

# THE VOTER



November, 2010  
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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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Yakima Co. Auditor:  
[www.co.yakima.wa.us/auditor/](http://www.co.yakima.wa.us/auditor/)  
LWVWA: [www.lwvwa.org](http://www.lwvwa.org)

## Our League

On the evening of November 16<sup>th</sup>, family and friends of the League of Women Voters gathered at Perry Technical Institute to honor members of the Yakima League. Becky Scholl was the organizer of an amazing evening for anyone interested in the history of the League and the history of Yakima. We were treated to an insight into the 60 year history of the local League in the presence of four remarkable women who have served in the League over its sixty years: Kay Gempler, Laura Hopp, Charlotte Kendrick, and Dorothy Plath. The national League was founded in 1920. The local League began as a provisional League in 1950.

Over the next four issues of the Voter, we will be able to participate in that history through the stories of these four remarkable women as prepared and presented by League members Deborah Severtson-Coffin, Joyce Dennison, Jane Sarmiento-Schwab and guest speaker, Linda Brown. To introduce the evening, Corky Mattingly, newly reelected as County Auditor, presented a history of the League prepared with the assistance of Cynthia Garrick, LWVYC President and Yakima Regional Library Reference Librarian

## **Corky Mattingly: A Brief History of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County**

The Provisional League of Women Voters of Yakima was founded in 1950 by Charlotte Kendrick, one of our honorees this afternoon. The Provisional League was recognized by the national League of Women Voters in 1951 and Laura Hopp served as its first president. Dorothy Plath was President from 1969-71. In 1971, the League officially became the League of Women Voters of Yakima County and Laura Hopp again served as president from 1985-1987. Kay Gempler served as president from 1993-97.

During the years from 1950 to present, the League has presented many forums, published many directories of local officials, studied many local issues, developed many consensus positions and used these positions to advocate for community betterment. The first task the League tackled was advocating in favor of the formation of the Yakima Valley Regional Library.

Consensus positions include the importance of a viable downtown to the identity and quality of life in Yakima County to a realization of the importance of the Yakima Health District and a position on the form of city government way back in 1979, This position was created because in order to be recognized, the League was required to complete a "Know your Town" study.

The local League is not limited to discussing local issues. National issues are on the agenda also, immigration reform, health care and climate change. Geneve Bowden, president from 1959-61 and a long-time board member promoted an active interest in foreign policy.

Members have come to the local League for a variety of reasons. In an article published in the Yakima Herald Republic in 1998, Greta Atwood, president at the time, said she originally came to the League to have a chance to talk to adults while her children were young. Others have come because they believe in the importance of a politically educated electorate and to the importance of voting. Others have joined to get to know their community. In the same article mentioned above, Kara Kondo joined because her neighbors were members. After joining League, Kara became recognized statewide as an expert on water issues. She said "League has given me the tools I needed to be an effective citizen."

Two local League Presidents, Ruth Coffin Schroeder and Fran Dew served as Presidents of the State LWV; Joyce Dennison has been on the State board and Lynne Baxter currently serves on the state LWV Education Fund board.

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County continues to be involved in local issues. Our last study described children's health in the valley. This election year, we sponsored two (2) Meet & Greet events for local candidates. Our downtown committee recently organized a tour of the Capitol Theater and the new Black Box Theater. There is still a lot to learn and do.

## **A REMARKABLE WOMAN**

By Deborah Severtson-Coffin, for The League of Women Voters of Yakima November 16, 2010

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1920, the world welcomed Katherine Elizabeth Holden Gempler. Kay was born in 1918, and as she grew up through the 1920's she watched her Mother – who had a college degree - and her Mother's peers suffer from the oppression of the times in which they lived. This had a big impact on Kay as she grew up, and how she viewed the world.

She first started her relationship with the League of Women Voters in the 1950s in Syracuse, New York. She and her husband Ed were raising two young children, and Kay volunteered to register voters at the local library. Ed was working a lot, and his work often took him out of town. Because of this, Kay started attending League meetings. Kay told me that she was attracted to the League and its members because they were about knowing what you're doing when you go to the polls.

"I'm a great one for knowing what I'm doing." She saw that many decisions made by voters were not by educated voters. She said she often thought, "Why were they going to do a dumb thing when it was so unreasonable?" She was attracted to the fact that the League always makes decisions that are REASONABLE! They look at all sides of an issue and all the facts before coming to consensus and taking positions on issues. The members come from a variety of political parties and backgrounds, but they all agree on looking at all the facts and acting in the best interest of their community.

After Syracuse, NY, the Gempler family moved to Findley, Ohio, near Chicago. She became active in the local League there. At one time, a group of the local "Good Old Boys" were unhappy with some of the work that the League was doing and the local members were called "The League of Women Vipers". Kay got a big kick out that, and laughed about it for many years. She was the Treasurer of the League in Findley for several years, and then became the President. Always humble, Kay told me that "I couldn't imagine those women wanting me to be president." Well, I can imagine them wanting her to be President! During this time, Kay was involved in many civic activities. She was a longtime member of the "Civitan" and was a volunteer Girl Scout leader for over 30 years. Later, she was an administrator with the Girl Scouts.

