



VOTER

Volume 4, Issue 5

APRIL 2010

CALENDAR

Monday, April 12
 Olympia Climate Change meeting
 Olympia Center
 7-9:30 pm
Topic: Shorelines and sea-level rise

Thursday, April 22
 LWVTC General mtg.
 Traditions Café
 6 pm
Topic: County Government

Cancelled
 Please note that **DATE HAS CHANGED BACK**
 to the 4th Thursday of the month

Saturday, May 22
 LWVWA Council
 Bellingham

Thursday, May 27
 LWVTC Annual mtg.
 Coach House
 5:30 pm
 Potluck Dinner

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 Dawn Brooks Gibbs
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NOTE DATE CHANGE -BACK TO 4TH THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

Mark your calendar

Lwvtc
 General meeting
APRIL 22, 2010
Topic:
COUNTY GOVERNMENT

CANCELLED

Imagine a county that could:

- Assure a clean, healthy environment in which the water and air are pure;
- Develop in ways that house people closer together and jobs closer to housing, with pedestrian amenities, so that people do not have to use cars as much; and forests, farmlands and shorelines are preserved
- Sustain a healthy economy employing the region's physical assets, historic features (such as the Brew House) and green buildings;
- Support a vibrant and diverse arts community;
-

- Serve as an appealing Gateway to the Olympics and Pacific Ocean; and
- Create a sense of belonging, in which citizens come together around projects and are fully aware of what they need to contribute to the community?

Thurston County can't achieve this vision in its current structure. That was the conclusion reached by our Study Group on Local Government, who will be reporting to the general membership meeting on ~~Thursday, April 22.~~

Please join us at that meeting to hear their report; discuss what alternatives could be available to make Thurston County,

and potentially the cities, more accountable, representative, and transparent and financially sound; and to discuss the viability of promoting a home rule charter at this time.

The study group worked for several months to produce this report. They considered previous work done by the League on home rule charter efforts, analyzed current issues and reviewed a variety of alternative governance options to reach their conclusion – that a home rule charter, though not an easy endeavor, is necessary.

The group's full report will be online after April 1 at our web site, www.lwvthurston.org.

Cynthia Stewart

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

LWVTC 2010 ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 27, 2010

COACH HOUSE

5:30 PM

POTLUCK DINNER

Open GOvernment in the electrOnic AGE

Come and watch Tim Ford, Open Government ombudsmen, from the Attorney General's office and I discuss open government and the Public Records Act on May 27th at the Thurston County League of Women Voter's annual meeting. Tim Ford will review the importance of open government and transparency. I will be reviewing the cost to the tax payer in terms of implementation and data storage.

The concept of open government is part of our inherent democratic foundation that government is of the people, by the people and for the people. When the original initiative and the Public Records Act (PRA) passed in the early 1970s, no one could have envisioned the communication systems that evolved during the late twentieth century, and are continuing to evolve in the early 21st century. The Public Records Act was originally written for paper documents in file cabinets, tape recordings, mimeographs (remember those?) etc... It was put in place during an era when government was less regulatory and less a part of our everyday

lives. Even the environmental laws that we take for granted today didn't exist. But just like today, the people wanted their government to be transparent.

As our population increased, along with the role of government and the need for services, and as our form of communication changed dramatically, government agencies, both state and local, began generating hundreds of millions of emails, text messages, and other electronic files a year. Saving all of these costs the taxpayer in terms of data storage and retrieval. Data storage is not cheap. It can cost even a small agency hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Text messages aren't even held by government but are stored by a third party provider. It is questionable whether third party providers like AT&T or Verizon Wireless are even required to store anything at all. After all, they simply provide a service. They are not government.

Recently there was a request for every e-mail sent to and from King County for a year. This turns out to be approximately 22 million e-mails. It would probably take an individual 40 years to read 22 million e-mails. Technically, the individual is entitled to those e-mails. But you, the tax-

payer, have to pay for gathering them, producing the metadata, and reviewing each one to ensure that no exemptions apply. The agency I work for found ourselves in a similar situation when we received a request for tens of thousands of e-mails. Theoretically, *all* e-mails should be part of open government. Practically however, this is an extremely expensive proposition.

Therefore, perhaps the question really isn't whether government should be open and transparent, because we all agree that it should be. But, maybe, in the electronic age we need to do a better job of delineating just *what* we want government to save and *how long* we want to save it. Every e-mail? Every text message? Every single electronic document?... both draft and final? In an age when we can't even afford full day kindergarten and music programs in schools, storing all electronic communications is becoming inordinately expensive. And as we are learning this legislative session...if we spend our tax dollars in one area, like information technology, other areas that we think are important may be reduced or eliminated.

Alllyson Brooks

Possible Congressional Forum

Plans are in the making to involve the LWVTC with TCTV in a public political forum for the candidates for Brian Baird's congressional seat. A venue and date have yet to be firmed up, but it would probably be held before the end of June. The League, as well as members of the media, would present questions to the candidates. Stay tuned for further information!

