



# VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

[www.lwvpullman.org](http://www.lwvpullman.org)

February 2017

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

**Executive Committee:** Chair – Anne Lewis, 334-1075; League Voice – Mary Collins, 509-592-6929; Information Coordinator – Libby Walker, 432-4756; **Secretary:** Alice Schroeder, 334-2470; Backup: Jackie Miyasaka, 332-1248; **Treasurer:** Shelley Jones, 432-4328; **Voter Service Team:** Deb Olson, 332-2114 & Maria de Jesus Dixon, 414-535-9996; **Voter Editor:** Susan Daniels, 332-6699; **Finance Coordinator:** Diane Smerdon, 334-5413; **Finance Drive Thank-You:** Lenna Harding, 332-7749; **Membership & Publicity:** Janet Kendall, 432-3368; **Scheduling & Notices:** Barbara Hammond, 332-4104; **Observer Corps Chair:** Judy Stone, 509-878-1519; **TRY Editors:** Susan Daniels, 323-6699 & Judy Stone, 509-878-1519; **Webmaster:** Paul Spencer: 332-6699; **Community Update Editor:** Diane Smerdon, 334-5413; **Nominating Chair:** Anne Lewis, 334-1075; **Brown Bag Coordinator:** Deb Olson, 332-2114

## Meetings and Events

### Climate Change

Date: Monday February 6, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
 Program: Virginia Lohr, Bertie Weddell, and Judy Meuth from Citizens Climate Lobby will discuss climate change and ways to address it.  
 Place: Umpqua Bank  
 Contact: Judy Meuth, 509-592-5213

### Criminal Justice

Date: Monday March 6, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
 Program: A team of WSU students in the Global Scholars Program will present their winning topic, Debtors' Prisons, and some solutions to this problem.  
 Place: Umpqua Bank  
 Contact: Karen Kiessling, 332-4755

### Brown Bags

Dates: Third Thursdays: February 16, March 16, noon to 1:00 p.m.  
 Programs: February – Audra Sims, Superintendent for WA

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State Parks, SE District, Planning and funding our parks  
March – Director of Whitman Public Health, Troy Henderson, Dental services for the poor.  
Place: Community Congregational Church, Opal and Campus  
Contact: Deb Olson, 332-4755

### **Board Meetings**

Date: Fourth Tuesdays, February 28, March 28, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.  
Place: Daily Grind, back room  
Chair: Anne Lewis, 334-1075

### **Pi(e) Day**

Date: Tuesday March 14, 11:00 a.m.  
Program: Celebrate Pi and Pie  
Place: Home of Anne Lewis, 915 SE Skylark Ct.  
Contact: Anne Lewis, 334-1075

### **Book Club**

Date: Monday April 17, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.  
Program: *Rise of the Rocket Girls* by Nathalia Holt  
Place: TBD  
Contact: Anne Lewis, 334-1075

**Read your VOTER with your calendar next to you so you write in the meetings immediately. You are what makes the League a success.**

## **Climate Change and Policies to Address It** **Judy Meuth**

The February 6 meeting will focus on climate change and potential policies to address it. Virginia Lohr, Bertie Weddell, and Judy Meuth, members of the Palouse Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL), will serve as panel members. The panel will discuss predicted impacts of climate change to the natural world, human activities like agriculture and other industry, and groups of people, as well as how those impacts are already happening. Panel members will also share information on Americans' views on climate change and on several proposed policy solutions to it, including regulations, cap and trade, and taxes. The panel will concentrate on one solution, placing a revenue-neutral fee on carbon that would be returned to Americans via a monthly dividend. This proposal has garnered support across the political spectrum.

## **March's Monday Meeting** **Karen Kiessling**

Hold on to your hats Leaguers! You have a real treat in store on March 6th when we host the winners of an international competition who have returned from speaking to the assembled United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

That's right. A team of students at WSU who are in the Global Scholars Program chose a topic of international importance, researched the issue, wrote and presented their research to a juried panel from around the country who named them the winners. Therefore they traveled to Geneva over their Thanksgiving break from classes and spoke to the assembled representatives at the United Nations as well as three separate meetings with Non-Governmental Organizations who serve in several countries.

