

ARGUS

SAVE THE DATE

BY **SUE BOYD & SUSAN TAVAKOLIAN,**
LWVLC CO-PRESIDENTS

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Our fall luncheon, the start of the League's new year, will be **Wednesday, September 28**. Bob Baugh, executive director of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council will be our speaker. He has also served as secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO and deputy director of the Oregon Economic Development Department. He earned a master's degree in industrial and labor relations from the University of Oregon.

We will have more information, including the place, in next month's Argus. Unfortunately, Mallard Hall, our longtime choice for Third Thursdays and other events, has been sold, and we are actively searching for a new venue.

The luncheon is a great time not only to see old friends but also to invite potential new members to see what the League has to offer. The board is developing a calendar for the new year. Units in **October and November** will be based the Federal Role in Education study prepared by LWVUS. An update on Oregon Coastal Management is scheduled for the spring.

In February, we will be marking a

very special anniversary, the centennial of woman suffrage in Oregon. **Oregon granted women the right to vote in 1912**, eight years before the passage of Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. Also in February we will have the popular **Day at the Legislature** at the beginning of the mini-session.

We are debuting a new fundraising activity this fall, the sale of fruit boxes. The board voted in June to commit to the program for three years to see if we can make it as successful for us as it has been for other Oregon leagues. Finance chair **Janet Calvert and her committee, dubbed the Fruit Loops**, have begun organizing. If you are interested in joining them, please contact Janet at 541-686-2697.

There is a lot going on this summer as well.

August 5 The Voter Service committee will once again assist in welcoming around 25 new citizens at the naturalization ceremony at the federal courthouse. Incidentally we are the only League in Oregon that

does this.

We have also signed up for a booth on the Community Causeway during the **Eugene Celebration August 27 - 28**. If you would like to help staff it, contact Fran Boehner at 541-942-8204. She needs volunteers for two hour stints both days.

Earlier, as you may have seen in newspaper and television coverage, Susan, Sue, and former president Pat Hocken participated in the **Eugene City Council's first Pledge of Allegiance event**, reading the Declaration of Independence. In her thank you note, Mayor Kitty Piercy, said that they **"could think of no organization more appropriate than the LWV."**

Much of our action focus has been on the redistricting efforts of Lane County, Eugene and Springfield. A complete rundown of our activity begins on Page 5, including the column on our criteria for redistricting which ran in **The Register-Guard July 19**. All in all, a productive season, with a lot to look forward to!



Bob Baugh - luncheon speaker on 9.28.11

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.

FEDERAL ROLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION BY PAT HOCKEN

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) is engaged in a study of the Federal Role in Public Education with the goal of adopting a new position on this critical issue. The LWVUS study is focusing on common core standards and related assessments, funding and equity, early childhood education, and the overall role of the federal government.

Our local League began our participation in this study with unit discussions in April. We will continue by devoting both October and November units to discussing and answering the 15 consensus questions and submitting the LWVLC response by November 30. We plan to consider about half of the questions each month so there will be sufficient time to hear everyone's views and to identify commonly-held positions.

The LWVUS has already prepared and sent to local Leagues five position papers, abridged versions of the position papers for general distribution, and a discussion leaders' guide. So we have all the necessary materials. However, we do need a local committee to guide our local efforts. Tasks would include reading the position papers (a total of about 60 pages of text), helping to plan units and briefing, serving as a resource person at a unit, and helping to compile the unit responses. No original research or writing is required. If you are interested in learning more about the subject and want to volunteer, please call me at 541-343-1138 or e-mail at jphocken@comcast.net.



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ACTION

BY KAPPY EATON & PAT HOCKEN - ACTION CO-CHAIRS

STATE OF THE STATE

There was doom and gloom following the November 2010 election caused by the 30-30 split between the Democrats and Republicans in the Oregon House of Representatives, along with a narrow margin of 16 to 14 for the Ds in the Senate. Predictions of a do-nothing legislative session, bitterness, no compromises, and the dire consequences of a \$3.5 billion dollar revenue shortfall for the 2011-13 biennia were rampant. There was a strong belief that the mandated redistricting of legislative and Congressional seats would yet again fall to the Secretary of State (1981, 1991, 2001), and both parties wanted it done by the Legislature. And then the Miracle on Court Street (Capitol location) occurred.

- The 76th Session of the Oregon Legislature convened on the second Monday of January as required by the Constitution, organized by electing co-Speakers of the House, the incumbent Senate President, naming the parties majority and minority leaders, agreeing that all House committees would have co-chairs and evenly divided, and set an adjournment date of June 30. Sine Die was June 30 – ON TIME.

