



The Voter

April, 2015

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma—Pierce County

Phone: (253) 272-1495

Email: lwvtacomapierce@gmail.com

Web: www.lwvwa.org/tacoma

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LWVWA: <http://www.lwvwa.org/>
LWVUS: <http://www.lwv.org/>

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma—Pierce County is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and

Mental Health Study—Phase I Report

This month's unit meetings focus on Phase I of the mental health study that was approved at last year's annual meeting. The study will take nearly two years to complete. The Phase I study utilizes a composite case study to describe how the "system" works.

Twenty-five percent of the population experiences mental illness in some form. This can range from mild depression to a serious mental illness. Six percent of the population have serious mental illness. The case study in this report relates to serious mental illness: the kinds of symptoms that occur, when they occur, how treatment is accessed and paid for, and more. Other issues will be addressed in Phase II of the study.

You can read the report here. A reprint of the March Voter article is here.

Co-President's Message



Paula Eismann, Co-President

One of the many opportunities that Ruth Ann and I have had these past two years is to be a part of a monthly conference call with our MLD (Membership Leadership Development) coach, Susan Mancuso, and our League's membership chair, Diane Kerlin. During those calls, we do an update as to our progress in retaining and increasing membership, how we are engaging members to be part of leadership, and how we can better get the Voice of the League out into our communities. It's a time of reflection, support and encouragement as we discuss recent developments, how goals are being met, and a reminder that we need to keep working on new or useful strategies when goals aren't fully met.

Efforts that originated in the MLD conference calls include the membership interest survey sponsored by the membership committee as a source for future committees to work on studies and topics and then for the nominating committee in recruiting potential future leaders for the Board. We've also studied how to diversify the League in age, ethnicity and political interests to encompass more of our communities.

This has been a great time to focus on improvement, share our accomplishments, and motivate us to face the challenges of getting increased involvement in the work of the League. So here's an opportunity to help us out in achieving expansion of membership--our next two unit meetings have topics that can bring the public out. Ask your friends, co-workers, and even relatives to attend. They could be potential members and leaders of the League!!
Happy Spring! *Paula*

Meet New Member Cheryl Mann



Originally from California, Cheryl Mann moved to Gig Harbor after many years in Alaska. She says that she wanted to continue living in the northwest but with less severe weather. She has been here two and a half years and loves the natural beauty and friendliness

of the people.

Cheryl holds a Ph.D. in social welfare and retired from being a college professor in Anchorage. Previously, she has worked as a legislative staffer for a representative in the Alaska state house. She also served on several boards of organizations focusing on substance abuse,

mental health, developmental disabilities and the disabled. She enjoys travel and ended her teaching career at a school in Great Britain.

Since retirement, she has been exploring a variety of artistic media including water colors and photography. She is also involved in New Neighbors and the Gig Harbor Yacht Club. She and her husband left a son and daughter-in-law in Anchorage, and have a daughter and son-in-law in Arizona.

Cheryl joined this League in October of last year having been a member in Alaska. She is keenly interested in political issues, in particular, ensuring access to an informed voting process. In the League, she would like to focus on voter rights and also wants to engage in behavioral health issues such as mental health and addictions.

Your Board at Work—Summary of March 11, 2015 Meeting

On March 11, the Board met and discussed the need for fundraising to increase revenue for both the general fund and the education fund. The Board decided last month to begin the process to establish our own Education Fund (as opposed to the current practice of having donations flow through the State League's Education Fund), so that we could more easily receive larger donations from individuals and donations from corporations. Information was given on the survey to members to determine more ideas for fundraising.

The Board discussed information needed for the Annual Meeting in June – budget, bylaw changes, nominations to Board, and reports. The LWVWA convention is in June, so the Board discussed who might want to attend that convention from our League. Susan Eidenschink and Cynthia Stewart indicated interest in attending.