What was their winning topic? Debtor's Prisons. Specifically economic discrimination in the criminal justice system, which creates a modern day "debtor's prison." The issue arises as people are ticketed or have a fine from a criminal conviction but are unable to pay the fine and are referred to probation. Their bill begins to build up more than the actual ticket as they are forced to pay interest, probation charges and other fines. People in poverty or who are unaware of their rights suffer a heavier burden than those who are not in poverty and therefore the practice is discriminatory. Poor people caught in this system go deeper and deeper in debt with no hope of climbing out of the hole.

What solutions did the team create to suggest to the members of the UN? This issue affects every country, everywhere in the world, including the United States. To hear what this group of outstanding students finds as solutions, be sure to attend the March 6th meeting and bring friends. It will be worthwhile evening of learning an issue and discussing solutions that embody justice.

See you there!

Note: The WSU Global Campus, of which the Global Scholar's Program is a part, has just been ranked in the top 15 programs in the country among the 311 schools examined.

## Third Annual Pi(e) Day

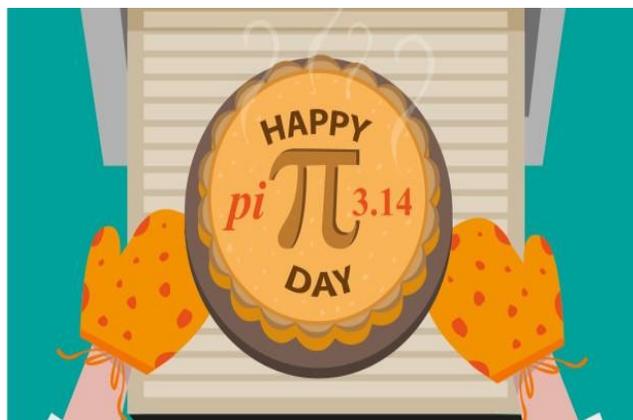
What: Pi(e) Day!

When: Tuesday, March 14, 2017

Time: 11 am

Where: Home of Anne Lewis- 915 SE Skylark Street, Pullman

What to Bring: A pie (sweet, savory, or something even more creative).



This is an opportunity to enjoy and celebrate delicious food, warm conversation, and the good things in life. Historically, there is an abundance of food. Please, if you are in any way drawn to this event and baking or procuring a pie is more stressful than happy when this day arrives, still come!

## Report on the December 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting Karen Kiessling

The December 5th meeting of the League was dedicated to the topic of the civics education that we provide to Pullman High School Seniors and to the Spokane Falls Community College Political Science classes. The members of the team of Leaguers who provide the information and lead the

discussions for our students did the same thing for the members of the League and the public who came to the Umpqua Bank meeting room to first enjoy holiday treats and hot drinks and then to find seats to begin the civics class.

We were very fortunate to have two Girl Scout troops present the colors for the start of our class time together. They presented the flag of the State of Washington and of United States and lead us in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. They also recited the Girl Scout pledge as an example of the high standards and goals of Girl Scouting. Several of the girls and their parents stayed for the program which added to our pleasure.

Our civics classes start with the voting history of the United States by using the audience members as the various classes of voters over time. We do that with candy bars each person chooses and, while that is a sweet beginning, it also introduces several issues -- how it feels to watch while others get to vote and you do not, how arbitrary and unfair are the systems that deny voting rights to others, and how very recently all this unfair behavior was being practiced in the United States. And of course the threat of it reappearing.

We next administer the literacy test used in the US until the mid -60's and after the students struggle with trick questions we walk through the answers, underling how arbitrary and unfair all of this testing is.

We talk about the voting issues before the Supreme Court of the United States and we share information about systems that serve as fine examples of open and progressive practices. A discussion of gerrymandering is included.

We had a voting trivia test to wrap up our evening because we end our classes by registering voters and that was not the case in the general public meeting. Discussion and stories of various places and practices made the evening an even richer experience.

## **Report on the State and Local Planning Meeting**

### **Paul Spencer**

The State and Local planning meeting was held on Monday January 12 at Libby Walker's home. The purpose was to re-examine the Pullman League and Washington State League positions and to provide feedback to the Washington State League organization about their positions. On a cold winter evening with a lot of accumulated snow on the ground, the League members participating were Libby Walker, Lucy Linden, Deborah Olson, Susan Daniels, Alice Schroeder, Anne Lewis and Paul Spencer.