Kay and her husband Ed always enjoyed a rich intellectual life, and shared their belief in reason. Kay told me that Ed always thought things should be done for a good reason, or don't do them at all. He told her that "These League women are the first group of women I've met who make sense!" Kay and Ed shared a dislike of people who talked around a subject, instead of taking it head on and looking at all sides before coming to a conclusion. When I've visited Kay over the years, she has always been in the middle of a new book. It was always a hefty biography or history book – something you could really sink your teeth into. No fluff for Kay! When I spoke with her about receiving this honor today, I noticed that she still is surrounded by books and newspapers – The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge was one in the stack.

Kay and Ed moved to Yakima in 1988 to be near their son Mike. Kay jumped right in and started volunteering with the League here. She and Kara Kondo worked on many projects together, while becoming dear friends in the process. She was co-president with Kara Kondo in 1993, and was the President (without sidekicks) for the years 1994-97. Kay was involved in Voter Registration, Candidate Forums, promoting dialogue between political parties and candidates. "If it needed to be done I worked on it." Kay attended many State League meetings and worked on innumerable forums and study groups, focusing on a variety of issues including downtown revitalization and responsible water use.

Kay is still a civic-minded person, staying abreast of all the issues and proudly voting in the recent election. She told me she read the League Voters Pamphlet to help her decide on several of the issues. While Kay and I were chatting, one of the employees at Living Care walked in and I shared that Kay would be honored today by the League. She smiled and said that Kay reminded *her* to vote on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Kay has 2 children, Mike and Susan, who are immensely proud of her and her lifetime of civic involvement. She also has 3 grandchildren, Lara, Georgia and Ava, and two great-grandchildren, Lorenzo and Zeta. I know that they, too, are proud of their grandmother.

***Next in our Voter series of REMARKABLE WOMEN OF THE YAKIMA COUNTY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS will be the speech given on November 16th by Joyce Dennison on her colleague and friend, Laura Hopp.***

## Kitty's Corner

At our November League Board meeting, the Downtown Committee was applauded for the success of the Capitol Theater event. Again, we had to recognize Steve Caffrey for his generous offer of the Capitol Theater and its resources and for being our host and tour guide himself.

Our special thanks to Marilyn Shearer, Jackie Hertel and Jackie Call for their hard work; our thanks also to Mary Stephenson for her incredible decorations. They made the Black Box shine. Of course, the nibbles spread, featuring local produce, was fantastic. The great turn-out netted the League approximately \$1,000 in operating funds.

Nibbles spread provided by Doris Ayyoub, Chris Bardill, Lynne Baxter, Gwen Chaplin, Mary Crago, Eleanor Hungate, Kitty Jubran, Trixie Koch, Janis Luvaas, Kay Marsh, Karen Pilon, Elaine Smith, Milly Stenehjem, and Victoria Whiteman. Wine service was provided by Kana Winery staff. Downtown Committee additional members: Larry Breer, Bev Bartz, Cynthia Garrick.

Secondly, prompted by the Yakima City Council's proposal to conduct a ballot election in February on the Mayor versus City Manager issue, the Board discussed the local League's responsibility in offering information to the public on the issue. Mary Crago, VP for Programming, is planning a late January public forum to include a speaker informed about both government styles.

Finally, as the November 2010 elections have been certified, it is time to update the TRY for 2011. Mary Crago is heading the Board's TRY committee. Her goal is to have the TRY revision distributed by February.

Mary and the Board need your HELP in this endeavor. It is a HUGE task. We need help confirming information before publication and help in distributing the TRY's once they are printed. The Board is also seeking additional underwriters. If you can help, if you have ideas for distribution or for underwriters please contact Mary Crago, 966 9938 or Cynthia Garrick, 457 6371. "Many hands make light work."

It's going to be a busy January,  
Kitty Jubran

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Return Service Requested

# Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA  
COUNTY

Cordially invites you to: JOIN US!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Categories:

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$10 Student Associate**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$60 Basic**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$70 Contributing**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$80 Supporting**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$40** Each additional family member

at the same residence

**Student Associate** is not a voting member

## Observer Corps Opportunities

Yakima County Commissioners

Yakima City Council Chambers

Tuesdays, 10 am

129 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street 574 1500

[yakima county.us/cmrs/](http://yakima.county.us/cmrs/)

Yakima City Council

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6 pm

(See Y Pac, Cable 22 for broadcasts)

Yakima City Council Chambers

129 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street 575 6050

[ci.yakima.wa.us/council/](http://ci.yakima.wa.us/council/)

Please call Jackie Call, Mary Crago, Jackie Hertel, or Marilyn Shearer for forms and information to get started.