Barb Theiss
LWVTC Voter Service chair

It's time to think about Council

The theme this year:

Reason Isn't Enough-How to Have Civil Discussions in Uncivil Times.

Council 2010 will be held in Bellingham, with roll call of local Leagues beginning at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 22. Highlights that day will include workshops on civil discussion, on neutral issue framing, on League materials and, concurrent with that one, a workshop on 21st century techniques of Facebook design and blogging. There will also be discussions about League policies and experiences with controversial issue programs. The day will end with a reception and banquet at a location overlooking Bellingham Bay.

Sunday, May 23 there will be a morning caucus for national convention delegates, and Friday, May 21 we can sign up for a special docent tour of the wonderful new Lightcatcher Building of the Art Museum.

Costs include \$95 for the complete Council packet- registration, Saturday lunch, coffee breaks, reception and banquet. Hotel rooms are \$109 plus tax for either single queens or double queens, and includes breakfast and free van pickup from airport or train station.

Formal Council packets will be sent out on April 1st or 2nd-the required 50 days ahead of Council-with all registration and hotel information.

It's a good time to meet other Leaguers and to learn a broad range of things, both from other attendees and from the various workshops and formal discussions. The workshop on civil discourse is one we especially hope you will attend, because we would consider trying to do similar workshops throughout the state if you think they would be valuable.

We have room for the two formal delegates from each local League and for perhaps a total of 20 observers from Leagues around the state. Please do plan to come.

Linnea Hirst,
President
LWVWA

LWVTC Recognizes Anniversary of the 19th Amendment

Thurston County – This August 26 marks the 90th anniversary of the constitutional amendment that granted U.S. women the right to vote. The nonpartisan League of Women Voters—founded the same year women achieved this right—celebrates Women’s Equality Day by remembering this historic achievement, and looking forward to greater civic participation and healthy debate on the issues that matter most to our communities.

“On this Women’s Equality Day, we take time to recognize not only the historic 19th Amendment, but the tremendous progress we’ve made over the last 90 years in expanding and protecting voting rights,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson. “Generation after generation, the work of League of Women Voter members across the country is a testament to the incredible legacy of the 19th Amendment.”

“But our work is not done,” Wilson continued. “As we face new and even greater challenges as a nation, the League continues to recruit and organize active, local leaders who are dedicated to safeguarding democracy. These leaders are in your communities, engaging elected officials as we work together to find viable solutions.”

“The League of Women Voters of Thurston County believes that the hands-on work of an engaged citizenry can and does lead to civic improvement at all levels of government,” says Thurston County League President, Marilyn Funk. “Women’s Equality Day is a celebration of such a basic part of our democratic process—the right to vote—and the opportunities to channel that power into real, lasting change, starting at the grassroots level.”

“The League of Women Voters of Thurston County has worked for 49 years to safeguard democracy through expanded civic engagement.” Marilyn Funk said. “As a League member, you have the opportunity to have a profound, direct and positive impact on the issues that matter most to our community, and what better day than the anniversary of the 19th Amendment to get involved?”

HELP COMMEMORATE WOMEN’S EQUALITY DAY...

**LWVTC IS LOOKING FOR MEMBERS TO HELP ORGANIZE AN
OLYMPIA FILM SOCIETY SHOWING OF
“IRON JAWED ANGELS”**

Please contact:
Dawn Brooks Gibbs
at dawn8152@msn.com

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED

Maytown Downzone

The League of Women Voters supports and promotes land use decisions that give first consideration to protecting the natural features that sustain and support a quality environment and a viable economy.

With these goals in mind, we strongly support the Maytown downzone, presently under consideration. The land is a non-industrial tree farm owned by the McIntosh family and the Port of Tacoma. Along with other preserves, these properties form an uninterrupted 3,000-acre wildlife corridor.

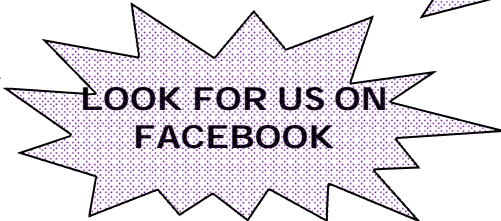
The rezone has the support of the McIntosh family.

The property belonging to the Port has not been used for industrial purposes for more than 15 years, and the current Rural Resource Industrial zoning of 40% of the Port property at this location is not warranted and out of keeping with the rural character of the area and the sensitive prairie and wetlands nearby. The remaining 60% of the land is zoned as rural residential, (1 for 5), a density too high to afford the level of protection needed for this fragile system.

While downzoning may create problems in some areas, this is a case where all factors seem to argue in its favor; the land in question has a higher value as an area for resource protection than for any other potential use. As pressures on all our natural resources continue to grow, it is increasingly critical that such opportunities not be missed.

Please support this proposed downzone.

