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Mental Health Issues in Pierce County - Proposed Local Program

by Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow

Unit meetings last November gave us a great deal of information about mental health services, and left our members with a desire to know more, and perhaps be able to take action on some of these issues. Therefore, after discussion at Program Planning meetings, and with great support from those in attendance, the Board has approved recommending this new study to the membership.

Proposed study of Mental Health Issues in Pierce County, to include financing, privatization, sales tax, the relationship to homelessness and housing, the effect of returning war veterans, and the need for a mental health court, leading to consensus and action.

SCOPE – Research the:

- Funding and distribution of mental health diagnosis and treatment services in Washington State and the relationship of Pierce County services to statewide funding and service delivery.
- Purposes and implementation requirements of the .1% sales tax allowed for mental health services, which Pierce County does not currently collect.
- Trends in and effects of privatization of mental health services in Pierce County.

- How mental health conditions and services (or lack thereof) affect homelessness and housing of Pierce County residents.
- How returning war veterans with P.T.S.D. or other issues, who remain in Pierce County, may affect the delivery of services in Pierce County.
- Whether or not a mental health court in Pierce County would be helpful in addressing mental health needs in the County, using evidence from the successes and failures of such courts in nearby counties.

Study these issues, leading to consensus and action.

This will appear in the Annual Meeting Book and be voted on by the membership. It is appearing in the VOTER now to give you an early chance to let us know if you are interested in working on this study if it is adopted. The Study Committee will refine the scope as needed, and decide whether it should be a one-year or a two-year study. To express interest, please e-mail Bobbie Fletcher (fletchnol@yahoo.com), Sharon Peace-Doane (hrdoanes@comcast.net), or Ann Williams (willar12000@yahoo.com).

Many thanks to all who participated in the Program Planning process this year.

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The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

From the Co-President

by Paula Eismann



I've heard many positive comments from various League members regarding our informative and interesting unit meetings this year. Thanks to all of you who have worked at making them factual, and educational. This takes time and planning to

create a dynamic meaningful gathering and it only happens with preparation and your efforts.

March unit meetings brought a variety of speakers on the issue of Food Inequality, giving us a perspective of how agencies throughout Pierce County are providing nutritious food for food

banks and helping the participants feel welcome whether they are short or long-term visitors. The April unit meeting will focus on gun responsibility, firearm laws, and what we can do to decrease gun violence. It will focus on educating members of the various facets of this important issue.

Thanks to all of you who helped out with the March 20 Sunshine Forum in setting up the speakers, advertising, and bringing refreshments. Your enthusiastic participation was greatly appreciated.

Looking ahead to the remainder of this year (whew, it's gone by quickly!) the nominating committee, the bylaws committee and the budget committee are working diligently in preparation for reporting to League's Annual meeting, on Saturday, June 14. Please save the date. See you in League!

Tacoma Charter Review

by Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow

Every ten years, Tacoma citizens get to review the City Charter and make recommendations to the City Council, which then decides which things should be passed on to the citizens for a vote. This is one of those years. The Tacoma Charter Review Committee has been meeting since January, and is currently meeting in small committees to deal with issues which have been brought up.

There will be a public meeting on Wednesday, 9 April at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chamber in the Tacoma Municipal Building. Our League has a strong position in favor of our Council-Manager form of government. At the last public meeting, several people brought up wanting to change the form to a strong mayor form of government. If you have an opinion on this, April 9th would be a good time to show up and let them know. As well, we support continuing to have some of the Council member elected by district and some at-large.

Other issues you might want to bring up are changing the language of the Tacoma Charter to make the language gender neutral and changing the election of

three civil service board members to being appointed. Tacoma has the ONLY elected Civil Service Board in the country; members of the Charter Committee are discussing having an all appointed board. Come let them know what you think. You may also email charterreview@cityoftacoma.org or jharris2@cityoftacoma.org or call 253-591-2067 to give your opinions on possible changes to the Tacoma Charter.

You may NOT speak in the name of the League, but you may speak as League members supporting our positions, or just as yourself, on any issue you want. The Tacoma City Charter may be found at the City of Tacoma website: http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/CityAttorney/CityClerk/CityCharter/

League position on Tacoma City government may be found in the Handbook.

