

The Voter

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

SUMMER 2012

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SUMMERTIME VOTING

By Julie Anne Kempf, Voter Services Co-Chair

Welcome to the Summer Voter!

Around this office, the “Summer Voter” has long meant the summer edition of your League of Women Voters’ (of Seattle-King County, of course) nearly monthly journal of what’s new, what’s news, and what’s up with our local League.

The phrase “summer voter” takes on an entirely new meaning this year, however, with the advent of our very early primary. The new primary day for Washingtonians is now the first Tuesday in August, which means that ballots will be in the mail on July 18th. Voters will barely have had time to soak and scrub the Independence Day barbeque sauce off their grills and patio tables before their ballots arrive. Behold, instant *summer voters!*

Note to self: With all the gardening, barbequing, and playing with small children, summertime is gloriously messy. Wash hands before opening ballot envelope and handling contents.

Summer was always a quiet time around the League in the past. With the advent of “summer voting”, those days are gone! Here at Seattle-King County League headquarters, rather than scaling back operations for a couple of slower summer months, we are changing with the times, and actually increasing our Voter Services for the summer of 2012, to serve all those voters and would-be voters out there.

My Voter Services co-chair, Cyndi Goddard-Woods, led a team of League registrars down to King County Elections on June 26th for special training (and train-the-trainer training) that will hold them in good stead when the League registers over 500 new citizens as new voters at the July Fourth Naturalization ceremony at Seattle Center. Some of you may recall that this is an event that we at the League have been staffing for decades. If you want to join the voter registration fun, please

call 206-329-4848, and leave a message for Cyndi, or e-mail info@seattlelww.org.

League representatives will also be registering voters at the Lake City Farmers’ Market, as well as several other farmers’ markets around King County this summer. Call our office at 206-329-4848 if you would like to be trained and join in the summer registration fun!

We have also been doing our part to be ready for your coming election questions. We have prepared balanced ballot issue summaries for you, found on pages 23-26 of this edition of *The Voter*, which will be posted on our website. Our Voter Information Desk is ready to serve you at 206-329-4848.

On the state level, State Voter Services Director Lou Templeton, former President of the South King County League Becky Cox, our representative on the Elections Oversight Committee Marilyn Knight, and yours truly have all been representing our Seattle-King County League on the Vote411 committee, and contributing information and research to the massive LWVWA project. What is “Vote411” you may ask? Vote411 is our first Washington State League comprehensive on-line voter’s pamphlet, candidate information resource, jurisdiction lookup, and sample ballot generator. Read more inside this issue!

Our Speaker’s Bureau calendar for September

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INSIDE

CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY Pages 27-40
Please plan to attend the “Jumbo” Unit meeting Thursday, August 16 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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Connecting with Judy

Happy New Year!?

It's a new year—given that we operate on a fiscal year which begins July 1. Having completed the Annual Meeting, State Council in Pullman, and National Convention in Washington DC, we are ready to get our new Board plugged in and activated. At our retreat in early August, we will make our new year's resolutions; that is, develop goals for the year and plan how we can complement each other's work to increase our effectiveness.



Judy Bevington

At the Annual Meeting, we adopted a \$208,550 budget which will require the continued generosity of members and the larger community. We agreed to conduct a tree ordinance study, chose a Carrie Chapman Catt award winner (Miriam Helgeland), honored five 50-year members and one 64-year member, and elected new Board members. We adopted new positions on education and some housekeeping changes to complete the merger with King County South.

At State Council we heard about the new VOTE 411 system, to which State League has devoted long hours. This is a website where you can type in your address and get tailor-made information about candidates running for office in your districts. Try going on-line to see how helpful this will be to you and other voters. We also prepared for the national convention by discussing approaches to deal with the *Citizens United* and campaign finance issues. We heard a panel of judges from all levels of the state bench who talked about the importance of diversity among our judges. This can help diverse people feel that they will be understood and treated fairly and can make them more supportive of our judicial system. Justice Gonzalez said that we have not yet reached the place where a surname such as his does not

negatively impact an election. We heard about the new MLD program that will be training local leaguers in membership, leadership and development.

At National Convention, we got notebooks full of ideas and were treated to presentations ranging from Eric Holder, US Attorney General, to a parody of a Lady Gaga video. Holder confirmed the need for the kind of work we do to assure voting rights; the video showed a suffragist

tossing the baby to Dad and running off to demonstrate for the vote. A major issue was how our organization should respond to the *Citizens United* issue. A compromise was reached on a resolution that called on LWVUS "to advocate strongly for all appropriate, duly-considered measures which may include but are not limited to a constitutional amendment and which are consistent with our current positions on campaign finance reform and individual liberties." It called for measures to allow Congress and the States to set reasonable regulations on campaign contributions and expenditures and ensure that elections are determined by the voters. Language on corporate personhood was not passed nor was a separate vote on a related study. The \$1 per member payment (PMP) increase did pass. Positions on the Nora Leech-initiated privatization study were adopted, without removal of a key paragraph, after some discussion. Congratulations Nora!

At our annual Board retreat in August, we will be setting goals for the year. We will identify how we can work together so that we have improved "products" (Program, Action and Voter Service) to "sell" (Development, PR, et al.) so that we reach more people and have sufficient funding.

For program, we'll be out of the gate early with candidates forums in July for the August 7
(continued on p. 6)

July/August

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|-----------|--|--------|-------------------------|
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 League Drinks 6:00p.m. No Forum | 3 | 4 |
| 5 Voter Deadline | 6 | 7 Primary Election Day | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 Board Retreat |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 Conservation District Meeting 7:00p.m. | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 Unit Leader Meeting 7:00p.m. | 29 | 30 | 31 | . |

JULY

League Drinks
Thursday, July 12
6:00p.m.
Capitol Club
414 E Pine St. Seattle

Primary Candidates Forum
Thursday, July 12
7:00p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Primary Candidates & Issues
Wednesday, July 18
7:00p.m.
Renton Library

AUGUST

League Drinks
Thursday, August 2
Capitol Club
414 E Pine St. Seattle

No Forum this month

Voter Deadline
Monday, August 6

Board Retreat
Saturday, August 11
9:00 a.m. – noon
Offsite

Conservation District Study
Membership Meeting
Thursday, August 16
7:00-9:00p.m.
League Office - upstairs

Unit Leader Meeting
Tuesday, August 28
7:00 p.m.
League Office

SEPTEMBER

League Drinks
Thursday, Sept. 6
6:00p.m.
Capitol Club
414 E Pine St. Seattle

Drug Policy Forum
Thursday, Sept. 6
7:00p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
Saturday, Sept. 8
9:00a.m.
League Office

Forum Schedule

September 6 - Drug Policy

October 4 - Ballot Issues

November 1 - Economic Issues

December 6 - No Forum

January 3 - Action/Program Planning

February 7 - Energy Concerns in WA

March 7 - Women's Issues

April 4 - Campaign Finance Reform

May 4 - All-Mail Voting

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC) presents a public forum each month 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. Because of the broad community interest in drug policy issues, we are holding the September forum at the Town Hall Downstairs. The tentative schedule of upcoming forums for 2012-2013 appears at left; check your *Voter* each month or the LWVS-KC website, seattlelwv.org, for up-to-date information.

Board Briefs

The Board of the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County met on Saturday, June 16, 2012, for its in and out meeting where the current Board members and newly elected members are both invited to attend. This is a summary of their work.

The portfolio for each member was reviewed. The calendar dates for the upcoming year and election season work and forums were confirmed, along with volunteers to do the necessary work. Annual Meeting results were reviewed. Financial records and closeout figures were presented.

President Judy Bevington and 1st VP Cyndi Woods reported on the LWVWA Council meeting and the presentation on the importance that the diversity of the community be reflected by the judges that are elected. Kim Able of the State Board is a coach for the new Member Leadership Development program through the Ruth S. Shur Leadership Institute, a national coaching

team that will support and strengthen emerging League leadership, membership recruitment and League visibility and best practices. Her husband established this institute to honor his wife who had been a longtime member and League leader. Three local members will be participating.

Julie Anne Kempf announced that the LWVWA VOTE 411 will be launched on July 1. The LWVUS is developing it as a one-stop shop for election information that will provide nonpartisan general and state-specific election information.

New contribution levels for the Leadership Circle were announced. Board members who attended the LWVUS Convention commented on some memorable outcomes. *(See the Convention reports on pages 14-16 for more information.)*

President's Message (cont'd from p. 3)

election. With the Conservation Districts study in August, we will try a new approach; members will be able to choose whether to have a summer unit meeting, to respond as individuals, or to attend a meeting here at the office. We will have a forum on drug policy in September and an election forum in October.

We have taken action related to Washington State Park's strategic planning process; they have been directed to look at ways to fund parks sans any money from the general fund. We have met with them and sent them a letter discussing our related positions. Our positions on open space and privatization apply to this serious situation. Other action will be directed at our ballot issue endorsement process.

Our Voter Service team is running fast making speaking engagements, providing moderators, registering voters, judging a student government project, writing ballot issues summaries and putting on forums.

We welcome our new Board members, Marge Baker (Voter), MJ Vigil (Outreach), Lindsay Cummings (Units), Susan Jones (Membership), as well as Julie Kempf (Voter Service), Beatrice Crane (Program/Publications), Ellen Barton (Action), and Joanna Cullen (Secretary) who have been on the Board before. They, with the continuing Board, will help our organization be an exemplar of collegiality, civility, and engagement during the possibly contentious election season. It should be a good new year.



Judy Bevington, President

(cont'd from cover)

and October is already filling up. But we will be ready to meet your organization's need for someone to explain and describe the potential effects of this year's ballot issues. Please feel free to reserve your autumn speaker now for your event by calling the Voter Information Desk at 206-329-4848.

We also sponsored two forums in early July, one in the south end covering the 11th Legislative District primary and the Renton Library site debate, and one in the north end covering the 36th and 46th Legislative District primaries. We look forward to co-sponsoring and/or moderating several candidate forums throughout the county in September and October. Please check the website at www.seattlelwv.org to see the full calendar, and feel free to make suggestions. If you need a League of Women Voters moderator for your local campaign forum, the number to call is 206-329-4848.

These summer and fall forums, the ballot issue summaries included in this Voter, the voter registration volunteers and all the folks who staff booths in fairs and markets all summers, along with the volunteers and moderators who are going out to speak in our community through the Speakers Bureau, represent the educational mission of our organization.

Here's hoping for a sizzling hot summer voter turnout for the Primary on August 7th!

**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.

Committees

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

We are preparing for the drug policy forum in September. Please join us!

ALL-MAIL BALLOT STUDY COMMITTEE

Still time to join the study team! To include the presidential year data, we will be reporting in April 2013. If you have questions or would like to join the team, leave a message at the Seattle League office 206-329-4848, or please contact chair Julie Anne Kempf via e-mail at: julie@kempf.com.

MOST OF THE COMMITTEES DO NOT MEET DURING THE SUMMER. CHECK THE SEPTEMBER VOTER OR THE WEBSITE FOR MEETING DATES.

ECONOMICS AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

(see Comstock article on page 20)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee presented two studies on education this past year. In November 2011, we organized a forum at Town Hall on the national League of Women Voters study on the federal role in education. The forum was a great success and attracted people from outside the League. The committee members also served as resource people to the units.

Since August 2010, the committee worked on the local study, *Fostering Effective Teaching: No Easy Answers*. The study was presented to members in March 2012. The study was well received, and the consensus questions may lead to new positions for the Seattle-King County League. Members of the committee include Nancy Bagley, Karen Adair, Joanna Cullen, Kelly Powers, Jan O'Connor, Zita Cook and Shira Brewer.

Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis, Chair

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

LAND USE/WATERFRONT COMMITTEE

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

TIME: 10:00 A.M. - NOON

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

Our topic for the 2012-13 year will be freight. Please send any questions, topics, and speakers to consider to janetwinans@earthlink.net.

We encourage participation by all in our issue committees. Often there are excellent speakers who provide informative presentations.

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 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.

Action Alerts

Primary Election Ballot Issue Endorsements:

KING COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES CENTER LEVY

The Board of the LWV Seattle-King County voted to support the Children & Family Services Center Capital Levy to replace the current, dilapidated facility for juvenile justice and family law services. This is a priority capital need and overdue for replacement.

SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY LEVY

The Board of the LWV Seattle-King County voted to support, with expression of concerns about the method of financing, Proposition #1 Regular Tax Levy including Seattle Public Libraries. The LWV of Seattle-King County believes that libraries are a critical part of a city's core function and should be thoroughly funded through the city's general fund. Recognizing, however, Seattle's current budget deficits coupled with the fact that many of the libraries crucial services have already been severely curtailed, the LWV of Seattle-King County endorses the Seattle Public Library levy as a temporary stop gap measure. Under no circumstances does the League think the city should divert levy resources to other than library services and urges the city to work diligently to bring library funding back to full funding through its annual budget.

