



VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

www.lwvpullman.org

December 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; **Vice President:** Shelley Jones, 432-3428, ; **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:** Janet Kendall, 332-4268; **Hospitality Chair:** Barbara Hammond, 332-4104; **Observer Corps Chair and TRY Editor:** Lucy Linden, 332-2755; **Webmaster:** Paul Spencer: 332-6699; **State Board Member:** Karen Kiessling, 332-4755.

Meetings

LWVWA Study – Conservation Districts

Date: Monday December 5, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Program: Coffee and Cookies followed at 7:00 by a discussion of the study led by Ray Ledgerwood, and a look for consensus

Place: Neill Public Library, Hecht Room

Contact: Joan Folwell, 332-3946

Pullman Levy Presentation and LWVUS Planning

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

Program: School Superintendent, Paul Sturm, on the school levy followed by the planning meeting for LWVUS programs

Place: Neill Public Library, Hecht Room

Chair: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470

Citizens United Discussion

Date: Thursday February 2

Program: Discussion on the Citizens United Decision co-sponsored with the Foley Institute

Contact: Lucy Linden, 332-2755

Pullman Security Camera Policies

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

Program: Joint meeting with Police Advisory Committee

Place: City Council Chambers

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Chairs: Karen Kiessling, 332-4755 and Barbara Hammond, 332-4104

Board Meeting

Wednesday January 25

Time: 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Place: Lucy Linden's home, 500 SE Crestview

Chair: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470

President's Message **Alice Schroeder**

The Pullman League has had a great fall with a well attended back to League potluck, three forums, board training and then completion of the LWVUS Education Study in one fast paced meeting. (See [page 7](#) for the results of the consensus meeting.) In December we will relax a bit with a holiday social half hour and presentation of a 50 year pin and certificate to Marj Grunewald. Please come and honor Marj while enjoying a few Christmas goodies. Then we will work on the State League Conservation Districts Study led by Ray Ledgerwood. He is a former staff member for the National Association of State Conservation Agencies and a member of the Washington State Conservation Commission, and, fortunately for us, a Pullman resident. His insight will be invaluable as we deal with the consensus questions. This is League at its best—doing a study. Bring a guest!

The fall has also brought satisfaction that our many efforts really do bear fruit. Our Wind Farm meeting on how the public could respond to this proposal led to some rethinking and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is now a requirement for the permit. Also, considerably more will be done to test for possible adverse effects on birds. Finally, some support will be given to acquire and protect some native Palouse prairie in place of that being affected. Several years ago we held a meeting on drug courts—how they work and whether such a court could be started in Whitman County. In early November we received a letter from Dennis Tracy, Whitman County prosecuting attorney, who spoke at the meeting. It reads in part: “During the course of the evening, I was able to speak to a number of your members and came away with a desire to establish a drug court here. It has taken some time, but I am glad to share with you that I and Judge Frazier have put together a drug court for Whitman County that is now up and running. ...I just wanted to thank you and the members of the League for your engagement in these issues.” We also received many thank you’s for all three Forums.

We are not planning to rest on our laurels. Note the two special forums coming up in February listed in the Calendar on the first page. If you would like to work on one, or on the upcoming LWVWA Council 2012 June 1-3 please let me or the chair know. We could really use your help!

Great Holiday Reading!

Joan Folwell (rjfolwell@pullman.com, 332-3946)

On Monday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 PM at Neill Public Library, we will be meeting to honor Marge Grunewald and enjoy some Christmas goodies. We will continue the evening with a discussion of the Washington State Conservation District Study and answer the consensus questions. We are very fortunate to have Ray Ledgerwood lead this discussion. Ray has been involved with conservation districts since 1979; currently, he is a staff member for both the WA State Conservation Commission and the National

Association of State Conservation Agencies. With his incredible breath of experience, Ray will be able to answer any of our questions and explain any complication. But we, as members, need to be prepared for some intelligent exchanges. Electronic copies of the study and consensus questions for you to read are available on the state website; click on [Report](#), or go to www.lwvwa.org; choose “studies” on the home page menu and this study will be near the top of the list. There are also some hard copies available. If you or someone you know without a computer would like one, please contact Alice or myself. Just to get us all thinking, here are the consensus questions:

1. Do you support the work and mission of conservation districts in Washington?
2. What could the Washington State Conservation Commission and Conservation Districts do to raise awareness of:
 - a. their purpose and work?
 - b. their elections?
3. Does the current method for selecting CD Supervisors need improvement? If so, what changes would you suggest and why?
4. Should the Washington State Conservation Commission remain an independent commission? Why or why not?
5. Come for the fellowship and stay to hear about another interesting facet of our society!

