

ARGUS

STATE CONVENTION 2011

BY SUE BOYD & SUSAN TAVAKOLIAN,
LWVLC CO-PRESIDENTS

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“Meeting Big Challenges: Economics and Demographics”

was the theme the League of Women Voters of Oregon chose for its biennial convention last month in Keizer. Declining membership and difficulties in fundraising are a problem for many local Leagues, including ours.

Convention workshops focused on the use of technology and social media to reach a larger

audience and engage a younger demographic. At the same time, there was recognition we must meet our current members' expectations. For example, the presentation of Vote411, an online Voter Service site, was accompanied by a reminder that LWVOR intends to continue to produce a printed Voters Guide. (If you want to see, go to

www.vote411.org/) The underlying message could be summed up in the words of an old song twice selected for a group sing-along: *“Make new friends but keep the old.*

One is silver; the other, gold.”

During the convention business sessions delegates voted to adopt a restudy of our 1995 position on

(Continued on page 2)

VALEDICTION BY PAT HOCKEN

This is my farewell column after four years as League president. My term expires in a few days, and Sue Boyd and Susan Tavakolian will be taking office as co-presidents. They will be very effective leaders for the League, and I look forward to working with them in my new role as Action co-chair with Kappy Eaton.

It has been a wonderful honor to be president. I have had the opportunity to meet and interact

with many members and to represent the League in the community. Serving as president has stretched me in ways I didn't believe possible. I am extremely grateful for the support and assistance of enthusiastic, hard working board members and off-board leaders without whose help I could not have carried out my duties. Thank you for allowing me to lead the League of Women Voters of Lane County.

I think we have had fun and accomplished much. However, our community, our state, and our planet still need the League's help. So I want to encourage you to keep working for what you believe with a quote that my sister in St. Louis has posted on her refrigerator. The remarks were spoken by Robert Kennedy in June 1966 in Capetown, South Africa. (My apologies for his use of only male

ANNE MEHL, UNIT CHAIR

There will be no units in June, July, August or September. Briefing and unit meetings will resume in October. If you have questions, telephone your unit coordinator listed in the 2011 directory or Anne Mehl. Have a wonderful summer. See you at the September membership gathering.

CONVENTION

(Continued from page 1)

Children at Risk. The original position refers only to teenage pregnancy and would need to be expanded to address other kinds of risk. The Coastal Management study will be continued with consensus meetings expected next spring. Also, the LWVOR board approved the water study consensus. To see the full position, turn to page 6.

Lane County member Becky Gladstone was elected LWVOR secretary. She succeeds Merle Bottge and assumed her duties early since Merle could not attend convention. Flo Alvergue will continue as events coordinator. One major event on her calendar will be the

LWVOR State Council meeting in Eugene next spring. Though a smaller gathering than a convention, putting on Council will require local volunteers. Veronika Walton will be taking over some duties maintaining the statewide League list.

Dr. William J. Bernstein, retired physician, financial theorist and historian, was the speaker for the Saturday night banquet. His topic was "The Coming Demographic Tidal Wave." He described the impact of income inequality and healthcare delivery systems on the economy. He believes the Medicare program is the largest threat to our country since the Civil War. Dr. Bernstein was introduced by his wife, outgoing

LWVOR Education Fund chair Jane Gigler.

Several Lane County members were honored during the Convention Honorees luncheon: Kappy Eaton, former LWVOR president and LWVOR governance chair; Janet Calvert, former LWVOR Education Fund chair; and though not attending, former local League presidents 1999-2001 Karen Rikhoff and Pat Russell (Curry County).

LWVLC delegates included Pat Hocken, Janet Calvert, Kappy Eaton, Babs French, Becky Gladstone, Sue Miller-Wielesek, Susan Tavakolian, Flo Alvergue and Sue Boyd.

VALEDICTION

(Continued from page 1)

pronouns. It was, after all, 45 years ago.)

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. And in the total of these acts will be written the history of this generation.

It is from numberless diverse acts

of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.

And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

Undoubtedly Robert Kennedy's words were directly aimed at the apartheid in force in South Africa, which we know was ultimately eliminated, but I find them very relevant to today's world. Let's continue to make ripples and maybe even a few waves.

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MEMBERSHIP - SUE MILLER-WIELESEK, CHAIR

The Spring Soiree was held at Tsunami Bookstore on May 7, with **Barbara Pope**, author of the historical mystery, Cezanne's Quarry, speaking about her new book, The Blood of Lorraine. Tsunami Bookstore is a wonderful venue, and we are most appreciative to Scott, the retiring, but most gracious, host. The food and wine, both excellent, were thanks to the members of the Membership Committee, Flo Alvergue, Pat Hocken, Rosie Janz, Fran Boehner, and Veronika Walton. And Ms. Pope is a most dynamic speaker; one of

the strong themes of her book is anti-Semitism.