And if you just want to go listen, hear what they have to say and what your fellow citizens are saying, I will look forward to seeing you there!

April 2014 Unit Meeting - Gun Laws, Gun Violence, Gun Culture

by Mary Ann Leskie

Since the Newtown school tragedy, there's been a national conversation about gun laws and gun violence. In the 2008 District of Columbia v. Heller decision, for the first time, the Supreme Court ruled that an individual has a right to own a gun for personal safety rather than only for militia service. However, this decision had an important caveat. Justice Scalia wrote that the right to bear arms is not unlimited.

At the April Unit meetings, LWVT-PC will have a dialogue about gun laws, gun violence and the gun culture. Some of the facts that will be presented may surprise you. For example, just since 1968, more Americans have died from gunfire than died in all the wars in this country's history. These firearm deaths include homicides, suicides, and accidents.

Some of the topics we'll touch on include:

- Gun laws in Washington State, Canada and at the Federal level;

- Passed, pending or failed legislation;
- Effectiveness of background checks;
- Statistics with an emphasis on different types of gun deaths, including domestic violence;
- Responsibilities of gun ownership;
- History of League positions on gun control and are they adequate;
- Your questions.

Please join us for the discussion and informational handouts. Bring your questions and comments. Feel free to contact any of the committee members prior to the meeting with questions to allow time for research.

Thank you!

Committee members are: Paula Eismann, Rosa Franklin, Diane Kerlin, Mary Ann Leskie, Judy Payne

Gun Safety and Public Health

Conclusions and summary of a report by the National Physicians Alliance and the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (To read the full report, go to [Gun Safety and Public Health Smartgunlaws.org](http://GunSafetyandPublicHealthSmartgunlaws.org))

Because medical professionals play a central role in solving public health crises and as witnesses to the trauma that occurs due to gunshot injuries and deaths, they see gun violence as an epidemic through the lens of public health. Consequently, they demand concrete action to reduce gun violence. Examples include:

- Extending existing laws to prohibit purchase and possession of guns by people who are high risks in committing firearms-related or violent crimes such as violent misdemeanants, alcohol abusers,

and serious juvenile offenders;

- Banning assault weapons and high capacity ammunition magazines;
- Establishing universal background checks for anyone buying a firearm or ammunition;
- Regulating guns and gun safety devices as consumer products by requiring inclusion of product safety features, safety devices such as loading indicators and magazine mechanism, and then testing them for safety prior to sale;
- Encouraging new technologies to increase gun safety such as personalized guns;
- Removing all gag rules that apply to clinical encounters so patient and provider can be free to discuss any issue including gun safety;
- Restoring research and robust funding for the National Institutes of Health and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to allow an

evidence-based approach in gathering data that tracks gun-based deaths and injuries, safety interventions, and the impact of measures to reduce gun violence over time;

- Requiring law enforcement oversight of gun dealers and ammunitions sellers who should be held accountable for negligence in the marketing or the sales of these products; and
- Ensuring that violence prevention including gun safety is a core part of training and continued education for doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, teachers etc. The medical community must give strong support to these life-saving interventions. We call on the medical community to give strong, vocal support to these powerful

life-saving interventions.

National Physicians Alliance is a non partisan, 501(c)3 organization that creates research and education programs that promote health and foster active engagement of physicians across medical specialties who have a commitment to profession integrity and health justice. They accept no funds from pharmaceutical or medical devices companies.

The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence is a non-profit organization and a premier clearinghouse for information and state firearm laws, and 2nd Amendment litigation. smartgunlaws.org, Phone 415-433-2062

