



# VOTER

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE SAN JUANS**  
**P. O. Box 784, Friday Harbor, WA 98250-0784**

**October 2008**

## **Calendar**

**October 11, 2008 – Saturday, 9:15 am to 11:15 am at the Orcas Island Senior Center**

**October 11, 2008 – Saturday, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm at the  
Friday Harbor Middle School**

### **General Election Candidates' Forum**

We are having two forums on one day this year. Our first forum of the day will be on Orcas Island for Orcas and Shaw residents. The second forum will be on San Juan Island for San Juan and Lopez residents. The fall interisland ferry schedule coordinates with these times.

All candidates running for the following positions have been invited:

- US House of Representatives, 2<sup>nd</sup> District
- State Senate, 40<sup>th</sup> District
- State Representative, Position 1
- State Representative, Position 2
- County Council, San Juan South
- County Council, Orcas West
- County Council, Town of Friday Harbor

**November 3, 2008 – Monday, Noon to 2:00 pm at the San Juan Island Library  
Monthly Board Meeting**

**November 10, 2008 – Monday, Noon to 2:00 pm at the San Juan Island Library  
Membership Meeting**

The film *Iron-Jawed Angels* will be shown at this meeting. This film recounts for a contemporary audience a key chapter in U.S. history: in this case, the struggle of suffragists who fought for the passage of the 19th Amendment. Focusing on the two defiant women, Alice Paul (Hilary Swank) and Lucy Burns (Frances O'Connor), the film shows how these activists broke from the mainstream women's-rights movement and created a more radical wing, daring to push the boundaries of political protest to secure women's voting rights in 1920. Breathing life into the relationships between Paul, Burns and others, the movie makes the women feel like complete characters instead of one-dimensional figures from a distant past.

*Board meetings are on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month and Membership Meetings are on 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays. Annual Membership meetings are in May of each year. If you are coming from another island, call any Board Member and we'll arrange a ride from the ferry.*

## **DUES ARE DUE**

You recently received information on paying your 2009 dues. Because the membership count is used to determine the number of our delegates to the national convention, it is important to have members paid up by the end of the year. While this may be somewhat confusing (it certainly is to your newsletter editor), suffice it to say, "Be kind to the membership chair and send your dues in now!"

## **LWVSJ Happenings**

### **September 8 – Monthly Board Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at noon by Nancy Wight. Present in addition to Nancy were Susan Dehlendorf, Marj Stanley, Joyce Lewin, Carol Baylis, Beverly Zapalac, Carolyn DeRoos and Pat Curtin. Minutes from the July 14 meeting were approved.

Carol noted that a video titled *Recount* is out and provides an interesting perspective on the 2000 election. Carolyn noted that the Green Party has released a CD on the topic of anonymous voting.

The August 2 forum was a standing-room-only success. We spent \$100 to rent the facility but raised \$170 in contributions from attendees. Pat reported that we currently have over

\$4000 in our savings account and \$369 in our checking account; but we are due to send \$1000 to pay our national and state dues.

We have a new member – Lynn Poston of Orcas.

2008/2009 membership dues of \$50 are now due and payable. Notice will go in the voter, and Marj will send out invoices. Pat will update the membership list for Marj.

Marj has obtained new LWV badges. We will give one to each member and encourage everyone to wear them, particularly to events like candidates' forums. There are also new national brochures.

Beverly made a “get out the vote” registration effort on Lopez. Most people are already registered.

National Election Forums: We discussed plans for forums in advance of the general election. Ballots will be mailed October 16. Rather than holding four events on four different evenings on four islands, we will try to schedule two sessions on a Saturday—one on Orcas and one on San Juan, timed so as to be convenient for ferry riders from Anacortes, Shaw and Lopez. Date has not been finally established, but will probably be either October 11 or October 18. Invitations will be e-mailed to 13 candidates. Carolyn will moderate the San Juan session, and either Carol or Susan will moderate the Orcas session; Nancy will be timekeeper. We will confirm date and times and solicit more volunteers at the meeting on September 15, noon at the library.