The Spring Soiree gave us a chance to meet our newest member, **Miriam Aiken**. Welcome, Miriam! We hope to have pictures and biographies of our remaining new members in upcoming issues of the Argus.

The Membership Committee is actively soliciting additional members. The Membership Committee has the most variety in its tasks of any of the committees, and the committee itself is a cheerful,

funny group. Call Sue Miller Wielessek at 343-8432, or any of the committee members.



Barbara Pope

Miriam Aiken



VOTERS SERVICE

BARBARA FRENCH & SUSAN TAVAKOLIAN, CO-CHAIRS

ANOTHER ELECTION & MANY FORUMS GONE BY

Voter Service was quite active educating others before the last election. We teamed with Eugene City Club on two occasions, first for a 4J School Board Candidate forum and then for a Measure 20-183 debate concerning the pro's and con's of the local income tax for schools. Three of us also collected and presented our own information about the pro's and con's of Measure 20-183 and Measure 20-182 (the bond issue to make capital improvements to schools) to the retired folks at both YaPoAh and the Eugene Hotel. We very much appreciate Janet Calvert's help on the presentation and for helping us to coordinate with City Club.



Susan Tavakolian at Naturalization Ceremony Celebration

Now it's time for some gratitude. Thank you to Susan Tavakolian as she leaves her Voter Service chair and moves up to the Co-president's chair next to Sue Boyd. We are also happy that Flo Alvergue is joining us again as Voter Service Co-chair. Also, thank you committee members, all, for your loyalty and willingness to work with us.

We have so many dedicated people working on projects for the League because we all find it gratifying and fun to work with one another. Please call us if you would like to be notified as to when are committee meetings are or if you'd just like to work on a given project. The future will bring another election which will mean more presentations to prepare and give, naturalization ceremonies to attend, brochures to distribute, and voters to recruit.

Photos by
Flo Alvergue

ACTION BY KAPPY EATON

Local Issues:

City and County Redistricting.

Lane County and city governments will be realigning their respective boundaries for the County Commissioner districts and City Council wards. Read details in Pat Hocken's report on page 8.

West 11th EMX is apparently moving along with the route change to West 6th and 7th. The "No build" signs sprang up almost immediately. A number of League members from other communities asked us about the signs during the LWVOR state convention. Our league continues to monitor the process.

Local Schools. We used our School Facilities position to support the successful property tax levy for new roofs and improve and maintain several other buildings in the district.

State Issues

Fiscal Policy. The May 2011 revenue forecast on which the Oregon General Fund budget for the 2011-2013 biennium will be based, contained both good and bad projections. Personal income was up from the March forecast as was the Lottery Fund revenue. However, withholding revenues, for both personal and corporate, were down, and the imbalance in revenue to cover the rest of the current biennium has taken most of the Rainy Day Fund (RDF). It had been expected

there would be about \$300 million in the two reserve funds – RDF and Education Stability Fund (ESF). A chunk of \$64 million must come from the ESF to the feds because Oregon did not meet the maintenance of effort requirement required for the educational stimulus package in 2009.

There is now about \$150 million in reserves, and there will be little in an ending biennium balance, of which 1% goes into the RDF, so it will not increase much.

The Joint Ways and Means committee is wrestling with the increased needs of Oregonians and the grim reality of not enough revenue to meet those needs. Under the budget structure agreed upon this session by the leadership and the three co-chairs of the committee, the final budget is based on only the projected revenue for the next biennium. Agencies, which were asked to submit budgets cut by up to 25%, will receive less money, and state employees will be asked to take additional furlough days and no wage increases. The committee hopes to complete its work by June 6-7. Priorities have been given to education, children, seniors and disabled, and youth at risk.

The League, along with many business interests, educational groups, non-profits, unions and good government organizations, has been urging legislators to look at revenue sources

to ease the drastic cuts which are being considered in human services and public safety. The budget for K-12 public education has already been passed at \$5.7 billion. It does not meet the needs of the 197 school districts across the state, but no additional funding will be available. Besides the \$40 million or so to be had from letting tax credits (to sunset in 2012) die or be revised, these are some of the revenue options which we hope the decision-makers will consider:

1. reducing state middle management positions by increasing the staff to manager ration to 5.0 from 4.5 with corrections and state hospital employees exempted.
2. cut use of outside contractors.
3. crack down harder on tax evaders
4. repeal or lower the political tax credit
5. drop the tax deduction for second home mortgages
6. put a means test on the senior medical deduction
7. consider raising the tax on cigarettes by \$1 per pack (two bills) or \$1.82 per pack (one bill). Six states have thus far increased cigarette taxes, Washington's \$1 a pack one of them.