Summary of Washington State Gun Laws RCW 09.41xxx

<u>Subject/Law</u>	<u>Relevant Statutes?</u>	<u>Summary of Statute</u>
State permit to purchase?	None	
Firearm Registration?	Partial	Retail dealers must record and report all retail pistol sales to local police/sheriff and to State DOL
Owner license required?	None	(Note: See "Carry permits issued")
"Assault weapon" law?	None	
Constitutional Right to Bear Arms	Yes	
Carry permits issued?	Yes, hand-guns only	Washington is a "shall-issue" state and will grant concealed carry permits to all applicants that meet the criteria. There are no training requirements.
Open carry?	Yes	Open carry is lawful without any permit. Open carry of a loaded handgun in a vehicle is legal only with a concealed pistol license. Open carry of a loaded long gun in a vehicle is illegal, regardless of CPL possession.
State Preemption of local restrictions?	Yes	State law does not allow more restrictive local laws.
NFA weapons restricted? (See National Firearms Act)	Yes	Machine guns and shotguns are illegal for non-law enforcement possession. Silencers are lawful if registered with ATF.
Peaceable Journey laws?	No	Federal travel-with-a-firearm laws apply. Carry must be open, or in a vehicle, unloaded.
Castle Doctrine/Stand your ground law?	Not defined	Washington State Supreme Court ruled "that there is no duty to retreat when a person is assaulted in a place where he or she has a right to be."

State Background and Positions on Gun Control -- from LWVWA Program in Action, 2013-2015

Position in brief: *Government should regulate ownership and possession of firearms and limit their accessibility.*

Background: The 1990 League of Women Voters national convention adopted a position on Gun Control by concurrence. A study was adopted by LWVWA in 1993 to examine and evaluate existing Washington state gun control laws and their enforcement. The scope of the study further called for a review of current laws in other states and Canadian provinces, and an assessment of gun control issues.

In 1997, after several years of lobbying unsuccessfully for legislation implementing our position, the League endorsed Initiative 676, the Handgun Safety Act, and worked in coalition with Washington Ceasefire and other groups to gather enough signatures to place the measure on the November ballot. The act would require that all handguns be sold with trigger-locking devices for safe storage and that handgun owners be required to obtain a safety license to indicate that they have been trained in the safe operation, handling and storage of handguns. The Handgun Safety Initiative 676 supported by LWVWA did not pass in 1997. Since that defeat we have continued to work on legislation regarding the safe-storage of guns and for closing the gun show loophole involving the sale of guns without the regulations required of licensed gun dealers.

The federal assault weapon ban, enacted in 1994, expired in September of 2004 because Congress failed to extend it. However, Washington State could join seven other states by enacting an even more effective ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines. Other legislative priorities are closing the gun show loophole and to require the safe storage of firearms.

The 108th Congress also passed a bill in 2005 that granted the gun industry immunity from lawsuits although lawsuits are the only means of holding reckless dealers and manufacturers accountable. In 2005 The Washington State legislature passed HB1687, strengthening provisions concerning the

possession of firearms by persons found not guilty by reason of insanity.

THE LEAGUES'S POSITION ON GUN CONTROL (1994):

The LWVWA believes that:

GLC-1: Government should regulate ownership and possession of firearms and limit their accessibility.

GC-2: Firearms should be regulated by government through measures, which may include the following:

- Federal: applications to purchase; registration; manufacturers' and dealers' license fees; restrictions on owning, transporting and distribution; prohibition on types and places allowed, extended waiting periods (as consistent with LWVUS Gun Control position)
- State: Licensing to purchase; issuance of state and local ID cards; registration; manufacturers' and dealers' license fees; restrictions on owning, carrying, transporting and distributing; prohibition on types and places allowed; extended waiting periods.
- Local: prohibition on places allowed

GC-3: Taxes and license fees should be increased to help pay for:

- Education about firearm safety
- Background and verification checks for gun purchasers
- Violence prevention programs and measures
- Investigation and prosecution of illegal trafficking in firearms.

GC-4: Measures should be taken to limit young people's access to firearms. These should include the following:

Gun-free zones in school areas

- An age limit of 18 for the use and possession of guns
- Requirement for safe gun storage

GC-5: Civil and criminal parental liability should be included under certain circumstances.

The National League's History on Gun Control – from LWVUS Impact on Issues 2012-14

The 1990 Convention took the then rare step of adopting the gun control position by concurrence. Proponents had sent two informational mailings to all Leagues before Convention. Spirited debate on the Convention floor persuaded the Convention to concur with the statement proposed by the LWV of Illinois.

Following the Convention action, the LWVUS wrote to all members of Congress, announcing the League's new position on gun control and urging passage of federal legislation to control the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States. In 1991, the League joined with other organizations to support legislation banning semi-automatic assault weapons. In 1992 and 1993, the League supported congressional passage of the Brady bill, to institute a five-day waiting period and background check for the purchase of handguns. Following enactment of the Brady bill in November 1993, the League stepped up its efforts in a successful 1994 House campaign to force inclusion of the assault weapons ban in the final conference report on omnibus crime legislation.

