MARCH MEETING

WATER: PROTECTING ASHLAND'S RESOURCE

SPEAKERS:

Paula Brown, former Public Works Director (now consultant), City of Ashland

Bill Meyers, Water Coordinator, Rogue Basin Region, Oregon Department Of Environmental Quality

WHEN:

Thursday, March 20th,
Noon to 1:30 p.m.

WHERE:

Ashland Public Library
(Gresham Room, downstairs)

At this month's meeting, panelists Paula Brown and Bill Meyers will speak to us about Ashland's water supply – its origins, distribution, treatment and regulations – so that we as informed citizens can understand how to help protect it. As Ashland and the surrounding region continue to grow, so do demands on our water resources. Given a finite supply, it is important to know the trends, threats, policies and protections that affect our water so that we can ensure it is properly conserved and sustained.

The program will start promptly at noon, but if you like, come at 11:30, bring a sack lunch and share in the conversation. For further information, contact Susan Rust (482-3259) or Kate Culbertson (488-8693)
PRESIDENTS’ MESSAGE

It was one of the largest gatherings we have ever seen at an LWVA meeting. At least 100 people squeezed into the Gresham Room at the library on Thursday, February 21st, to hear the League’s panel discussion on the homeless in Ashland. The timing of the event had much to do with the outpouring of interest, sparked by a recent Tidings article on the homeless and a story about an accidental death apparently of a homeless man who started a fire to warm himself where he was camping alone above Ashland. Record-breaking cold nights in January and February also may have heightened the community’s concern. As Regina Ayar’s article on page 3 of this newsletter indicates, the discussion at the meeting only began to touch on the issue, and LWVA plans to follow up to see how possible solutions may turn into action.

The March meeting deals with an issue that affects all of Ashland and the surrounding area: Our water -- Is it pure and will we have enough of it as our population grows? Two knowledgeable speakers will be on hand to address this question – Paula Brown, who was with the Ashland Public Works Department for many years, and Bill Meyers, DEQ Water Coordinator. Their presentation will be an excellent introduction to the water study that LWVA has been working on for the past nine months.

On Saturday, March 8th, we will celebrate International Women’s Day with the SOU Women’s Resource Center. We’re counting on many of you to march with us in the parade. We will gather at 11:00 a.m. at Triangle Park, Liberty Street corner Siskiyou Blvd., and will begin to march at 11:30, arriving at Stevenson Union in SOU in time for the festivities to begin at noon. Our League will set up a table there with LWVA materials and voter registration forms and would love to have you join us to talk to guests about the League and registering voters. Plan to spend the afternoon to enjoy the good food and entertainment. We’ll see you there.

Judith & Vanya

SUMMARY OF THE BOARD MINUTES OF 2/7/08

Treasurer’s Report: No change from last month.

Membership Report: 71 members, including 8 national members. All, except three members, are current with dues.

February Meeting: Homeless in Ashland. Benjamin will deliver invitation to the City Council; sandwiches and dessert will be provided to the panel. Board will bring treats.

March Meeting: Water: Preserving Ashland’s Resource. Paula Brown and Bill Meyers will be panelists. Rust and Culbertson will coordinate the event.

April Meeting: Planned Parenthood of Southern Oregon will be invited to speak.

Fundraising: A fundraising letter will be sent out by April 1 (Sloan/Ayars).

Annual Meeting: Sundeen will send a letter to Peg Crowley inviting her to speak on the Community Health Centers. Speaker to follow our business meeting.

LWVOR Council: May 17-18, Corvallis. Delegates will be Benjamin and Ayars. Advocate article will encourage members to attend as observers.

LWVUS Convention: June 13-17, Portland Hilton. Benjamin will be the delegate. We’ll invite members to attend as volunteers and observers via the Advocate.

Unite for Peace: Feb. 29 - March 1 at SOU. We’ll have a table at the event.

International Women’s Day: March 8, SOU Resource Center to organize a parade and event. We will be in the parade carrying our banner. All members are invited to join us.

Welcome Home Project: May 22-26. Veterans and their families will be invited to do a retreat at Buckhorn Springs. OSF will host the closing celebration. We will co-sponsor.

John Fregonese Land-Use Talk: Fregonese has offered to give a free talk in Ashland. As Hal Cloer suggested, we will contact Pat Acklin, an SOU land-use professor regarding our possible co-sponsorship of Fregonese.

