



Voter

League of
Women Voters of
Bellingham/
Whatcom County

November 2009

From Co-President Jayne Freudenberger



The autumn months have flown by in a whirlwind of activity by our local league. We have taken the lessons of convention to heart and planned several

collaborative efforts with other local groups to make sure our aims of voter education and advocacy are met. This fall we have shared sponsorship of meetings and forums with the YWCA, the AAUW and Whatcom Fair Voting

We presented a school board debate and an issues forum with the AAUW on Oct. 19th. The school board debate was lively and we are fortunate to have good candidates interested in working to make our schools a better place.

A discussion about non-partisanship has arisen at the state level concerning the initiative I-1033. The LWV always tries to present both sides of an issue at our forums even when as in this case we already hold a position. Our program chairs worked hard to contact the pro I-1033 sponsors, but no one from that side was willing to come forward to defend this position at our forum. This presented a dilemma for us. I-1033 is an important issue facing the electorate and we felt the information should be presented so people could make an informed decision.

We chose to present the substance of the bill and to permit the speaker against the initiative to state his position and answer questions. We did not state our position which is to vote no on the initiative except to note at the end of the forum that the LWV's position paper was available in the hall.

Some local leagues chose to advocate the LWV's no vote on I-1033 without the attempt to be bi-

(cont'd on page 2)

“Paths to Women’s Wellness” 5:30 p.m. Thursday, November 12, 2009 YWCA Ballroom 1026 N. Forest, Bellingham

This is the third in the “Healing Healthcare” YWCA speaker series co-sponsored with the American Association of University Women and League of Women Voters. The program is free. Dessert and coffee are provided and brown-bag dinners welcome.

Practitioners from various prevention, wellness and healing disciplines will discuss paths to women’s health

Panelists are:

- Elizabeth Bernstein**, Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine, who has a particular interest in the link between mind and body in trauma recovery;
- Michelle (Misty Dawn) Carlson**, a state and nationally Licensed Massage Therapist, who specializes in pregnancy massage and injury recovery;
- Sue Dabney, M.D.**, of North Sound Family Medicine, who previously had a career in public health emphasizing disease prevention;
- and **Jean McFadden Layton**, a Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine, who focuses on nutrition as part of her wider interest in endocrinology.

Moderator is **Michelle Zimmeroff**, YWCA board member and Wellness Coordinator for BP Cherry Point Refinery.

The series concludes at noon Thursday, Nov. 19 with “Healing Healthcare: Where Do We Go from Here?” WWU Political Science Chair **Sara Weir** will discuss the status of healthcare reform and what the debate reveals about the forces impacting significant national legislation.

For additional information, see www.ywcabellingham.org or call (360) 734-4820.

From Co-President Jayne Freudenberger, cont'd

partisan. What was the right approach? The state board will be addressing this quandary in the coming weeks and we will update you on their decision.

On Saturday Oct. 21, board member **Robbi Ferron** moderated a debate on the National Popular Vote Compact. Jointly sponsored by the LWV, Whatcom Fair Voting and the three main political parties, the debate has far reaching consequences, as some people hope the electoral college will be abolished with a one man one vote process, while others believe no changes should be made in our election systems that were devised by our founding fathers.

Robbie and her voter watch team, **Lynne Rein, Mary MacCartor, Mary Le Donne Lynn Belinger, Robin Holcombe and Rosemary Hosteltler** have also completed training to monitor the counting of election ballots. Robbi's article

about this process is printed in this Voter and on the website. Thank you all for your service.

I'm sure many of you were happy to see our 2009-210 membership handbook arrive in the mail. Getting this out is always a challenge as our board typically doesn't meet in the summer and as new members come on in the fall we want them to be in the updated book. Thank you **Margaret Woll** for making sure it happened.

We are getting prepared for our wine and cheese event with our elected officials Dec. 2nd, 5-7 p.m. at the YWCA. If you didn't attend last year, you missed a fun and informative time. No formal speeches, no stiff protocol—just an informal chance for you to chat with an official from the city, county, port or legislature about something that concerns you. **Please put it on your calendar and bring a friend**—the meeting is by invitation of a league member only!! Happy Thanksgiving.

-Jayne

The League needs you!

Get Involved



Do you have good computer skills—
We need some one to keep our data base.
Call **Jayne** 734-5283.



Kathy Gablehouse would love some members to help with planning for the wine and cheese party on December 2nd. Call **Kathy** at 734-1813.

Our local League's water study begins in January. Call **Lynne Rein** at 393-3209 if you are interested in joining the study group.



Most people would be daunted by having to put on three political forums in a row, but not our super hero Voter Service Chair **Georgia MacGregor**. She made it look easy. Thanks to you, Georgia, and all your volunteers for doing such a good job with this important task. Georgia is also a master quilter and was instrumental in organizing terrific county-- wide quilt show this fall.

