



VOTER

Volume 2, Issue 5

APRIL 2008

CALENDAR

April 24

LWVTC meeting
Tradition's Café
6 pm

**Topic:
Affordable
Housing**

May 22

Annual Meeting
Place TBA

June 13-17

LWVUS
Convention
Portland, Oregon

Who Needs Affordable Housing?

More people than you might realize. The economic expansion of the 1990s obscured certain trends and statistics that point to an increased, not decreased, need for affordable housing. The generally accepted definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing, and a family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States. The lack of affordable housing is a significant hardship preventing them from meeting their other basic needs, such as nutrition and health-care, or saving for their future and that of their families.

*March 17, 2008
US Dept. of Housing and
Urban Development
[http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/
affordablehousing/](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/)*

Want to know more?

Join us

April 24, 2008

Tradition's Café

6 pm

Topic:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Speakers:

**Thurston County Commissioner and
Housing Consortium Chair**

Cathy Wolfe

And

Habitat For Humanity Executive Director

Curt Andino

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Editor: Dawn Brooks

*President's Column***Board is Busy, Busy, Busy**

The 25th of each month is the deadline for submission of articles for the VOTER. I'm usually completing my column at the last minute, trying to find something relevant to say and trying to make sense of the myriad events that have occurred and will be occurring. The VOTER is our one opportunity, each month, to tell you, our members, about how the League is making a difference in Thurston County.

As we go to press, the water committee is trying to finish their year long study by the April 1 deadline. For those of you who have worked on a study, you will appreciate the committee's

work. The rest of us can only imagine the difficulties involved.

Next, the board must set a date and find a location for the consensus meeting. Both email and print copies of the study will be available to members and later to the public. As always, we expect that anyone who attends the consensus will have read the study and the questions. The quality of our consensus process relies on our member's participation.

The board is also busy making plans for Annual Meeting where we will review the year's events, elect some new officers, make bylaw changes, set the budgets, make plans for the next year and have a

potluck dinner. We are looking for a special speaker. Look for the Annual Meeting packet in the mail during April.

Finally, last month we added a book review to the VOTER, written by Carolyn St. Claire. And she's written another one for this issue. Also please look for information on our attempt to revive the Observer Corps and bring it into the 21st Century, thanks to Jackie Kettman-Thomas. In addition, soon we will begin a series of member biographies.

We always welcome suggestions for the VOTERs and appreciate articles by our members.

Marilyn Funk

Good In Government Award Luncheon

Several of our members attended the state League's annual award luncheon in March. The purpose is to give an award to people who have made an outstanding contribution for the public good.

It was held on *International Women's Day* and the award went to *Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner* for her contribution to civic life as co-founder and Executive Director of *Moms-Rising-* a national internet-

based organization providing easy entry to citizen advocacy for those whose goal is a more family-friendly America.

Margaret Larson, journalist and consultant to *Women Helping Women Make a Better World* was the guest speaker.

*Held on
International
Women's Day*

This fundraising event was as interesting as it was inspiring. It was good to learn of the many activities others have undertaken to make the world a healthier place for women and their

families. It was also a great opportunity to visit with old friends.

Karen Verrill

Vote411.org

Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both

general and state-specific information. An important component of VOTE411.org is the polling place locator, which enables users to type in their address and retrieve the poll location for the voting precinct in which that address is located.

The League has found that this is among the most sought after information in the immediate days leading up to, and on, Election Day. For more information, go to www.lwv.org

www.lwv.org

Shadow of the Silk Road

For over a thousand years, merchants bearing exotic goods—silks, horses, gemstones, and spices, as well as inventions and ideas, traveled a myriad of arterial roads that led from China to Turkey, and then on to the West.

