

**CrossPoints 2011  
LWVWA Convention  
The Shilo Inn Suites, Richland  
May 20 – 22, 2011**

**ACTION – ADVOCACY—VOTER SERVICE—ISSUES—STUDIES**

**Overview:**

The Convention, held in Richland on the banks of the Columbia River, was a stimulating, informative, and at times awe-inspiring occasion. The roll-call of local Leagues was most interesting--our League colleagues are all very busy with the work of the LWV, and the variety was inspiring. Sixteen local Leagues were present, with 55 delegates and 9 LWVWA Board members. Clydia Cuykendall and Pat Dickason attended as delegates from LWVTC and Karen Verrill attended on Saturday to represent *The State We're In* (TSWI).

The business of Convention proceeded according to LWV processes--the LWVWA Board met on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> to do pre-convention work. LWVWA President Linnea Hirst presided over the Convention. The current state programs, and the proposed new program were proposed for adoption and subsequently passed. New state officers were elected for 2011-2013: Linnea Hirst (Seattle) and Kim Abel (Kitsap), co-presidents; Pat Dickason (Thurston), Vice-President; Brenda Hirschi (Mason), Secretary; Gail Hiestand (Kitsap), Treasurer; and Directors Pam Behring, (Spokane Area); Sarah Crosby (San Juan); Myra Howrey, (Kitsap); Karen Kiessling, (Pullman); Judy Ostrow, (Seattle); Kathy Sakahara, (Seattle); Penney Van Vleet, (Clallam). The Nominating Committee will be chaired by Susan Eidschink, (Tacoma-Pierce).

The state budget was proposed and subsequently adopted, with the provision that the Per Member Payment (PMP) which local leagues pay to the state could be raised by \$1.00 in 2012 should it become necessary. The revised By-Laws were proposed and adopted, permitting the Board to do e-mail voting and hold Board Meetings via conference call (3.2, 5.2 and 5.3). Marcia Merrins, LWVUS Board of Directors addressed membership issues and spoke to the Convention about the television ads that LWVUS ran concerning recent votes taken on the Clean Air Act by Senators Claire McCaskill and Scott Brown. Norm Turrill brought greetings from the LWVUS Board of Directors. Clydia Cuykendall and Pat Dickason offer the following summaries:

Workshops were presented on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday May 21<sup>st</sup> afternoons. Topics on Friday afternoon included *League Basics, Coalitions, League Discussion Lists, Websites and Social Media, Lobbying, Program Planning, Civil Discourse in Partisan Times, Voter Service/Voter Registration, Writing Ballot Issue Positions*. Topics on Saturday afternoon included Marcia Merrins' *The League, Non-Partisanship and Elections in a New Era* and *Membership*. Other workshops were on *Education Fund, Publicity, Fundraising, and Moderator Training*.

**Plenary Session (May 20, 2011).** John Fox, Mayor of Richland, commended the League for the quality of its issues analysis. Norman Turrill, LWVUS Board, told us that the national web site will be updated by this Fall, and that it will include a clearinghouse for local and state League studies. *Vote 411* is being expanded to present candidate and ballot issue information. This will be available to local Leagues by subscription.

The number of Leagues present at this session was 16 of 21 and there were 55 delegates. Reading and Resolution Committees were appointed. Convention rules and the agenda were adopted. The roll call of local Leagues was held, at which their activities and achievements were reported. As a result, Clydia was approached by Mason County to consider a joint event, and by Yakima County to collaborate on our respective "home rule" projects. Local Leagues will be asked to review and respond to the Conservation District Study consensus questions this Fall. New program proposals for 2011-2013 include an update of the state League's energy positions with an emphasis on biomass and concurrence with the Seattle League's positions on privatization. By-Law changes were proposed to allow electronic means of meeting and taking action. Gail Hiestand, LWVWA Treasurer reported on the current budget, stating that

approximately \$250,000 has been spent this biennium, with an equal amount of expenses. The next biennial budget is about \$20,000 less than the current budget.

Marcia Merrins, LWVUS Board member, explained the LWVUS TV ads, run in Massachusetts and Missouri criticizing MA Senator Scott Brown and MO Senator Claire McCaskill for their votes to amend the Clean Air Act to preclude the EPA from regulating green-house gasses. These ads have been criticized by some League members as a violation of our non-partisan policy.

### **Friday, May 20:**

**Ice Age Flood (George Last**, Pacific Northwest National Lab hydrologist and President of the Lake Lewis Chapter of the Ice Age Flood Institute). Why are there huge dry canyons and waterfalls and exotic boulders of puzzling origin in Eastern Washington? J. Hailen Betz (1882-1981) proposed in 1923 the “outrageous” idea that they were created by a catastrophic flood, but this explanation was not accepted until the late 1960’s. The source of the water was a huge lake in the Missoula Basin whose existence was proven in 1940 by Joseph T. Pardee, 1971-1960). The last ice age was 2.6 million years ago (“mya”). The southern- most glaciers reached Olympia.

