

THE VOTER



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This Newsletter published by and for the League of Women Voters of Yakima County

MISSION STATEMENT

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

VISION

To empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

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www.secstate.wa.gov/
Yakima Co. Auditor:
www.co.yakima.wa.us/auditor/
LWWVA: www.lwwva.org

Calendar

Tues. April 12th, Noon : Kara Kondo Lunch, Gasperett's,

Thurs. April 14th, Noon: L WVA Board , League Office

All Members Welcome

Unitarian Universalist Church 225 North 2nd Street

May: TBA, LWVYC Annual Convention, Election of Officers

May 20-21: TBA, LWWA State Convention, Richland

Summer: TBA, Election Forums on Redistricting.

Sept.: TBA, Yakima Water Study Informational Meeting

Our League Story:

Laura Hopp by Joyce Dennison

Laura Hopp joined the League of Women Voters in Yakima when she was 30 years old and continued her interest and support for the next 60 years. She was one of that "mighty band" of women who established the League in Yakima.

She served as the first president when it became recognized as a local League, and she served as president for two other terms. (Continued on Page 2.)

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Laura was a nurse when she and Blaine came to Yakima from the west side, and she became a nursing instructor at YVCC, all the while a dedicated Leaguer. Blaine served the community in legal and judicial fields. Their three sons and a daughter grew up in Yakima.

When I was new to Yakima, I immediately joined the local League, bringing my enthusiasm for the League of Women Voters from my membership in Iowa and Illinois. A very early memory of my participation in the Yakima League was being picked up by Laura and Blaine and being taken to a program meeting. I soon understood Laura's dedication to League work and League process.

A requirement to be recognized as a local League by the national League was to do studies of city and county governments. Laura led the study of Yakima city government. Laura's original motivation for involvement with the League, and, in fact, for starting it in Yakima County, was her belief that women should be involved in the political process and knowledgeable about their local government.

One of the hallmarks of Laura's influence on local League members of the years and particularly local League board members, was her refusal to shortcut the obligatory standards of League process, including:

- Careful grassroots study of issues
- Taking action in the appropriate legislative venue: local, state or national, only after study and consensus.
- Non-partisan relationship with candidates for public office
- Providing appropriate non-partisan voter education
- League public pronouncements to come only from the local League president, and then only on the basis of member consensus.

As with many effective organizations with open membership, people occasionally saw the League as an opportunity to promote personal agendas.

League issue studies are usually glacially slow – simply by the nature of the care and caution afforded these issues—and positions come only after the adoption of a study by the membership.

Several years ago, a member of our local League came to an annual meeting and proposed a local study. It was specifically about a governmental relationship between the Yakama Nation and the city of Toppenish. Many members were taken aback by the prospect of the Yakima County League targeting the Yakama Nation. But Laura Hopp to the rescue! She politely pointed out that the Yakama Nation had a political relationship to the federal government, and the local League could not arbitrarily undertake a “national” or “federal” study.

Many decades ago my husband and I made a Christmas visit to my family in my hometown in Iowa. We had arrived from Seattle at a very cold time, 25 degrees below zero. One evening Clay and I were visiting the farm home of one of my high school friends where a number of people were gathered in the large farm kitchen, including a visitor and his border collie from a Wyoming sheep ranch.

Clay and I were asked to restrain the dog if it tried to go out in the cold on this strange farm when somebody used the outside door. When that did happen and the collie moved toward the door, Clay and I leaped to the rescue, each grabbing handfuls of the dog's shaggy coat. However, it moved, relentlessly, toward the door, simply dragging two healthy young adults in its wake – no growling, nor snapping, nor complaining.

Clay and I adopted a metaphor for a quietly persistent action as “being a border collie” Laura Hopp has always been my favorite League of Women Voters “border collie”.

She politely kept us on track and kept the League of Women Voters of Yakima County true to its tasks. Thank you, Laura.

By Joyce Dennison,
Presented November 16th, 2010

A Review of the Basics of League Governance by Linnea Hirst, LWVWA President, 2011

Nonpartisan Policy: we do not support or oppose candidates for public office. Ever.

