



LWV Corvallis

Serving Benton and Linn Counties

February 2005



Campaign Finance Reform: The Road to Clean Elections

Speaker: Sarah Wetherson from
Money in Politics Research Action Project

February 10, 2005

Thursday

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Corvallis/Benton County Public Library

Co-sponsored by LWV Corvallis & Corvallis/Benton County Library

Help us honor our 50-year League Members

February 19th, Noon Luncheon
Autzen Center for the Humanities,
8th & Jefferson
see page 5 for details

And don't forget....

Legislature 2005

Town Hall Meeting – A Look at the Budget
Senator Frank Morse and
Representative Kelly Wirth
Saturday morning, February 5
9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Corvallis/Benton County Library

Co-sponsored by LWV Corvallis & Corvallis/Benton County Library

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: February 2005

The LWV education mission has been assumed by our league during the past month. The booklet, "Funding Oregon: The Ins and Outs of State Finance," was distributed to members in the State Voter this winter and at the last public meeting and will be available at the Legislative Town Hall meeting series. The Corvallis Library received a stack, which are available for the public. A copy was delivered to 3 local high schools and 2 teachers have ordered more copies for American Government classes. Board members have taken them to local organization meetings. We have a limited supply but will get more if requested by other groups. If you would like copies; contact a board member.

The league presentations on Funding Oregon on January 13 drew audiences of 30 in the afternoon and 35 in the evening. The work on this booklet and our presentation was well received by the public. Thanks to Walter Barkan and Peggy Lynch for their clarity on the budget presentations. Thanks also to JoAnne Trow and Louise Ferrell, as well as Peggy and Walter, who contributed to the writing and editing of the study booklet and speakers' materials. Thanks to Jean Nath, Vice-President, who has taken on the responsibility of Events Organizer as well as Publicity. Thanks to Miriam Miller, who filled in this fall on Events, and continues to take the consignments down at the OSU Thrift Shop. As you can see, many of our board members do double duty. If you have some time for us, we could use your help and experience.

The March afternoon meeting topic will be **Affordable Housing**. Barbara Ross, LWV Corvallis member, is a prime mover in Corvallis Neighborhood Housing, a non-profit agency, and likes to promote the newest developments in the planning process. Come learn about classes and services for those who are seeking home ownership. Some members have asked for daytime meetings, so we have scheduled a few to test the water. If these meetings are well attended, we will continue offering daytime meetings. On February 19th we hope you will join us at a luncheon to honor our 50-year members at the Center for the Humanities on 8th & Jefferson. (More details on page 5).

The Chamber of Commerce hosts a Leadership Corvallis training class every year and has asked the LWV Corvallis to present a Legislative Workshop Day in Salem in odd years and a Local Government Day in even years. Corrine Gobeli and Walter Barkan have worked with them in past years, and Sue Mariner and I have assisted with the programs the past 3 years. We are currently planning the next Day at the Legislature for Leadership Corvallis on March 10. We plan to highlight the budget process and distribute copies of Funding Oregon to this group. The speakers and panelists are drawn from State and Legislative employees, current legislators, lobbyists, and league leaders. If you would be interested in assisting with this Chamber-sponsored effort, please contact Sue or me. If you are interested in attending a Workshop at the Legislature, one will be scheduled in mid-March by LWVOR and will be advertised in the next bulletin. Watch for your opportunity to join other league members at the legislature.

–Karen Nibler, President

LWV Corvallis

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Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVOR

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The bulletin is the newsletter of the LWV Corvallis and is produced nine times a year. Members subscribe through their dues. Membership is open to anyone 18 years or older.



Campaign Finance Reform

The LWV Corvallis program on Campaign Finance Reform, February 10th, will begin with an 8–minute video titled, *The Road to Clean Elections* by LWVUS. Sarah Wetherson, our speaker, has given this presentation to Clackamas and Multnomah County Leagues and will visit Rogue Valley LWV earlier in the day on March 10. Sarah is a Research and Outreach Associate for MIPRAP, Money in Politics Research Action Project. MIPRAP currently maintains a database of contributions to statewide and legislative candidates and ballot measures. They track spending by lobbyists and their employers and are active in reporting and disclosure. MIPRAP has been a major player in Oregon Campaign Finance Reform efforts.

