

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OREGON



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Come Join Us for the Day at the Legislature

Alice Bartelt, Action Committee Chair

We hope that you will be able to join us on April 29th for the LWVOR Day at the Legislature. The following folks have agreed to speak to us:

- Senator Tim Knopp
- Kristen Sheeran, Energy and Climate Change Policy Advisor to Governor Brown
- Representative Carla Piluso, Criminal Justice Reform
- Jim Carlson, Coalition for Common Good
- Representative Dan Rayfield; and Senator Jeff Golden.

You will also hear from our Action Committee Coordinators. At lunch, you will have the opportunity to network with folks about specific areas of legislation. A special thank you goes to Action Committee members Barbara Ross and Debbie Runciman for putting the program together.

There are many more groups holding lobby days this year, and Room 50 at the Capitol was not available for any group to use. So, our meeting will be held at the Willamette Heritage Center. It is not far from the Capitol but may be too far to walk for some. On the positive side, parking at the Center is free.

The fee for the day includes breakfast rolls and a boxed lunch. To register, please go to <http://lwvor.org/day-at-the-legislature-2019/>. We hope to see you there!



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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.

Convention 2019 in Ashland

Convention 2019
Ashland Springs Hotel
May 17 - 19, 2019

Robin Wisdom & Barbara Klein

Please join members from around the state in fabulous Ashland for a splendid Convention and the chance to get together to discuss issues. There's lots to do in Ashland, so plan to come early and stay late! First Call has gone out (we hope you marked your calendar). Look for the Second Call to Convention in April. Reserve your rooms early to get the group rate and the type of room you prefer.

You can guarantee your rooms now – Call the Ashland Springs Hotel to reserve at 541-488-1700. All Convention-related events will be held at the Ashland Springs Hotel. However, rooms are available at both the Ashland Springs Hotel and the Ashland Hills Hotel (2 miles from the Ashland Springs Hotel at exit 14).

Our League hosts from LWV Rogue Valley encourage you to kick off this special anniversary year by celebrating our convention theme of honoring the League as "A Beacon of Democracy for 99 Years". Come for fun, great speakers, informative workshops, and networking. Join us in Making Democracy Work.

Hope to see you there!

Improving Civics Education with the Harvard Case Study Method: Teacher Training Opportunity

The League of Women Voters of Greenwich (CT) has piloted a successful civics education program in partnership with local high schools, using cases from Harvard Business School Professor David Moss's recent book, *Democracy: A Case Study*. The League of Women Voters of Oregon is sponsoring one high school social science teacher from each school district in Oregon to attend an [all-expenses-paid professional development workshop](#) at Harvard, led by Professor Moss in August. Additional information about the project can be found at <https://www.hbs.edu/case-method-project/Pages/default.aspx>.

Elections May 21, 2019

What do the water you drink, the first responders who show up when you call, and the delightful kids who board the school bus down the street have in common? Some of the elected officials who oversee the agencies that provide these services in your community will be on the ballot in May. In some areas, there will be bond measures and levies to provide funding for them. These are very local and very important elections.

Local Leagues will be gathering information and writing questions for these positions to load into Vote 411 so we can provide voter information. Sarah Andrews and Amanda Crittendon in the LWV Oregon office will be providing the technical expertise to populate Vote 411 and will devise a format that local Leagues can use to print Voters Guides for the positions of interest. Some Leagues have started planning forums. These elections are where the League can shine by giving candidates ways of getting their messages out and encouraging voters to be knowledgeable and to vote.

Keeping Busy at the Capitol

Alice Bartelt, Action Committee Chair

The League is blessed with having many of our members engaged in the legislative process. We have six coordinators and many portfolio chairs. Although there are many people involved, we can always use more help.

We are at about mid-term in the session, so there are a couple of thousand bills that have been drafted and that are all still alive. But, the deadline for any bills to be scheduled to be heard in a committee in the house of origin is fast approaching. After the deadline, some of the bills that we have been following will be gone.

The Action Committee meets every Monday morning at 10:30 to go over upcoming testimony and to hear the status of bills. If members are unable to come to Salem, they may join the meeting by phone.

One of the most important aspects of advocating at the Capitol is working

within coalitions and task forces. LWVOR is a member of many coalitions and have members on numerous task forces. These members amplify our voice in working on many of the issues that we support or oppose.

We hope that you are all reading the Legislative Report each week. It takes many hours of work by our coordinators and portfolio chairs. In addition to the updates about the bills that we are following, we have tried to include a schedule of lobby days for many of the groups that we work with. We hope that you will consider attending some of them.