Addressing constitutional arguments affecting gun control, the 1994 Convention voted to amend the position on gun control based on federal court decisions limiting the meaning of the Second Amendment's "right to keep and bear arms." This section of the position was nullified by the Supreme Court decisions in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 2008 and *McDonald v. Chicago*, 2010.

Throughout 1995-1996, opponents of the assault weapons ban and Brady bill pushed for repeal, but the League and others convinced Congress otherwise.

The 1998 Convention again amended the position with: "The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety."

In the 106th Congress, the LWVUS worked for gun control measures to close major loopholes in current law. Although the Senate passed legislation mandating background checks for all gun show purchases, the House derailed this and other attempts to control gun violence, including child safety locks on guns.

The LWVUS endorsed and League members joined the Mother's Day 2000 Million Mom March that demonstrated citizens' call for common-sense gun control measures.

In 2004, the League voiced strong concern over the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which would grant special protection for the gun industry by barring city, county or individual lawsuits against gun manufacturers and dismiss pending cases

The League supported legislation to extend the Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in September 2004. The LWVUS also supported language to close the Gun Show Loophole to require all dealers to run criminal background checks at gun shows.

In the 2000s, the League opposed congressional attempts to repeal District of Columbia gun safety laws because such action interfered with the right of self-government for DC citizens.

2nd Amendment to the United States Constitution

"A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

The National League's

Position on Gun Control, as adopted by 1990 Convention and amended by the 1994 and 1998 Conventions

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens.

The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety.

The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background checks, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of educating and verification.

The League supports a ban on "Saturday night specials," enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocations of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

Units Gathered Facts, Considered Actions

by Lucinda Wingard

All four Unit meetings for March were dedicated to Food Insecurity topics. Speakers from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) the Emergency Food Network, FISH Food Banks, and Food Backpacks 4 Kids, as well as from Pierce County Conservation District focused our attention on hunger in Pierce County.

Anecdotes of families with huge medical expenses, professionals whose jobs took drastic cuts, mothers working 2 jobs, and military families unable to make ends meet gave those who are dependent on food stamps a face.

The need for Food Bank services is not decreasing in the ‘economic upturn’ of the last four years. For example, FISH in the Gig Harbor area served 365 more families, ones previously unseen in 2013, than in the previous year. Other bad news includes lack of public transportation makes serving rural areas difficult. On the GH/KP peninsulas there are no “meals on wheels” for the homebound, we were told.

At two Units, Kristen McIvor touted the [Pierce Conservation District](#) for coordinating gleaning projects at community gardens and parks. She suggested small gardens can provide specialized foods for ethnic groups. Workshops for proper care of fruit trees help produce more local food to share.

Aside from food, NGOs provide recipes for the food they hand out and have cooking classes. Food Backpacks 4 Kids actually provide the ingredients for a cooked meal for four. Along with the other organizations, they scour local resources for needed utensils, linens and clothing items for their clients.

Government and NGOs collaborate to provide a more consistent supply of food for such families in Pierce County. New member Marianne Seifert of Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department reports some of the ways her department supports Food Bank volunteers. Pierce County Community Connections’ Community Development unit currently funds food banks through the Community Development Block Grant

program. Also, Pierce County Community Connections’ Aging & Disability Resources (ADRC) receives calls from individuals and families seeking food assistance. The ADRC does preliminary screening for Basic Food Assistance and refers callers to one of the many food pantries in the county, for home delivered meals, or to their nearest senior center where meals are served. ADR does direct funding for meal sites throughout Pierce County.

Washington State University Extension nutrition programs address food insecurity through nutrition education classes for low-income residents to manage their limited resources while preparing and serving healthy foods at home for families. It works with some school districts to provide nutrition education in elementary school classrooms, including garden enhanced nutrition education.

WSU Extension also helps create a better understanding of poverty itself through Poverty Simulation workshops. These workshops are used for professional, community and policy development as well as volunteer training, to help improve services, programs and policies serving people in poverty.

So What do We Do?

