VOTERS VOICE

General Meeting
Thursday March 9, 2017
OEA Bldg 2495 S. Pacific Hwy
11:30 am Medford

The March General Meeting will be a discussion of several items of member interest: reports from the Town Hall Feb 24 on the Oregon Budget, the Observer Corps, League non-partisanship policies, membership development in Josephine County, action policies, and the results of the Post-Secondary Education consensus.

We value your input and welcome your participation. We will also discuss the April program on the Our Children’s Trust, and reports from committees.

This is an opportunity to hear from your local League activists and ask questions about traditional League processes.

Post-Secondary Education Consensus Meeting will be held Saturday, March 4 at Western Carriage Estates, 3995 S. Stage Road, Medford from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.

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From the President’s Pen ........

This has been an interesting, busy year for LWVRV. We are half way through and nothing seems to be slowing down. This upcoming March meeting will give us an opportunity to bring everyone up to date. We will share results of the consensus from the Post Secondary Education study group (study group meeting information elsewhere in Voters Voice), hear reports on legislative visits, town hall meetings, the upcoming April event and other exciting tidbits.

We will clarify for new members, and remind older members, what we can and cannot do in the name of the League. It is so easy to forget these days.

We would like everyone who has attended an event (an Indivisible meeting, a Huddle, etc.) to come early so we can share what has been and will be happening locally.

Stay calm and carry on. Jackie Clary, President

Secretary of State Dennis Richardson has Appointed a new “Fair Redistricting Task Force”

Central Point resident Dennis Richardson has appointed eight legislators to a new task force which may offer a ballot measure to amend the methods for redistricting. LWVOR president Norman Turrill is also on the task force along with former Secretary of State Phil Keisling.

Secretary Richardson’s op-ed:


references the Oregon League’s “Redistricting in Oregon” (2007) and the California LWV’s “When the People Draw the Lines”.

Review of election districts occurs every ten years with the U.S.Census, and is done by the legislators themselves if they can agree in time—otherwise it goes to the Secretary of State. The next U.S. Census is 2020. The task force meets every Monday at 5pm through March and is open to the public.

Oregon LWV State Convention is May 5-7, 2017 in Wilsonville, and hosted by Clackamas LWV.

From the Interim Editor……

If you have information or letters you would like to share, please contact the interim editor at:

kdonham@gmail.com

541-772-5044
Nature’s Trust, Our Children’s Trust:

A Climate Forum on Litigation to Save the Future

ECOS (The Ecology and Sustainability Resource Center at Southern Oregon University) (https://inside.sou.edu/ecos/index.html) and the League of Women Voters Rogue Valley (www.lwvrv.org) are presenting a climate forum, “Nature’s Trust, Our Children’s Trust: A Climate Forum on Litigation to Save the Future,” on Thursday, April 13, 2017 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Rogue River Room of the Stevenson Union on the SOU campus in Ashland, Oregon. Doors open at 5:00.

The program will feature Mary Christina Wood—Philip H. Knight Professor, Faculty Director of the school’s Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center, and author of Nature’s Trust: Environmental Law for a New Ecological Age—and a panel of youth climate activists. Panelists will include two Plaintiffs in Juliana et. al. v. the United States et. al., a landmark constitutional case based on the public trust legal concepts developed by Ms. Wood, and brought by 21 young people against the federal government (www.ourchildrenstrust.org). Plaintiffs allege that for decades, the federal government has willfully failed to guard and protect natural public trust resources essential for a livable future. They charge that the government has actively facilitated fossil fuel development, known to release greenhouse gases and cause climate change, thereby allowing irreparable harm to those resources that now jeopardizes current and future generations. The trial, now officially against President Donald Trump and major organizations representing the fossil fuel industry, is expected to begin in U.S. District Court of the District of Oregon this summer. Juliana Plaintiffs will be joined by two youth activists affiliated with Ashland Youth Climate Action (www.rogueclimate.org/ashlandyouth) and currently working to convince the Ashland City Council to make the city’s Climate and Energy Action Plan a legally binding, scientifically grounded, equitable ordinance.

Admission is free, but donations will be gratefully accepted.


For questions, more information, or to obtain a Press Release, contact Shirley Weathers at 541-690-7779 or walsh.weathers@gmail.com.
As we work on consensus for the LWVOR study on "Public Post-Secondary Education in Oregon," I thought it would be interesting to look at some of the LWVRV education efforts in the 20th Century.

