

ARGUS

THE STATE OF EDUCATION BY PAT HOCKEN, LWVLC PRESIDENT

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

UNITS	2
VOTER SERVICE MEMBERSHIP	3
ACTION	4
OPPORTUNITIES	6
HOMELESS	7
NEW MEMBERS	8
BOOKS, IN MEMORY, & MEMBER FORM	9
CALENDAR & MISSION	10

For some months our community has been focused on budget shortfalls for our local schools and for schools throughout Oregon due primarily to reduced state income tax revenues. This month we will expand our horizons to consider the state of education throughout the country.

Oregonians are not unfamiliar with the impacts of fewer dollars for schools, including steadily increasing class sizes, teacher furloughs, and shortened school years. Throughout the country, many other states are also facing fiscal crises and are increasing

class sizes in response to budget cuts and teacher layoffs.

Overall, the data about the health of education in America are not encouraging. Despite the widespread belief that our educational system is one of the best in the world, the reality is much different. According to Charles Vest, former MIT president and participant in a national group working to identify strategies to improve U.S. economic competitiveness, where we actually rank today is: "...sixth in global innovation-based competitiveness...; 11th among industrialized nations in

the fraction of 25- to 34-year olds who have graduated from high school; 16th in college completion rate;...27th among developed nations in the proportion of college students receiving degrees in science or engineering; 48th in the quality of kindergarten through 12th grade math and science education...."

Is it any wonder there is acrimonious finger-pointing about the cause of this decline and calls for controversial and dramatic educational reform? In a recent AP-Stanford

(Continued on page 7)

THIRD THURSDAY BY NANCIE FADELEY

This year, the Peace Corps is celebrating its 50th anniversary. That's why we have asked a panel of returned Peace Corps volunteers (RPCV) to describe their Peace Corps service and offer their views on the value of the Peace Corps to host countries and American society. Will either of these need or want the Peace Corps in the future?



**The Peace Corps at 50:
Will you still need me when I'm 64?**

**Mallard Banquet Hall
April 21**

Our own
Dorothy Soper,

a RPCV who served from 1963-65 in Ghana, will be the moderator of a panel of three other local RPCVs who are members of the West Cascade Peace Corps Association. They will reflect on their Peace Corps experiences and share their thoughts about its future.

Third Thursdays happen at Mallard Banquet Hall, 725 West 1st Avenue, Eugene. The free program begins at 12:15 pm

A buffet is spread at 11:45. The \$12 cost for lunch includes beverage, dessert and tip. Beverage only with refills - \$2.50.

For reservations, call the League office, 541-343-7917, or e-mail league@lwvlc.org for reservations. Reservations are a priceless help to the Mallard staff.

UNIT TOPIC – ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN EDUCATION ANNE MEHL, UNIT CHAIR

Monday April 11

10 am

South Willamette #1
147 Westbrook Way (1 block beyond 46th, then right on Westbrook Way to Edgewood clubhouse on right by pool)

H: Barbara Greenley, 684-9127

C: Emily Schue, 344-7597

2 pm

Harlow Road #2

394 Cherry Drive

H: Barbara French, 485-9090

C: Kay Huston, 607-8962

Tuesday April 12

9 am

Coburg Road #3

2135 Rocky Lane

H: Dorothy Cruickshank, 342-2577

C: Punky Smith, 844-9277

Wednesday April 13

10 am

East Eugene #5

555 E. 15th Avenue

Central Presbyterian

H: Stephanie Winsor, 342-8243

C: Diana Grandberry, 342-8402

12 Noon

Cottage Grove/Creswell #8

Lane Community College,

Cottage Grove

H: Gayle Downing, 942-1858

C: Dian Missar, 942-7676

4 pm

S.W. Eugene #4

2365 W. 23rd Avenue

H: Pat McDaniels, 343-4728

C: Sally Weston, 484-4404

Friday April 15

9:30 am

Cascade Manor #9 (Cascade View Room)

65 W. 30th Avenue

C: Lorraine Abbott, 434-4107

Frank Carlton, 434-4140

On-Line Unit #6

All week, anytime, anywhere

Charlcie Kaylor – charlcie@efn.org

Chris Donohue – kimchee569@yahoo.com

Unit Briefing

Tuesday April 5 th - 3 pm

at the Atrium (Sloat room)

10th and Olive

All are welcome.

