The Voter
The League of Women Voters of Tacoma—Pierce County

December, 2014

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LWVWA: http://www.lwvwa.org/
LWVUS: http://www.lwv.org/

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.

Co-President’s Message

We’ve just completed a general election, and while the voter turnout was the lowest in seventy years (36.4%), our Voter Service Committee provided many excellent opportunities for voters to see their candidates in action and gain knowledge about ballot issues in forums throughout Pierce County (see page 3). We appreciate their doing the League’s work.

Voter disengagement as demonstrated by the low turnout makes it especially necessary for the League to provide good information on important issues to the voters in our area. You can become a part of this continued effort by volunteering to plan and attend upcoming unit meetings, with topics ranging from the McCleary decision to Citizens United. Check out the topics offered this spring and get involved now. Call the office at 253-272-1495 and volunteer.

On a sad note, I regret to announce that Bobbie Fletcher has resigned from the Board of Directors in order to provide continued support for her nephew’s family following the death of her nephew’s wife. We will miss Bobbie’s presence and contributions to the Board but appreciate her continued service to the League.

We hope to see you at the general meeting at Merrill Gardens December 6 (see page 2), where we’ll work on program planning for next year and celebrate the holidays. This is your opportunity to contribute to discussion and have your topic of choice addressed in future programs. It promises to be a time for great discussion, a delicious potluck, and a chance to win some lovely items in our raffle and put some dollars in our treasury!

Here’s wishing you good health and great times at League in the New Year.

Co-President Paula Eismann

Thanks to our generous donors since the last Voter:

Betty Devereux       Patricia Mail
Susan Eidenschink    Shera and Zoeb Mogri
Paula and Donald Eismann  Judy Payne
Ann Elliston         Ann Williams
Cynthia Lorch
December General Meeting

Program Planning and Holiday Celebration
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 6
Merrill Gardens
7290 Rosemount Circle, Tacoma

By Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow

Please join your fellow local League members for this great day. We hope to mix business with pleasure, learn a lot about the League and about your concerns. Instead of conducting our Program Planning at individual Unit meetings, we will do it all together, so we can gain the benefit of each others’ wisdom.

What you should bring:
* YOURSELF;
* Friends and family members who might be interested;
* A breakfast or lunch item to share (something that does not require heating or refrigeration);
* Your Handbook (and if you can read the State and Local League positions first, we’ll have a good start);
* This issue of The Voter;
* Some money to buy tickets for our raffle baskets;
* A raffle basket, if you wish; and
* YOUR IDEAS for what we should study.

We will gather your concerns about what we need to be doing locally and what we should recommend to the state League for study and action. Our local Board will discuss what comes out of this meeting. Our state suggestions will go to the State League Board, as will the suggestions from other Leagues, to help guide our state study and action for the next two years. The State Board will bring suggested programs to the 2015 State Convention (June 12-14 in Yakima).

To see LWVWA’s Program in Action, which contains all the state League positions in full, go to http://www.lwvwa.org/pdfs/PiA13-15.pdf. Please also read the information below from the forms that, as a League, we will fill out and send in to present your idea(s). We can suggest a new study, an update of a position, or action on issues where we already have a position. We may send up to three proposed program items, which we are asked to rank in order of importance to us.

If we do come up with suggestions for either state or local programs, we will need to have a proposed title, scope of the study, and outlook for work. As much of this as we can do on Saturday, the better off we are. So, I ask you to think about hot issues, and the questions above. We’ll be playing off each other’s thinking and throwing out ideas. If you already have some ideas, please send them to me, or call me, ahead of time.

I really look forward to seeing all of you at this meeting. There will also be socializing time before we begin the formal part of the meeting at 10 a.m., and during lunch (which is also when winning numbers will be drawn for the raffle baskets).

