

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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Our League Story:

Dorothy Plath

Presented by Linda C. Brown

November 16th, 2010

The story begins after Dorothy graduates in 1945 from the University of Washington with a degree in economics. At first she works in Seattle for a Teamster affiliate, West Council of Cannery Workers, doing research if there are complaints made against one of the workers or when someone in the local union is injured. She loves labor economics because of her professor Dr. Clark Kerr, who will go on to become Chancellor and then President of the University of California, Berkeley. Dorothy returns to Yakima, sells ads for the Good Fruit Grower, marries Fred, begins to raise her three boys (Clifford, Ric and Peter). Out of curiosity, when she sees an article in the newspaper talking about the League of Women Voters, she goes by herself to her first meeting and recalls, "That was it! It was so stimulating!"

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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

Cynthia Garrick and I were fortunate to be introduced to the redistricting issue at the LWWVA's annual convention in Richland this weekend by Lura Powell, PhD, the non-voting chair of the bi-partisan 2011 Redistricting Commission who described the commission and its task as well as referencing LWWVA's historic role in former redistricting battles.

Redistricting is a relevant issue for Yakima city and Yakima County, as the 14th LD and the 4th CD will be altered by the changes required to equalize the populations in LD and CD districts as well as by the creation of a new 10th CD.

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She is hooked. What follows are unit meetings held at members' homes discussing issues sent by national. They study everything, but her favorite is working with Kara Kondo on issues of water resources. Soon after, Dorothy appears in a photo taken about the same time with Mrs. Dick Croy, Mrs. Tak Kondo, and Mrs. Fred M. Plath finalizing the plans for a finance drive.

From 1969-1971 Dorothy serves as President of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County. She recalls a rally conducted by the League when Henry "Scoop" Jackson came to town with his wife and the League cordoned off Second Street to listen to all the political candidates give their speeches. She fondly remembers the people cheering as Jackson spoke; "I hadn't realized how popular he was."

Fred remembers that the League's office is basically the loft of their home and that Dorothy and Kara Kondo are always working on League business. As Dorothy says, "When I was President, my whole life's job was to do League work." In fact, she laughingly adds that she welcomed the time just before Christmas because "The phone finally stopped ringing. Everyone was busy with their own families." Finally John Fairbrook gives the League an actual office downtown on Second Street, and Dorothy clears out all the official business that has filled her home.

The men in Dorothy's life knew she was really busy, but not exactly what she was doing. However, Ric confesses that that he used the mimeograph machine belonging to the League of Women Voters to publish an underground newspaper that he distributed at Eisenhower High School in 1971 and for which he was punished. (Please note that we believe he is protected now by the statute of limitations.)

After the busy years as President, Dorothy goes on to serve on the State Board. She serves two terms from May 1971 to May 1975. Her portfolio in 1971 is the United States Congress and Representative Government, followed in 1972 with a portfolio on Voter Service.

Ruth Coffin remembers that Dorothy helped draw up Initiative 272, which brought about public disclosure in order to run for public office. The Washington League, at that time boasting close to 2,000 members, is far ahead of the other state Leagues. Dorothy becomes part of the effort to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. Though it fails, eventually they are able to pass many of the elements that were part of the original amendment.

Dorothy also serves on the state nominating committee and takes on the demanding position as chair of the State Convention, held in Richland that year. President of the State Board, Jocelyn Marquizio says of Dorothy, "She was willing to take on this huge job and make the State Convention one of our best."

Following the successful convention Dorothy certainly doesn't rest on her laurels. In 1975 she steps up as State Chair of the By Laws Committee. Joyce Dennison also finds a wonderful article that appeared in the September 25, 1979 Yakima Herald Republic that shows a young, vibrant Dorothy Plath visiting Mike Smithhisler's political science class. She has such a profound effect on the students that after her visit a Junior Statesman's Club is formed at A. C. Davis High School, named to honor Dorothy's father who was Superintendent of Public Instruction, where I am now teaching right down the hall, but I don't get to meet this grand lady until thirty years later.

The changes required are a result of demographic changes in the state that were identified in the 2010 US Census.

