



# VOTER

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Summer 2011

## ***State Convention 2011: Meeting Big Challenges: Economics and Demographics***

*Jane Gigler*

The weekend of May 13-15 saw many League members gather in Keizer, Oregon for our convention. All conventions have three main goals – to pass a budget, to determine our program and to elect new officers. We successfully accomplished all three and had three interesting workshops, some dynamic caucuses, and some great discussions.

Libby Medley ably chaired the budget discussion and explained the major budgetary change made by the state League. Ever since the League split into LWVOREF and LWVOR, expenses have been divided 50-50. However, a review of these expenses over the past decade revealed that a 60-40 split more accurately reflects the larger portion of Education Fund activities the League accomplishes. The adopted LWVOR budget has expenses of \$69,788. The LWVOREF budget adopted by its trustees (not by the delegates at convention) will have a budget of \$141,906.

After adopting our current positions and the continuation of the Coastal Management study, the delegates at convention also voted to complete a restudy of the Children at Risk position. See page 6 for more details.

The convention also featured a workshop on membership growth entitled “Silver and Gold” to challenge members to think about

the League and its members in a new way. After a review of the structure and life spans of organizations and a discussion about why change is necessary if an organization is going to grow, there were exercises to encourage League members to think creatively about general meetings.



**Mary Sinclair and Marnie Lonsdale lead the Silver and Gold Workshop**

The second session of workshops offered members a choice. One focused on using technology to make meetings and communication more available, even if members are not in town. Skype phone calls offer a way to attend meetings from afar. The other workshop focused on social media – how to use a Facebook account for your  
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## State Convention

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League and to let your friends know about the activities of your League.

While we did focus strongly on League basics – membership and communication – the League also enjoyed the observations of Will Rogers, a political wit of the 1920s. Cy Eberhart, a retired pastor, has had a long admiration for Will Rogers and brought him vividly to life, along with his wry comments about politicians. The Marion/Polk League sponsored this humorous talk that shows that although the cast of characters change, politics does not change.



**Cy Eberhart as Will Rogers**

The evening speaker was more serious. William Bernstein, an economic writer and retired physician, shared his thoughts about the federal budget and the challenges it faces with the rapid growth in predicted Medicare expenses. Dr. Bernstein presented a series of graphs that outlined the stresses placed on the federal government's budget and the woes associated with current health care system and its failure to emphasize sound public health policies. (Full disclosure: Dr. Bernstein is the spouse of Jane Gigler, 2010-2011 Education Fund Chair).

A new slate of officers was also elected at convention. They are:

Robin Wisdom (President) 2011-13 – Umpqua Valley  
 Mary Sinclair (First Vice President) 2011-13 – Rogue Valley  
 Becky Gladstone (Secretary) 2011-13 – Lane County  
 Trish Bowcock (Director) 2011-13 – Rogue Valley  
 Marianne Germond (Director) 2011-13 – Member at Large  
 Rose Lewis (Director) 2011-12 – Marion/Polk Counties  
 Betsy Pratt (Director and Chair of the Education Fund) 2011-13 – Portland

Remaining on the board are:

Pamela Ashland (Treasurer) 2010-12 – Clackamas  
 Alice Bartelt (Action chair) 2010-12 – Member at Large  
 Rita Fawcett (Director) 2012-12 – Portland  
 Marnie Lonsdale (Director) 2010-12 – Portland

A few League members also enjoyed a book discussion about Frances Perkins, FDR's secretary of labor and the first woman cabinet member. Having witnessed the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in New York City, Frances Perkins developed an interest in the work force and a determination to improve working conditions. She fought some of the same issues we are still fighting today.

Taken all together, the convention accomplished a great deal and League members enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with old friends at meals, including the dine-around in Keizer. The incoming and continuing local League Presidents also had an opportunity to network at breakfast on Sunday morning. New friendships were formed and old friendships were renewed as "one is silver and the other is gold."

### LWVOR Board of Directors

Robin Wisdom, President  
 Mary Sinclair, 1st VP  
 Marnie Lonsdale, 2nd VP  
 Becky Gladstone, Secretary  
 Pam Ashland, Treasurer  
 Betsy Pratt, Education Fund Chair  
 Directors: Alice Bartelt, Trish Bowcock  
 Rita Fawcett, and Marianne Germond.  
 Rose Lewis.