- Committee hearings started February 1 and followed a strict time line for discussing and moving or not moving bills. In the House, both co-chairs had to agree to a bill before it could be voted out. In the Senate, most committees had a D chair and an R vice chair. Fewer bills were agreed upon in the House commit-

tees, but hearings were held on a great many. Only one committee had visible partisan difficulties. Usually most committees continue during the interim period, but several leadership positions and committees have been changed for the current interim indicating internal management decisions.

- The 2011 Redistricting process provided 12 public hearings, technically drawn maps based on the current legislative lines, joint meetings of the House and Senate committees and on-line updates. For the first time in 40 years, the Legislature produced a plan which was passed and signed by the Governor. Oregon is among the first states to complete that project. Members were unable to agree on the new boundaries for five Congressional Districts which will now fall to the Supreme Court.

- During the interim between the 2009 and 2011 legislative sessions, an agreement was reached to restructure the way in which the two year state budget is developed. Under the new plan, agreed upon by legislative leadership and the Governor, the amount of projected revenue, along with reserves and other available resources, started the process. The agencies presented their budgets, along with the Judicial and Executive branches, and the budget was drawn to fit within the revenue projected at the February 2011 Economic Forecast. This is in contrast to prior budgets which were often put together with the idea of preserving a current services

level and its inflation cost increases by assuming revenue rises.

- The Joint Ways and Means Committee, which was charged with drafting the state's budget for 2011-2013, began its five months task with the \$3.5 billion shortfall in revenue. There would no ability to continue the same level of funding for education, human services, public safety and transportation even with the cuts made during 2009-11. The recession has continued to erode revenue for the General Fund and Lottery, depleting the fragile Rainy Day and Educational Stability Funds so dollars were also needed to rebalance state agency budgets for the six months which remained in that biennial budget. Under the new fiscal structure, all agencies and departments presented budgets reflecting up to 15% cuts; all tax credits due to sunset (expire) in 2012 were reviewed for continuation, revision or ending; state employee contracts were considered (these are agreed on separately); various other costs savings were implemented. Across the board educational programs, services to children, elderly the disabled, corrections and highways were cut, revised, eliminated. In the end, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, a balanced budget (as required by the Constitution). Efforts were made to protect schools and the vulnerable as much as possible, with the caveat that if additional revenue is available for the 2012 February session, both education and social services would receive

funds. The next Revenue Forecast will be made on August 26.

●The biggest disappointment was the failure of the Assembly to reach consensus on stable, long-term funding for the reserve funds and some type of revision of the Kicker law. Considerable effort went into a Senate proposal which linked the reserves, the kicker and higher education. It appeared there were enough Senate votes, but that the House would defeat it.

Following is a brief summary of some of the enacted legislation followed by the League and passed.

Initiative Reform

An office has been established in the Secretary of State's Department to oversee the Citizen Initiative Review. The Commission will administer the process, but the costs for the 24 member panels will be covered by private funds placed in a special state account. The number of initiative petitions which would be reviewed depends on the amount of money raised.

Chief petitioners of filed initiatives will now be held responsible if fraud is proved in either the collection of signatures or in the payment of petition passers. Payroll records will be closely monitored.

Campaign spending and contributions of more than \$5000 must be reported more quickly during the two weeks prior to elections.

Ethics Reform

An attempt to increase the

amount of money lobbyists can spend on legislators died in committee.

The Ethics Commission will decrease significantly the number of public officials required to file an annual statement of economic interest (SEI).

Election Laws

Long-time absentee voters living overseas and members of the military will now be able to vote electronically. Faxing is available, but not often possible for troops.

In order for the emailed ballot to be valid, voters must submit a written declaration accepting non-privacy of the ballot and a signature which can be verified by the State or county elections offices which already have secure lines.

Clarification for the process of fusion voting was enacted.

Recount votes are assured for all elections, including non-partisan, which qualify.

Fiscal Policy

Access to information on energy tax credits will be available on line giving the public the identity of the company, the purpose of the credit, the amount of money allocated and the progress of the project.

Higher Education

A Higher Education Coordinating Commission has been created for the Oregon public four year and community college institutions. The University system will have more independence and authority over its affairs as well as eminent domain.

Health Care

The Oregon Health Authority is now implemented and responsible for the development of Oregon's health system. Oregon has enacted one of the country's first insurance exchange programs.

Natural Resources Policy

A comprehensive review of Oregon's water resources and their management is under way.

The bottle bill has been expanded to include most beverages and for the development of regional collection centers.