Finally, a House Concurrent Resolution will honor Kappy Eaton on April 25 at about 11:00 am on the House Floor. This is also the lobby day for Small Donor Elections Reform. We hope to see many of you in the House gallery that day.

Central High School Senior Wins LWV Essay Contest

A senior at Central High School in Independence is the winner of the first essay contest conducted by the League of Women Voters of Marion and Polk Counties. Taylor Buccello won with her essay, "Civil Discourse: A New Age." As the winner, she received a \$500 award from the League. Her essay follows.

Civil Discourse: A New Age

Taylor Buccello

With the introduction of online social media in the late twentieth century, the goal was to provide a new platform for communication. Families and friends across a country or across an ocean could reconnect with pictures and messages that would reach their recipient instantly and, unlike a phone call, stay there until seen. No longer was it necessary to balance schedules across time zones, trip over the stairs to reach the ringing phone before the call ended, or wait a week after the fact to receive holiday pictures. It was a new age of social connection.



Social media provided a relatively safe way to meet new friends and spread messages, something organizations and companies inevitably discovered they could utilize. Advertisements, promotions, publicity for politicians and celebrities, news articles—it all seeped into online communication. And so, social media shifted a chunk of its purpose from social connection and onto the dispersion of information. Both connecting and informing are vital components of civil discourse and social media remains an excellent platform for the engagement and discussion required in healthy civil discourse.

However, as time has gone on, social media has, in some regards, strayed from the path of true understanding, another critical component of civil discourse. The various social media sites are open for any and all to make an account and post their piece for others to read and respond to. In this way, it's possible to connect with people who share your views or to converse with those who don't. People across countries and continents can talk about shared experiences and issues and ideas. They're able to organize meetings and marches. They can rally support for a statewide measure or national petition. Most importantly, they can connect to share information, enhance knowledge, further a belief, and to understand an issue or idea in more depth than they had before.

The issue arises with the anonymity social media presents. The disconnect between the words a person types and the person who types the words can be difficult for some to coalesce. Oftentimes, people have less fear when communicating with people on the internet—strangers, friends, family members, it doesn't matter. The lack of physically seeing the other person can
(Continued on page 5.)

Civil Discourse Essay (Continued from page 4.)

lead to a sense of safety and of freedom from judgement and the social norms. Under this cyber cloak of invisibility, people are less afraid to confess love or ask for favors or, most importantly for civil discourse, to argue.

The understanding that is born from healthy civil discourse is indisputably the most important goal. Yet, due to the faceless nature of social media, paired with a voiceless response, the arguments apt to appear are not ones of debates meant to enlighten, but of the crude and emotional thrusting of ideas and beliefs into the face of another. In the case of a writer for The Kenan Institute for Ethics, when she posted about being catcalled on Facebook, she received support and advice about how a family friend deals with the issue. When this woman's friend posted the same sort of concern on her own page, she was met with a man who put forth a "defensive and close-minded tone similar to the #NotAllMen campaign," which has often been cited as leading to the derailment in civil discourse about women's issues. In the first instance, the use of Facebook allows the conversation to continue and advice to be shared, while the latter results in an internet argument leading only to hurt and frustration on either side. These two distinct responses to the same sort of post on the same social media platform show the split between the information side of social media: that which provides a lack of conflicting views and that which provides a lack of civil responses. This phenomenon is the result of what some scholars call an "echo chamber." Echo chambers on the internet behave much like their physical namesakes: they throw back the same information in which is thrown to them. In a working paper by Yosh Halberstam and Brian Knight, this idea is supported using data from liberal and conservative Twitter accounts. It was found that the liberal voters within the study followed 67% liberal accounts and 33% conservative accounts, while the conservative voters followed only 20% liberal accounts and 80% conservative accounts. Thus, the 90 million politically-active (defined here as following one or more candidates for the House of Representatives) accounts studied in this experiment had unknowingly crafted a social media of largely like-minded people.

Social media is a place for the spreading of information. With the account owner surrounding themselves with like-minded people, their social media account can become a place of extreme bias, of an echo chamber repeating what they want to hear. This is a frightening notion, as the Pew Research Center reported that, in 2017, 45% of Americans used Facebook to get their news—the same platform on which the two women in the first example received quite different responses to the same issue.

There's no doubt that social media is a great place to receive information. Considering the amount of people who get their news from social media, many would be oblivious to the goings on of their country or their community without these platforms. However, the point of civil discourse is to understand what is being discussed, and can someone really understand something when they're never exposed to the perspectives they would disagree with? With online social media rapidly becoming the most common form of civil discourse, its flaws have proven harmful to the enhancement of understanding. Although it's easier to connect with people, it's easier to see their posts as something to reply to and not a person with their own experiences. While it's an efficient way to gain knowledge and information, the manmade bias associated with social media sites leaves many blind to the full picture. We, as a society, must become aware of the flaws of social media in order to make this new age of civil discourse a shining example to remember for years to come.