From the Medford MailT, May 24, 1970: "League Discusses School Finance." The Oregon State Council meeting in Medford decided to study 1) "whether or not the state should assume a larger share of local school district operating costs, and 2) continue the study of regional planning in Oregon." The January 19, 1972 MMT noted that the LWVRV general meeting had "Valley Educators Tell Their Goals." The Superintendents of Medford 549C and Phoenix-Talent District 4 and Elementary Ed Director of Central Point District 6 presented their concerns for better communication and improvement in cooperation with SOCollege in teacher education.

In this century, while receiving overviews on the changing organization of higher education, funding and public schools, the League has focused more on studies of Children at Risk and presented speakers on various programs to help our valley's children and youth.
Natural Resources Action News
Shirley Weathers, Natural Resources Chair

We discussed SB 557 in the February issue of the Voters Voice. Since then, the Renew Oregon Coalition, of which LWVOR is an active member, has launched a campaign to achieve passage of a bill that will set a science-based cap on greenhouse gas emissions. SB 557 and SB 748 are both routes to accomplish this goal. Both bills have been crafted to create thousands of jobs, including in rural areas, by encouraging investment in cleaner energy sources, greater energy efficiency, and upgrading infrastructure threatened by climate change. The LWVOR endorsed the campaign and seeks active League member support across the state. More talking points @ The Clean Energy Jobs Campaign.

More on Our Children’s Trust

Attorneys for the 21 youth Plaintiffs in Juliana et. al. v. USA, et. al. found several notable admissions in the Obama Administration’s Answer to Plaintiffs’ Complaint received on January 13. Julia Olsen, counsel for the Plaintiffs and Executive Director of Our Children’s Trust, credited the Administration for “...its commitment to scientific research and disclosing the full dangers of climate change to the American people and the world.” This excerpt from the January 18 Our Children’s Trust press release highlights key areas where the Administration agreed with aspects of the Complaint, admitting:

- That the use of fossil fuels is a major source of CO2 emissions, “placing our nation on an increasingly costly, insecure, and environmentally dangerous path.”

- That for over fifty years some officials and persons employed by the federal government have been aware of a growing body of scientific research concerning the effects of fossil fuel emissions on atmospheric concentrations of CO2—including that increased concentrations of atmospheric CO2 could cause measurable long-lasting changes to the global climate, resulting in an array of severe deleterious effects to human beings, which will worsen over time.

- That from 1850 to 2012, CO2 emissions from sources within the United States (including from land use) comprised more than 25 percent of cumulative global CO2 emissions.

- Federal Defendants admit that they permit, authorize, and subsidize fossil fuel extraction, development, consumption, and exportation. Federal Defendants admit that fossil fuel extraction, development, and consumption produce CO2 emissions and that past emissions of CO2 from such activities have increased the atmospheric concentration of CO2.

- That current CO2, methane and nitrous oxide levels are at “unprecedentedly high levels compared to the past 800,000 years of historical data and pose risks to human health and welfare.”

- Current and projected concentrations of six well-mixed greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, including CO2, threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations.

- Federal Defendants admit that scientific evidence shows that elevated CO2 concentrations have caused ocean acidification and ocean warming and caused adverse effects to coral reefs and wildlife.

- Stabilizing atmospheric CO2 concentrations will require deep reductions in CO2 emissions.

- “The United States has supported fossil fuel development through overseas public financing, primarily through the Export-Import Bank of the United States...” and that the Export-Import Bank “provided $14.8 billion in commitments for 78 transactions or projects in the petroleum sector, including...six in Russia/FSU...The Export-Import Bank of the United States also supported numerous coal and gas power plants.” [continued]

Stay Informed and Take Action During the 2017 Oregon Legislative Session

With the Legislature in session until July, a lot will happen that matters to the League and League members. A good way to keep up with happenings and learn when and how you can be involved is to subscribe to the state LWV’s weekly online Legislative Update. Just address an email to lwvor@lwvor.org, type “Please send me the Legislative Update” on the subject line, and hit “Send.”
Since then, the Trump Administration has been named as the Defendant in the case, replacing Barack Obama. Donald Trump’s stance in denial of climate change has been consistent, as has his commitment to facilitating fossil fuel development.

What the Defense’s strategy will look like going forward is unclear. Attempts to delay the process may be one tack. In a management conference before Federal Magistrate Judge Thomas Coffin on February 7, attorneys for the government called unsuccessfully for the trial to be delayed until 2019. Attorneys for the fossil fuel industry may decide to contest facts admitted in the government’s Answer. An attorney for the Trump Administration stated that his team is considering filing an appeal of Judge Aiken’s fall denial of the Defendants’ motions to dismiss.