### **September 17 – Transportation Forum**

Close to 200 people attended the first ever Transportation Summit at the San Juan County Fairgrounds. Attendees participated in conversations about present and future transportation needs and challenges. They generated actionable ideas for improved transportation in the islands and began the collaboration to implement those transportation solutions. An Executive Summary, presenter notes and brainstormed results from each session will soon be available at [islandway.org/transummit](http://islandway.org/transummit). Hard copies of all materials as well as videos of sessions and photos from the graphic recording will be available at local libraries by the end of October. A Yahoo Forum has also been set up. The San Juan Islands Transportation Forum is dedicated to continuing the transportation related conversations begun at the summit, among citizens, elected officials, and transportation providers. Interested persons should email: [SJITransportation-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:SJITransportation-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) to request to become a member.

### **State/Local LWV**

The Washington League has taken positions on I-985 and I-1029. Following are brief summaries of the positions.

## No on I-985

The League of Women Voters, the Association of Washington Businesses, the Washington PTA, The Sierra Club, and dozens of other businesses, civic groups and leaders agree: **I-985 is bad for traffic, and bad for the state budget!** Here's why Washington should vote No!

*Sound bites don't fix traffic. Independent traffic engineers agree that I-985 would make congestion worse.*

I-985 orders big highway changes that would clog HOV lanes with traffic, slowing down bus trips and carpools. If HOV lanes slow down, current transit riders and carpools will switch back to driving alone. That'll make traffic worse, not better!

*I-985 takes money away from schools, health care, and law enforcement.*

The state is in the middle of a once-in-a-generation fiscal crisis. I-985's spending plan would make the state's red ink worse. We need to save our scarce tax dollars for *real* priorities, like K-12 education and health care. Plus, I-985 forces residents of eastern Washington to pay for misguided Puget Sound transportation projects!!

## Yes on I-1029, Safe Quality Care for Seniors

Washington's long-term care workforce is inadequately trained.

The majority of home and community based long-term care workers - who provide life-sustaining care for our state's vulnerable seniors and persons with disabilities - are required to have 34 hours of training and no certification. Compare these low training standards with Washington State's standards for hairdressers, manicurists and dog masseurs - 1,000, 500 and 300 hours of training and certification respectively.

Washington has achieved national recognition as a leader in consumer-centered care. Our system gives Washington's seniors and people with disabilities a choice to remain in their home or community and receive care instead of going into an institution. This means that our long-term care workers don't just provide traditional chore services but highly complex care in home and community-based settings. But our approach to training hasn't kept pace. Long-term care workers need better training to provide for increasingly complex care needs in home and community based settings.

## National LWV

### League Action Results in Federal Postal Office Policy Change

What started as a local voters' service issue for the League of Women Voters of Shelter Island, NY has turned into a national policy change on voters' access to information. When the local League urged the Shelter Island post office to make absentee ballot applications available, the U.S. Postal Service responded in late August by instituting a new policy to make that information available at all postal offices nationwide. The ban had outraged the League of Women Voters and members of Congress.

“With a national election less than 40 days away, we should be flooding our post offices and other federal agency offices with absentee ballot applications, not ripping them off the shelves,” said Senator Charles E. Schumer, Democrat of New York.

Cathy Kenny, president of Shelter Island’s chapter of the League of Women Voters, said, “It’s disturbing if the U.S. Post office is not open about letting this information flow through their own facility.”

Postal Service officials said the policy had been in effect for more than a decade, though it had not been universally followed and had attracted little attention. The policy was reiterated on Aug. 22, in the Postal Service’s Retail Digest, a weekly internal bulletin. While voter-registration materials generally were acceptable, the digest said, applications for absentee ballots were prohibited from post office lobbies, along with political campaign pamphlets and posters.

The weekly paper, The Shelter Island Reporter, reported the prohibition on Thursday — along with and the puzzled reaction of the Suffolk County Board of Elections, which regularly sends absentee ballot applications to local post offices. “The Postal Service prohibition was a little baffling to us, since New York State law requires that voter registration forms be displayed at post offices, with a mark to check that you want to receive an absentee ballot,” said Tom Noble, an assistant to Cathy Richter Geier, the county’s Republican elections commissioner.

Joanne Veto, a spokeswoman for the Postal Service, said her first call on the issue had been from The Shelter Island Reporter. The reason for allowing voter registration materials in general, but prohibiting applications for absentee ballots, she said, was that while voter registration happens all year, applying for an absentee ballot is more akin to a campaign activity. “We believe that encouraging people to register to vote is different from encouraging people to vote, and we see applications for absentee ballots as encouraging people to vote,” she said. “But as a practical matter, she said, post offices in different areas have adopted different practices regarding absentee ballot applications. We have routinely tried to put into place uniform services in post offices across the country, but we have found that some post offices did have absentee ballot applications and some did not,” she said. “But now, we’re going to institute a policy making applications for absentee ballots available everywhere.”