Partnering with other groups was discussed, and Board members expressed their agreement with establishing partnerships. Some organizations have contacted us, and we will contact other groups with which we have common goals.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, April 8, 2015
3:00-5:00 p.m., at the League Office
All League members are welcome to attend

Keeping up with League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County

For those of you who are not on Facebook, look for LWVT-PC online posts at The Suburban Times, thesubtimes.com, and Patch, patch.com. Both of these news sites have become easy to use. For Patch, select your desired community (Find your Patch) and scroll among the latest Bulletin Board posts.

Raising Money

The March Voter reported that LWVT-PC must raise money and announced a survey to find out what kinds of fundraising efforts members would support. About a quarter of the membership responded, and here’s what we found:

- ⇒ More members prefer an auction or other event to other fundraising methods
- ⇒ More members would help with a specific event than other fundraising methods
- ⇒ Events were liked primarily because of their potential appeal to non-members and because of the amount of money that could be raised. However, some respondents noted that an event is too much work and that they are not sure what kind of event would appeal to non-members
- ⇒ Auctions were liked because of the diversity of items that could be sold and appeal to non-members; but many commented that auctions are too much work
- ⇒ Those who liked the direct mail fundraising approach appreciated its relative ease but some were concerned that it is not working well and it isn’t clear how to generate more funds in that way
- ⇒ Those who liked sustaining memberships appreciated their relative ease but noted that although there may be members who could do this, many could not
- ⇒ The most frequent “other” suggestion for fundraising was for a luncheon or restaurant event.



Your responses to the survey are very much appreciated and will be helpful to the fundraising committee. The fundraising committee will be discussing these results and planning a strategy for the next few months, including ways to reach out to the community for fundraising. More information will be forthcoming after this discussion.

Thanks to our generous donors since the last Voter:

Nancy Davis	Paula and Donald Eismann	Bobbie Fletcher
Nancy Hellyer	Marceline Lazzari	Patricia Morse
Christie Perkins	Ann Williams	

Welcome to our new member:

Martha Konicek

LWVTPC Board Members

Co-President	Paula Eismann	253-863-8845, peismann60@comcast.net
Co-President	Ruth Ann Hatchett	253-864-7556 ; ruthann6257@msn.com
1st Vice President	Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow	253-924-0288; lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com
2nd Vice President	Julie Offner	253-432-4407; offner.julie@gmail.com
Secretary	Ingrid Curtis	253-862-7865; Ltcolrwc@comcast.net
Treasurer	Susan Eidenschink	253-365-4005; susaneiden@harbornet.com
Directors:	Jacqueline Jones-Hook	jjoneshook@aol.com
	Sharon Peace-Doane	253-265-0841; hrdoanes@comcast.net
	Cynthia Stewart	360-413-1210; stewdahl@comcast.net
	John Thurlow	253-219-1617; johnthurlow@harbornet.com
	Ann Williams	253-759-3355; willar12000@yahoo.com

“Corruption in Politics and You the Voter”

By Terry Bergeson and Deborah Allen

“The enormous sums of money given to both parties by just about every special interest in the country, corrupts our political ideals...” John McCain, 1999



Concerned about the corrupting influence of money on politics, 56 Tacoma and Seattle citizens joined a forum on March 7 at the First United Methodist Church of Tacoma to learn about Washington’s strong and open political system -- a model in the nation -- and the threat to that system by negative politics and dark money at the national level.

The forum, presented by the Tacoma RAD (Restore the American Dream) group and supported by the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County, Fix Democracy First and WAmend, was third of a series of events exploring political issues hurting our way of life in America. The events aim to be cross-partisan because these issues affect us all.