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**VOTER** Editor: Karan Kuntz

### LWVOR Mission

The League of Women Voters® of Oregon is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government in order to build better communities statewide. The state League's purposes are to influence public policy through education and advocacy and to provide support for League members and the League organization.

## Announcing the Winner of the LWVOR Raffle 2011!

*Robin Wisdom*

The LWVOR Raffle 2011 came to a close at the LWVOR convention when the Raffle winner's name was drawn on the evening of May 14<sup>th</sup>. And the winner is.... Catherine Pratt, sister of Betsy Pratt of LWV Portland, seller of the ticket, and the new EF Chair for 2011-2013. Catherine has won the \$3,000 travel certificate to be arranged with Walker Travel in Gresham, Oregon. Congratulations, Catherine! We can't wait to hear of your travel plans!

The number of tickets sold this year was 1305, which translates into \$13,050. After expenses the net amount is estimated at about \$10,000, which will greatly help LWVOR by offsetting office and operations expense.

Other interesting facts: 150 tickets were sold online, 12% of all tickets sold. 13 local Leagues participated, and nine of them made money for their local Leagues by selling as many or more tickets as members in their respective Leagues.

Special Acknowledgement: Kudos to Dorthea Petersen of LWV Curry County, the individual who has sold the most tickets of all League members in the last three Raffle events, averaging over 50 tickets each Raffle. Dorthea, thank You for your dedication and support!



Thank you to all ticket sellers and buyers. The Raffle is an important component of LWVOR's budget, and your sales make a difference. The League could not do all it does without your support.

*Robin Wisdom & Lorie James, Raffle Co-Chairs*

# President's Column / Robin Wisdom

I remember my mother saying she always heard good things about the League of Women Voters, but she never joined. In 2001 I joined the League, and then I encouraged my daughter to become a member. Now a League member of ten years, I have been elected president of the League of Women Voters of Oregon for the next two years.

Originally from San Diego, California, and after high school and a stint in Hawaii "finding myself," I found myself in Roseburg, Oregon. Marriage and children happened; it seemed instantaneous at the time, like just adding water! Three of them arrived in sequential order, 19 and 22 months apart.

After the children were attending pre-school and kindergarten, I returned to school where I earned an associate degree in computer programming in 1990 at Umpqua Community College. Although I never worked in my field, I usually ended up the computer person at work. I worked in the credit reporting industry for six years as Director of Operations and through "Y2K." In 1996 UARCO, a printing factory in Roseburg employed me in pre-press communications until the business was purchased, gutted and closed down. After that I juggled several part time jobs for five years. One of those part-timers was for an environmental organization in Roseburg, Umpqua Watersheds. At the same time I was also office manager and bookkeeper for a small medical clinic for women. I retired in 2005.

My goal in life is to savor the tremendous beauty of natural Oregon, and I mean every corner of it. The rivers should all be protected and floated – by me! I love the Rogue and Umpqua Rivers in particular. My husband and League member, Gerald, and I love to float the rivers during the summer in our 14' self-bailing raft. The League became the perfect venue in which to express my appreciation of Oregon's treasured waterways.

From 2007 to 2010 I served as a co-chair of the LWVOREF Water Study. In 2009 I served as the state League Development Chair for two years, and in 2006 I was development chair for one year. On the local level, I served as president of the Umpqua Valley League for three years and later as Treasurer and Membership Chair. My other interests include but are not limited to making friends, beading, gardening, rafting, sewing, and traveling.

I am excited and challenged to meet my new obligations as president, and I am overjoyed to have the opportunity to grow, learn, stretch myself personally, network, and accomplish something for the greater good. Thank you to the members of the League of Women Voters of Oregon!



## **Meet Betsy Pratt, Newly Elected Education Fund Chair**

*Betsy Pratt, Education Fund Chair*

I am a third generation League member, following in the footsteps of my grandmother and mother. My mother gave me a membership in 1970 when 18-year-olds were first allowed to vote in Massachusetts. I graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a degree in urban studies, and I also earned a Masters in Public Administration from Syracuse University. My first real job was in Washington, D.C., with the Federal Energy Administration, managing energy conservation programs.