Redistricting. There are now three plans being considered by the House and Senate Redistricting committees.

Option 1 is the Democrat legislative plan;

(Continued on page 5)

**Next Action
committee
meeting:
9:30 am
June 13th**

(Continued from page 4)

Option 2 has the Republican legislative and Congressional plans;

Option 3 is the Democrat Congressional plan. The party district maps are quite different. The two committees have met jointly to hold 12 hearings across the state and three in the Capitol. With the House split 30-30 between the two political parties, and the Senate with but a two member Democrat majority, it is not a slam dunk that the Legislature will come up with either of the required legislative and Congressional plans, or if the Governor would sign the legislative one. In any case, it needs to be done by June 30 when the session is scheduled to end. You can goggle Oregon Legislature Redistricting to view the plans and some rationale.

Campaign Finance Reform.

Out of nowhere, the House Rules committee held a hearing on HB 2894 on May 19, a totally gutted and stuffed bill originally on contribution limits which had not moved forward. Instead, it now is a disclosure proposal for more transparency

in campaign advertising done by persons or groups outside the normal campaign committee or candidate. These are primarily media ads (newspapers, postcards, TV, mailers, etc). Under the amended bill, names of the ad payers must be shown, or if a group, the top three contributors. While the League opposed the original version, we joined with Common Cause Oregon, the Independent Party, Fair Elections Oregon, and two representatives in support. With some minor changes indicated by testimony, it appears the proposal will move forward. This is another example of the many behind-the-scenes decisions being made this session.

Kicker Reform and Rainy

Day Fund. The four bills comprising the funding of the Rainy Day Fund (RDF), amending the kicker to split 50-50 with the RDF and personal income tax payers, establish a Universities Stability Fund funded by the corporate kicker, and cut capital gains taxes passed out of the Senate Finance and Revenue committee to the Senate floor with a unanimous vote. However, the Senate president

intervened and sent them to Senate Rules. It is uncertain whether they will die there, be amended some more, or move on. The measures represent some excellent and careful bipartisan work over the last five months.

Other bills of League interest.

The bottle bill (HB 3145) has passed the House and is heading for a Senate hearing. It covers an extensive list of bottles, raises the deposit to 10 cents, and establishes regional deposit centers;

The grocery check-out plastic bag (SB 536) still sits in Senate Rules and may not make it;

The toxic plastic sippy cups and baby bottles (SB 695) may be on their way out, having passed the House;

The Oregon Health Authority will develop programs to recruit medical school students, primary care residents and primary care physicians under HB 2366A which passed the House;

A maternal mental health patient and provider education program within the Oregon Health Authority is created in HB 2235A and has passed the House.

Solution to partisan wrangling?

"Having two bathrooms ruined the capacity to cooperate." Margaret Mead

Quote submitted by Eleanor Mulder

NEW WATER POSITION ADOPTED

PAT HOCKEN

The board of the League of Women Voters of Oregon has adopted a new position, entitled "Water Policy - Quality and Quantity," which updates and replaces two existing positions. The new position appears below. This is a culmination of process in which volunteers logged thousands of hours over several years to do a comprehensive study, publish two outstanding reports, and seek member consensus.

It is especially gratifying for our league since we recommended the update and lobbied for its adoption at the 2007 LWVOR convention. Thanks especially to Phyllis Loobey who taught us that water is the new gold and chaired our initial local study committee on the subject, to Veronika Walton and Kathleen Shelley who chaired later local committees, to Dorothy Soper who helped convince the 2007 convention delegates the update was needed, and to Janet Calvert who as LWVOREF chair and LWVOR water committee member made a significant effort by doing research and by raising money for report publication. Local member Pat Russell also served on the LWVOR committee and a local committee. Pat Bitner, Pat Hocken, Emily Schue and Ray Wolfe also worked on a local study committee.

Water Policy – Quality and Quantity

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that water is a resource that should be managed for the benefit of the public and as sustainable habitat for all life forms. We support Oregon state policies and statutes, which promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and management of ground and surface water and the improvement of water quality. Regulating agencies that govern the protection and conservation of water should be transparent and provide the public easy access to information.

