ELECTING JUDGES IN THE PRIMARY  By Nora Leech

Are you ready? Primary Election day is Tuesday, August 17.

You will be electing judges in the primary and need to be knowledgeable about the candidates, at times a very difficult task. But we are going to provide you with a forum, background information and resources to help you vote wisely on the judges. Our League forum in August will feature candidates for the Supreme Court, as well as for King County Council position 8. See page 22 for more information on the primary.

Washington Supreme Court
Supreme Court justices are elected to six-year terms in nonpartisan elections by voters throughout the entire state. There are nine Supreme Court justices; the terms of three of the current justices expire in 2010, so three positions will appear on the primary ballot.

If a candidate receives more than 50% of the votes cast in the primary, that candidate appears on the general election ballot without opposition. If no candidate receives more than 50% in the primary, the top two candidates appear on the general election ballot on November 2, 2010. Positions 1 (Jim Johnson and Stan Rumbaugh) and 5 (Barbara Madsen, who is unopposed) will be decided in the primary. There are three candidates for position 6 (Bryan Chushcoff, Richard Sanders (incumbent) and Charlie Wiggins).

So why do you need to pay attention to Supreme Court candidates? Don’t they just review lower court decisions for errors? Yes, but in doing so they interpret our state laws and constitution, and in the process our state Supreme Court can be as controversial as the US Supreme Court. These are some examples of recent state Supreme Court rulings.

No-contact order
In State v. Warren, a 2008 decision, the court upheld a lower court sentence that permanently banned a convicted child molester from contacting his wife, who was not a direct victim of his crimes. Richard H. Warren had been convicted of child molestation and child rape against his two stepdaughters. The court ruled that limiting Warren’s marriage rights was reasonably necessary to achieve the compelling state interest of protecting the girls and their mother.

Same-sex marriage
In a July 2006 decision that split 5-4, the Washington Supreme Court upheld a state law banning same-sex marriages. Justices issued a total of six opinions in the case. Some in the majority asserted that the state legislature remained free to extend the right to marry to gay and lesbian couples, while others took a harder line. The four dissenting justices felt that the majority was endorsing discrimination against gay and lesbian citizens.

Prisoners and public records
The Court issued a 5-4 ruling in July 2008 saying that while prisoners may make open records requests which the state must fulfill, the correctional facility is under no obligation to actually deliver the documents to the felon if it deems them inappropriate in a prison setting.

Important cases may turn on one vote—so it matters who is on the court.

Come to the forum and meet the candidates. You will then be well informed and can help others make wise choices.
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President’s Message

Summer is here and election season is in full swing. We’re hosting forums, reviewing ballot measures, tabling at community events to help people register and let them know about resources to learn about the candidates and the issues. This is a big part of our visibility in the community so please share what we’re doing with family and friends. Come out and join us too!

As you’ll read in this issue, national convention was chock full of interesting speakers, seminars and opportunities to learn about Leagues from all over the country. As I have before, I finished the four days exhausted but at the same time energized and inspired. There is an amazing diversity in the local and state league chapters and the lessons to be learned are numerous. We often assume that the way we run our League is how all Leagues operate (and should operate!) Not true; there are a lot of different models. We heard a lot from national about streamlining and as we move forward this will be helpful as we make decisions about where we invest our resources. The cry of “this is how we’ve always done it” will no longer be accepted. We need a more thoughtful and realistic approach. When we ask you to volunteer, it should be to do something you will find enjoyable and meaningful and that will also help advance our mission.

In addition to the activities listed above we have a lot of other things going on that could use your help, from our gala fundraising dinner in October, to working on one of the three current studies: the development of public school teachers, local mental health treatment issues and a review of reclaimed water plans in King County. Hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

Allison Feher

Mission Statement
The League of Women Voters of Seattle, 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.

The League of Women Voters of Seattle serves the greater Seattle area, including the cities of north King County as well as east King County from Bothell to Bellevue.
August/September

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1:00 p.m. | 30 | 31 | September 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
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**AUGUST**

Primary Candidates Forum
Thursday, August 5
7:30 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Hear My Voice
Thursday, August 5
6:00 p.m.
Museum of History And Industry

**Voter Deadline**
Monday, August 9

LWVS Reclaimed Water Review Committee
Monday, August 9
1:00 p.m.
League Office

Education Study Committee
Wednesday, August 11
12:00–2:00 p.m.
League Office

Herstory Walking Tour
Sunday, August 15
10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
Seattle Justice Center

Primary Election
Tuesday, August 17

Herstory Walking Tour
Thursday, August 19
6:00–8:00 p.m.
Seattle Justice Center

Unit Leaders’ Dinner
Wednesday, August 25
5:30 p.m.
2908 Fuhrman

Young Leaguers Mixer
Thursday, August 26
5:00–8:00 p.m.
The Bar at Palomino

Board Meeting
Saturday, August 28
9:00 a.m.
League Office

**SEPTEMBER**

**Voter Deadline**
Tuesday, September 7

Panel Discussion: Will Your Vote Count?
Thursday, September 9
7:30 p.m.
MOHAI Auditorium

LWVS Reclaimed Water Committee
Monday, August 30
1:00 p.m.
League Office
The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) presents a public forum each month between August 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, including at least one on the eastside. A special event planned for this coming September is a joint LWVS/Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) panel discussion on the effect of the female voter on democracy. This will take place at MOHAI, as one of a series of events celebrating the centennial of women’s suffrage, and will replace the traditional LWVS forum. The tentative schedule of upcoming forums for 2010-2011 appears to the left; check your Voter or the LWVS website, seattlelwv.org, each month for up-to-date information.

Please note that the September event is a week later than usual due to the Labor Day weekend.

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Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS), 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 recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVS 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 affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, staff and programs.
May Board Briefs  By Brita Butler-Wall, Secretary

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) met on Saturday morning, May 1. This is a brief summary of their work.

Membership: LWVS currently has 717 members, with 647 of those in good standing. We gained 7 new members and lost 12 this month. Kelly Powers has been developing membership trending reports to aid in planning.

Units: Units discussed Making Democracy Work. Attendance ranged from 2 to 28; recordings showed good discussions. The Southend Unit is losing a long-time leader, Sam Scharff, and we gained a new unit, Bayview, which is being led by long-term Leaguer Peg Williams. The small Kirkland unit made $609 at their fundraising event. A few units are having an optional June meeting.

Budget: The Board discussed the draft budget for 2010-11 presented by Treasurer Judy Bevington and made some adjustments. The amended budget was approved by the Board and will be brought to a vote at the Annual Meeting.

Finance Review: Brita Butler-Wall presented the draft report of the finance committee’s review of the 2008-09 financial records. The report showed that the accounts of the organization are in good order; the committee also made some recommendations to the Board. Laraine Volkman, former Treasurer, and Linda Snider, CPA, also served on the committee.

Voter Service: Sarah Luthens, Jeffrey Wasson, and Nora Leech will organize forums for August and October relating to ballot issues for the primary and general elections. They will have announcements and signup sheets at the tables at the Annual Meeting.

