



The Voter

December 2016

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma—Pierce County

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Happy Holidays

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 advocacy

Program Planning Meeting—December 3

In December, there will be a general membership meeting for program planning, rather than the usual unit meetings. This is the chance to provide input to the State Convention concerning what issues we want State League to work on—and to generate ideas for local work for next year.

This year's two studies, the mental health services study and the study of Pierce County Funding, resulted from program planning discussions in the past. Here's what one member said about working on a study following that decision, giving meaning to the program planning exercise:

Because of my lifelong interest in mental health issues, I joined the League when I learned that the organization planned a study of the services in Pierce County. I became a member of the Mental Health Study Committee and spent the next two years in a wonderful and satisfying experience.

Perhaps foremost was that I met a whole new set of women in my community with noble goals and values, as well as intelligence, savvy, and poise.

I highly recommend others give serious consideration to joining a future study committee. It was interesting, enlightening, fun, and educational.

For members holding back from joining a committee because they are unavailable for extended periods of time — that excuse doesn't hold water. Several members of our committee were gone for long periods and no one batted an eye. We all accept that we have other commitments.

And, assuming the Pierce County Council passes the mental health tax, I know that the League's report was one small cog in effecting this positive change.

I'm proud to have been a small part in this effort.

Evonne Agnello, Author of "Shaking Shame from Mental Illness"

Please come to the meeting on December 3 and help determine the work of our Tacoma-Pierce County League and give direction to the State League for the upcoming year or so.

See additional information on page 3

President's Message



The Action Workshop that LWVTPC hosted on November 19 was very successful. There is a detailed summary of the workshop in The Voter for you to review. The keynote speaker, legislators, and state lobby team did a great job providing insight into the upcoming legislative session and the challenges our state is facing. It was encouraging to hear the legislators, both Republican and Democrats, agree it will take by-partisan cooperation to bring solutions.

I was very pleased to meet non-members who attended. Several young women came and they are ready to take action. Thanks to Cynthia, they saw it on Facebook. The state office got an email from one young women who said, "I had a great day today, Kathy. Everyone was so welcoming. I am so impressed with your organization. I'm going online to join now!" Now it is up to us to engage her and other new members.

We owe a HUGE thank you to Ginny Peterson for organizing the food; it was fantastic. At the workshop, she had help from Judy Payne, Ingrid Curtis, Paula Eismann, and Bobbie Fletcher. This was truly a team effort. Susan Eidenschink and Lynette Chandler registered participants and generally kept things moving. Thank you to all LWVTPC members who came and helped us host a wonderful event.

Remember, rather than December Unit meetings, we will have a general meeting on **December 3** at the First United Methodist Church of Tacoma downstairs in the fellowship hall. We will do program planning for next year, and share pot luck as we celebrate the holidays.

Ruth Ann Hatchett

Please Support LWVT-PC with a Contribution

By now you should have received a letter letting you know that your financial support is needed to help League continue its good works. This year was remarkable. We

- ◇ Conducted a record number of candidate and issue forums;
- ◇ Registered the most voters ever, including a significant effort in high schools;
- ◇ Completed a study of mental health services in Pierce County and presented it to the Pierce County Council;
- ◇ Produced a study of Pierce County funding that is now ready for discussion;
- ◇ Published They Represent You (TRY), a directory of all elected officials in Pierce County;
- ◇ Distributed our monthly Voter to a wide audience;
- ◇ Provided election inspection for local elections;
- ◇ and more!

Our work is performed entirely by volunteers, but your support allows us to print TRYs, reports, and publicity; cover our office costs; pay the cost of forums; and mail our Voter to those who can't get it online.

If you haven't already, please send your contribution—whatever you can afford—to either the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County OR the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County Education Fund (tax-deductible status pending) at 621 Tacoma Ave. S., Ste. 202; Tacoma, WA 98402.

Thank you!!

Visit us on Facebook at

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



Program Planning, *Continued*

by Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow

**Saturday, December 3, 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
First Methodist Church Fellowship Hall
621 Tacoma Ave South, Tacoma, WA 98402**

As many of you know, I LOVE the Program Planning Meeting, especially when we all do it together. And, that's how it will be. We will be in the Fellowship Hall of the United Methodist Church on Tacoma Avenue South (where the office is). We invite all to come at 9:30 and share some pre-meeting food. We will begin the meeting at 10:00, break for lunch at around noon, and take as much time as we need to finish thereafter. It being holiday season, we will also have raffle baskets.