As a problem solving organization, League members discussed various responses. Opportunity for volunteerism is a bright spot—over 230 people are regular volunteers in FISH just on the Gig Harbor and Key peninsulas.

In a 22,500 sq. ft. warehouse in Lakewood, food is collected in bulk from sources all over the state and, with the help of volunteers, is put into smaller portions and delivered to the Food Banks and one mobile unit. Up to 15 people at a time can volunteer at EFN’s warehouse in Lakewood to sort/bundle oats, rice, etc.

Food donations are needed, but cash donations can buy 7 times more food, Kate Wright of the Edgewood Food Bank told the East Side Unit.

Karen Jorgenson of Food Backpacks 4 Kids has bought the book and the film “A Place at the Table” and is

interested in putting on an event showing the film to wider community. Gig Harbor Unit showed interest in partnering in such an event. Late news: This film is also being presented at The Grand Cinema in Tacoma, April 26 at 9 am by The Junior League of Tacoma.

More Issues for Study

Food insecurity is a problem with many 'tentacles'.

Perhaps future League programs could follow up on related topics such as how to feed 9 billion people in 2050 with the effects of climate change; the food industry's highly processed cheap calories and the effects of Genetically Modified Organisms; how our health care system is affected by poor nutrition; or what can be done to avoid wasting good food in the distribution system.

Notes on Affordable Housing Consortium

by Helen Sohlberg

Nativity House has received \$1 million from the Gary Milgard Foundation. This money will be used to build a new facility that will combine services offered by Catholic Community Services - the Tacoma Avenue Shelter, Hospitality House, and Nativity House Day Programs. The facility, to be completed in December 2014, will have 50 units designed to help homeless people until they can relocate to permanent housing. A part of the \$5 million dollar goal will be dedicated to fund mental health services, education, and employment services.

Olympia and Thurston County are leading the way in providing homeless shelters in a "village" of tiny 129 sq. foot cottages that was opened in December 2013. This type of housing has been successful in Madison, Wisconsin. The project in Olympia is called Quixote Village where thirty cottages, each with a half bath, toilet, sink and covered front porch, are clustered

around a community building containing showers, laundry facilities, shared kitchen, sitting and dining area, meeting room and office. Taking what was actually paid to construct the buildings and develop the site, the cost of each cottage is just under \$88,000. More information, including pictures, funding sources and how the village is governed and supported can be found at www.quixotevillage.com and http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/20/garden/small-world-big-idea.html?_r=0.

An interesting connection between the Olympia project and League is the person who led the effort, Jill Severn, who is author of the LWVWA civics education textbook, *The State We're In: Washington, Your guide to state, tribal and local government*. She received Thurston League's 2013 Lifetime Citizenship Award for her work with the homeless, as well as her many other citizenship accomplishments, including the textbook.

Sunshine Week

by Ruth Ann Hatchett

Each year the League of Women Voters celebrates national Sunshine Week across the nation. This year the Washington league is especially celebrating the passage of the Open Government Training Bill by the Washington state legislature which requires training for most public officials to understand the public disclosure laws.

Our League hosted a forum on The Influence of Money in Government at the TNT on March 20 as our part of the celebration.

One of our speakers was Libby Carr of WAmend who encouraged those present to support citizen's initiative I-1329 calling for an amendment to the US

Constitution to reduce the influence of big money on our elections.

Attorney, Larry Couture, spoke about constitutional law as related to public disclosure and the Citizen's United Supreme Court decision giving corporations unlimited ability to donate to campaigns.

You are encouraged to watch these two short videos that give a good overall view of campaign financing <http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-citizens-united-v-fec/>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM>

Hospital Mergers – State Approval Required

by Susan Eidenschink

Beginning on March 25, 2014, Washington State Hospitals will be required to obtain state approval before systems are allowed to merge or affiliate. The new rules will subject any mergers to the Certificate of Need (CoN) process, which is the state's system of oversight to ensure hospital beds and services aren't duplicated and don't exceed the needs of the community. As many Washington hospital systems have started to affiliate with each other and the deals are different from formal mergers in that they often include changes in hospital governance, there seemed to be a need for more oversight. Hospitals will be required to include on their websites all their policies of admission, nondiscrimination, end-of-life care, and reproductive health.