Policies and Bylaws: The Board reviewed the most recent draft of the policies as required by bylaws, and made some adjustments. The Board approved the revised policies. Nora Leech noted that the policies are reviewed every two years and can be amended by the Board as needed. The Board will revisit social media policies after the National Convention, where that subject is taken up.

Annual Meeting: Butler-Wall thanked Board members for getting their material in so that the annual meeting kit can be formatted and printed in a few days. Feher will encourage the state League to provide Parliamentarian training.

Nominating Committee: Sarah Luthens reported on the slate and continuing Board members. She noted that member Ginny NiCarthy is interested in creating a 20-year diversity plan.

Outreach: The Board will have a table at the upcoming fundraiser for Washington Public Campaign and will announce the event to our members and on the website.

Public Relations: Jean Carlson reported on radio and TV announcements of the May Port forum. She is coordinating scheduling League events with the Governor’s office to reduce scheduling conflicts.

Fund Development: Jean Carlson reported that the fund development committee has met twice and has outlined a fundraising strategy for next year which will include a fall event with headliner (but no silent auction), a spring TRY-related event, and a spring headliner event. League members are encouraged to send suggestions/contacts for possible speakers for such League events to the office, where a database is being developed. Christal Wood will work with the committee to develop small fundraising events throughout the year.

National Convention: Board representatives to the National Convention in Atlanta will be Nora Leech, Kelly Powers, Judy Bevington, and Allison Feher. Non-board delegates will include Education Chair Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis, International Relations Chair Ellen Berg, and incoming Board member Brigitte Ashley.
Committees

Most League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) committees take a break during the summer. However, the committees responsible for the two new studies adopted at Annual Meeting—the Education Study Committee and the Reclaimed Water Review Committee—will be gearing up for work in August. For updates on meeting times and locations check the website or call the office.

For a complete list of LWVS committees, with contacts, see inside back cover. All our committees welcome additional members. Please contact the committee chair to find out more if you are interested in participating.

EDUCATION STUDY BEGINS IN AUGUST
DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11
TIME: 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.
PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE
CHAIR: LUCY GASKILL-GADDIS, (206) 938-3040 OR TERRYLUCY2U@COMCAST.NET

The first meeting of the Education Study Committee is August 11. Although summer is travel time, we need to start soon, as the plan is to present the study in May 2011. We hope that most of those who are interested can come. At this meeting we will lay out the scope and begin deciding how to organize ourselves. Please let chair Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis know if you can or cannot come to the meeting. She will be sending information out in advance of the meeting, and wants to be sure everyone who is interested will get the information.

Please also feel free to contact her before the meeting if you have questions.

RECLAIMED WATER REVIEW COMMITTEE
DATES: MONDAY, AUGUST 9 & MONDAY, AUGUST 30
TIME: 1:00 P.M.
PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE
CHAIR: DENISE D SMITH

At the 2010 Annual Meeting, the members of the League of Women Voters of Seattle were enthusiastic about a proposal for LWVS to conduct a review of the policies and current projects in planning and development for reclaimed water in the region. The intent of the League update proposed by Denise Smith is to review what has been done and what is planned in the region, and to offer some form of education on that issue to our membership.

Staff from both King County and the City of Seattle have proposed making presentations to the League on their respective reclaimed water programs. There is also a new state rule on reclaimed water, which is currently in the public outreach and public comment phase. These local, regional and state processes will result in long term policies and infrastructure investments that League members are likely to be asked about.

The review committee that is being formed will meet over the next few months to compile information on reclaimed water in the region and present this information to the membership. We hope to have an informational forum on this issue early next year. We encourage interested members to contact Lindsay Cummings at the League office for more information or to attend the first meeting, at which retired King County Council Woman Louise Miller will speak. Councilwoman Miller will discuss the history of this issue in our region from her perspective as a King County councilmember and co-chair/member of the Regional Water Quality committee. The second meeting will feature staff from the King County Waste Water treatment division.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
TIME: 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: HOME OF VICKY DOWNS: 909 E NEWTON, # D-9

Topic A: Afghanistan. Join us for our first hot button program!! More than a committee meeting but less than a forum, this session is open to all LWV members. First there will be two talks, then the floor will be thrown open to discussion. Former LWVS president Pat Emerson will talk about Afghan culture, and I-R chair Ellen Berg will talk about current U.S. policy in Afghanistan. For more information, contact Ellen Berg at ellenzberg@msn.com or (206) 329-4848.
Announcements

HELP WANTED
VOTER REGISTRATION

Please join the fun and come out to register voters and promote the League of Women Voters.
Upcoming opportunities:

- Hempfest: August 20–22
- Bumbershoot: September 4–6

Please call the office at (206) 329-4848 for more information.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Every election season we get dozens of requests for speakers to present an objective overview of the issues on the ballot to audiences in workplaces, retirement centers and other community venues. **Without your help we will not be able to continue this valuable service.** This is a great way to learn about the issues (we provide training), develop your speaking skills, and promote the mission of the League.

Please call the office at (206) 329-4848 for more information.

YOUNG LEAGUERS MIXER

**DATE:** THURSDAY, AUGUST 26  
**TIME:** 5:00–8:00  
**PLACE:** THE BAR AT PALOMINO, 1420 5TH AVE. # 350; (206) 623-1300

New Board member Brigitte Ashley invites other young League members and their friends to join her for an informal mixer at the bar at Palomino. People can drop in any time between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. This is a great networking opportunity and a chance for us to get together and talk about the upcoming primary and the League in general. If you have questions, please contact Brigitte: (206) 329-4848 or brigitteashley@hotmail.com.

UNIT LEADERS DINNER

**DATE:** WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25  
**TIME:** 5:30 P.M.  
**PLACE:** 2908 FUHRMAN AVE E., SEATTLE

All unit leaders for 2010–2011 are invited to join Diana Henderson, Unit Coordinator and Kelly Powers, Membership Chair, for a casual dinner at Diana’s home, in order to get to know each other and discuss what we all hope to achieve for the League year. Please RSVP by email to whender912@aol.com or phone (206) 329-4848 by August 20th.

LOST AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

If you accidentally picked up a long black hooded raincoat with gray trim at the LWVS Annual Meeting, please call the League office at (206) 329-4848.
Women's Votes, Women's Voices Exhibit at the Museum of History & Industry

The Women’s Votes, Women’s Voices Exhibit, celebrating the centennial of women’s suffrage in Washington State, will be at the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) through October 3, 2010. The exhibit, visiting from the Washington State Historical Society, covers the campaign for suffrage and the influence that women’s votes have had on Washington’s history.
In addition, MOHAI has scheduled various special events to commemorate the centennial. These include:

Walking Tour: Seattle’s Herstory—Celebrating a Century of Suffrage
Seattle Architecture Foundation (SAF) and MOHAI offer a walking tour of Pioneer Square which focuses on Seattle’s role in Washington’s suffrage campaign.
Meet at: Seattle Justice Center, located at 600 5th Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98104.
Cost: MOHAI Members $10; General $15.
Times/Dates: Third Thursdays, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.: 8/19 and 9/16
Third Sundays, 10:00 a.m. – noon: 8/15, 9/19
Tickets/Registration: Register at brownpapertickerts.org or call (880) 838-3006

First Thursday Programming: Hear My Voice
Thursday, August 5, 6:00 p.m.
Living Voices presents a moving performance of “Hear my Voice”, a tale of one women’s struggle for her right to vote, followed by a discussion lead by Living Voices’ Artistic Director, Rachel McClinton. Free.

