



THE ADVOCATE

League of Women Voters of Ashland

NOVEMBER 2008

P.O. Box 1296, Ashland, Oregon 97520
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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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NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

JACKSON COUNTY'S BUDGET

A Joint Meeting with LWV Rogue Valley to kick off our County Funding Study

Thursday, November 13, Ashland Elks Lodge
 11:30 a.m. lunch (optional); 12:00 p.m. program

Danny Jordan, Jackson County Administrator, and Sheriff Mike Winters will be speaking

Mr. Jordan will give an overview of the County's Budgetary Process: How priorities are set; funding sources and restrictions; the role of the Budget Committee with respect to the Board of Commissioners

Sheriff Winters will talk about Funding Jackson County's Police Services

An RSVP for lunch (482-4544) would be appreciated.
 Everyone is Welcome!

(Note to Members: We are returning to the Elks Lodge this year. However, please note that this meeting is on the second Thursday rather than our usual third.)



NOVEMBER CALENDAR

- 4 Election Day!
- 6 LWVA Board Meeting, Thursday, 1:30 p.m., Ashland Library
- 13 November General Meeting, Elks Lodge, 11:30 a.m. (See above for details)
- 14-15 Jackson County Plastics Recycling Event (See page 5 for details)
- 27 Thanksgiving



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For the past couple of months our League, like the rest of the country, has been focusing on elections. As individuals, we may have been caught up in the national campaign, but as an organization LWVA has concentrating on the local scene. Our Voter Services director Regina Ayars deserves a big thank you for the fantastic job she did in bringing the candidates to the public with her organization of our Candidates' Fair and Forum which was so well attended. Regina also helped create our beautiful and informative local Voting Guides, and had a League table at the growers' markets. Additional thanks are due to Elizabeth Berry, Ann Magill, Iris Milan, Anita Nevison, Eleanore Perkins, Vanya Sloan, and Mary Anne Wallace, for helping with the election season efforts. Regina's article below has a list of our League's Voter Service activities. We are making a difference!

Our members were also on hand at other events that gave us an opportunity to help get out the vote. We had a table in the Rogue River Room at SOU's Stevenson Union when John Fregonese spoke and again for the celebration of the 63rd Anniversary of the U.N. (See my articles on pages 4-5). When Mary Anne Wallace and I were at our League's table at the U.N. event, we had a conversation with a woman in her 90s who asked about the League's position on the ballot measures. She was not interested in the copies of the state League's nonpartisan Voting Guide that we were distributing, but wanted to know which measures the League supported or opposed. We've been telling people to check the state League's website to read the League's position statements, but not all older people surf the Internet. In fact, in checking the distribution of our local Voting Guides, we are finding they are being used more at senior residences than at schools and libraries. As we review our voter service activities, we need to ask ourselves if we are doing the best job we can to reach different audiences and present the issues objectively while also publicizing the League's positions. The LWVOR Convention in May 2009 will be close to home – at the Red Lion Inn in Medford . Maybe we can put some of our questions on the agenda.

In the meantime, plan to be at this month's general meeting when the Rogue Valley League will join us to help jumpstart our study of county funding and services. We hope you will sign up to participate in this important study. And don't forget to RSVP (482-4544) if you plan to have lunch. It will be nice to be back at the Elks Lodge.

Looking forward to November 4th!

Judith

Water Study continues: Your local Water Study committee is still at work, but now finalizing a report, composing a Position Statement, and planning a Spring General Meeting. We call your attention to the Bear Creek Watershed Council's recent report on the Ashland Watershed: <http://www.bearcreek-watershed.org/MN.asp?pg=aws>.

ELECTION SEASON COMING TO A CLOSE, by Regina Ayars, Voters Service Chair

The League of Women Voters of Ashland was busy this year. We started in September with the board decision to apply for a grant from the state League to publish our first local guide and host a Candidate Fair instead of our traditional Candidate Forum. After receiving feedback from members, citizens and candidates we added a Forum to the Fair and extended the hours of the event. This event was by far our biggest gathering with close to 200 people attending.

Election Activities:

- Moderated a City Council Debate between four candidates in Talent
Given our non-partisan focus, the new City Manager of Talent requested that the League provide a moderator for his city's Candidate Forum.
- Registered new voters at Ashland and Phoenix Head Start schools
A joint voter registration drive sponsored at the state level between Head Start and the League of Women Voters was implemented in Jackson County at many of the sixteen Head Start facilities across the county. We provided a Spanish speaker at the Phoenix Head Start School to assist Spanish speaking parents.
- Sponsored a "Meet the Candidate" table at the Downtown Farmers Market on three Saturday mornings.

The Farmers Market allows one non-profit organization to host a table each Saturday morning and the League was there starting August 30th. Both the customers to the market and the candidates enjoyed talking informally about local issues and countywide concerns.