The first annual session of the Legislature will be held February 1 to March 6, 2012. The same system of interim preparation which worked well for the 2011 session will be in place. Interim committees will meet in September and November to discuss issues and draft legislation. The LWVOR Action team will be attending committee hearings and commenting as appropriate. We expect the February short session (limited to 35 days) to concentrate on fiscal matters and only on urgent policy matters. However, it is also possible that some of the important issues not addressed such as the reserve funds will be on the table. There will be a League Legislative Day on February 7 to update members about the session and possibly to get more involved with actual lobbying.

Kappy Eaton

Local Action next page...

Next Action committee meeting: 9:30 am September 7th In Kappy Eaton's new residence 175 S. Garden Way, #220 Eugene

ACTION IN LANE COUNTY

The League is following several local issues in anticipation of testifying over the next several months. If you wish to learn more about an issue, please come to the next League Action committee meeting or attend a public event held by a local government as described below. Also, feel free to contact me with questions or suggestions.

Local Government Redistricting

This is the year that state and local governments need to redraw the geographic boundaries for their elective districts to accommodate the new population counts in the 2010 census. The League is very interested in this process because of its effect on the rights of voters.

As reported previously in the June ARGUS, the League board adopted seven criteria it believes should guide the redistricting process for county commissioner districts, city council wards, and other elective positions.

On July 19, our League's article on the redistricting process and the League's preferred criteria was published in The Register-Guard on the Op Ed page and is reprinted on page 6.

I am pleased to report that at its June 27 work session, the City of Eugene adopted several of the League's criteria, (including items #1, #2, and #4) to guide the creation of various mapping scenarios, which will be presented to the council on July 27. There will be

opportunities for public review and input before the new ward boundaries are adopted in the fall.

The League is also tracking the work of the **Redistricting Task Force** appointed by the Lane County Board of Commissioners to make a recommendation to them for revised commissioner district boundaries, and we will testify before the committee and the Board of Commissioners as appropriate. The first meeting of the task force is scheduled for July 28.

The **City of Springfield** has contracted with the Lane Council of Governments to provide census data and to prepare ward redistricting scenarios for Council consideration and tentative approval in the fall. At an October 10 work session the Council will review three scenarios for ward boundaries: projected growth, limited change, and a combination of the approaches. Although all Springfield Councilors must live in the wards they represent, they are elected at-large. Thus, the ward boundaries primarily impact candidates' residency.

Envision Eugene is the process the City is using to create a vision for accommodating future growth and to design the steps to implement the vision. The League testified before the Eugene City Council in April in support of the seven pillars in the draft conceptual framework.

A significant unresolved issue is the potential need to expand the City's urban growth boundary with additional acres for industrial

development and single-family residences. Upcoming open houses on this topic are scheduled for August 3 on Jobs Land Need and on September 7 on Housing and Jobs. Both open houses will be held at the Atrium Building in downtown Eugene from 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.

West Eugene EmX Lane Transit District is in the process of preparing a report on the environmental impacts of the 6th/7th route alignment of the EmX route extension to West Eugene. It plans to issue the report and hold a public hearing by late fall.

Lane County Public Safety The absence of an adequate, comprehensive public safety system in Lane County continues to be of concern. The lack of continuous coverage by sheriff's deputies and of a sufficient number of jail beds are visible symptoms of the wider problem. It does not appear that there are currently proposals under consideration to address this important community need.

Pat Hocken

GUEST VIEWPOINT: Simple principles should guide city, county redistricting

By Kappy Eaton

Published: (Tuesday, Jul 19, 2011 The Register Guard)

For the first time in 40 years, members of the Oregon Legislature were able to agree on a redistricting plan for the state's House and Senate seats.

Now it is the turn of our local governments to do the same for their voters.

The required revision of the specific areas to be represented by lawmakers is one of the most critical processes for representative democracy. Called redistricting or reapportionment, it takes place every 10 years following the federal census of the country's population.

In some places, the process has become extremely political as the major political parties seek to protect "safe" seats for their members and even expand their influence. Locally, Lane County must redraw its five county commissioner districts to reflect population shifts since 2000 so that each person's vote has the same weight as that of every other voter in the district — the so-called one person, one vote test which all redistricting plans must meet.

The county has established a Redistricting Task Force, which hopes to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners this fall.

Its schedule calls for meetings

this summer and hearings in October and November, with adoption by Nov. 12, the latest date final commissioner district boundaries can be adopted for use in the May 15, 2012, primary election.

In Eugene, there are eight city council wards to revise. The City Council has held one work session and issued a list of criteria to be considered. At its July 25 meeting, the staff will present the various redistricting scenarios to the council, which hopes to agree on new ward boundaries in September or October.