In *Shadow of the Silk Road*, British writer, Colin Thubron embarks on this same journey. Starting in Xian, China,



the author travels alone for 7000 miles to the city of Antioch (Antakya), Turkey on the Mediterranean Sea. Along the way we learn of the “mingled ethnicities” of the people of Central Asia today and how they live and cope in dry lands where poverty is a fact of life. They live in restless lands, where cultures mix uneasily and where tradition and modernity are in disturbing conflict. We learn, too, the history of Islam and its cen-

tral importance to these cultures. The author interweaves the present day with the glorious past of ancient civilizations such as the Persians, Mongols, Seljuk Turks, and Arabs told through the artifacts and dwellings that still remain. In *Shadow of the Silk Road*, the author illuminates for us that to understand Central Asia today, it must be seen through the prism of its past.

Carolyn St. Claire

HERB LEGG, CITIZEN ACTIVIST

Our community lost an exceptional, free-thinking activist when Herb Legg passed away on January 28. Herb wrote many letters to the editor of *The Olympian* over the years, pricking our consciences and challenging us to think beyond our personal spheres. Among the issues he cared about, he advocated a renewed GI bill, health care for all, parks preservation, and aid for the poor. Others have written about his

varied and impressive life chapters; I knew him primarily from his letters to the editor. When you saw his name, you could count on thoughtful and thought-provoking ideas about community matters. Herb was a model of citizenship in that he kept himself informed, thought about problems, discussed ideas with others (even organizing a political discussion group at the convalescent home where he died), and he didn't stop there. He wrote; he

spoke out; he challenged his neighbors to join him in changing our world. Without the shrill cynicism so tempting to those who care about these things, Herb used wit and gentle, yet pointed probing to get his point across. It's up to us now to pick up the baton and carry on, thinking beyond our personal spheres and shaping a community we can be proud of. A community that produces citizens like Herb.

Jackie Kettman-Thomas

Why should you attend the LWVUS Convention in June?

Have you ever experienced the excitement of being with a thousand people who care about our democracy? Have you ever had the opportunity to network with others who have achieved great things at local, state, and

national levels? Would you like a chance to learn from national speakers, professional trainers, League members and staff with special expertise? Then don't miss the LWVUS National Convention on June 13-17 in Portland, OR! Join with Leaguers from all over

the country to discuss, debate, have fun and meet the amazing people who, like you, care about the League of Women Voters.

February 21, 2008
Leaders Update
LWVUS

How to Access the Observer Corps Google Calendar

Here's the basic formula:
 Register with Google and sign in; find the "groups" search box and search for "LWVTC Observer Corps;" click on the "Calendar" button on the calendar page.

Step-by-step instructions:

1. From the Google website, sign in with your email and password.
2. In the upper left corner, click on "more" for more Google options
3. From the "more" drop-down list, click on "groups"
4. In the "search" dialogue

- box, enter "LWVTC Observer Corps"
5. From the results list, click on the group "LWVTC Observer Corps"
 6. Be sure to click on "join this group" on the right, for easier access in the future

- From the LWVTC Observer Corps group page, click on "The Calendar"
- 1 Not done yet!
 8. From the Calendar page, click on the "Google Calendar" button
 9. Find a local meeting you'd like to go to, and click on the title for meeting details.
 10. On the "event" screen, try adding an email reminder from the "options" box on the right
- Attend the meeting report on it!

Send reports to
lwvtc-oberserver-corps@googlegroups.com.

Once you've joined the LWVTC Observers group

1. Sign in and click on "my groups" in the top right corner
 2. Click on "LWVTC Observer Corps" on the right
 3. Click on "The Calendar" under the list of the group web site pages
- Continue with instructions above, beginning with 7.

If you have questions, contact Jackie at 870-6625 or email at the address shown above

Jackie Kettman-Thomas



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! LWVUS CONVENTION PORTLAND, OREGON JUNE 13-17

OBSERVERS NEEDED

During the month of April, the Thurston County Planning Commission will continue its series of work sessions discussing proposed changes to the Critical Areas ordinance. That regulation is the primary environmental protection mechanism for the unincorporated areas of the County. It puts limits on new development to protect wildlife habitats, reduce flooding, avoid or mitigate landslide dangers, and prevent building in areas that flood, would be subject to shoreline erosion, and earthquake and

other hazards. The meetings will be held Wednesdays, April 2 and 16, at 7:00 p.m., at the Thurston County Courthouse. See our LWVTC Observer Corps calendar on Google groups for more info.

