



VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

www.lwvpullman.org

December, 2012

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

Officers

President: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470; **Vice President:** Shelley Jones, 432-3428, ; **Secretary:** Paul Spencer 332-6699, Backup: Deb Olson, 332-2114; **Treasurer:** Joan Folwell, 332-3946; **Voter Service Chair:** Diane Smerdon, 334-5413; **Voter Editor:** Susan Daniels, 332-6699; **Finance Drive Chair:** Lenna Harding, 332-7749; **Membership Chair:** Janet Kendall, 332-4268; **Scheduling Chair:** Barbara Hammond, 332-4104; **Observer Corps Chair** Deb Olson, 332-2114; **TRY Editor:** Lucy Linden, 332-2755; **Webmaster:** Paul Spencer: 332-6699.

Meetings and Events

Please check the date and place when you get the meeting notice a week before the meeting. We can now only reserve the Hecht Room one month ahead so the place or date may change from that listed here.

Energy Study Consensus

Date: Monday December 3rd, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Program: 6:30 Holiday cookies; 7:00 Energy Study Consensus Meeting

Place: Neill Public Library, Hecht Room

Contact: Paul Spencer, 332-6699

School Bond Update and LWVWA Planning

Date: Monday January 7th, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Program: Pullman School Bond update by Superintendent Dr. Sturm followed by LWVWA and local planning

Place: Neill Public Library, Hecht Room.

Contact: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470

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Historic Preservation in Pullman

Date: Monday February 4th, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Program: Public panel with Pullman Planning Director Pete Dickinson and members of the Historic Planning Commission.

Place: Neill Public Library, Hecht Room.

Contact: Alex Hammond, 332-4104 or Allison Munch-Rotolo, 334-5321

Board Meetings

Wednesday November 27th, January 22nd

Time: 1:00-2:45 p.m.

Place: Daily Grind, back room

Chair: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470

President's Message

Wow!! What an election season!! As so many of you know, the Pullman League was very busy with four forums, parades and voter registration. I would like to thank all of you who helped and all of you who supported us. But, of course, our work is never done. Now we must think about next year. Diane Smerdon and her committee have done an outstanding job organizing, getting support, and getting the word out. Especially gratifying was their connection with KWSU TV to spread voter information and enhance our League's presence. Diane will not be able to head the Voter Service Committee next year, as she and husband Mic will be on sabbatical. Please consider whether you could help with this vital service the League performs. June Crawford and Deb Olson, our nominating committee members would love to hear from you.

Members often ask why most of our dues go to the LWVWA and LWVUS for per member payments. That money was very instrumental in supporting LWVWA's inaugural venture into the LWVUS's VOTE411 website with all its information on candidates at every level. This was especially important during the primary election when the state did not print a Voter's Pamphlet and citizens had a difficult time accessing unbiased information on candidates. Per member payments also supported the LWVUS's battle to defeat various state's efforts to make voting harder for many citizens by requiring restrictive voter identification. Many young, old and poor people do not have driver's licenses, especially in large cities, and do not have birth certificates or other documents or can not afford to get copies of them for Voter ID requirements. Several state Leagues worked hard to help these citizens.

It was also exciting to have several people join the Pullman League this fall. Please welcome Ann Christenson, Lydia Gerber, Jen Heim, Jann Hill, Anne Lewis, John and Debby Sherman, and Beth and Alfred Toerne. We get excited to see each other and to talk about League activities and sometimes forget to welcome you, but we are truly happy you have joined us.

Please introduce yourselves and speak up! We old members really want to welcome you and include you.

In the next two months we will focus on some traditional League concerns and a little fun. On Monday December 3 we will have fun visiting over holiday cookies and then settle in to consider consensus questions on Alternative Energy following up on the November panel. January finds a traditional League meeting—School Superintendent Paul Sturm’s presentation on the School Bond followed by consideration of the positions LWVWA and our Pullman League should take over the next two years. Perhaps neither is as exciting as an election but both are very important to our existence as an important force in a civil and effective society. Please come if you can. We are only as strong as our active members.

Wishing you all a wonderful Holiday Season,

Alice

Holiday Cookies and Consensus

Alice Schroeder

Do you wish there was a little time to socialize at League Meetings? Do you wonder where all those positions come from that League uses for lobbying legislators? **Monday, Dec. 3 at 6:30-9:00 pm in the Neill Library’s Hecht Room** is your chance to get the answers. We will start off with Holiday cookies and (decaf) coffee or tea and lots of chatting at 6:30 pm. If you would like to bring some cookies please let Deb Olson know at olsonbones@aol.com.