Nominating Committee: Board members Jones and Wallace will join the nominating committee. April 15 set as target date for having all nominees confirmed.
MEETING ON HOMELESS ATTRACTS WIDE AUDIENCE, by Regina Ayars

LWVA hosted a meeting on Homeless in Ashland at our Public Library on February 21st. An overflow crowd came to hear a panel discuss the issue. In addition to League members, the audience included city officials, commissioners, homeless people and other interested community members. Panelists, each with a unique perspective, included Arnie Green, former Director of Community Works; Terry Holderness, Ashland Police Chief; Graham Lewis, member of the City’s Housing Commission; Daniel Rueff, homeless activist; and Sharon Schreiber, ICC director.

Barbara Jarvis moderated the event and started by asking the panelists to address two broad questions: (1) What should Ashland do about the homeless, whether youth, adults or families and (2) What role should churches, community organizations, city officials and agencies play in addressing homelessness. Their responses to these and other pointed questions from the audience brought up a wide range of issues and possible solutions.

Holderness said that the demographics of the homeless in Ashland are unique because more here choose the homeless lifestyle, and we have more youth and seasonal transients who move up and down the I-5 corridor. Schreiber felt that the community needs to be more realistic about what service agencies can provide, since they now have fewer resources and must prioritize how services are allocated. There is no transitional housing in Ashland, and the people who do not choose to be homeless -- families, youth, the mentally impaired need to be identified, given priority, and be willing to accept services available outside of Ashland.

Green felt it is unlikely that Ashland will have a youth shelter, as some have suggested, because of the prohibitive costs. A shelter to house 14 youth would cost $650,000 a year because of the need for male and female staff 24/7. He urged the community to lobby for a countywide shelter for homeless teenagers and young adults.

Rueff has lived in Ashland for 17 years and is homeless by choice. He felt that the most important thing for him and others like him who chose to be homeless is a safe place to sleep without being chased by police. He has asked the city to allow a homeless encampment on city-owned property above the reservoir. A city ordinance, however, does not allow camping in city limits, and a homeless person doing so will be chased away by police and fined $250. The Police Chief stated that homelessness is not a crime, but that his agency is responsible for enforcing the laws.

Despite different viewpoints, all agreed that homelessness is a complex issue, and, as Lewis said, the various groups dealing with the homeless need to come together to find solutions. The “us” and “them” attitude does not work. The idea of creating a coordinating council to sponsor study sessions and create unified action plans was proposed. The people of Ashland must agree on what resources they are willing to commit and what solutions they are willing to accept. Will they support hiring a full-time professional to coordinate services for the homeless, as Green and others suggested? Will they allow a homeless camp to exist, as it does in Portland? These questions and many more from the audience prompted a last questioner to urge a follow-up discussion to consider what actions to propose. Our League plans to continue this dialogue.

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Graham Lewis addresses the audience.

Call to LWVOR Council
"WAVES OF THE FUTURE"
Salbasgeon Suites, Corvallis, Oregon
May 17 and 18, 2008
Banquet Speaker: John Kaufman, OR Department of Energy

The League of Women Voters of Corvallis is hosting the LWVOR Council. Each League is entitled to two delegates, and the LWVA board has agreed to send Judith Benjamin and Regina Ayars as delegates. Local
Leagues are encouraged to send as many observers as would like to attend. Observers may not vote, but may have the privilege of the floor upon the Chair’s recognition and are encouraged to exercise this privilege.

The cost of full-time observer registration plus the workbook is $25. Observers for one session will be charged $10 plus $5 for the workbook if they choose to purchase it. Registration forms and payment must be received in the state office by March 31. Registration will not be available at Council. Please contact Judith Benjamin (488-3827), if you wish to go as an observer, and she’ll provide you with the required forms. Judith may also carpool with you. For an overnight stay at Salbasgeon Suites, you must make your own reservation directly with the hotel. Call (541) 753-4320 or toll-free (800) 965-8808, or contact www.salbasgeon.com, and mention the LWVOR Council meeting to receive the discounted Council rate.

**LWV Celebrates Its 88th Birthday!**

This is a sampling of over 1,000 messages that the LWV received last month to celebrate the League's birthday. It was sent to us by Maggie Duncan, Communications and Online Outreach Manager for LWV. We thought you would enjoy reading it:

“88 keys on a piano. 88 years of League. Let the music continue.”

“You are truly the League with a heart, a voice, and shared information which can create positive change”. “Still the best organization in America! Taught me most everything I know about organizing. Love it with all my heart.”

“You are the most underappreciated national treasure.”