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**APRIL UNITS
BY PAT HOCKEN**

Units in April will consider the Federal Role in Pre-K through Grade 12 Public Education. This is the beginning of the participation by members of the League of Women Voters of Lane County (LWVLC) in a new study adopted by the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) at its convention in June 2010. Our

April discussions will be based on a report prepared by a LWVLC committee and which is included with this ARGUS newsletter. In the fall of 2011, we will consider information and consensus questions developed by the LWVUS.

April units are planned to be an open-ended conversation about

public education in this county, addressing both good and bad aspects as well as the appropriate role for the federal government in this critical area. Plan on joining us for what is expected to be a lively exchange.

Anyone is welcome to attend briefing to learn more about the topic in preparation for attending a unit meeting.

"I ARISE IN THE MORNING TORN BETWEEN A DESIRE TO IMPROVE THE WORLD AND A DESIRE TO ENJOY THE WORLD. THIS MAKES IT HARD TO PLAN THE DAY." E. B. White

Submitted by Eleanor Mulder

VOTER SERVICES

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TRY Distribution

We need your help in distributing the new "They Represent You" brochures, which provide contact information for public officials for the years 2011- 2012 .

Please take some to your church, clubs, neighborhood groups and organizations that will benefit from copies of the document. We particularly need help in making them available to communities in Lane

County outside of Eugene. Please mark down where you take the brochures on the distribution list we have provided in the League office. We need to keep track of where we have delivered them.

The entire new TRY is also available on the LWVLC website for website users.

Forum for Eugene School Board Candidates

The Eugene City Club is sponsoring



a forum/debate for the candidates for the 4J school board in early April. We expect that the League will assist the City Club with this event.

Susan Tavakolian

MEMBERSHIP - SUE MILLER-WIELESEK, CHAIR

It is with barely contained excitement that the Membership Committee announces our annual Spring Soiree from 5 to 7 pm on the evening of May 7th. This is a chance for members to socialize, meet recently joined members, drink a little wine, and munch on cheese and canapés.

The event will take place, thanks to Scott and the Tsunami staff, at Tsunami Bookstore, 2585 Willamette Street. We are so fortunate to have **Barbara Pope**, author of historical novels *Cezanne's Quarry* and *Blood of Lorraine*, to talk about *Blood of Lorraine*. Her first novel, *Cezanne's Quarry*, is out in both hardback and paperback, and there will be copies available

for signing. *Blood of Lorraine* is out in hardback and may also be available in paperback by May 7th. Ms. Pope is Professor Emerita of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Oregon.

There will of course be non-alcoholic drinks available. Bring your Mother's Day company and join us.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHAT LEAGUE MEMBERS SAID BY JANET CALVERT

The March unit discussions were focused on the City Club of Eugene's DRAFT document, "Tracking the Role of Local Government in Economic Development". Unit reports indicated lively discussion and appreciation for the research and the report written by the three City Club members. Many members expressed surprise and admiration for the timelessness and wisdom of League positions dealing with the role of government in economic development that were reached more than 12 years ago.

There was general agreement among the 63 members attending units that economic development should include more than programs designed either to assist individual businesses or promote development through general public policies to also include the quality of life for the whole community .

While there were a variety of opinions if Eugene's two Urban Renewal Districts should be phased out, there seemed to be agreement that the Riverfront District needed a fresh overall vision and coordination of its three distinct parts. It was no

surprise that members agreed that economic develop efforts by the city, region and special agencies should be transparent, have clear measurable goals and objectives, coordinate/integrate plans, encourage citizen understanding and that are updated regularly. All these principles were enumerated in the LWVLC's positions.