*Please let us know of other Leaguers
we can salute in this column.*

Walkin' & Talkin'

For scintillating conversation, join the weekly "Walk and Talk" group every Friday at 2 PM. We meet just south of the Chrysalis at the top of Taylor Street Pier. After the walk, we go to the Book Fare, upstairs in Village Books for coffee and more conversation.

First LWV Election Observer Corp Activity

Bellingham/Whatcom County Leaguers, **Lynne Rein, Mary Morgan McCartor, Mary LeDonne, Robbi Ferron, and Lynn Bellinger** comprise the first LWV Election Observer Corp. The 'Corp' will observe the election process for the November 3, 2009 General Election. Statute permits the major political party representatives to observe 'up close and personal'. This is the first time non-partisan citizens are observing.

Auditor Office staff **Pete Griffin** and **Lori Starkovich** trained political party and citizen election observers and Opening Board temporary employees on October 19, 2009. Election Observers protect the integrity of the election by observing election activities.

Griffin trained on the four following areas 1) Logic and Accuracy test for the tabulation system, 2) Processing Ballots; 3) Counting Center activities and 4) Election Certification.

Ballot processing includes collecting ballots, opening the outer envelop, counting and recording, making 'batches' of 120 ballots as they arrive, verifying voter signatures and keeping the ballots private and secure. At a separate location, the privacy envelop is opened and the number of ballots separated, counted and stored until they are counted on election day.

Griffin explained how when counting votes on the ballots the counting machines separate out ballots with anomalies such as stray marks. All write-in votes, real or fictitious, are separated. He indicated how those ballots are documented and traced to the end of the process.

Starkovich's directed her presentation primarily to the Opening Board. She used the State of Washington official guide to interpreting voter intent in a variety of potential situations. For example, why a ballot must be 'duplicated' manually. The tabulating machine will not count a race where there is ambiguity because of cross out marks. It is programmed not to accept any ambiguity. Staff manually duplicate the ballot and include the vote that needed interpretation of voter intent - using the guidelines. They then run the duplicated ballot, which the machine will now tabulate or count. The Opening Board and Observers were given the State Guide.

Griffin emphasized how every ballot is accounted for by it being documented at each step in the process.

Counting the votes on ballots mailed in prior to election day begins in the Counting Center on election day. During the day observers select 6 batches from which one race per batch will be hand counted. On Wednesday following election day the political party representatives tell the Auditors office which race for each of the six batches they want hand counted. It is interesting that the hand count during the primary election counting the hand count was one vote more than the machine count.

Contemporary election counts may be released beginning at 8 PM on election night.

Observation continues beyond the day following the election. Ballots will trickle in and if they meet criteria must be counted up until Certification.. Military ballots for troops overseas are sent 30 days before election day, nonetheless they may trickle in.

Certification occurs on the 21st day following the election and should be on November 24. Observers may observe.

Griffin and Starkovich provided handouts of their visual presentation, effectively and professionally answered all questions and explained the reason for each procedure.

Robbi Ferron coordinates LWV observations with the political party representatives, **Jim Fox** and **Larry Helm**.



League of Women Voters of Bellingham/ Whatcom County

LWV of Bellingham/Whatcom County
P.O. Box 4041
Bellingham, WA 98227-4041

Phone: 360-734-2366

Fax: 360-734-2366

Website: www.LWVbellinghamwhatcom.org

Inside:

- "Paths to Women's Wellness"
Nov. 12th, YWCA
- Election Observer Corp Activity
- President's Letter
- Get Involved
- Kudos
- Walking & Talking

FALL CALENDAR— Meetings of Interest for League Members

November

14th AAUW Bellingham Branch – Becky Pillai –
Academy for Lifelong Learning. YWCA Ballroom
10 a.m. to noon.

18th City Club "Is it Time to Legalize Marijuana?"
Northwood Hall noon -1:30 p.m.

19th "Healing Healthcare: Where Do We Go From
Here", YWCA, 12 noon—1:30 p.m.

December

2nd. LWV Wine and Cheese with Your Elected
Officials – YWCA Ballroom 5 p.m. to 7 p.m .

LWVWA Action Workshop—November 21, 2009

9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at St. Andrews Lutheran Church,
2650 148th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA

Includes lunch and a bake sale! Cost is \$25 person.

Lobby Team Priority Topics:

Public Campaign Financing for Judicial Positions
Early Learning/Education
Washington State Budget Issues

If you are interested in attending, please contact Elsie
Heinrick at elsieheinrick@comcast.net or 671-9534.

Update your Member List - New and Renewing Members

Since the last VOTER was published, we have a new member—Martha Mills, 4373 Frances Street, Bellingham, WA 98226. Welcome Martha! We have also received renewals from Arlene Beacom, Dorothy Burgess, Edie Norton and Judith Wiseman. Please make sure these members are included in your Member Handbook.