



Spokane Area VOTER

Ann Murphy & Sandy Paine,
Co-Presidents

April 2006
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VOTER Publisher, Doris Tryon

"The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences the public policy through education and advocacy."

April Water Drops



Spokane River issues and possible solutions will be the focus of the LWVSA April 8, 2006 general meeting. Rachael Paschal Osborne, water law attorney and environmental activist, will outline the issues and lead our discussion. "In addition, a representative of the City of Spokane Water Stewardship Program will explain that program (check it out: www.waterstewardship.org)

You will find it useful to review your *Aquifer Atlas* and the March 2005 *LWVSA Voter* (also on line at www.lwvwa.org/Spokane.) Look for the *LWVWA Spring Voter*, which will arrive just before (or just after) our meeting. There is an article on Eastern Washington water issues.

Last spring, in discussing regional water issues, members were shocked to learn that it wasn't just the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Refueling Station spill and rampant unanswered growth in Idaho and the Spokane Valley that threatened our drinking water. It was also Spokane County leaking fuel tanks, old industrial sites, old railroad yards, paper and aluminum mills, and lawn and agricultural run-off which can affect the quality of our water.

Some progress has been made in addressing some water issues; some efforts are more difficult. Water doesn't recognize state or county lines, so most water issues require joint state, county and/or city or tribal or water district planning. Also involved are environmental and other groups.

The bi-state Aquifer Study is expected to be completed by late 2007. The third participant in the study, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) withdrew staff last summer, citing inadequate funding to continue their participation.

April General Meeting

"Water Issues"

Rachel Paschal Osborn

and

City of Spokane Water Stewardship Program

Saturday, April 8 - 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
Global Credit Union, 1520 W Third Ave.

Meeting Is Open To The Public. Invite Friends!

Spokane County has six watersheds (recharge areas draining into one body of water) shared with other counties. Respective counties recently approved three Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) management plans, two others are underway.

The eight-person Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission (Coeur d'Alene Basin) includes Idaho agencies and county commissioners and one non-voting slot for Washington State. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently pushed for L. Michael Bogert, regional EPA administrator, to join the Commission, in part because the Commission is faltering, they say. As Idaho Governor Kempthorne's lawyer, Bogert helped Idaho fight the EPA's plans for expanded Superfund Clean-up.

The Upriver Dam clean-up will take place in late August or September, at the time of lowest flow in the river.

Speaking of lowest flow, the river levels during that time have steadily decreased in the last seven years due to increased water use. I am told that in 2001 low flow was eight cubic

President's Perspective...

I am looking forward to our *April 8th General Meeting* and the opportunity to hear **Rachel Pascal Osborn** educate us on the challenges facing this community and area regarding the Spokane River and other impaired water sources.

In preparation for our meeting, I've been reading articles from the City of Spokane Web Site on water quality. The city is currently seeking better ways to treat waste water, permitting water reclamation or re-use, while protecting public health and safety. There are also many things we can do to reduce phosphorous in the river. I've included a short list to remind us that we can make choices which can improve the current situation.

1. Use phosphate free dish and laundry detergents.
2. Discontinue use of pesticides.
3. Dispose of pet waste so waste does not run into the river untreated.
4. Use low phosphate fertilizers or naturally fertilize by leaving grass cuttings on your lawn.
5. Wash cars on the grass so any soap can filter into the lawn.

By instigating these simple measures, we can insure that there are healthy amounts of oxygen in the water, benefiting all aquatic life.

We also can be better stewards of our water supply by installing front-loading washing machines and low-flow toilets and shower heads in our homes, and reducing lawn and planting areas which require constant summer watering. Please take time to read up on water issues and be ready with questions, concerns and ideas. I am excited that all League members can be part of the solution to this problem and through our various community contacts can help educate others on water issues. In September 2005 the City Council resolved to promote a Water Stewardship Program and called upon all citizens to embrace this effort. Our meeting will give us the knowledge to become active participants in this process.

Sandy Paine

Quotable Quote

“Really what we're talking about is how much pollutants the river can take.”

Dave Peeler -Water Quality Manger
State Department of Ecology

Splinters from the Board



Treasurer's Report:

Checking - \$291.42 Savings - \$6,522.43



Membership Totals:

Local 71

Natl 12

Total 83



Annual Meeting Items

Budget is being fine tuned.

Nominating committee has met and is waiting for responses.

The call to meeting will be mailed April 14th.



Doris Tryon was thanked for her dedication to the school levy process for 55 years. She was presented with a card and small gift. She shared the proclamation presented to her by Mayor Hession.



We need someone to take over the publishing duties of the monthly voter and also someone to assist the treasurer in posting information on the Internet. Please call 467-9524 if interested



Ten members and 2 guests attended our birthday celebration. **Charlie Wood** led everyone in a toast and nine of us stayed for dinner.



One hundred women attended the International Women's Day event. League had a display and donated a copy of "**The State We're In**" as a door prize.



Pam Behring provided new tax fliers and reported on the tax forum in Pullman.



Program

April- Water issues will be covered by **Rachel Paschel Osborn** at the general meeting, at the Global Credit Union.

