THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, A NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, ENCOURAGES INFORMED AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT, WORKS TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF MAJOR PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES, AND INFLUENCES PUBLIC POLICY THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.

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APRIL CANDIDATE FORUMS

Candidate Forums are Co-Sponsored by
League of Women Voters of Rogue Valley
and
American Association of University Women,
Ashland & Medford Branches

Medford Forum:
Friday, April 11th
LWVRV will host a forum for
Candidates for the Position of
Jackson County County Clerk.

Meeting will be at the Black Bear Diner,
1150 E. Barnett - 12 noon – 1:00 p.m;
11:30 a.m. lunch (Reservations: 772-4290
or rogers4290@aol.com

Ashland Forums:
Thursday, April 17th
Candidates for Circuit Court Judge,
County Assessor and County Surveyor positions.
Ashland Public Library 12 noon - 1:30 p.m.
(Prior to noon, enter through the back door)
Parking is limited, so plan accordingly)

Friday, April 25th
Candidates for County Commissioner
Ashland Council Chambers
1155 E. Main Street (near Mountain Ave.)
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Meeting will be televised on Channel 9

ANNUAL MEETING: SAVE THE DATE:

Thursday, May 15th, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.,
Ashland Public Library
Following the members meeting, guest speaker
will be Margaret M. Crowley, M.P.H., R.N.,
Executive Director of the Community Health Center
(Ashland, Medford & White City)
PRESIDENTS’ MESSAGE

Our water study got a boost last month when Paula Brown and Bill Meyers spoke at our meeting on Protecting Ashland’s Water Supply (See “Right Water for the Right Use,” p. 3). Kudos to Susan Rust, Kate Culbertson and their study committee members for doing a great job organizing the event. The meeting was well attended and well received, especially by League members, many of whom are involved in the study. We especially like to thank our guest speakers, who graciously stayed beyond their formal presentation to talk with people who had additional questions.

This coming month our League will be focusing on the upcoming primary election. While everyone has been talking about Senator Obama’s and President Clinton’s recent visits to Southern Oregon, we’ll be concentrating on local elections. Together with the Rogue Valley League, we are sponsoring three candidate forums. Details of these forums are on the front page.

In April, besides co-sponsoring these events, our League will distribute Voters’ Guides. We have requested 400 copies, which will be delivered to our Voter Service Chair, Regina Ayars. If you’d like to help Regina distribute them, please contact her at 482-5019 or reginariley@jeffnet.org. Voters’ Guides will also be available online, and we will email them to you. You can also go to the LWVOR website, www.lwvor.org, to print Voters’ Guides for yourself, your friends and neighbors.

If helping with these election activities has whetted your appetite to do more for the League, how about joining the Board? You don’t have to be a long-time member to get involved. Liz Berry, a young mother with a beautiful 20-month-old daughter, is joining our League and will be our nominee for Secretary. She said she wants to give back something to the community, and this is her way to do it. Why not follow her lead. Contact Anita Nevison, chair of the Nominating Committee, 535-5369, or nevison@jeffnet.org, and volunteer to be a Director. Better yet, offer to be Treasurer to replace Judy Heatherington, who has served on our board for many years. Anita would love to hear from you, so don’t be shy.

Please note the article in the next column about voter registration, and send it to friends: “Leave no voter behind!”

Judith & Vanya

VOTER REGISTRATION FAQs:

The deadline to register to vote in the May 20th Primary Election is April 29, 2008. This primary is a closed, rather than an open primary, which means if you want to vote for the Democratic candidates, you must be registered as a Democrat, and if you want to vote for a Republican candidate, you must be registered as a Republican. If you prefer to register as an independent or as a member of a party other than Democratic or Republican, you will be able to vote for candidates seeking office that are non-partisan.

If you want to change your name, address, or your party, you can obtain a voter registration form at the following locations:

• Jackson County Elections Office, 1101 W. Main St., Suite 201, Medford, OR 97501; 541/774-6148
• Public Library
• League of Women Voters Candidates Forums (see page 1).

If you have a permanent residence address, you qualify. Just show proof of residence with a bill or anything else addressed to you at that address.

You need to re-register if you’ve moved since your last registration. Changes after May 15, 2008 must be made in person at your County Elections Office. Changing your address at the post office does NOT re-register you.

Seventeen-year olds may register to vote if they will be 18 by Election Day.

WHAT IF I NEED VOTING ASSISTANCE?

Any Oregon voter with a disability can call the County Elections Office to ask for help to register to vote, complete a ballot, or return a ballot.

