

# LEAGUE LINES



A Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Umpqua Valley  
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## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Greetings again from your local League president. I may not have met you all in person, but I appreciate your dedication to League and the work you do to learn new things and to advocate for our studies to the wider public, especially the voting public.

In April we will hold our annual business meeting, which will have nominations for new board members and continuing with existing board members. You may be contacted to step forward in some way to participate in our local League. We often reach out for people to attend meetings, to review Action Team reports or help Action Team from home via your internet, and to pursue committee work with regular attendance. We also often request you come to some of our public meetings, as greeters, to bring small foods to share, or to be part of the program. Input from members about meeting topics is essential for us to remain relevant in these fast changing times.

Some of you may have participated in the recent orientation luncheon at Jenny's house. We hope to offer these get acquainted sessions more often in the future. Many are new to League, others may not be up to date with our online resources, which are also evolving to help members connect. We are a small part of the larger state League, and also of the national League. Studies are being conducted at both of these levels, and we must try to learn when we have the opportunity or interest.

There are also many helpful resources saved online. We can see a power point, get a tutorial on accessing League websites, and tips on using social media for those who are connected. And if you are not the owner of a fast internet connection, we can also provide League meetings where internet (WiFi) is available so we may share on laptops or via overhead projector.

The state League convention is fast approaching May 1 - 3 in Eugene. We can have three delegates based on our total membership numbers [54]. Start thinking if you would wish to serve as a delegate, to vote on important business. There have been at least two state studies proposed by Portland League: Election Reform Study and Carbon Tax Study.

We are always looking for articles to put in this newsletter. If you know of important community happenings, or if you have a passion for a topic of which the League has a position, it could be useful to

### **IN THIS ISSUE:**

- 1 President's Message
- 2 Member profile
- 3 Welcome to New Members
- 3 Report on January/February meetings
- 4 Calendar of Events
- 4 Garden Tour Committee Report
- 5 Health Care Committee Report
- 6 County Government in Action
- 7 Legislative Process Day
- 8 Action Update
- 8 Help Wanted

write an article for publication herein. That is how we connected to the recent League meeting about Gun Violence. It was suggested after our County Commissioners passed a resolution that our county would not enforce any new gun regulations. How this is even possible is another matter. Luckily we have some dedicated League members attending the weekly County Commissioner’s meetings and noticing what they talk about. These meetings are now recorded for later viewing (online) but I really have seen less about this printed in our local newspaper.

Sally McKain, President, League of Women Voters of Umpqua Valley

### **MEMBER PROFILE**

Kareen LaValley is one of our newest members. She was born in Portland, Oregon, but spent the greater part of her childhood in Japan.

Her father had a civilian job with the Army that required the family to move often, so she also spent part of her childhood in California and Washington state, and finished high school in the state of Virginia.

After two years of college, Kareen married a Navy man and the “army brat” lifestyle resumed, so that by the time she graduated from Old Dominion College in Virginia with a degree in psychology, she had attended five different colleges and universities.

A divorce and second marriage soon found her back in the Navy, back in Japan, and then on to Hawaii. Job opportunities were hard to come by, with so much moving and the Navy policy of giving priority to hiring local Japanese, so although she worked during this time, her jobs were not career-track positions.

In Hawaii, Kareen went back to school and took some accounting classes, thinking she might find something interesting in business.

Which she did, when her husband left the Navy and they moved to Bremerton, Washington. He went into the insurance business and Kareen became a loan officer at Seafirst Bank (now part of Bank of America).



She worked at various branches in Washington state for the next twelve years. But when the bank began to reorganize centralizing the decision-making process, her position became less about analyzing loan applications and more about sales. She decided she wasn’t interested in moving up into a management position, as she really enjoyed the connections she made working with the public directly, so Kareen began to look for something different.

At this time, her marriage had ended and she was living and working in Vancouver, Washington, near her parents.