During a yearlong special assignment with the Minnesota Department of Energy, I started flying lessons. I met my husband, Philip Thor, when I returned to the DC area and looked for a new flight instructor. Phil later joined my agency, by then part of the US Department of Energy (DOE), and in 1981 we moved to Portland to work for the Bonneville Power Administration, which is also part of DOE. I retired from BPA in 2008, after a series of diverse jobs, including internal management consultant, library manager, and facilities manager.

Throughout my working career, I was an active League member, serving on study committees and on the Portland Board as secretary, treasurer, director, and vice president. For 10 years, I was on the Board of Directors for the Lloyd District Transportation Management Association, an outgrowth of both my BPA job and my urban studies interest.

After retiring, I was elected president of the Portland League and just finished that 3-year stint. I also began weekly cat care sessions at the Oregon Humane Society and reading to first and second graders under the SMART

program. It has been years since either Phil or I have piloted a plane. After Phil discovered woodworking, and we both rediscovered a love of hiking and travel, we haven't had the time.

As chair of the LWVOR Education Fund, my portfolio, or area of responsibility, includes voter service and member/community education. We will be focusing on the latter during the fall while we complete the coastal study and organize the newly approved study of state and local services for children at risk. We will also be doing the groundwork for the spring 2012 primary election. We hope to expand our use of the on-line *Voters' Guide*, VOTE 411 and develop an improved format for the hard copy *Voters' Guide*.

However, for the next 6 weeks, I'm planning to not think about the League at all. Phil, who retired in March, and I are taking an exhaustive, or maybe exhausting, tour of Europe with stops in Venice, Nice, Corsica, and the Dordogne area of southwest France. Enjoy your own summer holidays!

## **Bylaws Amendments Pass at Convention**

*Alice Bartelt*

The 2011 state convention passed a number of bylaws amendments. The ones that will have the most impact on local Leagues will allow more flexibility in selecting council and convention delegates by not stipulating that the president must be one of the delegates. Another amendment will allow the final call to convention to be sent by e-mail. An online copy of the workbook will be available, but members who want a hardcopy of the workbook may request one ahead of time or wait to receive it at registration. There were a number of other amendments that were housekeeping in nature and also one that affected the board's ability to do business by e-mail. The new state bylaws will be posted on the LWVOR website in the next few weeks.



## ***Restudy of Children At Risk Adopted at Convention***

*Karen Nibler*

The Governor's Initiative to establish an Early Learning Council was the incentive to restudy this 1995 position. The LWVOR Convention delegates considered the non-recommended update and approved a restudy of the 1995 Children at Risk Position. The Mental Health Services for Children and Youth position from 1975 is also to be included in the new restudy. League members who are interested in joining the study committee should contact Betsy Pratt ([b.pratt@lwwor.org](mailto:b.pratt@lwwor.org)) or Karen Nibler ([niblerk@comcast.net](mailto:niblerk@comcast.net)).

The scope of the restudy will be prevention programs and services for children of all ages. Over the next two years the state study committee will gather information from the Early Learning Design Team and state agencies. Local Leagues will interview local agencies and will contribute that perspective to the study. The current Children at Risk position focuses on Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting only. The LWVUS position is broader but too brief. The LWVUS position does not include mental health.

The Governor appointed the Early Learning Design Team, which started meeting in March. The Team has been tasked with recommending a detailed action plan by June 30, 2011. The Early Learning Council is expected to be established on July 1, 2011, but it will not be ready to begin implementation for another year. The proposal includes the consolidation of all services for ages 0-5 under the education umbrella, to assure that all children are ready to learn when they enter Kindergarten. Services include day care, family preservation, mental health, early intervention, public health and pre-school.

League members who would like background information can access several websites for information:

- Build Strong Foundations for our Youngest Children, the federal program, is at [www.buildinitiative.org](http://www.buildinitiative.org). Charles Bruner presents "A Framework for State Leadership and Action in Building the Components of an Early Childhood System."
- The Early Learning Design Team website is [www.oregon.gov/GOV/OEIT/EarlyLearningDesignTeam](http://www.oregon.gov/GOV/OEIT/EarlyLearningDesignTeam). The minutes of the meetings and background information presented to the team is filed according to meeting dates. The Team started with Early Childhood Matters and Head Start Goals on 3-14 and the Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Workplan on 4-4. A targeted 40% of the 0-5 child population was identified, and documents on Poverty and Inequality were reviewed on 4-11. The National Center for Children in Poverty Data was introduced on 4-25 along with Revenue Sources for the Early Learning programs. There is also a Birth to Five Literacy Plan of 207 pages.
- Another resource is the Annie E. Casey Foundation and KIDS COUNT that has published, "Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters." The website address is [www.aecf.org/PUBS/Initiatives/KIDS](http://www.aecf.org/PUBS/Initiatives/KIDS).