“You go, girls...doing a great job!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

“When LWV speaks, civic leaders listen. Happy Birthday to a group that has earned respect because of all the hard work of its volunteers.”

“With respect, love and gratitude from my grandmothers, my parents, my children, grandchildren - and self.”

“From the bottom of my heart, body, mind and political soul - Women can and do change the world. Let's keep it up!”

“The League was responsible for two of the biggest things in my life: My business and my marriage. I’ll always be grateful to this terrific group of women.”

“LWV is the standard by which I measure all other organizations.”

“Without you, we’d be nowhere. Thanks for changing the world.”

“League Members are wonders, Without them voters would wane, By not registering to vote, by not standing in the voting lane. So Happy Birthday LWV, Long may you continue to serve, So our voting process continually improves, And never your resolve shall swerve.”

“It is great to be associated with this wonderful organization which so many depend on for advice & information, especially in this election year!”

“The League continues to blaze a trail for women’s equality. Congratulations!”

“We've come a long way baby!!!! The clothing changed, but not the sentiments!!!”

“AT 88 you still have the "it factor" and still rock.”

“Happy Birthday to a group that still believes in the "high road" and making things transparent, honest, and positive.”

“To the best darn organization that ever was created in these United States. Happy Birthday, women. “

“We are so proud to be a small part of this big, beautiful picture of democracy in action.”

“I came from Iraq and I was 38 year-old. I was never given the chance to vote. I am a proud member of this league and I am a proud citizen of this country where I was given the chance to vote.”

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Sharon Levin – We were unable to obtain a bio from Sharon for this newsletter, but we are looking forward to meeting her and seeing her at our meetings.
Mardi Mastain – Mardi’s profession is corporate management, especially China operations, and she speaks Mandarin. Living here since 2000 enjoying “the wilderness beauty,” Mardi initially moved to Ashland to be with her parents. She serves on several boards, including the United Nations Association of Southern Oregon, and decided to join the League because of our mission and our efforts to improve government through education and advocacy.

Celebrate International Women’s Day by marching with SOU’s Women’s Resource Center and other women’s groups from Triangle Park to Stevenson Union at SOU. Wear your best walking shoes and anything – hats, badges, sashes, buttons, flags – that show your pride in being a League member. Come march with us!

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK! (NEW)

The League now has a special page on the social networking site, Facebook — and we need your help to get the word out! Online social networking is a great way to reach out to new people, encourage younger Americans to get involved in the political process, and reconnect with inactive or lapsed League members. If you (or your friends, loved ones or co-workers) already have registered on Facebook, join our cause by logging in, visiting the League’s page and clicking on “join.” Not on Facebook yet? It’s easy to sign up and connect with friends around the world! Go to www.facebook.com and follow the simple instructions. Once you’ve confirmed your registration by clicking on the verification e-mail, jump to the League’s page (or search under “causes” for “League of Women Voters”) and click “join.”

WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY!!!

You can attend the LWV National Convention in Portland this June (13-17) by being a volunteer. Don’t miss out on this terrific opportunity to be involved and find out what is happening with the League nationally. You may be able to carpool to Portland and stay at a member’s home. Call Judith Benjamin, 488-3827, and tell her “yes” ASAP!

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MARCH IN THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY PARADE

When: Saturday, March 8th 11:00 a.m.
Where: Triangle Park, Liberty St. & Siskiyou Blvd.

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK! (NEW)

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CALENDAR

MARCH

1    Unite For Peace Conference - SOU
6    LWVA Board Meeting
8    International Women’s Day
20   General Meeting: 
     Water: “Protecting Ashland’s Resource”

APRIL

3    LWVA Board Meeting
17   General Meeting: Planned Parenthood 
    of Southern Oregon Presentation

MAY

1    LWVA Board Meeting
15   Annual Meeting
17-18 LWVOR Council, Corvallis, Oregon

JUNE

13-17 LWVUS 48th Biennial Convention, 
    Portland, Oregon
## JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

**2008-2009**

Annual Membership Dues:
- Individual Membership: $60 ___
- Household Membership: $90 ___
- Student Membership: $30 ___

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS:**

**EMAIL:** ___________________________ **PHONE:** ___________________________

**NEW MEMBER:** ______  **RENEWAL** ______  **ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION:** ____________

My Special Interest/s: ____________________________________________________________

Please make checks payable to League of Women Voters of Ashland (LWVA)

Mail to LWVA, P.O. Box 1296, Ashland, OR 97520