For more information, contact Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow, lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com, 253-924-0288

Guidance from LWVWA

Consider that League members are motivated to work on an issue that has a measurable impact on our communities and/or state. Once your members have decided that an issue of public concern requires League attention, you must determine what role the League should play in addressing those issues, including:

1. STUDY: to reach member agreement on an issue so that the League can take action. Questions to ask yourself:
   . Does the League already have a position?
   . Is there a government solution to the problem?
   . Is there enough time to do a study and then act to influence the resolution of the problem?

2. UPDATE: to review an issue. Questions to ask yourself:
   . Is the League position still useful?
   . Is the position sufficiently general?
   . Are there significant developments in the issues area that are not reflected in the position?
   . What is the proper scope of effort to update the position?

(cont’d next page)
Guidance from LWVWA, cont’d

3. ACTION: always the goal of the League’s study process. Member understanding and strong support are essential for successful action. Questions to ask yourself:
   - Are the timing and the political realities right for success?
   - Does the community expect or need the League to be a player on this issue?
   - Will League action on this issue make a significant difference?
   - Could a focused, targeted action-campaign enhance LWV visibility and stature?
   - Do our members understand our position and our action goals?

4. CITIZEN EDUCATION: to help citizens understand the complexities of an issue and encourage people to participate in reaching a solution; can also lay the groundwork for successful advocacy. Questions to ask yourself:
   - Does our community need help in understanding this issue and its possible solutions?
   - Is there enough time to develop and implement our project before citizens must make a decision?
   - Is it more important to help citizens understand this issue than to advocate our League position at this time?

5. CONCURRENCE: to agree with a position already held by another League of Women Voters. Questions to ask yourself:
   - Is their study available to us?
   - Is their resulting consensus of sufficient use to us?
   - As well, we would need to be sufficiently well-informed on the issues.
   - We would need the statement and background materials including pros and cons.
   - We could not amplify, make subject to conditions, or alter the statement of position reached by the other League.

Fall Forums

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County partnered in some way in nine forums this fall educating voters in our communities. Many thanks go to Terri Baker, Susan Eidenschink, Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow and Ann Williams for organizing and leading the events. Each forum had 30 – 50 attendees.

LWV partnered with several different organizations:

- Affordable Housing Consortium
- Leading Age at two senior housing centers
- Bonney Lake Chamber of Commerce
- Tacoma Public Library – two forums
- Milton-Edgewood Library partnering with Pierce County Libraries
- Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council

After the election, we also partnered with the Washington Coalition for Open Government and the Associated Students of Pierce College Puyallup on use of private electronic devices in conducting public business. Recent requests in Tacoma and Puyallup for records created by public officials on personal devices prompted the discussion. Of those who attended, 95% said they would attend another event.

Educating voters is one of our major responsibilities in our communities and the way we can remain visible while we are serving.

Welcome to our new members:

Catherine Cantwell Luria
Kathleen Geller
Cheryl Mann

Keeping up with League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County

For those of you who are not on Facebook, look for LWVT-PC online posts at The Suburban Times, thesubtimes.com, and Patch, patch.com.

Both of these news sites have become easy to use. For Patch, select your desired community (Find your Patch) and scroll among the latest Bulletin Board posts.
Observer Corps Returns

The League strongly encourages members to be engaged in their communities. We believe one way the League could be an asset to our communities is having observers at our local city council meetings. This League has done this in the past in various cities in Pierce County and has realized the benefits of gaining visibility and informing members of their local city councils’ actions. We are asking for volunteers who may be interested in becoming observers to let the office know or sign up at the general meeting or your next unit meeting. The organization of the observer corps will be finalized in February followed by a brief training session for all those interested. Responsibilities include:

- Attend assigned meetings, arriving promptly
- Take notes/fill out observer form
- Report to board through written report
- Advise the board of opportunities for action on League positions
- Wear your observation button

If you want to know more about Observer Corps or have specific questions, feel free to call Paula Eismann at 253-863-8845.

Board Meeting Summary

On November 19, the Board met and discussed the December 6 general meeting, the next issue of TRY, donations, new phone service and Board vacancies.

