



March General Meeting

Examining Equity in Portland Public Schools

Lynn Baker

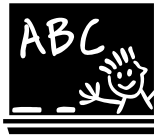
Within the last few years, school districts in and around Portland have undergone changes. Portland Public Schools 1J has changed the way it educates middle school students by restructuring many schools into K-8's and keeping others as 6-8 facilities. It is now in the planning stages of restructuring its high schools. Because of lower enrollment, a number of schools have closed. David Douglas, on the other hand, has seen a large rise in enrollment, and they are overcrowded. Parkrose has seen its enrollment stay relatively stable, but has had a 29% rise in the number of students for which English is their second language.

The education study committee is focused on two components of education: structure/organization and equity. It has chosen to look closely at three districts wholly within Portland—David Douglas, Parkrose, and Portland Public 1J. By examining those very dissimilar districts, it hopes to find practices which contribute to excellence and equity in the way in which Portland's children are educated. This will inform a LWV discussion about whether our current positions are adequate for the present time.

Some questions the committee endeavors to answer are:

Please turn to **Education**, page 3

Education Equity



Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 pm

Board Room, Multnomah County Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard

Panelists:

- **Carole Smith**, Portland Public Schools Superintendent
- **Barbara Rommel**, David Douglas School District Superintendent
- **Karen Fischer Gray**, Parkrose School District Superintendent
- **Dan Ryan**, Portland Public Schools Foundation

Parking: Ample street parking.

By Bus: Plan your route with TriMet's Trip Planner at www.trimet.org

*Special Presentation! **Everything You Wanted to Know About League... But Were Afraid to Ask** at 6:30 pm in the same location directly preceding the general meeting.*

Save the Date – Candidate Forums

Portland City Commissioner Positions 2 & 3

Tuesday, April 13, 7:00 pm

Multnomah County Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland

Multnomah County Chair & County Sheriff

TBA

Metro Council President

Wednesday, April 21, 12:00 noon

Multnomah County Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland

All forums will be recorded and aired on local access cable television. Assisting us in that effort are Portland Community Media and Metro East Community Media. Nonetheless, please plan to attend in person—and bring a friend or three—so that we may have a large and enthusiastic audience.

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of Portland, OR**

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Voter is produced 9 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Portland. We welcome your comments, suggestions, story ideas and submissions. Please contact Pat Chor or Heather Drake at the League office, 503-228-1675. Submissions must be received no later than the Friday before the board meeting each month.

March 2010



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President's Column

Betsy Pratt

February was full of birthday festivities. In addition to our own splendid celebration at the Riverside Golf and Country Club, I attended the Clackamas League party at the Lake Oswego Heritage House (my mother, Nancy Pratt, was one of the 50 year members they recognized). The State League held its special function at the State Capital On February 19th and invited all the legislators to share in their cake. Although the League usually focuses on serious matters of government and public policy, these events show that we're capable of having fun as well. We must do it more often.

As I reported at both the general meeting and the birthday party, Portland Mayor Sam Adams issued a proclamation in our honor. The proclamation declared the 13th day of February, 2010, as LWV Making Democracy Work Day, in recognition of the League's 90th anniversary, and urged "all residents to pay great tribute and respect to the League of Women Voters for all they do to make our community healthy, vibrant, and strong." Makes me feel all warm and fuzzy.

Speaking of healthy and vibrant communities, our February 9th program on sustainability provided some outstanding information on what local organizations are doing to make Portland livable in the long-term. If you could not attend or catch the cable rebroadcast, you can still watch the program. The cable services have been providing DVD

copies of our programs whenever we have one taped. Contact the Portland League office if you want to borrow a copy.

School issues have been the subject of many local news stories lately, especially regarding the high school reorganization proposals. Anyone who cares about the quality of education will want to attend our March program on the school system. We all have a vested interest in seeing that the next generation is prepared to be effective members of the community, so please put the March 9th meeting on your calendar.

The Development Committee is organizing another fun event for Sunday, April 25. Jan and Don Wolf are hosting a dinner party for League members with Deborah and Gretchen Kafoury as special guests. For more information, see the flyer accompanying this *Voter*.

The Board has started the groundwork for our local convention, which is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11, at the parish hall of St. Philip Neri Church in southeast Portland. The Budget and Nominating Committees are well underway, but we did not appoint a By-Laws Committee this year. Please let me know if you have any concerns about our by-laws. They can be viewed on the League web page (www.lwvpdx.org/about/board-resources). While you're there, check out our other web page features and give us your feedback on what works and what needs improvement.

New League Book Group Forming

Members interested in joining a newly forming book group should contact either Barb Hansen or Jane Giger. They hope to put together a League book group devoted to non-fiction with governmental or multi-cultural themes.

An organizational meeting is planned for 7:30 pm on Wednesday, March 24, at Barb's home. Meeting times, dates, books, format etc. will be worked out. We look forward to reading and then discussing a book with friends.

Education

Continued from page 1

Equity of staffing among schools:

What is the number of teachers teaching outside their licensure and does the percentage differ between schools with higher and lower socio-economic status? Is there equity of staffing in the average level of experience and education among all schools? Are secondary classroom subjects assigned or voluntary?

Foundation grants: How should equity and need be balanced in giving Foundation money to schools? What is the percentage of money accessed by lower and higher socio-economic schools? What kinds of things does Foundation money buy? Can wealthier schools get around Foundation rules?

Services: Do all students get the same out-of-classroom services such as PE, music, and art? How are talented and gifted and special education students served?

