



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- SAVE the DATE- Annual Dinner Meeting
LWVRV looking forward to two big events, p.5
LWVRV and LWVA co-sponsoring meet and greet candidates, p.8

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APRIL GENERAL MEETING

Friday, April 11, 2008

Meet and Greet the five candidates running for the position of Jackson County's County Clerk. This meeting is co-sponsored with LWVA.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT if one of the five candidates receives 50% plus 1 vote in the primary, that will be the only candidate's name to appear on the ballot.

11:30 - lunch (for reservations, Joan Rogers, 772-4290 or rogers4290@aol.com)

12:00 - 1:00 Program

Black Bear Diner, 1150 East Barnett Road - Medford

Non-members are welcome to attend!

LWVRV ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Café Dejeuner

1108 E. Main Street

Medford, OR 97504

541-857-1290

Guest Speaker: Sharon Johnson,

"The Healing Power of Laughter"

DETAILS to FOLLOW in the ANNUAL MEETING PACKET



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Trish Bowcock

Health Care Reform – Time to Learn the Details

This is a deciding time in American politics. Elected officials, and those seeking to be elected officials, are proposing various ways to reform America's health care system. At the crux of most reform proposals is a mechanism for opening-up health insurance coverage so that all Americans are insured. The question I have is whether having health insurance is the same thing as having access to affordable health care?

My question arises from personal experience. I carry health insurance yet I still find the cost of health care to be prohibitively expensive. In spite of good health and few claims, my insurance premiums soar annually, as does my deductible which is now \$10,000. Simultaneously, the list of health care services excluded from coverage grows. Having health insurance used to provide peace of mind. It would save me from financial devastation should I experience a serious illness. That is no longer the case. I would still be responsible for excluded services, even if deemed medically necessary. These costs would pile on top of my deductible and would not count toward the maximum exposure of loss quoted in my policy. My financial exposure for a serious illness is great. I find that as a middle-class American, having health insurance does not truly grant greater access to affordable health care.

In the coming elections, as you look at the various proposals for health care reform, ask whether health insurance coverage will actually result in greater access to health care for middle-class Americans. Look at the various proposals to see if the ones relying upon universal health insurance coverage also simultaneously propose provisions that will regulate the insurers in a way that coverage actually translates into affordable access to health care.

There is a great, easy-to-use, web site recommended by LWVUS. It provides comparative information on various reforms currently being advocated. Check it out at www.health08.org. Some interesting facts:

Forty seven million Americans lacked health insurance coverage in 2006.

Health Insurance premiums have increased by 78% since 2001.

46% of Americans lack an employer-sponsored health insurance plan.

Local League Leaders

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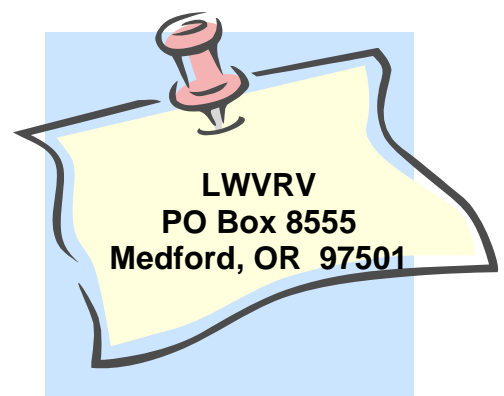
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LWVRV Voice Mail:
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www.lwvrv.org

WHAT OTHER STATES THINK ABOUT OREGON'S VOTE-BY-MAIL

The following correspondence occurred in January, 2008. The letters tell the story:

Dear Mr. Bradbury,

I am a resident of Jacksonville Oregon and President of the Rogue Valley League of Women Voters.

Several months ago I was visiting my mother-in-law in Georgia. We attended a luncheon organized by the League of Women Voters Georgia. Approximately 400 people were in attendance. The keynote speaker was Georgia Secretary of State Karen Handel. The topic was Voter Participation. Ms. Handel denounced Vote By Mail as an unsuccessful experiment, specifically citing Oregon's experience as proof. As this is contrary to my understanding, I attempted to discuss this with Ms. Handel following the presentation. She stood by her comments and stated that you were the source of her information and that if I had a problem with it, I should contact you.

I would like to provide information to the League of Women Voters of Georgia correcting Ms. Handel's comments. I think this is important, as that organization is exploring the concept. But first, I wanted to ask your opinion, as Ms. Handel cited you as the source for her assertion that voter participation was not affected by a vote-by-mail system.

Many thanks for your time.

Trish Bowcock

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Dear Ms. Bowcock,

Dear Ms. Bowcock,

Thank you for your email. As you might know, calculating and comparing voter turnouts can be a tricky proposition. Since so many variables can (and do!) change from election to election, it's difficult to assign credit--or blame--for turnout numbers on any one factor.

That said, the experience in Oregon has NOT shown Vote By Mail to be a failed experiment in voter turnout; quite the opposite, actually. For reference, see the pdf document at this link: <http://www.sos.state.or.us/elections/nov62007/nov07stats.pdf>. Specifically, pay attention to the last page, which has historical results for both primary and general elections from 1964 to November of 2006 (even years only).