Ice dams created Glacial Lakes Missoula and Columbia (each about 2000 feet deep), which drained in 48 hours when the Missoula ice dam broke, flooding the Columbia Glacial Lake, which in turn overflowed into much of Eastern Washington. There are giant ripples in the Camas Prairie and at least three channels leading from the former location of the Columbia Glacial Lake. A temporary lake known as Lake Lewis was formed while the flood drained through the Wallula Gap into the Columbia River which carried the flood waters out to sea.

Lake Lewis filled the Quincy and Ephrata Basins, 900 feet deep over Tri-Cities, extending as far as Yakima in the west and the upper Walla Walla valley in the east, for about a month when the ice age flood occurred. Scientists are studying the distribution of mammoth bones (killed in the flood) to determine its scope. The evidence indicates there were at least 40 floods over a 3000 year period originating from Glacial Lake Missoula and caused by ice dam failures. An Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail is under development, as part of the 2009 Federal Omnibus Public Lands Bill, pending funds availability.

**Lobbying Workshop. (Kim Abel)** Lobbying includes testifying before a legislative committee, meeting with legislators to find out what they care about (especially when they are in their home districts), working with coalitions, and building relationships (especially with legislators’ aides). The lobby team meets weekly in person or by phone to prioritize issues for focus. It is very effective to find someone directly affected by legislation to testify with you. Lobbying starts with local positions, but state and national positions can also be used. Any member can use the League’s positions if they are quoted accurately. If you are a member writing to a legislator, always let your lobby team advocate know and always ask for a response from the legislator.

**Coalitions Workshop. (Elizabeth Davis)** Local leagues don’t have to get LWVWA approval to join local coalitions, but they do need to follow the LWVWA coalition guidelines. The benefits of coalitions are having more influence and building relationships. A disadvantage is that other members of the coalition may not be supportive of other League positions. This is OK, if the coalition’s goal is limited and clearly defined. Some of the LWVWA coalitions have been going for a decade, but they are not viewed as permanent. LWVTC should prepare a list of its coalition memberships, which currently include the Sustainability Roundtable of Thurston County and the Thurston Early Childhood Coalition, but there may be others. (Information about Coalitions is found in *LWVWA Policies and Procedures*, page 20 followed by the Coalition membership form, page 22 available on the LWVWA website, members section).

**Website and Electronic Media Workshop. (Norman Turrill, LWVUS Board)** Consider registering an individual account on the LWVUS website, so you will have access to the members-only section and can participate in issue focused listservs. The speaker described the League’s Easy Web, a service provided by LWVCA, which is what the LWVTC uses for our local web site. The cost is \$200 per year. The important part is to post good content and keep it up to date. Our websites are our public face, and they are a primary component of member recruitment. Consider using student interns to build or maintain

your web site. The home page should be provocative, so visitors will read more. Facebook and Twitter can add to your outreach, especially to younger generations. Consider assigning someone to do five posts a month, and to monitor third party posts, so inappropriate posts can be removed by the administrator.

**Civil Discourse in Partisan Times: (Mary Dumas)** presented information about “where we go from here”. The LWV is widely recognized as able to hold/chair civil discourse on public issues. The essential ingredients of presiding over civil discourse are to be able to regulate the cognitive and emotional information available and bring our best to the situation. Mary noted that productive conflict is possible. Some aspects of what “gets in the way” of productive conflict might be the possible pain of “learning in public”, difficulties in getting heard, and difficulties in hearing others. Pace ourselves .....it’s helpful to hear differing views---ask members to bring someone who has a differing view to a meeting.

Identify how LWV is currently called upon by local and state governments to support citizen education and engagement in public involvement. When LWV hosts forums or prepares voter education resources, what technical information and resources do you rely on, or wish were available to your League? Perhaps a publicly available venue, publicity or a strong moderator?

**Awards.** The first day concluded with a dinner address by Marcia Merrins, LWVUS Board, focusing on how to continue the League’s legacy of voter service. Sue Lean received the Voter Award and Margie Reeves was recognized as a 50 year LWV member.

### **Saturday, May 21:**

**Plenary Session (May 21, 2011).** Sixteen Leagues and 44 delegates were present. The proposed By-Law changes were reviewed in detail. A motion to consider concurrence with the LWV Seattle privatization positions passed. There is a new lobby portfolio chair for the Columbia Basin (Railene Gold). Speakers did surveys on how many Leagues had liability insurance (only one) and how many Leagues awarded scholarships (only one).