SECURE MEDICINE RETURN FOR KING COUNTY

The Seattle-King County Board of Health has formed a subcommittee to prepare recommendations for a Safe Medicine Return program for King County. LWVWA lobbyist Lonnie Johns-Brown recently informed us of this development. As many of you know, League has joined with dozens of other organizations to lobby for passage of such a bill in Olympia for the past three years, so far unsuccessfully. For King County to institute such a program would be a major step forward.

The subcommittee will begin its meetings in July. Lonnie is convening a meeting in early July of organizations who want to work for this goal of establishing a safe medicine return program in King County. **It would be very helpful to have someone from the Seattle-King County League involved in this process and we are asking for volunteers.** Although this meeting has taken place, Seattle-KC League members can still learn what has been proposed and how to affect the process set up by the Board of Health subcommittee. The goal is for the subcommittee to have recommendations ready for public comment in September with hoped-for adoption by the end of the year.

For anyone interested in participating in this effort, please contact Lonnie Johns-Brown at: lonniejb@comcast.net. For additional information, contact Elizabeth Davis, elizabethd@whidbey.com.

STATE PARKS: URGENT CALL FOR ACTION

By Cynthia Howe

Washington State Parks is facing a crisis in funding that Leaguers and anyone who enjoys the extraordinary array of state parks in Washington should be alerted to.

In 2009, 65%-80% of park operations were covered by General Fund tax support, but funding dropped to 46% during the 2010-2011 biennium; 12% in the 2011-12 biennium; and an expected 0% for the upcoming budget cycle. This year, with the advent of the \$30 Discover Pass, donations, and one-time capital fund transfers, some of the gap was made up, but there are no guarantees for the future.

State Parks has been given the legislative directive to submit a report, by August 1, 2012, to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) on progress made toward the goal of becoming financially self-supporting.

Toward that end, State Parks has drawn up three potential approaches which it has organized into 'themes' and which it has presented at public meetings across the state for public feedback. It also met directly with the joint State and Seattle-King County Leagues in June.

The themes include: Parks as an Enterprise; Parks as a Community Non-Profit; and Parks as a Public Asset. Based on those themes, State Parks suggests different methods of funding its myriad activities, which range from camping to day use activities, and include recreational boating, swimming, interpretation, education, historic preservation, archaeological protection, stewardship of natural resources, winter recreation, special events for arts, culture, sports, and recreation, park commerce, and law enforcement.

The planning process, which State Parks calls its Beyond 2013 Transformation Strategy, seeks to identify issues and concerns of stakeholders and to explore different funding approaches, assuming that a mix of different elements of the three themes will emerge. It has emphasized that

no preferred alternative has yet been chosen and that it is actively seeking public input to assess where public feelings lie before it draws up its draft documents in mid-July in preparation for the OFM Report due August 1, 2012, and presentation before the Parks and Recreation Commission in Wenatchee on August 8, 2012, where public comment is welcomed.

Additional work on the plan will be done during the Fall with expectations of adoption at the end of 2012 or early 2013. Included in the process will be the 2013 Legislative Agenda and the 2013-15 Agency Budget, which it is assumed will be the basis on which state legislators will make their decisions for funding of State Parks next session.



The League has long been a supporter of parks, which provide low impact recreation for people of all ages and economic backgrounds while promoting environmental awareness and stewardship. The League is open to the idea of public-private partnerships to support public assets, but only with adequate oversight

and public participation. State Parks is a core asset of government, and the League believes it should not be transferred to the private sector nor excluded from General Fund funding.

To get involved and register your opinions, go to the State Parks and Recreation Commission website (<http://www.parks.wa.gov/Beyond2013/>) or the Washington State Parks website (<http://parks.wa.gov/plans/>) where downloadable documents include:

- State Parks Strategic Alternatives Analysis
- Strategic Analysis of Your Favorite Park
- Take the State Parks Finance Test
- Revenues and Efficiencies Task Force Report

This is an issue which needs careful monitoring if we are to keep our parks for future generations. And it will require putting pressure on our legislators to find funding next session.

King County Connects

Voter Registration - New Opportunities and Training by Cyndi Woods, Voter Services Co-Chair

In the Voter Registration arena this year we are devoting more efforts to reaching out to under-served populations. We are meeting with immigrant groups to help new citizens learn about voter registration and how to make informed voting choices. We again supported voter registration at the 4th of July naturalization ceremony where more than 500 new citizens were given the opportunity to register to vote. We are also helping community college students register and understand how to make voting choices as they review their ballots for the first time. As we reported in the last issue of the Voter, we had a Voter Registration table at North Seattle Community College's "Day of Action" event where new voters heard from a number of organizations about local issues, politics, and civic engagement.

Kathy Sakahara and Cyndi Woods had a unique opportunity to reach out to a group of young citizens at South Seattle Community College in May. We collaborated with a federally funded non-profit organization, Youth Works, which trains young people in the construction trade. They work on their GED or community college classes in the mornings and then work with construction professionals in the afternoons over an eight-week program. At the end of the classroom training, they work with Habitat for Humanity to put their new construction knowledge to work in the "real world." Youth Works supports these students in finding construction jobs once their training ends. We were invited to participate on a panel discussion with local officials to describe how these students can connect with their elected officials. We also registered a number of new voters who were excited to participate in the civic process.

With Washington's on-line voter registration and vote-by-mail system, we find that we need to look at new ways to engage with our community to ensure we further our mission of promoting an informed and active voting populace. We can always use help in coming up with new ideas and volunteers to staff our Voter Registration efforts. Please feel welcome to contact us at the League office if you'd like to help.

Voter Registration - Training for Volunteers!

The new forms and the online registration are pretty straight-forward, most of the time. But what to do about someone whose mailing address isn't where they live? What if someone doesn't have a state ID card or driver's license? Can a seventeen year old register?

The answers to these questions and more at the next training session:

July 31st
5:30p.m.
League Office

Please RSVP if you plan to attend!
206-329-4848
info@seattlelwv.org

IMMIGRATION at the CROSSROADS: Exploring Fact and Fiction.

On April 28, 2012, the Seattle LWV Education Fund sponsored a discussion of Immigration at the Crossroads at its Spring fundraising luncheon at Town Hall, Seattle.



Immigration policies have emerged as one of the decade's hot topics, generating such misinformation and dissension that the basic underpinnings of our democracy are often called into question. The growth of detention centers, invasive border patrols, and increased deportation are viewed as unjust by some – necessary to staunch the flow of illegal immigration to others. The nation is divided.

To further explore these issues and bring into focus the highlights of immigration fact and fiction, the league invited Jorge Barón, Executive Director of Northwest Immigrant Rights Project to give the keynote address at the luncheon.

His talk explored current immigration policies, state and local responses to these policies, and “Where do we go from here,” before responding to questions from the audience of more than 200. He addressed the misinformation in the minds of many including: “Immigrants lead to higher crime rates!” -- Evidence supports the opposite. “Immigrants don't pay taxes!” -- In the past three years immigrants have paid: \$808 billion, \$100 billion, \$1.5 billion. “Immigrants are taking our jobs!” -- Immigrants tend to take jobs that otherwise remain unfilled.

He offered short term, medium term, and long range topics for further investigation:

Short term: prosecutorial discretion, administrative changes, Dream Act.

Medium term: comprehensive immigration reform including family reunification, expanding legal channels of immigration, strengthening worker and due process protections, and legalization for undocumented individuals.

Long Term: Trade policy, foreign policy, and shifting demographics.

Another feature of the luncheon was the Extraordinary Scholar awards presented to Lina Ali and Elsa Hagos. Monique Ming Laven, weekend anchor for KIRO Eyewitness News, emceed the event which raised an unprecedented \$22,000.

THANK YOU TO OUR LEADERSHIP CIRCLE FOUNDERS!

Since July 2011, the Leadership Circle has received three-year pledges amounting to more than \$62,000. We want to thank the founders of this tremendous effort to provide ongoing and stable support to our organization:

Nancy Bagley, Judy Bevington, Linda Brown, Lucy Copass, Nancy Debaste, Vicky Downs,
Nancy Eitrem, Allison Feher, Roberta Goodnow, Jeannette Kahlenberg, Candis Litsey,
Charlene McKenzie, Pamela Mitchell, Lois North, Jan O'Connor, Ann Ormsby, Peggy Saari,
Ann Sandstrom, Betty Sullivan, Ellyn Swanson, and Cyndi Woods.

Want to join the circle? You are always welcome and we have many different levels at which you may join. Contact Ginna Owens, Development Chair, for more information.



What is Vote 411?

Paid for by the League of Women Voters' Education Fund, the LWV Vote411 website is an invaluable resource for election information throughout the US, with county-by-county resources that will help you answer many questions. These resources include a local election office finder, a voter registration tool, information about candidates and ballot measures, as well as a printable personalized sample ballot tool, and much more. Vote411 is a one-stop shop for all the information a voter is often looking for.

This resource will be especially important in 2012, as the State of Washington has chosen not to publish a Primary Voter's Guide on paper, and mail one to each voter, as is customarily done. Without a voter's pamphlet coming in the mail, voters need to know where they can find a source of unbiased election information. Fortunately for those of us in King County, our elections office will be providing a printed election guide that includes all federal (except the president), state and local races and measures.

Promote VOTE411 in your units, your community, and with friends and family around the country!

Our League is using Vote411.org to increase voter information, as well as build visibility and stand out in our communities—and with hundreds of thousands of voters expected to visit us this year, you won't want to miss out. Here are some ideas we plan to try and hope you will too:

1. Incorporate Vote411 into your email messages - include a link in your signature line.
2. Promote Vote411's on-line voter registration tool to help new voters fill out, print, and send their completed forms to local elections officials. If you have access to wi-fi, and a lightweight printer and laptop available, set up an on-line voter registration station at a farmer's market or LWV booth at a local street fair or Seafair celebration.
3. Submit information to the Seattle-King County League regarding your candidate meet-n-greets, debates and forums, so we can pass it on to the state League and get it on the Vote411 calendar. Submit it early so we have time to feature your great work!

Much of the content for Vote411 is gathered by League volunteers at the state and local levels. With this on-line tool, we can gather and publish candidate information with greater ease, consistency and visibility. The software allows our League to:

- Cover any state or local race or ballot measure.
- Publish an on-line Voters' Guide for our community in an easy-to-use electronic format.
- Invite local candidates to participate, using a custom email tool that gives us the ability to automatically personalize each email while sending out invitations to several candidates at once!
- Track the progress of our data collection with the easy-to-use tracker tool.
- Strengthen partnerships with elections officials and media outlets by producing accurate, consistent information each election cycle.

Vote411 launched on July 4, 2012 – log on and give it a whirl today!

www.vote411.org

LWVS-KC ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

The LWVS-KC successfully launched the new 2012-2013 year on Thursday, May 24, 2012 with President Judy Bevington and 1st Vice President Cyndi Woods leading the meeting. The necessary changes to the bylaws and positions were approved to finalize the merger of the Seattle and South County Leagues to become the LWVS-KC. A new board was elected, a new education position adopted, the 2012-2013 budget as presented by Treasurer Kati Ortiz was approved, and a new study accepted. Volunteers were recognized. Miriam Helgeland was honored as the recipient of the Carrie Chapman Catt Award for League members who have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

Nominating Committee Chair Karen Adair presented the slate that was elected to serve the LWVS-KC with the continuing members President Judy Bevington, 1st Vice President Cyndi Woods, Treasurer Kati Ortiz, and Director Janet Winans.

Those elected are as follows:

- 2nd Vice President Ellen Barton 2012-2013
- 3rd Vice President Beatrice Crane 2012-2014
- 4th Vice President Ginna Owens 2012-2013
- Secretary Joanna Cullen 2012-2013

Directors:

- Marge Baker 2012-14
- Lindsay Cummings 2012-14
- Susan K. Jones 2012-13
- Julie Anne Kempf 2012-14
- Mary Jo Vigil 2012-14

Nominating Committee 2012-13:

- Betty Sullivan, Chair, Becky Cox, Carol Goldenberg, Kelly Powers, and Laura Weese

Education Committee Chair Lucy Gaddis-Gaskill presented the education position that was adopted as a result of the local study on teacher effectiveness:

Support an evaluation system for teachers that includes information from multiple measures of student growth. The measures should reflect the overall performance of the student.

The following criteria should be used in determining a reduction in force caused by budget reductions:

- *seniority based on years of experience*
- *teacher evaluations*
- *the needs of the school*

Support funding for professional development and teacher collaboration time as a priority for improving teacher effectiveness.

LWVS-KC member Nancy Rust led the successful effort to adopt a study of the feasibility of a tree ordinance for Seattle and other cities in King County with the possibility of the League's adopting a model tree ordinance.

Fifty-year members Ann Bowden, Becky Cox, Sylvia Seman Fisher, Janet Lynch, and Estelle Wertheimer and sixty-four year member Betty Krasner were recognized for their many years of service to the League.