- Co-sponsored a candidate Forum and Fair at Southern Oregon University
In conjunction with the Association of University Students, AAUW and the Ashland Daily Tidings, our League hosted the event in the Rogue River Room in the Stevenson Union. The event started at 10:00 a.m. with citizens informally visiting with over twenty candidates. Each Ashland candidate and each Jackson countywide candidate was invited and had a table for literature. Between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., candidates answered questions from the League and the audience and then finished up with more informal tabling.
- Published a local Voters' Guide for Ashland Candidates and ballot measures
With the help of a grant from the League of Women Voters of Oregon, we solicited answers to questions from seven mayoral candidates, seven councilor candidates, three parks commissioners and two-ballot measure spokespeople. We printed 500 copies and distributed them around town and published them on our website www.lwv.or.lwvnet.org
- Mock Elections sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Oregon held at three local schools
Local members worked with Ashland High School, Ashland Middle School and Talent Middle School teachers to ensure that students actively participated in the event.
- Spoke with local groups on state ballot measures
The League was invited to speak at a monthly Soroptomist Meeting on the state ballot measures helping to educate its members on statewide initiatives.
- Voter registration tabling on the plaza and the Ashland Food Co-op on Constitution Day, United Nations Day at SOU and other local events.

Remember to VOTE by Tuesday November 4th. It's our right and responsibility to participate actively in our democracy.



ASHLAND SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN LWVOR STUDENT MOCK ELECTIONS, by Iris Milan

All of the social studies classes at Ashland Middle School participated in the Student Mock Election sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Oregon. The school registered for the program on-line which then made the curriculum available for download. Social Studies teacher, Bob Julian, who in previous years had participated in the program, created a special enrichment class, Election 2008, which gave the 28 enrolled students a more in-depth experience and used more of the materials provided by the League. Students, working in pairs, researched individual candidates and the statewide ballot measures. Putting the information in their own words, the students created a Voters Information Pamphlet, which was distributed to the other 130 voting middle school students. Julian commented that the students were surprised by the number of parties that had candidates running for President other than the major Republican and Democratic parties. What values did the various major and minor parties such as the Libertarian and Green have that differed from one another? That also led into a discussion of what it could mean in a close election between the major parties if some of the votes were siphoned off to a minor party. Was it important to vote your conscience or help one of the major candidates win? History of the 2000 election when Nader was a 3rd party candidate and Gore lost made the possibility more probable. The class also analyzed the political advertisements and the strategies and tactics used by campaigns.

Rick Shaw, video production teacher, created the venue for the mayoral candidates forum held at the middle school with a small live audience who questioned the candidates. As in the real campaign debates, the live telecast was transmitted to the classrooms. The enrichment class and the other students generated the questions and a few of the students from the class went in person.

The other social studies classes voted by computer. This confined them to only voting for the Presidential candidates. The Oregon Mock Election Committee required those voting for state candidates, ballot issues, and local offices to vote like the residents of Oregon do; that is, they had to vote on a paper ballot. Asked how he handled the count, Bob Julian said the student counters listed the candidates and issues and put tally marks beside them as the votes were counted. As a poll worker back in rural Wisconsin before voting machines, I told Bob that was the way we did it. Students announced the

results of the statewide Oregon Student Mock Election at a live-streamed press conference at 9:30 am on Thursday, October 30 in the Council Chambers of the Beaverton City Hall.

More than seventy-five thousand students from more than 300 Oregon elementary, middle, and high schools are enrolled and expected to vote in the National Student/Parent Mock Election. In Oregon, student voting takes place between October 23 and October 29. National results, in which every state and several territories are involved, will be broadcast on national news. Since we are going to press before that date, we cannot give you the results. It should be on the League of Women Voters website under Student Mock Election. The enrichment class was close to the wire in getting the votes counted before the deadline. The students are finding the counting process interesting as they notice patterns emerging.

LWVA provided the high school and middle school additional copies of the State Voters' Guide and the first ever published Nonpartisan Voting Guide for Ashland Voters, which included the 7 mayoral (now 6) and 7 council candidates, and 2 Parks Commission Candidates, plus the Library and Restaurant Rating Ballot Issues. Ashland High School students also participated in voting in the Mock Elections. LWVA is proud of the teachers and students who have become involved in the most important aspect of keeping our Democracy alive: becoming informed voters and exercising the right to vote.



BIG LOOK TASK FORCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION, by Pam Vavra

I attended the first of two *Big Look* Task Force presentations/discussions in Medford. It is my understanding that the impetus for reviewing our land use system is two-fold: 1) It is predicted that we will have to accommodate 1.7 million new residents by 2020; and 2) The restrictions that the 30-year old system imposes on property owners have been questioned and challenged recently. The Task Force is a response to our legislators who are asking for our direction as they contemplate changes.

At the meeting I attended, Task Force members played PowerPoint presentations and video clips, and invited roundtable discussions and Q&As around two main topics: *How do we create more livable communities to accommodate the growth?* And *How do we protect forests, farms and natural areas in the process?*

Attendees were asked to give their opinions on various aspects of each of the questions. For example, during the discussion of livable communities, several options for how communities might grow were presented and attendees were invited to discuss the pros and cons of each and then rate them.