### **New Water Study Position**

We are pleased to announce the adoption of the new LWVOR Water Position. Take a look at <http://www.lwwor.org/lwworpositions.htm#quality>.

## Where Are Our Legislative Archives? OR GO PAPERLESS - SAVE A TREE

*Paula Krane, Government Access Chair*

The latter title is all over many publications. Every bulletin, announcement or utility bill we receive has this written on it somewhere.

With each new technological advance we could have trouble reading past documents. As the Oregon Legislature (as well as all governmental bodies, private companies, schools, and almost any group you can name) has joined the rush to go paperless, many concerns about the process have surfaced. What about all the people who do not have computers or feel uncomfortable around them? Have these members of the public lost their access to legislators? How are phone calls and paper now being handled at the capitol by legislative and committee administrators? What is happening to all our communications with the governor and his office?

The state archivist and local officials in this position assure me that all official testimony and meeting records are being kept. This includes all committee and floor records. However, not all the versions of a bill might be kept as it moves through the Legislature.

The Oregon Legislature is following the law and keeping all the required materials on computer servers or back up files and updating as technology changes. But is this an illusion of digital permanence? Archivists and librarians are worried that maybe 20 or 30 years from now, historians or students might not be able to read that material – some transfers of data files might not be possible.

Besides these long term retrieval concerns, many immediate concerns exist. What is happening to all these emails, testimonies,

and other electronic communications that are being sent to our legislators? What type of filing system is being used and can our legislators easily find all the communications concerning specific bills when it is time for them to vote? Or are all these emails, etc., just sitting somewhere in cyberspace or on a spare flash drive? This is an immediate problem, but at the same time, it is long reaching. After this session, where is all this electronic data going to be filed so that in the future, Legislatures and the public can access them?

By Oregon statute, individual legislators do not have to keep any of this after the session. It is not part of the public record. Some legislators generously donate all this material to a university library or their county's museum archives. However, Oregonians may be losing a lot of their history.

With each new technological advance we could have trouble reading past documents. Do we need a paper copy of everything somewhere? And where? This issue of going paperless seems to present more questions than answers; however, the League needs to keep asking these questions until we get good answers or until the technology is sufficiently advanced to cover all past storage attempts.

See page 11 for some suggested questions about the League's immediate concerns. When you see your legislators, it would be helpful if you sent me their responses. (Paula Krane [kranep@peak.org](mailto:kranep@peak.org)) Include your name and the date of the interview. We must also keep asking questions about what is happening to all this saved information on their computers and how concerned citizens will be able to access this information 30 to 40 years from now.

## **SOLD on Vote411**

*Rita Fawcett, Voter Services Co-Chair*

A gratifying event of the 2011 convention in Keiser was the Voter Service caucus on Friday night where some 25 members learned what the voter service team has been up to. Heather Drake, Clackamas County League, led a PowerPoint presentation about the new, on-line source for election information, Vote411. Copies of this presentation are available upon request from Deanie Anderson (deanieha@comcast.net), and it will also be posted on the League's website.

The exciting part of Vote411 is the ease for voters in accessing information about state and local candidates and the complementary ease for candidates to answer our issues questions. It goes a step further than our traditional *Voters' Guides* by providing voters an opportunity to compare candidates side-by-side. Voters will be able to see candidates' photos, or even a video that a candidate might want to upload.

Vote411 is so easy that local Leagues can either write their own questions and put in their own researched local ballot measures or let the state voter service team use generic questions for their local candidates. The best part is the voter will now see every office that will be on her or his individual ballot. Vote411 can accommodate as many individual races as your community holds. From local boards to presidential candidates, Vote411 will host them all.