Thank you to Merle Bottge, Renee Buchanan, and Dale Haynes, committee members who served as resource persons at units. A special thanks to Pat Hocken, who stepped in for me as resource person when I became contagious.

ACTION BY KAPPY EATON

Local Issues

EmX West. After extensive hearings and meetings of the Eugene City Council, the LTD Board, and the Metropolitan Planning Commission, it appeared that the preferred alternative route for west Eugene transit would be the corridors of West 11th and West 13th Avenues. The League's Action committee and the Board agreed to that configuration and so testified, both to the City Council and at the LTD hearing. The City Council vote was 4-4 for 11th and 13th, with the Mayor breaking the tie in favor. Then, at the last minute, there was a move to consider the 6th and 7th alternative. The LTD Board decided to continue the discussion. The Council has now decided to back the 6th and 7th alternative. There has been intense opposition by the businesses on West 11th to the 11th Avenue option so we will see how the new decision is viewed.

School Funding. The Action committee recommended to the League that we remain neutral regarding the proposed income tax to fund District 4J schools. While we recognize the great need for additional revenue, there are inequities which flaw the proposal. The Action committee did recommend that the League support the proposed bond levy for \$70 million, payable over a 21 year period.

The funds would be used for capital improvements to aging buildings, remodeling several schools, improving technology and teaching environments. The measure is very specific as to which schools would be improved. We can support this levy on the basis of our School Facilities position.

Eugene City Hall. We have been monitoring the discussion on how best to deal with the need to replace the 47 year old City Hall for several years. Many of the proposals were too expensive or outside the core of the city. The city manager has now recommended moving the city offices temporarily to some other site, razing the existing building, and constructing a new one at the same city-owned site. The Council has agreed. We will be following this discussion carefully since having an effective and well functioning city government is within our local government positions.

State of the State.

The plethora of bills which inundated the Legislature at its start (almost 2000) has been augmented by proposals from committees and legislators themselves. The Oregon League's Action committee has been spending close to five days a week testifying, following up on amendments, talking to legis-

lators, and keeping track of which bills are being heard and by which committees. We also meet weekly with written reports by each of the coordinators, articles for the weekly Legislative Report and seek approval for testimony via email daily. You can follow what is going on from the Social Services and Natural Resources Coordinators by logging onto lvvor.org and linking to the Report. Below are some of the issues which the Governance Coordinator is handling:

★ Proposals which would affect how voters register in Oregon and how county elections officials conduct ballot oversight, have been heard in the House Rules committees the past two weeks. Supporters would require more stringent statutes relating to who can register to vote, including the need to produce a birth certificate, naturalization papers or a passport. The same group of supporters raised questions about the protection of ballots during an election, believing that observers should have the right to disqualify ballots, be allowed to count ballots, and more closely check the verification of signatures. The League, along with Common Cause, ACLU, the state chair of the Association of County Clerks, and others testified in opposition. If you read be-

(Continued on page 5)

**Next Action
committee meeting:
9:30 am
April 4th**

(Continued from page 4)

tween the lines, these changes are directed at making it more difficult for students, minority groups, and the poor to register and vote.

★ Tax credits, part of the plan to obtain more General Fund revenue from the review and subsequent removal or revision of State's huge tax expenditures, are being discussed in policy committees which are to answer 10 questions put to them by the newly created Tax Credits committee, made up of the Senate Revenue committee and some House Revenue committee members. This committee will review the recommendations of the policy committees with regard to tax credits which will expire in 2012. They will then be sent to the Ways and Means committee to decide how much revenue needs to be realized from the changes to those tax credits. The League has testified in favor of a revision of the senior medical deduction which costs the state millions of dollars each biennia. The changes would provide a financial means test as well as increasing the age at which the credit can be taken, beginning at age 63 and going up to 66 by 2014. Whether or not the policy committee will actually recommend that some tax credits be allowed to expire remains to be seen. There is strong opposition from

groups such as the Association of Oregon Industries and other business groups. We expect to be weighing in on tax credits as a whole when there is a clearer picture of their status. The Oregon Revenue Coalition meets weekly to review the status of various proposals and the tenor of the discussions taking place around the Capitol.