WHEN ARE THE BALLOTS MAILED?

The U.S. Postal Service will begin delivering ballots Friday, May 2nd, for the May 20th Primary Election. Each registered voter will receive a ballot in the mail. All ballots should be received by Thursday, May 8th. Voters who do not receive a ballot by that date can call the County Clerk’s office to request a replacement ballot.

WHEN ARE THE BALLOTS DUE?

Ballots must be received at the County Elections Office or the ballot drop-off box at the Ashland library by 8:00 p.m., election night. Postmarks do not count, so if you plan to mail your ballot, do so by Thursday, May 15.
SUMMARY OF THE BOARD MINUTES OF 3/6/08

Treasurer’s Report: $3,371 cash in the bank, $3420 dues paid this year, $330 carried forward to 2008, Grant fund $488.75, Total reserve $7,000, of which most will be used for PMP.

Membership Report: 73 members, with two new members. All, except two people, are current with dues.

February Meeting (Homeless in Ashland) follow-up: Meeting was a big success and the board agreed that LWVA would like to sponsor a follow-up meeting with key players in the community.

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. (Please note that this has been cancelled due to candidate forums.)

Fundraising Letter: Decision to delay letter until September, due to LWVOR fundraising and annual membership solicitation.

Annual Meeting: Sundeen confirmed that Peg Crowley would speak about the Community Health Centers. Speaker will follow the business meeting.

Voter Services: Discussion regarding looking into costs and content for Primary Voter Guide, and whether it will also be available on line.

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. However, expenses for this are a concern. Cost is $295 for full registration, plus hotel and meals for 5 days. Members have been invited to attend as volunteers and observers via the Advocate.

Nominating Committee: Milan has joined the Nominating Committee.

“RIGHT WATER FOR THE RIGHT USE,” EXPERT STRESSES AT MARCH MEETING

by Eleanore Perkins

As part of its water study, LWVA presented a program on Thursday, March 20, at the library, coordinated by Susan Rust and Kate Culbertson, on Ashland’s Water Resources. Bill Meyers, Water Coordinator, Rogue Basin Region, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Paula Brown, former Ashland Public Works Director, now a consultant to the City of Ashland, were the speakers.

Meyers described the work of DEQ, the implementing state agency for the federal Clean Water Act that focuses on environmental health. He distinguished between “point” (permitted discharge), which is regulated through permitting and “non-point” (runoff) sources of pollution, which are difficult to regulate. Primary sources of pollution in the Rogue Valley are summer heat, bacteria, sediment, and elevated nutrients.

Ordinary citizens can help Rogue Valley meet clean water standards through conservation, education, and involvement in water quality activities, according to Meyers. Future problems may include mercury (from mining and from airborne sources) and algae blooms at Lost Creek and Fish Lake.

Brown summarized Ashland’s water situation. The primary source of water is the snowpack from Mount Ashland, one of the cleanest sources of water in Oregon. Water from the Talent Irrigation District (TID) is also available, though it must be treated. The City is also online to receive water from the Talent-Ashland-Phoenix pipeline, which is scheduled for completion in 2016. It will supply 1.5 million gallons per day. Historically, Ashland has had a drought every seven years. The biggest threats to Ashland’s water supply, Brown said, are pollution (in Ashland Creek), spills, pollutants in storm drains, commercial runoff and erosion above Reeder Reservoir.
Ashland uses 2 million gallons of water per day in winter, but 7.5 million gallons per day in summer. Brown pointed out that Ashland citizens have shown they can conserve when necessary: In the 2003 drought, summer water consumption dropped from 7.5 to 5 million gallons per day when the city asked for voluntary conservation. Future concerns, according to Brown, include population growth (1.5% per year), rising costs, finite water resources, global warming, drought, flooding, storm water, stream flows, quality and temperature of wastewater, and tightening regulations. Brown commented that Ashland’s wastewater treatment facility is the best in the State and re-use options will need to be considered.

Brown emphasized “right water for the right use.” We shouldn’t be using drinking water for irrigation, for example.

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**A COMMUNITY DIALOGUE TO PROMOTE POSITIVE POLITICS**

**Wednesday, April 30, 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.**
**At the Historic Ashland Armory**

This Community Discussion will be a facilitated dialogue to engage on-going community participation and hopefully inspire collaboration. The goal of meeting together is to define a set of community values statements to guide decision-making, vision-development and to promote effective leadership.