We do work hard to inform and educate the public:

Candidate Debates: 3 important sources from LWVUS,

League Basics

Guidelines for State and Local League Debates, including “Empty Chair” situations

Face to Face: A Guide to Candidate Debates, especially Legal Consideration section

(Can be funded through Ed Fund.)

Advocacy: Based on member study and agreement on selected issues. Involves concerted efforts to achieve public policies consistent with League positions. Advocating change through education of policymakers and the public is education and a legitimate use of Ed Fund money.

Lobbying: Promotes or opposes specific pieces of legislation. *(Can't be funded by Ed Fund.)*

Voter Services: Designed to provide citizens with unbiased, factual information that they can use as a basis for reaching their own decisions. Voter services materials must not contain statements of League positions, and League positions on ballot issues must not be discussed at voter services events. *(Ed Fund money can be used.)*

Citizen education activities: provide information on public issues, including those on which we have a position. By law and by League policy, it isn't necessary to present both sides of an issue in such situations.

League can present educational forums about issues on which the League has a position, provided that the discussions focus on issues of concern rather than the merits of specific pieces of legislation, no lobbying takes place and no call to action is issued.

(Can use Ed Fund money.)

Lobbying activities must be kept completely separate from voter service activities, and voters' guides and other voter services materials and publications must not contain statements of League positions.

Only the president or designee is permitted to speak for the League. All members are strongly encouraged to take action, but should in no way indicate that they are League members in their communications.

Linnea Hirst, President

League of Women Voters of Washington

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Seattle, WA 98105

206-622-8961

January 2011, Cynthia Garrick, President

Each year in January, League members meet to discuss recommendations for issues that they want the State LWV and National LWV to consider. Since this is the year of the State Convention, local Leagues were asked for issues that they would like their State Leagues to address.

Yakima members met at the end of January and gangs were on everyone's mind. We spent some time discussing the issue and were interested in the relationship of Gangs, Guns and Drugs in our community and the state.

Our recommendation was a study of this issue on a state level with local Leagues contributing a study of their own area. The State Board of LWV looks at these recommendations and a makes proposal at the League Convention in Richland, May 20-22.

See page 7 for Convention information.

2011 Kara Kondo Luncheon will be held on Tuesday, April 12th, Noon.

Gasperetti's will provide a special lunch menu.

1013 N 1st Street, Yakima, WA

"What's Yakima Doing Right?"

Speakers:

Sister Mary Robinson on "Cultural Context"

Randy Town Yakima County Sheriff & ESD 105, Safety Officer

"Gang Issues: Intervention/Prevention"

For reservations call the League office at 452-3419.

The Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Study

Update by Eleanor Hungate

Over the past two years, twenty representatives of agencies involved in the provision of water for fish, wildlife, agriculture, municipalities and households met, considered and have reached a working consensus on an Integrated Plan for the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project, with a few agencies with reservations. I expect every agency ultimately will approve the Integrated Plan because that simply moves the process to the next step, which is to consider the plan's impact.

The Integrated Plan is distinct from all previous Yakima water plans in that it has resulted from a multifaceted collaboration of all stakeholders. The preparation of an impact statement by the Department of Ecology will be done this year. The environmental, social and economic impacts will be described in detail and become part of a wider review of the Integrated Plan. The Yakima League of Women Voters has an opportunity to participate in the wider review.

In the paper and on blogs, I have read a few objections from outside the panel. The Sierra Club has come out against the plan. My interpretation of the Sierra Club's view is that they fear the construction of a new dam and the expansion of an old one will lead to other dam construction across the country as more regions try to adapt to water shortages. You can understand their viewpoint better if you have ever seen the lower Gila or Colorado Rivers. Another environmental group asserted that they did not trust the political process to honor the mitigation elements through the budgeting process. Michael Garrity of American Rivers replied that he would not sign off without an assured mitigation package. Environmental groups with a major local presence, such as The Nature Conservancy, are in agreement with the Integrated Plan.

(To access the Preliminary Integrated Plan for the Yakima River Basin, Google the US Bureau of Reclamation Yakima Water Study.)

New Election Ballot Issues Announced
League Board Meeting , March, 17th, 2011

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Guests: Mary Baechler and Jake Faleschini of Central Washington Progress.

