



THE ADVOCATE

League of Women Voters of Ashland

MARCH 2009

P.O. Box 1296, Ashland, Oregon 97520
www.ashland.or.lwvnet.org info@ashland.or.lwvnet.org

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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MARCH MEETING: ASHLAND'S WATER

*March 19th, 7:00 p.m.
Ashland Community Center*

Speakers:

Mike Faught
Public Works Director, City of Ashland
And
Steve Mason
Manager of the WISE PROJECT
(Water for Irrigation, Streams & Economy)

You have received your LWVOR Report on Oregon Water, which you *are* reading! At this meeting, we will bring that knowledge to the local level. As you read the LWVOR Report, think of questions for our speakers. Like, does Ashland have enough water to meet the future? What about climate change? Can we do something about watering our lawns with drinking water?

Please attend and bring your questions and your interested friends. This will be our last informational meeting before our local study report is published.

CALENDAR

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH!

Saturday, March 7: 11:30 a.m., International Women's Day Parade from Triangle Park to SOU's Rogue River Room;

Thursday, March 12th, noon, Medford Library, LWV Rogue Valley Panel Discussion on Open Government.

Tuesday, March 17: Day at the Legislature (See p. 5)

Thursday, March 19: General Meeting: Ashland's Water

Tuesday, March 24: Member Meeting: National Popular Vote Compact Consensus, Ashland Public Library, 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 15: Member Meeting: Water Study Consensus, Ashland Public Library, Noon

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Those members who attended the General Meeting on the 26th were enthusiastic about Dick Wanderscheid's information about Ashland's conservation programs. As Director of the Electric Utility, Ashland's unique municipal power source, and with 30 years of experience in Ashland government, he was able to trace the city's cumulative efforts in conservation.

He noted how the city's contract with Bonneville in 1982 to provide wholesale power has made it possible for the Ashland utility to provide electricity to city residents at a lower rate than the private Pacific Power Company would otherwise charge them. Moreover, the proceeds from the tax on their bills add to the city's general fund to provide residents with other essential services.

Since the introduction of the municipal utility, Ashland's usage of electricity, measured in kilowatt hours per person, has declined to the lowest rate in Oregon, which in turn has a lower rate than the national average. Wanderscheid talked about the city's carrot and stick approach to encourage conservation. Fees depending on usage are the sticks. The carrots are allowing developers, through its Earth Advantage program, to build extra houses in a given site if they are energy efficient; giving home-owners rebates for insulation and energy efficient appliances, a zero interest loan to put in a new heating system, or \$50.00 to remove an old wood-burning stove.

Wanderscheid expects further advances in the future. With increased use of wind and solar power and electric cars, a system could be developed for a smart grid automated to use the cars to power it when capacity is low from too little wind or sun. A cost/benefit analysis will determine whether the city takes advantage of new technology as it emerges. In the meantime, the city has shovel-ready projects, staff and programs, to start once the state gives the city the go-ahead.

When I receive a printed version of Wanderscheid's PowerPoint presentation, I will e-mail it to our members. If you would like a home energy audit, you should call his department. The website is Ashland.or.us/conservation.

Our League has a number of important activities coming up this month. Besides the evening forum on Ashland's Water and the consensus discussion of the National Popular Vote Compact, we're also joining with SOU and other organizations for a parade on Saturday, March 7th to honor International Women's Day. We'd like to see a good turnout when we get together at 11:15 a.m. at Triangle Park to walk to SOU Stevenson Union. You should wear pins, hats, sashes, or whatever will show you're a member of the League. Setting up tables in Ashland to sell the state League's raffle tickets (win a trip to Maui!) will begin in April, but in the meantime, if you want to buy a ticket or sell some to friends, please call or e-mail me at 488-3827, jeg@mind.net. I'll look forward to hearing from you!