The forum panel provided a fascinating insider’s look at our election system and government accountability. Sam Reed, former Secretary of State, and Brian Sonntag, former State Auditor, were joined by Larry Seaquist, former Democratic Representative from the 26th district, and Alex Hays, Executive Director of Mainstream Republicans of WA, and a political consultant. The panel was moderated by Terry Bergeson, RAD member and former State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The panel and audience discussed Washington’s political strengths. Our election system encourages and supports informed voting with strong outreach, access and

education. The “top two” primary system means that voters face a less extreme and polarized slate in the general election. The initiative and referendum processes give voters direct access to passing or overturning laws. Washington also has strong government accountability through popular election of state and local elected auditors, financial and performance audits, open meetings and open public records laws, and a government employee Whistle Blower Act.

The audience also discussed problems with Washington’s politics. We need a fair revenue system to fund needed investments in education and transportation. We need to curb increasing levels of money devoted to negative campaign ads that discourage voter participation. We worry that younger people have to work multiple jobs with little time and energy to engage in the political process.

Attendees also learned about Represent.US, which is trying to put into place an American Anti-Corruption Act to stop bribery of politicians by lobbyists, end secret political donations, and empower voters by limiting PACs and giving annual tax rebates for campaign donations. (See more at <https://represent.us/>.)

It was a great discussion! Tacoma RAD invites you to attend these educational events in the community. Help us build cross-partisan networks to reclaim the American Dream.

Affordable Housing Consortium Meeting - March 11, 2015

By Helen Sohlberg, Observer

A panel of city and county officials and representatives of private companies presented their perspectives on ways to develop affordable housing for low income people in Pierce County.

Speakers noted that Pierce County has the largest gap between affordable housing and available income in Washington State. This is true for both rental and owner occupied housing.

The Housing Trust Fund of Washington State should not be a political issue. Tax credits should be used more. This means developers would be incentivized to put in place

more affordable housing in building projects.

There is little land available within Tacoma and Lakewood to develop big projects. There is more land available in the county.

There is an updated plan for development of affordable housing by the Tacoma City Government

An example of private industry in the business is the Mercy Housing Northwest, which includes New Tacoma 2 Senior Apartment. In Hilltop, it includes 40 one bedroom apartments now under construction. Some units are set aside for disabled individuals.

Opportunities for Action and Participation

League has not taken a position on these issues but these activities are important to many League members and they are therefore provided here for member information.

Tacoma Proposition 1 – Raise the minimum wage in Tacoma to \$15 per hour. The goal is to collect enough signatures (3,500 valid signatures) by mid-May to place this proposition on the Tacoma City Ballot in November. This is a grassroots effort, which has a weekly meeting on **Saturdays from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 621 Tacoma Ave S.** If you want to help with signature gathering in Tacoma, attend the meeting, checking out the website <http://15nowtacoma.info/>, or contact Sarah Morken at 253-973-8153.

Citizens United Initiative – Initiative to the Legislature – Signature gathering begins in April. WAmend will sponsor an initiative to the Legislature this year. This measure would urge the Washington Congressional delegation to propose amending the Constitution to clarify that constitutional rights apply to natural persons, not corporations, and to authorize greater regulation of political contributions and expenditures. Sixteen states have passed similar resolutions either in their Legislation or by initiative. See more about this initiative at <http://www.wamend.org/>.

March Unit Meetings—”Unit Choice”

Tacoma, March 12: How do we get healthy foods into the schools? Why do we care?

By Marianne Seifert

Tacoma Unit members invited several leaders to help us explore challenges and solutions to this issue:

- ⇒ **Debbie Winskill**, Tacoma School Board member;
- ⇒ **Brogan Shell**, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and Just and Healthy Foods Puyallup Watershed Initiative Community of Interest (COI);
- ⇒ **Chrissy Cooley**, Pierce Conservation District and Agriculture COI.