Special thanks to Ruthie Dornfeld for her outstanding musical performance! Thank you to all who attended and contributed to the success of the meeting.

From Nancy Rust:

The latest newsletter from the Seattle Audubon Society reports that, although there has not been city-wide tree loss in the last four years, little progress has been made in reaching the City's goal of a 30% canopy cover. In fact, it only increased from 22.9% in 2007 to 23.6 in 2011. In the view of some, trees are not just an amenity, but should be considered part of the infrastructure because of the work they do. An effective tree ordinance may be one way to work for increasing the canopy. That is why the Seattle-King County League voted at its annual meeting to conduct a study about tree ordinances. We will start by examining ordinances from other cities with possibly agreeing on what a model ordinance should look like. Some members volunteered to be on the committee at the meeting, but we need more. We will not have our first meeting until late September or early October since I will be away the first three weeks in September. We will be meeting in the daytime. If interested, please contact Nancy Rust at ndrusrust@comcast.net or 206-621-4856.

LWV NATIONAL CONVENTION IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Your delegates to the biennial national convention kept very busy for the four days of convention. Major highlights are as follows:

The resolution related to the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision was one that Janet Winans worked with others to pass.

Resolution: We, the representatives of local and state Leagues assembled at the 2012 LWVUS Convention, call upon the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for all appropriate, duly-considered measures which may include, but are not limited to, a constitutional amendment and which: are consistent with our current positions on campaign finance reform and individual liberties; allow Congress and the States to set reasonable regulations on campaign contributions and expenditures; and ensure that elections are determined by the voters.

Others attended the caucuses related to the review and update of an the agricultural position that was originally passed in 1988. This update was adopted and will investigate genetic modification, consolidation in the food industry, money in the regulatory process, and the consumer's right to accurate and comprehensive food labeling. We will be working on this locally in 2013-14.

All were happy to see the privatization position that was adopted is consistent with and supports the position LWVS-KC had previously adopted.

The proposal for national to raise the membership dues that will be collected at that level passed. This will affect the amount per member LWVS-KC will owe LWVUS.

The National Convention program, along with the great lineup of speakers and the opportunity to talk with the many others from around the nation who shared the League's values, provided food for thought and inspiration to continue the work of the LWV.

NATIONAL POSITION ON PRIVATIZATION

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that when governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified

and considered. Further, the LWV believes that transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good must be ensured.

The League believes that some government-provided services could be delivered more efficiently by private entities; however, privatization is not appropriate in all circumstances. Privatization is not appropriate when the provision of services by the government is necessary to preserve the common good, to protect national or local security, or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. While the League recognizes that the definition of core government services will vary by level of government and community values, services fundamental to the governance of a democratic society should not be privatized in their entirety. These services include the electoral process, justice system, military, public safety, public health, education, transportation, environmental protection, and programs that protect and provide basic human needs.

The decision to privatize a public service should be made after an informed, transparent planning process and thorough analysis of the implications of privatizing service delivery. While specific criteria will vary by service and local conditions, the League believes the following considerations apply to most decisions to transfer public services, assets, and functions to the private sector:

- On-going and timely communication with stakeholders and the public;
- Statement of the circumstances as they exist and what is to be gained;
- Definition of the quality, level, and cost of service expected;
- Assessment of the private market: whether there are providers to assure competitive pricing and delivery (in some cases there may not be multiple providers if a service is so specialized, i.e. high tech, airports).
- Cost-benefit analyses evaluating short and long term costs of privatization, including the ongoing costs of contract administration and oversight;
- An understanding of the impact on customers, the broader community, environment, and public employees;
- An open, competitive bidding process with clearly defined criteria to be used in selecting a contractor;

- A provision and process to ensure the services or assets will be returned to the government if a contractor fails to perform;
- A data-driven selection of private entities whose goals, purposes, and means are not incompatible with the public well-being;
- The careful negotiation and drafting of the controlling privatization contract; and
- Adequate oversight and periodic performance monitoring of the privatized services by the government entity to ensure that the private entity is complying with all relevant laws and regulations, contract terms and conditions, and ethical standards, including public disclosure and comment.

The League believes that the enactment of state laws and issuance of regulations to control the process and delivery of privatization within a state's jurisdiction is often appropriate and desirable. Best practices for government regulation of the privatization process

should include the following requirements:

- An open process that allows for citizen input and oversight in a timely manner;
- A reasonable feasibility study and project evaluation appropriate to the size and scope of the project;
- The establishment of carefully crafted criteria for selection of the private-entity (beyond the lowest cost bid);
- Additional consideration for local bidders in order to support the local economy;
- The retention of liability and responsibility with the government entity;
- Allowance for and promotion of opportunities for innovation and collaboration; and,
- Provision for employment, benefits and training plans on behalf of employees displaced as a result of privatization.

NATIONAL POSITION ON THE FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

The League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right.

The League believes that the role of the federal government should include the following:

- Provide leadership and vision to promote a quality education for all children;
- Provide broad common standards developed by educational experts upon which states and local education agencies can build;
- Provide a suggested curricular structure or framework as a guide to state and local education agencies to develop their own curricula;
- Provide a national assessment that clearly informs teachers, parents and students about how well individual students have mastered criteria established at the national level;
- Provide a national assessment that informs

districts how well their populations compare to other populations similar to theirs; and

- Provide a combination of competitive grants and non-competitive funding to states and local school districts to achieve equity among states and populations.

The League of Women Voters believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for students. While the League recognizes that there are instances where the federal government's involvement is the only way to achieve universal change (desegregation, special needs population, gender equity), we also recognize that primary responsibility for public education resides with the states. In accordance with the League of Women Voters' position on Equal Rights, we continue to support equity in public education for all through:

- Broad guidelines for accountability, leaving implementation to the state and local education agencies;
- Adequate funding sources that support the broad goals of national standards; and
- Mechanisms for local and state funding with adequate federal support for mandates that require less burdensome, compliance-based reporting and regulations.

The League of Women Voters believes a basic role of the federal government in funding education should be to achieve equity among states and populations on the basis of identified needs. This should be done with full understanding that equity does not mean equal, given that some populations are more expensive to educate than others and some localities have specific needs.

The League believes that the federal government should be primarily responsible for funding any programs mandated by the federal government on local education agencies. Although the League recognizes equity in education depends on meeting basic human needs of children and of their families, the costs associated with providing equitable access to safe neighborhoods and secure housing do not belong in the education budget. Major programs of federal funding for public education (i.e., Elementary and Secondary Education Act) should be targeted toward children living in poverty and/or children with special needs. The federal government has the responsibility to monitor and support access to the following:

- High quality teaching and learning, supported by quality current learning materials and well maintained educational facilities; and
- Access to health care needs (i.e., hearing,

vision, dental, immunization, school-based health clinics at the secondary level, etc.) and nutritionally adequate food (i.e., school-based meals under “free and reduced meal programs”).

The League of Women Voters believes that the first five years of a child’s life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Additionally, the League believes quality, developmentally appropriate and voluntary early learning experiences should be available to all children, with federally funded opportunities going first to children of poverty and/or with special needs. The League believes that the federal government should support the following:

Early childhood education programs that include funding for parent education and involve child development, health, nutrition and access to other supportive services such as mental health care for all children and their families;

- Research that documents quality early childhood education programs; and
- Research that demonstrates the importance of linking state and local community partnerships with effective early childhood education programs and services.

FLACK CHECKING - A NEW WAY TO HELP CLEAN UP ELECTIONS

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, the Director of the Annenberg Policy Center, was one of the very provocative speakers who addressed this year’s LWVUS Convention. And she came with important how-to information about campaign finance laws and interesting nuance.

Her first and most important message was: You CAN address the assault of campaign advertising that is and will continue to bombard you as the 2012 election cycle roars to its day of voting.

While campaign finance law protects actual candidates’ free speech rights, the law also requires that any candidate’s advertisement, regardless of truth, must be broadcast or printed, so long as it ends with the statement: “I am the candidate and I approve this message.”

This requirement does NOT apply to any other entity seeking to purchase advertising time or space. The entity selling the time or space IS obligated to stand by the veracity of the statements made.

The Annenberg Policy Center has added another resource for those who want to learn about the truth of claims made in political advertising. In addition to FactCheck.org, they have added an interactive site: FlackCheck.org. This site allows visitors to learn about deceptive advertising techniques and to verify the claims of particular advertisements AND to make personal statements to the organizations that have sold the time or space for the ads that FlackCheck has investigated and determined to be misleading.

If you Google FlackCheck.org, you can learn about the origin of the project, its purpose, and the success users of the site have had in causing advertising sellers to take down the ads – presumably refunding the fees they received.

Getting Connected Membership News

NEW MEMBERS

We have been delighted to add many new members this year and also to have long-time member **Carol Goldenberg** as our new “welcome committee.” She’s volunteering on our reception desk on Friday mornings and is making calls to help our new members feel welcome, learn a little bit about them, and help them connect with League.

Some of our new members are shy and prefer not to give a bio, and sometimes it takes a couple of months to get to print, but if we’ve left you out please accept our apologies and let us know!

Betty Krasner, a 60-year League member from Montclair, NJ, is new to LWV Seattle-King County. Betty lives at University House and finds the unit meeting there very convenient. In addition to her interest in the issues League is dealing with, Betty is taking classes from the University of Washington and the Osher Institute (lifelong learning program). She has taken courses on the presidency, the Supreme Court, and the banking system. A lively mind indeed!

David Perez is an attorney with Perkins Coie. Before joining Perkins Coie, David served as the Assistant Director of the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality at Seattle University School of Law, where he worked on civil rights appeals and helped write the Washington State Voting Rights Act. David received his J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was the Development Editor of the Yale Journal of International Law, and his B.A. from Gonzaga University. After law school, David clerked for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. He lives in Queen Anne.

Russell Fosmire, a native Kansan, graduated from an industrial high school in Kansas City. After serving in the US Army during and after WWII, he graduated cum laude from Kansas State University with enough credits for three Bachelor’s degrees. He then earned an MS in History and Government. He became a school teacher in Kansas City and Seattle, where he was also an administrator in several schools. He eventually became the benefits and insurance risk manager. The basic formats he worked out for

the Seattle School District’s comprehensive benefits system, which was later copied by other Washington school districts and state agencies, are still in use 45 years later. Russ also worked as a negotiator for the Seattle School District in union disputes. He developed a resolution to the first three major work stoppages by teachers, administrators, and other employees. In retirement, Russ lives at Horizon House in downtown Seattle. He has five children.

Elaine Hogle has known and admired the League of Women Voters for as long as she has been voting. She has worked as an accountant and was a California CPA for over 20 years, until she made a mid-life career changes to software sales. Along the way, she raised two sons. She has lived in Bellevue for 15 years.

Terry Beck moved from Chicago to work in Seattle 13 years ago. She has been a librarian with the Sno-Isle Libraries where she coordinates programs and reference services for teens and adults. In that capacity, she interacts with the League of Women Voters. She is a member of the American Library Association Notable Books Council. She reads voraciously, 200 to 300 books a year, to develop a list of Notable Books. The standards are exacting for fiction, non-fiction and some poetry. Terry says she has little time for other activities. We are grateful she has chosen to become a member of the League.

Paule Drayton was born in Paris, France where she studied at the Institute of Political Science. She married an American, Lloyd Drayton, and lived in Salem, Oregon, for more than 40 years. Paule taught French literature and foreign languages at Willamette University. She earned a doctorate in foreign languages from Middlebury College in Vermont during summer sessions. For many years she chaired the Off Campus Study Committee at Willamette, helping students study abroad. Widowed now and living in Seattle, Paule likes walking and playing bridge as well as listening to and discussing political news. She thinks joining the League will enable her to learn more about local issues and the opinions and views of our political candidates. She will have much to share with fellow League members.

Mary Lou Siebert, with a MS in Library and Information Science, works as a publisher's representative in health sciences. Her interests in civics education, natural resources and climate change, parks and open spaces and voter registration mesh nicely with League's mission. Mary Lou has volunteered with Food Lifeline, Trust for Public Land, City of Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board and Pride Foundation. Mary Lou is also deeply involved with music. She has played clarinet in the "Around the Sound Community Band" in Shoreline since 2006, and has played piano and guitar for fun "pretty much my whole life. I do something every day with one or more of these instruments." Mary Lou admits to being a "decent photographer."

IN MEMORIAM

It's been a rough couple of months; we've lost some amazing women whose contributions to the League were substantial. Most were not presently active, but they will certainly not be forgotten.

Anne "Trudy" Brown, Margaret Ceis, Muriel Diamond, Jocelyn Marchisio, Nancy Miller, and Dorothy Jane Youtz.

We need your help to keep up on current and former members. Please e-mail the office or call if you get news - we don't always hear about it soon enough to share it with the membership in a timely manner.

Thanks!

THANK YOU TO OUR FABULOUS UNIT MEMBERS!