On April 16, the Board of County Commissioners will discuss proposed changes to agricultural lands designations, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. This is not a public hearing, but is open to the public to observe.

On April 23, the Board will review and discuss proposals for the 2008 docket of new amendments to the

Comprehensive Plan.

Also, the County has a number of citizen advisory committees on topics ranging from services for the aging to solid waste. Apply and get involved! See the County website for more details. http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/bocc/Boards/advisory_boards.htm, and see the current Board meeting agenda for a list of those committees the Board is currently seeking applications for.

Jackie Kettman-Thomas

League Sees Voter Turnout, Financing & Party Nominees Making History in 2008

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters today provided its first in a series of comments on the 2008 presidential campaign, and noted that this election is on pace to make history in several areas.

“From what we have seen so far, the 2008 presidential election will be in the history books for several compelling reasons,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson. “Americans are energized about this campaign and we are seeing that reflected in the high voter turnout and record amount of funds being raised from millions of voters.”

“We’ve been watching closely, along with the rest of the country and see trends developing both good trends and bad trends,” Wilson stated. “There have been lots of candidates, with lots of views and perspectives in the campaign. A healthy exchange of ideas is democracy at its best.”

“Many have worked for years to counter embarrassingly low rates of civic participation in America. This year, it

seems we are on track to make significant improvements in that arena,” added Wilson.

“Participation is on the upswing – and that is evident in the high turnout rates this primary season and the many Americans who have signed up to help as poll workers.”

“This is the first election since 1928 where neither an incumbent president nor vice president is seeking nomination for the highest elected office in the U.S. This diverse field of candidates from all parties has led to an elevated sense of excitement and a newness that is drawing more people into the system,” Wilson said.

“The League has been educating voters throughout the 2008 primaries and caucuses and is prepared to do the same this fall. Our members are working in communities across this country to be sure the elections systems work as well as they can for voters, the candidates and elections officials. Our online election resource, www.VOTE411.org, educates millions of voters about the election and helps them locate their polling place through the only nationwide online polling place locator,” noted Wilson.

“Leagues are also working throughout the country to help

election officials and others prepare for what could be record turnout in November, and make sure all election workers have the resources they need to ensure things run smoothly at the polls.”

“We are less enthusiastic about the trends we see developing on the financing of this election,” Wilson noted. “While it is inspiring to see so many new individuals giving small contributions to these campaigns, we continue to call on all the Presidential candidates to commit to use the public financing system for the general election if they become their party’s nominee. Recent comments by the candidates suggest that they will not stand behind their commitment to use public funds this fall. This is disappointing.”

“While pundits will dissect the ups and downs of individual candidates for months to come, the League hopes that voters will continue to stay engaged throughout the campaign. We will be working throughout the year to ensure the election system works for all voters, and want to urge all Americans to get registered and vote this fall! While you’re at it, make sure your friends and loved ones are registered by sending them to www.VOTE411.org to get started.

**2008 ON PAR
TO BE
HISTORIC
ELECTION**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THURSTON COUNTY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For more information about the League's activities or membership call Marilyn Funk, 360-259-4424, or mail in the membership form below.

DATE:

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$_____

◇ \$60 for my membership

◇ \$_____ for an Educational Fund Donation

For Lifetime Membership and Scholarships contact Marilyn Funk, 360-259-4424.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

LWVTC Newsletter, the VOTER will be distributed by email unless you specifically request a hard copy in regular mail.

Please send my copy of the VOTER by postal mail to the above noted address.

Please send my copy of the VOTER to _____

LWV Purpose

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan, nonprofit political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government. The League influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any one of voting age may become a League member.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS THURSTON COUNTY

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