Hospitals do not like these rules. They argue that the new rules will add costs (including a \$40,000 filing fee) and lengthy waits to get approval of new affiliation agreements. In fact, the Washington State Hospital Association is suing over this issue.

In July 2013, Governor Inslee asked that the old Certificate of Need process be reviewed. The governor's decision came after growing public concern about Catholic health systems taking control of secular hospitals. Catholic health systems limit access to reproductive services and end-of-life care, which are available in secular hospitals.

Check out the website of a hospital near you to see what policies they list. You may want to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper with this information and with any research of websites that you have done. Find out more information at <https://aclu-wa.org/myhealthcare>.

Mark your calendar today for your Unit meeting May 8th, 9th or 10th —

The Undocumented Among Us: What About the Law?

by Lucinda Wingard

What should we do about the millions of immigrants (perhaps more than 12 million) who live and work in the US without the necessary paperwork? Some Americans call them illegal aliens, law-breakers, while others use the less loaded term "undocumented."

Whatever the language, most agree that new laws are needed to reduce the size of this under-culture in the US. What current initiatives protect human rights, promote social justice, and maintain our national interest in regulating immigration?

A strong and active organization newly named Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (A.I.D. Northwest) will be one source of information for our May meetings.

"The Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) Roundtable is a nonprofit charitable

organization, formed in 2006, to provide practical help to detainees and their families, as well as raise awareness about the NWDC facility in Tacoma, WA. The Roundtable is unique, with a widely diverse membership, including advocacy groups, churches, aid organizations, government agencies such as ICE, Congressional liaisons and GEO, the private firm that owns the facility. We work within existing law to promote fair, humane practices, provide much needed assistance and build healthy connections between communities in our great "nation of immigrants."

Consider joining Lucinda Wingard's committee to help plan this exciting program. WingardJL@comcast.net, or 253-858-3647

Council 2014: Be Bold
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® of Washington
May 31st - June 1st

Council 2014 will be held at: Embassy Suites – Lynnwood
20610 44th Ave West
Lynnwood, Washington, 98036
Ph: 1-425-775-2500 Fax: 1-425-774-0485

For those who wish to stay at the hotel, please reserve a room directly with the hotel. When you call, ask for the League of Women Voters room rate discount. This discount is only valid if you **reserve by May 13th!**

You can view the most up-to-date agenda online at lwvwa.org/council2014.html.

The League requests that each individual fill out a separate registration form.

An optional free tour is also available of the Mukilteo Lighthouse on Friday afternoon (5/30) from 2:30pm to 5pm. Come see the inner workings of this historic lighthouse with beautifully landscaped grounds and stunning works of architecture, as well as its romantic, scenic, educational, and historical values. Contact Phyllis Busch to reserve a place on the tour: phyllis_busch@comcast.net.

If you wish to pay by credit card, please register online at lwvwa.org/council2014.html. To pay by check, please fill out and submit the form below.

Registration

Full Name: _____

League Affiliation: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Registration Package:

- o Full Registration (includes workshops, coffee, lunch, and dinner): \$120
- o Saturday Morning & Afternoon (includes workshops, coffee, and lunch): \$80
- o Saturday Banquet & Speaker (includes dinner only): \$50

For Full Registration or Saturday Banquet & Speaker, please indicate:

o Chicken or o Vegetarian

Dietary Restrictions (if any): _____

Please include a check for your total registration amount, payable to LWVWA. Submit to:
1402 Third Avenue, Suite 430 Seattle, WA 98101

If you wish to register after May 13th, please come prepared to pay by check at the door, with an additional \$10 fee on any package.

Project Homeless Connect

by Susan Eidenschink

On Wednesday, May 7, the third Project Homeless Connect of 2013-2014 will be held at The Puyallup Fair Grounds (WA State Fair Grounds) from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. If you want to help register voters and help inform felons of their right to register to vote for one or two hours at this important event, please contact Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbornet.com.

The first event of the 2013-14 Project Homeless Connect season was held on October 23rd, at the Tacoma Dome and the second event was held at Spanaway Middle School. At these events hundreds of homeless people received medical, dental, and vision care, help with chemical dependency, flu shots, haircuts, clothes, housing information, pet care, and more. Approximately 200 people were helped to enroll in Medicaid and Medicaid Expansion with the help of Assistor's designated by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. See the website for more information, <http://www.pchomelessconnect.com/>.