First Thursday Programming: The Scarlet Letter
Thursday, September 2, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
MOHAI and Intiman Theatre present a Front Porch Theater performance of The Scarlet Letter, the story of Hester Prynne, one of the great female characters in American literature. Family, friends and neighbors are invited to come together to read an excerpt from the play aloud, followed by a moderated conversation about the issues and ideas it inspires. All are welcome; those who don’t wish to read are encouraged to attend as audience members and participate in the discussion. Free.

Panel Discussion: Will your vote count?
A look at 100 years of suffrage and how voting is changing today
Thursday, September 9, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.
MOHAI and the League of Women Voters of Seattle host a stimulating panel discussion which explores how American democracy has been affected by the female voter. How has female suffrage influenced politics and social issues in Washington State over the last 100 years? What challenges do voting women continue to face today, and how will the rights of voters – male and female – be altered with the incorporation of the digital age into our democratic practices? Free parking and light refreshments provided.
Free
Podcast Series: Women’s Voices
MOHAI’s latest podcast series illuminates the stories of six King County women and their groundbreaking social and political achievements. Influenced by both postwar domesticity and the rising feminism movement, these six women found themselves drawn into local politics through prior community involvement, volunteerism, and a great desire to better their evolving cities. All podcasts are excerpts from an extensive oral history project produced by MOHAI and narrated by Marsha King. To access the podcasts, visit: www.mohaipodcasts.org

Isabel Hogan: First female Mayor of Kent
Beth Bland Winn: First female Mayor of Mercer Island
Nan Campbell: First female Mayor of Bellevue and City Council Member
Doreen Marchione: Mayor of Redmond and current Kirkland City Council Member
Doris Cooper: First female Mayor of Kirkland and City Council Member
Christine Himes: First female Mayor of Redmond

→ Save the Date!
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2010

Celebrate Ninety Years of the League of Women Voters!

5:00 pm Reception
6:00 – 8:00 pm Dinner & Program

Red Lion Inn, Downtown Seattle

Please join us for this important LWV fundraising event!

We will be contacting you later in the summer with more details but start planning now. Bring friends and potential friends to learn about the League and help support our mission while having fun celebrating all we’ve done and how far we’ve come!
Community News

FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL’S CIVIC LEADERS OF TOMORROW

BY KELLY POWERS, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR AND CIVICS ED COMMITTEE MEMBER

What is on the minds of twenty-nine 2010 Graduating Seniors from the John Stanford Public Service Academy (PSA) at Franklin High School?

- Youth Suicide
- Diabetes Awareness
- History of African American Veterans
- Preventing Teen Pregnancy (3 presentations)
- Domestic Violence
- Youth Gang Violence (3 presentations)
- Autism
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Graffiti: Art or Crime?
- Fighting HIV/AIDS
- The Undervalued Teacher: Childcare Workers
- Teen employment
- Homeless Veterans
- Rainier Vista Boys and Girls Club
- Raised Bilingual & Refugees

The PSA program is a three-year, college preparatory program that culminates with a senior project. Each graduating senior chooses a topic to research and dedicates hours of community service. Each senior identifies a mentor in the community working in a related field.

The graduating seniors presented their projects to family, friends and judges from the community at the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence on June 7. Each student gave an oral presentation, with power point slides, a brochure and a student-made video. Presenters were scored on a range of criteria including quality of speech, depth of knowledge, and handling of follow up questions. Kelly Powers served as a judge for three of the presentations; Ruby Powers was a time keeper.

The speakers were well rehearsed and passionate about the topics, often inspired by personal experiences. Students talked about how they evolved from being uninterested and disengaged coming into the academy their sophomore year, to realizing that they have the power and tools to make change happen in their communities as they participated in the program.

Their junior year, students concentrate on state government. Each student chooses a bill to research and follow during the legislative session. Students visit Olympia to learn about the state legislature and government, and to meet their legislators to advocate for issues.

This year, due to budget cuts, the high school seniors were not able to take their senior trip to Washington DC to meet their national delegation.

There are several ways League members can support this innovative, empowering program that gets kids engaged with government and public policy:

- Be audience members – it’s a joyful and inspiring evening
- Volunteer to evaluate or time senior project presenters.
- Recruit other community members and freshman students to participate.
- Spread the word about the PSA program.
- Check out the website www.psaforall.org.
- Attend the fundraiser usually held in April or May – let’s help them get to DC next year!
- Sponsor a League table at the fundraiser.

The Class of 2010 is graduating during the worst recession since the Great Depression, a time when even community college can be out of reach. League support and encouragement can make a big difference.

If you’re interested in supporting the PSA program, please call the office at (206) 329-4848 and leave a message for Laura Weese and Kelly Powers. We’ll contact you as opportunities arise.
The Membership of the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) met on Thursday evening, May 20, 2010. This is a brief summary of the meeting.

President Allison Feher called the 2010 Annual Meeting of LWVS to order at 5:30 p.m. She welcomed the 74 members attending.

Board member Sarah Luthens presented a bylaws amendment proposed by the Board, which synchronizes the board term with the fiscal year. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

After discussion, Vice President Nora Leech moved that the new position on Privatization be added to the LWVS Positions. The motion carried, with one abstention.

No other changes were proposed and the existing positions were readopted unanimously.

Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis, chair of the LWVS Education Committee, presented the Board-recommended study, entitled “The Development of a Public School Teacher.” This study was adopted.

Denise Smith moved a review of the wastewater treatment and reclaimed water plans of Seattle and King County. This review was adopted.

President Feher announced that this year we will hold a fall fundraiser with a headliner speaker, but without the arduous silent auction. All-mail voting has made attending the traditional ‘Political Party’ difficult for candidates and the board is exploring new avenues of fund development. Board member Jean Carlson and member Ginna Owens are heading up the fundraising effort this year.

Musical entertainment by Seattle’s Raging Grannies was a hit during dinner.

On behalf of the League, Peggy Saari, Past President of LWVS, presented the Carrie Chapman Catt award to Dorothy Young Sale.

Joan Thomas, Chair, presented the nominating committee report, and proposed the following slate of officers, directors and nominating committee members for 2010-2011: 1st Vice President Nan Moore, 2nd VP Kelly Powers, 3rd VP Jean Carlson, Secretary Joanna Cullen


Nominating Committee: Chair: Nancy Eitreim, Vicky Downs, Peggy Saari, Liv Grohn Goodman

The slate was approved unanimously.

On behalf of the League, President Feher thanked all the dedicated volunteers, pointing out that it is not only elected and appointed members who do the work of the League. Membership chair Kelly Powers recognized seven 50−year members. Powers also recognized members who were attending their first annual meeting and those who have joined in the last year. She noted that 85 have joined since last May.