★ Local schools could receive assistance in dealing with the current fiscal crisis if the proposal to amend the Oregon constitution related to the \$5 per \$1000 of assessed value put in place by Ballot Measure #5 passed in 1990. The proposal would allow school districts to have \$6.50 as the cap from the existing level, and up to \$7.50 if the district decided to refer that amount to local taxpayers. The League testified in support of this measure based on our school funding position.

★ After a three session hiatus, reproductive health issues are being raised. One bill would prohibit any abortion, by any method, after 20 weeks. Only a medical emergency, not well defined, could be used as an intervention. This has been put forward by the Right to Life organization. Planned Parenthood is behind a proposal to mandate that pregnancy centers post all of their services and their background information, which PP does, but the centers currently do not. The League will oppose the abortion measure as we have in

the past. Our position is based on the LWVUS position regarding the right to privacy and individual rights. We expect that both of these bills will receive what is called a "courtesy" hearing and not be moved forward. However, we need to be prepared to speak if necessary.

★ Schools in general are being discussed. The House has failed to pass a charter schools bill which would have allowed less oversight by their sponsoring school district and more autonomy to the school. An overflow crowd listened and spoke to the bill which would allow all charter schools to receive 95 percent of the state's allocation per pupil. Currently, K-7 charter elementary schools receive 80 percent of that allocation and charter high schools receive 95 percent. With the crisis in public school funding, it is unlikely that the proposal will pass out of the House Revenue committee.

Apropos of that, the fate of many bills will be determined by mid April when all bills in the Senate or House must have been heard and moved forward to survive. There are many more bills we are monitoring, and the burden should be lessened after the April deadline. Actually, not too many bills have gone to the floor of either chamber at this point.

To receive LWVOR's legislative reports by e-mail sign up at - <http://www.lwvor.org/legislativereports.htm>

OPPORTUNITIES AND MORE BY PAT HOCKEN

Annual Meeting in April

Plan now to attend the Annual Meeting (Local Convention) of the League of Women Voters of Lane County on Saturday morning April 23 from 9 am to noon. It will be held at the Garden Club, 1645 High Street, Eugene.

We will begin with a continental breakfast followed by a business meeting at which we will elect officers, adopt a budget and program, and consider a dues increase and a by-laws change. You will receive the Annual Meeting Workbook with all the details in a separate mailing or e-mail.

This is a good opportunity to see League friends who may attend a different unit or not participate in Third Thursday.

Raffle Tickets: Win a Great Vacation

Thanks to those who have bought raffle tickets and sold them to friends and neighbors. We're still a long way from meeting our goal to sell 183 tickets (the number of our members). Every two years the League of Women Voters of

Oregon sponsors a raffle to help cover the cost of the state convention and action at the legislature. This year the prize is a \$3,000 certificate toward a vacation of the winner's choice. Each raffle ticket is \$10 and only 2,000 are sold. Local leagues will receive a \$1 per ticket commission if they sell at least as many tickets as the league has members.

If you haven't purchased a ticket yet, they will be available at April briefing and units, Third Thursday and the Annual Meeting. Please contact the League office by phone or e-mail if you want a block of 10 tickets to sell or if you want a ticket for yourself but can't attend a League event to purchase it.

Holding Up Half the Sky

Women's Opportunity Worldwide invites you to an Open Community Conversation to explore the humanitarian issues presented in the best-selling book *Holding Up Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, written by Nicho-

las Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. The oppression and abuse of women and girls in much of the world is gaining recognition as one of the paramount human rights problems of this century.