In 1989, she enrolled in Law school at Lewis and Clark in Portland, Oregon. While she originally had thought she would go into business law, she began to think that trial law might be more interesting. When she finished school and passed her bar exam, Kareen took a job as a public defender in Coos Bay. After five years there, a friend of hers moved from Coos Bay to Roseburg and wrote to tell her about an opening in the public defenders' office here.

She worked as public defender in Douglas County for sixteen years before retiring in 2014.

Kareen comes from a family with a strong work ethic and always tries to do the very best job that she can. She found that as a lawyer this required her to put in much more than a forty-hour week. She often worked weekends, and had no time for hobbies. In any case, she says, she loved her job so much it *was* her hobby.

Now that she is retired, she is enjoying the sensation of not having to be always "on the go". She is looking forward to living a more relaxed lifestyle and just having fun. She is discovering new interests. She loves to cook and is considering taking up sewing projects, which is something she used to do many years ago. She is taking a Master Gardener class. And she has joined the League of Women Voters.

Kareen has attended League forums and events from time to time over the years. She likes the nonpartisan nature of the League, the feeling that it is more open-minded and looks at things from all sides. She appreciates the fact that the League is focused on getting good information out to the public.

Kareen feels she can learn a lot from the League, educate herself on the issues, and find ways that she can help in areas that inspire her interest.

Anna Willman, Newsletter Editor

## **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

We are happy to note that Bob Allen has joined the League. Please make a point of introducing yourselves to him at our monthly meetings and making him welcome.

## **LWVUV MEETINGS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY**

On the evening of Tuesday, January 20, 2015 about fourteen LWVUV members gathered at the First Presbyterian Church to participate in a task carried out by LWVs nationwide – Program Planning. We enjoyed a meal of soups, bread and a tasty dessert and then LWVUV president, Sally McKain, led us through a review of the list of positions LWV of Oregon has adopted over the years.

These positions fall into the categories of Governance, Natural Resources, Energy, Land Use, Water, Social Policy and Health Policy. Generally, the consensus is to retain the positions. Sometimes members recommend that a position be updated or the subject restudied.

Our group discussed the fact that Mental Health Services to Adults, and to Children and Youth, seem to be sorely needed these days, and delivery of these services is changing here in our own community and around the state. We would like the state League to consider updating these positions, especially if there is a similar opinion voiced by other Oregon Leagues.

You may read more about LWVOR positions online by going to <http://www.lwvor.org/take-action/our-positions/>.

In attendance was also retired pediatrician Dr. Larry Hall. He expressed his own strong concern about gun violence, especially as it endangers children in our communities. He suggested that we invite a speaker from Cease Fire Oregon to

inform the public about the value of stronger gun safety laws.

So we did just that. On the evening of Wednesday, February 18, 2015 about thirty people, some LWVUV members and some members of the public, gathered in the Ford room at the DC Public Library to hear a presentation by Penny Okamoto from Cease Fire Oregon. Sally began the meeting by reminding us that the LWVOR agrees with the LWVUS position supporting background checks to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

Dr. Hall spoke next, reminding us of the many once controversial laws we take for granted now, such as the requirement of child-proof caps on medications, bicycle helmets, and mandatory seat belt use. These laws protect our children and others. Laws that address prevention of child access to guns are important and could be made stronger.

Penny Okamoto told us that she was inspired by the school shootings at Thurston High School in Springfield to get involved in gun violence prevention. Cease Fire Oregon is a group that does not take money from out of state. It supports child access prevention laws that make firearms an adult responsibility that includes criminal liability for any damage done with the owner's unsecured gun. It also supports background checks for private gun sales.

Currently in Oregon, there is a "private gun sale loophole". Background checks for gun sales are only required at federally licensed gun dealers or gun shows. Data shows that in states that have a law requiring background checks as a part of private gun sales, fewer on-duty police officers are shot and killed, fewer women are shot and killed by their intimate partners, and fewer people commit suicide with guns. 87% of Oregonians support background checks, including 83% of Oregon gun owners. More information is available online.