Judy Bevington, Treasurer, presented the proposed budget for LWVS for the fiscal year 2010-2011. Dana Twight, Chair of the Civics Education Committee, moved to reinstate the Civics Education budget line item 6091 from $0 to $200. Kelly Powers moved a friendly amendment to reduce line item 5015 state PMP from $13,000 to $12,800 as a source for this increase. The motion to adopt a budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year passed unanimously, as amended.
At the Annual Meeting, Peggy Saari presented the Carrie Chapman Catt Award to Dorothy Young Sale. The text of her introduction follows.

Tonight I have the privilege of presenting the 2010 Carrie Chapman Catt Award.

But first, I want to briefly review the life of the founder of the League of Women Voters.

Carrie Chapman Catt became President of the National American Suffrage Association in 1900, taking over at the request of Susan B. Anthony. She developed the “Winning Plan,” encouraging Association members to focus solely on the issue of suffrage. The passage of the right to vote for women became the 19th amendment to the US Constitution in 1920. It was at that time Catt founded the League of Women Voters to assure that women would be informed voters. She continued to work for the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance in order that women around the world might also obtain the right to vote.

Now it is my pleasure to announce that the 2010 Carrie Chatman Catt Award goes to Dorothy Young Sale for a career of work on women’s rights and related issues. Dorothy was born in New York City, raised on Long Island, and graduated from Swarthmore College. She earned a Master of Library Science degree from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. She and her husband Roger moved from the east coast in 1962 and Dorothy joined the LWV here in Seattle. She was particularly interested in the growing civil rights movement and worked on the LWV’s study of Equal Opportunity in Education, Employment, and Housing. From 1971 to 1974, she joined the National Organization for Women, working for the passage of the Washington State Equal Rights Amendment in 1972 and the ratification by the legislature in 1973. Dorothy took on Seattle, Western Washington, and National NOW Board responsibilities. Striving for passage of the ERA in enough states to achieve amendment status, she served as a field organizer in Oregon, Wyoming, Alaska, Oklahoma, and Illinois, sometimes driving from state to state in her little Honda.

Dorothy became active again in the League in the 1990s, serving on the Women’s Issues Committee and the Board of Directors as Voter Service Chair. She was elected Vice President in 1993 and President from 1997-1998. I remember the first summer of her presidency when we wanted to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Women’s Suffrage, we organized with others a parade from Westlake Mall to the Seattle Center featuring costumed “suffragettes.” She served as the LWV Seattle Development chair from 1997-1998. From 1997 to 2005, she was the LWV of Washington’s representative on ProChoice Washington and Reproductive Rights Chair from 2004-2005. Currently, she serves on the Consortium appointed by the Governor, to celebrate the centennial of women voting in Washington State. She is a serious person who loves to read, sings in her church choir, and has been a regular at Angie Bolton’s exercise class at Spectrum Dance Theater since 1986.

Congratulations, Dorothy, on all your efforts.
REASON ISN’T ENOUGH – HOW TO HAVE CIVIL DISCUSSIONS IN UNCIVIL TIMES

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2010 STATE COUNCIL MEETING

BY KELLY POWERS, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Who can forget the Summer of 2010 and the nationwide meltdowns in civic discourse splashed all over the news and on YouTube? How did this corrosive political climate affect local Leagues that were conducting public forums?

These were a few of the issues discussed at the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) Council, which took place May 21–23 in the beautifully restored YWCA building in Bellingham. State Council is a gathering of local Leagues in the off year between state conventions. Eighteen out of 21 local Leagues attended. Allison Feher, President, and Kelly Powers, Membership, represented the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS).

Catherine Ahl of Kitsap, Ann Murphy of the Spokane Area, and Mendy Mclean Stone of Whidbey Island shared their dramatic stories and tips for holding dignified public forums. Preparation and process, two things Leaguers do very well, are the keys to successful forums. Suggestions included: print the ground rules in the program, only print enough programs for the number of people allowed by fire code, have a peace officer on hand to enforce the fire code, plan for the overflow (e.g., with speakers in the parking lot), greet each person in a friendly and welcoming way, allow people to show signs to the cameras and then park the signs during the event, use peer pressure to encourage people to stick to the rules, and of course, set the tone by being respectful to all attendees.

Most Leaguers struggle to interpret and apply the League’s nonpartisan policy from time to time. LWVWA President and LWVS member Linnea Hirst explained how the League’s nonpartisan policy applies to the four main League activities—advocacy, lobbying, voter services and citizen education—and which activities are funded by the 501(c)(3) tax-exempt Education Fund. See the boxed summary on the next page.

Are you vitally concerned about civics education for Washington’s kids? Karen Verrill is leading the effort to sell LWVWA’s excellent textbook The State We’re In: Your Guide to State, Tribal and Local Government, suitable for grades 7–12.

Karen’s team provides a brochure and talking points for making presentations to school districts. They ask that each League sell or give a classroom set.

Please call the office if you or your unit would like to work on getting this book into Greater Seattle-area schools.
A REVIEW OF LEAGUE BASICS

-Excerpted from Council Workbook, League of Women Voters of Washington, May 2010

Nonpartisan Policy: we do not support or oppose candidates for public office. Ever. We do work hard to inform and educate the public:

Candidate Debates: 3 important sources from LWVUS

League Basics:
Guidelines for State and Local League Debates, including “Empty Chair” situations
Face to Face: A Guide to Candidate Debates, especially Legal Considerations section.
Can be funded through the Education Fund.

Advocacy: Based on member study and agreement on selected issues. Involves concerted efforts to achieve public policies consistent with League positions. Advocating change through education of policymakers and the public is education and a legitimate use of Ed Fund money.

Lobbying: Promotes or opposes specific pieces of legislation. Can’t be funded by Ed Fund.

Voter Services: Designed to provide citizens with unbiased, factual information that they can use as a basis for reaching their own decisions. Voter services materials must not contain statements of League positions, and League positions on ballot issues must not be discussed at voter services events. Ed Fund money can be used.

Citizen education activities: provide information on public issues, including those on which we have a position. By law and by League policy, it isn’t necessary to present both sides of an issue in such situations.

League can present educational forums about issues on which the League has a position, provided that the discussions focus on issues of concern rather than the merits of specific pieces of legislation, no lobbying takes place and no call to action is issued. Can use Education Fund money.

Lobbying activities must be kept completely separate from voter service activities, and voters’ guides and other voter services materials and publications must not contain statements of League positions.

Only the president or designee is permitted to speak for the League. All members are strongly encouraged to take action, but should not mention that they are League members in their communications.
National Convention

2010 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS
BY BRIGITTE ASHLEY, BOARD MEMBER

I don’t know where to begin with highlights from National Convention; even after a month I am still trying to process everything. This was my first National Convention and I had a blast. I was so inspired and honored to be a part of this extraordinary experience and to be around so many intelligent and passionate women.