The purpose of this examination was to:

- Make minor revisions for incorrect grammar or confusing wording of positions OR
- Decide if a position is ripe for action such as lobbying, writing an initiative, a citizen education program, etc. OR
- Consider whether an update to the position is needed. (This is a serious undertaking since a committee is needed to gather information, talk to experts, group discussions, writing a document, consensus and so on.) OR
- Decide if there is some area which is not included in the current positions for which a new study should be done. (As with the updates described above, this requires a serious effort.)

We examined the "2015-2017 State Program: Positions in Brief" and rapidly scanned the "Program in

Action 2015-2017, both of which are available on the State LWV website [lwvwa.org](http://lwvwa.org) and decided that the positions seemed clearly written and adequate. We therefore concluded that we would recommend State League action rather than updating studies or making new studies. We recommend education and lobbying for three areas:

- 1) **Climate change and its probable and possible consequences**, and countermeasures to both prevent further climate change and to abate the effects of climate change. These could include promoting advance planning for such countermeasures and methods to decrease use of fossil fuels such as a carbon fee and dividend or a carbon tax. Despite their economic cost, if early steps like these are not adopted soon, the eventual costs to the U.S. and to the world may be much much larger.
- 2) **Education** -- adequate State funding for primary, secondary, and university education.
- 3) **Health Care** -- access for everyone at reasonable cost.

For our Local League the group recommended education and actions in two areas:

- 1) **Environmental Quality** -- including climate change, water use for households including sewer and storm water, and single stream recycling without glass.
- 2) **Health care and Hospitals** -- this includes a number of Whitman County health care issues which resulted from the Poverty Study completed in 2016.

## Donating to League Shelley Jones

Did you know you can make recurring monthly donations to LWV-Pullman?

Many banks today have on-line bill pay system that allows you to make recurring payments. You can utilize your bank's on-line bill pay system to write LWV-Pullman a check. *If you don't know how to set-up monthly recurring payments, please contact your bank to find out.*

Here is some information to help you set-up the recurring payment:

- Company Name: LWV-Pullman
- Account number: Your Last Name
- LWV-Pullman address is: P.O. 366 Pullman, WA 99163.
- Phone Number: (509)-432-3428 (Shelley Jones, LWV-Pullman Treasurer)
- Email: [shelley.jones@gmail.com](mailto:shelley.jones@gmail.com) (Shelley Jones, LWV-Pullman, Treasurer)

Once this is set-up, your bank will write an actual paper check and mail it to the LWV-Pullman's PO Box. Then, our Treasurer deposits the paper check at our bank.

Again, if you don't know how to use your banks on-line system, please contact your bank. For other information contact LWV-Pullman Treasurer, Shelley Jones, at 509-432-3428 or [shelley.jones@gmail.com](mailto:shelley.jones@gmail.com).

## Action Workshop Report Karen Kiessling

2017 Action Workshop was held at St. Andrew's church in Spokane, WA, from 9:30 – 3:00 p.m. on the first Saturday in January. Paul Spencer and Karen Kiessling represented the Pullman League for the

day. The goals of the session were three:

1. Prepare participants to plan an informed, active role in Advocacy during the 2017 Legislative Session.
2. Identify specific roles for Advocates/participants that match their passion.
3. Strengthen relationships between participants and Lobby Team, legislators and each other.

Our two lobbyists , Nancy Sapiro and Pam Crone, spoke to the assembled group by video, giving their take on the upcoming session and answering questions. The prognosis was grim, the session must deal with McCleary and the partisan bickering will continue. Advocates for programs and getting the work done are absolutely necessary.

A panel addressed Making Democracy Work and they were excellent and interesting. Vicki Dalton, Spokane County Auditor presented her office by calling it "Ballots R Us" and then gave a rousing talk that made me yearn for such an elected official in Whitman County. She is an officer in the auditor's association and was very excited about our civics program, giving me her card and asking that we consider making a presentation of the class to the state meeting next spring. She and I will be in touch about it.

