



# THE ADVOCATE

## League of Women Voters of Ashland

FEBRUARY 2009

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.

### LWVA BOARD 2008-2009

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 Co-President: Regina Ayars  
 Secretary: Elizabeth Berry  
 Treasurer: Judy Heatherington

#### Directors:

Voters Services: Regina Ayars  
 Membership/Publicity: Eleanore Perkins  
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Iris Milan, Eleanore Perkins, Regina Ayars,  
 Pam Vavra, Eleanor Marzocco

#### Off-Board Chairs:

Book Group: Iris Milan  
 Webmaster: Kate Culbertson

#### Websites:

LWV Ashland: [www.ashland.or.lwvnet.org](http://www.ashland.or.lwvnet.org)  
 LWV Rogue Valley: [www.lwvrv.org](http://www.lwvrv.org)  
 LWV Oregon: [www.lwvor.org](http://www.lwvor.org)  
 LWV United States: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

### FEBRUARY MEETING

#### ASHLAND MOVES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

FEBRUARY 26, 2009  
 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Ashland Elks Lodge  
 255 E. Main Street, Ashland

Dick Wanderscheid, Director of Electric Utility,  
 Will speak about "Conservation and Sustainability Initiatives in Ashland"

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR LUNCH!**

In order to have our meetings at the Elks, we must commit to a minimum of 20 lunches. \$11.00 includes Ashland food tax, gratuity and room rental expenses. If you haven't eaten at the Elks in a while, you're in for a surprise. **They have a great new cook who uses many organic products in her soup/sandwich/salad buffet.** Please join us for a lunch at this historic establishment.

### SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH 19, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.  
 Ashland Community Center



**ASHLAND'S WATER** This is the final program from our Water Study Committee. Important guests will speak about the Future of Ashland's water.

### CALENDAR 2009

Feb. 9: Board Meeting, 3:00 p.m.  
 Feb. 14: 89<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, League of Women Voters  
 Feb. 19: General Mtg. - Sustainability  
 March 19: General Mtg. - Ashland's Water  
 April 23: General Mtg. - TBA  
 May 15-17: LWVOR Convention 2009, Medford  
 May 28: Annual Meeting

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Change is in the air, and we can feel it everywhere, from watching the Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C. and seeing crowds of people with tears of joy in their eyes, to here in Ashland and being at hearings and meetings with many in the community speaking about their hopes for the future. A Task Force on Revenue Restructuring came through the county and heard testimony from city officials about the breadth of unmet needs. Our state legislators hosted forums where they talked about proposals to provide more revenue for state services in line with the reforms the Task Force has been proposing and that many organizations as well as people in the audience supported. They also made clear that the budget was an ongoing process, and they would advocate for more funds for social services, especially to help the neediest. At another meeting our representatives hosted, along with a coalition of organizations, health care reform was the agenda, and the audience came away geared to take action to advance legislation on health care for all in Oregon. Then at the very end of January, a group of Ashlanders organized a community forum where city officials, community leaders and a broad spectrum of citizens shared their ideas on how Ashland can become fully sustainable.

Our speaker this month, Richard Wanderscheid, will tell us what Ashland has done to become more sustainable in its use of energy -- a topic that relates to the issue LWVUS has chosen for its member education program, *Global Climate Change*. The LWVUS Climate Change Task Force has produced a number of papers on the subject, one of which you can read in this newsletter. You can read the full collection by going to the LWVUS website: <http://www.lwv.org>.

You may have noted that change seems to have affected our League too, but on a more mundane level. Instead of the traditional third Thursday of the month luncheon at the Elks Club, we have held meetings at different rooms in the library as well as at the Elks and on different days. (When meeting at the Elks, we have had to switch from the third to the fourth Thursday because of a conflict in scheduling with another group.) In March, we'll be at the Community Center in the evening to see if that time and place will attract a larger audience. As many of our members do like the old tradition, whenever we have outside speakers we'll try to have lunch at the Elks. We look forward to enjoying the Elks' hospitality with many members this month.

