

The Voter



A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County

SEPTEMBER 2013

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Voting Rights 2013

by Margaret Baker, *The Voter* Editor

Many years ago, I shared a hospital room overnight with a young black woman. Her large extended family came to visit and I couldn't help overhearing their conversation. At some point, the topic turned to voting and the woman said that she never voted. Her grandfather told her she should be ashamed and reminded her that people were put in jail and even killed for protecting her right to vote. I don't know if her grandfather's words had any effect on her, but I remembered them.

As we get into election season, we should remember that the League of Women Voters grew out of the women's suffrage movement, to encourage women newly enfranchised by the Nineteenth Amendment to exercise their right. Today, just like my hospital roommate, we often take our right to vote for granted, forgetting that women were imprisoned for advocating women's suffrage. Be assured that the League doesn't forget and continues to lobby for voting rights and to sponsor voter registration events.

The right to vote is today a topic for discussion because of a recent Supreme Court decision and numerous legislative actions. In *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, the Court struck down parts of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Many states, most recently North Carolina, are enacting statutes requiring specific kinds of identification to register and vote and limiting the time for registration and for early voting. Opponents of these laws claim that they are intended to suppress the vote among

certain groups of citizens. Those in favor of the law say that they will curtail voter fraud.

National League is advocating that Congress take action to restore the Voting Rights Act. Go to www.lwv.org to see how you can help. In the meantime, whatever the motivation behind these statutes, we can counteract voter suppression by actively encouraging and helping people register and vote. To that end, the LWV/S-KC is conducting voter registration events, some in conjunction with National Voter Registration Day on September 24. See the article on page 8 for information on volunteering. Watch for more information through the online Constant Contacts. If you can't help with a voter registration event, talk to your family and friends about registering and voting. Tell them how easy it is to register. Tell them about www.vote411.org where they will find everything they need to exercise their right to vote. Tell them the League of Women Voters has been working hard to protect everyone's vote for more than 90 years.

Seattle Mayoral Candidates Forum

Monday, September 30
6:30 p.m.

co-sponsored with Allied Arts

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Connecting with the Leadership

Well, we just completed our very interesting and successful Board retreat. It was held in the Atrium at Starbucks Coffee Co. headquarters with coffee and pastries for all. We have our Board Member MJ Vigil to thank for that. She also conducted the strategic planning session of the meeting, which is her area of expertise.

Prior to the meeting, MJ reviewed the strategic plan drafted in 2009 and gave it high marks. While not all the goals were achieved, significant steps were taken to improve the health and strength of the organization. She next asked the units to provide feedback about the League, particularly in the categories of strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities. There were a few surprises in the responses, but most of those stemmed from a lack of good communication. We will be working to improve that! Weaknesses and challenges included a lack of diversity (age, gender, ethnicity) in the membership, and organizational fatigue, while our strengths continue to be the grassroots, thoughtful and nonpartisan nature of the organization.

Based upon your feedback and the Board members' own experiences, and keeping within the overall mission of the League, the Board decided to continue to focus on four activities – voter services, action/advocacy, development, and membership. Each of the Board members present signed up for one of those activities. In that way, there is no one person responsible for the entire portfolio. Instead, Board members will share the responsibilities.

The Board members also set priorities for each activity. For example, voter services will work on training more speakers so that we can respond

to each and every request for speakers and to expand our coverage to include the entire King County area. We also decided that our development efforts should prioritize story-telling and better utilization of the unique talents of each member. For action/advocacy the Board wants to set up a protocol through which action items may proceed expeditiously. Finally, the Board plans to increase and diversify membership by working to make League relevant to all.



The groups will be meeting separately during the fall and winter to refine these goals as well as to determine specific tasks, assign responsibilities and gauge progress. The groups will be looking for volunteers to assist with specific tasks as well as to serve on the committees on an ongoing basis. If you are interested in participating in this process, please contact Allison at the League office.

Future articles will give you more specifics as we proceed, as well as a more complete summary of our strategic plan for 2013-2017. As always, if you have any comments, questions or concerns, please contact Allison or me, your President.

Ellen Barton

September/October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
September 1	2 LABOR DAY	3	4	5 League Drinks 6:00 p.m. Forum: Ballot Measures 7:30 p.m.	6	7 Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.
8	9 Int'l Relations Committee 12:45 p.m. Voter Deadline	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Education Committee 10:30 a.m.	27	28 Economics & Tax Committee 9:30 a.m.
29	30	1	2	3 League Drinks 6:00 p.m. Forum: Ballot Measures 7:30 p.m.	4	5 Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.
6	7 Int'l Relations Committee 12:45 p.m. Voter Deadline	8	9	10	11	12

SEPTEMBER

League Drinks
Thursday, September 5
6:00 p.m.
Jimmy Z's on Broadway

Forum: Ballot Measures
Thursday, September 5
7:30 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
Saturday, September 7
9:00 a.m.
League Office

International Relations
Committee
Monday, September 9
12:45-2:45 p.m.
League Office

The Voter Deadline
Monday, September 9

Transportation Committee
Tuesday, September 17
10:00 a.m.
League Office

Education Committee
Thursday, September 26
10:30 a.m.
League Office

Economics & Taxation Comm.
Saturday, September 28
9:30 a.m.
909 E. Newton, # D-9, Seattle