Most people who have spent time in Ashland agree that an amazing array of talent, enthusiasm, artistry, creativity and problem-solving skills is found among the residents. People here tend to feel strongly about certain issues and not shy about standing up for their point of view. The down side of dissent is the uncivil tone it can sometimes take. Many feel this negativity is counterproductive to achieving shared goals. If the talent and ideas of Ashland’s community could be focused to positively address the issues of our town, we would have an outstanding resource for the decision-makers to use. One goal of the community dialogue process is to redirect community energy toward creative progress.

All interested residents are encouraged to attend this free event, which will be hosted by the Community Dialogue Subcommittee of the Ashland Coalition. This group consists of representatives from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Southern Oregon University, the Ashland School District, Ashland Community Hospital, the faith community and a representative from the community at large. For more information, please call the chamber at 482-3486.

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**WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBER**

**ELIZABETH BERRY**

Liz and Violet

Elizabeth (Liz) Berry moved to Ashland in 2004 from the Florida panhandle. For the past three years, she’s been working at the Ashland Food Co-op while also attending SOU to complete prerequisites so that she can apply to a Doctor of Pharmacy program. She says that she loves spending time with her family, especially with beautiful baby daughter Violet, and is excited to become more involved in the community. We’re delighted to having her join us.

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**CALENDAR**

**APRIL**
11  LWVRV Hosted Candidate Forum
   Black Bear Diner, Medford (see front page)
17  Candidate Forum
   Ashland Library (see front page)
25  Candidate Forum
   Ashland Council Chambers (see front page)
30  Community Dialogue
   Ashland Historic Armory (see page 4)

**MAY**
1    LWVA Board Meeting
15   Annual Meeting
17-18 LWVOR Council, Corvallis, Oregon
20   Primary Election

**JUNE**
13-17 LWVUS 48th Biennial Convention, Portland, Oregon
From March 19 through 21, the State’s Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) was in Ashland hearing what communities in Southwest Oregon have to say about land use issues. Apart from a reception, a tour of the old Croman Mill site and a presentation of the site’s redesign, Commission members and staff from LCDC spent most of their time at City Council Chambers listening to the concerns of local public officials and interested citizens.

At an early morning roundtable discussion, Ashland Councilors brought up the issue of affordable housing. They have been urging the State to pass legislation permitting the City to levy a real estate transfer tax that would provide funds for affordable housing and to establish inclusionary zoning that would require builders to include affordable housing in their projects.

These Ashland interests were raised again the next morning at a session on proposed legislation to allow cities to reserve land on their outskirts for affordable housing. LWVOR had sent a letter to the Commission expressing concerns about this legislation, that it would isolate low-income families “on the edge” of cities and away from transportation, employment and downtown services. These concerns, however, were not discussed. Instead, Commission Chairman John Van Landingham reiterated the response he had made earlier to Ashland’s legislative proposals. He said that although he is in favor of them and had worked for years to have legislation enacted ending the ban on real estate transfer taxes and inclusionary zoning, the realtors and developers have lobbied against both and will continue to do so successfully.

At the morning roundtable discussion, the Administrator for Klamath Falls mentioned her community’s concern about the extent to which development has occurred outside the city limits. It has become a contentious issue because the City is providing services for people who do not pay taxes to the City.

At a later public hearing, someone from Grants Pass noted the need for the City to recognize changing demographics in regulating the number of unrelated adults living in the same dwelling. With 75% of U.S. households no longer the typical family of four, she argued, health and safety not family size should determine the number of adults in the same household. Changing the criteria would allow the possibility of shared and cooperative housing and thus greater density.

Someone else from Josephine County mentioned that the County is now charging $2,500 for land-use appeals. This is another issue that has concerned LWVOR. In a letter to Chairman Van Landingham, LWVOR President Marge Easley and Natural Resources Coordinator Peggy Lynch pointed out that “as the fees move higher, the opportunity for citizens and recognized neighborhood organizations to bring important issues to decision makers is lessened.” Josephine County is also arguing that waivers people received from the County under Measure 37 are equivalent to contracts with the County and therefore legally binding. The LCDC Chairman pointed out, however, that state law overrides any county action, and people who may have had a Measure 37 waiver to build on their property should apply under Measure 49 within the time limit so as not to lose their rights.