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March Unit Meetings—"Unit Choice", *cont'd*

Tacoma, March 12: How do we get healthy foods into the schools? Why do we care?, *cont'd from p. 5*

A wide range of topics, including taste, requirements, and local foods:, were discussed, including:

- ◆ Proper nutrition promotes optimal growth and development of children.
- ◆ A poor diet and drinking sugar-sweetened beverages can result in weight gain, overweight, and obesity.
- ◆ Under-nutrition can negatively affect overall health, cognitive development, and school performance.
- ◆ Food needs to be appealing to kids or they won't eat it - a lot is thrown away.
- ◆ Food preferences are cultural.
- ◆ Kids are more willing to try food they grew themselves.
- ◆ Kids are more willing to eat foods popular kids are eating.
- ◆ Federal regulations are too stringent. (For example, they require whole wheat in pizza crusts - kids don't like it and throw it away.)
- ◆ Portions may be too small for rapidly growing and active youth.
- ◆ Cooking at each school may provide more menu flexibility.
- ◆ Creating a food hub to help distribute locally farmed foods to schools might help.
- ◆ Local, fresh foods can be tastier and healthier, have less salt and sugar, than processed foods.
- ◆ Local farmers would like to sell to schools but cannot distribute to all 54 Tacoma school locations.
- ◆ Schools would like to buy from local farmers, but need foods certified that "safe practices" are used.
- ◆ COI studies are underway that will help identify possible solutions, including a food hub.

Several next steps: were discussed, including:

- * Recommend an action item at the state convention: hold a public forum to share Agriculture COI and Just and Healthy Food COI study results and help implement recommendations.
- * Special pilot menu at Tacoma School District: Marty Webb will work with Debbie Winskill and others to develop a locally-sourced and appealing menu.
- * Find out more about:
 - Farm to School federal legislation and more at <http://www.farmtoschool.org>
 - Washington Farm to School Summit, April 15-16: <http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Page/101/waf2sconf2015>
 - Local foods availability at <http://PugetSoundFresh.org>
 - Nutrition facts: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/nutrition/facts.htm>

Lakewood and Neighbors, March 13: What's Going on at Joint Base Lewis-McChord

By Nancy Pearson & Jack Cameron



Lakewood and Neighbors unit members heard three fine speakers from Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Lakewood on the topic of "What's going on at JBLM that affects our area." They discussed how the military and civilian communities around the base collaborate to share and solve issues that arise among them. JBLM is the 2nd largest military base in the country (after one in Texas) and its economic benefit to the local area and state is approximately \$6 billion. This figure includes salaries as well as local purchases for supplies, personal purchases by military members, etc.

Deputy Commander of JBLM, **Col. Davit**, began with a slide show that described what the joint operation is and how the merger of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base has changed what do they do, how they are planning for coming changes, and some of the social and environmental, land use and transportation issues.

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March Unit Meetings—"Unit Choice", *Cont'd from page 8*

Lakewood and Neighbors, March 13: What's Going on at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, *Cont'd*

Tiffany Speir, who heads a new program started in Lakewood called South Sound Military and Communities Partnership (SSMCP), was the second speaker. The SSMCP has a long list of member communities: Cities of Lakewood, Lacey, DuPont, Olympia, Tacoma, Tumwater, University Place, Yelm and town of Steilacoom; Pierce and Thurston County governments; Nisqually Indian Tribe; Thurston Regional Planning Council; JBLM; Washington Military Department; Washington Department of Transportation; Tacoma-Pierce Chamber of Commerce; Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept.; United Way of Pierce County, Clover Park School District, Tacoma-Pierce Co. Association of Realtors, WorkForce Central and 16 collaborative partners. It brings together all the interested parties to foster good communication, improve transparency, improve support for military families, and serve as a coordination point to address specific issues that arise between military and civilian communities. The program sponsored a 'listening session' last fall that brought out 500 people.

The third speaker was **Mary Moss**, from the Lakewood City Council, who talked about the partnership between JBLM and the City of Lakewood. She also got the group talking about voting and low turnout. The military has a Voting Assistance Program to encourage military personnel to register and vote, but it does not identify the rates of voter participation among service members. Many military families are registered in other states.