Program Planning is a three-part process that is a core component of the League's mission. In our meetings, we study issues, come to consensus on our positions on the issue, and advocate with one voice for that action. Program Planning is Stage One of deciding WHAT it is we will study. Every year, we discuss our local program. Alternate years, we discuss state or national issues to take to their conventions. THIS year is STATE's turn.

YOUR jobs: PLEASE:

Invite a friend. It's a good time to learn about what the League does, and about the positions we hold. Guests may, as at consensus meetings, participate in discussion, but NOT help us make our choices of what we really want to study or where we want to take action. Explain that League is truly a grassroots organization and we would welcome their participation.

Come with ideas of what we should focus on or study both locally and statewide. (You are also invited to send them to me [lyzkurnitz2harbornet.com] in advance.) Our complete positions, and the short form of our State positions are in the Handbook.

Bring your Handbook and this Voter.

Bring food to share.

Bring some money/checks for raffle basket tickets – or to fill our stockings.

Show up!

On the next page is an article titled, "How We Decide What to Study". It covers basic questions about how we decide what to do – and what we need to think about. Please read it, and try to answer some of the questions about program ideas which you have.

I really hope to see many of you at the meeting and look forward to hearing your ideas.

Location:

The Fellowship Hall is on the First Floor of the First Methodist Church, adjacent to the alley in back of the church. There is limited parking in the alley area. You will be able to enter the building at the Tower entrance and take an elevator to the Fellowship Hall on the first floor. Someone will be at the Tower entrance to direct you.

Parking:

There is no dedicated parking for the First United Methodist Church. On Tacoma Avenue there is free 90 minute parking and unlimited parking for those who have a handicapped permit. There is free parking in the parking lot south of the corner of South 7th Street and South G Street, which is adjacent to the school administration building, about a block and a half from the church. This is normally occupied during weekdays but is available on weekends.

If you have questions, contact: Susan Eidschink, susaneiden@harbornet.com, 253-365-4005.

How We Decide What to Study

Deciding what are important issues usually seems pretty easy to us. However, then we have to decide if WE are the right people to study it, and how we would do it. Please consider the questions below to help you decide what our active issues should be and what we are able to do about them.

1. **STUDY:** to reach member agreement on an issue so that the League can take action. QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELVES:

- ⇒ Does the League already have a position?
- ⇒ Is there a government solution to the problem?
- ⇒ Is there enough time to do a study and then act to influence the resolution of the problem?

2. **UPDATE:** to review an issue. QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELVES:

- ⇒ Is the League position still useful?
- ⇒ Is the position sufficiently general?
- ⇒ Are there significant developments in the issues area that are not reflected in the position?
- ⇒ What is the proper scope of effort to update the position?

3. **ACTION:** always the goal of the League's study process. Member understanding and strong support are essential for successful action. QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELVES:

- ⇒ Are the timing and the political realities right for success?
- ⇒ Does the community expect or need the League to be a player on this issue?
- ⇒ Will League action on this issue make a significant difference?
- ⇒ Could a focused, targeted action campaign enhance LWV visibility and stature?
- ⇒ Do our members understand our position and our action goals?

4. **CITIZEN EDUCATION:** to help citizens understand the complexities of an issue and encourage people to participate in reaching a solution; can also lay the groundwork for successful advocacy. QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELVES:

- ⇒ Does our community need help in understanding this issue and its possible solutions?
- ⇒ Is there enough time to develop and implement our project before citizens must make a decision?
- ⇒ Is it more important to help citizens understand this issue than to advocate our League position at this time?

5. **CONCURRENCE:** to agree with a position already held by another LWV QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELVES:

- ⇒ Is their study available to us?
- ⇒ Is their resulting consensus of sufficient use to us?
- ⇒ How can we be sufficiently well informed on the issues?
- ⇒ How do we obtain the statement, background materials including pros and cons?
- ⇒ How do we comply with the requirements not to amplify, make subject to conditions, or alter the statement of position reached by the other League.

Highlights of October Board Meeting

By Julie Offner, Secretary

President Ruth Ann Hatchett reported that the Pierce County Budget Study was well received by the Pierce County staff who reviewed it, and the comments received from the county staff were helpful. It was noted that a mental health sales tax is in the executive budget but will have to be approved by the Council. The Budget Study has been posted on our website. Ruth Ann articulated the appreciation of the Board for this impressive effort.

The September Treasurer's report noted that we have had more renewals and four new members—one household and two individuals. Membership is now 113. The Board is working on new financial procedures and will consider a proposal at the November meeting.

Cynthia Stewart and Judy Payne are working to transition Judy to her role as the Education Fund's treasurer. The Education Fund will underwrite the cost of printing of the Pierce County Budget Study. Progress is being made on the application to the Internal Revenue Service to obtain a 501(c)(3) designation (able to receive tax-deductible donations).

Roxanne Miles presented a strategy for fundraising and proposed three areas of focus: donation incentives, They Represent You (TRY) donation request, and grants. She also presented several donation incentive options such as a pen/pencil set with the League's logo. The Board will discuss these proposals in greater depth in November.

The annual finance drive will begin next month with a letter to members and friends of the League asking for a donation. Last year, the finance drive generated \$2,600. Donations can be made to the general fund or Education Fund.

Susan Eidenschink presented a proposed list of recipients for the 2017 TRY. It was recommended that we print 6,000 TRYs and an equal amount of bookmarks. We should emphasize the availability of electronic copies by providing a link to the TRY on our website.

In preparing for the Program Planning Meeting, which will be held on Saturday, December 3rd from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Board members agreed that the focus should be on local issues versus state. We have a new position on mental health and recommended actions. We will need contributions for the raffle and food to share.

Ruth Ann recognized the efforts by the Voter Service Committee—kudos to Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow, Cynthia Stewart, and Ann Williams, as well as new members Ginger MacDonald and Katie Baird, both of UW Tacoma, who were co-sponsors. The quality of the forums was impressive, and there were record-setting number of forums and turnout.

Welcome to Our New Members

Katie Baird

Lisa Linegar-Johnson

Voter Production & Distribution Volunteers

Your Voter is brought to you by the following people:

Editorial Volunteers:

Cynthia Stewart, Susan Eidenschink, Julie Offner

Distribution Volunteers:

Susan Eidenschink, Ingrid Curtis, Judy Payne

Check out our web site:
www.tacomapiercelwv.org

2016 Action Workshop

by Julie Offner

Over 60 enthusiastic participants met at the First Methodist Church in Tacoma on November 19 to become more informed about issues and advocacy techniques in anticipation of the upcoming 2017 Legislative Session. One of four workshops being presented around the state, the session was an opportunity for participants to learn about critical issues, share knowledge, and develop advocacy skills. Attendees were welcomed by League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) President Ann Murphy, who remarked that people are reaching out to the League, and we are experiencing some growth following the recent election. The League is exploring new avenues to work on issues and is keyed up for action, President Murphy said.

LWVWA First Vice President for Advocacy, Kathy Sakahara, introduced the League Lobby Team and reviewed the issues—economic justice, education, gun safety, health care, representative government, revenue, and water, rivers, forests and natural resources. She challenged participants to put their knowledge into action and encouraged them to prepare a “To Do” list.

Tacoma-Pierce County League President Ruth Ann Hatchett announced the theme of the workshop—the relationship between Mental and Behavioral Health and Homelessness. She noted that our League had completed a study on mental health in Pierce County and had developed a consensus position. She introduced the keynote speaker, Carla Reyes, Assistant Secretary of Washington State Behavioral Health Administration, who articulated that the Administration’s mission is to transform lives and provide a continuum of care. Community-based care accounts for 98 percent; and two percent, which is acute care, is provided in state hospitals. Prevention and crisis intervention are part of the continuum, she indicated.

Ms. Reyes explained that progress is being made toward meeting deficiencies identified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Failure to correct could result in the loss of \$64 million in federal funds. Challenges include recruitment and staffing - especially psychiatrists—insufficient beds to meet demands, 100 plus year-old buildings, and timely



completion of court ordered competency evaluations. A positive development was reaching a goal of hiring 100 nurses. Another step in providing care is the ability to use Medicaid dollars to create a supportive housing benefit. A goal of the Administration is to fully integrate mental health, substance use disorders and physical health by 2020. The Southwest Region of Washington has already achieved this.

Three local legislators joined the group for a panel discussion—Senator Jeannie Darneille, Senator Steve Conway, and Representative and Senator-Elect Hans Zeiger. There were several areas of agreement on the extent of the challenges that will be faced in 2017:

Coming up with the dollars, approximately \$2 billion, to fully fund education per the McCleary decision will be difficult and could come at the expense of other programs. Small majorities in each house will require bipartisan compromise. Loss of the three key budget writers will be impactful.

Uncertainties include the direction of the Trump Administration regarding the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid. Federal funding reductions may require the state to meet these needs. Cuts in other areas could occur.