Some people at our event were clearly concerned that background checks would infringe on their right to buy and sell guns. One League member

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

March 25: Consensus meeting on Children at Risk study. Social time and refreshments 5:30; program 6:00-7:30. Room #3 of the Mercy Education Building on Stewart Parkway

April 2: Day at the Legislature, Salem

April 21: Annual Business Meeting, Salud Restaurant, 5:30 pm

June 13: Annual Garden Tour

commented that many Oregonians don't want to own guns and do want to feel protected from guns.

The Oregon legislature is likely to vote on a bill that would strengthen gun safety laws this session.

### **GARDEN TOUR COMMITTEE REPORT**

This year our committee members are, Anna Willman, Sally McKain, Robin Hartman, Penny Reed, Beverly Paulson and Nancy Farris.

Our annual Spring Garden Tour is Saturday, June 13th from 10AM to 5PM.

This year we again have six gardens, spanning a distance of ten miles from the south of downtown Roseburg to the north on Del Rio Road. Among them, a Community Garden, the garden of a family who bought their own hill, and four others. This year in addition to musicians at each location, we are featuring craftsmen who will sell larger garden-art, as well as garden furniture.

Once again we will need League volunteers to sit at the host tables on the day of the tour. Volunteers will sign up for 1/2 day shifts. We need two in the morning and two in the afternoon

for each garden. All volunteers will be given a free pass so they can visit the other gardens the other half of the day.

Non-League members are welcome to volunteer for this as well!

If you are interested in volunteering, please email Nancy Farris at [nfarris73@hotmail.com](mailto:nfarris73@hotmail.com), or call 541-643-8113, or let any of our committee members know, and you will be added to the list.

Nancy Farris, Garden Tour Committee

### **HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE REPORT**

#### **LWVOR Position on Single Payer Health Care:**

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) position on health care supports the concept of universal health care coverage. A resolution passed at the June 2010, LWVUS Convention called upon the LWVUS Board to advocate for federal bills that legislate for improved Medicare for all.

The Action Committee of the League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) supports the long-term goal of a single payer health care system in Oregon. The Federal Affordable Care Act has provided funds for Oregon to cover all children and more low income adults in the Medicaid program. Oregon has established the Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) to hold down costs in the Medicaid program. Advances have been made in the delivery of health care in primary care homes in order to prevent more expensive care in hospital emergency rooms. Dental care and mental health care are covered.

The Federal Insurance Exchange for subsidized insurance has added coverage for adult children up to age 26 and no rejection of clients based on prior conditions, which has contributed to health care coverage for Oregon citizens. 80% of insurance premiums must be spent on medical care. The Oregon Health Authority has worked on implementing electronic medical records, standardized billing forms, requiring hospital checklists before surgeries, hospital reports of

medical mistakes, and publications of these reports. LWVOR supports these improvements in health care delivery in Oregon.

The original promise of a bill provided to the Legislature was that healthcare for all would be paid for by a single tax on the wealthy. Oregon tax return information from 2011-2012 revealed that Oregon does not have enough wealthy people in Oregon to cover all Oregonians' health insurance needs. If a tax to cover universal healthcare in Oregon is imposed, it would be very expensive for all citizens.

League members are encouraged to hold and attend informational forums and meetings about the single payer issue. However, please keep in mind that any advocacy for a state-level single payer system at this point should be done as individuals and not on behalf of the League. The Action Committee believes that Oregon has made considerable progress in the improvement of medical care and cannot afford an all payer system at this point in time. The Action Committee welcomes the participation of any League member who would like to help monitor bills related to health care this session. Training will be provided, and travel to Salem is not required.