The LWV VOTER is published monthly except in the summer by the League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area, 2404 N. Howard St. Spokane WA 99205. Members of the League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area subscribe through their annual dues. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen, 18 or older, may join the League of Women Voters.

Continuation of Water Drops Article from page 1

feet per second (CFS) at Barker Rd and it was possible to cross the river on foot. What happens to water quality if that area dries up completely some hot dry summer following a dry winter?

The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plan has been the hot issue the past several months, specifically the need to reduce the amount of phosphorus discharged into the river. (See **LWVSA Voter March 2006.**) This could delay or stop the proposed county wastewater plant. Increased growth in the county will exceed the 10 million gallons per day of sewage contracted with the City of Spokane by 2011. The Clean Water Act requires that new plants meet the standard immediately.

The City of Spokane opted out of the year-early re-adoption of the Aquifer Protection Fee because the City has most homes sewered now and the County continues to build without sewerage. The opt-out is only for citizens of City of Spokane. Other cities (including Spokane Valley and Liberty Lake) continue to pay the Aquifer Protection Fee and are covered

under Spokane County plans. The County expects to eventually convert 10,000 homes from septic to sewer system

The City of Spokane's five-year state permit to operate their wastewater plant expired at the end of 2005. The rate stabilization fee is going up \$10 per month this year to pay for extensive and expensive improvements, including installation of advanced filtration to remove 90% of the phosphorus, which leaves still too much. (**Spokesman Review**, March 12, 2006, "Sewer Rate Hike Ahead".) HB2322, limiting phosphates in household dishwasher detergents to half a percent, passed the 2006 Legislature, but with an amendment to phase in the ban, with Spokane, Whatcom and Clark counties beginning in July 2008, the rest two years later. A ban on phosphates in fertilizer in Spokane County or statewide will be much more difficult.

Conservation of water is much touted but there is very little actually being done. We still think our water supply is forever clean and unending. It is not.

Alice Stolz

LWVSA Annual Meeting

Friday, May 5, 2006
5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
at Global Credit Union
1520 W. 3rd, Spokane

Dinner will be of Mexican flavor to help celebrate Cinco de Mayo!



- Washington's cigarette, liquor and gasoline taxes are among the highest in the country.
- Washington relies more heavily on the sales tax than any other state in the nation.

Tax Facts:



Join in Spokane's Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 22 - 11 a.m.- 3 p.m.
Riverfront Park, Gondola Meadows
World Music and Dance Festival, Environmental Film Festival, Transportation and Technology Fair, Reuse-a-Shoe Collection, Cell Phone Collection & More.



The Official Call To Annual Meeting Will Be Mailed No Later Than April 14.

Please bring **The Call** and your **Member Handbook** (blue cover) to the meeting – information you will need!!



MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES, I want to join The League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone-- Home: _____ Work: _____

Fax: _____ e-mail: _____

Please make check payable to & mail to:
LWVSA 2404 N. Howard St. Spokane, WA 99205

- \$ 45. Student Rate
- \$ 65. Individual
(\$24.20; State \$17; Nat'l \$23.80)
- \$100. Household
- \$100. Sustaining Member
- \$150. Benefactor

Calendar

- April 8 **LWVSA** General Meeting – Water
Spokane River at a Crossroads (see page 1)
- April 14 Mailing for Call to Annual Meeting
- April 19 Board Meeting -5:30 p.m. @ **LWV** Office
- April 22 Earth Day – Join in at Riverfront Park
- May 5 **LWVSA** Annual Meeting
- May 17 Board Meeting
- June 2-4 **LWVWA** Council, Ellensburg
- June 9-13 **LWVUS** Convention, Minneapolis MN



The Nominating Committee is still looking for a board director and a nominating committee member. Nominating committee member responsibilities:

- Meet with other committee members once to determine potential nominees
- Contact and invite your nominee(s) to serve.

You don't have to "know" members. Suggestions and input are available from those who do know them. Please call **Alice Stolz, Suzi Hokonson** or **Sandy Paine** to volunteer or suggest names.

International Women's Day

About 100 women and a few men gathered on March 8 at the Women's Club to celebrate International Women's Day. The room was surrounded by various displays, including League's own. The program included the Women's Day Proclamation read by Mayor Dennis Hession, presentations on various women's activities in other countries, the new Women's and Gender Studies major at EWU, and AAUW's work on "Drawing the Line on Sexual

Harassment on Campus." The Women of the Hearth shared several original heart-felt poems. The event closed with a presentation on Women as Decision Makers. Of note were the number of young high school and college women present. League contributed a copy of *The State We're In* as a drawing prize and was represented by **Sandy Paine, Suzi Hokonson**, and **Ann Murphy**. A good event – consider attending next year!
Ann Murphy

LWV THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE SPOKANE AREA

2404 N. Howard
Spokane, WA 99205
(509) 326-8026

WWW.LWVWA.ORG/SPOKANE

LWV/Spokane Area

Co-Presidents: Ann Murphy & Sandy Paine

Secretary: Sandy Haupt

Treasurer: Betty Banks

Directors: Pam Behring

Doris Tryon

Mayo Sayrs

Nancy O'Keefe

Nominating

Committee:

Chair: Alice Stolz

Suzi Hokonson

TO: