



VOTER

Volume 9 Issue 2

JANUARY 2015

CALENDAR

January 22, 2015

LWVTC General mtg.
 Traditions Café
 6 pm Social
 Speakers at 6:30
Topic: County Charter
PLEASE NOTE
TOPIC CHANGE

February 26, 2015

LWVTC General mtg.
 Traditions Café
 6 pm Social
 Speakers at 6:30
Topic:
Water quality /
fish consumption

March 26, 2015

LWVTC General mtg.
 Traditions Café
 6 pm Social
 Speakers at 6:30
Topic:
Carbon Tax /
Cap & Trade

April 23, 2015

LWVTC General mtg.
 Venue TBD
Topic:
Coal Train Safety

LWVTC
 GENERAL MEETING

TOPIC:
County Charter

**What is County Home Rule?
 What are the risks?**

SPEAKER:
Steve Lundin

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Our January program is a close look at the County Charter process. We are fortunate to have Steve Lundin, retired after nearly 30 years as the Senior Council for Washington State House of Representatives, as our speaker. He staffed the House Local Government Committee during most of these years. In 2007, Lundin wrote the authoritative reference book on local government in Washington State, entitled *The Closest Governments to the People*. He's presently publishing again, this time his book explores the Yukon gold rush, *From Cheechako to Sourdough*.

Lundin's knowledge of the procedure for adopting county charters gives him a unique ability to provide both the pros and the cons of the process. He will focus on the most likely way a county charter will begin here in Thurston County: with a petition of the people. The process has been brought before a vote of the people in the past and has failed. Some suspect it was lack of voter understanding of what are the implications of home rule. So Lundin will answer the question, What is County Home Rule, how does it happen and what might be the consequences if the voters approve Home Rule and elect freeholders in 2016.

Zena Hartung

VOTER Editor:
 Dawn Brooks Gibbs
 dawn8152@msn.com

President's Article

Best wishes to all our League members for a wonderful 2015 and we look forward to have you join us for our upcoming programs this year. As you will read more about, we are starting to sponsor and co-sponsor programs that will educate the residents of our county on what a county charter is, how the process works, pros and cons, and the potential end product. Through these programs the board will determine whether or not we support any potential Charter process. We also have programs focused on our envi-

ronment this spring. As usual, we will meet on the 4th Thursday of each month at Traditions starting at 6:00 pm. Our first program for 2015 will be on January 22nd.

One of the most important issues our League is facing in the upcoming year, and beyond, is the low voter turnout we experienced during the last two election cycles. Only half of our county's registered voters sent in their ballots last November. In 2013 only 25% of our residents participated in the election. Compare those statistics to 2012 when the turnout was 80%. It

appears we must do a better job of motivating our citizens to vote during non-Presidential cycles. Our local elections matter just as much as those at the national level. We must get our citizens reenergized!

Finally we have some board positions open so if you are interested in joining the board please let me know! We are looking for new, energetic members to help us set the direction and tone for the League of Women Voters of Thurston County. See you at our first program in January!

Allyson Brooks

Program Planning / Study Identification for the LWV of Washington State

As a grassroots organization, the League of Women Voters **Program Planning Process** begins at the local level. During this process, members all over the state consider what issues their own local League believes are important and need to be addressed. The inputs from the local Leagues are gathered and discussed by the LWVWA board which will decide on a recommendation to the delegates at Convention 2015 where members will decide which issues from the local Leagues are to be placed on our state level public policy agenda for the next two years (2015-2017).

Identification of these issues is part of our Citizen Education program aimed at helping people understand the complexities of an issue and encouraging people to participate in reaching a solution and can also lay the groundwork for successful advocacy.

Local League planning usually takes place in January. In 2015, the State Convention will be held June 12-14. State study recommendations must be received from LWVTC by February 21, 2015.

In preparation, it is important to be familiar with the current

positions. You can find these on the LWVWA web site (www.lwvwa.org)

A good way to determine a state issue or study to suggest (and would be willing to work on) is to ask yourself "What is My Passion?"