Donations for November totaled $1,200. There both member renewals and new members. The TRY is being edited to incorporate changes since the last election and may be issued with a new cover design. The Board is investigating new options for phone service at less cost.

Additionally, the Board discussed the upcoming League Birthday in February and ways to celebrate. Unfortunately, for health and family reasons, both Marie Cameron and Bobbie Fletcher have resigned from the Board, and the Board is looking for replacements.

There will be a meeting of unit leaders in the near future to discuss how meetings are conducted and records kept. The next Board meeting will be Wednesday, December 10, 4:30 pm at the League office.

LWVTPC Board Members

Co-President          Paula Eismann  253-863-8845, peismann60@comcast.net
Co-President          Ruth Ann Hatchett  253-864-7556 ; rhatchett@pierce.ctc.edu
1st Vice President    Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow  253-924-0288; lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com
2nd Vice President    Julie Offner  253-432-4407; offner.julie@gmail.com
Secretary            Ingrid Curtis  253-862-7865;Ltcolrwc@comcast.net
Treasurer            Susan Eidenschink  253-365-4005; susaneiden@harbornet.com
Directors:           Jacqueline Jones-Hook  jjoneshook@aol.com
                      Sharon Peace-Doane  253-265-0841; hrdoanes@comcast.net
                      John Thurlow  253-219-1617; johnthurlow@harbornet.com
                      Ann Williams  253-759-3355; willar12000@yahoo.com
December 2014

Get Involved! Attend a Unit Meeting and Bring a Friend (or two)

Tacoma

2nd Thursday of the Month
1:00—3:00 pm
North Tacoma Police Station
5140 N. 26th St.
Tacoma
Contact: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow, lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com

Lakewood & Neighbors

2nd Friday of the Month
10:00 am to noon
Steilacoom Community Center
2301 Worthington St.
Steilacoom
Contact: Ann Elliston, 253-564-4102

East Pierce

2nd Saturday of the Month
10:00 am to Noon
Puyallup Library
324 S. Meridian
Puyallup
Contact: Ellen Zulauf, eazul@comcast.net

Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula

2nd Saturday of the Month
2:00—4:00 pm
Harbor History Museum
4121 Harborview Dr.
Gig Harbor
Contact: Sharon Peace-Doane, 253-265-0841

For more information, see www.lwvwa.org/tacoma/

This Month: December - Program Planning

In December, Unit meetings will be combined in a General Meeting to jointly discuss Program Planning. Usually we have undertaken Program Planning in individual Unit meetings in January, but we are going to try a different format so that each of us who participates will hear other members’ thoughts and ideas on possible studies, updates or actions on local and state topics. Come to Merrill Gardens on December 6th to participate in this important process. See more information on pages 2-3.

Next Month: January — Hospital Mergers

In January, the four Unit meetings will include information on hospital mergers and how these mergers of religiously affiliated hospitals with secular hospitals may affect the range of care that is delivered. Cynthia Stewart and Susan Eidenschink, who are members of the State League’s Hospital Merger Committee and of a coalition of groups concerned about this matter, will discuss the issues and how public comment has been affecting outcomes.

To read more about the hospital merger issue, click here. If there are any specific dimensions of this issue that you would like to have addressed in these unit meetings, please contact Cynthia Stewart, stewdahl@comcast.net, or Susan Eidenschink, susanneiden@harbornet.com.

Last Month: November—Environmental Health

The November Unit meetings were organized by Marianne Seifert, who conducted a member survey to determine which indicators of environmental health were of interest to League members in each Unit. Marianne invited two or three experts in the areas of interest to come to the Unit meetings to present information and to answer questions. These Unit meetings were well attended and many League members expressed their delight in finding out new information. Attendees received an updated copy of Environmental Health Indicators in Pierce County. See more on pages 6-7.
Environmental Health at November Unit Meetings

By Marianne Seifert and Susan Eidenschink

November’s unit meetings featured Pierce County Environmental Health. Marianne Seifert coordinated and led an impressive and diverse set of panel discussions tailored to the interests identified by each unit. Copies of the new Pierce County Environmental Health report produced by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department’s Environmental Health Division were handed out as a starting point. Each guest speaker shared additional information about some of the issues in the report that League members had identified as specific interests. Marianne also pointed out that while the report was compiled by the Environmental Health Division, it was facilitated by data contributed by many other agencies and enhanced by community members interested in and working on improving our environmental health.