At our May annual meeting, change will be the topic of the day. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. John Forsythe, instrumental in organizing the health care forum, talking about proposed health care changes for Oregon. At the May meeting we will elect a new board and decide on changes to our local position statements recommended by the group who met for our program planning session. One possible result from the group's discussion that may be considered at the LWVOR May Convention in Medford is a League study on the quality of grade school education in Oregon. We'll see what happens.

In the meantime, even as the economy weakens, believe that change for the better is happening and that LWVA will be there to promote it.

See you on the 26<sup>th</sup>.  
Judith

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### LEAGUE CITIZENS WELCOME "NEW ERA OF RESPONSIBILITY"

January 21, 2009, Washington, D.C. -- League of Women Voters President Mary G. Wilson today congratulated President Barack Obama on his inauguration as the 44th President of the United States. "This is an historic moment for our nation's democracy, inaugurating America's first African-American president," said Wilson. "Last year's election was also an impressive example of the kind of widespread involvement of citizens that makes our democracy strong."

"President Obama's address included an important call to action for citizens, telling America: 'We are in a new era of responsibility.'" Wilson said. "The League is ready to help citizens answer this call, stay engaged with their government, and hold their elected officials accountable. . . Numerous times, President Obama has signaled his intention to continue to reach out and include the power of citizens in governing this country," Wilson stated. "Americans are hopeful and energized about the potential of **the Obama** Administration. They are ready to be involved with their government and make a difference." "And citizens deserve a government that is open about how they will govern and the direction of their policies," Wilson said. "President Obama has set the right tone in his first address to the nation pledging to 'do our business in the light of day.'"

"But now that the inaugural celebrations are over – it's time to get to work. The League's network of citizens is ready to step up and address the issues that are important nationwide," stated Wilson. "The League is asking citizens to weigh in on the most important issues for the new Administration to focus on and displaying the results at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)."

"The issues that our country confronts cannot be resolved by just the new administration, the Congress and our elected officials," concluded Wilson. "Instead, it will take the full and active participation of many voices to make lasting change in 2009 and beyond."

# **THE UNITED STATES MUST TAKE AGGRESSIVE ACTION TO CUT ITS GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TO STABILIZE EARTH'S CLIMATE**

**Produced by the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force © 2008 by the League of Women Voters of the United States**

## **The evidence is clear that human-induced climate change is underway.**

The emission of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases—primarily by the burning of fossil fuels—has increased the blanket of heat-trapping gases in Earth's atmosphere. Global temperatures have risen approximately 0.8°C (1.4°F) above pre-industrial levels, and this small increase is already causing significant adverse effects. These effects—documented by the world's leading climate scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—include rising sea levels, intensified storms, higher global temperatures, and severe droughts and floods that are already having adverse impacts on human health, food supplies, and ecosystems, as well as national economies.

## **The United States has made a commitment to stabilize the climate.**

The United States Senate ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, joining over 180 nations in a commitment to “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”

## **Prompt action is required to slow the build-up of greenhouse gases.**

According to the IPCC, global emissions must peak and begin declining *before 2015*. There is strong scientific consensus that warming of more than **2°C (3.6°F)** above pre-industrial levels will lead to irreversible damage to our planet. The pre-industrial concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, expressed as CO<sub>2</sub>-eq (CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases and aerosols), was 280 parts per million (ppm). It was 375 ppm in 2005 and is increasing each year. We must start now to limit CO<sub>2</sub>-eq below 450 ppm, adjusting the target periodically as necessary, to reflect our understanding of the rapidly evolving science of climate change. Eventual stabilization at even lower concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>-eq may be necessary.

## **The United States must adopt an aggressive trajectory for reducing its emissions.**

The United States must stop the “Business as Usual” emissions of greenhouse gases and impose aggressive emission reductions starting in 2010. We support adoption by the U.S. of a firm, verifiable cap that reduces emissions at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80-100% below 1990 levels by 2050. Even with these aggressive reductions in the U.S., the global decrease in emissions may lag, as shown in the graphic, resulting in dangerous warming. Furthermore, part of the emitted CO<sub>2</sub> remains and accumulates in the atmosphere; thus, the atmospheric concentration will continue to increase until the global rate of removal exceeds the rate of release.