Please submit your state study recommendations to Dawn Brooks Gibbs before January 10, 2015; and plan to attend the LWVTC Board meeting discussion on 1/15/15, 5:30 pm, at the Childcare Action Council (3729 Griffin Ln. SE; Olympia, 98506).

LWVTC will send a complete list to the state League.

February 2015 LWVTC General Meeting Water Quality / Fish Consumption

On February 26th our League's public program at Traditions is on the issue of fish consumption and water quality. We are very excited and honored to have Senator John McCoy as our speaker. Senator McCoy represents the 38th legislative district (Marysville) and is a Tulalip tribal member.

Our water quality standards are based on how much fish the state considers our citizens to be eating. Washington's Native American tribes and other advocates have long considered the current

water quality standards, to be far too low. The current standard is 6.5 grams of fish consumption per day. The proposal from the Governor would raise that number to 175 grams per day, a much more realistic assessment of how much fish our citizens consume. Tribes and environmental groups still consider 175 grams to be too low and are concerned that new potential rules have too many loopholes. Businesses and others have voiced that the number is far too high and the changes to water discharge, required to meet the new standards, will impact economic develop-

ment. The proposal will create a stricter discharge limit for 70% of the 96 chemicals that are currently regulated.

Senator McCoy will explain how our water quality standards came to be tied to fish consumption, why Tribes and environmental groups contend that even at 175 grams the level is too low and why businesses argue that more stringent requirements for water discharge systems will be hurt our state's businesses.

Allyson Brooks

DON'T MISS THESE INTERESTING 2015 LWVTC MEETINGS

- JANUARY 22 (PLEASE NOTE TOPIC CHANGE TO) Home Rule Charter
- FEBRUARY 26 Water Quality / Fish consumption
- MARCH 26 Cap & Trade / Carbon tax
- APRIL 23 Coal Train Safety
- MAY 28 Annual Meeting

LWVTC GENERAL MEETINGS
(4th Thursday of the month)

6 pm social
Speakers at 6:30 pm

Traditions Café
300 5th Ave SW
Olympia, WA

March 2015 LWVTC General Meeting Cap & Trade / Carbon tax

Our March meeting will focus on various ideas and proposals to reduce atmospheric carbon through a carbon tax. Proposals now on the table include one by the governor, which would also produce significant (in the billions) of revenue for the state. One major problem: It would exempt the Centralia coal plant, under a legislative mandate to close by 2025, but relieved of further regulation and taxation in the meantime. Looming even

larger is the likelihood that the governor's plan will not find favor with the divided legislature. No doubt there will be more clarity on this in a couple of months.

Another plan -- revenue neutral -- has been floated by the stand-up economist Yoram Bauman, a fellow of the highly regarded Sightline Institute in Seattle. He is circulating an initiative to the legislature for a revenue neutral carbon tax. With the requisite number of signers, it

would go to the legislature, and then to the 2016 ballot as a popular initiative should the legislature not act.

With the price of gasoline plummeting, the time seems uniquely auspicious for some sort of gas or carbon tax. What form that could or should take will be a ripe topic for discussion. Stay tuned.

Peggy Bruton

SEEKING BOOK REVIEW VOLUNTEER

If you like to read, and if you are concerned about the current role of money in politics, you may be the perfect person to write a book review for the LWVTC VOTER. All you have to do is read the book and write up your personal opinions for Local League members. This should help us decide if this book might be a resource as the League moves forward with the work of reforming money in politics.

The recommended book is 'Corruption in America' by Zephyr Teachout.

Teachout's main target is the currently reigning money-in-politics doctrine of the Supreme Court, as defined mainly by Citizens United, the 2010 decision that struck down certain restrictions on political spending by corporations.

The deadline for article submission

is the 25th of the month preceding the issue month. Article parameters are 75-125 words, 100-150 words, 150-200 words, and 175-225 words.

If you would like to contribute a book review to the LWVTC VOTER, please let Dawn Brooks Gibbs know as soon as possible so that space for it may be reserved.