Together you have raised over \$3,250 for the League. The money often comes in via the unit leaders so I don't have all your names - but you know who you are. As they say, every little bit helps, and this helps a lot!

2012 ANNUAL REPORT-CITIZEN INFORMATION SERVICE(CIS)

Cynthia Howe, CIS Coordinator

The CIS desk has been actively staffed this year by 22 volunteers, ten of whom take regular weekly shifts and twelve who serve as substitutes. The desk is staffed from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday with the exception of part of last summer when it ran on reduced hours from 9:30 - 1:30 p.m. *Note: this summer we're so busy we're keeping to the regular schedule.*

Because of the primary election in mid-August last year, the CIS desk swung into full operation on August 15, 2011 with volunteers answering questions from the public on the upcoming fall elections as well as fielding member questions on the political party, committee meetings, and forums. As the year progressed, callers asked questions about the legislative session in Olympia and made requests for the TRY. Much of the information is now found on the desk computer on the League website as well as the websites of the city of Seattle, King County, and the Secretary of State.

A refresher meeting on CIS procedures was held in March for new and returning volunteers.

Serving regularly on the desk in 2011-12 have been: Mary Barton, Betty Sullivan, Ruthie Dornfeld, Cynthia Howe, Amanda Berry, Estelle Wertheimer, Candis Litsey, Cyndi Goddard Woods, Carol Goldenberg, and Joanna Cullen.

Serving on the substitute list have been Zita Cook, Lois Laughlin, Betty Newell, Jan O'Connor, Alice Rasp, Ruth Schroeder, Rivian Smith, Laraine Volkman, and Lily Reid.

New to the substitute list this year are Pat Cleary, Beatrice Crane, and Ginna Owens.

Thanks to all who have so faithfully served this year and helped the desk to run smoothly. The CIS serves as the public voice of the League and reduces the workload of the staff. We couldn't do without you!

Features

BOOK REVIEW by Vicky Downs

The Gardens of Democracy: A New American Story of Citizenship, the Economy and the Role of Government by Eric Liu and Nick Hanauer

When Charlie Rose interviewed these authors on television, I was very much taken by their ideas, and quickly bought the book. Their basic idea is that, for too long, too many Americans have been talking about our government and our economy as though they were machines that either “functioned well” or were “broken.” They say such thinking leads to self-regulating views such as: “individuals are intrinsically individualistic, that what I do is no one’s business but my own [so long as I don’t harm anyone], I am self-made, success is the result of individual effort, [and] if everyone just does what’s best for [himself] society will be ok.”

Liu and Hanauer’s idea is that it is much more effective to think of government and the economy as “gardens” that need tending. This kind of thinking leads to very different views, starting with the understanding that “humans are intrinsically social.” This leads to ideas such as: “We’re all in this together, cooperation is essential, everything I do (and don’t do) affects others, people are emotional and reciprocal, if we act as though we are reliant on one another society will be ok.”

They also state their belief that we are always role models for others, for good or for bad, and without necessarily realizing we might be making a difference to others. They refer to “contagious behavior,” which comes from the fact that we all live in a “networked environment.”

In such an environment, “society becomes how you behave.” If you are “cut off in traffic and feel...road rage” you can feed that rage by taking revenge against the offending driver or perhaps cutting off another who wants to enter your lane. The “alternative scenario requires you to not compound the problem with more discourtesy,” but to let drivers into traffic “even if it feels like an affront to your dignity.” Then, “other drivers will do the same.” Science has shown that when you react in a “pro-social” way, traffic in fact tends to become better. We can see it at work when we are forced into “pro-social” behavior during heavy

traffic hours, when a traffic light requires us to wait a moment before entering an expressway.

It is also interesting to think of the economy in garden terms. “Just because dandelions, like hedge funds, grow easily and quickly, doesn’t mean we should let them take over.”

“Gardeners don’t make plants grow, but they do create conditions where plants can thrive and they do make judgments about what should and shouldn’t be in the garden.”

Similarly, they tell us it is helpful to avoid talking about government “spending”, as it gives the sense that the money is gone forever. “Spent” means “having been used and unable to be used again: a spent matchstick.” The authors see government as not spending money but “recirculating” it. Social Security is the largest line item in government ‘spending’ in the budget. But Social Security is simply a collateralized savings account. “Understood as circulation, Social Security’s main benefit isn’t to keep the elderly from living in cardboard boxes, though that is a fine thing, but to ensure that they continue as dynamic consumers in our economy. Social Security circulates money back to the citizens who contributed to it in the first place and is then circulated again by them” as they buy supper or go to a movie.

I am inspired by this short book written by local authors, as it gave me a positive, hopeful, and practical way to look at government and the economy. It is not a quick read, but it is both interesting and thought provoking. I can imagine it might be a good book to discuss in a small group, perhaps even a Unit Meeting. Since there are only six chapters, perhaps discussing three chapters at one meeting and the next three at another would work even better.

This book is an especially worthwhile read in an election year!

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

“CHANGING GLOBAL ECONOMICS: BUILDING A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY”

On May 21, 2012, Professor Don Comstock gave a talk at the home of one of our members. The following is a summary in note form of that presentation, including his slides.

About 35 people gathered at Vicky Downs' condo on Capitol Hill to hear Don's talk, sponsored by the Capitol Hill/Montlake Unit and the League's Economics and Taxation Committee. Don is a professor at Antioch University in the Management and Leadership Program. He earned a PhD in Sociology from Stanford University. He has previously spoken at two League forums on privatization.

“This is not what you learned in kindergarten - the world has changed!” The environmental and economic crises are linked, e.g. melting glaciers and the meltdown of mortgages.

Some signs of the times:

1. Desperate effort to extract fossil fuel: Deepwater Horizon, tar sands, fracking, shipping Wyoming coal to China
2. More frequent and severe weather events; 2011: President Obama declared 99 major disasters
3. Crazy growth of student loans: 1999 - 2011 500% increase (other debt about 100% increase)
4. Privatization of prisons: 1990-2009 1,600% increase (7000 to 129,000 inmates)

What is happening to income?

1917 - 1970: Incomes grew, top 10% got 28% of growth, bottom 90% got 72%

1970 -present: Top 10% got all growth, bottom 90% declined

Growth of unproductive money in financial capitalism

1. Rise of multinational corporations in 1970s
2. Stagflation (leading to OPEC oil embargo) in 1970s
3. Explosion of credit cards in 1980s
4. Junk bonds used to finance:

a. Mergers and acquisitions in the 1980s

b. Savings and loan bail out in 1980s

5. Dot-com bubble in 1990s

6. Housing bubble in 2000s

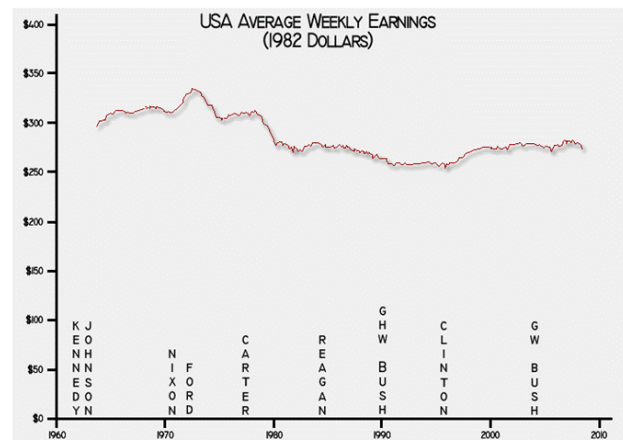
Other factors shaping US economy:

1. In the 1970s Germany and Japan became effective competitors of the US.
2. Baby-boomers bought homes. This drove the economy (they bought washers, dryers, dishwashers, etc.). At one time up to 68% of US population owned their own homes.

Signs of the economy in crisis:

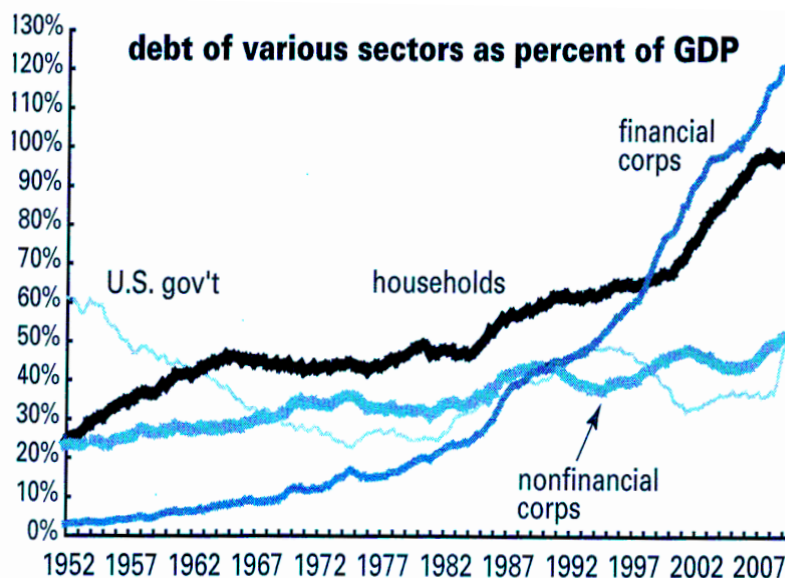
1. Declining profit rates: peak in 1966 at about 8.5%; plunge in later 60s, early 70s to about 4%
2. Declining incomes since 1970: average weekly wage (in constant dollars) falls from \$330 to \$250

Declining Incomes Since 1970



3. Rising debt (1952-2012)

- a. Household debt up 100% (use of credit cards a factor)



b. Financial corporations' debt up 120%

c. Government debt relatively stable until 2008

4. Exploding financial sector (1952 - 2012) - Rose from 400% to 1000% of GDP

5. Slower re-employment after each recession since WWII - Average: 10 and 1/2 months

Minnesota Federal Reserve Bank statement, "The 10 previous postwar recessions ranged in length from 6 months to 16 months, averaging about 10 1/2 months. The 2007-09 recession was the longest recession in the postwar period, at 18 months."

1980 recession - double dip (intentional!), interest rate up 18%

What is causing both the environmental and the economic crisis?

"It is not about 'bad people' or 'insufficient regulation.' It's about an economic system that needs to keep growing."

For example, JPMorgan Chase is sitting on a huge debt. It has to make 8 - 10% profit, therefore it has to gamble.

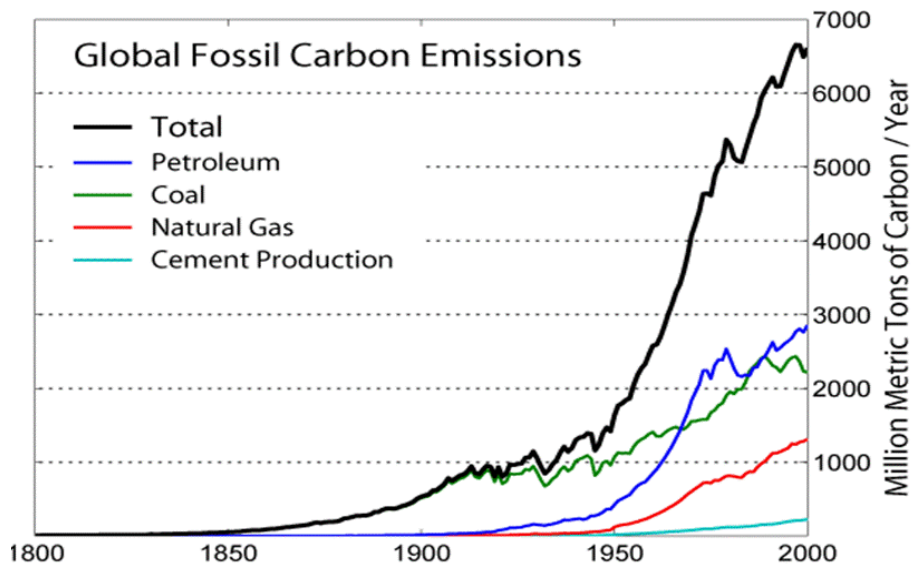
Look at GDP growth and the growth of fossil fuel emissions:

1. GDP growth is gradual from 1800 to 1900; takes off in the late 1930s: exponential growth from 3-4% up to 6% [Exponential growth always looks very gradual at first and then rises more and more steeply until the system crashes. This is observed in population dynamics in nature. Isolated from predators, all species' populations grow exponentially. Only our economy does so too!]



Figure 1.3 Real GDP in the United States, 1800-2003, in trillions of 2000 U.S. Dollars.

2. Global fossil carbon emissions show parallel growth with GDP, takes off in 1950:



Fossil fuels basis for economic growth

Kenneth Boulding quote: “Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman ... or an economist.”

Why does exponential growth happen? Businesses must reinvest profit; exponential growth comes from compounding reinvestment. Debt must be repaid with interest. For example, if you borrow \$100,000 at 6% for 30 years you pay \$215,838 in principle and interest.