A potential area of compromise is the Business and Occupation tax. Both parties agree that the tax, which dates from the 1930s, is antiquated and should be made fairer. This could be an opportunity for the League to form coalitions with like-minded organizations to support this reform. The League can share its knowledge with other coalition members.

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

Tacoma

2nd Thursday of the Month

1:00—3:00 pm

Tacoma Police Department, North Substation

5140 N. 26th St., Tacoma

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

Southwest Pierce

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 Place at Cottesmore

1016 29th St NW, Gig Harbor

Contact: Sharon Peace-Doane, 253-265-0841

For more information, see
www.tacomapiercelwv.org or call
253-272-1495

This Month: December – Program Planning and Celebration

The Unit meetings in December will be combined for a general meeting to jointly discuss Program Planning. This format has been used for the past two years, and it has worked well. Each of us can hear other members' thoughts and ideas on possible studies and update or action of local and state topics. Come to the First United Methodist Church on December 3rd to participate in this important process. In addition, we will have some drawings and celebrate a meal together.

Next Month: January – General Meeting on Civility and Respect

In January there will be a general meeting, open to the public on Civility and Respect toward others, particularly those whose opinions differ from our own. This topic is very important following the recent contentious election. A panel of experts will share their opinions and attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions. There will be no Unit meetings in January.

Last Month: November – Pierce County Budget Study

At the November Unit meetings, members of the committee studying the Pierce County Budget shared information they have gathered on sources of revenue for Pierce County provided by Pierce County. This is Part 1. The committee will share the cost of services provided by Pierce County to its residents in Part 2 in March and the committee will have consensus questions for members so that our League can consider a position on the Pierce County budget.

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.

LWVT-PC Calendar - December 2016— May 2017

<p>Dec 3 9:30 am—2:00 pm</p>	<p>Program Planning & Celebration First United Methodist Church 621 Tacoma Ave South, Tacoma</p>	<p>Feb 20</p>	<p>Deadline for March Voter</p>
<p>Dec 20</p>	<p>Deadline for January Voter</p>	<p>Feb 21 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>LWVT-PC Board Meeting League Office 621 Tacoma Ave. S., # 202, Tacoma</p>
<p>Dec 29 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>LWVT-PC Board Meeting League Office 621 Tacoma Ave. S., # 202, Tacoma</p>	<p>Mar 9 1:00 – 3:00 pm</p>	<p>Tacoma Unit Meeting Study of Pierce County Funding & Consensus Tacoma Police Substation North 5140 N 26th St, Tacoma</p>
<p>Jan 14 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>General Membership Meeting & Forum Civility & Respect First United Methodist Church 621 Tacoma Ave. S., Tacoma</p>	<p>Mar 10 10:00 am – noon</p>	<p>Southwest Pierce Unit Meeting Study of Pierce County Funding & Consensus Steilacoom Community Center, 2301 Worthington St, Steilacoom</p>
<p>Jan 20</p>	<p>Deadline for February Voter</p>	<p>Mar 11 10:00 am – noon</p>	<p>East Pierce Unit Meeting Study of Pierce County Funding & Consensus Puyallup Library 324 S Meridian, Puyallup</p>
<p>Jan 24 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>LWVT-PC Board Meeting League Office 621 Tacoma Ave. S., # 202, Tacoma</p>	<p>Mar 11 2:00 – 4:00 pm</p>	<p>Gig Harbor Unit Meeting Study of Pierce County Funding & Consensus Harbor Place at Cottesmore 1016 29th St NW, Gig Harbor</p>
<p>Feb 9 1:00—3:00 pm</p>	<p>Tacoma Unit Meeting Action/Engagement with Legislators and Local Officials Tacoma Police Substation North 5140 N 26th St, Tacoma</p>	<p>Mar 20</p>	<p>Deadline for April Voter</p>
<p>Feb 10 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>Southwest Pierce Unit Meeting Action/Engagement with Legislators and Local Officials Steilacoom Community Center, 2301 Worthington St, Steilacoom</p>	<p>Mar 28 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>LWVT-PC Board Meeting League Office 621 Tacoma Ave. S., # 202, Tacoma</p>
<p>Feb 11 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>East Pierce Unit Meeting Action/Engagement with Legislators and Local Officials Puyallup Library 324 S Meridian, Puyallup</p>	<p>Apr 8 10:00 am—Noon</p>	<p>East Pierce Unit Meeting Unit Choice Puyallup Library 324 S Meridian, Puyallup</p>
<p>Feb 11 2:00—4:00 pm</p>	<p>Gig Harbor Unit Meeting Action/Engagement with Legislators and Local Officials Harbor Place at Cottesmore 1016 29th St NW, Gig Harbor</p>	<p>Apr 8 2:00—4:00 pm</p>	<p>Gig Harbor Unit Meeting Unit Choice Harbor Place at Cottesmore 1016 29th St NW, Gig Harbor</p>

