

# VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PULLMAN

February 2011

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; **Secretary:** Deb Olson, 332-2114, Backup: Francie Bose, 332-5114; **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:** Elinor McCloskey, 334-3242; **Hospitality Chair:** Barbara Hammond, 332-4104; **Observer Corps Chair and TRY Editor:** Lucy Linden, 332-2755.

## Meetings

### State and Local Planning

Date: Tuesday February 8, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Program: Consider our State and Local League positions and future studies.

Place: Neill Public Library, Hecht Room

Chair: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470

### Sustainability — Local Consumption of Local Produce

Date: Tuesday March 8, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Program: Panel discussion on local production and consumption of food in Pullman.

Place: Neill Public Library, Hecht Room

Chair: Deb Olson, 332-2114

## Board Meetings

**Mondays February 28, March 28**

Time: 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Place: Home of Natalie Clark, 220 SW Mountain View Dr.

## Other Meetings of Interest

### LWVWA State Convention

Date: May 19-22.

Place: Shilo Inn, Richland, WA

Information: See article below

## President's Message

I guess it was inevitable. Here I am, president again—no good deed goes unpunished? And, I need your help!! The way League stays active and effective is if each of us does a bit, whether it is as an officer or as a member taking on a one time job. The more people who help, the less any one person must do. Please consider volunteering. When I send out a general e-mail request usually no one answers. It is hard and discouraging, not to mention time consuming, to have to approach people individually for each job.

At the moment we need a nominating committee to search for officers for next year. Could you do that?? Your work will take a month or so. Next year we badly need co-presidents, so one person is not continually tied down. We may need others as long term officers need to take time off. If you are asked, please consider saying yes. Don't say no because you travel. We are all adventurous people or we probably wouldn't be in League and by splitting the jobs up we work around everyone's schedule.

There are smaller jobs such as being an observer for any of the many city or county councils, commissions, and boards. If you want to know how government works, this is the place for you **and** you are not supposed to talk—the perfect roll for shy people. There are also one time jobs from helping plan a public meeting, to posting advertising for a meeting, to working with the Voter Service Committee. Please plan to do a bit for the League this year. And, don't forget, you can have a say in what League studies, updates, and takes action on by participating in the planning meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 8, 7:00 pm at Neill Public Library's Hecht Room. See you there.

Thanks,  
Alice

## February 8— State and Local Planning Meeting

Alice Schroeder

Our January meeting was changed when understanding the CUP process for Wind Farms took precedence. However, there is still work to do!! We need to consider our State and Local League positions and future studies, so the Feb. 8 meeting in the Hecht Room at Neill Public Library is it. (Note: This is a Tuesday because of Jesse Jackson's talk on Monday.) Our suggestions will be considered by the state board and discussed at the LWVWA convention, May 20-22. We will adopt local program suggestions at the Annual Meeting in May and put them into action at our July planning meeting. Since we exhaustively reviewed the State and Local positions two years ago, this year we will break into groups to examine some of the positions and brainstorm on the need for studies or updated positions. Then we will come back together to finalize our ideas for LWVWA and the Annual Meeting. Please come. We need everyone's input!! Go back to the December Voter ([www.lwvwa.org/pullman](http://www.lwvwa.org/pullman)) to find our local

positions and the WA State positions. To find more information on the WA State Positions go to [www.lwvwa.org](http://www.lwvwa.org) and click on *positions*. Scroll about half way down the page to *Program in Action, Printable Program in Action 2009-2011*.

## **Report: League Public Wind Farm Meeting in Colfax**

### **Joan Folwell**

The Pullman League hosted a public presentation entitled *Land Use Planning 101; Permitting for a Wind Farm* at the Whitman County Library in Colfax on January 11, 2011. The speakers included Joan Folwell, Pullman League; Alan Thomson, Whitman County Planning Director; and Mike Denny, Blue Mountain Audubon Society. The focus of the meeting was to explain the permitting steps required to certify the construction of a commercial wind farm and, in particular, how the public can participate in that process. First Wind, the company applying for the Palouse Wind project near Oakesdale, refused to send a speaker; their lawyers had cautioned their representative against appearing in a public forum because this was “a sensitive time” and wanted no opportunity for people to misinterpret their comments.