Debt financing also creates inequality. Those who have money lend to those who do not. Those who need money repay much more than they were lent. This moves income and wealth from those who borrow to those who lend.

“Growing the economy is not the solution. Survival depends on a shift from exponential growth to reasonable sufficiency.”

What we can do:

- Strengthen local economy and community
- Use local banks and credit unions
- Support local businesses
- Create cooperatives and local currencies (i.e. “Seattle bucks”)
- Enact a financial transaction tax to reduce unproductive debt-based financial activity

- Raise corporate taxation and redistribute profits to reduce the pace of reinvestment
- Example: Sweden in 1980s - banks in trouble, increased corporate taxes, boosted social services; this also reduced problem for private businesses

New public policies:

- Stop privatization of prisons, schools and other public functions
- Create a Washington State Bank
- Charter public benefit corporations in Washington State - PBC’s are private corporations whose first responsibility is not making money, stockholders cannot sue if profits not driving factor. (Patagonia was the first company to do this. California recently was the 6th state to create PBC’s.)
- Eliminate corporate “personhood”
- Restrict or eliminate debt-based money. (Recent research available on this)
- Ask every candidate for office what they understand about our economy and environment and what they propose to do about multiplying crises in both.

Primary Election Ballot Issues

King County Proposition No. 1: Children and Family Services Center Capital Levy

The King County Council passed Ordinance No. 17304 concerning a replacement facility for juvenile justice and family law services. This proposition would authorize King County to levy an additional property tax for nine years to fund capital costs to replace the Children and Family Justice Center, which serves the justice needs of children and families. It would authorize King County to levy an additional regular property tax of \$0.07 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for collection in 2013. Increases in the following eight years would be subject to the limitations in chapter 84.55 RCW, all as provided in Ordinance No. 17304. Should this proposition be:

Approved _____ Rejected _____

Brief explanation:

This is a King County nine-year levy to raise the capital funds necessary to replace the Children and Family Justice Center, otherwise known as juvenile detention center and courthouse, currently located in the Yesler neighborhood of First Hill in Seattle.

What is the Children and Family Justice Center?:

The proposed new Children and Family Justice Center will replace the existing King County Youth Service Center, located on a four block square parcel of land just south of Seattle University on First Hill in Seattle, at 12th Avenue and East Alder Street. The center currently houses the Juvenile Detention Center, Juvenile Court, and Juvenile Court Services, as well as juvenile divisions of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Department of Judicial Administration.

In north King County, juvenile and family law matters are split between the King County Courthouse in downtown Seattle and the Youth Services Center. The plan for the Children and Family Justice Center proposes to unify juvenile and family law matters in one location serving the entire county. The Superior Court would be able to provide onsite assistance and coordination for youth and families involved in the justice system at a single site. The Youth Services Center will still fulfill all of its current functions at the new center. This includes north county juvenile dependency, truancy, at-risk youth, child-in-need-of-services cases, and countywide juvenile offender matters.

King County Juvenile Detention Center and Courthouse has been in an increasing state of deterioration for more than a decade, as routine maintenance and normal upkeep are not enough to battle the problems caused by poor design and shoddy original construction. Most of the complex's major systems have decayed well beyond the end of their useful life. The electrical, heating, and cooling systems are deemed beyond repair. The facility is beset by plumbing problems -- sewer gases permeate the lower levels and brown water comes out of the cold water line. There is general agreement that the current Juvenile Detention Center must be replaced. The debate comes down to method of replacement -- build a new facility or re-use other existing facilities, along with efficiencies or other streamlining ideas.

Impact on taxpayers: If King County voters approve a levy lid lift for the Children and Family Justice Center Levy in August, the initiative will provide approximately \$200 million in funds for capital improvements and construction over the nine years of the levy. Homeowners will be assessed \$.07 per \$1,000 in value. Based on an average estimated King County residential assessed value of \$287,500 in 2013, and \$435,000 in 2018, the estimated annual cost to the average homeowner will be \$20.12 in 2013, and \$30.45 in 2018.

What supporters are saying:

The current Youth Services Center is extremely overcrowded, and is not designed to address the safety concerns that arise from emotional cases involving families and children--cases which pose the greatest threat of violence among all types of court cases. Courtrooms and waiting areas are too small and overcrowded, creating a noisy,

hectic and confusing environment. With no private meeting rooms, families must meet with their attorneys and case workers in the lobby and public hallways to discuss the most sensitive of private matters. Families in turmoil deserve an atmosphere that is safe, that respects their privacy, and that supports their efforts to recover. After reviewing many options, including using other existing properties, the County Council chose this plan for the Children and Family Justice Center, finding that it achieves operational efficiencies, makes the best use of this site, and meets the county's responsibilities to the public. Replacement of the Youth Services Center has been King County's highest-priority capital project since 2008. Providing, safe, efficient and cost-effective regional justice facilities for the children and families of King County must remain a priority, and one that is seen through to completion. Good public transit and parking options are important for access to services at this centrally located site. The proposal addresses all of the noted concerns.

What opponents are saying:

No one disputes that the current Juvenile Justice Center is in a state of disrepair beyond saving, and new facilities must be located. Opponents maintain that there is no need to build a brand new expensive facility and that services could be relocated to existing well-maintained King County buildings for much less. The county has existing facilities that are underused and would be much less expensive—for example, the many empty county buildings at Boeing Field (KC Airport). Opponents also feel that property owners are already overburdened by recent tax increases during a recession, and that the county could find funds in another way, for instance, by privatizing some services.

City of Seattle Proposition No. 1: Regular Tax Levy Including Seattle Public Libraries

The City of Seattle's Proposition 1 concerns supporting, maintaining and improving core library services. This proposition would increase library collections, support library hours and services, update technology, and maintain library facilities, as provided in Ordinance No. 123851. It authorizes regular property taxes above RCW 84.55 limits, allowing collection of up to an additional \$17,000,000 (approximately \$0.15/\$1,000 assessed value) in 2013 and up to \$122,630,099 over seven years. In 2013, total City taxes collected would not exceed \$3.60 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Should this Levy be approved?

Levy, Yes

Levy, No

Brief explanation:

This is a City of Seattle seven-year levy, with investment to be made for public library services, including increasing library collections, providing financial support for library hours and staff, and updating library technology and maintaining facilities.

Brief argument for the measure: Libraries are a critical public service to the community, and Seattleites value this excellent library system. This levy is a reasonable and important investment in the future of the libraries.

Brief argument against the measure: Libraries are an important public service, but should be funded at an appropriate, sustainable level from the City General Fund, not by a levy.

Impact on taxpayers: If Seattle voters approve the library levy in August, the initiative will provide up to \$122,630,099 in revenue for the city over the seven years of the levy. Based on an average estimated City of Seattle residential assessed value of \$462,045 in 2013 and of \$567,971 in 2018, the estimated annual cost to the average homeowner for the library levy will be \$69 in 2013 and \$85 in 2018. In 2013, total city taxes collected may not exceed \$3.60 per \$1,000, or \$1,663.20 total for the average homeowner for the Seattle city portion of their property tax bill for the year 2013.

What supporters are saying:

Supporters of the levy state that Seattle's neighborhood and downtown libraries are a treasured resource for all of us. The Seattle Public Library system is the one public institution that is open to all people regardless of age,

economic status, or social class. Everyone should have access to what the library can offer. Supporters say the levy is necessary to keep libraries open and accessible and maintain the world class collection of materials—from archives to e-books, children's collections to computers.

The recession, compounded by caps on revenue following voter-approved tax cut initiatives, has resulted in real cuts to library hours and services. Since the city's financial situation is not expected to significantly improve in the next three to four years, and with more cuts on the horizon, Seattle Proposition 1 gives voters the opportunity to make an investment in their libraries. Another year of budget cuts could mean cuts equivalent to closing five branch libraries—at a time when more and more people are using our libraries.

Without this levy, supporters say that the ability of the libraries to serve every neighborhood is in jeopardy. Staffing levels, maintenance, collections and technology upgrades are threatened. These levy funds will protect and maintain one of the finest library systems in the country.

What opponents are saying:

Opponents agree that Seattle's libraries are a core public service that is treasured. But they claim that they are being denied sufficient funding by the Mayor and City Council. Revenues are increasing, and there is no need for a \$122.6 million (\$17 million+/year) property tax increase. Ballot measures should be used for infrequent capital projects or for unavoidable emergencies, not for ongoing operations. Operations should be funded from the regular budget, the city's statement of its true priorities. This levy is temporary and moves the library away from the stable funding it has had for a century.

Also, opponents maintain that the levy fails to guarantee how the funds will be used, saying that the levy ordinance (123851) does not include any commitment to maintain libraries' regular funding (now \$51 million/year), or to increase hours, services, and technology. It does not even promise not to cut library hours or services. There is no oversight committee to protect branch funding from diversion to the downtown library, or even diversion of library funding to other parts of city government. Passage of the levy would encourage cutting of the library's regular funding and diverting it to other purposes.

Levy opponents conclude that, rather than passing a temporary levy for operations, it is important to ensure appropriate library operations funding in the regular budget, as has been the case for over 100 years in the City of Seattle.

City of Renton Proposition No. 1: Vote to Select a Library Site Downtown

After Renton voters chose to join King County Library System (KCLS), Renton contracted with KCLS to provide a state of the art library in downtown Renton. The library will be located at EITHER the existing library location over the Cedar River (100 Mill Ave. South), OR West of the Renton Piazza (508 South 3rd Street). If the Piazza site is chosen, Renton will keep the existing library building for alternative public use in the future.

Which location should be the site of the downtown library?

Over the Cedar River West of the Piazza

Brief explanation:

This is a vote for the City of Renton on where the newly updated downtown Renton Library should be sited.

History of the Renton Library:

Prior to 2010, Renton was the largest King County city electing not to be a part of the KCLS. As a stand-alone city library system, Renton built the landmark Cedar River Library in 1966. The building is located in a park, and spans the river, which can be viewed running underneath it from inside the building. The building remains an excellent example of mid-century modern landscape-integrated construction as practiced in Europe

at the time and in the school of Frank Lloyd Wright's later work.

In 2010 Renton citizens voted to annex with KCLS. The annexation required the City of Renton to fund and construct two new libraries to replace Renton's two existing aging libraries. Acting on the annexation agreement, the city council approved issuance of \$19,000,000 in bonds to fund land acquisition and construction costs for both new libraries. Initially, the city proposed to relocate the new downtown library and purchased the property west of the downtown Piazza formerly occupied by the Big 5 sports retailer. However, after the new building was purchased, many Renton residents indicated their wishes that the downtown library stay in the Cedar River building.

The proposal asks voters which site they feel is better for the downtown library, and commits to retaining and using the Cedar River building as a public space in the future if the library is moved to the Piazza location.

Impact on taxpayers: There is some disagreement as to what the costs of either site would be, but a funding request is not part of the measure. There will be costs to renovating either site for a newer library, and the funding for either appears to be part of the KCLS current budgeting. So, effectively, there will be no change in fiscal impact on taxpayers either way.

What supporters of the Piazza site are saying:

Renton is having a hard time letting go of its library over the river. But the voters spoke when they approved the merger with KCLS in 2010, which included the building of two new libraries. Supporters of the Piazza site believe that it is time to move forward with building a new library near the Renton Piazza and Transit Center. Downtown Renton does need a positive draw. It has lost customers to The Landing, which is becoming an economic engine for the city and elsewhere, as pointed out by the Chamber of Commerce. A library stands for family values and those values are desperately needed in a downtown area recently struck by youth violence.

Supporters of a new library location say that the city and KCLS have no choice but to build a new library and find another use for that iconic building on the Cedar River. That deal was sealed when the Renton City Council approved the purchase of the Big 5 property for the new library. Selling the approved bonds needed to build the new libraries is the right thing to do and should be done with confidence and with a commitment to find a new good public use for a landmark building that is a symbol of Renton.

What supporters of the Cedar River site are saying:

Many Renton residents believe that substantially renovating the existing library to KCLS standards and preserving the family-loved location over the river would better serve Renton. They point out that the square footage of the proposed site in the former Big 5 building is actually smaller than the square footage of the current library location, so moving the library to the central downtown area would mean reducing the amount of available square footage within the library facility. Citizens wanted the opportunity to vote. Proposition 1 is their chance to determine where the new KCLS library will be located.

Many citizens who want to keep the library at its present location are pro-local business and pro-City of Renton. They patronize local Renton businesses, want to see a vibrant mix of businesses succeeding downtown, and appreciate the need to encourage more pedestrian traffic. However, they believe that the City's choice of the limited former Big 5 site is seriously flawed, and that the argument that this choice will revitalize the downtown core is mere speculation.

In addition, residents of the cities of Algona, Auburn, Des Moines, Federal Way and Pacific will be voting on financing of fire protection services in their fire districts. For more information, go online to Vote411 or check out the voter's guide from King County Records and Elections.