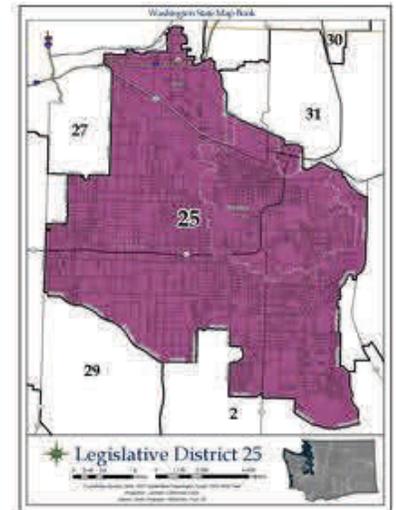
Mary Moss indicated that in Lakewood, she discovered that many voters, even though registered, don't turn out because they don't trust government generally, or the candidates; feel that campaigning is too negative; or don't understand the issues. It sounded to us members like an opportunity for voter service from the LWV.

For more information, see the web site for SSMCP: <http://www.ssmcp.org/>. For a copy of the power point presentation by Col. Davits, contact Cynthia Stewart, stewdahl@comcast.net; it was too large to link here.

East Pierce, March 14: Legislative Update

By Ellen Zulauf

The East Pierce Unit invited legislators from legislative districts in East Pierce County to talk about the current legislative session and answer questions from attendees. Two legislators from Legislative District 25, **Representative Hans Zeiger** and **Representative Melanie Stambaugh**, came to the gathering and spoke about the session, particularly about the budget and funding education. There were about 25 people in attendance, most of whom were non-league members. They asked questions about taxes, funding education, unions, and health care. Many attendees expressed partisanship in their questions, as did the legislators in their answers and comments.



Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula, March 14: Local Land Use Planning

By Lucinda Wingard

Eleven unincorporated (non-city) areas in Pierce County have Community Plans that govern how they develop and grow in population. The Gig Harbor Peninsula and the Key Peninsula are two of them. A collaboration between Pierce County Planning and Lands Services (PALS) and local citizens comprising a Community Planning Board led to these documents and to the creation of a volunteer Land Use Advisory Board (LUAC) for each community.

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March Unit Meetings—“Unit Choice”, *Cont’d from page 7*

Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula, March 14: Local Land Use Planning, *cont’d*



Because so few residents are aware of how development decisions are made locally, League member **Lucinda Wingard**, who serves on a LUAC, and Key Peninsula Neighborhood Council president **Danna Webster** presented anecdotes about how each community has been dealing with large population growth and major changes in development, including opening of the second Narrows Bridge, expansion of the City of Gig Harbor, inauguration of two new Parks and Recreation taxing districts, and loss of public transportation on the Key Peninsula.

In response to the requirement by the State to plan ahead for population growth, the County is presently updating its Comprehensive Plan, incorporating many elements of local community plans. A series of advisory commissions and County Council committee hearings are open to the public while they are considering major rewrites and amendments. The final result must be voted upon by the full Council in June. League members should keep an eye out for actions that will directly affect the character of their community.

Meeting attendees were given a tour of the County website and a handout comparing the Visions and Goals of each community. They were shown what a volunteer LUAC typically does and the meeting ended with a demonstration of the Public GIS, which allows anyone to browse any property in the County and see what, or whether, permitted development is happening.

LWVT-PC Calendar March—June 2015

April 8 3:00—5:00 pm	LWVT-PC Board Meeting 702 Broadway, Tacoma	May 9 10:00 am – noon	East Pierce Unit Meeting Citizens United Decision— LWVWA Tool Kit for Action
April 9 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Tacoma Unit Meeting LWVT-PC Mental Health Study	May 9 2:00 – 4:00 pm	Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Unit Meeting, Citizens United Decision— LWVWA Tool Kit for Action
April 10 10:00 am – noon	Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting LWVT-PC Mental Health Study	May 13 3:00—5:00 pm	LWVT-PC Board Meeting 702 Broadway, Tacoma
April 11 10:00 am – noon	East Pierce Unit Meeting LWVT-PC Mental Health Study	May 14 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Tacoma Unit Meeting, Citizens United Decision— LWVWA Tool Kit
April 11 2:00 – 4:00 pm	Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Unit Meeting LWVT-PC Mental Health Study	June 12-14	LWVWA Convention Holiday Inn, Yakima WA
April 20	Deadline for May Voter articles	June 20	LWVT-PC Annual Meeting! Time/place to be announced.
May 8 10:00 am – noon	Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting Citizens United Decision—LWVWA Tool Kit for Action	June 24	Deadline for Summer Voter articles