OCTOBER

League Drinks
Thursday, October 3
6:00 p.m.
Jimmy Z's on Broadway

Forum: Ballot Measures
Thursday, October 3
7:30 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Forum Schedule

September 5 - Ballot Measures

October 3 - General Election

November 7 - Climate Change

December 6 - No Forum

January 9 - Program Planning

February 6 - TBA

March 6 - Women's Issues

April 3 - TBA

May 1 - TBA

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC) presents a public forum most months between September and May, generally on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Most forums are held at the Seattle First Baptist Church, but occasionally they are scheduled in other locations and times. The tentative schedule of upcoming forums for 2013-2014 appears at left; check *The Voter* each month or the LWVS-KC website, seattlelwv.org, for up-to-date information.

There are a number of candidate and election forums going on this month and next. Check out the listing on page 9 and www.seattlelwv.org for the latest details.

Board Briefs by Amanda Clark, Secretary

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County Board met on Saturday, August 3, 2013. Because this was in conjunction with the strategic planning meeting, the business meeting was very brief.

President Ellen Barton called the meeting to order, the minutes of the June 8 meeting were approved, and the C3 and C4 boards were formally combined, with the exception of treasurers.

Before the planning meeting got underway, the Board approved the reading committee for ballot issues, consisting of Cyndi Woods, Beatrice Crane, and Joanna Cullen. Then Allison Feher reviewed the League's nonpartisan policy. This policy was determined in 1920, before the current tax code, so that the League would be independent and not subject to any outside interests. To this day we need to make sure that we remain neutral on candidate issues. This neutrality is one of the reasons the League maintains its strong position among groups with various views.



Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Not a Member?

It's easy to join - you can visit our website (www.seattlelwv.org) and sign up or call the office and one of our volunteers would be happy to send you a brochure. Or just send a check to the office:

LWVS-KC
1620 18th Ave, Ste 101
Seattle, WA 98122

Annual dues are \$60.

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC), in both its values and practices, affirms its beliefs and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

LWVS-KC recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVS-KC subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWVS-KC affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, staff and programs.

Committees

Meetings can sometimes be subject to last minute changes. Call the LWVS-KC Office at 206-329-4848 to confirm.

Economics And Taxation Committee

DATE: Saturday, September 28

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: 909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

Education Committee

DATE: Thursday, September 26

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: League Office

The Education Committee is now meeting the fourth Thursday of the month. Please join us for a discussion with guest presenters on Technical and Career Education and Arts Education.

International Relations Committee

DATE: Monday, September 9

TIME: 12:45 – 2:45 p.m.

PLACE: League Office

Our focus is China foreign policy.

Transportation Committee

DATE: Tuesday, September 17

TIME: 10:00 – 12:00

PLACE: League Office

Subject: Transportation Issues and League Action

Speaker: To be announced.

We encourage participation by all interested members in our committees. Its a great opportunity to meet and talk to community leaders, stakeholder organizations, and experts where you can have direct input on local issues that affect you.

Don't see a committee that covers your issue? Call the office and let us know. Sometimes people are working in a more informal manner without regularly scheduled meetings. If not, we may be able to help connect you with like-minded people to start your own.



King County Connects — Announcements



National Voter Registration Day is September 24

We need lots of volunteers to staff tables at several locations around King County including the Starbucks at 23rd and Jackson and Cupcake Royale on Capitol Hill. This is a great opportunity to share voter information resources as well as help new registrants.

If you've already been through our voter registration training, all we need to know is your availability. If you haven't done it before but would like to participate, let us know and we can arrange something and/or team you with an experienced volunteer. Contact the office at 206-329-4848 or voterservice@seattlelwv.org to volunteer. Please join us!

League Talks

LWVS-KC Voter Services welcomes volunteers and also encourages members to contact us if your local unit or another organization would like a presentation on the November ballot issues.

As a volunteer presenter, you will have the opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of the issues. If you have not volunteered in the past and would like to help, please let us know, and you will be invited to a ballot issues briefing.

To volunteer or to schedule a presentation, please leave a message for Voter Services Co-Chair Joanna Cullen at info@seattlelwv.org or 206-329-4848.



League Walks

Come join the "Team of Women Voters" as we take part in NARAL's Run for your Rights on September 21st at Seward Park. While we may not face the legislative challenges that led to Senator Wendy Davis' 13-hour filibuster in Texas, Washington women's health and reproductive choice is under threat due to the continuing consolidations and mergers of health services with companies that have religious affiliations. Please help make sure that women have not only the choice, but also the access they need to make it.

For details on how to sign up, please call the League office at 206-329-4848.

ELECTION FORUMS



In addition to our two first Thursday forums, we are also co-sponsoring or assisting with several other forums around King County.

Ballot Measures

Monday, September 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Horizon House

900 University St, Seattle

Note: Co-sponsored by the First Hill Unit of the League and the Public Affairs Committee of Horizon House. Open to Horizon House residents and League members. If you are not a resident, please rsvp to Joan Lawson, joanvlawson@gmail.com.