Voter Service experimented with Vote411 at the state level and at the city/county level in Ashland, Clackamas, EMCO, Rogue Valley and Portland Leagues. Those voter service chairs and members liked what they saw - the ease of use and the ability to connect with voters online. Now the state is making this opportunity available to all local Leagues, at no charge, for both the primary and the

general elections in 2012. It is supported by LWVUS and will be paid for by the state League Education Fund through a grant from the Saling Foundation. National will walk local Leagues through the process in webinars, and as needed, the state will also offer training. Both will provide the technical support local Leagues might need to make this a successful endeavor.

So, can you say SOLD on Vote411? Voter Service is, and we are excited to make this part of voter services for Leagues all over the state. Hope you and your League think so, too.



## **Membership Message**

*Sandra Smith Gangle*

As of May 12, 2011, our statewide membership is at 1066. That is an increase of nineteen members over the February number, which was the lowest it had been in years, at 1047 members. The tide seems to have turned. Let's keep that positive growth going!

Over our ninety-year history, Oregon's League membership rose, and then fell, like an ocean tide. The numbers moved steadily upward between the 1920's and the mid-1950s. High tide lasted about twenty years before the membership wave began to recede.

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## **Membership Message**

*Continued from Page 8*

Records show, for instance, that in 1949, there were 1952 members in four established local Leagues plus 78 members in seven provisional Leagues, for a total of 2030 members statewide. Between 1981 and 2011, however, we lost more than 800 members. The most obvious reason for the decline was that more and more women went to work outside their homes. They simply did not have time to devote to League meetings and studies. So, recruitment of new members slowed down. At the same time, many of our long-standing members were becoming less active as they reached their senior years.

The current leaders of Oregon's local Leagues are working hard to help the membership tide rise again. At our 2011 Convention, the delegates and observers participated enthusiastically in a workshop that demonstrated ways to make League meetings fun and meaningful at the same time. We learned that new people will be more likely to join our organization if they see variety in the venues of our meetings and the programs we present and they learn that our activities are fun as well as interesting. We learned that by thinking "outside the box" and collaborating with others, we can partner with groups of people in our communities who are under-represented in the League, such as men, young people and members of racial and ethnic minorities. With such new involvement, we can stimulate new interest and participation in League projects. Membership numbers will increase and new leaders will emerge.

This is my last message in the capacity of LWVOR Board's Membership Chair. I want to thank all the Board members and local

League leaders I have worked with over the past four years. I know how committed you are to the success of our organization and how hard you have worked. I have appreciated your willingness to try new ways of recruiting and retaining members. Hopefully, due to your vision and your diligence, the tide has now turned and our membership numbers will continue to rise again.

## **LWVOR/Local League Silent Auction**

*Pam Ashland, Treasurer*

The silent auction at the 2011 LWVOR convention not only was fun, but it added to both the State and local league coffers. Fifteen red Chico bags filled with themed goodies crowded the assigned table. Nine local leagues showed off their areas with tempting treats such as tea, wine, chocolates, books, and hazelnuts. The State Board members and committees provided six bags that ranged from a tribute to Colleen Bennett to fun at the coast, complete with the fixings for s'mores. The local leagues gathered \$865 and the State received \$276. Thanks to all who filled bags with delights and many thanks to those who bid on and won the silent auction bags.



ight!

## ***More Convention Highlights***

**The LWVOR board assembled beautiful gift baskets for outgoing LWVOR President Marge Easley (below) and outgoing LWVOR Education Fund Chair Jane Gigler.**



**Delegates participate in a convention business session.**

**Heather Drake leads a mini workshop on using Skype for League collaboration.**



**Robin Wisdom and Lorie James, Raffle co-chairs, prepare to draw the winning ticket.**

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## ***Where Are Our Legislative archives: Questions for Legislators***

Legislator \_\_\_\_\_

Legislative Administrator \_\_\_\_\_

- How are you acknowledging email concerns?
- How is your computer filing system organized?
- Does the Legislator have easy access to all communications for each bill – including emails from voters?
- How can the public access this material?
- Will you accept any paper communications? What do you do with written communication?
- How are you handling phone calls, particularly if the calls relate to a specific bill?
- What are some of your concerns about going paperless?
- What changes are you advocating or suggesting? How can we help?

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the Interview \_\_\_\_\_

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