At 7:00 Paul Spencer will lead us in answering consensus questions on the LWVWA state study on Alternative Energy pros and cons. The study and the questions are posted on our website www.lwvpullman.org or you can follow the links [Study](#) and [Questions](#). Paul has written a summary of the public meeting our League held on Alternative Energy which you can read on [page 9](#). Consensus questions are our opportunity to give our opinion on what League Positions should be on a topic we have studied. Thus, it is important to have as many people as possible participate. Do take time to look at the study and questions if you possibly can. If you can’t, come anyway and learn. I look forward to seeing you there. Note: If you were looking forward to a Tuesday meeting, we tried but we could not get the Hecht room so we are back to Monday

School Bond and League Planning

Alice Schroeder

Monday Jan. 7th at 7:00 p.m. should find us again in the Hecht Room of Neill Public Library hearing a presentation by Pullman School Superintendent, Paul Sturm, on the School Bond. After Dr. Sturm’s presentation we will break into three groups to brainstorm ideas for both Washington State League of Women Voters program and our own Pullman Program for 2013-2015. Please plan to come and let us

know what positions and areas YOU would like to see your Leagues study and act on for the next two years.

Historic Preservation in Pullman

Our meeting on Monday February 4th will be on Historic Preservation in Pullman. The Pullman LWV will sponsor this public panel with the city's Planning Director Pete Dickinson and members of its Historic Preservation Commission. The presenters will brief us on the current status of and future goals for Historic Preservation in Pullman and take questions from the audience. The meeting is planned for the Hecht Room at Neill Public Library from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Alex Hammond and Allison Munch-Rotolo are the organizers.

Voter Service Update **Diane Smerdon, Voter Service Chair**

Voter Services joined, for the first time, with KWSU and the Foley Institute to produce video clips and a forum on IL502, respectively. We reached a larger voter audience and these were very successful. KWSU aired information pieces on IL502 and Ref. 74, which were presented by Diane Smerdon. Diane got many compliments on how well the video clips were done by KWSU—Elinor McCloskey's praise was especially appreciated because of her past expertise. Although our speakers for Ref. 74 with the Foley Institute didn't materialize, a very well attended and spirited forum was held on IL502 with the Foley and Pullman League co-partnering. Two lawyers from Seattle (Tonia Winchester – yes, and Douglas Hiatt – no) were entertaining and informative. Unfortunately, we were not able to find anyone to speak against legalizing marijuana outright. As you all know, this initiative was passed by voters.

Both general election forums were well attended, one in Colfax, and the second in Pullman. The candidates for County Commissioner were at both forums, and the initiatives and referendums were divided between the two meetings.

Report on 2012 Chamber & Port of Whitman Tour **Deb Olsen**

Wow! What a Great Trip, even the weather cooperated. Thank you to the Pullman Chamber and the Port of Whitman.

We started out at the Chamber in Pullman at 7:15 am and were on the bus and leaving town at 7:30 am. Breakfast boxes were provided by the Daily Grind. On the drive one of our Port Commissioners, Tom Kammerzell, filled us in on the fiber optic project the port is doing. They have their first company leasing line use. Our first stop was the Palouse Wind Project near Rosalia. Very impressive. We got to drive right up to the top of the ridge amongst the towers. What a spectacular view of the Palouse. Some of the rotors were spinning but the noise was negligible (there is more hum under high tension power lines). First Wind is finishing the construction phase and starting land reclamation. All evidence of construction will be cleaned up. Received a lot of information about the towers and future

operations. We kept them busy with lots of questions.

Our second brief stop was at the McCoy Grain Terminal site (new to me also) under construction. The facility (privately funded by Co-Ag and PNWFC) will have the capacity to load a 100 car grain train in 10 hours from a central location. Currently grain is loaded on train cars at several locations. Anticipate shipping 40 trains a year which will relieve some barge traffic on the river. The new facility will be connected to the state owned PNL railroad. Good news on the railroad front also. The state is now actively overseeing the line and is working to upgrade the rail (neglected for many years). With upgrades trains with heavier loads can travel faster.

Our third stop of the morning was Potlatch Idaho – a town that refused to die when the mill closed up. They are embracing their history as a company town. We got a tour of the historic City Hall (former headquarters) and depot in the process of being restored by volunteers. Brief stop at Scenic 6 Park and the murals on the other depot (moved from Princeton). Worth a trip. On December 8 *A Company Town Christmas* celebration is scheduled in Potlatch with lighted parade, fireworks and more. Sounded like a lot of fun.