Horizon House will also hold two candidates forums on October 7th and 14th.

Seattle Mayoral Candidate Forum

Sunday, September 30 at 6:30 p.m.

(location to be confirmed - check website)

Co-sponsored with Allied Arts

Lake Forest Park City Council Candidates

Tuesday, October 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Third Place Commons, Lake Forest Park

Mercer Island Candidates Forum

Thursday, October 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Mercer Island Middle School

We also have plans in the works for Ballard, Medina, Renton and SeaTac. Keep watching for e-mail updates and checking the website for additional details.

Because we can't do them all but we want people to be able to know about and attend forums in their area, the calendar on the League website is also listing nonpartisan candidate forums that are open to the public. If you know about one and it is not listed - please let us know!

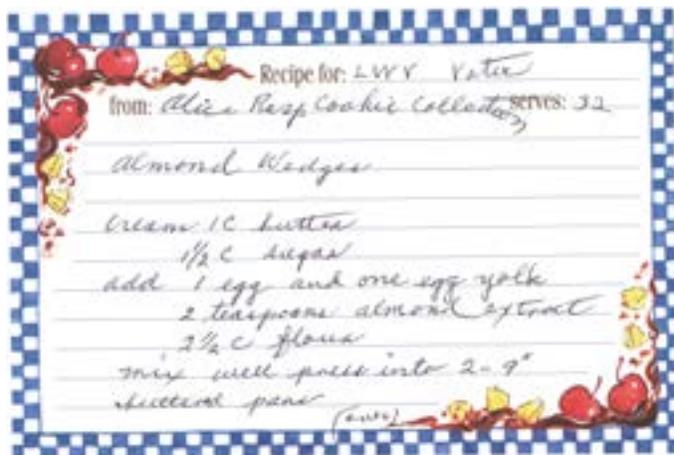
ALICE HANGS UP HER OVEN MITTS

Rumor has it that some people come to Seattle-King County League forums just for the cookies. Of course, those people could not possibly be League members. But for many years, members have looked forward to Alice Rasp's cookies to put them in the proper frame of mind for the educational part of the evening.

Alice does not even remember how many years she has been baking. She started out buying cookies, just as a way to make a contribution. Gradually, she started collecting and trying out recipes, until her cookies evolved into a League tradition.

But as Alice approaches her 89th birthday this fall, she has decided that it is time to hang up her mitts. We are very grateful for her long and faithful service. Although we do not expect to replace her, we would appreciate any contributions of baked goods for future forums – call the office if you can help.

One of Alice's most popular recipes is printed below.



smooth tops & brush with slightly beaten egg white sprinkle slivered almonds on top
Bake 35-40 min ~~at~~ at 325° don't overbake - so watch - cut in narrow wedges 16 per pan

Almond Wedges

Cream 1 cup butter
1 1/2 cup sugar
add 1 egg & 1 egg yolk
2 teasp. almond extract
2 1/2 cup flour

Mix well.

Press into 2 nine inch buttered pans. Smooth tops and brush with slightly beaten egg white. Sprinkle slivered almonds on top.

Bake 35 to 40 minutes at 325°

Don't overbake - so watch.

Cut in narrow wedges, 16 per pan.

Getting Connected Membership News

NEW MEMBERS BY CAROL GOLDENBERG

Trudy Soileau has had a number of challenging careers. Thanks to her peripatetic life with a military husband, she found interesting positions in many places. One of the most satisfying was as assistant to a state senator in Oklahoma. Trudy said, "I gained a thorough education in political science." She and her husband have one daughter who is now grown and living in Seattle.

Trudy has volunteered to work with the League's agricultural study. She said since reading Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma* a few years ago, she is convinced we need to pay more attention to our food chain. She has joined the Southwest King County unit.

Heather Stark is a radio broadcaster and health podcaster for several Seattle radio stations. She provides public education and lectures about all aspects of domestic violence and interpersonal violence, including the dynamics of physical and emotional abuse, their social repercussions, and the court system. She earned a Masters in Public Administration with a focus on Domestic Violence from the University of Colorado in Denver, and is a candidate for a Ph.D. in organizational psychology. She has served on the board of the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and is a founding member of Heal Everywhere, an organization dedicated to helping survivors of abuse become productive and powerful members of their communities.

Heather authored a book, *Why Doesn't She Just Leave?*, which helps friends, family members, and co-workers of women suffering abuse understand the dynamic of domestic violence and learn why things are not so simple for the abuse victim as the question implies. Heather is a survivor.

Autumn T. Johnson is a lawyer who relocated to Seattle last year. After attending college at the University of Arizona, she became a social worker, working with teenagers in the Arizona foster care system. She later moved to Oregon to attend law school at the University of Oregon, where she focused on environmental law. After law school she moved to Idaho and clerked for a judge for two years.

Last year Autumn opened her own law firm in Seattle, the Law Office of Puget Sound. Her office practices business and nonprofit law with an emphasis on microenterprise. She is currently working on an MBA at Seattle University. She is a member of the King County Bar Association, Washington State Bar Association, the Washington State Association for Justice, and the Greater Seattle Business Association.