During the convention I attended a number of caucuses and workshops, all of which were very interesting and informative. I was especially energized by the caucus on the Climate Change Toolkit. This toolkit is an amazing new resource that was put together by the Climate Change Task Force. It is a website that provides links to scientific literature that was referenced to build the site, as well as links to other resources and ideas to engage all different types of communities in the climate change discussion. One area of the site was devoted to targeting children and included a music video produced and funded by the Ted Turner Foundation—a neat and innovative way to educate kids and get them interested in the environment. There are also links for engaging faith-based communities as well as for what local leagues can do to engage their communities in this important dialogue.

This Climate Change Toolkit caucus was held toward the end of the convention. I felt that the timing of the caucus was very appropriate because many of the other caucuses I attended dealt with improving and developing new League positions regarding safe drilling and mining practices and sustainable water and food supplies; such positions are needed in part because of effects on climate change.

I encourage you all to go check out the Climate Change Toolkit! It can be accessed through the League of Women Voters of the United States website, lwv.org, by going to the Toolkit for Climate Action link under Global Climate Change, or by typing http://participate.lwv.org in your browser.

2010 NATIONAL CONVENTION: INSPIRATION, INFORMATION, CONNECTION AND CIVIL DISCOURSE
BY JUDY BEVINGTON, LWVS TREASURER

I was inspired by speakers including Congressman John Lewis, Kathleen Sebelius (Secretary of Health and Human Services) and distinguished past League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) presidents, as well as by seeing 500-plus Leaguers engage in civil discourse on issues where different views prevailed. Our own delegation’s achievements—passage of a study on privatization and of concurrence on arms control positions and recognition for a civil discourse program—made me proud.

Workshops and caucuses on treasury procedures and development and on immigration, arms control and privatization were sources of valuable information. Chatting with Leaguers from other areas provided additional insights.

As we face financial challenges, the development workshop was particularly useful. LWVUS staff noted that fundraising should be part of an overall development plan. 82% of contributions come from individual contributions and bequests; only 18% from foundations and corporations. We should rely first on our own members, who realize most the value of the organization. It was recommended that different levels of giving be offered as people renew. Returns are best when concrete benefits are made explicit, whether in support of an event or of particular accomplishments and planned actions. “Asks” are typically less expensive and have better returns than events. Boards were urged to be supportive and pledge to “Give or Get” as much as possible in order to demonstrate their commitment to the organization to potential donors. Belief in the cause and the feeling that gifts are appreciated and used effectively influence decisions to contribute to a greater degree than the issue of tax deductibility. Further information is on the LWVUS website. Staff members declared that they are happy to make suggestions on any proposed solicitation letters that are sent to them.

I wager that we all returned eager to dig in.
MY CONVENTION REPORT
BY ELLEN Z. BERG

For me, the most wonderful moment at the convention was when the update of the Arms Control Position was adopted – unanimously! This brought to a successful conclusion work our League did over the past three years, and the arms control task force did over the past year to move arms control onto the action agenda of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS). It is now on the legislative watch list – which means LWVUS will take action when the occasion arises. The updated position will enable that action to fit current, post-Cold War, post-9/11 circumstances.

When we met in Atlanta, our chief lobbyist assured me that they are already on the watch: the New START treaty with Russia has been sent to the Senate for ratification, and a debate is expected. It is satisfying to know League will be in that debate.

And we in Seattle will be continuing to follow the issue as well: Ambassador Thomas Graham has accepted our invitation to speak at a forum on December 2. Tom Graham was general counsel and acting director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency during the Cold War, and President Clinton’s ambassador on nuclear issues; now in retirement, he teaches part time at the Jackson School’s Institute for Global and Regional Security Studies. You will find him to be a highly informed and charismatic speaker – so mark your calendar now!

Passage of the motion to adopt the update by concurrence was a two-fer. In addition to moving us ahead on arms control, it moved us ahead on LWV process. One of League’s great challenges is how to maintain our tradition of member agreement on the one hand, and be nimble enough to participate in debates in our fast paced, 24/7 world. What was tried on arms control was a new process designed to bridge these competing demands. It was, essentially, a Board initiated process, allowable under Bylaw XII, C and D.

First, the Board appointed a national task force which wrote background papers and reviewed the position for relevance, usefulness, and practical application to current circumstances. The task force then proposed some modest revisions to the position, accompanied by pros and cons, to the Board. The Board announced a period for member comment, following which it made a few changes in the proposed update, and then took it forward to the convention for concurrence as part of their recommended program. At a caucus arranged by the task force, Judy Duffy, who had served as a Board advisor to the task force, described this process as “a work in progress,” but said the Board hopes to use it to update other out-of-date but basically sound positions in the future.

Since returning from convention, I have been struck by continuing discussions on the convention listserv which reflect members’ concerns with streamlining LWV processes. One issue is how to make conventions affordable to more Leagues and members. This takes on added importance if we routinely utilize the task force and concurrence method of updating positions; obviously we want most (if not all) Leagues to participate in such votes.

I participated in many sessions on a variety of topics, but was particularly involved in the discussions of arms control and concurrence. This all happened because of work done by the International Relations committee – which is reported in the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) Voter. I was honored to represent my committee colleagues and all the Seattle membership at the convention; many thanks for the opportunity.
HISTORY, HOMEWORK, AND HAVING FUN: THE LWV NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ATLANTA
BY LUCY GASKILL-GADDISS

For five days in June, I imbued myself in League history and tradition. At the national convention, the League celebrated 90 years of history in grand style. The highlight was the panel of former presidents, from the early 1960s up to the present. Their stories reminded everyone of the important role the League has played in “Making Democracy Work.” The presidents were inspirational and funny, and deserved the standing ovation they got.

Delegates had to do their homework to keep up with the fast pace and diversity of issues addressed at the convention. We voted to adopt two studies, one on the federal role in education and one on privatization (Go, Nora!); a concurrence on marriage equality; and an updated arms control position (Go, Ellen!). We also passed six of the many resolutions that were proposed (lift travel ban on Cuba, improve Senate filibuster, Medicare for all, add transparency to accountability for electronic voting machines, promote safe drilling and mining, and support the gulf states dealing with the oil spill.)

While working from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., we did find time to have fun: having dinners with delegates from other states, hanging out with other Washington State delegates over wine, and celebrating the successes of Seattle and Washington State efforts. It was an honor to go, and I return energized to continue the hard work of the League.

NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT
BY KELLY POWERS, MEMBERSHIP

National Convention in Atlanta was a thrilling fountain of information. I am so proud of the impact of the Washington State delegation. There is much to share, but for this report I will focus on information from two sessions.

Workshop: Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy and Citizen Participation in the Digital Age
The workshop opened with a summary of the Knight Commission report*, Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age. Given that “technological, economic and behavioral changes are dramatically altering how Americans communicate,” the commission has started a national conversation in which it invites the League to participate.

The commission concludes that “current financial challenges facing private news media could pose a crisis for democracy.” The traditional news model, where readers pay relatively low subscriptions for news that is to a considerable amount underwritten by local business advertising, is failing. Free news on the internet is unsustainable. Several new business models were discussed, but none were thought to have taken hold. One interesting comment: If people want quality journalism they are going to have to pay for it. The panelist estimated it would cost $300 per year per reader.

