokane Area is partnering with KSPS to present the documentary "A Land for Women" focusing on women's suffrage to a broad and diverse audience. Another project "Here Come the Judges!" is a forum with six judges to discuss general court mechanics, election vs appointment of judges, and public financing of judicial campaigns.

Mason County is purchasing a digital camera and key accessories to produce educational videos for their web site, including a graphic 5 minute video of the findings of their Budget Study Group and several videos of speaker presentations, candidate forums, and candidate interviews.

So let those creative juices flow and fill out the Civic Education Grant available on the LWVWA web site. If you need any help or would like to contact one of the Leagues mentioned above, contact me at pvv@olympen.com or 360/682-0071.

A Special Shout Out to Betsy Greene
LWV/Seattle - Eastside Unit

After 18 years as a weekly volunteer in the State League office, Betsy has retired. She is still active in her local League unit and International Relations Committee. Betsy was a valued addition to the office. She handled every job capably and deliberately. Among her recent accomplishments: a complete make-over of the filing system including, culling, organizing, restructuring and archiving, on-going filing tasks, and an excellent telephone rapport with many callers over the years – sometimes under difficult conditions. And she always offered an interesting and educated view of current and historical events. She has an invaluable depth of institutional knowledge – some of it from her 12 years on the state League board. Her absence is felt but we wish her the best in her "retirement". Thank you Betsy!

Washington's 3-Strikes Law

Washington's "Persistent Offender Accountability Act" was enacted after the passage of Initiative 593 in 1993. Washington was the first state in the nation to pass this law, also known as the "3-Strikes" Law. Three strikes laws and other changes in the sentencing policies in Washington State and throughout the United States have been the major cause of an unprecedented prison population expansion in the past twenty years. During a time of decreasing revenue, the cost of constructing and operating prisons is receiving more scrutiny.

In addition to this, 3-Strikes laws have been found to have lower effectiveness and higher social and fiscal costs than many other crime-fighting investments such as drug treatment and drug court, higher education in prison, job training, mental health treatment, and increasing community policing. A 2005 study by Justice Policy Institute show that, while crime has been falling across the nation since 3-Strikes was passed, it has fallen faster in states that do not have 3-Strikes laws. This is particularly true of violent crime.

There is a movement to Fix Washington's 3-Strikes Law. Some of the reasons for this effort are the following::

- 1) Approximately 73% of the convictions under 3-Strikes are for crimes in the mid to low range of Washington's criminal seriousness scale at RCW 9.94A.515;
- 2) Robbery 2, the most common 3-Strikes conviction and Assault 2, another common 3-Strikes crime, are classified in the least serious quarter of criminal offenses, carrying standard sentences of three months to seven years;
- 3) Approximately 40% of the population incarcerated under Washington's 3-Strikes Law is African American, as compared with less than 4% of the total population of the state;
- 4) Most people sentenced under 3-Strikes are poor. Throughout the years that this law has been in effect, Washington's system of public defense for poor people has been seriously under funded. In 2005, Washington ranked 50th in the percentage of state contributions to trial costs. Major improvements have been made but in 2010, Wash-

ington's Office of Public Defense reported that the state's public defense system, "overall is still not at the appropriate level of quality."

5) In 2001 the Washington Sentencing Guidelines Commission recommended that Robbery 2, a Class B felony, be removed from the 3-Strikes list, because this behavior poses "little risk of physical injury." The Commission recommended that the legislature also evaluate whether any form of Assault 2, another Class B felony, should remain on the list.

6) Three-Strikes shifts sentencing discretion from judges to prosecutors. Regardless of the seriousness of the crime or the history or circumstances of the defendant, the judge must impose the same punishment – Life Without Possibility of Release. A related concern is that the severity of this punishment, especially for less serious crimes, shifts power in the plea bargaining process to prosecutors. Because strike crimes like robberies, burglaries, and lower-level assaults are among the most common in the state, these impacts are widespread.

Senator Adam Kline has proposed legislation to be introduced during the 2011 Legislative Session that would impose a mandatory minimum sentence of fifteen years and a maximum sentence of life for those offenders whose convictions, used as a basis for a persistent offender classification, were not Class A felonies. The LWVWA Board has voted to support this proposed legislation on the basis of our position on Administration of Justice – Adult Corrections. Our position states that "The LWVWA believes that a system of sentencing should provide accountability, equity and uniformity among courts and jurisdictions. Flexible guidelines should take into account the diversity among individuals and situations."

The LWVWA Board has tabled until September a decision on whether to join 30 other organizations as a signatory of the statement that links to the 2001 Sentencing Guidelines Commission recommendation to reform 3-Strikes and calls for legislators to take action through reform or repeal. This statement appears at <http://fix3strikes.org>.

What are your thoughts about Washington's 3-Strikes Law? I would like to hear from you. Should the LWVWA support the Fix Washington's 3-Strikes Law movement?

Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbournet.com

Conservation Districts – State Study

In 2009, at LWVWA Convention, delegates adopted a study of Conservation Districts in the State. Information and Consensus Questions were to start with LWVT-PC's study and consensus. A committee was to decide what we needed to add, and adjust consensus questions, as needed, for the state. There was much interest at the caucus and in the floor discussions. Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow contacted all those people, and has heard from some of them.

In early 2010, she asked each League to get some basic information on their upcoming Conservation Districts (CD) elections:

- When was the election?
- How many candidates ran?
- What kind of/how much publicity was there?
- How and where was voting conducted?
- How many people voted?

Information was received from King, Pierce, Spokane, Whatcom, North Yakima, and South Yakima. Lyz has a very interesting, useful article on Clallam County elections, but not the specific answers needed. In the meantime, King County South has published an excellent Conservation District Report. (It's in their March 2010 Voter)

Based on the Pierce and the King information, she has all the basics needed to write/adapt a few pages on how conservation districts work, what rules govern them, and the requirements of their election rules.

She will need a few specifics on how each Conservation District works, to include:

Information from this year's election.
How they are funded (not the same for all

- districts)
- What kinds of projects they fund, and what work they do.
- What kind of public outreach they have – publications, public events, volunteers, etc.
- Local suggestions for how to deal with how few people vote in elections and why.

If each League gathers the needed information, only the broad outlines would go in a report, but the League would have specifics to present to their units. Local Leagues would need to conduct Unit meetings to consider the compiled information .

If statewide information could be gathered and written up by September 2010, a smaller group could pull it together, and propose consensus questions for the whole group to approve (and then forward to the Board).

Local Leagues would need to hold Unit meetings to discuss the report and the consensus questions, perhaps in February. The final report could be posted on the LWVWA website – and ideally sent to all members.

Lyz is unable to chair this study, but is willing to work with a group on this, and if each League gathers and writes up information and a few people volunteer to meet once or twice and help put all together and coordinate, she is happy to be among them. So, additional leadership is needed to move this process forward. Please let the state office know if you are able to work on this project.

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.

The Washington State *VOTER* (printed version) is published twice yearly by the League of Women Voters of Washington, 4730 University Way NE, #720, Seattle, WA 98105. The Washington State *VOTER* (on-line version) is also published twice yearly. Yearly subscription is \$10. Members subscribe through their annual dues. Call 206-622-8961 for a local league in your area or look online at www.lwvwa.org.

Send address changes to League of Women Voters of Washington, 4730 University Way NE, #720, Seattle, WA 98105.

The State We're In Washington

As League members we are aware of how much we need our young people to understand government and become active members of their community. Our civics textbook, *The State We're In: Washington*, and its excellent companion Teachers Curriculum Guide were designed for this purpose. Over the last five years, however, we have found that many teachers and curriculum directors desperately want to use this material but their school district cannot afford to purchase it.

Dr. Wayne Martin, LWV Seattle, recently gave us \$5,000 in honor of his mother, who was the first woman elected as a School Superintendent in Texas. The purpose of this donation is to place gift sets of *The State We're In: Washington-Your guide to state, tribal and local government* (6th edition) in schools that are small and cannot afford to purchase them. We usually limit such gifts to schools where 52% percent or more of the students qualify for the Federal lunch program.

We are deeply grateful to Wayne and his family for their generosity over the years and for this particular gift. We already have seven requests for gift sets. What a terrific investment in our future! What a wonderful way to honor Mysie Martin! (Please see the Winter 2010 VOTER for a more detailed version of the life of Mysie Martin, quite an amazing lady!)

Since the Martin gift two other League members have made donations that allow our civics text to be placed in classrooms. Perhaps YOU also will consider a gift for this purpose. It is an investment in our children that can honor a person you respect and admire.

Or, working through your League, consider one or more of these ways to help find schools where our civics materials will reach young people:

Buy some of the books and sell them at your forums and other public meetings. We can supply brochures for the table as well;

Talk about the book to a teacher or school board member. Ask that person to help you make a contact with the principal or curriculum director and invite them to come with you. Or advise us and we will make the contact;

Find out who is the Curriculum Director in a local School District and email their name and contact information to Claudia at the office (lwwwa@lwwwa.org);

Advise us of a school district in your area that may need assistance in purchasing books. Please include contact information so we can follow up;

Take some books on consignment and as you sell them send the money to the state office.

We need to get more books into the hands of our young people. Our democracy will thrive when all our children learn and use basic civic lessons in their adult lives. Your help can make a difference now, one classroom at a time, even one student or teacher at a time.

For complete instructions and help tips, contact Karen or Claudia at the state office. Gift classroom sets include 25 books and a Teachers Guide at \$425. Individual texts are \$18 including tax; Teachers Guides are \$10. See www.lwwwa.org for ordering information and sample chapters.

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