In her free time, Autumn enjoys the arts, the outdoors, and college sports. She also likes yoga, cooking, and playing with her pets. She says her mentor recommended the League of Women Voters as a way to become involved in the community. She looks forward to meeting new people, becoming informed on local politics, and participating in community events. Although she lives in West Seattle, she is hoping to participate in the Capitol Hill unit.

Features

BOOK REVIEW by Vicky Downs

MY BELOVED WORLD by Sonia Sotomayor

The prologue of this book tells us that at age seven, Sonia Sotomayor learned to give herself insulin shots. Her parents' daily arguments about the procedure made Sonia realize she couldn't rely on them. "It then dawned on me: If I needed to have these shots every day for the rest of my life, the only way to survive was to do it myself." This event initiated a profound self-discipline that reverberated throughout her life.

Sonia also credits her success to her extended Hispanic family. She writes, "I have always felt that the support I've drawn from those closest to me has made the decisive difference between success and failure." She was her grandmother's favorite and felt utterly secure in the older woman's company. She spoke Spanish at home, but her Spanish-speaking relatives could not help her at Blessed Sacrament School where everyone spoke English.

Sonia found "little warmth" at school, in part because the nuns disapproved of working mothers. Ironically, her mother worked at the hospital "to pay for [the] education she believed was the key to any aspirations for a better life."

At school, however, "Mrs. Reilly...unleashed my competitive spirit," confesses Sotomayor. Her teacher gave gold stars for something really well done, and "I was a sucker for gold stars." To earn more, Sonia had to improve her study skills. She approached one of the smartest girls in the class and asked her how to study. The girl was surprised, but "generously divulged her [techniques.]" The result was many gold stars, and Sonia was never again shy about finding mentors and asking professors, colleagues, and friends for "whatever that [person] could teach me."

Soon Sonia Sotomayor was near or at the top of her class through senior high school. She applied to several colleges and decided to attend Princeton. There, she received a "C" on her first term paper and had to learn how to write more clearly and to improve her English.

When some students complained that "affirmative action students" were displacing a far more deserving affluent white male, the pressure to succeed academically and to fight prejudice became ever more powerful. Sonia joined other Spanish-speaking students in Action Puertorriquena. This group wanted to bring in more minority students, and also spoke up on issues like the Vietnam War. "But I felt myself more a mediator than a crusader," she writes. She then successfully worked to hire minority faculty.

She graduated with the Pyne Prize, Princeton's highest honor, and went on to Yale Law School and then a New York law firm. There she realized that her ability to focus on a goal could lead her to miss social cues. She overheard one colleague call her "one tough bitch." That hurt, but typically she found a secretary who would "hold a mirror up when she notices me getting intimidating or too abrupt...."

When she worked in the District Attorney's office, she prosecuted a man accused of robbery and of jumping bail. Though she was confident her work was "solid," she lost both cases. She asked a colleague to tell her where she'd gone wrong. He responded that "I was appealing to logic, not morality, and in effect letting the jury off the hook. Since it is painful to most jurors to vote 'guilty' and send a human being to jail, you couldn't simply reason with them...you had to make them feel the necessity. They have to be-

lieve that they have a moral responsibility to convict." She never forgot that advice.

This book takes us up to Sonia Sotomayor's work as a judge in New York. She quickly realized that addressing the courtroom from the bench was where she belonged, and she told a friend, "I think this fish has found her pond!"

I found this a very readable and compelling autobiography. Sotomayor shows us how and why family background makes a difference, and in what ways her life's journey helped to make her the person and the judge she is. Now I look forward to a sequel that will show us how she approaches work on the Supreme Court.

The opinions in this review are personal and do not represent those of the LWV.

NEWS FROM THE ECONOMICS & TAXATION COMMITTEE

BY JEANETTE JOHNSON

This is the second in a series of articles on Timothy Noah's book, "The Great Divergence," about America's growing economic inequality crisis, which the committee is reading and discussing this year. This month I'll begin the discussion about what Noah sees are the causes, and importantly, what are not the causes of our current dilemma. Here are some highlights:

The growth in income inequality over the past three decades cannot be attributed to either race or gender because the income gaps between black Americans and white Americans and women and men would have to have grown over the years, and they haven't. In fact, the black American/white American median family income gap has remained relatively stable over the

years – only four percentage points smaller today than it was in 1980. Furthermore, the male/female wage gap has actually declined over the past 30 years. In 1980 the median annual income for women was 40% less than that of men; today it is about 23% less and expected to narrow in the future because women are becoming better educated than men. While these findings reflect women's success in the workforce, they also indicate declining job opportunities for working-class men and stagnant wages for men in general. In fact, between 1979 and 2009, the median income for males working full time increased 2% (after inflation), while the median income for women rose 22% (after inflation).

As Noah points out, one way women have not been able to avoid the effects of the Great Divergence is by creating families with men. While real median family income doubled between 1949 and 1979, it increased by a mere 10% between 1979 and 2010, with most of the increase happening during the 1990s technology boom.

In practice, family incomes may have declined. In 2003 Elizabeth Warren calculated that though many things, like appliances, food, and clothing were cheaper, families were spending close to \$500 more on electronic amenities that had been largely unavailable in the early 1970s – cable TV, computers, et cetera. When you factor in mortgage payments, car payments, taxes, health insurance, and day-care bills, today's dual-income families have less discretionary income – and less money to put away for a rainy day – than the single-income family of a generation ago.