I had expected that arguments over Measure 37 versus Measure 49 would have taken up most of the public response, but I was mistaken. Instead, attention was focused largely on the Regional Problem Solving Project (RPS). From the first roundtable discussion, it was clear that cities in this region each have a different view of growth and therefore of the RPS plan being proposed. The representative from Central Point said that his city likes it and is projecting a population growth of 17,000, which means extending the City’s boundaries. In contrast, Ashland City Councilors reported that Ashland does not expect to double its population and expects that any increase would be sustained through infill. They noted that the city had 100 acres within its urban growth boundaries on which additional housing could be built, enough to satisfy any growth in population for the next 20 years. A housing inventory for Medford showed that that city also had more than it needed to house its projected growth for this same time period.

The representative from Talent had still another viewpoint. He said that Talent does not want to become another Ashland. Rather, Talent sees itself as a rural community and it wants to have a buffer between the urban area and farmland to accommodate larger acre residential lots. A concluding comment from the Jacksonville representative was that “one size does not fit all” and that the State’s land-use regulations should allow for more flexibility at the local level, to which the Commission Chairman replied, “Flexibility can mean lower standards.”

From the roundtable discussion and the sessions that followed, it was clear that city officials from some communities had a different concept of growth and development than many of their residents. The President of the Ashland School Board argued that growth should not be equated only with more people and more housing, but also with economic development in agriculture and forestry and the infrastructure to sustain them. Several farmers who were there noted the importance of agricultural land in providing the basis for industrial development, noting that we need agricultural reserves that take into account the difference in acreage and types of land that different farming requires. Twenty acres on sandy soil may be fine for growing grapes, for example, but not for growing wheat. Another farmer talked about his problems in exchanging one piece of property for another to do his type of farming, but local land-use regulations to separate urban from rural areas have not always taken into account farming needs and have made it
impossible for him to proceed. An LWVA member at one
session noted such local businesses as the Rogue Creamery
and Amy's Kitchen that rely on local agriculture and have
been critical to the Rogue Valley's economic development.
Someone else commented that in view of the high price of
gasoline and the effects of transportation on global warming,
it's important that we rely more on local farmers to produce
the food we eat.

Clearly, what is bothering many of the people who testified
before the LCDC is that the RPS plan proposed for this
region is expanding cities at the expense of agriculture.
Several representatives from 1000 Friends of Oregon, the
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy and other citizens
groups stressed the argument Rogue Valley League member
Porter Lombard cited in his recent article in the Mail Tribune
that the RPS plan has included 9,000 acres of agricultural
land into urban reserves even though only 6,700 acres are
needed if the population were to double. The Director of the
Rogue Valley Transit District mentioned the need to consider
transportation in expanding city boundaries.

At the public hearing, one person noted that density in
Medford is only 2,500 people per square mile, although the
State allows a density of 5,000 per square mile in determining
transportation needs and 3,500 as the standard before city
expansion is permitted. Other people expressed opposition to
the RPS plan on the grounds that it does not deal with
affordable housing, is not based on a detailed needs
assessment, and was not produced through public hearings.

The Chairman made it clear that the State does not require
RPS. He said that he personally likes it, but it has already
failed in Polk and Lane Counties, and apparently may suffer
the same fate in Jackson County. Speaking for many of the
people there, the representative from 1000 Friends of Oregon
said that he supports the goals of RPS, but not the plan as it
exists here: “I don’t think that a flawed plan is better than no
plan at all.” He said that RPS has produced some good work
and believes that urban reserves can still be adopted, but
recognizes, like the Commission Chairman, that more needs
to be done to reach agreement. As someone else concluded,
“RPS is a work in progress.”

McMillan and Kim Shelton, and LWVA and the Rogue
Valley League are among its sponsors.

The veterans and their families will stay for five nights
at the Buckhorn Springs retreat center outside of
Ashland, where the focus will be on creating a sense of
community and encouraging expression and healing
through storytelling, art, writing, meditation and
movement. Professionals experienced in working with
traumatized individuals and communities for many
years, as well as therapists who have worked in the field
of combat trauma recovery will lead the program. All
expenses will be paid for the veterans and their families.

In the belief that healing can happen when the burden of
war can be shared by the larger community, the final
evening of this event will be a Memorial Day
Ceremony, Voices of Vets, a coming together of the
veterans and the public in a ceremony of re-connection
and welcoming home. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival
has generously offered the use of the Angus Bowmer
Theatre for this event, which will include, poetry,
theater and art, with input from the veterans and the
public as well. This large gathering will enable citizens
to become compassionate witnesses to the stories of war
and return. Additionally, we will document the event on
film for wider public distribution so that many others
will better understand both the difficulties faced by the
men and women who have gone to war, as well as their
families, and the possibilities for support and healing
provided by the larger community.