## **We have the capacity, responsibility and economic imperative to lead this effort internationally.**

The U.S. has met great challenges before—such as World War II and space exploration. Since we are responsible for much of the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases, we need to accept responsibility for being the leader in solving the global climate challenge. Our efforts will transform our way of life by creating a new clean-energy economy and will allow the U.S. to maintain its technological leadership.

## **A FIRM CAP AND A STRINGENT EMISSIONS REDUCTION TIMETABLE ARE CRITICAL FOR AN EFFECTIVE UNITED STATES CAP-AND-TRADE PROGRAM**

### **Aggressive near-term action is essential to stabilize the global climate.**

The United States must cap its greenhouse gas emissions at current levels and steadily reduce the cap to at least 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80-100 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. A firm cap with steadily declining reduction targets will (1) help limit future warming, (2) promote long-term planning and investment in low-carbon technologies, (3) encourage strong action by other nations, and (4) facilitate steeper cuts in future years if called for by new scientific information.

### **Key elements in designing an effective cap-and-trade program.**

- **Scope.** A comprehensive, economy-wide cap-and-trade program covering all greenhouse gases and all major sectors and emissions sources will increase certainty that critical emissions reduction targets are met. Complementary policies such as stronger energy efficiency standards, renewable energy standards and higher fuel economy standards will also be needed, but they are not a substitute for an effective cap on emissions.
- **Allocation.** Allowances should be auctioned rather than distributed free, with revenues used in the public interest, e.g., to fund efficiency measures and clean-energy technologies, invest in green-jobs training programs, cushion vulnerable households from higher energy prices, and help communities adapt to the unavoidable impacts of global warming.
- **Banking.** Allowing capped entities to hold unneeded allowances for use in future years will create incentives to make larger emissions reductions in the near term. Early action is especially important because a significant fraction of carbon dioxide remains in the atmosphere for thousands of years, making it all the more critical to limit cumulative emissions.

• **Borrowing.** Allowing firms to use future-year allowances to satisfy current-year obligations should be strictly limited. Regulations concerning the amount that can be borrowed, the repayment period, and the rate of interest should be designed to ensure that cumulative emissions targets are met.

• **Offsets.** Firms should be permitted to use offset credits generated by projects outside the cap-and-trade program to satisfy a small fraction of their compliance obligations. An offset program can help address emissions in sectors that don't lend themselves to a trading system, e.g., agriculture, landfills, and forestry, as well as support qualified projects in developing countries. The quantity of offsets must be limited, however, so as to maintain incentives for capped entities to invest in new technologies. Offset projects must meet rigorous standards to ensure their environmental integrity and that they achieve real, permanent reductions that go beyond what would have occurred without the incentive of the offset. The following mechanisms would undermine the integrity of the emissions cap and should be rejected.

• **Safety valve.** Setting a ceiling on the price of allowances and permitting capped entities to purchase unlimited additional allowances once that ceiling price has been reached would slow emissions reductions and erode incentives for investments in new technologies. It would also hinder linkage with international carbon markets, which do not use safety valve mechanisms.

• **Circuit breaker.** The option of delaying the scheduled timeline for emissions reductions if the price of allowances rises above a specified level would jeopardize the environmental certainty of the cap.

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## **LWVA ELECTION METHODS STUDY CONSENSUS REPORT, by Eleanor Marzocco**

### **(1) Elections Process Elements:**

The system should promote majority rule, fair representation, high voter turnout and a stable government. The system should be simple and easy for all voters to understand. Votes should be counted accurately with a system developed for verification. All voters should be treated alike to ensure fairness.

### **(2) Criteria:** Four most important; four least important:

The four most important: a) encourage competitive elections; e) increase voter participation; g) encourage geographical representation; j) prevent political manipulation.

The four least important: f) offer range of voter choice; h) encourage "sincere" voting; i) encourage "wasted" votes reduction; l) Fair and accurate representation of political views.

a) and j) were the top vote winners. It was stressed that the system should be easy and clear to win the support of voters. The Oregon system of vote by mail was lauded as a way of informed voting because it allows study of the issues as they are presented on the ballot.