Middle-class families are also experiencing greater financial insecurity because of the greater likelihood of job loss, which has increased significantly since the 1970s; the decline of fixed-pension benefits; and privatization, in which company employees have been replaced by private contractors.

Noah raises the issue of whether the increase in economic inequality could come from shifts in marriage patterns, such as assortive-mating. Assortive-mating occurs when a highly-paid individual marries another highly-paid individual. As more and more women have come to hold high-paying positions, there has been an increase in assortive mating. Between 1960 and 2003, the likelihood of two highly-paid individuals marrying one another has increased by 25%. The result, according to one researcher, is that earnings inequality from 1967 to 2005 would have been 25 to 30% lower if it hadn't been for the increasing correlation between spousal incomes. Noah concludes, however, that this cannot explain the extreme income inequality seen in the U.S., since income-based assortive mating has been increasing in other advanced industrialized democracies at similar, or even higher, rates than in the U.S.

The rise in single parenthood is also an issue. Noah points out, "Between 1970 and 2004, the proportion of U.S. children living with one parent jumped from 12% to more than 26%." He further notes that "40% of single-mother families have incomes below the poverty line, compared to only 8% of two-income families." While single parenthood is common throughout the world, "the rate of single-parent families that are in or near poverty is significantly higher in the United States than in western Europe." However, Noah concludes that the contribution of single parenthood to the Great Divergence has been minimal, since single parenthood "increased mostly before 1980, when the Great Divergence was getting underway."

Follow along next month as we explore more about the causes and effects of America's growing economic inequality crisis.



**HOW TO BE
AN INFORMED VOTER**

A SELECTION OF TOOLS
TO HELP YOU FIND AND EVALUATE
INFORMATION ABOUT
CANDIDATES AND ISSUES



NOTE TO UNIT & DISCUSSION LEADERS: There will be no discussion leaders' briefing, but the speakers will provide additional information that will contribute to meaningful unit discussion. Please plan to attend and encourage your fellow unit members to join you!

While part of the presentation at the forum is on the ballot measures for the city of Seattle, summaries of those measures are not yet ready. We expect to have them available at the forum and they will be printed in the October edition of *The Voter*.

Note for facilitators and recorders: Because this is not a study there are no consensus questions and you are not required to reach consensus. Nevertheless, please discuss the following and record the gist of your discussions. These notes help guide the board and the voter services committee in developing future activities on this topic.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Where do you get your information about the candidates and measures on the ballot?

Please list any online resources you've used.

What sources do you find the most helpful when choosing how to vote?

Do you ever have difficulty finding reliable information? If so, please explain.

Do you ever look at who is financing campaigns? If so, what resources have you used?

ONLINE RESOURCES

More and more, we are using the internet to access election information. There are a number of useful resources and among the most comprehensive for us is Vote411.

Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a “one-stop-shop” for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information on the following aspects of the election process:

- Absentee ballot information
- Ballot measure information (where applicable)
- Early voting options (where applicable)
- Election dates
- Factual data on candidates in various federal, state and local races
- General information on such topics as how to watch debates with a critical eye
- ID requirements
- Polling place locations
- Registration deadlines
- Voter qualifications
- Voter registration forms
- Voting machines

An important component of VOTE411.org is the polling place locator, which enables users to type in their address and retrieve the poll location for the voting precinct in which that address is located. The League has found that this is among the most sought after information in the immediate days leading up to, and on, Election Day.

Vote411 in Washington State

Vote411 is a work in progress. It offers basic information on elections in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, a number of state Leagues, Washington among them, are working with local Leagues to implement the personalized ballot feature. Local volunteers have been gathering information on county

and local races, entering job descriptions and salaries for each office, and coming up with appropriate questions for candidates. The next step is to submit the questions, along with a request for biographical information. Some follow up may be necessary if candidates do not respond promptly. While some information (e.g. job descriptions) will remain fairly static, much of it must be updated for every election, and it's not automatic – it all represents hours spent by Leaguers like you. (And many thanks if it is you!)

But by the end of September, you should be able to go to vote411.org, enter your home address, and get all the information you want, and then some, on what will be on your ballot for the November 5 election. If you find it useful, spread the word.

Additional useful resources include:

Municipal websites and the state legislature's website where you can look up the history and committee reports for measures that have been placed on the ballot.

The Seattle Ethics and Elections and the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission's websites provide information about the campaigns - who is raising money, who is donating and how much.

Candidate ratings can be found on sites such as the Municipal League and votingforjudges.org.

Listings for these and other resources can be found on our website and in our annual directory of elected officials: *“They Represent You.”*

HOW TO PICK A CANDIDATE A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This material was adapted in 2007 from LWVUS Pick a Candidate, LWVNY How To Pick a Candidate, and LWVWA How to Pick a Candidate. It is available in brochure form. Contact the Seattle-King County League office to obtain copies.

This guide is designed to help you decide which candidate to vote for.

Step 1: Decide what you are looking for in a candidate.