Joan explained that there is a state office called the Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) which is a one-stop licensing agency for non-hydro energy projects. EFSEC has a seven-step application process that an applicant must fulfill (see <http://www.efsec.wa.gov>). Since the Palouse Wind project will produce less than 103 megawatts, First Wind had the option to apply directly to the county for a Conditional Use Permit. The EFSEC process is more stringent than the county process.

Both options require the applicant to fill out an “environmental checklist.” The lead agency (EFSEC or the county) examines the checklist to determine if the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the environment. The county determined that the Palouse Wind project would have a significant impact, which resulted in the rules for the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to be applied. Thus, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had to be prepared by the county. To date, the draft EIS has been submitted to the public for comment and that comment period was over on Dec. 20, 2010. The county has not yet issued a final EIS. The state Department of Ecology issues a SEPA Citizens Handbook containing information helpful in responding to an EIS (<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/citizensguide/citizensguide.htm>); this guide is generally useful in creating meaningful comments from the public in many situations.

Alan Thomson ([alan.thomsom@co.whitman.wa.us](mailto:alan.thomsom@co.whitman.wa.us)) gave an introductory overview of the responsibilities and authority of his department. He expects that the final EIS will be issued by the end of February. In the meantime, citizens may continue to send in comments about the wind farm. These comments will become part of a file for the formulation of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP). A CUP 1) allows consideration of special uses, 2) controls the use which could have detrimental effect by imposing pertinent conditions of approval, and 3) requires a public hearing. A hearing examiner will preside over this public hearing. Notice of this hearing as well

as a copy of the final EIS and other information will be on the county web site (<http://www.whitmancounty.org>) then go to “quick links” at the bottom of the page).

Mike Denny ([m.denny@charter.net](mailto:m.denny@charter.net)) spoke about a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that could be added to the requirements of the CUP. The TAC functions as a post-construction quasi-judicial advisory committee to review results of post-construction monitoring data and make suggestions for adjusting mitigation and monitoring requirements. The committee would include stakeholders like the county, the wind company, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, environmental groups, and any others deemed affected. Denny said that a TAC is useful for dealing with environmental issues. In his experience, operation and placement of turbines has been changed at the TAC’s orders after evidence of avian mortality was discovered. The county planning department has not included a TAC as a requirement in the EIS.

A footnote: All other approved wind farm projects in Washington require a TAC. The WA Fish and Wildlife Department recommends the establishment of a TAC in their policy handbook “Wind Power Guidelines.”

## **Website Update**

**Shelley Jones**

I am excited that in the next couple months we will have an active website! The domain ‘[www.lwvpullman.org](http://www.lwvpullman.org)’ was purchased for the Pullman League. The website will be a work in progress depending on the needs of League members and the community. So, what is initially placed on-line can and will change. Additionally, I have had a couple WSU students inquire about an internship with the League in assisting us with our website. I am in the process in meeting with them. I also look forward to working with other League members that have expressed interest in this project.

## **Candidate by Accident?**

**Joan Folwell**

There are times when pieces of your life may intersect and prompt you to action. I had always been interested in environmental issues; my husband Ray and I had become friends with the Palouse Conservation District through their help with our Palouse Prairie effort; and last February, the Pullman League presented a public meeting to study state conservation districts focusing on their election procedures. This League meeting coincided with the annual election and call for candidates notices issued by the local Conservation District. So I thought, “Is there a better way to understand the election process than to become a candidate? Oh, what fun!”

Filling out the application for a district board supervisor position was easy. But then I found that I had an opponent. That was unexpected; my intelligence source had been wrong! At this point,

Ray advised me to make a serious effort or not do it at all. The first thing I decided was that I *did* believe in myself. I felt capable of fulfilling the position and I might even become good at it. The second thing I did was to shrug off all sense of modesty and become a self-promoter. I printed up information sheets listing my qualifications. These I passed out to the captive audiences at meetings for the various organizations that I belong to. Did I feel as if I were taking advantage of my friendships? Well, yes, I did. But this is what candidates have to do. Who else will vote for you if your friends don't – especially in an election that few people know about?