Jan. 9 Levy Presentation and National Planning Meeting

Alice Schroeder

On January 9th, at 7 p.m. in the Hecht Room of Neill Public Library, School superintendent Paul Sturm will give us a 15-20 minute presentation with time for questions on the school levy(s) we will be voting on in early February. Come with your questions and bring a friend. Afterwards, we will break into groups to examine some of the National (LWVUS) positions and ideas of other Leagues. We will brainstorm on the need for studies, updated positions or action and bring them back to the whole group to finalize. These ideas then go to the LWVUS office and will be combined with those of other Leagues for presentation at the National convention as a new study, update or action mandate. **This is your chance to have a say in the policies of the LWVUS and its program** for the next two years. It is also a fun way to get familiar with the League positions which are used each time the national League lobbies or takes other action. The current positions of the LWVUS are reprinted on [page 11](#).

Board Training Report

Shelley Jones

On October 30th, Barbara Seitle and Barbara Bush led Board Training for our local League, which about 15 members attended. They discussed the key topics of: Board Basics, the “Magic” Notebook, resources at the State and National level, and the League’s Two Key Principles in Action: our non-partisan position and speaking with one voice. Other topics that were discussed were event and liability insurance and membership recruitment. We discussed in great detail the responsibilities of the Board and how to organize all of the information you need to keep track of and that you collect. We also discussed different scenarios that may arise and the correct action. I discovered that the LWVUS site has sections for board members with specific information relating to their job. The training was

very interactive and very useful. The Board training was available to us due to a legacy that was left by Pullman League member Kay Buss.

October Forums A Success **Diane Smerdon, Voter Service Chair**

This year's Colfax Forum on October 18th included races for Port Commissioner , City Council Seat #6 , Mayor , and three races for School Board. Diane Smerdon moderated.



Colfax Forum

There were over 115 people in attendance. The Colfax Gazette summed up the night with its opening paragraph in the Gazette on Thursday, October 20: "Neptotism on the school board, empty store fronts on Main Street and port district taxes were spotlighted during the Pullman League of Women Voters candidates forum Tuesday night in Colfax."

We are grateful to Kristie Kirkpatrick at the Whitman County Library for all her help in advertising and setting up for the Forum. The Library was filled to capacity and the candidates did not disappoint!

This year's Pullman Forum took place in the City Council Chambers in City Hall on October 19th. Deb Olson moderated. The Moscow-Pullman Daily News labeled it a "Passionate debate at Pullman League of Women Voters' initiative forum." Once again, the Port Commissioner candidates faced off. Following that, three Initiatives were debated, and two that did not have representatives for both sides were presented.

Our sponsors, the Colfax Gazette and Moscow-Pullman Daily News, gave us broad coverage in their papers and website. Time Warner Cable did a wonderful announcement, which played continuously on Channel 11, and followed up by re-running our Forums on Channel 11. (**Kudos to Paul Spencer for video-taping the Colfax Forum and delivering those CDs and the one from Pullman City Hall to Time Warner for broadcast, in addition to placing them on our website.)

And...thank you to sorters, timers and runners for all their help. It takes a Village!!

Action Workshop Report **Deb Olson**

On October 8th 2011, five members of the Pullman League attended the 2011 Action Workshop in Ellensburg, Washington. Paul Spencer volunteered to drive (Thank You! Thank You!). Other members who made the trip were Alice Schroeder, Deb Olson and two of our new members Keiko Tuttle and

Shantel Martinez.

The workshop was held in beautiful historic Ramsey House owned by a member of our host League, Kittitas County, and after the welcome and introduction by the State League Co-president Kim Abel, the owner of Ramsey House gave us a brief background about the house and the architect.

The workshop presented lots of information on how the legislature works and how the League lobby team works. Topics discussed include the process of how a bill becomes a law, why League advocacy is important, what our lobby team does and what the professional lobbyist does, how individual League members can be effective for legislative advocacy, and what's happening in the legislature. The lobby team provided server "tools for advocacy" including phone numbers, a sample script for contacting your legislator, how to get the most out of the legislative Update Newsletters and a hands-on demonstration of the legislative website. (This last was very helpful for me since when I wandered onto the site before I didn't know how to get the information I needed.)

After a delicious lunch provided by our host League, a guest speaker from Central Washington University, Barbara Newman, presented a very interesting talk on the History of Russian Women. (Her book same title will be out April 2012). She talked about the role of specific women on Russian and European history through time.