Next stop, Palouse WA for lunch at the new Community Center (catered by Mimis's Bakery). But on the way we sampled Dirty Blond Ale provided by Tom Handy at Paradise Creek Brewery in Pullman. The mayor and several other people talked about what they are doing to rejuvenate the town. The whole town is pulling together to make improvements and supporting each other's business. Had some time to wander around town and shop if wanted to.

Then on to Uniontown. We stopped at the Ice Cream Parlor/General Market run by Cheryl Walker who is also starting up a new company Grandma Lela's Oatmeal. The product can be purchased now at Dissmores (freezer section). She talked about her expansion plans with the help from a grant from the Port. The Ice Cream Parlor is next to a café. There is now a place to stop and eat in Uniontown. Across the Street is a wine tasting room and store, The Vineyard Vault. Like Palouse, Uniontown is a community where businesses help each other out to improve their town. Most of us know about Sage Bakery and Dahmen Barn but there are many other businesses in Uniontown, including several antique stores.

Our last stop was Whiskey Barrel Cider Company, a new business right here in Pullman that makes cider (the alcoholic kind). Can be purchased at Dissmores. We tasted the three kinds they make and had a good spread of hors d'oeuvres before heading back to the Chamber by 6 pm. A long day but a Good day.

Pullman League in Civic Engagement

November 1 was the date for a campus meeting at the Center for Civic Engagement on the topic of voting, how to do it, why it matters, how the electoral college works and all other matters that might pertain to taking part in the election on November 6. Karen Kiessling represented the Pullman League in talking about how to sort out fact from fraud in advertising, why it matters to vote (even if you are not in a swing state) and where to get nonpartisan information on ballot issues and candidates.

Action Coming on the Open Meetings Act

Karen Kiessling

One of the ways the League can help our newly elected and re-elected officials is to educate them on the Open Meetings Act that is law in the State of Washington and the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine which is in effect in our state. In a one sentence summary the law requires that all elected officials make their decisions in public and they do so without having made those decisions outside a public meeting and then simply announcing their decision in public session. The Pullman League plans to work with the Washington Coalition for Open Government to sponsor this meeting because WCOG provides the experts in the law on the subject, both elected and appointed officials. The Pullman League plans to hold a public meeting on this topic in late spring to early summer and wants to encourage the public to attend so they understand the law and will be more likely to require elected officials to abide by it. If you are interested in working on this topic for the League, please let any member of the board know that, or contact Karen Kiessling, 332-4755 to join this committee. The speakers will be provided, the League will advertise, and handle the physical arrangements. Sign up -- it will be easy and educational.

New Member Interviews

Welcome to all our new members. We will be having get acquainted articles about our new members in the VOTERS. Interviews for three new members follow.

Welcome to Jann Hill

Karen Kiessling

Jann, please tell us about your background -- how did you come to live in Pullman? What was your job or career on the Palouse? Family?

Wow, where to start! My first 15 formative years were spent in New Orleans, LA (where I was born) and my second 15 formative years were spent in Memphis, Tenn. My dad was a Presbyterian minister. My mom was a artist – mostly jewelry and batik. I am an educator. I have taught at the high school, preschool, and college levels and absolutely loved each age for different reasons. I earned my B.A. In English, Secondary Education at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn. I earned my graduate degrees in Literacy at WSU. While working on my PhD, I took a job at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, ID where I spent 10 years as a Professor of Literacy, then 16 years as chair of the Education Department. My husband and I have two children – Jenny and Chandler. Jenny and her husband and 2 girls, ages 5 and 7, just moved to Pullman this summer. Chandler and his wife, Kelly, have a 1 year old daughter and they live in Minneapolis. My husband, Herb, is a chemist at WSU and is the reason we moved to Pullman 36 years ago. I retired from LCSC in July.

What caused you to join the League of Women Voters of Pullman and what interests you about the League?

I have always appreciated the information provided by the League, particularly at election time. I am looking forward to having the opportunity to gain a greater depth of understanding about critical issues and to being involved in educating others about the pros and cons of pending legislation and proposed policies. When I was asked to join the League of Women Voters, I decided it would be a great place to devote some of my time as a retiree.

What topics would you like to League to pursue in the area of public policy? And where are you willing to be involved in League programs or issues?

TBD. Right now, I am interested in knowing more about campaign financing, political etiquette, Obamacare, sources of accurate information. PLUS, I need to know more about local concerns and issues. That's just for starters...