Washington State Conservation Districts

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Produced by the League of Women Voters of Washington
www.lwvwa.org

At its 2009 convention, the League of Women Voters of Washington adopted a study of conservation districts in Washington State. League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County members have three options for participating in this study this summer.

1. As individuals: Read the study and return your responses to the questions to the League office by the end of August.
2. As unit members: This is an optional study for units, since they do not normally meet during the summer. Unit leaders may schedule an August meeting if enough members are interested and able to attend. If your unit plans a meeting, check with the office about the availability of a resource person. Return unit responses to the office by the end of August.
3. By attending a special meeting: There will be a discussion meeting open to all interested members upstairs at the League office on Thursday, August 16 at 7:00p.m.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you know about the Conservation District in your area?
2. If you have voted in a Conservation District Election, how did you find out about the election? Did you vote by mail, in person, or using the internet? If you voted, was your signature verified? If you haven't voted, why haven't you?
3. Discuss the pros and cons of elections that have many people participating who may not be familiar with the duties of the office or with the candidates, versus fewer people participating who may be familiar with the duties of the office and with the candidates.
4. Discuss the merits and shortcomings of using appointment rather than election for selecting Conservation District Supervisors.

Consensus Questions:

1. Do you support the work and mission of conservation districts in Washington?
2. What could the Washington State Conservation Commission and Conservation Districts do to raise awareness of:
 - a. their purpose and work?
 - b. their elections?
3. Does the current method for selecting CD Supervisors need improvement? If so, what changes would you suggest, and why?
4. Should the Washington State Conservation Commission remain an independent commission? Why or Why not?

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

This report was prepared by the League of Women Voters of Washington and has been edited for purposes of space. A complete report with footnotes, a list of resources, and appendix is available at http://www.lwvwa.org/pdfs/studies/LeagueOfWomenVotersofWashington_WashingtonStateConservationDistricts_2011.pdf.

Introduction

Conservation is the protection, management, or restoration of wildlife and of natural resources such as forests, soil, and water. In Washington State there are 47 conservation districts (CDs) with the mission to promote conservation within their borders. Most of these CDs approximate county boundaries. Each CD has a unique mission statement describing its work to preserve natural resources within the district.

Examples of mission statements are the following:

- King CD: “to promote the sustainable uses of natural resources through responsible stewardship.”
- Pierce CD: “to work to retain renewable natural resources.”
- Spokane County CD: “to promote the sustainable use of natural resources within Spokane County.”

Each CD is an independent, non-regulatory local government entity that works with landowners to help them protect water quality, improve fish and wildlife habitat and resource conservation, while sustaining the vital agricultural community. In other words, CDs exist to help landowners to be good stewards of the land. The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) is “a small state agency created to assist and guide conservation districts as they work to conserve our natural resources. The mission of the WSCC is to lead the citizens of the state in the wise stewardship, conservation, and protection of soil, water, and related natural resources on private lands. The WSCC provides grant funds to conservation districts, maintains accounting procedures in cooperation with the State Auditor’s office, oversees conservation district elections, and appoints members to each local conservation district board.” State statutes governing WSCC are contained in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC). RCW Chapter 89.08 contains Conservation District Law, and WAC Chapter 135 contains Rules for the WSCC.

Washington State Conservation Commission

The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) board has ten members with experience in

ranching, farming, law, management, public service, and natural resource management: four elected from conservation districts, four appointed to represent state agencies, two appointed by the Governor. The board employs an executive director to implement the board’s policies and plans, who in turn employs staff to manage agency financial programs, provide direct service to conservation districts, and perform functions to implement the WSCC Strategic Plan. The WSCC headquarters are in Lacey, with satellite offices in Longview, Okanogan, Olympia, Spokane, and Yakima. The powers and duties of WSCC commissioners are included in RCW 89.08.070. Some of these powers and duties are to review district programs, to assist and guide districts in the carrying out of programs, to coordinate programs used in more than one district, to promote cooperation and sharing between districts, to review agreements proposed to be entered into by districts with other public or private agencies, to inform districts of recent legislation that may affect them, to review district budgets, to require annual reports, and to conduct conferences and seminars.

The WSCC and the 47 conservation districts work with federal and state services and agencies to help people use resources wisely.

Examples of this coordination are the following:

- WSCC works with the Federal Soil Conservation Service, or as it is known today, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- In 1978-79 the Clean Water Act provided funding to hire field technicians and assist landowners to improve water quality. WSCC “partnered with Washington State University Extension and hosted regional community groups to discuss the social, economic, and scientific feasibility of practices that protect water quality.”
- WSCC works with state agencies. For instance, a 1988 agreement between the Washington State Department of Ecology and WSCC allowed “conservation districts to intervene and help farmers voluntarily solve water pollution problems” before the Department of Ecology took

enforcement action.

- In 1989 the Washington State Legislature passed legislation allowing a county to collect an assessment on behalf of a conservation district. Fifteen counties in Washington State collect this assessment in support of their respective conservation districts.
- In 1993 the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Plant Materials Center was created, allowing districts to sell plants for income.
- WSCC and the 47 conservation district programs and services have expanded the number of private citizens who voluntarily engage in stewardship through incentives. For instance, in 2006 through 2008, using state grants, Washington state CD projects “protected 1,296 miles of streams with livestock exclusion fencing and native plantings, saved 568,443 acres of land from erosion and runoff, and saved 5,739 acre feet of water for in-stream habitat use.” This was all done through the installation of 7,171 conservation practices by private citizens.

The WSCC works with conservation districts throughout the state to help citizens protect renewable resources through the use of proven, incentive-based practices, which are a conscious use of rewards (or penalties) to encourage good performance. CD programs provide incentives to landowners who plan and implement conservation practices on their land. These incentives are both technical and financial in nature. Technical assistance generally involves District Resource Technicians who consult with landowners on natural resource concerns on their property. Financial assistance, called “Cost Share,” reimburses landowners for expenses incurred to implement those best management practices. “Cost Share” frequently covers from 10% to 50% of the landowner’s cost to implement a practice. A small reward is often the motivation that a landowner needs to change management practices.

Washington State Conservation Districts

Conservation districts (CDs) are ‘special purpose districts’: local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts have worked with many cooperating landowners and operators to help

them manage and protect land and water resources on all private lands. Conservation districts work under the philosophy that conservation decisions are best made at the local level with technical and funding assistance from federal, state and local governments for implementation by communities and the private sector.

Conservation districts were generally formed along county lines, with local input determining the boundaries. If communities did not want to be included in the conservation district, they could opt out. A few counties have two conservation districts and some conservation district boundaries contain more than one county. The boundary of a conservation district may be altered with approval of the WSCC. The 47 conservation districts in counties throughout Washington state are governed by farmers, landowners, and other local citizens interested in conservation. The mission of these CDs is to work to retain renewable natural resources within their boundaries. Each CD has a district manager, with paid and/or volunteer staff. District staff walk the land and get to know landowners, trust is developed, and projects move forward to reduce soil erosion, conserve water, prevent pollution and runoff, and enhance habitat.

Funding

Conservation districts are funded through public and private grants, special assessments, and contributions and partnerships. The WSCC may authorize grants to conservation districts from money appropriated to the Commission. The rules pertaining to eligibility and distribution of these grants may be adopted by the WSCC. Conservation districts must apply for these grants. There are fifteen counties in Washington State that are authorized to collect special assessments to fund projects directed by conservation districts. The CDs for which special assessments are collected are the following: Benton, Franklin, King, Kittitas County, Lincoln County, Mason, North Yakima, Okanogan, Pierce, San Juan Islands, Snohomish, South Yakima, Spokane, Thurston, and Whidbey Island. Special assessments are unique charges that government units can assess against real estate parcels for improvements or services the government unit provides that benefit the owner’s property. RCW 89.08.400 lists rules governing special assessments for natural resource conservation. Some of these rules include the following:

- “Activities and programs to conserve natural resources, including soil and water, are declared to be of special benefit to lands and may be used as the basis upon which special assessments are imposed.”
- “Special assessments to finance the activities of a conservation district may be imposed by the county legislative authority of the county in which the conservation district is located for a period or periods each not to exceed ten years duration.”
- “A system of assessments shall classify lands in the conservation district into suitable classifications according to benefits conferred or to be conferred by the activities of the conservation district, determine an annual per acre rate of assessment for each classification of land, and indicate the total amount of special assessments proposed to be obtained from each classification of lands...The maximum annual per acre special assessment rate shall not exceed ten cents per acre. The maximum annual per parcel rate shall not exceed five dollars, except that for counties with a population over 1,500,000 persons, the annual per parcel rate shall not exceed ten dollars.”
- “The special assessments for a conservation district shall not be spread on the tax rolls”...if...“a petition has been filed with the county legislative authority objecting to the imposition of such special assessments, which petition has been signed by at least twenty percent of the owners of land that would be subject to the special assessments to be imposed for the conservation district.”

A few examples of special assessments are the following:

- King County collects approximately \$6 million from a \$10/parcel assessment, which makes up about 80% of the King CD budget.
- Pierce County collects approximately \$1.2 million from a \$5/parcel assessment, which makes up about 60% of the Pierce CD budget.
- Spokane County collects approximately \$965,000 from a \$5/parcel (20 acres or under), \$.05/acre for range land over 20 acres, and \$.10 for agricultural land over 20 acres. The assessment makes up about 36% of the Spokane County CD.

Governance

Each conservation district has a board of three

elected and two appointed supervisors. In order to be appointed or elected to the board of supervisors, a person must be a landowner or farmer. In 2010, a change was made to the Washington Administrative Code requiring two of the three elected supervisors to be landowners or farmers rather than all of the elected supervisors. “Landowner’ means a person with legal title of record to real property in the conservation district at the time of filing for election or applying for appointment.” The roles and responsibilities of conservation district supervisors are set out in RCW 89.08, Sections 210 and 220. Some of those roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Identify local conservation needs and develop, implement, and evaluate programs and services to meet the needs.
- Educate and inform landowners and citizens within the district as well as local, state, and federal legislators on conservation issues and programs.
- Supervise paid staff and volunteers working with the district; coordinate with any cooperating agency personnel.
- Manage and seek revenue to implement conservation needs and report on activities to the community within the conservation district boundaries.
- Coordinate assistance and funding from federal, state, and local government, district association, and private groups.
- Set policy for staff to implement.

Elections

Each CD has an election each year, which is mandated by the state and regulated by the WSCC. A survey of the 2010 election was done by the study committee. The following questions were asked of each conservation district:

1. On what date was the election held?
2. Where was it held?
3. How many people voted?
4. How many candidates participated?
5. How was it publicized?

Twenty-three CDs responded to the survey questions, and additional data for those CDs not responding was obtained from Bill Eller at the WSCC. A few examples of the number of registered voters and the population of CDs will give some insight into these results. These numbers are taken from 2010 county

figures, which may vary slightly from the conservation district population and number of registered voters. All registered voters within CD boundaries may vote in the elections for supervisors.

- Asotin County CD, in southeast Washington, has a population of 21,623 with 12,270 registered voters, of whom 17 voted in the 2010 conservation district election.
- Kittitas County CD, in central Washington, has a population of 40,915 with 20,193 registered voters, of whom 22 voted.
- Lewis County CD, in southwest Washington, has a population of 75,455 with 41,972 registered voters, of whom 28 voted.
- Lincoln County CD, in northeast Washington, has a population of 10,570 with 6,983 registered voters, of whom 45 voted.
- Pierce CD, in west central Washington, has a population of 795,225 with 404,213 registered voters, of whom 301 voted. Pierce CD uses mail-in balloting upon request.
- Spokane County CD, in east central Washington, has a population of 471,221 with 261,250 registered voters, of whom 12 voted.
- Whatcom CD, in northwest Washington, has a population of 201,140 with 116,581 registered voters, of whom 11 voted.

There appears to be little correlation among the methods used to publicize the election, the number of registered voters, and the number of people voting in the election. In all cases, the number of voters and the number of candidates participating in the election are low. One reason Pierce CD has slightly greater participation may be the use of mail-in balloting upon request.

State Election Procedures

Each conservation district has a five-person board of supervisors. Two supervisors are appointed by the WSCC board. One supervisor is elected each year for a three year term. Some of the guidelines for holding conservation district elections for supervisors are as follows:

- RCW 89.08.190 states that conservation districts shall hold elections during the first quarter of each calendar year, at which time one supervisor shall be elected for a three-year term.
- The date for this election must be set by the

Board of Supervisors during the last quarter of the previous calendar year. A minimum of four polling hours must be set, and polling places must have sufficient parking and be accessible to those with disabilities.

- District employees may not recruit candidates for supervisor. They may post public notice, provide nomination forms, verify eligibility of candidates and petition signatures, answer requests for information, and provide information to the WSCC, which provides forms for district use.
- Candidates must be listed in alphabetical order on the ballot. There must be a line for write-in candidates.
- There must be two polling officers; they must be independent of the Board of Supervisors.
- On Election Day, the polling places must be clearly marked. Polling officers must complete the Poll List and verify the signature of each voter.