You want to pick a candidate that you agree with on the issues and that you feel would be a good person for the job. Both are important. Your first step in picking a candidate is to decide what you care about and what character you want in a leader.

Create a Candidate Report Card listing your priority issues and the qualities you think are most important in an elected official. Rate the candidates on how closely their views match yours and on their leadership abilities.

Step 2: Take a good look at campaign information

You get a lot of impressions and still feel that you get very little real information about the candidates and their views on the issues. You hear slogans, you recognize the names of famous candidates, and you can see the personalities of those candidates. But does that help you decide who you like for the job?

Candidates use many tools in campaigning for office, such as political ads, direct mail, web sites, and polls. Voters need tools as well, to judge candidates on their positions and qualifications. Here are some tools and suggestions:

- TV and Radio Ads: Ask yourself some

questions. What did you learn about the candidate? Did you find out any details on what the candidate wants to do? Did the candidate tell you anything about qualifications? Or was the ad designed only to appeal to your emotions? Separate the glitter from the substance.

- Direct Mail: More and more candidates use direct mail to ask for money or votes. Computers make it easy to send a letter that looks like it's just for you. Remember that the letter is another way to try to get your vote and try to see what can be learned from it.
- Pamphlets and Flyers: The leaflet slid under your door may contain good, interesting information or it may be full of half-truths. Read it critically. Does it accuse the opponent of something? Did you get it so close to Election Day that the opponent can't answer back?
- Emotional Appeals: Listen to a candidate's statements and arguments. Then decide if they are targeted for your emotions alone. Sometimes the words and pictures used are meant to get you to feel a certain way.

Step 3: Learn how others view the candidate.

Poll results are a favorite news story these days. People are asked who they support and sometimes why they support a particular candidate. Polls will tell you who is leading at a certain point in the campaign. Candidates like to know who's leading because it can increase support and contributions from people who want to be on the winning team. Before you believe everything in a poll, ask these questions:

- Who paid for the poll? Did they give you all the answers? When parties and candidates pay for polls, they can control what results they give you and may not publish any information that may be bad for them.
- Was the poll affected by an important event? When people see a lot of news stories on an event such as a military crisis or a po-

litical scandal, their opinions may change.

- What questions were asked? Were they fair?

You can easily spot really biased questions that couldn't help but produce a resounding Yes or No, but also look for the leading questions that push you to a certain answer or leave no room for a Yes, if... or No, but...

- Who was interviewed? How were people picked? Were people chosen at random? Did the poll include all parts of the country? If not, the results may tell you how a small group feels but nothing about the total population.

- How many people were interviewed? No matter how well a poll is done, there is always a margin of error. And the smaller the number of people, the more chance that there are mistakes.

- How many "undecideds"? Remember, once the "undecideds" make up their minds, the results could change dramatically.

- How long ago? Even the best polls are just a snapshot in time. People may change their minds in a day, a week, or a month, especially as new things happen or they learn more. Look for polls and compare the new poll with past ones, and try to spot trends.

- Be smart about how you use group ratings: Endorsements provide clues to the importance a candidate places on an issue. Some organizations representing special interest groups (business, the environment, labor, older Americans, etc.) go through people's votes on bills and rate them on how closely they match one group's point of view. These ratings can be helpful, but they can be misleading. Never take them as the final word.

- Check the organization's reputation. Can it be trusted?

- What is the group's bias? Which issues are important to its members? Are they the same ones you care about? What one group might label as a vote for wasteful spending, another might see as a vote in support for an important project.

- What votes were included in the ratings?

Sometimes, for instance, the vote that really tells you how the person thinks is on an amendment, not on the main bill. Do the group's choices and explanations help you sort it all out?

Step 4: Rate the candidates on how they campaign

You can tell a lot about a candidate by the way the campaign is run. We deserve open, honest campaigns that tell us about what the candidate wants to do. We shouldn't put up with unfair campaigns.

- Does the candidate answer questions? Is the candidate willing to debate with opponents? Does the candidate appear in person or send a "stand-in?"

Here are some ideas that help you identify an unfair campaign:

- Name-calling: A candidate might call an opponent "wishy-washy" or "two-faced" when he or she really is just showing that it's OK to listen to both sides and to change your mind. Don't listen to attacks on a candidate's family, ethnicity, gender, race or personal characteristics that don't have anything to do with how the candidate will do the job.
- Spreading rumors: Watch for tricky statements such as, "Although everyone says my opponent is a crook, I have no personal knowledge of any wrongdoing." These unfair hints can sway an election long before a fair campaign investigation can stop them.
- Loaded Statements: "I oppose wasteful spending" doesn't say much - and it makes it seem as if the candidate's opponent is for it. A candidate should say which spending should be cut and which spending is necessary.
- Catchwords: Beware of empty phrases such as "law and order" ... "The American Way," that are designed to trigger a knee-jerk, emotional reaction without saying much.

Spot Phony Issues:

- Passing the blame: When one candidate

accuses another candidate or party of being the cause of a major problem, such as unemployment or inflation, check it out. Was it really possible for the candidate to solve the problem? Has there been time to tackle the problem?