The four least important listed received no votes. However, it was pointed out that item f) is assured by a) and e), which were accepted.

### **(3) Alternative Methods for Oregon--which ones, if any:**

There was consensus on two alternative methods to explore in Oregon--Instant Runoff and Fusion. Encouraging disenchanted minority party members who often do not vote may be accomplished by using these methods. Voters are helped to focus on the issues presented by candidates.

### **(4) Oregon Legislature as Non-Partisan:**

Because of the recent rejection by voters, it was decided not to study this option.

### **(5) Multiple Seat Elections--state or local, if any:**

This model gained consensus for use in local, small city elections but not for state elections. It was deemed extremely important by some in the City of Ashland, which has a history of difficult elections for City Council. Ashland elects its Council members-at-large by position number. Voters complain that they like more than one candidate running for one position, but none of the candidates running for another position. Arguments in favor of the single-seat positions include helping new candidates who have less name recognition and members of minority groups who are less known to the voters.

## **(6) Funding Current Elections:**

The consensus recommended a combination of sharing costs, with the state fully funding state elections. The present system with counties managing elections and billing cities is difficult for poor counties.

Funding election changes:

It was reported that the cost of the software and ballot design is a deterrent to new systems. Also, the required enabling legislation has a history of being difficult to achieve. The chair explained a proposed model for sharing costs of election changes. The first jurisdiction requesting an election change would bear the initial costs. Other jurisdictions adopting the change would pay their share of the costs, reimbursing the one that paid the initial costs.

Additional Comments:

We had a very spirited and lively discussion. So much so that we had to devote two meetings to properly cover all the questions. The write-up on fusion voting seemed difficult for people to understand.

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## **SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE LWVA BOARD MEETING, 1/19/09**

**Present:** Judith Benjamin, Regina Ayars, Judy Heatherington, Vanya Sloan, Elizabeth Berry.  
**Visitors:** Trish Bowcock, Barbara Jarvis, Greg Holmes, and Kate Jackson.

**Regional Problem Solving:** The board listened to the visitors' discussions for and against the City of Ashland signing the RPS Participant's Agreement. Board voted to not take a position.

**Treasurer's Report:** The grant refund from LWVOR for voter services has been received.

**Membership/Handbook:** Calling members to remind them about dues was successful, and the membership list has been updated. Perkins and Sloan are revising the handbook and will have printed copies of revisions ready for annual meeting in May.

**Program Planning Meeting:** Benjamin will have 20 copies of the LWVOR positions printed.

**February Meeting:** An article will be published in the Advocate reminding people of our commitment to buying 20 lunches to host a meeting at the Elks Club, and to inform members that the food has greatly improved and is well worth \$11.00 (incl. tip). Ayars will attend the Newcomers meeting to invite them to the February meeting on Sustainability.

**Water Study:** The Water Study Report is in its first draft. It will be submitted 6 weeks prior to the annual meeting.

**Election Systems Consensus Meeting:** January 26 is the follow-up meeting. A meeting for the National Popular Vote Compact was proposed for April.

**Book Group:** Perkins suggested starting a Great Decisions book group with AAUW. It would be held at the library and open to the public, and would begin in early February.

**Annual Meeting:** Dr. John Forsythe will speak on the topic of health care.

**Legislative Interviews:** Benjamin interviewed Rep. Buckley. She will interview Sen. Bates by telephone.

**The Advocate:** Sloan reminded the board to submit articles for the newsletter. Benjamin will forward relevant articles from the LWVUS Website.

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

**JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

**Annual Membership Dues: (Dues year is May 1 through April 30)**  
**Individual Membership: \$60 \_\_\_ Household Membership: \$90 \_\_\_**  
**Student Membership: \$30**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NEW MEMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ **RENEWAL** \_\_\_\_\_ **ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Special Interest/s:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make your check payable to League of Women Voters of Ashland (LWVA)**  
**P.O. BOX 1296, Ashland, OR 97520**

**Thank you for your support!**