Simultaneously there is a crisis in content. Investigative journalism can’t compete with stories about Lady Gaga. The panelists are also concerned that people read news to validate their personal opinions rather than to actually learn new information. Beat journalism, one of the major tools for demanding accountability and transparency in our communities, is going the way of the phone book. A new generation is coming up and not even realizing what they are missing and why it’s important.
The report concludes:

- People need relevant and credible information to be free and self-governing.
- People need tools, skills, and understanding to use information effectively.
- To pursue their true interests, people need to be engaged with information and with each other.

Specific recommendations that seemed particularly relevant to League included:

- Increase support for media aimed at meeting community information needs.
- Develop systematic ways to measure the effectiveness and quality of information.
- Fund and support public libraries as centers of digital and media training, especially for adults.
- Integrate digital and media literacy in the schools.
- Engage young people in developing the digital information for their communities.
- Develop ambitious standards for nationwide broadband availability.

We then formed small groups to take stock and determine if we each live in a healthy information community. We were given eight criteria, detailed in the Knight Report, to evaluate the information. We were asked to create action plans. One of the main issues raised by every group was how to goad editors and reporters to cover important stories. The exercise underscored the importance of League in demanding better from our local media.

“How open is my government and how can citizens use online techniques to interact?”

Have you ever gone to a government website and found that although it might seem great at serving up information, it does not provide the information you really want, or that it’s not adept at explaining how to interact with the agency or give feedback to people at the agency? Maddening, isn’t it? Steven Clift, of E-Democracy.org calls this the “services first, democracy later” model. Interestingly, 85% of the American people believe that government should allow people to contact agency officials through the website.

The League of Women Voters of the United States has partnered with E-Democracy.org to launch a conversation on local online support for democracy, tentatively titled Sunshine 2.0. Clift says it begins by asking “What do we want government to tell us? What must government tell us? What do we want to tell government? Do they understand? Do they listen? Do they respond?”

Clift also presented eleven “indicator” features to quickly determine if your local government is a leader, such as “does the government make it easy for the public and the government employees to interact either online or in community forums?”

The panelists talked about the importance of attending government meetings, especially now, with beat journalism at an all time low. League members can serve a vital role—even more important right now—by pinning on a huge red League button and attending hearings and other government meetings. Their presence lets officials know that citizens are watching and that the officials are accountable to the people. Clift suggests that League members evaluate meetings for good governance practices, such as compliance with open records, posting meeting times and places and providing time for adequate discussion.

Journalist Jim Walis, former head of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s investigative team and now editor of an online investigative blog, Atlanta Unfiltered, recommends that the League periodically run local governments through the paces. For example, Leagues could ask several agencies for a Freedom of Information Act report (FOIA) and evaluate the process—how much did
it cost to obtain the report? was it easy? was the staff professional? did they respond in a timely way?

It was a thoughtful, interactive workshop that encouraged participants to go home to local leagues and start working these very important issues.

*The Knight Commission is a project of the Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program and the John S. and James I. Knight Foundation.

**What you can do now**

• Read the Knight Report and join the public dialog at www.knightcomm.org or by using the twitter hashtag #knightcomm.

• Read local news blogs and even some local blogs and begin considering the quality of the information. Atlanta Unfiltered (www.atlantaunfiltered.com) reminds you of what a full page of investigative journalism looks like, even if it does have that cheeky online style.

• Read Steve Clift’s blog entry on Sunshine 2.0 — including his 11 indicators—at http://blog.e-democracy.org/posts/826.

• Follow the Sunshine 2.0 drafting process at http://e-democracy.org/sunshine.

• If you’re interested having the Seattle League pursue this topic, let us know!

**Fair Elections Now Act Caucus** presented by League of Women Voters of Boulder County, Colorado.

In response to the highly controversial recent Supreme Court Ruling Citizens United v. FEC, two immediate pieces of legislation have been proposed:

The FAIR Elections Now Act (S. 752 and H.R. 1826), a small donor approach to congressional campaign finance, was introduced in the Senate by Senators Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Arlen Specter (D-PA), and in the House of Representatives by Representatives John Larson (D-Conn) and Walter Jones, Jr. (R-NC). The House bill has 153 cosponsors and they are looking for 175; the Senate bill has 20. A vote is expected this summer. A Senate filibuster is expected.

The DISCLOSE Act, designed to control the influence of special interests on elections, is also expected to come to a vote this summer.

For a long-term solution, the League of Women Voters of Amherst and Concord-Carlisle, Massachusetts urges leagues to become informed on the impact of the Supreme Court ruling and to consider the need for a constitutional amendment to secure free speech for the people as opposed to corporations.

A speaker from Free Speech for the People gave a stirring presentation, pointing out that the only legal way to correct an egregiously wrong ruling by the Supreme Court is through a constitutional amendment.

“Every generation has its constitutional amendment fight; this is ours. It will be long and hard but our very democracy depends on it.”

**What you can do**

• Read outgoing League President Mary Wilson’s letter to the Washington Post, “Feedback for the High Court” www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/14/AR2010031402448.html

• Check LWV.org for action alerts relating to the FAIR Elections Now Act, the DISCLOSE Act and other campaign finance reform legislation.

• Check out FreeSpeechforPeople.org to learn more about the proposed Constitutional Amendment.
NATIONAL CONVENTION 2010: PRIVATIZATION STUDY
BY NORA LEECH, LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SEATTLE PRIVATIZATION

Who would have guessed? The National Board selected a recommended study on the Federal Role in Education, an important and timely topic. But when I stood up to recommend a non-recommended study on privatization, it was also adopted by a significant margin. It was the right topic, the right audience and the right time. Across our country, states are facing major decisions to privatize many government assets, services and functions. What are the long term consequences of these decisions? What works and does not work? This will be a two-year study of great importance.

For those of you who did not get the opportunity to participate in Seattle's 2009 study, you can find it on the Seattle League website, seattlelwv.org, under Library. Scroll down to studies 2009. (www.seattlelwv.org/sites/default/files/h2_privatization_8-17_final.pdf).

Action & Advocacy

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON SUPPORTS I-1098

The League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) Board of Directors has voted to support Initiative 1098, concerning establishing a state income tax and reducing other taxes.

Ballot Measure Summary
This measure would establish a tax on “adjusted gross income” (as determined under the federal internal revenue code) above $200,000 for individuals and $400,000 for married couples or domestic partners filing jointly; reduce the limit on statewide property taxes by 20%; and increase the business and occupation tax credit to $4,800. The tax revenues would replace revenues lost from the reduced levy and increased credit; remaining revenues would be directed to education and health services.

LWVWA's support for the initiative is based on its position on tax structures, which states:

“Inequities in the distribution of the tax burden should be removed. Ability to pay is an important criterion. Flexibility and recognition of changing times and needs is important in tax policy... Income should be part of the tax base preferably through a graduated net income tax.”
Voter Service

SUMMER VOTER REGISTRATION ACTIVITY
BY CYNDI GODDARD-WOODS, VOTER SERVICES CHAIR

Voter registration is in full swing this summer. As of press time, we’ve already had tables at two events. Thank you to Brigitte Ashley and Lindsay Cummings for staffing our table at the University District Farmers Market on June 26, 2010.