Jan Baker, the Chair of the Political Action Committee of the NAACP of Spokane spoke about the work that they are focusing on, one of which is the Burns grant of \$1 million to deal with criminal justice issues.

Ben Stuckart, President of the Spokane City Council, talked about his intense dislike of money in politics and told a strong story about his own candidacy and being offered really significant sums of money to change his position on issues. He was cynical and felt that democracy was not working and needs our help as never before.

Liz Moore, Director of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane was the keynote speaker and spent her time giving a pitch for the Peace and Justice League which was disappointing to me. She could have done much more with her time.

We broke into small groups to talk about various issues before the Legislature and were reminded that our lobbyists told us that one of the bright spots in this session is that there are 10 new senators! Ten. That connotes some flexibility. The House has 25 women, the Senate is divided 50 to 48 R's to D's. The issues we talked about in small group were 1. Elections/Voting 2. Climate and Environment 3. Social Justice and Economic Justice (I was in charge of this group and one woman is convinced economic justice is going to happen -- its time has come. May she be right) 4. Health Care 5. Education and Revenue.

I left the meeting at the finish of the table talks to drive home -- hitting the raging blizzard and whiteout just south of Colfax. I was soooo happy to drive into my garage but I was inspired by the day as I always am. Go next year!!!

## **Brown Bag Meetings**

### **Deb Olson**

**December 15<sup>th</sup>** was a very nasty day but our two speakers from WSU, Brad Jaeckel from the organic Farm and Deb Pherson from Tukey Orchard, made it to our meeting. Unfortunately only four League

members made it. The program was excellent and had lots of very good information. Deb started us off with some good graphics on how the orchard will be impacted by the airport. The orchard will lose 43.2 acres out of a current total of 70.6 acres, and a loss of 1286 trees. 2872 trees will remain. The trees lost include all apple varieties, all pears, and the old cherries at the top of the hill. New cherry plantings on the west side should remain as well as the Fuji apples. Also lost will be several ornamental trees. There are currently four options being considered. The Orchard is part of the Dept. of Horticulture and was intended as a field lab not the fantastic community resource it became. However less actual field work is being done now.

Brad explained that the Organic Farm is actually a teaching farm within the Crop & Soils Department. The farm receives no funding from WSU other than Brad's salary. In 2016 the farm was run by all student labor. The farm received a pledge from the Eggert Family (Pacific Foods). The farm is completely self-funded from sales of produce to the public through a farm stand on the property and a subscription service of 90 members. Approximately 1/3 of the organic sales go to WSU dining services and WSU Athletic Dining Hall. The CO-OP also buys WSU Organic produce. Sales of certified organic seeds are another source of revenue. The Bee club maintains hives at the farm and sells the honey.

Of the 30 acres of land assigned to the Organic farm, 10 are certified organic. Certification is very strict and within national standards. About 17 acres on the north side of the access road are still being grazed. There is also a wetland habitat that is being maintained for research. One of the requirements is to enhance biodiversity of native species to support various pollinators. The next planned project is to build a greenhouse for hydroponics. The current hoop houses are used to extend the growing season but are unheated.

**January 19** Roberta Kramer, Assistant Superintendent of Pullman Schools, gave us an update on the McCleary decision and the fight in the legislature on school funding. She started with some background. This fight to get the state to adequately fund schools has been around a long time (since 1978 Doren Decision). The paramount duty of the state (according to the State Constitution) is K through 12 education.

The Supreme Court has held the state in contempt many times and since August 2015 has fined the state \$100,000 a day. The deadline for a complete plan is the 2017-2018 budget (this legislative session). So far the Education Funding Task Force is deadlocked. The legislature is taking credit for all the added funding but state funding levels are still not equal to the 2007 levels.

Levy inequality is a problem. On average about 25% of school funding is from local levies. Levy money once just paid for school extras but now cover just about everything. One reason is unfunded or underfunded state requirements such as yearly health inspection, and transportation. The problem is individuals who live in districts with large tax base (population) pay a lower percentage of their income towards schools.

One of the chronic problems in the schools is teacher shortage, even here in Pullman. Teachers with specialized certifications such as Special Ed are in even more demand. One of the problems with recruiting teachers to WA is the certification requirements. WA has the highest standards in the country which sounds good but makes it difficult to recruit even experienced teachers from other states. Pullman is recruiting teachers now for an anticipated shortage next year.