Campaign Finance Reform in Oregon was chosen as an ‘issue for emphasis’ at the last LWVOR Convention. Why? Ballot Measure 9 in 1994 passed in Oregon by 71% in the general election. The Oregon Supreme Court overturned the initiative, which limited campaign contributions, in Feb. 1997. The ruling said that the state Constitution would have to be amended to allow contribution limits. Spending limits were voluntary. The court dismissed the ban on corporate and union donations and the ban on bundling of contributions by a candidate or political party.

The full Campaign Finance Reform article was published in the State Voter in the 2004 fall edition and it can also be accessed on the LWVOR website. The National Voter featured Campaign Finance Reform in the June 2004 edition of the LWVUS magazine. The article was an evaluation of the 2002 Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA). Only 11% of taxpayers have checked the box on their income tax forms to give \$3 to the Presidential Campaign Fund. The article makes an argument for saving and improving the system for 2008. They encourage a system that gives all candidates an incentive to empower small donors.

BCRA was commonly known as McCain–Feingold, and it was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, including the restrictions on soft money and issue advertising. However, there were loopholes in the soft money that allowed the formation of 527 committees, which we heard about in the recent presidential election. The US Constitution allows contribution limits and most states ban corporate contributions with exceptions for ideological and non–profit corporations. Spending limits have been considered unconstitutional restrictions against the freedom of speech.

An Oregon political work group, Build Better Campaigns, is planning to file a constitutional amendment initiative this fall to allow contribution limits. They also are exploring clean money elections along with contribution limits. Maine and Arizona have Clean Elections Systems as demonstrated in the video. The Oregon Secretary of State Office is working on disclosure statements updated online and accessible on the Internet. Free radio and television time is another goal of clean campaign groups. **Join us at the meeting February 10th at 7:00 and learn how you can help with this effort.**

Legislative Town Hall Meetings

Learn about legislative action at our new **Saturday morning Legislative Town Hall Meetings**. You will hear directly from your State Senator and Representatives. Each Saturday we will start with a specific question or legislative subject prior to questions from the audience. These morning meetings have been well attended by the public. Each Town Hall Meeting is scheduled from **9:30 am to 11:30 am at the Corvallis/Benton County Public Library. February 5** is the first date where we will get a look at the State Budget with Senator Frank Morse and Representative Kelley Wirth. Come listen and learn. Bring your questions and meet the people you’ve voted for.

Put these dates on your calendar:

February 5,

March 5,

April 2,

May 7,

June 4

Happy Birthday, LWV US 85 years!

The League of Women Voters was established in 1920, when woman's suffrage was finally written into the Constitution after a 72-year struggle spearheaded by the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The League immediately took on the task of teaching 20 million women how best to exercise their new political rights and responsibilities and enlarged the scope of League work to include all citizens. Realizing that citizens must do more than vote to have an impact on public policy, the founders of the League also made political action a keystone of the League's wide-ranging agenda. The League of Women Voters will celebrate its 85th birthday on February 14, 2005. This month, we are encouraging you and other League members to give gift memberships to the League. For more information, go to the LWV US website www.lwv.org.

LWV Corvallis membership...

LWV Corvallis currently has 132 local members and 12 who joined nationally for a total of 144. We also extend our thanks to Mary Jane Gray and Jane Woodward for their donations to LWV. Their generosity is most appreciated. The 2005 Membership List is ready for distribution. If you have not already done so, let Shelly Murphy (shellym@peak.org) know if you wish to receive the list electronically. Otherwise, you may pick up your membership list at an upcoming meeting. When you receive your list, please check to be sure that all information is correct. If there are any corrections, or you wish to add your email, please notify Shelly by email or by calling 754-1184.