The program will also include a Letter Writing
Project, a community activity to involve the entire
Rogue Valley and a prelude to the Memorial Day
Ceremony. Letter Writing Stations will be set up in
various locations – libraries, schools, stores and other
public places. At these stations, people will be able to
write letters to veterans, those who are currently serving
or those who have returned home, family members,
friends or anonymous veterans, alive or dead. These
letters will be on display at the stations so others can
read them as well as write letters of their own. They
should be personal but need not be signed and should
not be political. Selected letters will be brought to the
retreat for the veterans to read them and then displayed
at the Bowmer Theatre on Memorial Day.

With such a large-scale project, the directors are asking
as many people as possible to volunteer their time and
support. Help is needed to construct the letter writing
stations, particularly at the schools and to organize the
Memorial Day Celebration at the Bowmer. Also, the
directors are seeking someone to coordinate picking veterans up at the airport and driving them to Buckhorn Springs on May 22nd. In addition, they are looking for people connected with the food industry who may want to donate food for the veterans at the retreat and anyone who can provide them with four or five computers and printers so that they will be able to write poems, stories and the like while at the retreat. Anyone wishing to volunteer or make a tax-deductible donation may do so by going online to www.thewelcomehomeproject.org, or visiting or writing to The Welcome Home Project, 565 A Street, Suite 201, Ashland, or calling Bill McMillan, at 482-1072. Anyone with in-kind donations for the retreat should contact Leslie Sargent at Buckhorn Springs, 488-2200.

At this point, the project has about half the number of veterans it can enroll, and judging by the interest so far, applicants after April may need to be put on a waiting list. The directors therefore suggest that if you know of any veterans you who think would be likely candidates, have them get in touch with The Welcome Home Project as soon as possible.

**Update on the Homeless Issue**

At our meeting in February on the homeless in Ashland, many people expressed an interest to continue the dialogue and take appropriate action. As many of the suggestions required official approval and both the mayor and the majority of Council members are to be elected in November, the Board believes it would be best to enlist our members in an action program after that time. We can report, however, that some steps are being taken countywide to move forward on the homeless issue.

**Ten Years to End Homelessness**

A committee has been formed in Jackson County to connect with the federal program, Ten Years to End Homelessness, and is expected to complete a report in May. To perform its task, the committee has divided into four subcommittees to explore (1) data on the homeless; (2) permanent housing for the disabled; (3) Housing First, a strategy applied successfully in several major cities that offers housing with no restrictions to people living on the street; and (4) the infrastructure needed to build the recommended responses.

SOU Psychology Professor Kimberly Cox, who was at our February meeting and is a member of the committee, will be writing the report. In addition to the findings of the subcommittees, Cox plans to include an overview of homelessness on the national and state levels and then a detailed analysis of the situation in Jackson County—its economy, housing and demographics – in relation to causes and trends in homelessness.

**Oregon’s Homeless Youth**

LWVOR’s study and report on homeless youth, with our local Leagues participating, continues to have an impact, and will be the subject of a caucus at the League's National Convention in Portland. As many of you know, it was instrumental in convincing the legislature to adopt a law that provides designated funding for homeless youth. Jackson County, through its subcommittee on homeless youth led by the county’s Commission on Children and Families, submitted a proposal to develop a coordinated system to provide services for these youth. Unfortunately, the county’s proposal was not among the few chosen to receive the limited funding available. Nevertheless, the subcommittee, which includes representatives from the Rogue Valley and Ashland Leagues, worked out an arrangement for caseworkers from Community Works and OnTrack to come to Kids Unlimited once a week to provide counseling and support services for homeless youth who are there. Informally, this marks a first step towards a coordinated system.

**Hearts with a Mission**

Kevin Lamson, a member of the subcommittee, reports that the City of Medford has received a Community Development Block Grant of $216,000 to be used for *Hearts with a Mission*, the tax-exempt organization he founded to establish a county shelter for homeless youth. He credits *Oregon’s Homeless Youth* with much of his success in promoting the project. The shelter will be located in a large house across the street from Kids Unlimited. Once it is renovated, it will accommodate 14 youth. The organization plans to lease the property until it receives the grant in September. According to Lamson’s e-mail message, “The League of Women Voters played a very important role in helping us obtain … support. … I hope we can work together to help raise the necessary resources to open the doors.” For further information, see its website, [www.heartswithamission.org](http://www.heartswithamission.org)
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