On July 4, 2010, Jan Orlando, Kelly Powers, Lily VanderStaay and Cyndi Woods represented the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) at the naturalization ceremony at Seattle Center. Over 500 immigrants representing more than 80 countries were sworn in as new citizens that day. Many of them came to the LWVS table and registered to vote for the first time in this country. We felt truly honored to help these new citizens exercise their right to vote.

There are a number of events coming up through the end of the summer. We can always use more volunteers, especially at the big festivals such as Hempfest (August 20–22, 2010) and Bumbershoot (September 4–6, 2010). Please call the office at (206) 329-4848 if you’d like to volunteer at one of these events.

KING COUNTY PRIMARY ELECTION 2010

Primary election day in King County is Tuesday, August 17. Since King County has all mail voting, this means that ballots must be postmarked by August 17. Three accessible voting locations are available for disabled voters; these locations also have ballot drop boxes which can be used by any voters. For more information, consult the King County Elections website, kingcounty.gov/elections.aspx.

The primary determines which candidates appear on the general election ballot in November. In each partisan race, the top two candidates, regardless of party, advance to the general election. Nonpartisan races may be decided in the primary if one candidate receives a majority of the votes.

At the federal level, voters will choose candidates for United States Senate (incumbent, Patty Murray), and for representative according to district. At the state level, voters will select candidates for state house races. In King County, one seat on the nonpartisan county council will be on the ballot: the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) has invited the candidates for this seat to participate in its August 5 candidates forum.

Many nonpartisan judicial positions will be on the ballot, including three on the State Supreme Court. The candidates for these positions will also speak at the upcoming LWVS forum.

In addition, Lake Forest Park will have a ballot measure on its ballot: Proposition No. 1, Levy for Retention of Basic Public Safety and Other Services.

Try this!! votingforjudges.org

This is a great nonpartisan, impartial source of information about judicial elections in the state of Washington. They provide a complete rundown on each candidate including endorsements, interviews, donations and media coverage. You can even choose your county and they will give you a list of your election choices.
This year we recognized seven 50-year members at the Annual Meeting in May. Mary Lou Block, Eileen Gilman, Monica Leigh, Alice Rasp, Angela Robinson, Barbara Sarason and Lissa Wells all joined the League between July 1959 and July 1960. We interviewed most of the members to learn about how they joined and their favorite League activities.

The Red Scare was winding down and Alice Rasp was seeking the facts. Alice saw a notice for a League meeting in a North End Herald neighborhood newspaper and she called to inquire. Joan Thomas answered the phone and offered to pick her up and take her to the meeting. The rest is history!

Alice has been a unit leader and a member of the Vision of the City Committee; she has worked on Voter Service and the CIS Desk. She has doorknocked for tax petitions in the past, and she’s gearing up to go out there again for the state income tax initiative. When she’s not hitting the hiking trail, Alice bakes delicious cookies and brownies for the forums. I’m still trying to wheedle a couple of recipes from her.

When Lissa Wells was growing up, her mother was one of the founding members of the Lawton County, Virginia League. She felt that she shared her mother with the League. The final straw came when her father of couldn’t attend a Father’s Day celebration with Lissa because he was speaking to a League State Council! She decided that she would never join the League.

However, when she moved to Washington State, the first thing Lissa did was join the League. Lissa has been a Unit Chair, coordinated the staffing of the 1964 World’s Fair League Booth and served as liaison with the South King County League. She observed the Mercer City Council as part of the Observer Corps, and then was elected to the Mercer City Council. We are fortunate that Lissa overcame her initial objections.

Angela Robinson joined the League when she lived in Astoria, Oregon. She eventually became president of the Clallam County League. She fondly remembers attending National conventions, one in Washington, DC and then one in Atlanta, with Jimmy Carter as the keynote speaker. She says if you had any interest in politics you joined the League. She attributes the League’s success to the winning formula of great forums and unit meetings.

Barbara Sarason moved to Seattle and was finishing up her PhD when her first child came along. Several faculty wives suggested that she join the League to meet interesting people and
to keep her mind active during the childrearing years. She served on a past Seattle League Board. Barbara’s portfolio included following National League issues and organizing Voter Service. She enjoys the people she met through League.

“There is no other organization like the League,” says Mary Lou Block. “My friends urged me to join and eventually there was a whole group of us. We found our husbands enjoyed each other’s company so we became a tight-knit group and are still friends to this day.” Mary Lou served on the Seattle Board as the Unit Chair and enjoyed visiting each unit. “What remarkable women!” She also worked on legislative redistricting. Washington is the only state in the union that has a redistricting process that sends the redistricting plan to the State Supreme Court if the Washington State Redistricting Commission, appointed by House and Senate caucus leaders, cannot come to agreement. Mary Lou says “The League does great work—many of my peers ran for office or became community activists.”

Thank you to all the 50–year members for their dedication to the League and to their community. Your stories are inspiring!

WASHINGTON PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS HONORS
ELSIE SIMON

At its 4th Annual Awards Banquets on June 19, Washington Public Campaigns presented its Volunteer of the Year award to long-time League of Women Voters of Seattle member Elsie Simon, lauding her four years of quiet and efficient service. Several members of Elsie’s unit were on hand for the festivities. Congratulations, Elsie!
Elizabeth Davis, Natural Resources Chair of the League of Women Voters of Washington, and her husband enthusiastically recommended this book, which describes the Arab-Israeli situation from the point of view of Dahlia, a Jew, and Bashir, an Arab.

Dahlia Eshkenazi was born in Bulgaria in 1948. Her parents, like most of their Jewish compatriots, were saved from the worst of the Holocaust thanks to the efforts of a handful of Bulgarian political and Orthodox leaders. Within a year of Dahlia’s birth, they joined a large group of Bulgarian Jews emigrating to a new country where Jews were respected: Israel. Some months thereafter, they learned of homes available in Ramla, where they could choose from the many houses “the Arabs had fled.” The Eshkenazis chose a pleasant house with a lovely lemon tree in the back yard. This would be Dahlia’s home until she married decades later.

In 1942, the Khairi clan rode through the mountains of Palestine to celebrate the birth of Ahmad and Zakia’s first son, Bashir. “Back in al-Ramla [as the Arabs called the town] the school teachers congratulated the Khairi girls on the arrival of their baby brother.” Just six years later, after much fighting against the Irgun, a Jewish militia, Ahmad hired cars to take his family to safety in Ramallah. He intended to return, but the Jewish forces took control of the little town, and the Khairis never lived there again.

One day in 1967, after the Six Day War, Bashir and his cousins decided to take a chance on visiting their childhood homes. One cousin knocked on the door of the house where he had been born, and had that door slammed in his face. The second cousin found his home had been turned into a school. Finally Bashir walked up to the familiar gate his father had built. Passing through to the house, he cautiously knocked on the door. Dahlia opened it, and welcomed the young men in. Later, she realized it was as if she had been waiting for them all her life.