#### **LWVOR Statement of Principles on Health Care (Based on LWVUS Health Care Position):**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has worked hard to ensure access to affordable, quality health care for all residents and to ensure the protection of patients' rights. We favor a system that meets the following criteria:

- Provides access to a basic level of quality care for every U.S. resident (universal coverage);
- Includes coverage for the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care, and mental health care

(including treatment for drug and alcohol addiction and developmental disabilities);

- Contains effective cost-control strategies;
- Is financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums (national health insurance plan);
- Permits consumers to purchase services or insurance coverage beyond the basic level; and
- Ensures that services are equitably distributed.
- The League recognizes that the equitable allocation of resources may become problematic. The League recommends strategies such as allocating medical resources to underserved areas, training health care professionals in needed fields of care, standardizing basic levels of service, using community rating instead of experience rating and establishing insurance pools for businesses and organizations.
- The League believes that the ability of a patient to pay for services should not be a consideration in the allocation of medical services. In the event it becomes impossible to provide full services for all patients, the limited resources should be allocated based on the following criteria considered together:
  - The urgency of the medical condition,
  - The life expectancy of the patient,
  - The expected outcome of the treatment,
  - The cost of the procedure,
  - The duration of care,
  - The quality of life of the patient after treatment, and
  - The wishes of the patient and family.

The League believes that in order to accomplish appropriate reform and implement a comprehensive health care system, the process must assure opportunities for citizen participation, and be open, accountable, representative and responsive at every level.

## **COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN ACTION**

Jenny Carloni has been attending weekly Douglas County Commissioners' meetings regularly since the first of the year, and Bentley Gilbert has attended nearly every week as well. These meetings take place in Room 216 at the Douglas County Courthouse every Wednesday at 9:00 AM.

However, LWVUV has not formed an official Observer Corps. Official LWV Observers are not allowed to comment at government meetings. Jenny serves as a member of a Community Advisory Council focused on health, and sometimes feels the need to speak up when Public Health topics are discussed.

She notes that there is always a lot to be learned at the Commissioners' meetings. During last December's public outcry over the proposal to charge fees at the county landfill, Commissioner Susan Morgan commented that they had obviously done a poor job of educating the public about the dire financial condition that Douglas County faces. Consequently, she and the new commissioners, Tim Freeman and Chris Boice, find opportunities to explain the details of issues that may not be clear to the public. They often volunteer their opinions on various issues being considered in the state legislature as well. You may have enjoyed reading Susan Morgan's informational columns in the *News-Review*.

You are welcome and encouraged to attend the Commissioners' meetings yourself, but if you can't, this new commission, responding immediately to the public's calls for more transparency in county government, took steps to reinstitute video broadcasts of their meetings.

New since January, the commissioners' meetings can be viewed by going to Douglas County's Home Page, [www.co.douglas.or.us](http://www.co.douglas.or.us) and clicking on the webcast link. You can also view the agenda for the weekly meeting ahead of time there.

You may be able to watch live broadcasts at [www.ustream.tv/channel/DouglasCountyOregon](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/DouglasCountyOregon).

Visit the Douglas County Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/DouglasCountyOregonGovernment](http://www.facebook.com/DouglasCountyOregonGovernment).

Douglas County Twitter Page: [www.twitter.com/DouglasCountyOR](http://www.twitter.com/DouglasCountyOR).

You may contact the commissioners by email at [commissioners@co.douglas.or.us](mailto:commissioners@co.douglas.or.us) or phone (541) 672-3311.

### **LEGISLATIVE PROCESS DAY**

The state League co-sponsored a Legislative Process Day on Tuesday, January 13 in Salem. LWVUV members Beverly Paulson and Jenny Carloni carpooled with Robin wisdom to this event on a gloriously sunny day. The following



summary comes from the LWVOR Voter, so some of you members may have seen it already.

Legislative Process Day was a full house. Co-sponsors of the event were the LWVOR, Oregon NOW, AAUW of Oregon, and the Center for Women's Leadership. Many organizations were represented such as Common Cause, the Oregon Conservation Network, and the Human Services Coalition of Oregon.

Through the opening Journalist Panel we learned about vast changes to media organization. Peter Wong and Hillary Borrud spoke in this first

session. Wong has worked in Oregon since 1980, and now works for the *Pamplin Media Group*, which owns 25 news outlets. Peter is now covering issues such as the budget and budget process, minimum wage, paid sick leave, and a sponsored retirement plan, property tax, carbon tax, infrastructure, and vehicle mileage tax.