Judith

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

In celebration of Women's History Month 2009, the League of Women Voters commemorates the past achievements of women and highlights the successes of women today, making a difference from coast to coast. From the suffragists who founded our organization 89 years ago to the incredible women who work today to improve our communities and our country as elected officials and as volunteers, the League's women are making a profound civic impact.

This month we will celebrate **International Women's Day** on **Saturday, March 7th** by joining with other groups in a parade and festival to mark the event. We will gather at Triangle Park at 11:00 a.m. and march at 11:30 to Stevenson Union's Rogue River Room to enjoy an afternoon of international food and entertainment. Come be with us at the parade and show that the League is still marching on behalf of women.

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In addition, the National Women's History Museum (www.nwhm.org) is a great place to celebrate National Women's History Month. The museum sponsors CyberExhibits, biographies of women and classroom curricula that celebrate legendary female heroes and preserve the stories of women who have been forgotten over time.

PUBLIC HEARING ON HEALTH CARE REFORM, by Judith Benjamin

It was standing room only when the public hearing began on Monday, February 23rd, at the Anne Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass. Conducted by the Health Care Committee of the Oregon House of Representatives, the hearing was held to learn how Southern Oregonians feel about HB2009, which would establish an Oregon Health Authority Board to oversee the state's health care system.

I arrived just as the hearing began and was only able to get a seat after some people testified and left the room. In the time I was there, it was clear how opinion was dividing. The first speaker, President of Asante Health Care, enumerated a long list of uncompensated expenses incurred by his organization's two major hospitals in Southern Oregon and the services and staff that have had to be cut as a result. His main concern about the legislation was the proposed increase in the assessment levied on health care providers, expected to be 4 percent. Committee Chairman Greenlick noted, however, that the percentage had not yet been set and asked if health care providers would accept a higher assessment if federal funds allowed the state to reimburse them dollar for dollar. The answer was "yes."

The next speaker, an insurance agent from Roseburg, expressed his concern with the provision that authorized the Oregon Health Authority to establish a Health Insurance Exchange for people without private health insurance or Medicaid. His argument was that because private insurers in Oregon are competitive, they are able to keep administrative costs low and thus better able than the state to offer a low-cost policy. Another representative of the insurance industry noted the need to educate the public about the variety of options under the proposed Health Insurance Exchange, a job, she argued, better performed and at a lower cost by an experienced independent broker such as herself than by a government employee. Another insurance agent suggested that rather than legislate the recommendations of the Oregon Health Fund Board; they should be evaluated through a two-year study, with the results reported to the legislature. Chairman Greenlick responded that the legislation does authorize the Health Authority to spend the first two years evaluating the system's effectiveness. One or two people who testified wanted to keep the system as it is, using the Oregon Health Plan for anyone unable to afford insurance.

Arguing in favor of the legislation were representatives from Oregon Action. They urged support for all of the Oregon Health Fund Board's recommendations, including the provision that gives people the option to choose either a public or private insurance program. A businesswoman and member of the group mentioned a study confirming people's willingness to try a public health care option. The study found that contrary to popular opinion, voters are not afraid of a government program and believe it would help to standardize the system.

A number of people spoke about their own personal problems with health insurance – acquiring it, paying premiums, or getting coverage of expensive surgery. Private health care providers spoke about unmet needs, such as preventive care and public health education, with hospitals bearing the brunt and at a higher cost to the system. Concerned about the reduced state budget, they hope that Oregon can provide matching funds to take advantage of expected federal funding, which will then cover their expenses

One prominent local businessman, who apparently favors the legislation in general, had an interesting criticism to make about the current health care system. Besides noting his own difficulty affording health insurance, spoke about his employees who won't work extra hours because they'll earn too much to qualify for the Oregon Health Plan.

I left shortly before the session ended, when the majority of people were still there but unable to testify in the time remaining. From what I heard until then, however, I suspect that most of most of them would have argued in favor of the legislation.