The week before the election, I mailed out those information sheets along with voting particulars and personal notes to friends and acquaintances. I targeted people who were interested in conservation and those I knew who were familiar with the Conservation District. I also stopped to talk to conservation-minded individuals on the street; I explained my mission and gave out voting information.

Election day finally came. A usual turn out for district elections is five to ten voters. Over ninety votes were cast on March 2, 2010, and the majority of them had my name on them. Leaguers, my book club friends, my women's club friends, co-workers from WSU and others took time out of their busy lives to vote and fulfill my wish, my vision. I cannot explain what a wonderful feeling it is to have the support of your friends! And I thank each and every one of you. To each of you, I pledge to do the best job that I can.

The experience that all of you have made possible allows me to continue to grow in many ways. Joining a board of four men who have been involved in commercial farming for generations has been a challenge. Learning about inter-agency partnerships (USDA, WA Dept. of Fish and Game, Natural Resource Conservation Service, etc.) that float on a sea of acronyms has been mind-boggling. Understanding the procedures and processes from the local level to the state and national levels is endless. All of this is part of a civics lesson that I should have learned long ago.

The Palouse Conservation District has two main focuses. One focus is to promote soil retention by the implementation of no-till and low-till farming methods. To that end, the district offers its own grants to augment grants from other agencies for that purpose; local board members serve as mentors to local farmers interested in using these methods. The second focus is water quality. One group that contributes to water pollution (sedimentation, bacteria, loss of streamside vegetation) is live stock ranchers. The Department of Ecology will pay 100% of the costs to provide off-stream watering for animals, but producers are reluctant to do this. As an incentive to apply for these funds, the district is planning a meeting on Feb. 3, 2011, for producers to learn about a value-added price that could apply to their product if they adopted "green" methods.

The subject of conservation has many meanings to many people. I am happy and excited to be part of the conservation effort.

## New Members

### Susan Swan

Susan joined the League this fall and many of you met her at our “Back to League” September meeting. Susan first came to Pullman in 1972 to pursue her PhD in Latin American History. She was drawn to Pullman by the *Regla Papers* which had been purchased by Prof. J. Horace Nunnemaker. They consisted of letters from the managers to the owners of a large property on the Central Mexican Plateau. Naturally, they centered on agriculture and led Susan to bridge the humanities/science divide, becoming an expert on Mexican climate and a member of the AAAS and the New York Academy of Sciences. Her work resulted in two articles and a book on the history of drought in Mexico from before Cortez to the 1940’s, *Breve Historia De Las Sequias Mexico*, published in Mexico with Mexican colleague Dr. Enrique Florescano in 1995. She was also a consultant to the Mexican Government during this time.

With broad interests in literature, art, music and science, and a daughter to raise, Susan accepted a position in the General Education program at WSU where she enjoyed teaching for several years before retiring in 2008. Susan was very active in politics in the 1960’s but in retirement is pursuing her interests in art and music. In fact Alice interviewed her for this article as she sat next to her at the Graham Ballet Holiday show in the Gladish Gym! Although Susan is too busy at this point to give a lot of time to the League, she joined League because she strongly supports our work and positions and promises we will see her at many of our public meetings.

### Sharon Walbridge

Sharon was born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She graduated with an A.B. and M.A from Western Michigan University. She worked at Western Michigan University, Penn State, Antioch College, Wright State University, OCLC, University of Wisconsin, and the Oregon State Library before coming to Washington State University in 1992. While at WSU she worked as Assistant Director in WSU Libraries until retirement in 2006.

Work in WSU Libraries occupied her time until she retired. Since then she has served on the Gladish Board and she wrote the Gladish page for the *Pullman Community Update* for five years. She volunteers for Tapestry Women’s Choir and serves as Secretary on their Board. She recently joined the Grand Avenue Greenway Committee.

Sharon does a fair amount of traveling, mostly with her sister, Anita, who lives in Michigan and Arizona. Her god daughter, Garisha, lives in Post Falls and Sharon likes spending time with her. She likes to read, listen to music, dabble in photography, and play with her two cats. She is a passionate fan of competitive drum and bugle corps and nearly always travels to the DCI championships in August. Sharon acquired a time share in Kona the year she retired and spends time there in May almost every year.