Get Involved! Attend a Unit Meeting and Bring a Friend (or two)

Tacoma

2nd Thursday of the Month

1:00—3:00 pm

North Tacoma Police Station
5140 N. 26th St.

Tacoma

Contact: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow,
lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com

Lakewood & Neighbors

2nd Friday of the Month

10:00 am to noon

Steilacoom Community Center
2301 Worthington St.

Steilacoom

Contact: Ann Elliston, 253-564-4102

East Pierce

2nd Saturday of the Month

10:00 am to Noon

Puyallup Library
324 S. Meridian

Puyallup

Contact: Ellen Zulauf,
eazul@comcast.net

Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula

2nd Saturday of the Month

2:00—4:00 pm

Harbor History Museum
4121 Harborview Dr.

Gig Harbor

Contact: Sharon Peace-Doane, 253

For more information, see
www.lwvwa.org/tacoma/

This Month: April – LWVT-PC Mental Health Study

This month's unit meetings will focus on the phase 1 report from the mental health study that is currently underway. The study has a comprehensive scope and will not be completed until later this year or early 2016. Phase 1 describes the processes involved in the "system" of mental health treatment. It uses a hypothetical case study to illustrate what can happen when mental illness is discovered and treated and many of the issues involved for the patient, practitioners and family. The final report will describe funding, options available to the county (e.g., mental health court and mental health sales tax) and specific issues such as homelessness and veterans.

For background prior to the meeting, read the article in last month's The Voter and the Phase 1 report.

Next Month: May – LWVWA Citizens United Toolkit and WA State Initiative

At the May Unit meetings, a copy of the LWVWA Citizens United Toolkit will be presented and discussed. This toolkit is designed to help League members discuss the Supreme Court's Citizens United Decision and advocate for ways to change the current situation of money in politics.

WAmend, a Washington Coalition to Amend the Constitution, has filed a 2015 initiative to the legislature and is expecting an approved initiative before their kickoff event on April 25. See the website <http://www.wamend.org/> for more information. Copies of the initiative will be available at the Unit meetings.

Last Month: March – Unit Choice of Topics

At the March Unit Meetings, each Unit discussed a topic of interest to those attending that particular Unit. At the Tacoma Unit meeting, the topic was Healthy Children: Food in the Schools. The Lakewood and Neighbors topic was Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) and how leaders at the base coordinate with leaders and organizations in surrounding communities. The East Pierce Unit invited legislators from east Pierce County to talk about the current legislative session and answer questions of people attending the meeting. At the Gig Harbor Unit meeting the topic was Community Plans for Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula.

See pages 5-8 for information covered at each Unit Meeting.

Visit us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Tacoma-Pierce-County/312747775413



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Join the Tacoma—Pierce County League of Women Voters !

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County invites you to join us!

Any citizen of voting age, male or female may become a member.

Yes, I'd like to become a Member of the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County.

This application also entitles me to full membership in and mailings of the Washington State and National League of Women Voters (LWVWA and LWVUS)

Membership for one year for an individual is \$60 (for two members of a household - \$90). Student membership is \$30. If you are not a citizen and/or 18 years of age, you may become an Associate Member for \$30. Please indicate the type of membership you desire. We have scholarship memberships available at this time. Membership dues are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund (by separate check, and they are tax deductible) and/or the General Fund are welcome.

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Comments:

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County
702 Broadway, Suite #105 / Tacoma, WA 98402-3710