



VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

www.lwvpullman.org

June, 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

July Fourth Parade in Johnson

Continue the League tradition of having walkers in the Johnson Parade. Meet by 9:30 a.m. on the south side of the Johnson Community Center (the old school). Wear red, white and blue. We will have sashes and hats to wear and 400 flags to distribute to the onlookers. Note: water fights are now banned so you will stay dry. Contact Deb Olson, 332-2114 to carpool or for more information.

Planning Meeting

Date: Monday July 9th, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Program: Plan League activities for the coming year and enjoy a salad pot luck.

Place: Ruth Brown's home, see directions in Planning Meeting article below.

Contact: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470

Election Forum in Colfax

Date: Tuesday July 17, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Program: Forum on candidates for Whitman County Commission

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Place: Whitman County Library Meeting Room, Colfax
Chair: Diane Smerdon, 334-5413

Election Forum in Pullman

Date: Wednesday July 16th, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Program: Forum on candidates for Whitman County Commission
Place: Pullman City Hall Council Chambers
Chair: Diane Smerdon, 334-5413

Board Meeting

Wednesday July 25,

Time: 1:00-2:45 p.m.
Place: Daily Grind
Chair: Alice Schroeder, 334-2470

Get your two cents in!! Alice Schroeder

Plan to come to the July Planning Meeting and Summer Salad Potluck on Monday July 9 from 10:00 a.m. To 1:00 p.m. at Ruth Brown's home on Johnson Road. Once again Ruth has invited us to enjoy her lovely backyard while we consider what we would like to have the Pullman LWV do for the 2012-2013 year.

We have an unusually empty calendar with only one study – LWVWA, Renewable Energy Update, our October Voter Forums and a Jan. or Feb. review of our local and state positions. Suggestions are already coming in, including a public meeting with a film comparing the Canadian and US health care systems; a public meeting on requirements of the Open Meetings Law so that our county officials are better informed; a public meeting on Historic Districts and a meeting on the Pullman School District's approach to the new teacher evaluation requirements. Bring your thoughts on these and other ideas and join us on July 9. The more people who participate the better year it will be!

Directions to Ruth's farm:

From the Pullman-Moscow Highway turn south on Bishop Blvd.

Go 0.3 miles and turn left on Johnson Road (just past Quality Inn and the old Pete's Restaurant).

Go 3.3 miles on Johnson Road (WITHOUT turn-offs; do NOT turn onto the Old Moscow Road or Sand Road).

You will now find yourself between 2 big white barns on either side of the road. Ours is the one on the left with the blue metal roof.

The driveway is long and narrow, so stay in the middle. Phone 332-8038 if you get lost.

WELCOME!

VOTER SERVICES REPORT

Diane Smerdon

Plans are underway for our Primary Voter Forums in Colfax and Pullman, July 17th and 18th, respectively. Candidates for Commissioner #1 (Greg Partch, Art Swannack, and Bill Tensfeld) and Commissioner #2 (Pat O’Neill and Dean Kinzer) will be present. We will use our usual format for the forums. County voters in the Commissioner #1 precincts will vote to reduce the candidates from three to two; but the Commissioner #2 position has only two candidates on the primary ballot—write-ins will be allowed. Since four of the precincts have been shuffled—we will also provide updated information for the voters. Although the primary will allow only voters in the Commissioner #1&2 precincts to vote, both commissioner races will be on the general ballot in November. We are hoping that voters will take the time to get to know the candidates a little better through the forums.

Voters can access valuable candidate information by following this link [My Vote](#) to the *My Vote* page of the state web site. (Or by accessing the website via www.whitmancounty.org and then in *Search* type “elections”. Click on *Auditor*, then click on *Election information*. Under elections, click on *My Vote*.) In *My Vote* fill in your name and birth date. When you click on *continue* you will see your voter information and from there you can access *My candidates & ballot measures* and *My elected officials*. This is a good way to identify what will be on your ballot!

The Primary Election selects our state judges. Don’t forget that the primary ballot will include judicial elections which will be final if one candidate gets more than 50% of the vote. Unfortunately, the judges will not be participating in our forums. To get non-partisan information on judicial candidates go to the *My Vote* page following the directions given above or go to www.votingforjudges.org.

Forum advertising through newspapers, radio, the Community Update, and television will be forthcoming. In addition, Leaguers walking in the July 4 Johnson Parade will hand out over 400 flags with the Pullman League’s website and Primary Forum information. Contact Deb Olson at 332-2114 for more information about walking in the parade.