- Promising the sky: Be realistic. Voters shouldn't expect miracles and candidates shouldn't promise them.
- Evading real issues: Many candidates work very hard to avoid giving direct answers to direct questions. It's not enough, for instance, for a candidate to say, "I've always been concerned about the high cost of health care," and leave it at that. Watch out for candidates who talk about benefits and never mention costs or how the nuts and bolts of a program will work.

Step 5: Examine the candidate's campaign finances.

Where do the candidates get the money to pay for their campaigns?

- Use their own money
- Get money from a few rich people
- Get money from many people giving small amounts
- Get money from Political Action Committees? (PACs, as they are known, are groups formed to raise and distribute money to candidates and issues.)

Many types of information about money given to campaigns must be reported to the government and are watched by the press. Will people who are elected vote to support the people who gave them money? You may hear something like, "We all know Smith is backed by big money interests," or "The union has Jones in its pocket." Every candidate needs support from a wide range of people and groups who may not represent the candidate's views on all the issues. Judge the candidate's own words and deeds.

You can get information about campaign contributions:

Federal Election Commission

1-800-424-9530

www.fec.gov

State Public Disclosure Commission

1-360-753-1111, Toll Free: 1-877-601-2828

www.pdc.wa.gov

Step 6: Where can you find the information you need?

You want to make the right decision, but sometimes it's hard to quickly and easily find the information you want.

- Read your local newspaper.
- Listen to the news on television or radio.
- Talk to your friends about the election.
- Call the political parties.
- Check the League of Women Voters website, Vote411, which provides information on voting, elections, and candidates in all counties. www.Vote411.org

The League of Women Voters will link to all county websites and candidate websites.

Step 7: Pick a candidate

Now that you have the tools to make an informed choice - DO SOMETHING!

- Back the candidates you believe in.
- Talk to your friends and co-workers about "your" candidate.
- Don't be afraid to ask tough questions at candidate meetings, at rallies and when a campaign worker rings your doorbell.
- Call TV and radio stations and newspapers to praise or criticize campaign spots.
- Be a letter writer. Tell candidates, newspapers and party leaders how you feel about the issues.
- Don't tolerate unfair campaign practices.
- Call the League of Women Voters in your area to find out how to get involved and make a difference.

Unit Meetings

SEPTEMBER UNIT INFORMATION

(Unit times and locations subject to change; please verify with unit leader.)

Unit Leader email	Phone	Time	Location
Monday, September 9			
FIRST HILL – Joan Lawson			
joanvlawson@gmail.com	206-382-3147	10:00 a.m.	Horizon House, Forum & Social Room 900 University St, Seattle
CAPITOL HILL/MONTLAKE			
		7:00 p.m.	League Office 1620 18th Ave, Seattle 206-329-4848
SOUTHEND - Marian Wolfe and Vivian Montoya			
hedgwolfe@aol.com	206-763-9430	7:30 p.m.	Hostess: Marian Wolfe
montoyaviv@yahoo.com	206-695-2620		4155 13th Ave S, Seattle 206-763-9430
Tuesday, September 10			
WEST SEATTLE – Amanda Berry and Ethel Williams			
amandamberry@earthlink.net	206-724-7518	1:00 p.m.	The Kenney
etheljw1@q.com	206-932-7887		7125 Fauntleroy Way SW, Seattle
SOUTHEAST KING COUNTY/ENUMCLAW - Cathy Dormaier			
clcathy@skynetbb.com	360-802-6799	11:30 a.m.	Frankie's Pizza Highway 410, Enumclaw
Wednesday, September 11			
VIEW RIDGE – Gail Winberg			
winbergeng@q.com	206-524-7801	12:45 p.m.	Brig Bldg. (6344) in Magnuson Park 7400 Sand Point Way, Seattle
<i>Directions: Go into the Park through North entrance at 74th and drive EAST toward water. At the STOP sign, turn LEFT to park in front of the Brig, or RIGHT, for more parking.</i>			
QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA/BALLARD EVENING - Teddy Geokezas			
tgeokezas@msn.com	206-782-5036	7:30 p.m.	Hostess: Teddy Geokezas 4500 Palatine Ave N, Seattle 206-782-5036

(Unit times and locations subject to change; please verify with unit leader.)

Unit Leader email	Phone	Time	Location
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Thursday, September 12

ISSAQUAH DAY – Margaret Austin

margaret.austin@comcast.net	425-392-5760	10:00 a.m.	ECHO room, Issaquah City Hall 130 E Sunset Way, Issaquah
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UNIVERSITY HOUSE/WALLINGFORD – Alice Chew

achoo92@q.com	206-547-5395	10:00 a.m.	University House, Auditorium 4400 Stone Way N, Seattle
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SHORELINE – Juliet Beard

juliet@windermere.com	206-715-5531	4:30 p.m.	Richmond Beach Cong'tl Church NW 195th St & 15th Ave NW, Shoreline
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NORTH CENTRAL – Jan Orlando

orlanre@aol.com	206-524-0936	7:30 p.m.	Hostess: Alice Rasp 4523 5th Ave NE, Seattle 206-633-1835
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Friday, September 13

BELLEVUE/KIRKLAND/REDMOND - Bonnie Rimawi

bonnierim@aol.com	425-820-7127	12:00 p.m.	The Bellevue Library 1111 110th Ave NE, Bellevue
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Wednesday, September 18