One thing seems clear: the courage of these youth climate activists is going to continue to be tested. They seem to be up to the challenge. If you haven’t already, visit www.ourchildrenstrust.org and make plans to attend the April 13 event (see notice elsewhere in this issue)!

Can You Help?
The April event, Nature’s Trust, Our Children’s Trust, has some costs. The LWVRV is not yet a bona fide “charitable” organization [tax status 501(c)(3)], but if you or someone you know is willing and able to contribute towards the expenses, the support would be greatly appreciated. Contact Shirley Weathers at 541-690-7779 or walsh.weathers@gmail.com for instructions on how to ensure your contribution gets appropriately applied. And THANK YOU!
Just in case you missed this from LWV United States…..

The LWVUS sends us many notices of its work, but we don’t all catch each newsletter or email. I just wanted to cover a few things (in a summary fashion) that the LWVUS worked on during the first couple months of 2017.

On bill HB 634 (Rep Gregg Harper: R-Mississippi), which basically calls for the abolishment of the EAC (Election Assistance Commission). The LWVUS calls this “irresponsible.” Aside from other concerns, they point out that many of the ‘new’ machines that were purchased with monies form HAVA (Help America Vote Act) are now reaching the end of their useful cycles. As the EAC is the one organization to oversee such machine requirements or any type of election related fraud, it’s “irresponsible” to consider this abolishment. The LWVUS sent a memo in this regard to the Committee on House Administration.

The LWVUS made public notice regarding the repeated claims about voter fraud that the “issue has been studied and put to rest.” There is no significant evidence of frauds (such as in-person impersonation or double voting).

In a memo to the US Senate, the LWVUS suggested 3 important questions to put before any Supreme Court nominee:

- Must the Executive Branch obey federal judiciary system orders?
- What is the appropriate role for voting rights in our Democracy?
- Is big money in politics a fundamental part of our electoral system or can some limits be justified?

———Barbara Klein, LWVRV National Action

ACTION NEEDED! – Keep the Elliott State Forest Public and Protected!

The proposed sale would:

- Sell off our public lands
- Severely reduce protections for spotted owls, marbled murrelets and Coho Salmon
- Open thousands of acres of rare older forests to industrial-style clearcutting and pesticide spraying

Only members of the State Land Board can stop this sale. The League of Women Voters of Oregon is working with our Conservation allies on long-term solutions that would provide needed money to schools and education, protect critical forest values, create jobs in the timber industry and other fields, and maintain public access. Governor Brown has provided this opportunity to reconsider the sale.

Please get involved NOW!:

Call Governor Kate Brown (503) 378-4582 Treasurer Tobias Read (503) 378-4329 and Secretary of State Dennis Richardson (503) 986-1523 and ask them to keep the Elliott State Forest public and protected.
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

February 2, 2017

To: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

From: Chris Carson, President

Re: Repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Millions of Americans are counting on you not to disrupt their health insurance. The League of Women Voters urges you to ensure that a full replacement plan for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is in place before repealing any of its elements.

The ACA has successfully provided health care coverage to tens of millions of Americans who previously went without. This resulted in significant improvements in people's health and their sense of well-being. Accordingly, the League strongly supports the ACA and believes that fine-tuning is needed to improve the law rather than repeal.

Understanding, however, that many in Congress support "repeal and replacement," the League urges you to retain several essential elements of the ACA that are critical to protecting people's health:

- Guarantee that pre-existing conditions can't be used as a reason to deny coverage or raise rates. Too many people were unable to gain or afford coverage before the ACA due to pre-existing conditions, and their health and budgets were severely impacted.

- Ensure that health insurance rates and access do not discriminate against women. The health needs of women, including preventative care, are different than for men and they should not be penalized for this fact.

- Allow young adults to remain on their parent's plan until age 26. This reform has brought health care coverage to many and helped balance overall costs as well.

- Coverage of preventive care, limits on out-of-pocket costs, and a prohibition on life-time insurance caps are basic reforms that help stop illness and disease before they worsen and become more expensive.

- Ensure that Medicaid recipients can continue to receive full health care services. Medicaid expansion has brought better health in states that have opted in, and should be retained. In any case, Medicaid should not be turned into a block grant since that will both cut back significantly on health coverage and be costly to the states.

Repeal of the Affordable Care Act would leave millions of Americans uninsured, in poor health and one emergency away from financial ruin. Repeal with a mere promise of replacement would severely impact and disrupt health insurance markets and thus threaten people's health and pocket books.