Welcome to Beth and Fred Toerne, Newlyweds in their 60's

Lucy Linden

Fred and Beth were both widowed when they met at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse in Moscow, Idaho, in 2006. Beth is a long-time resident, having moved to the Palouse from Baltimore almost 40 years ago. She is a fiscal specialist at the Institute of Biological Chemistry at WSU in Pullman. Fred is a retired ELCA minister, now active in ministry online. Ask him what ELCA means and what online ministry is, and he will be glad to regale you with an interesting tale.

Fred's children attended the University of Idaho, and he fell in love with this part of the world. He escaped from his native Texas and moved up here when he retired. He closely follow international politics.

Beth is interested in fiscal policy and they are both concerned about social issues. Why did they join the League of Women Voters? Beth wanted to get in-depth information about politics and politicians, and Fred has long considered the League of Women Voters to be one of the most reliable, objective sources of that kind of information.

A note: My water aerobics classes on campus have been a good source for new members of League—that's where I recruited our graduate students. And after talking about current issues with Beth during class, we had coffee and I asked her if she'd like to join the League, and now we welcome both Fred and Beth to the Pullman League of Women Voters and look forward to their participation in our goal of good government.

Drug and Alcohol Courts

Lenna Harding

The recent announcement by District Judge Doug Robinson that he was shutting down the drug and alcohol court saddens me, partly because it benefitted so many young people, but also his reasons for doing so. This valuable program offered those convicted of certain misdemeanor offenses such as minor in possession of alcohol or small amounts of pot, for instance, to have an opportunity to erase the conviction from their records. This was no free ride—it meant paying fines or court costs, submitting to periodic testing, perhaps doing specially selected community service followed by a written paper telling of the experience, as well as frequent reporting to the judge over a substantial period of time. The requirements were tailored to the individual's situation. Once these were fulfilled to the judge's satisfaction, he could order that the conviction be set aside and their records cleaned up.

The problem came with the records cleaning. There are currently so many companies in the reporting business that policing them all is almost impossible. This state has no legal requirement that they keep all this information updated, therefore, they were reporting convictions that had been erased from the records and many people, who had a reasonable expectation of a clean record, were losing jobs or job opportunities as a result, even years later. This is a betrayal of people who have completed the program. So far, Judge Robinson has been unsuccessful in persuading the state legislature to enact such a law. Not having these assurances, defeats the whole purpose of having such a program. This is a national problem, requiring nation-wide attention too.

While passage of such legislation won't necessarily mean restoration of this program in our district court, it is still needed. To have any effect, such a law should provide for tough penalties for failure to keep records updated. Judge Robinson suggested starting with depriving a company of any access to our state's electronic court records. Also, revocation of licenses and provision for redress for those harmed by inaccurate reporting such as the right to sue for damages should be included. Until all states and the federal government enact tough remedial legislation, this will be a continuing problem and one that betrays the people who have already completed this very effective program.

One more interesting thing about the LWV!

Karen Kiessling

In October I was in New York City for one week with a friend who belongs to the Snohomish County League, Barbara Bush. At national convention Barbara had heard reports from LWVUS United Nations Observers. Every Thursday while the UN is in session there is a briefing on an international matter that the League volunteer observers attend. Barbara contacted Rosalee Keech, in charge of these observers, to see if Barbara and I might attend the Thursday session. We were invited to join the observers who obtained passes for us to enter the building and wend our way through what seemed like miles of tunnels to get to the briefing site, a small auditorium. Security at the UN is very tight and all manner of checks of persons entering is performed.

Our briefing topic was the use of satellite mapping during international crises. A panel showed examples of how the use of satellite maps could aid countries in dealing with natural and manmade disasters. Often a country will ask the UN mappers to show them the extent of flooding of an area, or where the best places are for rescue efforts, where groups engaging in rescue are focused and how to make sure that international organizations do not all send teams to the same area, ignoring other needs and actually hampering efforts because there are too many rescuers to handle.

This briefing was aimed at the leaders of the NGO's (non governmental agencies) who are on the ground around the world working with the local citizens in the daily delivery of food, clean water, supplies, education, etc. The satellite mappers need constant contact with them to give the best information to governments and agencies trying to save lives. After the panel discussion was finished the audience discussed with the experts the various ways to coordinate and contact. Most surprising was that most of these representatives of very powerful NGO's had never met each other or talked before. A huge first step in a necessary and valuable service they all provide.

Like the best of League activities, this event expanded my knowledge and had an impact on my life. League is vital to a healthy society. We get people involved and we share knowledge.