Several members of The lobby team made the trip over the mountains to the east side for the workshop. Lobby team members who made the trip were Mary Moore (Energy, Climate Change), Raelene Gold (Columbia River Issues), Kim Abel (Government, Campaign Finance), Nora Leech (Taxation, Budget, Privatization), Pat Dickason (Child Care, Early Learning), Susan Eidenschink (Health care, Justice Issues), Cynthia Stewart (Health Care), and Wayne Martin (Reproductive Rights). The lobby team briefly presented what they do and took questions from the participants.

How the League arrives at a position was reviewed (studies, consensus, updates). The National and State League positions are on the websites. The role of individual members was reviewed--explaining when you speak for the League (always supporting League positions) and when you speak just as a citizen. You can disagree with a League position but not as representative of League. The important message of the day: BE INVOLVED, Contact your representatives. As all the lobby team members said, your congressional representative assumes that for every person who contacts them, there are at least 10 others who feel the same way. YOUR VOICE COUNTS. This impressed our new members.

The lobby team is looking for Eastern Washington members who are interested in a topic to join them. A lot can be done remotely (email, Skype).

Observer Reports

Pullman Regional Hospital - November 20, 2011

Observer: Helen Stiller

As you are probably already aware the Hospital has committed to the purchase of this robotic equipment, I would like to present some background regarding this purchase. Approximately two years ago Dr. Keizur first introduced information to hospital administration on the growing use and success of robotic surgery for urological procedures. He encouraged the hospital to consider this technology during its strategic planning sessions.

In recent recruitment efforts it has become apparent that physicians completing their residencies in urology, general surgery and gynecology, anticipate and want their practices to include robotic surgery technology. Dr. Keizur noted that of his patients who have been considering prostatectomies, 60-70% travel to Spokane or Seattle for robotic surgery. He stated that robotic surgery is also very effective in renal surgeries to remove a tumor and preserve more of the affected kidney. This results in quicker recovery and return to work, less risk and a better outcome.

Upon approval of this purchase by the Hospital Board, the Hospital Foundation contributed \$250,000 toward the purchase of this equipment.

I hope that some of you took advantage of the opportunity to see and attempt to use this equipment when it was on display at SEL.

Whitman County Board of County Commissioners

Observer: Paul Spencer

Oct. 31, 2011 Meeting

Discussions which may be of interest to LWV members included a request by Shelly Bennett of Palouse Commercial Real Estate (on behalf of a Moscow church) to amend the zoning ordinance to change the currently exempted churches in the Pullman-Moscow Corridor District to a permitted conditional use. The Commissioners decided to handle the matter themselves because the Planning Commission is extremely busy. My understanding was that the Commissioners would consult with the Planning Commission to make sure that their preferences and judgement on the matter would be considered.

Mr Petrovich, county financial administrator, gave a short report on the county current expenses and expenditures to date for 2011 and gave comparison figures from 2010. (More recent numbers will be given below.)

Nov. 7, 2011 Meeting

John Audley, Deputy Director of Renewable Northwest Project (RNP) and Brian Walsh, Business Developer for Iberdrola Renewables, discussed the Renewable Northwest Project and its impacts on southeast Washington to inform the Commissioners about renewable energy in Washington. For more details, please refer to the BOCC minutes at

<http://www.whitmancounty.org/Commis/BOCC/pdf.aspx?date=11/07/2011>

Nov. 21, 2011 Meeting

The item of general interest was a presentation of the 2011 county revenues and expenditures through October 31 by Mr. Petrovich. With 2 months of the year remaining, the revenues are at 78% of the budgeted revenues. For the largest category, property tax, this figure is 91%, and the percentage ranged from a low of 46% for indirect Federal grants to 112% for CT Reimbursement & state Entitlements.

The expenditures for the same period also averaged 78% of the 2011 budget with the categories ranging from 49% to 85%. The two lowest categories are Child Support Enforcement at 49% and Parks and recreation at 63%

The year-end projections show \$12.0 million for expenditures, and a deficit of \$200,000 which is significantly less than that projected earlier in the year. Mr. Petrovich said that he would consider that

deficit or less as a good performance.

Results of Consensus on The Role of the Federal Government in Education

General Questions

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is
 Much too small too small ✓ about right too large much too large

COMMENTS: Our group felt that this question was too general to be easy to answer.

- There was a clear consensus that the amount of financial support by the US government is too small. Considering the importance of education to our future, the amount spent is pitiful compared with the defense budget.
- The federal government should play a strong role in evening out inequities at the state and local levels. It should avoid micro-management.
- The federal government should improve standards and testing by developing more effective ways of testing achievement and progress.