At the East Pierce Unit, Stephanie Leisle from Pierce County Public Works described recycling systems, with a focus on the need to create markets for the recycled materials. She also shared her work on reducing institutionalized racism to improve access to community gardens and healthy foods, as part of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative. Krystal Kyer, Tacoma Audubon, also spoke, thanking the League for their Biodiversity study and sharing her efforts to protect areas with high biodiversity as part of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative. Air quality was also discussed briefly, though other issues of concern, climate change, surface water, sustainable development, hazardous waste, and coal trains, could not be introduced because time was too short.

At the Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Unit, Jessica Ludwig, Pierce County Office of Sustainability, described how energy and other resources are being saved and greenhouse gas emissions reduced while saving money. Brad Harp, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, shared information and answered many questions about water quality.

At the Tacoma Unit, Kristi Lynett, City of Tacoma Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability, described the City’s program and commission and recycling efforts in Tacoma, including food waste. Stacy Carkonen, Tacoma Farmers Market, described the role of farmers markets in providing a direct market for local farmers. Other benefits of the farmers markets include incubating new businesses, keeping money local, and providing healthy local foods, including for WIC, EBT, and Senior Nutrition program participants. She also described efforts to buy and protect Pierce County farmland by the Pierce County Agriculture Roundtable, also part of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative.

At the Lakewood & Neighbors Unit meeting, Dan Catron, City of Lakewood, described the Lakewood Community Vision planning and stakeholder involvement processes. Krystal Kyer, Tacoma Audubon, described open space corridors and efforts to protect areas with high biodiversity as part of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative. We also talked briefly about the importance of focusing on children, immunizations, hand washing, air quality, public transit, and toxics.

(continued, next page)
Environmental Health at November Unit Meetings, cont’d

During the meetings, a variety of opportunities to get involved in these issues were discussed, including:

- Pierce County Solid Waste Advisory Council - working on new solid waste management plan.
- Puyallup Watershed Initiative Communities of Interest: Just and Healthy Foods, Biodiversity, Environmental Education, Agriculture, Active Transportation, and more.
- City of Tacoma Sustainability Commission and Transportation Master Plan, Sustainable Materials Management Plan, Environmental Master Plan development.
- City of Lakewood Community Planning meeting in January. Other cities and Pierce County meetings also are updating their comprehensive plans.
- Washington Transportation Commission and State Transportation Improvement Board.
- South Sound Military and Community Partnership.
- Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health meetings.
- Be a steward of your environment: save energy, protect land and water, share what you want in your neighborhoods: low impact development, open spaces, public transit, and more.
- Share information and what we can do in this report and League Biodiversity study with elected officials, neighbors, agency staff, and others!
- Call Washington, DC at 5 am to start their phone log! Call your Senators or Congessional representatives. Click here to get telephone numbers for Representatives. Click here to get numbers for Senators.

To see the full Pierce County Environmental Health report if you did not get a copy at the unit meetings, go to http://www.tpchd.org/environment/environmental-health-indicators-project/indicators/. Each icon on that web page brings up information specific to that indicator and includes data, human and economic impacts, policy actions and personal actions, as well as other resources for more information. Examples of actions we could take as individuals are:

- Share your vision of what you want in your neighborhood with your mayor, council members, planners, and others.
- Help develop and implement local and regional initiatives.
- Support libraries, parks, schools, grocery stores, farmers markets, community gardens and other resources you want to thrive in your neighborhood.
- Click here to find a nearby park or trail.

- For more information on the Pierce County Environmental Health Indicators Project please go to www.tpchd.org/ehindicators or contact Marianne at mseifert@tpchd.org or (253) 798-3823.
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 Na-
tional 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! Mem-
bership 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

Consider making a monthly contribution to the League
It’s Easy!