What can League members and the public do? Contact your local representatives and tell them how important this is. Also contact other representatives: Senator Andy Billig, Representatives Marcus Riccelli and Laurie Dolan. For talking points go to [www.waschoolexcellence.org](http://www.waschoolexcellence.org).

Watch for the notice of an upcoming open house at the new High School. Pullman Schools appreciates the great community support.

## **Upcoming Brown Bags**

### **Deb Olson**

**February 16** Audra Sims, Superintendent SE District WA State Parks, will talk about the comprehensive Planning for State Parks, the CAMP process and funding problems for state parks. A series of three open public meetings will be held within the District. The SE District includes everything south of Spokane and east of the Tri Cities, and includes some of our favorite spots, e.g. Palouse Falls and Steptoe Butte.

**March 16** Troy Henderson from Whitman County Health Services will speak on dental health care services for the poor in Whitman County and answer any other questions you may have for him.

## **Observer Corps Update**

### **Judy Stone**

An “end of year report for 2016” will be sent to the State League highlighting the fact that our Observer Corps has grown over the past several years into a vigorous, active group that involves about a third of our members. December and early January weather caused many meeting cancellations and many members to make the decision not to risk the snowy, icy roads. Here are excerpts from two reports from Observers who may have used dogsleds. One is a brand-new Observer, Richard Law, of a newly observed agency – the Whitman County Planning Commission.

## **Whitman County Planning Commission – December 7, 2016**

### **Observer: Richard Law**

Agenda Item III. Reclassification of 113 acres of land from “Farm and Agricultural” to “Open Space”. Tom Kammerzell’s property: part of it wetland mitigation of airport expansion, part conservation easement. Change would lower the taxes on the parcel. Motion to pass issue on to the Board of County Commissioners was approved.

Agenda Item V.d. The creation of two commercial lots on the Pullman-Moscow corridor will require removal of a great deal of rock, possibly to be used in constructing the airport. Removing the rock will give the temporary appearance of a quarry.

### Agenda Items VI.

Slight (*editorial*) modifications of the Cluster Residential District Code and Associated Comprehensive Plan language to conform to state law. No formal vote; changes will be submitted to public on Jan. 4, 2017 (public workshop).

Commission members discussed pending changes in water use policy/laws (RCWs) and referenced a recent WA court decision (“Hearst Decision”).

## **Port of Whitman County Board of Commissioners, January 5, 2017 Observer: Alice Schroeder**

The Port is opposed to removing the Snake Columbia River Dams. They are asking the Corps to consider the economic impact of stranded infrastructure and the environmental impact of a large increase in trucking and rail use, which apparently have not been considered. Commissioner Kammerzell will give talks at the Pullman Farm-City Day and the Ag. Show.

Work is continuing on selling buildings at Wilma and renovating and renting space in the Pullman Industrial Park. Boyer Park fees were approved with no change from 2016.

Tom Kammerzell reported on the PCC Rail Commission meeting in Spokane. He is pleased with the co-operation and action now being taken. Bids for a transfer facility in Airway Heights is underway. This will allow shipments to move smoothly and take many trucks off I-90. There are plans to work on new links to the McCoy loading facility.

Paul Agidius from Avista discussed working with the Port to get fiber to rural towns, businesses and homes. Abandonment of old technology (i.e. coaxial cable) by small businesses has been very expensive for them. They want to work with a stable entity like the Port. Some legislation will be needed. They will meet with Port staff in the next two months.

**Note: Getting fiber to rural areas is important for economic development and schools. The League should probably try to inform themselves and the public of why public money should be used to get this going. Perhaps a meeting with the Port and Avista and a legislator next year?**

## **Book Club Susan Daniels**

The League Book Club had its second meeting to discuss *Notorious RBG* by Irin Carmon & Shana Knizhnik. It was a small group but we had a lively and interesting discussion of RBG's life and her approach to achieving equality for women,. The book also gave insight into how the Supreme Court works. We recommend the book highly.

For our next book we decided to read *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars* by Nathalia Holt. The next meeting will be April 17. If you like to read and like to discuss books, please join us.