NOTICE: The Redistricting Commission will be holding one of its public forums in YAKIMA on JUNE 8th. The location has not yet been announced but times for all the public hearings have been announced on the website of the Washington State Redistricting Commission itself. Meetings open at 6 pm with a 30 minute welcoming period. I do recommend that you log-in to the Commission website which has much interesting information as well as maps of the districts for consideration. The commission is seeking local testimony about demographic, geographic, ethnic, historic and economic self-identification by citizens of affected areas of the state. Elaine Smith

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
YAKIMA COUNTY**

**CALL FOR
2011**

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 2, 2011

5:30 PM-8:30 PM

**Speaker : Margaret Luera, Historian
Yakima Morelia Sister City Association**

**The Clubhouse at Beckys Condo
5910 W Lincoln Ave**

Dinner from the Kabob House

Approximate Cost : \$10.00

**Please call the League Office, 452-3419
by June 1 to RSVP**



Photo by Larry Breer

Kara Kondo Luncheon Report, by Jackie Call

Attendance at the luncheon was 43. The luncheon selections were delicious, and the service was smooth.

Larry Breer presented a brief background on Kara's life and her community involvement and support of the League. (See following page)

Sister Mary Ellen Robinson gave an overview of the Latino migration and changes now going on in the valley, comparing it to the influx of pioneers of European-descent flowing into the area which overwhelmed the Native American population. In our current situation, gangs have blossomed, taking advantage of an immigrant community in transition and unsettling the agricultural community of the Yakima Valley.

Randy Town, the main speaker, a sheriff and the ESD 105 Safety Officer, addressed the some specifics of this problem. The audience learned about gang dress code and colors, gestures, body language, graffiti interpretation and the underlying social problems that have made young people so vulnerable to gang participation. According to Sheriff Town, locally, human trafficking and sex trafficking have been added to the drug trade.

After the talk, prompted by questions from the audience, Mr. Town more briefly described the intervention and prevention attempts undertaken by authorities in Yakima County ; some examples were the organization of Block Watches, public attendance at gang commission meetings and afterschool activities for young people.

Larry Breer distributed a handout of new investments and improvements in downtown Yakima.

We welcome the Latino participation and its point of view. In progress in the Yakima County League of Women Voters, is a continuing discussion of how to encourage Latina women to become members of the League .

“From the sunny days of childhood on an alfalfa farm near Wapato, through the despair of wartime internment, to civic activism and expertise in all things related to water, she lived a rich and giving life. Kara Kondo, who created a legacy here of quiet, gracious accomplishment died in her Terrace Heights home over the weekend. She was 89.

Kara Kondo was a 26 in 1942, when she and her family were taken by train to the Portland stockyards, a relocation center. There, they were processed as west-coast Japanese internees to be sent to Heart Mountain, Wyoming, just a few miles east of Yellowstone Park, near Cody, Wyoming. The Nisei would not come home until November 1945. Some would find their homes had been neglected during the war, and others would find neighbors had tried to care for their homes and farms during their absence. Some would never return to the homes they left.

The US government had erected 642 barracks buildings at Heart Mountain to house 10,762 Japanese Americans who were sent there. The war with Japan had caused a panic in American intelligence—that Japanese-Americans might be loyal to Japan and plot against the US. Of those interned, 62% were already American citizens.

The United States Census Bureau assisted the internment efforts by providing confidential neighborhood information on Japanese Americans. The Bureau's role was denied for decades but was finally proven in 2007.

The story of Kara Kondo is really one of patience and polite manner. She could have returned to her home bitter and de-crying her fate, but instead, she took up the cause of community improvement and especially the cause of clean, plentiful water. She belonged to committee upon committee that championed the proper use, conservation and distribution of water, to cities and to farms.

As a member of the League of Women Voters for many years, she worked tirelessly to improve the city, serving wherever she could. Following her death in 2005, the League honored her with the placement of a dry-land garden at the Yakima Arboretum. It was just the kind of garden she would have loved, striving on little water and verdant capability to live in difficult soil.” Jane Gargas Yakima Herald Republic , 2005

Visitors to the Yakima Valley Museum’s display titled “Land of Joy and Sorrow”, will see the story of the Nisei. One can view pictures of that time, hear Kara Kondo’s voice telling about the relocation, and sit and meditate.

I had some nice conversations with Kara. Her manners were soft, her dreams were hard and she aspired to treat everyone with polished dignity. She would want you to talk about doing what others need doing. She would want you to be polite in your dealings with others. She would be a little embarrassed at being the object of your attention.

LWVYC Downtwon Committee,, 2011

Marilyn Shearer, Chair,

League: Jackie Call, Cynthia Garrick, Jackie Hertel, Sister Mary Ellen Robinson, Mary Stephenson.

Community : Bev Luby Bartz, Larry Breer, Lynne Kittelson

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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