Borrud joined the *EO Media Group* (9 media outlets) in 2014 and covers the northern part of the state from Astoria to Enterprise. Hillary is following water storage projects, low interest loans for family farms and forests, gun control issues, marijuana laws, low carbon fuels, and the investigation of the former Governor's fiancée, among other things.

Ted Wheeler, State Treasurer and keynote speaker, thanked the League for supporting ballot Measure 86, the Student Opportunity Fund, which failed during the 2014 General Election. He spoke mostly about a proposed state sponsored retirement plan which would benefit those employed who do not have access to employee benefits.

After lunch, co-sponsors and the Issues Panelists presented each organization's priorities for this legislative session, which include financial assistance for students for childcare, gun safety and background checks, fair courts, money spent on judicial elections, climate change, clean fuels, housing, healthcare for all women and children, land use, watching for exploratory fracking, and much more.

The day concluded with our own League Action Team who spoke about their portfolios and what they are watching at the legislature. Be sure to sign up to receive their [Legislative Reports](#) that will be published throughout the legislative session. We should also thank the Action Team who put this informative day together by inviting those present to speak.

Best Quote of the Day: *"If you're not at the table, you may be on the menu."* ~ Sunny Petit, Center for Women's Leadership

## **ACTION UPDATE**

In February the LWVUS announced its legislative priorities for 2015.

They are, as usual, ranked in two tiers. The first tier priorities are voting rights and election administration and money in politics. Second tier priorities are climate and environmental protection, immigration, and health care including reproductive choice.

The League sets these priorities after consideration of a number of factors. The most important of those is focusing League effort where it can have the greatest impact.

The timeline for the *Money in Politics Review and Update* is as follows:

Spring 2015: Education materials will be posted periodically at the LWVUS website. Leagues are encouraged to use these materials for member and community meetings.

Fall 2015 : Study guide and consensus questions will be posted; Leagues hold consensus meetings.

February 1, 2016: Consensus reports from local Leagues are due to LWVUS.

April 2016: National LWV board meeting. Consensus reports and resulting position(s), if any, are approved.

On March 15 the LWVUS joined with other groups in opposing HR 412 which would repeal the presidential public financing system. The groups also oppose HR 195. That bill would terminate the Election Assistance Commission and transfer some of its functions to the "dysfunctional" Federal Election Commission.

The letter sent by that group to the House Administration Committee points out that HR424 introduced this year would repair the

Presidential public financing system. It would provide presidential candidates with the option of running for President on a system based on small donations and public funds as an alternative to becoming obligated to influence-seeking funders.

Another interesting letter sent by the LWVUS and other groups to a House committee was in support of HR1069, the Presidential Library Donation Reform Act. That bipartisan legislation would introduce a measure of transparency to fundraising for presidential libraries.

The week in which I am writing (March 15-21) is designated as national Sunshine Week. In a press release about this week the League states that "open government is the cornerstone of effective government, and a key ingredient in fostering the public's trust. We all have the right to know what our government is doing – both its successes and failures. Exercising our right to know gives us power."

Alice Lackey

## **HELP WANTED**

Thanks to Kathy Nelson who has volunteered to be our official League phone calling person.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of the following opportunities, please call Sally McKain (541-679-5597).

- We need volunteers to sign up for the observer corps. You will find it is a fascinating experience to attend local commission meetings regularly. You feel connected to the community in a new way and at the same time are playing an active role in keeping our government transparent.

- We welcome volunteers for committees, including our garden tour fundraiser committee, and our health care committee.
- Volunteers to write book reviews for this newsletter. Any topic you think might interest League members.
- Board members. This is a fun job with interesting people and a chance to make a

real difference in the community. Meet once a month and help lead this organization.

- Drivers to help non-driving members get to meetings (or to car pool with other drivers for state events held in other communities).

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