**Science and Public Policy (Mike Schwenk,VP Battelle).** He began with a funny story about political “groupies” when he served on the school board (parents zealously advocating for their children when and wherever they could find him). Battelle is a 501(c)(3) charitable remainder trust devoted to funding research, including running some of the US National Laboratories (which emerged from the Manhattan Project after WWII). Battelle runs six of the seventeen national labs, including the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL).

PNNL employs 5000 people in the Tri-Cities area and has an annual budget of \$1 billion, mostly from the US Department of Energy. PNNL chooses research based on relevance and impact. For example, PNNL is researching the ways biomass can replace petroleum. This project is a joint venture between Washington State, Washington State U and PNNL called the Bio-products and Energy Science Lab. Another PNNL research project is investigating microbial processes for cleaning up contamination, including radioactive contamination. This project has human health applications, too. PNNL does nuclear forensics, much of which is classified, but the speaker said all of our borders are protected by nuclear detection devices. PNNL also has a project on data intensive analytics, which has potential application to smart grids for electricity distribution. PNNL runs an experimental high school that focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Admission is by lottery. Schwenk concluded by saying only a well-educated populace can make the public policy decisions necessary to manage the issues that arise from the kind of research done by PNNL.

**Climate Change and Humans** (Kathy Hibbard, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory). She uses “integrated assessment models” to present options. The models are risk management tools, looking at the interactions between human and natural earth systems. They are constructed based on how we believe a system, such as the carbon cycle works, but they can’t observe or predict the future. For example, stabilizing CO2 concentrations at any level means that global CO2 emissions must peak, and then decline forever.

Hibbard reviewed carbon reservoirs, the largest being unconventional fossil fuels, such as shale containing oil. She said the health effects of methane, another green-house gas, are not known, but it is explosive! CO2 can be stabilized by carbon capture and storage (CCS), expansion of renewable energy (wind, wave, solar, hydro and biomass) and conservation, but the major developing countries lack CO2 storage capacity, so CCS must be a global system to work. Without CCS, we will be forced to become more dependent on nuclear energy, and we will need to devote substantially more land to bio-mass energy production. There have been experiments to reduce global temperatures by putting aerosols in the atmosphere or mirrors in space to reflect sunlight, but the impact of these measures on growing crops is uncertain. Her conclusion is that we have to make lifestyle changes and we have to have a diverse energy portfolio, which includes CCS. There are no single solutions—rather, we need to make careful and thoughtful choices.

**Future of Columbia River** (Jill Conrad, Tribal Affairs, US Department of Energy). Tribal people define themselves by family, so Ms. Conrad, who is a lawyer, gave us her Nez Pierce family history, seven generations back to Chief Lawyer (so called by White people because he negotiated with them), of which the last four generations are college educated. The Columbia River was a vibrant Native American trading center for millennia—salmon, sturgeon, eel figured prominently. The very existence of Hanford has preserved at least ten archeological sites. The discovery of Kennewick man proved humans have been in the Tri-Cities area for over 9,000 years. She told us the Coyote story about the formation of the Columbia River. She quoted Chief Joseph, “You do not inherit the earth from your parents, but you borrow it from your children”. She showed some dramatic Columbia River photos from [www.garys-hangups.com](http://www.garys-hangups.com).

**Non-Partisanship and Elections** (Marcia Merrins, LWVUS Board). She reminded us to review and clarify *League Basics* with all new Board members. Keep in mind the visibility associated with specific political activities and the possible effects on neighboring Leagues, who share the same elected officials.

What limitations should be put on Board members? People holding visible positions such as the President, Voter Service, League Spokesperson should be strictly non-partisan. Consider restrictions on seeking office, making financial contributions to candidates, and circulating petitions. To avoid accusations of partisanship, be sensitive to highly charged issues, establish a record of non-partisanship in the community by working with groups that do not agree with the League, and explain the difference between voter service and advocacy.

The best practices for holding candidate forums: know federal, state and local laws governing them; review criteria for candidate participation; conduct forums in a neutral, non-partisan manner; institute moderator training; partner with co-sponsors, provided they don't do endorsements; and disclaim responsibility for links to edited content or unauthorized or partial re-broadcasts, blogs, or U-Tube videos.

Marcia reviewed the following scenarios:

1. Responding to candidate concerns about organizational biases – It's not about the League, it's about you.
2. Responding to candidate charges that the moderator is partisan – The questions come from the membership of the sponsors, not the moderator.
3. Responding to comments on the questions – The moderator should not comment on the questions.
4. Refusal by candidates to participate in a forum – You can't have only one candidate, but you can let him or her make a statement at the forum.