Continued, next page

LWVT-PC Calendar - December 2016— May 2017, *Cont'd*

Apr 13 1:00—3:00 pm	Tacoma Unit Meeting Unit Choice Tacoma Police Substation North 5140 N 26th St, Tacoma	May 12 10:00 am—Noon	Southwest Pierce Unit Meeting Legislative Session Review Steilacoom Community Center, 2301 Worthington St, Steilacoom
Apr 14 10:00 am—Noon	Southwest Pierce Unit Meeting Unit Choice Steilacoom Community Center, 2301 Worthington St, Steilacoom	May 13 10:00 am—Noon	East Pierce Unit Meeting Legislative Session Review Puyallup Library 324 S Meridian, Puyallup
Apr 20	Deadline for May Voter	May 13 10:00 am—Noon	Gig Harbor Unit Meeting Legislative Session Review Harbor Place at Cottessmore 1016 29th St NW, Gig Harbor
May 11 1:00—3:00 pm	Tacoma Unit Meeting Legislative Session Review Tacoma Police Substation North 5140 N 26th St, Tacoma		

2016 Action Workshop, *cont'd from page 4*

In the question and answer session, the tuition reduction for colleges and universities that passed as a part of the 2015-2017 state budget was raised. It was noted that many local districts serving K-12 had schools that were at capacity and could not pass levies to build new ones. The reduction was cited as an example of compromise and a recognition that the rapid tuition increases at state colleges and universities were unacceptable and represented a hidden tax.

LWVWA's contract lobbyist, Nancy Sapiro, presented insights regarding the upcoming session including a restructuring of the committees. She emphasized that

legislators are human and encouraged participants to reach out to their legislators who will consider constituents' views. Informal settings are effective ways to engage legislators as well as scheduled meetings.

Three 20-minute sessions of "Speed Dating" allowed participants to have a more in-depth discussion with members of the Lobby Team.

Wrapping up the program, First Vice President for Advocacy, Kathy Sakahara, remarked on the energy and enthusiasm she observed during the day. She emphasized that all League members will be part of the Lobbying Team. She encouraged members to read the Legislative Newsletter and be sure to click on the links, and take action.

Observer Corps Training

By Paula Eismann

One of the many ways League can work to keep the public informed about the "business" of our local governments is Observer Corps. The Observer Corps is made up of trained members who observe at their public Council meetings. They then report the "business" of our local council meetings to the Board and occasionally through an article in the Voter. Observer Corps helps ensure that citizens are aware of the decisions that impact their lives and it promotes government transparency and accountability.

Having done Observer Corps in the past, the League is ready to train interested members again this fall. We encourage you to become a part of this opportunity to educate the public about your community and make the League's presence and works known. Looking beyond your local communities, the Pierce County Council could use an observer, important because that's where funding issues regarding Mental Health Services in the County may be determined, as well as zoning issues throughout the County, and much more.

It's never too late to get involved. Training will take place early in 2017 and sign-up sheets will be available at the November unit meetings. We welcome applicants any time. Please contact Paula Eismann for further information and training.

LWVTPC Board Members

President	Ruth Ann Hatchett	253-864-7556 ; ruthann6257@msn.com
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2nd Vice President	Cheryl Mann	252-851-6266; Larch@gci.net
Secretary	Julie Offner	253-432-4407; offner.julie@gmail.com
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	John Thurlow	253-219-1617; johnthurlow@harbornet.com

Join the Tacoma—Pierce County League of Women Voters !

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

Any person, age 16 or older, 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 \$75 (for two members of a household - \$112.50). Student membership is \$37.50.

There are also special memberships that will help League even more and will be given special recognition: LWV Suffragist, \$500.00; LWV Advocate, \$250.00; and LWV Supporter, \$150.00.

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 made out to the Education Fund of LWVT-PC, and they are tax deductible*) and/or the General Fund are welcome.

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Type of Membership: _____ Comments: _____

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County, 621 Tacoma Avenue South, Tacoma, WA 98402-2301