By Elaine Smith

A city redistricting ballot will be held in Yakima in August, 2011, to decide if the residents of the city of Yakima want seven equal voting districts for city council positions using the 2010 US Census. The redistricting ballot question also has term limits for City Council members. The campaign for this ballot issue is being conducted by Central Washington Progress, a locally based non-profit organization.

Currently, many citizens do not know who represents them on the council. CW Progress believes that seven equal districts by population will allow for better neighborhood representation, especially from currently under-represented areas of the city. For example, the current council has seven members. Four are selected by district in the PRIMARY only. In the general election they are elected AT LARGE. Three council members are elected AT LARGE in both the primary and the general elections. One result currently is that four council members reside in the same neighborhood in west central Yakima.

This change in city government was advocated in the November 9, 2010, Yakima Herald Republic editorial which is available on-line in the Herald archives: "District voting would bring the council closer to the people".

A new campaign for a "Home Rule Charter" ballot in Yakima County has now been opened by CW Progress and will begin with a signature campaign. "Home Rule Charter" is an option available under Washington state law whereby a county can establish its own charter. Right now we have the "default" system under Washington state law in which a county elects three commissioners at large. These three commissioners currently manage a \$220 million dollar budget.

First, the Home Rule Charter process involves a ballot to choose the option of a charter (constitution) for the county and the election of a number of "freeholders," defined as citizens who have five years residency and are registered voters. If the county declines the ballot, the election of freeholders is moot.

Following a successful vote, the elected freeholders have the duty to write the charter. The charter written by the elected "freeholders" is put before the electorate in the next general election (2012), to be voted up or down. Six (6) counties in the state have charters. Ten (10) charter ballots have failed sometime in the past, maybe even one in Yakima county. The last charter ballot in the state was about 10 years ago.

After the Central Washington Progress board voted to take up the Home Rule Charter campaign on March 16th., its first public announcement was made at the March 17th Yakima League Board meeting.

LWV of Benton-Franklin Counties Invites State League Members
to the Convention 2011

Location will be the Shilo Inn, Richland, right on the Columbia River with a walking path running immediately in front of the hotel. The path is good for walking, skating, or bicycle riding. There is a golf course a few blocks away and several others in the area. The swimming pool will be open.

Thursday, May 19, 2011, an optional winery tour starting at 2 PM is being planned. There will be a fee that will include the bus ride, tasting and snacks. Wine can be purchased by guests.

For Friday morning, May 20 a tour to Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science and Technology (CREHST) museum is being arranged. This museum was created to tell the story of the Columbia Basin and the surrounding region.

Convention begins at 1 PM on Friday, May 20. Lunch will be on your own. The hotel will set up a buffet for arriving guests to help expedite lunch if you choose. Friday evening's dinner will be served. Saturday's business also includes breakout sessions. Lunch will be buffet, and dinner will be served. Speakers are being invited.

Sunday, May 22—convention will adjourn at noon.

Each day guests of the Shilo Inn receive a hot breakfast. We are arranging for the hot breakfast to be served in a separate room to make it easier for League members. If delegates are not staying at the Shilo, there will be an option to purchase breakfast tickets. Other hotels are located nearby for those who might prefer alternatives.

(LWVWA Convention cost: \$185)

LWVWA 2011 Convention HOTEL Reservations, DUE TUESDAY, April 19th.

Place: Shilo Inn Suites in Richland*

Date: May 20-22 (but please note: we'll be in wine country and there's a terrific optional wine tour** on the 19th, so consider coming a day earlier!)

Room rates: 1 king bed is **\$85.95 + tax** each night and the rooms with 2 queen beds are **\$89.95 + tax** each night. For those rates: mention the League of Women Voters of Washington.

When to reserve: by **APRIL 19th**, according to the hotel

How to reserve: call 509-946-4661

*Details about the hotel:

- On the Columbia River.
- All the rooms have microwaves, mini refrigerators, coffee-makers, iron and ironing boards, and hair dryers.
- For hotel guests, there will be a hot buffet breakfast (to be set up in the League's meeting room).
- The pool will be open!

The wine tour: LWV of Benton-Franklin has arranged an **optional wine tasting tour on Thursday afternoon, May 19. The tour will be by bus, leaving the hotel parking lot. Register for the tour on the official convention registration form. Tour meets at 1 PM. Cost: \$25.