When asked, “Why did you join the League?” She responded, “The real question is what took me so long. I have enjoyed politics for as long as I can remember. My parents strongly believed in voting and I don’t believe I have ever missed an election. I believe in being an educated voter. ( People who vote for a political party because that is what their parents did drive me crazy.) I

was strongly influenced as a young adult by European immigrants who valued the democratic process and thought that voting was a privilege not to be taken lightly. John F. Kennedy was my hero.”

As a member of League she hopes to learn more about the political process and keep up with current issues and would like to urge others to become intelligent voters. When asked for suggestions for the League, she suggested, “ I have the feeling that League events and activities would benefit from better publicity.”

## LWVWA Thanks Kay Buss

The Pullman LWV board received a thank you from the state League board for a legacy gift from the estate of Kay Buss. Kay was the featured League member of the state when a League Legacy program was instituted at the state level. An article in the state League newsletter featured Kay Buss who urged all members of the Washington State League to put the League in their wills or estate plans so that it would remain a viable organization for the future. We remember Kay for her remarkable love for the League and all she did for it over the years since she helped found the Pullman unit and we know she would urge all members to put the League in their estate plans as well.

## LWV of Washington — Convention 2011

Early arrangements for 2011 State Convention are underway. LWV of Benton-Franklin Counties is looking forward to having you come to the Tri-Cities. Mark your calendars for May 19-22, 2011. Location will be the Shilo Inn, Richland. (There are other hotels nearby for those who prefer.) This is 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 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. Friday morning, May 20 a tour to Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science and Technology (CREHST) museum (2 blocks away) is being arranged. This museum was created to tell the story of the Columbia Basin and 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.

**More information to come. Please plan to attend.**

# **Pullman May Face Nursing Care Problem**

**Helen Stiller, January 29, 2011**

(The Pullman LWV supports adequate health care for all residents of Whitman County. Helen Stiller is our hospital board observer.)

On November 4, 2010 the hospital signed a Letter of Intent with Avalon Health Care. The mission of both parties is to support the development of a continuum of care that area residents utilize which includes both acute and post acute care, as well as long-term skilled nursing care. The primary intent of this document is to develop a new Skilled Nursing Facility on PRH property under the ownership of PRH and management of Avalon. (This is a minimalist description of the total document.)

About a week ago I received a call from Administration at PRH asking me if I would join some of the staff on a trip over to Olympia to talk to some Legislators. Not much else was explained so I figured that it would involve something to do with the budgetary process as I knew that the Governor is working on revising the budget and many cuts are anticipated (required for a balanced budget). I did find out that on our first night over there we would be meeting with a couple of representatives from Avalon Health Care.

Well fellow League Members, it looks like we are having a potential problem with medical care in our community. The predicament that exists is that the nursing home is in considerable debt because the income from all sources, but primarily Medicaid, is not covering expenses. It became apparent that the reason that we were in Olympia was to speak to certain elected officials regarding the necessity of supporting *The Nursing Facility Safety Net Assessment* which backfills negotiated rate reductions. There is also an apparent connection to a Federal program which also pays some additional money into this program.

It was emphasized to all that this is not a tax, but it would bring into the State additional Federal tax dollars. The representatives of Avalon informed us that if this Assessment is not approved they may have to close down our nursing home. We explained the difficulties that this would impose on the citizens of Pullman, who require the use of the nursing home, as well as the problems that would create for their families.

I think that these women were lobbyists. They were very knowledgeable about the whole issue and its impact on their nursing facilities in the state of Washington.

The members of our group were as follows: Scott Adams, Jeannie Eyler, Megan Guido, Trish Grantham, Marvel Kimbel, Dr. Karen Gehab and I. This was a very interesting experience as well as a very different side of government than Marvel or I had ever experienced.

## **Useful Pullman League Numbers**

Contact Us: [lwypull@yahoo.com](mailto:lwypull@yahoo.com)

Online VOTER: [www.lwvwa.org/Pullman](http://www.lwvwa.org/Pullman)