I did not arrive in time to get a seat at a roundtable, and had to crane my neck to see the videos, so, I was glad to see that all the materials are online at <http://oregonbiglook.org>. Even the survey that attendees were asked to complete can be submitted electronically at: <http://www.oregonbiglook.org/survey>.

People are encouraged to host neighborhood discussions ("Meetings in a Box") to spread the information more widely and obtain broader input. I hope to schedule one in my neighborhood, soon. I think it is very important to provide considered input on our land use system. The system is complex. The number of proposed changes is substantial, and each comes with a myriad of consequences, both intended and unintended. I hope all League members and many associates will take the time to read the materials and complete the online survey.



FREGONESE CALLS FOR SUSTAINABILITY, by Judith Benjamin

When John Fregonese, award winning city planner and Ashland's former Community Development Director, spoke early this past month at an SOU forum co-sponsored by LWVA, he set the stage for our local election. His theme of sustainability has been echoed by several of our mayoral and council candidates. He noted three aspects to sustainability – environment, equity and economy – and pointed out that while Ashland stresses the environment and does reasonably well on that account, it fails with respect to equity and economy.

By equity, he was referring to social equity – a living wage, health care and affordable housing. Typical jobs here are in low-paying retail and services catering to the tourist industry. Our median income is almost 25% less than the state average. Attracting better paying, higher skilled employment will require a cadre of educated young people to fill the jobs, but now they move away once they graduate because they cannot afford to live here. Not surprisingly, as many as 55% of the people who work in Ashland live elsewhere, adding the carbon footprint of commuting to the city’s otherwise positive record on the environment.

Ashland has a good history of city beautification, but it failed to take advantage of urban renewal legislation that would have provided funding for projects that include workforce housing. Since the typical household here consists of one or two people, Ashland needs to reconsider its zoning and planning requirements that encourage developers to build three- and four-bedroom houses. Concentrating on infill and diverse neighborhoods that include smaller, less expensive units, including some that allow people to live and work in the same place, will help to attract young people to Ashland. Fregonese called for the community to get involved in “designing a vision for Ashland’s future.”



CELEBRATING THE 63RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, by Judith Benjamin

The community was invited to join in the celebration of the 63rd anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The event was hosted by the United Nations Association of the USA and The SOU U.N. Club, with LWVA among its co-sponsors, and it was held at SOU’s Stevenson Union, on Sunday, October 26th. Besides listening to a great concert by the Siskiyou Violins, teenagers who have been first-class musicians, the audience heard a stimulating talk by Dr. Demetrios Argyriades, Consultant to the United Nation, in which he traced the organization’s beginnings, changes over time, and future role.

Although “a system of governance” and not a government, Dr. Argyriades noted, the U.N. has long been attacked by anti-government ideologues who prefer unilateral action to multilateral action and see only one form of democracy not the many democracies the U.N. now represents. Dr. Argyriades described how the organization had moved away from the shared culture and ideology of its founding statesmen as anti-colonialism added new and “non-aligned” nations to its membership. Eventually, the industrialized group of seven (G7) began to dominate, shifting the center of gravity from the social and political debate at the U.N. headquarters in New York to economics, the focus of the World Bank and the IMF in Washington. Divisiveness within the U.N. has had an enormous impact, and Dr. Argyriades cited as an example the failure to reach agreement on restricting small arms trade as the cause for much of the warfare and “climate of lawlessness” throughout the developing world. His conclusion was that the U.N. needs a new structure that enables the G7 to expand and make room for “the new giants,” that recognizes its multi-cultural and multi-languages and that “thinks more globally and reclaims the old statesmanship.” He sees the U.N. as having the capacity to move in this direction because it has the professionalism “to speak truth to power.”



JACKSON COUNTY PLASTICS ROUND-UP

This first-time ever drop-off event will be **Friday & Saturday, November 14-15, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Jackson County Recycling Partnership is hosting 3 free drop-off locations for NUMEROUS TYPES of plastic, including grocery and dry cleaning bags, cereal and potato chips bags, to-go containers, lawn furniture, toys, nursery pots, buckets and tubs, lids and caps, CDs and CD cases, baling twine, shrink wrap and much more.

For a LIST OF ACCEPTABLE ITEMS and more information, visit www.jcrecycle.org.

Three event drop-off locations include: Rogue Disposal Transfer Station at 8001 Table Rock Road in White City, Valley View Transfer Station at 3000 Valley View Road in Ashland, and OSU Extension at 569 Hanley Road in Central Point.

Recycle more: Find the Jackson County Recycling Directory online at www.RogueSMART.org/directory.html

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ASHLAND
P.O. BOX 1296
ASHLAND, OR 97520

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP 2008-2009

Annual Membership Dues:
Individual Membership: \$60 ____ Household Membership: \$90 ____
Student Membership: \$30

NAME _____ **ADDRESS** _____
E-MAIL: _____ **PHONE:** _____
NEW MEMBER: _____ **RENEWAL** _____ **ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION:** _____
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Please make your check payable to League of Women Voters of Ashland (LWVA)
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Thank you for your support!