The event will be held April 14, 2011 from 7 to 8:30 pm at Tsunami Books, 2585 Wilamette Street, Eugene. The authors will not be present at this event. However, Sheryl WuDunn will speak later this spring at the Erb Memorial Ballroom at the University of Oregon on May 11 from 7 to 9 pm in an appearance sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women And Society.

Below is a poem about participating in the League of Women Voters that was recently published in the newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Clackamas County. League member Sherry Finnegan was given this poem by **Colleen Bennett**, who recently passed away. Colleen served as the president of the League of Women Voters of Oregon and the League of Women Voters of Clackamas County.

Why Don't I Just Quit?

It seems to me that every year
I'm busier than before...
I'm tempted to resign from League.
Instead, I take on more.

I think the answer lies somewhere-
Deep within myself.
I want to see my talents used...
Not rusted on the shelf.

I want America to be
A better place to live.
Just talking won't improve it...
We also have to give.

I want to find myself among
The workers, not the floaters...
And that is why I am neck-deep In
the League of Women Voters.

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT BY FLO ALVERGUE, VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Now in its fifth year, Project Homeless Connect was held on March 17th at the Lane County Fairgrounds. LWVLC members registered a dozen voters and distributed TRYs to a large number. Elections official Cynthia Kinnish checked each registration form, found locations on the county map for citizens' precinct information, and described a new form of

ballot. No longer will voters need to draw arrows when they mark ballots. They will also be made of lighter paper.

The event served almost 1600 people who found help with housing needs, medical and dental care, employment, and veterans' benefits. Hot meals and haircuts were also available. There were 200 more

than last year served. Many received clothing, sleeping bags, and personal hygiene items.

Thanks to Veronika Walton, Susan Tavakolian, Chris Donahue, Helene England, and Stephanie Winsor who helped staff our table.



Cynthia Kinnish (Lane County Elections official) Susan Tavakolian, Veronika Walton, and Flo Alvergue

(Continued from page 1)

University poll, 68% of respondents believed that parents deserved heavy blame while 35% cited teacher responsibility. Columnist Robert Samuelson identifies "shrunk student motivation" as a cause of failure, commenting that "Students after all, have to do the work. If they aren't motivated, even capable teachers may fail."

President Obama devoted a significant portion of his 2011

State of the Union speech to education. He framed the issue thus: "Maintaining our leadership in research and technology is crucial to America's success. But if we want to win the future – if we want innovation to produce jobs in America and not overseas – then we also need to win the race to educate our children." He discussed the responsibilities of parents and teachers, promoted his Race to the Top initiative, and urged reworking of the No Child Left Behind law.

Please join us at April units as we discuss the state of education in the U.S. and proposals to improve it. These will be our first meetings as part of a study adopted in 2010 by the League of Women Voters of the United States on the federal role in pre-K to grade 12 public education. The local League committee, which prepared the Everymember material included with this ARGUS, is encouraging an open-ended, wide-ranging conversation about this topic and related issues. Come share your thoughts.

NEW MEMBERS

BETTY PARRISH



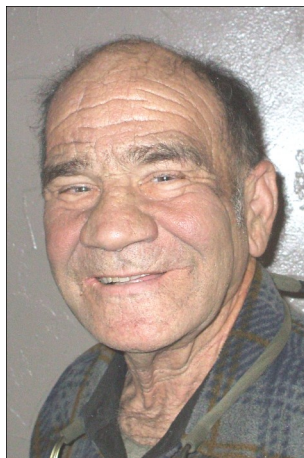
Welcome to new member Betty Parrish, who attends Unit One. She's a member of the group of women, like many of you, whose competence in the workplace increased respect, and opportunities, for woman working in jobs traditionally held by men.

She worked for ATT for most of her career, modestly attributing her rise on the ladder of corporate success to the Civil Rights legislation of the 1970s. With characteristic humor, she notes that she began her career as a mere peon at ATT. The new anti-discrimination laws put pressure on major companies to promote "black men and white women" and over the years of employment she moved into management positions. In spite of the apparent equality at ATT, she was always aware of the covert discrimination.