Council Committee Report Shelley Jones

First, thank you to the Council Committee for the hours they put in during the last year to create a wonderful LWVWA Council! Committee members include: Karen Kiessling, Barb Hammond, Lucy Linden, Amy Cole, Deb Olson, and Alice Schroeder (and myself, Shelley Jones). Without each of these committee members putting in time and energy Council would not have been such a big success.

Additional thanks to those that volunteered during Council: Diane Smerdon, Paul Spencer, Lenna

Harding, Diane Gillespie, Susan Daniels, Janet Miller, June Crawford, Shantel Martinez, and Janet Kendall.

Council was a big hit thanks to the dedication of every volunteer and committee member!

The Delegates Report -- Council 2012—June 1-3, Alice Schroeder and Diane Smerdon

Sunny weather on Friday and Saturday afternoon and the fabulous organization efforts of the council committee and their many helpers (See Shelley Jones' report.) gave council delegates a great learning environment. Three Palouse area tours were offered on Friday afternoon for early arrivals: 1) Washington State University, organized by Deb Olson; 2) Kamiak Butte, organized by Alice Schroeder; and 3) Colton/Uniontown/Lewiston Overlook, organized by Diane Smerdon. The weather was perfect and all organizers got a chance to "shine" the Palouse.

Friday evening brought a chance to see the State Board at work, linking us to the National League and working on many State Programs. Topics included the Washington State Legislative Newsletter, fall action workshops and funding.

On Saturday, Pat Wright, Pullman City Council Woman, welcomed the delegates and told them of the many ways the Pullman League has helped Pullman. Then, a full schedule allowed us to learn about four National Programs in which State and local Leagues are involved. The Membership-Leadership-Development program in Washington is coordinated by LWVWA co-president, Kim Able. It is aimed at bringing in new members and developing new leaders to keep the League viable. This LWVUS program, funded by a \$500,000 bequest in memory of Ruth Shur, has trained national coaches, including three from Washington State--Penny Van Fleet, Judy Goldberg and Kim Able. They will now train local leagues, often working with Leagues outside their home state. When I asked Pullman members (remember that e-mail?), three volunteered--Shelley Jones, Deb Olson and Amy Cole. They will go to Seattle for training August 11-12. They've also committed to working with all of us for at least the next 6 months to get more members. They will have former LWVUS board member, Sara Diefendorfer, from California coaching local Washington State coaches who will then schedule several conference calls with them. We also practiced the most important part of getting new members (ask them!), and heard several ideas on how to find out whom to ask. For example, during forums and public meetings, have people sign up who want more information on coming events, hold more Voter Registration events and make sure all public events ask members of the audience to join.

Hearing about the activities of the 15 WA State Leagues present (there are 20 Leagues in WA) gave us some more ideas of programs. Most interesting to me was the suggestion to hold an Elected Officials Luncheon with our US representatives and local officials. Could we pull that off? Spokane did. Perhaps we could work with the Chamber, the Foley Institute or other groups?

During lunch we heard about the LWVUS program to *Power the Vote* aimed at protecting voters from voter suppression laws and registering, educating and mobilizing them. This was a great introduction to co-president Linnea Hirst's discussion of the LWVWA effort to have all WA State candidates

represented on Vote 411, the LWVUS site for voter information, for the Primary Election. Since the State decided not to produce a primary voters pamphlet, LWVWA decided it was very important to get this information to the voters. Linnea's committee has been working very hard and we should encourage all Whitman County candidates to get their information to her. They can answer her e-mail or contact the LWVWA at lwwwa@lwwwa.org.

Late Saturday afternoon and evening was time to see LWVUS and LWV Pullman working together on a grant sponsored by the Transparency and Integrity Fund of the Open Society Foundations to promote diversity and independence of judges. The panel of five consisting of four Washington State Judges from the WA State Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Superior Court and District Court and an academic who studies Judicial legitimacy gave us a wide range of opinions on the importance of diversity in the courts. WA State Supreme Court Justice, Charles Wiggins, was both informative and entertaining at dinner as he talked about ways to assure judicial independence. These public events drew a substantial audience and really highlighted the League's educational reach and competence. Special thanks are due Karen Kiessling, Amy Cole and the Foley Institute's Nick Lovrich for organizing these outstanding events.