You'll be able to see how turnouts change from election to election, depending at least in part on whether it's a presidential year. Depending on how one decides to analyze the numbers, one could come to the conclusion that turnout has remained steady or edged up slightly since Vote By Mail was introduced. That may seem modest, but compare that to the reality of the voter turnout trend across the nation, which most experts believe is on the decline. In other words: since the implementation of Vote By Mail, Oregon has avoided the downturn in turnout numbers.

Additionally, in a 2003 study by Patricia Southwell at the University of Oregon, Vote By Mail rated very high among survey respondents (higher even than the vote percentage that made VBM the law of the land in 1998), and nearly 30 percent of the people polled said they vote "more often" under Vote By Mail. 66 percent said they vote with the same frequency, and only 4 percent said they voted less frequently. Young people aged 18-38 and women said they were far more likely to vote more frequently under Vote By Mail. I encourage you to take a look at that report, which is here:

http://www.sos.state.or.us/executive/votebymail/pdf_files/Southwell.pdf.

I hope that helps. Let me know if there's anything else you may need.

Scott Moore

Chief of Communications

Oregon Secretary of State's Office

503-986-2368

Continued on page 4

TEA FOR YOU



Voters' Choice Tea™

The League of Women Voters

We are selling Voters' Choice Tea as our new fundraiser. This delicious premium tea will be available at our general meetings and at Eve's Garden Cafe and Tearoom, located at 1590 Hwy 38 in Applegate. The phone number is 846-9019. The tea comes in 4 flavors and costs \$4.50 a box.

Please support us and buy a box for yourself and one to sell to a friend. All proceeds go to LWVRV.

LWVRV's BOOK CLUB



If stimulating discussion peaks your interest, please join us.

April 18, 2008

10:00 - Noon

Blue Shoes & Happiness by Alexander McCall Smith

Eileen Adee's home, 773-4450

May 30, 2008

10:00 - Noon

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

Carole Levi's home, 664-9940

Continued from page 3, What Others think

To the League of Women Voters Georgia
Hello!

My name is Trish Bowcock and I am president of the LWV Rogue Valley in Southern Oregon. My mother-in-law, Barbara Loar, is a member of LWV DK.

In October, Barbara invited me, as her guest, to attend the LWVGAEF fundraising luncheon. It was a grand and well done affair! Your Secretary of State, Karen Handel, was the keynote speaker. During her presentation, she mentioned that Oregon's vote-by-mail system had failed as a means for increasing voter participation. This comment troubled me and was contrary to my understanding of the success of our voter system. When I questioned Ms. Handel following her presentation, she cited her source as Oregon's Secretary of State. I queried our Secretary of State on the topic.

Below is the response from his office, which I hope you will keep in mind should LWVGA ever explore a change in the voting system.

As an FYI, LWVOR was a major player in bringing Vote-by-mail to Oregon. As a native Georgian who migrated to Oregon via Texas, I was concerned about how vote-by-mail would work when I moved here. Although I do miss going to the polls, I find vote-by-mail to be a great system.

Thanks so much for your time and kind hospitality at your luncheon.

Trish Bowcock
LWVRV

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Georgia's response:

Thanks, Trish. Yes, I remember someone mentioning her comment to me. While she is good on some issues, she is terrible and ill-informed on others. Thanks for the information. Oregon's model has long been held up as a great example to increase voter turnout through convenience.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Owens, Executive Director
League of Women Voters of Georgia
5115 New Peachtree Road, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30341 , 678.547.0755

United Nations Association—USA

The United Nations Launches its *Green Passport* Campaign

If you're thinking about traveling abroad this spring or summer it just got easier to go 'green' away from home. The **United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP)** and the **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs** launched the *Green Passport* campaign on March 7, 2008. This Internet-based campaign offers tips on a variety of practical steps you can take to contribute to sustainable development by making responsible vacation choices. Indeed, just small changes in your travel decisions do make a difference—from choosing service providers who are environmentally and socially friendly to reducing the consumption of energy in transit or in hotels—you can enjoy your vacation while protecting the environment and contributing to the economic and social development of people, cultures, and destinations you visit.

The *Green Passport* campaign aims to raise awareness of the increasing environmental and social footprint of vacation travelers. In fact, the number of international tourists reached 898 million last year, an increase of 52 million people from the previous year, according to the **United Nations World Tourism Organization**. "Tourism, the world's biggest industry is booming. By 2020, the number of international arrivals by air and by sea could reach 1.6 billion annually," reported Achim Steiner, UN-Under Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director. "This growth brings the prospect of income and economic development to countless tourist destinations in rich and poor countries alike. The challenge is to manage this growth sustainably. Governments have a key role to play, but so too do individuals and families when planning and going on holiday," Steiner said.

You will find green tips for all stages of travel, including planning your trip, packing, accommodations, activities, and transportation on the *Green Passport* website: www.unep.fr/greenpassport

The *Green Passport* campaign is yet another example of the vital work of the United Nations. To learn more about the United Nations' efforts in leading the way toward sustainable tourism, please visit the **UNEP's Sustainable Tourism Program** website: www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/home.htm

To become a member of your local **United Nations Association-USA, Southern Oregon Chapter**, please visit www.unausa.org or e-mail me at coxki@sou.ed

Kimberley A. Cox, Ph.D.