After retiring to Tucson, she wound up in Eugene, where she enjoys her home on Lorane Highway, particularly the resurgence of wild turkeys, who reward her for her move to the

Pacific Northwest with flamboyant strutting and courting..

CHARLIE HIRSCH



If we are the sum of our lives' experiences, new member Charlie Hirsch is a most interesting fellow! Fueled by nothing more than a couple of cups of coffee, he spoke thoughtfully of his early years as the son of a Bureau of Indian Affairs employee. Born on September 10, 1944, "the day the Yanks took Paris", he and his family lived on reservations in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nevada, Alaska, and again in South Dakota. He still remembers the stories the older women told, particularly about the practice of sending young men off to other villages to find and court a wife.

After college, he worked as a skilled civil servant for many years, supervising municipal electrical and plumbing service. He has lived in Eugene for more than 20 years, and has two daughters. He is also the doting grandfather of Hazel, almost one. Always socially active, he is

a member of the ACLU, the West University Housing Board, and Inter-faith Alliance. Welcome, Charlie!

Susan Miller-Wielesek

CHRISTY ALBIN



New member Christy Albin and her husband moved to Eugene in 2008. Susan Tavakolian and I met her last fall at a candidate forum in Springfield our League co-sponsored with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Christy's employer at the time. Since then she has begun her own technical equipment brokering business, helping people outfit their homes or businesses with cell phone, base phone, Internet, TV, security, and energy services that suit their particular needs. With a more flexible work schedule and three college-aged children, she feels that she finally has some time to pursue her own interests, especially learning more about her community and state while consorting with others who have the need to know. Having been a foreign exchange student in high school, she speaks German fluently and is obviously a life-long learner. The League will be a good fit for her.

Barbara French

A NEW WAY TO SELL BOOKS

Starting with our March Third Thursday event, we will be bringing a few books for you to peruse. If you find any that you would like to purchase, they will be offered at a very enticing price. Hardbound books will cost \$2.00 and paper backs will be only \$1.00. Don't forget to look for these on the table near where you pick up your nametags.

We received a very nice donation of books during the past month. One trip to Smith Family Book Store made the League \$70. The total for the month was \$133.50. This brings the grand total since July 1, 2010 to \$953.37. Our thanks to those of you who have donated your books.

Remember that the books can be left in the blue box at the office, or we will be happy to pick them up at your home if you have too many or cannot get to the office. Please give us a call.

Thank you,

Elleen and Louie Levy
541-343-7592



IN MEMORY

Our League lost another member last month. **Ralph Fischrup** died on February 28th.

He and his wife, Lyn, were married 55 years ago. They moved to Eugene from the Chicago area where they managed a KOA campground. Ralph enjoyed accompanying Lynn to our Third Thursday luncheons, as long as he was able.

After moving to Eugene, Ralph became a master potter. Now, his work can be found throughout Lane County.

A memorial service will be held for Ralph at 3 p.m. on March 27 at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene. Remembrances can be sent to the church.

PLEASE GIVE THIS TO A FRIEND

As a member of the League, you will receive the monthly newsletter from LW LC (Argus), which has information about our monthly and unit meetings, and the quarterly newsletter from the Oregon League (Voter).

Mail the form and check payable to LWVLC to:

LWVLC
 338 West 11th Ave, Suite 101
 Eugene, OR 97401

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS LANE COUNTY

Membership Form

- Individual \$60
- Household (Two people at the same address) \$90
- Student \$20
- Individual after February 1st \$30

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CALENDAR

APRIL

- 4, Action - 9:30 am
- 5, Briefing - 3 pm
- 11-15, Units
- 19, Membership committee - 10:30 am
- 20, Board meeting - 1:30 pm
- 21, Third Thursday - 11:45 am
- 23, Annual meeting - 9 am to noon
Garden Club, 1645 High Street, Eugene

MAY

- 7, Membership Spring Soiree from 5 to 7 pm
See page 3

Our Mission

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