WSCC Guidelines for Appointment, Elections and Elections by Mail

The WSCC does not mandate, but does allow, that elections be conducted by mail. The District Elections Supervisor must determine if applicants are registered voters, there must be a secrecy envelope for the ballot, and the outside envelope must include the voter's signature and an identifying number. The rules for locking up the ballots, opening, and counting them are also mandated.

Guidelines for WSCC Appointment of Two Supervisors

The WSCC notifies the District of those terms which are expiring, and notifies those supervisors whose terms are expiring. A district with an upcoming vacancy must provide adequate public notice of the vacancy in some form of mass media that reaches the broadest sector of the district's total population. Those who want positions must obtain the Application for Appointment from the WSCC or from the conservation district. The Conservation Commission appoints the supervisors to vacant or unexpired appointed positions. Each district has two appointed supervisors.

Election Process Issues

In 2001, legislation was introduced and passed that had the consequence of changing election law for

conservation districts. Former State Senator Marilyn Rasmussen, who was active on the Agriculture Committee and remains involved with conservation districts, reported that the first bill was passed because CDs handle public money.

Only those involved with districts were voting, which meant that some of the same people were voting as were receiving money. According to Rasmussen, the Attorney General said that this was not legal, and so the law was changed to allow CD elections to be on the general election ballot.

John Larson, Executive Director of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts, stated that the legislation was introduced by Senator Bob Morton, who worked closely with conservation district personnel in Legislative District 7. The legislation was intended to firm up the landowner requirement for an elected supervisor. Larson said, "An unintended consequence of this law was enabling CDs to have their elections for supervisors to be included on the general election ballot."

Being on the general election ballot is very expensive and conservation districts would have had to use most of their money just to hold elections. According to Rasmussen, there was talk of having supervisors appointed by the County Councils. According to the Senate Bill Report discussing testimony on SB 5904 (which did not pass in 2001), some CDs wanted to have their election on the general ballot, but some CDs wanted to continue to have their own elections, while some rural CDs were afraid that the requirement for public disclosure in the general election would limit their ability to recruit supervisors for a job that pays only expenses. As well, some county election officials feared that they would have difficulty determining the eligible voters in the conservation district, since not all CDs mirror county boundaries. In 2002, the Legislature passed SB 6572, which changed the law so that conservation district elections were scheduled in the first three months of the year. Ray Ledgerwood, WSCC Program facilitator, added that attempts at a legislative fix to remove or reduce the election costs were unsuccessful.

SB 6572 changed the law so as not to apply to "public utility districts, conservation districts, or district elections at which the ownership of property within those districts is a prerequisite to voting, all of which elections shall be held at the times prescribed in the

laws specifically applicable thereto." This legislation also called for the creation of "a work group on conservation district elections." Selena Corwin, Interim Director of the Pierce CD, said: "The taskforce was set up to examine the possibility of enabling CD election of supervisors to be included in the general election. This taskforce failed to reach any decisions on CD election."

The discussions and disagreements about how conservation district supervisors should be elected, or whether they should be elected at all, continue to this day. An editorial in *The Olympian* stated: "Voters Robbed in Conservation District Elections: State lawmakers and Gov. Gary Locke took a giant step – backward – in the management and administration of county conservation districts. Legislators passed, and the governor signed, a dreadful bill that basically nullifies the rights of voters to elect the men and women who govern conservation districts."

In 2005, *The News Tribune* in Tacoma included the following in an editorial: "Nearly everything in the law governing these elections makes participation difficult and unlikely. The elections must be held in the first three months of the year, preventing the district from combining with other elections. Going alone for a single board election each year costs up to \$600,000...A move to place these races on the fall ballot, when they would cost the district about \$100,000 and be more obvious to voters, was turned back by the Legislature. So the districts are allowed to run their own elections, traditionally small affairs with a handful of voters." Currently, Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts are able to include their elections on the general election ballot. The costs of these elections are paid by the County in which the CD is located. The configuration of the CDs in Oregon is similar to that of Washington.

Conservation districts in Washington State struggle to get the word out about their elections, and many have expressed the wish that there were a better way to conduct an election for this organization that covers a wide area and deals with conservation issues in that area. Some ask whether an election is the best way to select supervisors. Some ask whether appointing people to the supervisor position is more feasible. Would that be taking the selection away from the people of the district? Are people in the district interested and informed in order to make a selection?

A small number of organized people can determine the election of a candidate in these elections with few people voting.

Following are some of the issues relating to the election process:

- The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) mandates a voter number and the voter's signature on the outside of the return-mail envelope. In most cases, the conservation district ballot envelopes do not have a number or space for a signature. Even if this space were available, sample signatures of voters are available at county election offices, but are not accessible to the conservation districts.
- Election by mail has increased voter turnout considerably.
 - o In Pierce Conservation District, voting by mail began in 2004. Before 2004, fewer than 20 people voted, but in the 2009 election about 1700 people mailed in their ballots. In 2010, however, only 300 people voted.
 - o In King Conservation District, voter turnout has tripled in the past five years, with about 4400 ballots cast in 2010. Even though the King County general election uses all mail-in ballots, mail-in voting is not used by the King CD due to the expense. Seven polling places were available for the 2010 CD election.
- The King CD does not use the special election ballot that is run by the county in the first quarter of the year because of expense. Any special district must pay approximately \$2.50 to \$3.00 per voter within the particular district to have its issue on the ballot. The King CD, would have to pay at least \$2.50 for all registered voters in the King CD. With approximately 1 million registered voters in the district the cost would be \$2.5 million, over one-third of the King CD budget.
- Running a conservation district election is time-consuming and takes significant staff time away from the district's mission. The Pierce CD staff does its best to run elections well, but at times people who have requested a ballot by mail do not receive one. Running elections is not the expertise of conservation experts.
- The Thurston CD publishes quarter-page "Conversations on Conservation" articles in the local newspaper three or four times per year. These

include information about public meetings on re-authorizing assessments, information about what they are doing and what workshops are being held, calls for people to run for the Board of Supervisors, and information on voting in their elections. This publicity has not increased voter turnout. The Olympian on March 2, 2003 questions, "which is better for democracy: an election with 302 voters casting ballots or an election with more than 31,000 participants? The answer is obvious. Voter participation is a cornerstone of our democracy. The power of the ballot box is the public's method of holding their decision-makers accountable for their actions."

- Candidates for the Board of Supervisors often do much to bring new people to vote in the CD Elections by word of mouth. It is desirable to have choices when selecting candidates, but many CD elections have only one candidate participating.
- The comments on the election process received when League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County interviewed supervisors, activists, elected officials, and CD staff for its 2008 Pierce Conservation District report include:
 - o One of the commissioners said, "Many people think that changes should be made, and there are as many suggestions as there are people."
 - o Tom Salzer, Technical Service Manager, WSCC, said, "Conservation district elections are among the purest forms of local governance known in Washington State." He indicated that all qualified electors are eligible to participate in these local elections. The communities served by conservation districts participate as they see fit. He has not seen a correlation between the amount or intensity of notice to the public and the number of citizens who vote. Salzer said, "Citizens who wish to be involved become involved; those who do not wish to be involved do not participate."
 - o Having the County Elections Office run the elections would be worth the cost if they didn't have to have them every year.
 - o If all three elected supervisors were elected the same year, instead of the current system of electing one each year, there would still be continuity from the appointed supervisors,
 - o The terms of supervisors could be changed

from three years to longer.

o The number of supervisors could be increased; with a seven member Board and four-year terms, for example, three could be elected one year and four two years later.

o If the county were divided into districts, with each supervisor representing part of the county, candidates wouldn't have to run a county-wide campaign.

o The board could be appointed by the County Council, with nominees submitted by Council Members from their districts and chosen by the County Executive, and one directly appointed by the Executive.

o Monty Mahan, Pierce CD Manager, expressed his frustration with this system when he said: "In my opinion the system is fatally flawed at the level of the Revised Code of Washington, and efforts to dress it up at the local level are destined for failure, unless the [Pierce CD] is prepared to make its elections more important than its on the ground activities." Mahan went on to say, "I believe that conservation district elections belong on the general ballot. The issues surrounding funding and running them could be addressed either at the local or state level if there was a commitment to bringing conservation district elections into step with all other elections of Washington State officials."

Significant Changes to the Election Rules

Washington Conservation Rules Update – November 19, 2010

The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) is required by RCW 89.08 to adopt procedures for conservation district elections: "The commission shall establish procedures for elections, canvass the returns and announce the official results thereof."

In late 2007, the Commission expressed interest in establishing rules for the election and replacement of conservation district supervisors in order to address issues with the administration of elections and to clarify procedures. In 2008 and 2009, the Commission continued to reevaluate elections procedures and began soliciting input from various

stakeholder groups. The revisions and consultation with different stakeholders resulted in the creation, in late 2009, of an elections manual. After the 2010 elections, the Commission decided to move forward with the formal elections rulemaking process.

The Commission took public comments on the proposed rule from September 1, 2010 through September 28, 2010. They held two public hearings to gather comments; the first public hearing was held in Lacey on September 21 and the second was held in Spokane in September 23. Written comments were accepted through September 28. No oral or written comments were received.

The new rule reflects the recommendations of a number of different stakeholders, including:

- Conservation district staff and supervisors
- The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) District Operations Committee
- The Commission and WACD Joint Elections Committee
- County auditors and elections officials
- The Commission-assigned assistant attorney general
- Informal input from the public and interested parties

The Commission adopted WAC 135-110, "Election and Replacement of Conservation

District Supervisors," on November 19, 2010. The Commission is required by statute to adopt procedures for conservation district elections. The adopted rule:

- Establishes procedures governing the election and replacement of conservation district supervisors;
- Provides guidance on the conduct of conservation district elections;
- Sets forth criteria and procedures for the removal of conservation district supervisors from office;
- Establishes procedures for how individuals are elected or appointed to the office and how their terms of office terminate;
- Clarifies statutory language; and
- Provides statewide consistency in the election and replacement of conservation district supervisors.

What follows are some of the more significant changes to conservation district election procedures for 2011 based on the new WAC 135-110:

Adoption and Publication of the Election Resolution Timeline

The timeline for adoption and publication of the resolution establishing an election has changed. The date set for the election will determine the candidate filing deadline, which in turn will determine when publication of the election resolution and notice to voters of the election must take place. Conservation district supervisors must provide the WSCC with the election resolution by the candidate filing deadline.

Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots may be requested even if a mail-in election is not being held. WAC 135-110-240 states that elections can be by physical poll sites (in-person), or by remote methods (mail-in, electronic), or both. Any choice or combination is fine, except that it must still assure “fair treatment of candidates and voters,” provide “privacy in voting,” and comply with “all other parts of this rule.” WAC 135-110-410 requires a district to set a deadline to request a mail-in ballot.

Absentee Ballots and Notice

A public notice should be placed in a local paper letting the public know that absentee ballots are available upon request by registered voters residing within conservation district boundaries even though the election does not include a mail-in election. The district must still comply with the due notice requirements of WAC 135-110-210, “due notice containing all election information in the resolution must be published.” WAC 135-110-110 states the definition of “due notice” as, “notice published at least twice with at least six days between publications, in a publication of general circulation within the affected area. If there is no such publication, a notice may be posted at a reasonable number of public places within the area where it is customary to post notices concerning county and municipal affairs.”

Candidate Types

There are now three types of candidates:

1. Declared: a qualified district elector who has submitted candidate information to the district by the filing deadline.
2. Declared Nominated: a qualified district elector who has submitted candidate information to the district by the filing deadline and who has also

submitted a qualified nominating petition by the filing deadline.

3. Undeclared Write-In: a person who has neither submitted candidate information to the district by the filing deadline nor has submitted a qualified nominating petition by the filing deadline.

Ceasing to be a Farmer or Landowner

The question has arisen as to the possibility that a supervisor, who has been one of the two required landowners/farmers, retires and is therefore no longer a farmer. The new rules indicate that if a sitting supervisor retires from farming or is no longer a landowner such that it causes two of the three supervisors to no longer be landowners/farmers, then that supervisor is no longer eligible to serve, and the office is deemed vacant and must be filled according to mandated procedures.

Due Notice of Election

After a conservation district adopts the election resolution, the information in the resolution needs to be published at least twice, a week apart, the first time being at least one week before the candidate filing deadline. The candidate filing deadline is 4 weeks before election day.

Election Resolution

The information required to be provided in the resolution establishing an election has changed. The requirements include:

- The name of the conservation district;
- The date(s), the physical location(s), and the times polls will open and close for each polling place;
- The election methods selected;
- A list showing the name of each elected and appointed conservation district supervisor with a term expiring in the election and appointment cycle covered by the resolution;
- The filing deadline for candidates;
- Identification of an individual appointed by the conservation district to fulfill the duties of election supervisor; and
- The dated signature of at least one conservation district supervisor attesting to this information.