Looking for a method to make an affordable but larger contribution to the League? Just set up a monthly “account” in your checking account Bill Pay system. All you need is the League’s address and phone number.

• For “account number” , call it “contribution”.

• The payee, of course, is “League of Women Voters of Tacoma-
Pierce County”.

• The address is:
  League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County
  702 Broadway, Suite 105
  Tacoma, WA 98402

• And the phone number is: (253) 272-1495

Voter Production & Distribution Volunteers
Your Voter is brought to you by the following people:

Editorial Volunteers:  Distribution Volunteers:
Cynthia Stewart      Susan Eidenschink
Susan Eidenschink    Bobbie Fletcher
Julie Offner         Judy Payne
                     Ingrid Curtis

Visit us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Tacoma-Pierce-County/312747775413
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<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>General Meeting: Program Planning</td>
<td>Merrill Gardens, 7290 Rosemont Circle, Tacoma</td>
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<td>December 10</td>
<td>LWVT-PC Board Meeting</td>
<td>702 Broadway, Tacoma</td>
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<td>Deadline for January Voter articles</td>
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<td>January 8</td>
<td>Tacoma Unit Meeting</td>
<td>702 Broadway, Tacoma</td>
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**February 20**  
Deadline for March Voter articles

**March 11**  
LWVT-PC Board Meeting  
702 Broadway, Tacoma

**March 12**  
Tacoma Unit Meeting  
LWVWA Consensus – Study of Citizens United Decision

**March 13**  
Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting  
LWVWA Consensus – Study of Citizens United Decision

**March 14**  
East Pierce Unit Meeting  
LWVWA Consensus – Study of Citizens United Decision

**March 14**  
Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Unit Meeting  
LWVWA Consensus – Study of Citizens United Decision

**April 8**  
LWVT-PC Board Meeting  
702 Broadway, Tacoma

**April 9**  
Tacoma Unit Meeting  
LWVT-PC Mental Health Study Consensus

**April 10**  
Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting  
LWVT-PC Mental Health Study Consensus

**April 11**  
East Pierce Unit Meeting  
LWVT-PC Mental Health Study Consensus

**April 11**  
Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Unit Meeting  
LWVT-PC Mental Health Study Consensus

**April 20**  
Deadline for May Voter articles
More of what we can do to protect our environmental health

Excerpted from the May 2013 Voter article on biodiversity by Lucinda Wingard

1. Become good land stewards ourselves on our own properties: avoid pesticides and herbicides, control noxious weeds, and landscape for wildlife, because personal behavior makes a difference in a community.

2. Help change the attitude that distancing ourselves from neighbors is a good thing: living closer together needs to be considered a positive lifestyle.

3. Make it easier to build housing in urban spaces: support reduced regulatory red tape and green urban design. Refitting existing buildings to green standards generates money for government services and promotes economic growth.

4. Use and publicly fund the public transportation system.

5. Invest in environmental education, in schools and in communities. Spread the message: "Conserving native biodiversity is essential to our county’s overall health. Among many benefits, our wealth of native biodiversity provides communities with necessary resilience to survive catastrophic events and changes in climate."

6. Continue political pressure on elected officials. Do not let biodiversity fall off the table from lack of attention.

7. Help review the county Comprehensive Plan. It is up for review in 2014 and adoption in 2015. Not only rural and unincorporated areas, but urban areas need to be part of wildlife corridors. There are 23 cities in Pierce County. Maps need revisions to reflect opportunities for habitat conservation in all zones.

8. Advocate for Low Impact Development building standards (which is already a League consensus item).

9. Ask government to recognize the dollar value of ecosystem services and provide incentives for dedicating open space to those services.

10. Advocate for levy funding of open space.

11. Act locally and think globally. State legislators, too, need education in this issue. Inform ourselves of interconnected impacts, such as how proposals for coal trains affect biodiversity conservation.