Secretary, UNA-USA, Southern Oregon Chapter

LWVRV is Looking Forward to Two Big Events:



LWVOR Council 2008

State Council, "*Waves of the Future*"

May 17 – 18, 2008, Corvallis, Oregon

LWVUS brings convention 2008 to Oregon

National Convention, "*Reaching New Heights*"

June 13 – 17, 2008, Portland, Oregon

We will be sending one delegate to national Convention and two representatives to State

Council. If you are interested in participating In these events or upcoming league conferences, call or email Trish. 899-9557 or trishbowcock@charter.net

LAND USE ISSUES IN JACKSON COUNTY

The Regional Problem Solving Project (RPS) continues to move forward toward possible approval by the local cities and the state. Public hearings will probably be scheduled later this spring and summer for each of the 7 cities to approve of their designated urban reserve areas (50-year growth areas) and their contract with RPS. However, 75% of these urban reserve areas where future growth could occur consist of farmland. Residents of these cities should be aware of the possible development on these high value farmland and demand saving these important lands for agriculture. Also, testifiers should emphasize the importance of infill in the present city limits.

Please watch for the announcements for these public hearings. State hearing and possible approval by the Land Conservation and Development Commission could occur afterward at a commission meeting later this summer.

Comments from a Forbes article mentions there is huge potential for fuel-efficient cars and low-carbon fuels to reduce transportation's impact on climate change and public health. But technological developments alone won't be enough to solve these problems.

The key to success to keep car traffic from growing to unsustainable level in cities could be solved by shifting 2/3rds of new U. S. growth to compact neighborhoods where cars are not the only transportation option. And this would save 85 million tons of CO2 annually, which is more than the combined annual emissions of over 16,000,000 regular cars.

Porter Lombard, member of the RVLWV.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2008 at the Medford Central Library. *The summit is free and open to the public.*

10:00—11:30am State Legislator Panel

12:00—1:00pm Lunch and keynote speaker

1:30—3:00pm Krochalis and Ward Panel

Speakers: Rick Krochalis, Executive Director, Federal Transit Administration for Region 10 (four state region)

Michael Ward, ODOT Public Transit Administrator

Legislative panel with Representatives Peter Buckley, George Gilman, Sal Esquivel, Ron Maurer, Dennis Richardson (TBC) and Senators Jason Atkinson, Dr. Alan Bates (TBC)

**This is not a candidate's forum and the panel will limit discussion to transportation-related issues in*

*the legislative arena**

Sponsored by Rogue Valley Transportation District

League of Women Voters Rogue Valley

NEWS FROM LWVUS

HEALTH CARE REFORM

LWVUS has long advocated for health care reform. It is now listed as a top priority. The official league position is:

The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care.

Through decades of work in their communities, League members have learned that Americans believe that fairness and responsibility, as well as access, are important values for any health care system. We believe that healthcare reform can only succeed if it takes all these values into account.

..”Due an unanticipated but exciting opportunity to run for Oregon State Representative, 6th District, I must regretfully resign from the Board of Directors, effective immediately. Depending on the outcome of the election, I look forward to rejoining the board, if that is the wish of the organization.... Please know that I will miss the meetings, the fellow board members and the process and will continue to work on League assignments, but not as a board member. Thank you for your friendship.

2007 / 2008 League of Women Voters of Rogue Valley Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Membership in League of Women Voters is open to all women and men 18 years of age and older and includes subscriptions to local, state and national League publications.

Year Dues \$56. Spouse dues \$28

Send check, **payable to LWVRV**, and application to: Box 8555, Medford, OR 97501

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children at Risk | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Issues | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Election Issues | |

Tell your friends: New members to the League of Women Voters pay 1/2 dues during February, March and April, only \$28. New members who join in May get all of next year for the price of \$56.

April 2008 Calendar of Events

Friday	April 11	11:30am—1:00pm	General Meeting, Black Bear Restaurant.
Thursday	April 17	12noon—1:30pm	LWVRV, co-sponsoring with LWVA, to meet and greet candidates for Circuit Court Judges and County Assessor positions.. Bring brown bag lunch to the Ashland Library. Take #10 bus, carpool or join Eileen Adee at the RVTD bus station on Front St. and 10th at 11:00am. Parking is limited.
Monday	April 21	11:30am—1:00pm	LWVRV board meeting, Sun Oaks clubhouse. Everyone is welcome.
Friday	April 25	7:00—9:00pm	LWVRV, co-sponsoring with LWVA, to hear the candidates for County Commissioner, at the Ashland Council Chambers, E. Main and Mountain. It will be televised on Channel 9.
Thursday	May 8	10:00am—3:00pm	Public Transportation Summit, Medford Library.
Tuesday	May 13	5:30pm—8:30pm	ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

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ORGANIZATION
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PERMIT #765
MEDFORD, OREGON

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF ROGUE VALLEY
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