Election Supervisor

The title of “Election Officer” has been changed to “Election Supervisor.”

Incumbent is only Filing Candidate

Sometimes the incumbent is the only person filing as a candidate for an open supervisor position by filing deadline. In a case like this, the requirements and procedures to follow are:

- The incumbent is automatically reelected to another three-year term if:
 - o Due notice of the election resolution and the election have been duly published by the conservation district;
 - o The only person filing by the filing deadline is the incumbent;
 - o The conservation district verifies the continued eligibility of the incumbent to serve another term of office; and
 - o The incumbent has not resigned on or before the last date of election.
- When an incumbent is automatically reelected, no other election activities at physical poll sites or through remote election processes may be performed.
- Before election day, the conservation district must inform the voting public that the incumbent has been reelected by reason of being the only person filing for the position, and that no poll site, mail, or absentee balloting will be performed. On election day signs containing this information must be posted at poll sites.
- Within four weeks of the first date of election as scheduled in the election resolution, the conservation district must inform the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) of the automatic reelection of the incumbent. Note: One of the most important things to remember is that notice that all the conditions of WAC 135-110-370 have been met (therefore, an election will not be held) must be provided before election day, and on election day, signs containing this information must be posted at poll sites.

Poll Lists

Conservation districts are prohibited from using “lists obtained from an individual conservation district supervisor or employee, nor from any candidate, nor from any trade, company, church, union, fraternal or other organization.” An employee can assist in the

development of a list, or providing a list. The intent of the WAC provision precluding obtaining lists from district employees is to avoid the use of some other list, such list being inconsistent with the list noted in the WAC referenced.

Polling Officers

There must be at least two polling officers at each physical poll site. The Election Supervisor may serve as one polling officer.

Record Retention

All ballots, computer voting records, and election documents must be retained for six months after the election has been certified.

Current Election, Political, and Legal Information

King CD Election

As a result of changes to the Washington Administrative Code, the definition for a remote election, an election in which ballots are returned by some means other than for a poll-site election, King CD used electronic voting in its 2011 election.

WAC 135-110-240 states that “the conservation district supervisors must choose the method of the election using physical poll sites, or by remote methods, or by any combination of these methods that assures fair treatment of candidates and voters, provides privacy in voting, and complies with all other parts of this rule.” WAC 135-110-540 states that “for electronic voting, the functional equivalent of a paper ballot must be utilized.”

For the 2011 election, the King CD used a new and secure online voting option. King CD, working with Election Trust LLC (Bellevue) and Scytl Secure Electronic Voting USA (Washington, DC and Spain), introduced an online balloting program to provide residents within the King CD an alternative to in-person balloting. This is the first time this option was available for domestic voting in the United States. Online voting is used by U.S. citizens who live in other countries or who are overseas and are voting in the U.S. elections. The results of this process will be of interest to other conservation districts in Washington State.

On February 22, 2011, an article entitled “King Conservation District goes ‘paper free’ in online

election” was written in the Seattle Times concerning the new online King CD 2011 election. Statements from this article include:

- “Eager to reverse a history of low voter turnout, the little-known King Conservation District is holding the largest online election ever conducted by a public agency in the United States.”
- ““For a small district that’s trying to conduct an election without having the existing election facilities like ballot tabulation equipment, I think this is a smart way to go,” said Katie Blinn, who supervises local elections – but not conservation-district balloting – as co-director of elections for the Secretary of State.”
- “But without a paper record to back up every vote, Douglas W. Jones, associate professor of computer science at the University of Iowa, claims Internet voting is vulnerable to manipulation – and, he said, ‘Outsourcing a democracy is not a good idea.’” Jones goes on to say, “I believe the Internet is extraordinarily insecure regardless whose system you are using. The way to make a secure computer in today’s world is to have it not connected to the Internet.”
- “Wider use of Internet voting may be years off, state elections co-director Blinn said, but she believes it will come and will be done without compromising election integrity.”
- Election Trust, the firm hired to conduct King CD elections, “came up with a two-step process that requires voters to submit their signatures by mail, e-mail, or fax before voting. After the company verifies a signature matches the one on file with King County Elections, the voter is given a personal identification number for online voting.” The results of the 2011 King CD online election showed a reduction in the total number of people voting in this election. The total number of people voting was 2295, 172 of whom voted at the King CD offices on March 15, 2011, which is about half as many as voted in the 2010 election when there were seven polling places. The lower turnout may have had something to do with some glitches in the system and voters dealing with an unfamiliar system.

Proposed Consolidation of Commissions

In 2011, because of insufficient revenue in the State of Washington, Governor Christine Gregoire proposed

reducing the number of commissions in Washington State by combining them with other agencies. The Governor’s original proposed 2011-13 biennial budget called for the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) to be absorbed into the Washington State Department of Agriculture. This arrangement was projected to save \$200,000 in the 2011-13 biennium. This would have included staff cuts, which, in turn, may have led to a less influential position and to less communication among the governor, legislators, and the conservation districts. No legislation to change the status of commissions passed the legislature in 2011, but this concept may be brought up in the future. This may appear to be a logical arrangement, given the state’s revenue shortfall. The WSCC is a non-regulatory body, while the Department of Agriculture is a regulatory agency. The WSCC and conservation districts in Washington State have been successful in serving as a buffer between landowners and regulatory agencies to prevent and solve problems. The Department of Natural Resources and the Washington State Department of Agriculture contain divisions whose primary function is to educate. No research was found that compared the effectiveness of these agencies to conservation districts in promoting changes in conservation behavior.

Consolidation arrangements have been set up in other states, such as Idaho, Oregon, and California, with the result of a decrease in effectiveness and number of projects. In 1997, the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (ISCC) was moved from the Idaho Department of Lands to the Idaho Department of Agriculture. While with the Department of Lands, the ISCC acted as an independent agency that had great influence in natural resource conservation services for land managers. With a staff of 37, the ISCC provided state cost-share assistance to land managers of 40 projects with \$6 million annual funding. Since the move to be a part of the Department of Agriculture, the staff of the ISCC has decreased to 18 and funding has steadily decreased. In 2010, the legislature recognized the importance of the independent, non-regulatory role and services of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, and legislation was passed to rename it as the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and grant it autonomy within the Department of Agriculture. Essentially, the Commission now functions as a self-governing agency. This arrangement might be a model for other states.

Mason Conservation District Assessment Fee Litigation

For eight years Mason Conservation District has been involved in litigation in regard to its special assessment. In September 2002 Mason County adopted Ordinance 121-02, establishing a conservation special assessment under RCW 89.08.400. The ordinance states: "There shall be an assessment for natural resource conservation as authorized by RCW 89.08.400 in the amount of \$5.00 per non forested land parcel with [a zero dollar] fee per acre assessed for ten years starting 2003 and continuing through 2012."

In March 2003 a group of landowners in Mason County sued the county and the Mason CD, saying that Ordinance 121-02 was an invalid and unconstitutional property tax in the guise of a special assessment. In January 2005, this litigation was dismissed in the Superior Court of Mason County because the action was filed more than six months after the County adopted the Resolution establishing a special assessment. The landowners appealed this ruling. The Appellate Court determined that the Superior Court erred in its ruling to dismiss, and the case was remanded to Superior Court. This litigation has gone through several iterations before finally ending up in the Washington State Supreme Court, where a hearing was held January 13, 2011.

One argument against the fee is that it is contrary to statute in that the assessment is solely a flat amount, rather than a flat fee plus a prorated fee based on acreage (which is allowed per RCW 89.08.400, which specifies a flat fee plus \$0.00-\$0.10 per acre). The fee was primarily to be used to improve the water quality in the area within the Mason CD. Mason CD suggests that all properties benefit because everyone benefits from clean water. Owners of forest land and of property within the City of Shelton, not to mention nonresidents of Mason County, benefit from efforts to clean up part of Puget Sound and Hood Canal, but those people are not subject to the special assessment. On the other hand, owners of underdeveloped land, without any impermeable surfaces or any source of pollution, are assessed as these parcels are available for future development that is expected to impact water quality. Further, it is claimed by the petitioners that even though conservation districts are allowed to collect some fees, Mason County reserved two-thirds of the funds in a revenue-sharing scheme (agreed

upon between Mason CD and the Mason County Public Health Departments) which included a plan to hire two new Health Services staff members to assist in addressing water quality problems.

Mason County began collecting the special assessment fee in 2003, using the money for water quality projects. As a result of the litigation, beginning in 2008 Mason CD discontinued using the money collected from the assessment fee. Mason County has continued to collect the assessment fee, but the money is now held by the Mason County Treasurer, pending the Supreme Court's ruling. As of April 2011, more than \$685,000 in assessment fees is being held by the Mason County Treasurer. Prior to 2008 several hundred thousand dollars had already been spent by Mason County and the Mason CD.

The Supreme Court issued its decision on February 16, 2012, invalidating the special assessment on statutory grounds without reaching the constitutional issue. The court ordered the CD to rescind the payments to the successful litigants. *Cary, et al v. Mason County and Mason Conservation District*, WA Supreme Court, No. 83937-9, Feb. 16, 2012.

Since the Washington State Supreme Court ruled for the landowners, the money collected may have to be returned to those who were assessed. Broader ramifications of the court's ruling could affect all assessments for conservation districts in Washington State.

Conclusion

The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) has been in existence for over 70 years, but knowledge of its work and the work of local conservation districts does not appear to be widespread. The WSCC and the state's 47 conservation districts work with federal and state agencies to help people use resources wisely.

Each conservation district elects three of its five supervisors. One supervisor is elected each year to a three-year term. The elections are not held with any other election and are not well publicized. Voter participation is very low. In the League of Women Voters Tacoma-Pierce County study of the Pierce Conservation District in 2007-08, particular attention was paid to the method of selecting members of the Board of Supervisors. Many managers, supervisors, and staff involved in the Pierce, King, Thurston, and

Kitsap CDs were interviewed for that study. They had many suggestions for possible ways of changing parts of the mandated election system. These suggestions ranged from having the Conservation District Election on the general election ballot, to having more supervisors and electing more than one at a time, to having supervisors represent parts of the conservation district rather than the whole thing, to having the Supervisors appointed. Fifteen of the state's conservation districts collect assessments from property owners to help support the districts. It is a concern to some that we contribute to the conservation district, yet know little about how they are run, and that few people elect their supervisors. The mission of promoting conservation of natural resources through good stewardship would seem to be as important today as it was when conservation districts were formed in Washington State. Governor Christine Gregoire recently proposed absorbing the WSCC into the Department of Agriculture. Some of the possible changes to the effectiveness of the WSCC are discussed in the section "Current Political and Legal Issues."

It is hoped that this information promotes interest in and understanding of the purpose, structure, and election process of conservation districts in Washington State, that it might lead some people to further explore and get involved with their conservation districts, and that it leads to educated discussion.

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Unit Meetings

LWVS-KC UNIT INFORMATION

League unit meetings (small discussion groups) begin in September. Check the September *Voter*, which will come out in late August, or contact the unit leader for the location, date, and time of the meeting. LWVS-KC unit meetings are free and open to the public. Each month, units discuss a topic which corresponds to the monthly forum or study; the *Voter* for the month provides discussion materials. We encourage League members to join any convenient unit; see list below. The information below is current as of publication. Please check the September *Voter* for possible updates in unit leadership or contact information. Lindsay Cummings is our new unit coordinator. Please contact her if you have updated information or information to share with the units as a whole.

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| 2012–2013 | <i>2nd V.P. Action</i> | Ellen Barton | 206-321-7362 | eeb0825@yahoo.com |
| 2012–2014 | <i>3rd V.P. Program</i> | Beatrice Crane | 206-783-8485 | bscrane@comcast.net |
| 2012–2013 | <i>4th V.P. Development</i> | Ginna Owens | 206-323-7992 | ginnao@earthlink.net |
| 2011–2013 | <i>Treasurer</i> | Kati Ortiz | 206-329-4848 | treasurer@seattlelwv.org |
| 2012–2013 | <i>Secretary</i> | Joanna Cullen | 206-329-8514 | jfoxcullen@gmail.com |

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| 2012–2014 | <i>Voter Service</i> | Julie Anne Kempf | 206-329-4848 | julie@kempf.com |
| 2011–2014 | <i>Development</i> | Mary Jo Vigil | 206-318-6939 | mjvigil@starbucks.com |
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| 2011–2012 | | Kelly Powers | | lwvkellystp@gmail.com |
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| <i>Observer Corps</i> | Pat McCann | 206-523-0152 | thomaspa@nwlink.com |

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| | | |
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| <i>Education</i> | TBD | TBD |
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| <i>Social Justice</i> | Jayne Freitag | 425-922-9501 mjafreitag@comcast.net |
| <i>Transportation</i> | Janet Winans | 206-323-4825 janetwinans@earthlink.net |
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**No regular forum
this month. Member
meeting re: conservation
districts on August 16.**

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updates - new meetings and
forums will be announced as we
confirm them.