Voting

Jane Gigler, a member of the 100th Anniversary Committee

The League has fulfilled many roles in their endeavors to provide Voter Service. From registering voters to preparing voting guides, we try to create an equal playing field for all voters to cast their ballots. Sometimes the physical act of voting also comes to our attention. The excerpt below is from "Voting Machines for Clark County" by LWV Portland, Know Your Community Bulletin, October 1956, Vol. iv #2.

Multnomah County observers agreed that Clark County's new voting machines proved a big success in their first trial there at the primaries early in September. Clark County paid about \$1,500 a piece for its 4 voting machines. Multnomah County officials felt that the machines were certainly the modern way to hold an election, but they also stated that the stumbling block would be the initial cost.

Observers were impressed with the fact that two minutes after the polls closed the election board turned the crank and out came the tabulated returns ready for certification. This is the first time this new crank mechanism has been used in the United States and they permitted only one vote for each candidate. Some voters discovered this when they manipulated one key several times and very quickly to create a majority for one candidate. Voters also learned that once they drew the curtain closed, they had to cast at least one vote before they could get out.

It was also noted that women took longer to vote than men. At one precinct men took between 1 and ½ to 2 minutes to vote whereas women took up to 5 minutes.

Photos Wanted!!

The League's 100th Birthday is coming next year, and we need your help. At our big birthday bash, we will have media presentations showcasing the history and current activities of the League, from both state and local Leagues -- picturing members advocating for issues, registering voters, holding debates, hosting educational forums, conducting fundraisers, etc. We want to celebrate YOU with photos, sketches, line drawings and cartoons from our 100 years of history and nonpartisan service to all Oregonians.

Please root through your League's historical collection of photos and memorabilia and share them with us. If you have digital photos, send them via email. If you have paper photos, bring them to the Convention in May and we will copy them. With each photo, we'll want to know who is in the photo, when it was taken, and a brief description of what's going on. If it appeared in a local newspaper, we'd like to know that too, so we can assign appropriate credit.

While the 100th Birthday Committee is busy planning a whole year's worth of activities, (including a professionally produced video about the LWVOR!) several members have taken on this still photo project. After the birthday party, copies will be given to each local League for their own use. We are excited about this project!

Call or email us with questions, and pictures! Thank you for your help. Debbie Runciman, 503-550-3023, runciman@onlinemac.com, Jane Gigler, 503-488-5581

President's Message

Norman Turrill

This time of year is always a period of transition for the League as we prepare for our local and state conventions. Programs, budgets and bylaw amendments are all being prepared for our convention and annual meetings. However, perhaps the most important proposals being prepared are the reports of our nominating committees. I think that the nominating committee is the most important institution of the League because it determines the future of the League.



Serving as a League officer or on a League board is a highly effective way to have influence in your community because the League is so highly regarded by community leaders for our advocacy and voter service work. Serving in this way is also highly educational in that everyone learns and develops skills from the experience.

Every member should be aware of the great importance of this League process and propose names to the various nominating committees. Local Leagues should not be afraid of "loosing" leaders to the state (or national) League but should understand these leaders will be able to represent your interests at the higher level of the League and will eventually come back much better trained and able to serve your local League.

Likewise, members should not be afraid to nominate themselves. The League works best when members are doing the work that they are most passionate about. When every member does the little part that they are most interested in doing, the work of the League miraculously gets done.

Lastly, I think that "nominating committee" is a misnomer. It perhaps should be called the "recruiting committee", since it must not passively wait for proposed nominees to come to them, but should aggressively search for and recruit new leaders.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the LWVOR Convention in Ashland! It will be my last as your president.

In Memory of Liz Frenkel

Longtime Corvallis resident and League of Women Voters member, Elizabeth "Liz" Frenkel, 91, passed away on March 13, 2019, in Portland.

A graduate of Stanford University, she moved to Corvallis in 1965 with her husband Bob and two children. Liz began working on civil rights and anti-war issues with the local ACLU, League of Women Voters and other organizations.

Soon she began focusing on environmental battles, serving as statewide lobbyist for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club, and later Natural Resources lobbyist for the League of Women Voters. She held leadership positions in both organizations as well as the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, the Pacific Rivers Council, and other organizations. Most notably she pushed to pass the Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act and the Oregon Wild and Scenic River Act, and worked to protect the free-flowing upper Klamath. Liz served as a mentor to many younger environmental activists and was recognized as an effective and strategic political thinker.

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