## **League Continues Action to Ensure Vets' Access to Vote**

The League and its coalition partners continued their efforts this month urging the Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Congress to provide regular and widespread access to voter registration information at VA facilities. When action by VA Secretary James Peake was deemed insufficient, the House worked quickly to pass the Veterans Voting Support Act. The League is now urging the Senate to follow suit.

## **VETERAN'S VOTER REGISTRATION BILL PASSES HOUSE**

### ***Groups Call for Senate to Quickly Pass "Veterans Voting Support Act"***

Washington, DC--Hundreds of thousands of veterans would have widespread and direct access to voter registration services through Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offices under a landmark bill that was passed by the House of Representatives yesterday, the Veterans Voting Support Act (H.R. 6625), introduced by Rep. Robert Brady. A companion bill sponsored by Senators Diane Feinstein and John Kerry (S. 3308) may be acted on by the Senate in coming days.

The House and Senate bills would create new opportunities for the nation's 25 million veterans to register to vote at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Voting Support Act has been supported by a national campaign of veterans groups and voting rights and election reform organizations, including Demos, Common Cause, the League of Women Voters, the American Association of People with Disabilities, and the Brennan Center for Justice.

"This bill is a major step forward for veterans--ensuring they get the access to agency-administered voter registration services that are already widely proven to work well in other government offices," said Lisa Danetz, Senior Counsel for Demos, who testified as an expert witness at a Senate hearing on S.3308 this week.

"We call on the Senate to act quickly so that millions of veterans can receive the services they need to fully participate in our democracy," said Mary G. Wilson, President of the League of Women Voters. "Veterans have fought for our nation; they deserve full voter registration services from the VA," she said.

The Act requires VA facilities to provide voter registration applications to veterans, ensures access for election officials and third-party groups that wish to conduct voter registration drives, and assists absentee voting by veterans in residential facilities. The law improves upon the limited voter registration rules recently issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary James Peake.

"Making voter registration part of the process of providing services for our nation's veterans would be a historic step in making voter registration more accessible for every voter in the United States," said Tova Wang, Vice President for Research at Common

Cause, "Veterans have fought for our nation and we would expect the VA to be on the side of encouraging their participation in our democracy, not hindering it."

The House-passed version of the Veterans Voting Support Act would make significant improvements to voter registration access at VA sites through several measures:

--VA facilities would be required, at the request of a state, to affirmatively offer voter registration applications and assistance in completing such applications, as federal law currently requires at motor vehicle departments, public assistance agencies and offices serving persons with disabilities.

--Third-party voter registration services and voter registration by election officials would be permitted. Previously, efforts by both groups were prohibited.

If passed by the Senate, veterans will receive meaningful voter registration assistance in this election cycle.

"We thank Senators Feinstein and Kerry and Representative Brady for their great leadership and commitment to protecting veterans' voting rights. "The VA must provide adequate voter registration services at VA facilities that thousands of men and women rely on," commented Jim Dickson, Public Affairs Director for the American Association of Persons with Disabilities.

"We applaud the House's action on this issue, and urge the Senate not to delay in passing this important legislation," stated Adam Skaggs, Counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice. "Only by immediately passing this legislation can the Senate ensure that those who have risked their lives defending the right to vote will have a meaningful opportunity to exercise that right," he continued.

***Mission of the League of Women Voters***

*The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan, political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.*

***The goal of the League of Women Voters***

*Is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide. Membership is open to any citizen over the age of 18 who subscribes to the League's purposes and policies. All LWVWSJ meetings are nonpartisan and open to the public.*

**Board Members of the League of Women Voters of the San Juans**

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***JOIN US TODAY!***

**YES!** I want to become a member of the League of Women Voters of the San Juans for the year June 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009.

***Name(s)*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Address*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Phone*** \_\_\_\_\_ ***Email*** \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:

(Individual Membership \$50) (Two Members at same address \$75) (Student Membership \$25)

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the League of Women Voters of WA Education Fund and have enclosed a separate check (to LWVWA-EF) in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**PLEASE RETURN TO:**

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