NORTH KING COUNTY – Toni Potter

antoniapotter@comcast.net	206-365-8949	9:15 a.m.	Third Place Commons Meeting Room 17171 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Park
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SOUTHWEST KING COUNTY – Mary Ehlers and Kathy Jorgensen

maryehlers@comcast.net	253-941-1930	7:00 p.m.	Foundation House
kjorgensen@juno.com	253-859-8349		32290 1st Ave S, Federal Way

Saturday, September 21

BALLARD/MAGNOLIA/QUEEN ANNE DAY – Joan Peterson

joanmepeterson@gmail.com	206-789-7447	10:00 a.m.	Hostess: Janet Anderson 4560 W Cramer, Seattle 206-285-2460
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Board & Committee Contacts

Term Executive Committee

2013-15	<i>President</i>	Ellen Barton	206-329-4848	president@seattlelwv.org
2013-15	<i>1st VP-Action</i>	Janet Winans	206-323-4825	janetwinans@earthlink.net
2012-14	<i>2nd VP-Program</i>	Beatrice Crane	206-783-8485	bscrane@comcast.net
2013-15	<i>Secretary</i>	Amanda Clark	206-236-0517	amandac5@comcast.net
2013-14	<i>Treasurer</i>	Cindy Piennett	206-329-4848	treasurer@seattlelwv.org

Term Directors

2012-14	<i>Voter Editor</i>	Marge Baker	206-535-7299	votereditor@seattlelwv.org
2012-14	<i>Program</i>	Carol Burton	206-691-1298	ctburton7@gmail.com
2013-15	<i>Voter Services</i>	Joanna Cullen	206-329-8514	jfoxcullen@gmail.com
2013-15	<i>Social Justice</i>	Jayne Freitag	425-922-9501	mjafreitag@comcast.net
2012-14	<i>Membership</i>	Susan K. Jones	206-725-2902	susan@monckjones.com
2012-14	<i>Voter Services</i>	Julie Anne Kempf	206-329-4848	julie@kempf.com
2013-15	<i>Outreach</i>	Marianne Scholl	206-329-4848	outreach@seattlelwv.org
2012-14	<i>Unit Coordinator</i>	Lindsay Soyer	406-546-9314	lindsaysoyer@gmail.com
2012-14	<i>Development</i>	Lisa Unsoeld-Chang	206-329-4848	lisac@seattlelwv.org
2012-14	<i>Outreach</i>	Mary Jo Vigil	206-318-6939	mjvigil@starbucks.com

Note: All board members listed above, with the exception of the Treasurer, are also members of the Education Fund Board

Term Education Fund Officers

2013-14	<i>President</i>	Ellen Barton	206-329-4848	president@seattlelwv.org
2013-14	<i>1st VP</i>	Lisa Unsoeld-Chang	206-329-4848	lisac@seattlelwv.org
2013-15	<i>Secretary</i>	Amanda Clark	206-236-0517	amandac5@comcast.net
2013-15	<i>Treasurer</i>	Ginna Owens	206-215-1408	ginnao@earthlink.net
2013-14	<i>Director</i>	Pat McCann	206-878-2799	thomaspa@centurylink.net

Term Nominating Committee

2013-14	<i>Chair</i>	Judy Bevington	206-329-4848	judybevington@q.com
2013-14		Judith Hance	206-329-4848	judithhance2@gmail.com
2013-14		Cynthia Howe	206-329-4848	howe.john@comcast.net
2013-14		Lisa Peterson	206-329-4848	

Note: Two members of the board will be appointed to serve on the nominating committee when meetings begin.

Off Board Positions

Campaign Finance	Jean Carlson	206-774-6649	jean.carlson@att.net
KC South Liaison	Mary Ehlers	253-941-1930	maryehlers@comcast.net
CIS Coordinator	Cynthia Howe	206-236-0593	howe.john@comcast.net
Observer Corps	Pat McCann	206-878-2799	thomaspa@centurylink.net

Committees

<i>Economics & Taxation</i>	Jeanette Johnson		jeanettejohnson10@msn.com
<i>Education</i>	Joanna Cullen	206-329-8514	jfoxcullen@gmail.com
<i>International Relations</i>	see page 7		
<i>Social Justice</i>	Jayne Freitag	425-922-9501	mjafreitag@comcast.net
<i>Transportation</i>	Janet Winans	206-323-4825	janetwinans@earthlink.net

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County
1620 18th Ave, Suite 101
Seattle WA 98122

Periodicals Postage
Paid at Seattle, WA

Moving? Let us know!

Call the League office at (206) 329-4848 or
email info@seattlelwv.org

LWV SEATTLE-KING COUNTY:

How to Be an Informed Voter and
City of Seattle Ballot Measures

Thursday, September 5

Seattle First Baptist Church

1111 Harvard Ave (Harvard & Seneca)
Seattle, WA

Learn about some of the new tools to help
voters get information about the issues and
the candidates they will see on their ballots.

Prop 1 for Public Financing of Seattle City
Council Candidates

Charter Amendment 19 for Districting of
Seattle City Council Seats