R. Peggy Smith

League of Women Voters of the United States Responds to Comments by Rep. Scalise

Statement from Elisabeth MacNamara, president of the League of Women Voters

Washington, D.C. – "For nearly 95 years, the League of Women Voters has fought to educate and engage Americans on the issues impacting their communities. Rooted in the suffrage movement, the League has always been committed to educating and turning out voters.

"In order to expand participation and give voice to all Americans, [our nearly 800 state and local Leagues](#) register voters at every opportunity, including in high schools, at community colleges, bus stops and baseball games, as well as at naturalization ceremonies. In addition to [registering new voters](#), we work to [educate voters](#) on important issues in their communities, in part by hosting candidate debates and issue forums as well as publishing voters' guides in advance of elections.

"[Representative Steve Scalise's recent comments](#) regarding the League of Women Voters were misinformed. We are committed to working for all voters regardless of their party affiliation. We believe voters are the basis of our strong democracy, and we're committed to making our government work for all citizens. We will continue to fight for inclusion and tolerance and are committed to Making Democracy Work®."

www.lwv.org

THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING REVIEW

Transportation, transportation, transportation!

That was the mantra during the December 5, 2014 meeting of the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC). During a presentation by the Executive Director of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), local council members were told that the main issue that was causing a "sense of urgency" among PSRC members is Transportation. This is #1 on their Legislative Agenda. Past experience with legislative inaction, how-

ever, has resulted in considerations for Plan B approaches to transportation needs.

Karen Parkhurst, TRPC Senior Planner, reported on the Council's upcoming Legislative Priorities. Although their agenda will not be formal until the first of the year, Transportation will undoubtedly be up at the top of the list. The City of Olympia representative on the TRPC handed out documents showing that the City will be pursuing legislative authority to raise local revenues to be used on

Transportation projects (go to www.olympiawa.gov to view documents).

There was also good Transportation news reported during this meeting. The final "bridging the gap" on the Chehalis Western Trail will be celebrated this month. The third of three bridges over major roads will be open to fully link this trail, showing what can be accomplished with inter-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration.

R Peggy Smith

GERTRUDE BELL
(English, 1868–1926)

"I find [the East] catching at my heart again as nothing else can, or ever will I believe, thing or person." The first woman to get a first-class degree in modern history from Oxford University, mountain climber, linguist, archaeologist, and writer of vivaciously informative prose, Gertrude Bell fell under the sway of the Middle East during years of restless travel. The knowledge she amassed about the area and its peoples on lonely treks considered dangerous for a woman, as well as her forthrightness in stating her opinions, made her a force in shaping the region's political history during and after World War I. Brilliant, forceful, and acquainted, through her wealthy and well-connected family, with many of Europe's influential citizens, Bell became widely known through books such as *The Desert and the Sown* (1907) and *Amurath to Amurath* (1911), which described the remnants of ancient civilizations she found as she traveled the world of desert and silence: "The road and the dawn, the sun, the wind and the rain, the camp fire under the stars, and sleep, and the road. . . ."

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Women Who Dare



IDA WELLS-BARNETT
(American, 1862–1931)

"I felt that one had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or a rat in a trap." Ida Wells-Barnett fought all her life against racial injustice, but she is today honored most for her relentless and literally death-defying campaign against racial lynching.

Wells-Barnett was an early predecessor of Rosa Parks in her refusal, in May 1884, to give up a train seat in the white section. Removed by force, she sued and won in the circuit court, but the Tennessee Supreme Court later reversed the decision. The disheartening incident galvanized her desire to fight for racial equality, using the weapon she wielded best—the pen. Wells-Barnett became a full-time journalist in 1891, and for many years she defied mob violence and terror to train a relentless and harsh light on the national disgrace of lynching, even taking her campaign abroad.

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THURSTON COUNTY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please refer to www.lwvthurston.org for more information about League activities and membership, or mail in the membership form below.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$_____

DATE:

◇ \$60 for my membership

◇ \$_____ for an Educational Fund Donation

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

LWVTC Newsletter:

The LWVTC newsletter, VOTER, will be distributed by e-mail.

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

LWV Mission

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

PO Box 2203

Olympia, WA 98507

Phone (360) 352-8220