*Peggy Bruton
LWVTC
Growth Management Chair*



2010
They Represent You
A Citizen's
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NOW AVAILABLE
Please contact:
Dawn Brooks Gibbs
at dawn8152@msn.com

President's Column

What has been happening in the LWVtC in 2010?

Olympia Planning Committee

The Olympia comprehensive plan sub committee on water completed a paper in time to submit it to the Olympia Planning committee, as they began their scoping process. The hope is that their efforts will be considered by the planners as they begin to narrow their goals. You will find the paper on our web site at www.lwvthurston.org. Our thanks to Clydia Cuykendall and Zena Hartung for doing the research and creating a readable document, in time to make an impact on both Olympia and Thurston County.

Olmsted Project

At least a dozen of our members attended the Olmsted Project presentation on Satur-

day, February 27 in the Columbia room of the Capitol. Thanks to Sue Lean's efforts, the LWVTC combined with LWVWA and others, to produce a beautiful pamphlet on the Olmsted's contribution to our Capitol and to present a program on the subject.

The morning began with Dr Norman Johnston showing slides of the capitol under construction while telling anecdotes of his own memories of playing there as a child. Michael Sullivan then lectured on the planning process for the buildings and the grounds, followed by Susan Olmsted who presented the landscape master plan. Eliza Davidson concluded with more slides of how the capitol will look if we plant more trees and shrubs, as the Olmsted's imagined the

grounds and with an emphasis on sustainability. The program ended with a guided tour of Capitol grounds.

LWVTC General meetings

I just left the LWVTC meeting on Seeds, our program for March, held at Traditions and chaired by Eve Johnson and Barb Theiss. There is strong interest in the subject and fourteen League members were joined by members of the community, many of whom may never have attended a League program. Thanks to Dawn Brooks Gibbs and others, who are advertising our events and helping us provide educational programs to the people of Thurston County.

Marilyn Funk
LWVTC President

LOCAL LEAGUE MEMBER CONFIRMED AS MEMBER OF OLYMPIA PLANNING COMMISSION

Jeanne Marie Thomas, a member of our local League of Women Voters, has been confirmed as among the three newest members of the Planning Commission for the City of Olympia. This is an important post since she will be aiding the Planning Commission to rewrite the Comprehensive Plan for Olympia. As you know, we have a Committee presently drafting suggested revisions of the Comprehensive Plan. Let's all support Jeanne Marie in her new post as the process of revision proceeds.

Zena Hartung
LWVTC Vice-President

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for

health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care.

Through decades of work in their communities, League members have learned that Americans believe that fairness and responsibility, as well as access, are important values for any health care system. We believe that healthcare reform can only succeed if it takes all these values into account.

www.lwv.org

House Procedures "OK" According to League of Women Voters *Objections "Disingenuous"*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2010

Contact: [Kelly Ceballos](mailto:kceballos@lwv.org)

202-263-1331

Washington, DC - The League of Women Voters of the United States today called the planned procedures to pass health care reform legislation in the House of Representatives "OK."

The House Leadership has tentatively announced plans to adopt comprehensive health care reform legislation by a "deem and pass" procedure that would allow the House of Representatives to simultaneously pass both the Senate's health care legislation and corrective measures in a reconciliation bill with one vote. Those who have opposed health care reform from the beginning are attacking the procedure.

"As a nonpartisan citizen organization that has worked for 90 years to improve government procedures, educate the electorate, and make government at all levels more accessible and responsive to citizens, we are deeply concerned that opponents of health care reform have adopted a strategy of fear, delay and obfuscation," said Mary G. Wilson, president of the national League of Women Voters.

"It is disingenuous to criticize the use of parliamentary procedures that have been employed for decades by the leadership of both parties. This distracts from the real issue, which is health care reform," according to Wilson.

"The Constitution is very clear that the House of Representatives can adopt its own procedures for passing this kind of legislation," said Wilson, referring to Article I, Section 5.

"All the arguing by the pundits, partisans and politicians who oppose reform can't change the fact that Congress decides on the procedures for passing a bill. That is as the Founders intended when they created our representative, constitutional democracy," Wilson concluded.

Reporters may contact Kelly Ceballos (kceballos@lwv.org or 202-263-1331) to set up media interviews with President Mary Wilson.

www.lwv.org

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THURSTON COUNTY

MeMbership Appl icAtion

For more information about the League's activities or membership call Marilyn Funk, 360-259-4424, or mail in the membership form below.

DATE:

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$_____

◇ **\$60 for my membership**

◇ **\$_____ for an Educational Fund Donation**

For Lifetime Membership and Scholarships contact Marilyn Funk, 360-259-4424.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____ FAX NUMBER _____

LWVTC Newsletter:

The VOTER will be distributed by e-mail.

Check this box to specifically request a paper copy by regular mail.

LWV Purpose

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan, nonprofit political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government. The League influences public policy through education and advocacy. Anyone of voting age may become a League member.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS THURSTON COUNTY

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