The League of Women Voters urges you to ensure that basic protections are in place before significant changes are made in the ACA.
Observer Corps Reports

Rick Bennett, Medford City Council:

February 2 topics:

- Members of the public recommended a task force on homelessness, and discussed the effects on local businesses downtown.
- Expressed safety concerns about the sidewalks on Central Avenue and the responsibility for maintenance by the Medford Urban Renewal Agency and the City and budgeting for repairs ($300K).
- Made Fire station #3 design approvals; voting members of boards and commissions were appointed.

February 16 topics:

- Supplemental budget for 2015-17 Biennium were approved. Items included transferring Police Public Safety Funds monies to Fire Public Safety, Fire Station #3, and provided federal forfeiture revenue for 3D imaging and law enforcement equipment
- Received $250,000 revenue from MURA and adjustments to Parks & Recreation
- Reports from SOREDI and Alba Sister City were submitted.

Olena Black, Rogue Valley Council of Governments & SOU:

RVCOG, Rogue Valley Council of Governments was formed in 1968 to operate within Jackson and Josephine Counties in accordance with its Charter and Bylaws. The majority of RVCOG’s funding comes through grants and contracts with federal, state, and local government, with additional monies coming from donations and membership dues. It has no legislative, taxing, or enforcement authority. The RVCOG’s Senior and Disability program is also the designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Jackson and Josephine Counties, and reports on the Seniors Meals. There are currently 22 members: 15 local governments and seven other jurisdictions (such as special districts and higher education). Each member government appoints an official as its representative on RVCOG’s Board of Directors. At these meeting each representative gives a short summary of current actions. The Transportation District RVTD has added two new routes. Grants Pass was struggling with problems at the Water Treatment Plant related to the big storm in December 2016.

Southern Oregon University Board Of Trustees Finance Committee. BOTSOU-FIN

The finance committee is responsible for budgeting, tuition, mandatory fees (not student fees), investment, endowments, real property, and personal property. The meetings of the Finance committee review the status of enrollment to projections, and how the month-to-month money is used to run the University compared with current funds. (The University is on track to meet projections). Tuition may increase due to the state’s budget shortfall because of the failure of Prop 97, which would have raised taxes. Tuition projections were presented for increases of 10 to 12% along with the impact. The higher tuition could increase the dropout rate, which would lower student enrollment and require even higher tuition increases.
Civility and Ethics in Oregon Government

The Oregon Legislature does not seem to experience the lack of civility we are seeing at the national level, but the LWVOR has noted that the Southern Poverty Law Center lists Oregon as 10th state in the number of hate crimes nationally (33) as of Nov. 2016. Considering the state’s lower population, that is a higher per capita rate.

Two bills of interest presented by Representative Mike McLane House District 55 [eastern Jackson County] include:

**HB 2945** Proposes that if an incumbent office holder withdraws from running for re-election within three days prior to the regular filing deadline, the deadline would be extended to allow a full three days for new candidates to file.

He also recommends a rules amendment that would require any bill introduced by a legislative committee to include the name of the legislator who requested the bill. Is would require a constitutional amendment (it would therefore be brought before voters).

Oregon Senator Ron Wyden held a Town Hall meeting in Ashland Thursday Feb. 23. Thank you to all the League members who joined the large crowd and Senator Wyden. Local town halls for congressional representatives have been well attended. Representative Greg Walden, District 2, and Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee has not yet answered League calls requesting an in-person Jackson County Town
Membership & Nominating Update

The Nominating Committee will be calling members in the next few weeks. Please consider what help you can give our volunteer workers. Consider working as part of a committee and sharing the task with a friend.

Help is particularly needed in these areas: Secretary or Secretary substitute, Publicity team, Observer Corps, Speakers Bureau, Mock Elections at high schools, and Voter Service.

LWV of the Rogue Valley Membership Application

Name___________________________________
Address_________________________________
Phone__________________________________
Email__________________________________
May we include your contact information in the Directory? Y  N
Annual dues  $65.00
Additional family member $32.50

Areas of interest:
Education_______________________________
Government_____________________________ 
Natural Resources_________________________
Voter Services___________________________
Other___________________________________

Please send this completed application to Rogue Valley League of Women Voters, P.O. Box 8555 Medford 97501 with your yearly dues. Thank you for your interest.

New Members Welcome Meeting

Sunday March 12  2pm-4pm
Lorraine Werblow’s Home  
3017 Pineview Court, Medford
RSVP 541-245-3641
### March 2017

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**Womens History Month**

LWVRV
P.O. Box 8555
Medford OR 97501