This is Dahlia and Bashir’s story of the events that have taken place up to the present. Of course they have very different perspectives on the world, and particularly Palestinian-Israeli events. Dahlia knows she cannot return to live in a Bulgaria she doesn’t know: a Bulgaria that clearly does not want Jews. She is determined to stay in what she sees as the land of her forefathers, even though she thinks it is wrong that Bashir’s family was forced out of the house she lives in. Bashir simply wants to return to his own home in al-Ramla. Over time, he learns that neither the Jordanian King nor even the powerful Egyptian President Gamal Abdal Nazzer, who envisioned a place for Arabs that include the “liberation of Palestine”, would be able to help him return. He knows that he and other Palestinians will have to do the work themselves.

The reader is aware of their differences from the moment they meet. As the young men enter the house, “I had a sense that they were walking in a temple, in silence,” Dahlia remembered later. “Every step meant so much to them.” When they stopped in front of a small bedroom, Dahlia said, “This is my bedroom,” and Bashir said, “and it was mine.” Over her bed, Dahlia had tacked a picture of a blue-eyed Israeli soldier, from the cover of Life magazine. To Dahlia, the soldier was a symbol of “liberation for warding off a threat and for survival.” However, she realizes Bashir “might see it differently.”

As the years pass, Dahlia and Bashir keep in touch. Intifadas, peace plans, military skirmishes, trials and imprisonments do not stop them from communicating: sometimes by letter, sometimes by simply arriving at the other’s home.

Clearly, these are two good people trying to find a way to reach across an enormous cultural abyss. In time they do find a way to create a measure of peace. In part, that peace has to do with the lemon tree Ahmad Khairi planted in his garden, and which many years later produced the fruit which Dahlia’s father carefully placed in Ahmad’s hands.

The opinions in this review are personal and do not represent those of the LWV.
The word “lacuna”, pronounced “lah-kyoohnah,” means a gap, hole or missing part. Kingsolver describes many a lacuna in this historical fiction, but astute readers will discover others for themselves.

This novel focuses on Harrison W. Shepherd, the son of a dull American functionary in Washington, D.C. and a teenaged Mexican beauty. In the 1920s, when Shepherd was about six, he and his mother ran away with a wealthy but unkind Mexican businessman to a coastal island jungle where the howler monkeys terrified the boy. He took comfort from the gentle household help and from the moldy adventure and historical novels he discovered as he wandered through the empty rooms. He learned to mix flour and spices and eventually developed enough skill to occasionally help out in the kitchen. When a gift of second-hand goggles enticed him to look under the surface of the water, he discovered a heretofore-unknown world of fishes and corals and a totally new landscape.

After the wealthy oilman abandoned his mother, she took up with “Mr. Produce the Cash” and moved to Mexico City. There she put Shepherd in the only school that would take him, one for the mentally and physically handicapped. Eventually, the mother could no longer afford school at all, and the young boy roamed the streets doing the odd errand to bring in cash, until one day he came upon a muralist who needed a new boy to mix plaster. Since mixing flour and spice is not unlike mixing plaster and paint, he impressed Diego Rivera enough to be invited back on a regular basis.

As the Depression made life ever more difficult for his mother, Shepherd was sent back to his father in D.C., and promptly put into a military boarding school on the outskirts of the city. After a year, he was kicked out of the academy and he returned to Mexico, where he found a way to meet Rivera and his wife, Frida Kahlo, and soon thereafter became a member of their household. Rivera and Kahlo were active members of the Communist Party and agreed to protect Leo Trotsky and his wife from Stalinist assassins by bringing them into the household as well.

An outsider no matter where he lived, Shepherd kept journals which introduce the reader to world events of the 1920s through 1950s. Though Shepherd himself was quiet and watchful, the era was often one of brutality and violence. In his journals he described the lacuna, the gap, between what was written in the newspapers and the truth. While still at the military academy, he saw the Bonus Marchers and their families living in shacks and tents on the Mall. These were veterans of WWI who had lost their jobs in the Depression, and wanted their promised money. The newspapers told a different story: they were “Communists and persons with criminal records.”

“Why would the paper say they’re criminals?” [Shepherd asks.]
“They were treated like criminals, [came the reply] so people want to think it. The paper says whatever they want.”

This is a rich book with compelling characters, a vivid sense of place and a plot that turns on the lacuna between truth and popular perceptions. It is relevant to today’s world, and I am quite sure I will want to read this book again!

The opinions in this review are personal and do not represent those of the LWV.
The League of Women Voters of Seattle
Local Positions as Adopted at the 2010 Annual Meeting

THE FOLLOWING NEW POSITION WAS ADDED TO EXISTING POSITIONS

Privatization

• The following core services, functions and assets critical to the well-being of the people, should remain with government and not be transferred to the private sector: Courts, police, public health, public schools, prisons, voter services, taxation, parks, lakes, water and mineral rights, beaches, streams, and forests. 2010

• The following criteria should be the basis for decisions regarding whether core government services, functions and assets not listed in the preceding section should be transferred to the private for-profit sector: 2010

Criteria: Does the proposed transfer
1. serve the public interest today as well as for future generations;
2. align with public health and safety concerns;
3. assure quality of life for residents in the region;
4. ensure adequate government control and over-sight including performance audits;
5. include provisions for transparency, public in-volvement and competitive bidding; and
6. protect individuals from abuse.

• Public agencies are required to make a documented finding of adequate return on investment for the public for any government contribution of funds or assets to the private sector. Periodic performance audits should be required and made public regarding whether stated public benefits were met. 2010

• Government employees and elected officials after leaving government service should be prohibited for two years from working for any private company for which they had oversight responsibilities or authority over awarding contracts. 2010

If you would like to request a copy of the full League of Women Voters of Seattle Local Positions as Adopted at the 2010 Annual Meeting, please call the office at (206) 329-4848 or email lindsay@seattlelwv.org.
Unit Leaders

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SEATTLE UNITS, 2010 –2011

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) unit meetings begin in September. Check the September Voter, which will come out in late August, or contact unit leader for the location, date and time of the first meeting. LWVS unit meetings are free and open to the public. Interested League members are encouraged to join any convenient unit; see list below. Each month, units discuss a topic which corresponds to the monthly forum or study; the Voter for the month provides discussion materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Unit Leader[s]</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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# Board & Committee Contacts

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<th>Term</th>
<th>Executive Committee</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
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Moving? Let us know!
Call the League office at (206) 329-4848 or
e-mail info@seattlelwv.org

LWV SEATTLE: AUGUST FORUM

Primary Election Forum

Seattle First Baptist Church
1111 Harvard Ave. (Harvard & Seneca)

Thursday, August 5
7:30 p.m.

All forums are open to the public.

Including candidates for

➤ Washington State Supreme Court
  Stan Rumbaugh
  Jim Johnson
  Barbara Madsen
  Bryan Chushcoff
  Charlie Wiggins
  Richard B. Sanders (Campaign Representative)

➤ King County Council District 8
  Diana Toledo
  Tim Fahey
  Joe McDermott
  Shawn McEvoy

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