2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)

a. To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education. **[RANK 1]**

b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.

● We agreed that item b. should not be part of the role of the federal government and should not be ranked at all.

c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.

● We agreed that item c. should not be part of the role of the federal government and should not be ranked at all.

d. To monitor state efforts for funding

● We agreed that item d. should not be part of the role of the federal government and should not be ranked at all.

e. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.

● We agreed that item e. should not be part of the role of the federal government (except perhaps as a city or state-wide collected statistic) and should not be ranked at all.

3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

Common Core Standards

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal

funding? (Choose one)

- a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
- b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
- c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source
- d. All of the above

e. None of the above

- **We believe that the federal government itself should have a mandate to help compensate for the educational system inequities among the states.**
- **We feel that the federal government should publish guides and develop resources to help the states and school districts improve their education systems.**
- **Our group agrees that teachers and school administrations themselves have been overlooked and not fully utilized as tools for improvement of the educational systems.**

5. Should there be a **national assessment aligned** with the common cores standards?

Yes

No

If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)

a. Voluntary

- b. Mandated
- c. Mandated, if fully funded

- **Our group feels that there is a need for accountability for the states to report the results to the government.**

If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)

- a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
- b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.

- **We feel that item b. is a reasonable option to the voluntary national assessment of question 5.**

- c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically

6. National standards should lead to: (choose one)

- a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
- b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
- c. **A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.**

- **Item c. is our consensus choice**

- d. No national curriculum.

7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)
- Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.**
● [RANK 1]
 - Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
● [RANK 2]
 - Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers. [RANK 5]
 - Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement. ● [RANK 2]
 - Provide diagnostic information on each child. ● [RANK 5]
- **We could not reach consensus on a standard 1-5 ranking. Items b. and d. seemed equal, and items c. and e. were significantly less desirable to us.**
8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)
- Data should be “norm referenced” (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
 - Data should be “criterion referenced” and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level. ● Our consensus choice.**
 - Data should be used to determine “cut” scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.
9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):
- Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
 - Reward schools that achieve high scores
 - Rank teachers based on student test score data
 - Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
 - Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.**
● **Item e. is our consensus choice**

Please share any comments your League has concerning the topics covered in the Common Core Standards Questions. (250 word maximum):

- **We strongly feel that item 9 a., sanctioning schools not measuring up ..., is very counter-productive. Instead they should be encouraged and helped with money and improvement resources and personnel to become better. This could include mentoring and team teaching with master teachers.**
- **We strongly agree that Item 9 c., ranking teachers solely based on student test score data is a very bad idea. Student background, ability, test taking psychology, and mental and physical maturity can vary widely and are important factors mostly outside the control of the teacher. All of these factors may affect student test scores.**

Funding and Equity

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)

a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements

● **Item a. is our consensus choice**

- b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
- c. Competitive grants only
- d. No federal funding

11. If the federal government's role is the concern of the "common good" then: (choose one)

- a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
- b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
- c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
- d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.**

● **Item d. is our consensus choice**

- e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)

- a. high quality teaching/learning ● **[RANK 1]**
- b. adequate and current learning materials ● **[RANK 2]**
- c. clean and well maintained physical facilities ● **[RANK 3]**
- d. food and health care ● **[RANK 4]**
- e. safe and secure neighborhoods ● **[RANK 5]**
- f. secure housing ● **[RANK 6]**

● **We feel that items e. and f. are really outside the job of the educational system even though they are very important for the students and their families.**

13 Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered "categorical" rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g.Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

a. **Strongly agree** Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly Disagree

b. This funding should be extended to :

All children only those with special needs **special needs first**

Please share any comments your League has concerning the topics covered in the Funding and Equity Questions. (250 word maximum)

- **The consensus of our group is that in actual practice, the use of vouchers has often significantly damaged the public school system and therefore their use should be discouraged in the future.**

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

League of Women Voters of the United States

Taken from *Impact on Issues, 2010 - 2012*

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

Voting Rights

- Citizen's Right to Vote. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.
- DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation. Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

Election Process

- Apportionment. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.
- Campaign Finance. Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.
- Selection of the President. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct-popular-vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

Citizen Rights

- Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation. Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.
- Individual Liberties. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.
- Public Policy on Reproductive Choices. Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Congress and the Presidency

- Congress. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision making capability and effective performance.
- The Presidency. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

United Nations

- Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

Trade

- Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

U.S. Relations with Developing Countries

- Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

Arms Control

- Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

Military Policy and Defense Spending

- Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

League of Women Voters
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