The League supports management approaches that maximizes interagency communication to include:

1. Uniform definitions of "beneficial uses" and other terminology for both quality and quantity management,
2. Coordination of activities including water allocation, measurement, monitoring/testing, enforcement of water law and the promotion of water conservation,
3. Well defined statutory enforcement procedures and the funding to protect water resources held in common, and
4. Recognition of the variability of local/basin/watershed quality and quantity needs.

The League recognizes the application of historic prior appropriations of water but supports modifications in order to accomplish the following:

1. Consider both in-stream and out-of-stream beneficial uses of water,
2. Facilitate changes from one beneficial use of water to another,
3. Provide incentives for water user conservation,
4. Incorporate evolving scientific understanding of natural water systems in water management,
5. Develop priority uses for water in times of shortage, and
6. Expand protection of in-stream beneficial uses such as minimum perennial stream flow.

The League believes that the interdependence of land use planning and water planning must be recognized and required at all levels of government:

1. Local comprehensive plans, watershed plans, basin plans, state and regional plans should be coordinated and complementary.
2. Roles and responsibilities of all decision makers and agencies affecting water resource and quality issues should be clearly defined.

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The League believes that all planning for ground and surface water should include consideration for both the quality of the water and the availability of water to meet the beneficial uses. Planning at all levels should consider existing water rights and current and projected uses. The League acknowledges that this may be best accomplished at the watershed/ basin level if adequate funding and professional staffing are available. Basin/ watershed water management should be efficient and economical, responsive to public need, flexible to allow for changes over time, and lead to conservation and allocation of the resource in the public interest. Transfers of water between basins should require coordination with planning and water use in both basins.

The League recognizes that effective planning for water protection and use would be most effective with a complete inventory of the water resource including all domestic wells and encourages moving toward this goal. Priority efforts should be directed to geographic areas with identified problems and vulnerabilities.

The League opposes degradation of all of Oregon's surface and ground water. The League supports policies and legislation that integrate water quality into resource management and include but are not limited to standards for:

1. Potable water and drinking water treatment facilities,
2. Placement and inspection of septic tanks and alternative individual treatment systems,
3. In-stream surface water quality for recreational use, including primary contact sports, commercial and sport fishing, and habitat protection,
4. Ground water quality for recognized beneficial uses,
5. Agricultural, municipal, forestry and industrial wastewater discharge and runoff,
6. Uniform water quality testing protocols - updated as scientific methodologies improve,
7. Permitting and enforcement procedures with agency funding adequate to ensure timely compliance,
8. Adequate, well maintained sewers and sewage treatment facilities and
9. Control and treatment of runoff from non-pervious surfaces.

The League recognizes that conservation strategies for surface and ground water including but not limited to incentives, regulations and rationing in emergency situations, are needed to meet future demand. Individuals, agriculture, municipalities, forestry and industry should be encouraged to develop practices to reduce water usage and minimize pollution. Support should be provided for upgrading and maintaining the equipment necessary for water conservation. The League supports the need to build resiliency and innovation into water planning in order to address climate change impacts.

Public involvement should be encouraged throughout the water management and planning processes. The processes should be transparent and include education components.

The League acknowledges that all water users must share in the cost of water management. Rate payers should have primary responsibility for infrastructure maintenance, delivery and conservation. The state should have primary responsibility for planning, research data collection and public outreach. Permit fees should be a significant contributor to the development of infrastructure.

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAR JANICE THOMPSON

Janice Thompson, Executive Director of Common Cause Oregon, will be in Eugene June 3 for two presentations. She will speak at the Eugene City Club on the national and state significance of the U.S. Supreme Court Citizens United decision that opened the door for independent political spending from corporate treasuries. The meeting at the Vistas Ballroom on the

12th floor of the Eugene Hilton will begin at 11:50 a.m.

Later that day, Janice will join Kappy Eaton in presenting a legislative update from the perspective of Common Cause Oregon and the League of Women Voters of Oregon. Particularly important topics include National Popular Vote and redistricting. This meeting will be held at 2:00 p.m. at the LWVLC office at 338 West 11th office in Eugene.

Janice is a member of the League of Women Voters of Portland, has worked on LWVOR studies, and has collaborated with LWVOR on legislative advocacy. She spoke several years ago at the Civics 101 meeting of the League of Women Voters of Lane County on campaign finance reform.