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT, by Regina Ayars

The League of Women Voters of Ashland will hold a member's consensus meeting on March 24 at 1:00 p.m. in the Ashland Public Library's Guanajuato Room to discuss the National Popular Vote Compact. The questions listed below will be discussed and the answers will be submitted to LWVUS.

Background

The League of Women Voters studied the topic of the presidential electoral process, which resulted in its 1970 position supporting direct election of the President by popular vote. In 2002, the League voted to expand and update its position. Concurrence on a new position was reached in June 2004. At the 2008 Convention, delegates voted to adopt a new study, “The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the states as a Method for Electing the President.”

The League’s Current Position

“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to Representative Government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.”

The League strongly believes that the Electoral College should be abolished not merely reformed. The League also does not support reform of the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis because the League believes there should be uniformity across the nation in the systems used to elect the President.

Current status of the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact)

Passage of National Popular Vote Compact is accomplished on a state-by-state basis. As of September 1, 2008, the legislation necessary to activate the compact has been signed into law in four states: Maryland, New Jersey, Hawaii and Illinois, for a total of 50 of the 270 electoral votes required to activate the NPV Compact. NPV Compact bills have been introduced in 15 other states, where some have passed committee and others have passed one house.

Note: Information used to write this article was taken from a 12-page background paper written by Carol Mellor.

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

Amending the Constitution

1. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Action to alter a basic element of the Constitutional framework, which is achievable by amendment to the Constitution, should be accomplished by amendment to the Constitution.
- b. Action by states through a compact process is an acceptable way to alter the method for electing the President and Vice-President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

2. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Because a compact has never before been used to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the chance that it might set a precedent for the future leads to the conclusion that it is better that the League continue to work for an amendment to the Constitution to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College.
- b. Despite the novelty of the use of the compact approach to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the League should support the NPV Compact as a way of achieving an important goal.
- c. The group could not reach consensus

Congressional Consent

3. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is not of sufficient concern to block the implementation of the plan.
- b. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is sufficient to conclude that the plan should not be implemented without obtaining such consent.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

National Popular Vote Compact Consensus Questions Enforcement

4. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The NPV Compact contains sufficient enforcement provisions to assure smooth operation of the plan.
- b. Although it is not possible to determine whether the enforcement provisions will be sufficient to assure smooth operation of the plan, the plan should be passed anyway
- c. Enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concerns.
- d. The lack of adequate enforcement provisions is sufficient to conclude that the NPV is not a viable plan.
- e. The group could not reach consensus.

Uniformity

5. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The uniformity of voting systems is more important to American democracy than the possibility that the NPV Compact can be adopted.
- b. The NPV Compact is more important than uniformity of voting systems because it would succeed in achieving the popular election of the President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Popular Election of the President

6. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. It is more important to achieve the goal of national popular election of the President than it is to achieve the goal of abolition of the Electoral College.
- b. It is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College than it is to achieve the goal of popular election of the President by alternative methods, such as the NPV Compact.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Achievability

7. Which statements reflect the views of the group?

- a. The NPV Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and the need for action by so many states.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

b. A constitutional amendment to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College will continue to have problems being passed.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

JOIN US AT THE CAPITOL ON MARCH 17 FOR A DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

Experience the legislature in action! Guest speakers include:

Representative Mary Nolan, House Committee on Land Use

Senator Alan Bates, Senate committees on Health Care and Veterans' Affairs and the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

Representative Phil Barnhart, House Committee on Environment and Water

John Lindback, Elections Division Director, Office of the Secretary of State.

ALL ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!

An agenda, map, parking information, and directions will be available soon on the LWVOR web site: www.lwvor.org.

Advance registration required; space is limited to 50. Return by Monday, **March 9, 2009**, or sooner if possible

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

LWV Member (League Name: _____)

AAUW Member (Branch Name: _____)

Guest

Make checks payable to LWVOR and include with your form.