Volunteer Your Time

Voter Printing and Mailing

Each month the Voter is printed and prepared for mailing. This happens at the end of each month. If you like a little physical work once in awhile, contact Susan Eidenschink.

Community Fundraising

We're gearing up for a concerted effort to establish relationships with Pierce County businesses that will potentially donate to the League to support our work (and accomplishments)! We'll discuss this initiative in March Units, but in the meantime, please think about contacts you have in area businesses that could help open doors and your willingness to join the outreach effort.



Board of Directors

Voter Volunteers:
 Connie Ozmer
 Marie Cameron
 Susan Eidenschink

Please send comments or suggestions for The Voter to lwvtaco-mapierce@gmail.com

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Join the Tacoma – Pierce County League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County invites you to join us!
 Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a Member.

Yes, I'd like to become a Member of the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County.

This application ALSO entitles me to full membership in and mailings of the Washington State and National League of Women Voters (LWVWA and LWVUS)!

Membership for one year is \$60 (for two Members of a household - \$90). Student membership is \$30 but we are currently offering it at half-price, and even have scholarships available at this time! Membership dues are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund (by separate check, and they are tax deductible) and/or the General Fund are welcome.

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Comments: _____

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County
 702 Broadway, Suite #105 / Tacoma, WA 98402-3710

Get Involved!!!

Attend a Unit Meeting

BRING A FRIEND OR TWO

TACOMA

Day/Time: 2nd Thursday, April 10, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
 Place: N. Tacoma Police Substation, 5140 N. 26th St.
 Unit leader: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow,
lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com

LAKWOOD AND NEIGHBORS

Day/Time: 2nd Friday, April 11, 10:00 a.m. - noon
 Place: Steilacoom Community Center
 2301 Worthington St., Steilacoom
 Unit leader: Ann Elliston, 253-564-4102

EAST PIERCE

Day/Time: 2nd Saturday, April 12, 10:00 a.m. - noon
 Place: Puyallup Library, 324 S. Meridian, Puy.
 Unit leader: Ellen Zulauf, See Membership Directory

GIG HARBOR-KEY PENINSULA

NOTE change in meeting day from Sat. to Fri. -- for April only. Time is the same.

Day/Time: 2nd Friday, April 11, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
 Place: Harbor History Museum, 4121 Harborview Dr., Gig Harbor
 Unit leader: Sharon Peace-Doane, 253-265-0841

Welcome New Member!

Betty Devereux

THIS MONTH - APRIL:

Consideration of Gun Responsibility and Laws:

Some of the topics we'll touch on include: Gun laws in Washington State, Canada and at the Federal level; Passed, pending or failed legislation; Effectiveness of background checks; Review of statistics of gun violence in the U.S.; Responsibilities of gun ownership; History of League positions on gun control and are they adequate; and Questions from meeting participants.

See more on pages 3 - 6; also March VOTER firearms deaths statistics in our state, page 3.

NEXT MONTH - MAY:

Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact and Proposed Solutions:

What should we do about the millions of immigrants (perhaps more than 12 million) who live and work in the US without the necessary paperwork? Most agree that new laws are needed to reduce the size of this under-culture in the US. What current initiatives protect human rights, promote social justice, and maintain our national interest in regulating immigration.

See page 9 for more informaion.

LAST MONTH - MARCH:

Food Insecurity: Food bank services are not declining. Discussed were suggestions for what we can do, such as food and cash donations - especially cash which can buy 7 times more food. Also LWV partering in events for showing a film on the topic, which the Gig Harbor Unit expressed interest in doing. Future league programs on related issues were also discussed, such as how our health caer system is affected by poor nutrition, and how to avoid wasting good food in the food distribution system. See summary on pages 7 - 8.