Pat Hocken

LWVLC BOARD PRIORITIZES CRITERIA FOR REDISTRICTING CITIES AND COUNTY

The League Board has determined which criteria it will support in redistricting of city wards and county commissioner seats. The criteria in priority order are **1)** Each ward or district should have about the same number of people within a range of +/-3%, i.e. plus or minus 3%. **2)** The population of the wards or districts should be based on the number of people counted in the 2010 census without considering where population might grow during the next 10 years. **3)** Boundaries should be drawn without consideration of the residences of current elected officials. **4)** Each ward or district should be contiguous and as compact as possible. **5)** Communities of interest should be considered, i.e. boundaries should be drawn to keep groups with potentially similar interests together. **6)** The existing ward boundaries should be used as a starting point. **7)** Features such as rivers, railroad tracks, and major roads and bridges should be used as dividing lines between wards/districts. The City of Eugene has already begun its redistricting process. The League Board has met with City staff and will be testifying before the Council in June. League members as individuals have the opportunity to complete a City survey on the criteria and are encouraged to do so. Details of the survey and timelines are found in excerpts of a press release that are reproduced below.

"In 2011, the Eugene City Council will redraw (redistrict) the existing eight city ward boundaries that are used to elect local City Councilors and Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) members. Every 10 years, in response to the results of the U.S. Census, the City Council adjusts these boundaries to accommodate population changes and shifts.

The purpose of ward redistricting is to make sure each ward has about the same number of people. This helps ensure community members are represented equally on the City Council and by EWEB. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census data, Eugene's population totaled 156,222 which means that each of the eight wards should have approximately 19,528 residents...

The first step in ward redistricting is to establish the criteria that will guide how the wards should be created. Once the criteria are established, the actual redrawing of boundaries can begin. A number of boundary options that include up-to-date population figures and incorporate public feedback will be presented to the council for consideration.

The open public process will include numerous opportunities for community members to learn more, provide input and participate. Information will be posted on the website

www.eugene-or.gov/redistricting <http://www.eugene-or.gov/redistricting> where people can also sign up to receive email updates.

During May and June of 2011, suggestions and feedback on redistricting criteria will be collected through a survey at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/wardcriteria>. (Hard copy and alternate formats are available by contacting City staff at 541-682-6021.) The survey asks for input on topics like the allowable range of difference in populations among wards; how to address the location of current members of the City Council and EWEB as new boundaries are considered; and what role factors like geographical features and population demographics should play.

The City Council is scheduled to hold a work session on boundary criteria on June 27, 2011. Later this year, public feedback on where ward boundaries should be drawn will be collected....

The current timeline aims to establish redistricting criteria by the end of June 2011. Once the criteria are established, a number of boundary options will be created based on available data and public input. It is anticipated that several options will be presented to the City Council in the fall of 2011...."

Pat Hocken

TIME FOR READING

Now that summer is here, a lot of us will have more time for reading. As you make room for all those new books, remember that the League can use the books you have finished reading. We will be continuing our used book fund raiser during the summer months. Remember that books can be left in the blue box at the office, or we will be

happy to pick them up at your home. Just give us a call.

During the past month we have received some very good donations. EBay sales and our weekly trips to Smith Family Book Store have been profitable. The total amount raised has amounted to \$257.15. This brings the total since July 1, 2010 to

\$1,364.52. Some of the interesting places that your used books have gone this month have been to Great Britain, Canada and Germany. Thank you to those of you who have helped us bring in this money for the League. Enjoy your summer reading!

Elleen and Louie Levy
541-343-7592



A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH—THE LEAGUE YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS, JANET CALVERT, FINANCE

The programs and activities we sponsor and the testimony we give has greater impact when our membership numbers are significant and our members well informed.

The enclosed colorful Membership Form (and stamped return envelope) offers important information about League dues, an essential step in supporting the League. You may no-

tice that the dues for the League of Women Voters of Lane County have increased for the first time since 1998.

Other important information:

- Dues are due July 1 and must be paid by September 15.
- Our League retains only 8% of dues with State and National League receiving 92%. (Read the state action report to know those \$\$ are wisely spent)

• Special dues rates are available for new members or financial hardship situations.

• "Rounding Up" opportunities. Writing a check for \$65, \$70 or more helps support League.

Thank you for your contributions of time, amazing talent and continued financial support and for being a League member.

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
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|---|---------|
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDAR

JUNE

NO UNITS THIS MONTH

13, 9:30 Action Committee

14, 10:30 Membership Committee

15, 1:30 Board meeting

SUMMER OFFICE SCHEDULE

The League office will be closed Monday, May 30, for Memorial Day.
Between Memorial Day and Labor Day in September, the League office will be open on
Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am to 1:30pm,
except on Monday, July 4, when it will be closed for Independence Day.

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.