Workshop with lunch: \$18.00 pp. member; \$22.00 pp. guest Vegetarian lunch

Workshop only: \$11.00 pp. member; \$15.00 pp. guest

All Day Capitol Parking Pass: \$7.00 (we will mail this to you ahead of time)

Please make an appointment for me with my senator or representative

Return to LWVOR, 1330 12th St. SE, Suite 200, Salem, OR 97302 by **Mar. 9, 2009**.

Questions? Call 503-581-5722 or email lwvor@lwvor.org.

Space is limited so [register now!](#)

Sponsored by the [LWV of Oregon](#) and the [AAUW of Oregon](#).

FIRST CALL TO CONVENTION 2009 -- "SHOOTING THE RAPIDS"

HOSTED BY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ROGUE VALLEY

TIME & PLACE: The 2009 State Convention will be held Friday through Sunday, May 15-17, 2009 at the Red Lion Hotel, 200 N. Riverside Ave., Medford, Oregon

CONVENTION: Is the biennial State Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Oregon, which is held on alternate years to the State Council. First Call is issued so that local Leagues can begin to plan and discuss matters that will be presented at convention.

PURPOSE: The convention shall consider and authorize for action a program; shall elect the president, first vice-president, secretary, three directors (two-year terms), and three members of the nominating committee, as well as a chair of the nominating committee; shall adopt a budget for the ensuing year; and shall transact such other business as may be presented.

DELEGATES: The convention shall consist of the Board of Directors of LWVOR, and delegates chosen by members through the local Leagues. Each local League shall be entitled to two delegates for the first 40 members or fewer. If possible, one delegate should be the President. An additional delegate is allowed for every 20 additional members belonging to the local League as of January 31, 2009. Also, one delegate shall be chosen by the Board of each Inter-League Organization and one delegate for every 20 Members-at-Large (MAL). If there are fewer than 10 MALs, the interest of the MALs shall be represented by the LWVOR Membership Chair.

OBSERVERS: Any member of a local League in Oregon may attend as an observer. Observers may not vote but may, upon recognition of the Chair, have the privilege of the floor. League members are urged to exercise this privilege and local Leagues are encouraged to bring many observers to the convention.

Registration and workbook:

Delegate (includes workbook)	\$65
Full time observer (includes workbook)	\$25
Part time observer (no workbook)	\$10
Workbook	\$5

Meals: \$55 (approx.) covers Saturday lunch & Saturday banquet

RAFFLE: Drawing for Hawaii trip will be Saturday night, May 16.

Please make your reservations as soon as possible to ensure availability. The deadline for guaranteed reservations is May 2.

Phone: 503-581-5722; **Fax:** 503-581-9403; **Email:** lwvor@lwvor.org; **Web:** www.lwvor.org
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM (closed Fridays in summer)

SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF THE LWVA BOARD MEETING ON 2/10/09

Treasurer's Report: It was reported that our finances are in good order.

Membership: Our membership list has been updated on the LWVUS database. We have 70 members.

February Meeting: Dick Wandersheid will talk about Ashland's Electricity Sustainability.

Local Water Study: The report will be ready by mid-March. Draft will be sent to the board to discuss at the April board meeting. Consensus meeting will be on or about April 16th at the library. Benjamin will secure a room and advise of date.

March Meetings: (1) Ashland's Water, March 19, Community Center; (2) Member consensus meeting on National Popular Vote Compact, date to be decided. Ayars will send article for newsletter. Benjamin will contact library about meeting room.

Great Decisions Book Group: More information is needed.

Nominating Committee: Committee will meet this Friday at 1:30 p.m.

April Meetings: (1) Water Study Consensus, date to be determined; (2) April 23, General Meeting with Dr. Forsythe.

May Meeting: The Annual Meeting will be a membership meeting with no guest speaker. Date to be determined

IN MEMORIUM:

Belle G. Douglass: 1909-2009. We offer our condolences to the family of Belle Douglass. Belle was a long-time member of our League and a great lady. We will miss her.

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!