LWVT-PC Calendar 2013 - 2014

April

- April 9 - 5:30 pm - Tacoma Charter Review Public Hearing - Tacoma City Council Chambers, 747 Market St, First Floor**
- April 10 - 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm - Tacoma Unit Meeting
(Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)**
- April 11 - 10:00 am - noon - Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting
(Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)**
- April 11 - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Gig Harbor Unit Meeting
(Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)**
- April 12 - 10:00 am - noon - East Pierce Unit Meeting
(Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)**
- April 15 - 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm - LWVT-PC Board Meeting**
- April 20 - Deadline for May Voter articles**
- April 22 - Bond measure for Metro Neighborhood Parks & Zoo Improvements and Safety Upgrades**
- April 26 - 9:00 am - "A Place at the Table" - Grand Cinema, 606 S Fawcett Ave, Tacoma**

May

- May 7 - 9:00 am - 3:00 pm - Project Homeless Connect, Puyallup Fair Grounds, Register Voters**
- May 8 - 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm - Tacoma Unit Meeting
(Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)**
- May 9 - 10:00 am - noon - Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting
(Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)**
- May 10 - 10:00 am - noon - East Pierce Unit Meeting
(Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)**
- May 10 - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Gig Harbor Unit Meeting
(Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)**
- May 20 - 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm - LWVT-PC Board Meeting**
- May TBD - 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm - New Member Orientation - Nancy Pearson's home**

June

- June 14 - Annual Meeting**
- June 20 - Deadline for June/July Voter articles**

LWVT-PC Board Meeting Summary: March 18, 2014

by John Thurlow

A quorum of the Board discussed the following topics:

- **LWVT-PC has 128 members** (two new), none on scholarship. We received \$590 for hosting the LWVWA Action Workshop.
- **TRY:** there are extra copies available, if members know of needful recipients. We'll go back to libraries, etc., later in the summer to see if they need more.
- **Agriculture position:** The Units feedback was all very consistent, and the Board accepted the report to pass on to LWVUS.
- **Mental Health:** Changes to the material circulated earlier were accepted to present to the Annual Meeting for approval. The April Voter describes the proposed study and asks for volunteers for a committee to work on it.
- **Sunshine Forum:** Speakers are Libby Carr from WAmend (I-1329) and Larry Couture (disclosure laws).
- **Unit meetings:** The Food Insecurity discussions were well-received, and are summarized in the Voter. The "A Place at the Table" movie pre-viewed at the Unit meetings will be shown at the Grand on April 16th at 9am. April's Units will address gun history, culture, statistics, and public health issues, as well as the history of LWV positions; Paula Eismann will lead the discussion. The May Unit topic is immigration.
- **Tacoma Charter Review:** Progress was reviewed, and it was emphasized that now is the time for members to speak out in favor of the LWVT-PC's position on Tacoma government favoring council-manager government. There will be a public hearing on April 9th, 5:30pm, in the Tacoma City Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building.
- **Tours of the NW Detention Center:** The proposed LWVT-PC visit to the NW Detention Center won't be allowed (ICE: "no nexus of interest", that is, LWVT-PC is not involved with the process or detainees).
- **Publicity:** The process and timelines for getting Unit meetings and other events posted in the various publications was discussed.
- **The Nominating Committee** reviewed progress on a slate of directors and officers for election at the June Annual Meeting.
- **Membership:** The Board discussed issues around implementing an Associate Member category for certain potential membership groups. There will be a new member orientation meeting on May 29th – announcement details to come.
- **The Board endorsed** the Metro Parks Tacoma capital projects bond proposal.

Welcome
Spring!



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April 26 - Film on Food Insecurity and Hunger in the U.S.

The Junior League of Tacoma is really excited to host a screening of "A Place at the Table" on April 26, 2014 at The Grand Cinema. "A Place at the Table" is a provocative documentary about hunger in the United States. It discusses the lives of three individuals living with food insecurity and asks us to help this issue by getting involved in our communities. This is something I think our organizations can all benefit from, presenting something we all are passionate about to the community in a new and captivating way.

This screening will take place between 9 am - 12 pm. The agenda will be as follows:

9-9:20 am -- Arrival, serve light breakfast/coffee

9:20-9:30 -- Seating with 5 minute introduction by JLT

9:30-11:00 -- Showing of "A Place at the Table"

11:00-11:30 -- Panel discussion

11:30-12 pm --gather in lower lobby for further discussion (we need to be out of the theater at this time)

We would like to invite you and your organizations to be a part of this screening. Our hope would be to have your expertise in sitting on the panel (or facilitating it) and help us gather a targeted audience, though we will be happy with any level of involvement and support from you.

For more information on the film, please check out their website: <http://www.takepart.com/place-at-the-table/film>.