The first membership list for LWV Corvallis was Nov. 1, 1949. That makes us 'over 50'! We have Board Minutes and Bulletins from 1964 in our archives. The old records are in purple ditto copies or black mimeograph copies. We've come a long way baby!!!

FYI

LDS Student Association will host Richard G. Wilkins, J.D. on Marriage and the Constitution: What Every American Should Know. Feb 22 at 7:00 pm in MU Ballroom, OSU

LWV Corvallis March Program will be on Affordable Housing, March 10th, 7:00-9:00 pm, Thursday evening at the Corvallis Public Library – look for details in next bulletin

LWVOR will host **Day at the Legislature** on March 16 – look for sign-up in next bulletin.

CHALKBOARD PROJECT FOR EDUCATION

Since quality education is of importance to most Leaguers, we suggest that you check out the monthly web newsletter for Friends of the **Chalkboard Project**. After a year of surveying Oregon school data, they are about to tackle the hard work of evaluating the research. And, they are looking for input from as many people as possible. By March, they will combine those common-sense solutions with their research data, and ultimately share with everyone in this state the best possible options for elevating our public schools to among the nation's best.

This ambitious goal requires a long-term commitment with an eye toward lasting solutions. For our public schools to experience meaningful improvements, there must be involvement from all Oregonians ... taxpayers, students, parents, teachers, and friends.' For more information see below.

email: hildicks@chalkboardproject.org

phone: 877-YOUR-K12

web: <http://www.chalkboardproject.org>

LWVC BOOK CLUB

Challenge yourself with a good book!

Join us at Nancy Schary’s, Monday, February 14, 7:30 p.m. to talk about *Henry and Clara*, by Thomas Mallon. This fictional tale recounts the lives of the couple seated with the Lincoln’s in their box at Ford’s Theater the night of the fateful shot and provides an interesting insight into the times. Call Nancy at 752–1629 for directions for her home and to let her know you’ll be attending.

To get a head start on reading, check out the upcoming selections:

March 14: *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, Barack Obama

April 11: *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*

(The American empire Project, Chalmers Johnson

May 9: *The Master*, Colin Toibin

(Note the last two books are currently available only in hardback– alternates may be determined).

For more information about the LWVC Book Club, call Corrine Gobeli, 745–7736, cgobeli@aol.com

Let’s Party!

We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of League membership for **Lee Callahan, Marj Chilcote, Louise Ferrell, Kitty MacPherson** and **Jean Marvell**. There will be a hot buffet lunch from Valley Catering for \$7.95. This is your golden opportunity to honor these dedicated members who have contributed so much to the League. We will hear from each of them about when, how, and why they joined the League and they will highlight some of their favorite League experiences.

The Day – February 19th

The Place – Autzen Center for the Humanities on 9th and Jefferson

The Time – 12 noon (*til ~2:00pm)

If you wish to attend, please send your check for \$7.95 to Jean Nath no later than February 12th. While you’re doing this, you might invite another Leaguer (or former Leaguer) and plan to carpool.

Cut here -----
Cut here

Please send your check for \$7.95 no later than February 12th

To:
Jean Nath
2265 NW Brownly Heights Drive
Corvallis, OR 97330

___ Yes, I (we) wish to attend the luncheon. Here is my check to reserve a seat at the 50–year members’ anniversary celebration!

Name(s): _____

Upcoming Events: February 2005

- Feb. 5 Legislative Town Hall, 9:30 to 11:30 A.M.
Corvallis Library
- Feb. 14 Book Club at Nancy Schary's home
7:30 pm (see article)
- Feb.10 Campaign Finance Reform Public Meeting,
7:00 to 9:00 P.M. at Library
- Feb. 16 LWV Corvallis Board Meeting TBA
- Feb. 19 50 year membership celebration, Ctr. for the
Humanities, 8th & Jefferson

Mark Your Calendar Thrift Shop Consignment Day

Open Thursdays for consignments.

Call ahead to make arrangements
Miriam Miller 753-7261

Thrift Shop consignment number: 1073