Report on Renewable Energy Panel Meeting

Paul Spencer

The League's public meeting on renewable energy sources was held on November 5 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Hecht Room of Neill Public Library. The purpose was to provide an introduction to the subject and to allow the audience to ask questions.

Each of the four panelists spoke for 15 min. on the following topics and answered questions from the audience for the remainder of the meeting.

1) Paul Spencer gave a **general introduction to renewable energy**. He explained the definition of energy (the ability to do work), and that a renewable energy source is a source not derived from fossil fuels. He then listed the various renewable sources along with the major advantages and disadvantages of each.

These renewable energy sources are: hydroelectric dams, wind turbines, nuclear reactors, sun power, biomass, liquid biofuels, geothermal, waves, and tides. Each of these has some environmental or practical disadvantages. Examples are land use for the lakes behind dams, nuclear waste, intermittency for wind and sun. Except for hydroelectric dams, energy from most is more expensive than from coal, oil or natural gas sources. All have the strong advantage of adding much less carbon dioxide to the atmosphere than does the use of fossil fuel.

2) The **business perspective on alternative energy sources** was explained by Paul Kimmel of Avista. The largest source of energy for Avista is hydropower at 50% followed by coal at 23% and natural gas at 18%. He explained that the latter is used to satisfy peak loads by powering gas turbine generators when necessary. They buy natural gas when the price is low, and store it for use when needed. Avista needs the capability to vary their output to compensate for varying loads and eventually for the variation in the supply of energy from wind turbines and energy from the sunlight.

To achieve this Avista produces a comprehensive plan every 2 years for a 20 year future time span. This plan includes estimating customer behavior and future variations in all aspects of Avista's business. Mr. Kimmel mentioned that one aspect of this plan that might be of interest to our LWV members is that the state requires that 15% of the energy supplied by Avista must be renewable by 2020. This percentage does not include legacy hydro energy. For these matters, Avista has an advisory committee with open membership, and Mr. Kimmel encouraged anyone who is interested to inquire about becoming a member.

3) Dr. Phil Wandschneider from WSU talked about the **Economics for renewable energy**. He explained that fossil fuels are abundant and very useful and convenient. Renewable energy sources however are not abundant and tend to fill niches. With any new technology there is a long learning curve required to achieve the economies of scale. In addition, for many of the renewable energy sources, the location of the sources is not close to the consumers or to the electric grid. It is difficult to use these remote sources and develop them without the presence of the grid and it is not economic to

add to the network without the operation of the new sources.

Another difficulty is that markets do not work properly for energy. The price we pay for fossil fuel derived energy does not contain the whole social cost. That is the cost of pollution, acid rain, mercury in the atmosphere, the cost to the lives of the miners etc. If these costs were properly included in the price for fossil fuels, their use would be significantly inhibited.

An extra barrier has been added against the transition to renewable energy by the recent development of new technology for the extraction of oil and gas from shale. With the more abundant supplies of US oil and gas, the resulting lower prices have lessened the incentive to use the more expensive renewable energy sources.

The two governmental methods of trying to control the energy production and consumption process and to encourage desired changes are: tax & subsidy, and cap & trade. Both methods tend to be painful and difficult to implement. In some cases, however, they can be simple to implement and very effective. An example is the CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency) requirements and penalties for vehicle manufacturers.

4) Dr. Joe Thompson of the University of Idaho discussed **biofuels from renewable sources**. He said that they are cleaner and less toxic than fossil fuels, and in addition are renewable and sustainable. Current biodiesel can be a drop-in substitute for any diesel engine and can use the current diesel distribution infrastructure. Current production methods can make fuel which has 5 units of energy with only 1 unit of energy input. World production capacity is now about 2 billion gallons per year or about 6% of the on-road fuel. Biodiesel can be made from almost any fat or oil by addition of alcohol. This splits the oil molecules apart, and the byproduct glycerol (which has many industrial uses) falls to the bottom of the container. The resulting fuel has better lubricity and burns cleaner than diesel fuel made from fossil crude oil.

Because of fuel price fluctuations, the biodiesel industry has experienced lots of ups and downs. The government has renewable fuel requirements which forces the blenders to use some biodiesel. In the past there have been subsidies for both bio-ethanol and biodiesel but there are currently no subsidies for either. Dr. Thompson said that he favors restoring the biodiesel subsidy.

When asked if the US could convert all its fuel use to bio derived fuels, he explained that there is simply not enough land to do this with current or near term technology. Both cellulose source fuels and algae source fuels have potential to do much better, but both will require significant breakthroughs and development before being practical and useful liquid fuel sources.