Springfield is in a somewhat different position from Eugene and the county, because its council members are required to live in specific wards but are elected at large. Thus boundaries primarily affect candidates' residency. The council's schedule calls for new boundaries to be in place by the end of the year.

Dividing up a jurisdiction's population is not a simple task. There is no strict legal standard that specifies how much deviation between districts from an ideal number is appropriate. Eugene has chosen plus or minus 3 percent, Springfield is considering 5 percent and Lane County 2 percent. Currently, variations among local districts range from almost 20 percent over the ideal figure

(Springfield Ward 4) to almost 10 percent below the target (Eugene Ward 1).

It is worth noting that in its successful effort to adopt a redistricting plan, the Legislature used current boundaries for House and Senate districts as a starting point. It was then possible to shift the lines where the population growth occurred and make changes where it had dropped.

For example, the relative loss of population in coastal counties abutting us will push those districts further into Lane County to pick up more people. Population shifts also will affect the boundaries of the state's congressional districts, including our own 4th District.

Lane County's other cities and districts also must redistrict, and the county clerk has until Jan. 31, 2012, to complete precinct boundary changes.

The members of the League of Women Voters of Lane County have studied the redistricting process and recommend to the public, the cities and the county the following criteria to ensure that the revisions are equitable, fair and adhere to representative principles:

1) Each ward and district should have the same number of people within a range of plus or minus 3 percent.

2) The populations of the wards and 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 and district should be contiguous and as compact as possible.

5) Current boundaries should be used as a starting point, keeping communities of interest together. Using natural features such as rivers and roads as dividing lines also is an important criterion.

A statistics-driven process that deals in terminology like deviation from the mean might not sound particularly interesting. Yet redistricting is fundamental to representative government because it determines whom we can vote for and whether our votes will count as much as those of any other voter. The League urges all voters to become informed about the process in their communities.

Kappy Eaton is co-chairwoman of the League of Women Voters of Lane County's Action Committee. This essay was also written by Susan Tavakolian and Sue Boyd, co-presidents of the league.

SUMMER DONATIONS

Our wonderful members of the Lane County League of Women Voters have been keeping us busy! Thank you to everyone who has donated used books to our fund raiser. Maybe our cool summer and the long days have given us all the incentive to clean our houses and sort through our supplies of books. Since the new fiscal year started on July 1, the total raised from book sales is a whopping \$470.50. That is a good start to our new

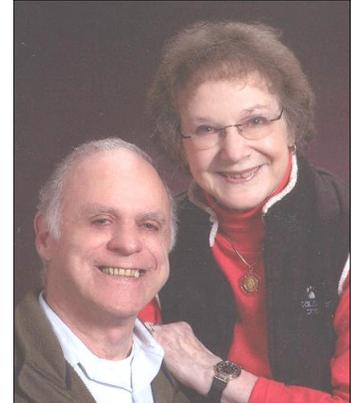
year. The books donated lately have been of good quality. This helps them to sell more easily. We can use any of your books, though, as long as they are not damaged. Paperbacks also sell well. If you are changing your residence this summer and need to downsize, we will be happy to bring boxes to your house to help in moving out your books. Or, even if you only have a few books that you

are unable to bring to the office, we will be happy to come get them. Books brought to the office should be left in the blue box.

The total brought in from book sales in year 2010-2011 was \$1,364.52.

Thank you,

Elleen and Louie Levy
541-343-7592



Energy Assistance for You or Someone You Know

If you are 60+, starting October 3rd, you can apply for EWEB Customer Care which provides \$200 to cover water and electric charges. Beginning November 1st. The Low income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will provide \$250-\$550 to cover electric, natural gas, oil, pellet, propane and wood charges. For information or to determine your eligibility contact the City of Eugene's Energy Line at 541-682-5354

PLEASE GIVE THIS TO A FRIEND

As a member of the League, you will receive the monthly newsletter from LWVLC (*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
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Membership Form

- Individual \$63
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CALENDAR

AUGUST

NO UNITS THIS MONTH

- 5, Naturalization Ceremony
- 17, 1:30 pm - Board meeting
- 19, Argus deadline
- 27-29, Eugene Celebration, see page 1

SEPTEMBER

- 7, 9:30 am - Action Committee , see page 4
- 21, 1:30 Board meeting
- 23, Argus Deadline
- 28, 11:30 am Fall Membership Luncheon

SUMMER OFFICE SCHEDULE

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day in September, the League office will be open on Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am to 1:30pm

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.