In case we were not tired, we returned to the Holiday Inn to a choice of caucuses. Alice chose the *Civility in Our Democracy* caucus. This is an effort by LWVWA to train both League members and others in how to moderate forums on contentious issues to keep them civil and productive. Initial training will be Saturday, July 21 in Seattle. Diane Smerdon and Shantel Martinez are planning to attend. The Pullman League can help with travel expenses for another participant so please contact Alice if you would consider doing this. The training will cover many topics from basic best practices and ideas for moderators, to how we react to conflict and positive ways to utilize our reactions. This is followed by six months of help via conference calls, a webinar and another half day session on the East side, as moderators get practice helping or taking the lead role during our public events.

Diane chose the *LWVUS in Action on Campaign Finance* caucus. Although the National League has a committee to address this issue and is opposed to "corporate personhood", no formal resolutions or studies by this committee are ready to be considered at Convention. Additionally, National has no policy towards Citizens United. Currently under consideration, however, is the Amherst League Resolution (Massachusetts) for Convention. It is being considered by National for the Convention agenda. Delegates are urged to consider Rule #11 for Convention which provides guidance on how this issue might be brought up in lieu of a formal Resolution at Convention. All the council delegates present agreed that there is no question this issue will come up in some form at Convention. Everyone agreed that the Campaign Finance issue seriously challenges the League's position concerning open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process. Frustration was expressed for the lack of progress on this issue.

Sunday morning found Alice at the Presidents' breakfast sharing ideas on how to efficiently and effectively run local Leagues and, most important, how to share the job and find a replacement before we burn out. Then more caucuses--Cathy Sakahara of Seattle led a discussion on how the League might develop a workshop, you tube videos, and other messages to help the public keep a critical mindset during the barrage of ads unlimited campaign spending is bringing to this year's elections. Meanwhile Deb Olson and Shelley Jones joined other LWVUS convention delegates to discuss state positions on the many proposals to be aired there.

Finally, it was time to raffle the eight beautiful baskets that Local Leagues had brought to help support the LWV Education Fund and say goodbye to friends new and old. The baskets brought about \$675 dollars and Pullman's own Janet Kendall won a lovely herb garden basket.

Consensus Responses to LWV Privatization Study

Alex Hammond

On April 2, 2012, nine members of Pullman League of Women Voters met at Neill Public Library to respond to the National LWV's consensus questions on the privatization of public and governmental services. On April 26, their responses were reviewed and approved by the Pullman LWV's board; on May 1, the results became part of the national study.

Privatization had been addressed in the Pullman LWW's March 5 public panel at Neill Public Library, a panel organized by Janet Kendall and Alex Hammond and featuring John Sherman, City Supervisor of Pullman; Shelley Richardson, utilities attorney and member of the board of directors of Columbia Grid; and Jon R. Miller, a professor of economics at the University of Idaho. The LWV's national study of this issue sought to "identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good." The Pullman League's discussion group came to consensus on the study's questions, with general agreement on the importance of maintaining citizen oversight, regulation, monitoring, and review of contracts and on-going performance whenever public services are provided by the private sector. While recognizing efforts to privatize many traditional functions of government in this country, the Pullman League stressed the continued importance of federal, state, and local governments' providing public services and monitoring the fairness of marketplaces that involve the common good.

LWVUS Convention

Shelley Jones

LWVUS Convention was held in Washington, DC this past week. Shelley Jones and Deb Olson attended. We attended caucuses, workshops, and many plenary sessions. We attended caucuses on topics such as, Farm Bill 2012, Fossil Fuel Extraction, Water, Human Trafficking, and Our Food & Future. Many studies were suggested as topics to consider. However, one study was passed by the delegation and that is to update the Agriculture position. Additionally, a resolution was passed regarding Citizen's United and a consensus was adopted on Sentence Reform. The budget and PMP were both adopted as presented by the LWVUS Board.

Shelley and Deb both attended a *Power the Vote* workshop where we worked through planning worksheets, but also got to hear ideas from other Leaguers from this state and elsewhere. Shelley was

invited to a reception with the LWVUS President, Elisabeth MacNamara, to discuss how the League can reach out to the “next generation of League leaders”. We also got to hear from fascinating speakers which included Eric Holder (U.S. Attorney General) and Eleanor Norton (Washington, D.C. delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives). As always, Convention proved exciting and very informative.