**Membership Workshop.** (Marcia Merrins, LWVUS) Marcia handed out a tip sheet, also available electronically from LWVWA. The challenge for the League is that it has experienced a thirty year membership decline, but many of those lost are short term members. After a couple of years, the retention rate is high. Why do people join? They want to do something; to be a part of something; to learn something, or they are curious. Think about how we present ourselves to potential new members—be hospitable and create a welcoming organization. Make them feel their time is valuable. To welcome new members:

- avoid the use of lingo;
- provide key information; and

- conduct an orientation or assign a mentor.

Your welcome package should include a welcome letter from the President, calendar of activities, contact list, interest form, and a small League item, such as a button or pin.

Introduce new members at meetings and/or in your newsletter. Wear nametags. Make a personal call or contact, and consider establishing an “ambassador” committee. Tell new members what you are doing, ask them about their skills and interests, and involve them quickly.

Also, acknowledge the work of members and help them have fun. Have a social event once in a while—an ice cream social, bagels and biscotti with LWV... Think about conducting a member satisfaction survey---what public issues are high- priority, what is the best way to contact members, what are professional, personal talents, what other groups are members active in, and so forth. To renew members, ask, follow-up and reconnect.

**Publicity Workshop** (Chris Sabula, Editor, Tri-City Herald). Call up your local editor and ask what he or she wants (editorials are usually about 600 words). For all content, identify what is noteworthy. Develop a good working relationship with local reporters, know how to contact the media, understand media deadlines and their editorial rights. Know how to be interviewed (reporters control the questions, but you control the answers). Fact sheets are helpful. Some sample press releases were shared, showing the good, the bad and the ugly. Press conferences are not interesting to newspapers because they can't beat timeliness of on-air or on-line coverage. The Tri-City Herald has a free events calendar. The Kitsap Sun runs free ads for the League and sponsors community blogs. The Snohomish League has a one-half hour radio program every month.

**Fundraising/Friendraising** (Penney Van Vleet, Ginna Owens) Penney suggested starting with “building the case” for LWV support. She then suggested developing letters to send to LWV member’s friends with a note from the LWV member. Members should then make follow-up calls. Penny also suggested actively scouting for potential funders. One of the things to raise funds for might be a scholarship fund, paying for 1/2 of student’s LWV membership, holding raffles.

Ginna Owens focused on “Managing for More—strategies for fundraising and friendraising”---a “Cultivation HiWay”. Ginna suggested that points of entry to LWV might be forums, café conversations, work parties, soirees. Friendraising is based on 1) confidence in the organization; 2) Passion for the LWV; 3) Voluntary opportunity to share names, addresses. Invite a friend to attend a LWV event. After attending the LWV event, contact your friend and ask “what did you think?” Ask if your friend knows anyone else to contact about membership, and then do that. Ginna suggested working to establish a “Leadership Circle” of people who donate \$500 – 1,000 per year to LWV.

**Washington State Redistricting** (Lura Powell, Chair of the WA State Redistricting Committee). The second day concluded with this dinner speaker, who described the effort currently underway to redistrict Washington’s congressional and state legislative districts to reflect the results of the 2010 census. The Commission is comprised of two Republicans and two Democrats appointed by the Legislature and the non-voting Chair. The criteria for redrawing the boundaries are established in federal and state law. The primary criteria is that districts should encompass equal numbers of people. The Commission is currently holding public forums across the state and will make its proposals to the Legislature by November. Some of the forums can be viewed at the Committee’s website, [www.redistricting.wa.gov](http://www.redistricting.wa.gov).

### **Sunday, May 22:**

**Plenary Session (May 22, 2011).** Sixteen Leagues and 60 delegates were present. Current state positions were re-adopted. The proposed energy position update with an emphasis on biomass was adopted. A motion to concur with the LWV Seattle positions on privatization was adopted with minor amendments. A motion to adopt the By-Law amendments to facilitate electronic meetings and actions passed. The general budget was adopted, with the addition that the LWVWA Board can increase the PMP by \$1 in the 2012-2013 year if the Board finds it necessary. The proposed slate of directors and officers was approved. It was reported the raffle earned \$1,063. A resolution passed directing the State President to appoint a committee to disseminate information about the *United Citizen* decision of the US Supreme Court (corporate entities have the right of free speech) and to advocate that it be over-ruled.

The latter will be difficult because the Supreme Court's interpretations of the Bill of Rights cannot be reversed by Congress. A resolution requesting the LWVUS to refrain from running negative public ads that target individuals passed, after considerable debate. Specifics of this resolution will be available on the state web-site when the Convention minutes are in final form. Remember to report new local officers and directors to the LWVWA.