Organization: How are parents and other community stakeholders invited to participate in decision-making? What are the ways in which these stakeholders can make a difference in how schools operate?

It should be an informative and enjoyable evening. And plan to join your unit this month as discussions continue.

March Action Committee Meeting

City Commissioner Amanda Fritz

Friday, March 26, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Room 433, Board of Trade Building, 310 SW 4th Avenue

All members welcome. Questions? Contact Debbie Aiona.

2010 Census: It's Time to Get Out the Count!

Adapted from the LWVUS website article "Census Overview" - Reprinted from the February Seattle Voter

Every election season, the League of Women Voters works to "Get out the Vote." This year it's time to "get out the count." In 2000, almost one in three households failed to return their census forms, leading to not only lots of extra work doorbelling by census workers but also holes in the final count. We can do better.

Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution mandates a headcount of everyone residing in the United States. The first census was conducted in 1790, and one has been carried out every 10 years since then. The 2010 Census form, a short form with 10 questions that will take 10 minutes to complete, will be mailed to all households in early March. The census will count all residents living in the United States as well as ask for name, sex, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship and housing tenure.

Census data is important because it:

- Impacts how more than \$300 billion per year in federal and state funding is allocated to communities for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, transportation and more;
- Is also used to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and to redistrict state legislatures and;
- Used to define legislature districts, school district assignment areas and other important functional areas of government.

The census is like a snapshot that helps define who we are as a nation. Data about changes in our communities is crucial to many planning decisions, such as where to provide services for the elderly, where to build new roads and schools, or where to locate job training centers. Here in King County, due to our large and very diverse communities (we speak over 90 languages and represent many ethnicities and races), getting an accurate count is critical.

Let's work together to make it happen right!!

90th LWV Anniversary Celebration: Thanks to Our Many Volunteers

Mary McWilliams

Many thanks are owed to many Portland League members for the successful and well attended 90th LWV Anniversary celebration brunch at the elegant and spacious banquet room at the north Portland Riverside Golf and Country Club on Saturday, February 13, 2010. At this festive event, sixty-six men and women came together to recognize and honor donors to the Portland League and the volunteer efforts of League members.

A slide presentation of LWV national history beginning in the pre-1920s and ending with pictures of events in our own League this past year was shown, while lively conversations took place at the tables.

Our president, **Betsy Pratt**, began the program by reading Mayor Sam Adams proclamation that declared Saturday, February 13, 2010, the 90th LWV Anniversary day in Port-

land, OR. This was followed by a funny musical skit on membership by **Debbie Kaye** and **Bev Wilson**, accompanied on the piano by **Ted Kaye**.

Kris Hudson, former LWVUS Board Member, LWV Oregon President, and LWV Portland President, introduced our two speakers, **Norman Turrill**, current LWVUS Board Member, and **Jane Cease**, former LWV Portland President and State Senator and Representative, Oregon Legislature.

Christine Vernier of **Vernier Software and Technology** was recognized for long-time support of the League. Betsy Pratt acknowledged all donors, large and small and thanked all for sustaining the Portland League's work. She then went on to thank the Portland League underwriters who had completely paid

for the 90th Anniversary Portland League celebration.

Kris Hudson then recognized the LWV Portland members who were former or current appointed/elected officials, followed by recognition of all the Portland League members who have volunteered for LWV United States, LWV Oregon, LWV Columbia River Region, and LWV Portland. Practically the whole room stood.

Betsy Pratt concluded the program by thanking all for their attendance and reminding them to take home their box of two truffles from Majestic Chocolate, a special Valentine Day treat for the actual February 14th date of the 90th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters.

See the League website (www.lwvpdx.org) for more information about the celebration.

New Member Gathering with Portland City Commissioner Fritz

Carol Cushman

Several new members met with fellow League members and City Commissioner Amanda Fritz over a brown bag lunch on Friday, January 29. We enjoyed a lively round of Q&A with the commissioner about all things city, ranging from the outreach efforts of the Office of Neighborhood Involvement to the ongoing process for Voter-Owned Election candidates. Commissioner Fritz noted that she personally reads all of her emails, and learns much more from two lines written by an individual than a repeat of mass email (the kind encouraged by an organized group or campaign), even if it has been slightly altered by the individual.

Thank you to Amanda, and welcome to all new members.



New League members, hosted by the Membership Committee, were treated to an inside view of life at Portland City Hall. From left to right: Beth Johnson, Carol Cushman, Marion Abrams, Janine Settlemeyer, Debbie Kaye, Commissioner Amanda Fritz, and Marsha Parks.

Local Convention Service Auction

Participation opportunities abound!

Debbie Kaye

League members had so much fun with the auction of services at last year's Local Convention, AND it was such a financial success, that we will offer it again this year on Tuesday, May 11. Please mark your calendars.

You are invited to:

- share your talents & skills (crafts, languages, computer education, editing, photography)
- offer services such as airport transportation, baked goods, event planning, plant watering
- loan a beach or mountain house, a pickup, a power washer
- recycle a serviceable item that no longer suits your home or closet

Please consider what you can offer, so our service auction will be a success again. Details will follow in the next *Voter*.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Win-Win for Bidders and League Coffers

Carol Wilson

We hit the jackpot at the 2009 local Convention, scoring three fabulous items: 1) A weekend at the Osborn's cozy Mt. Hood cabin with our children and grandchildren. We had a wonderful time together and are looking forward to another family getaway next summer. 2) A visit to Washington Park with Bob Lustberg, tour guide extraordinaire, who shared his favorite places and deep knowledge of park history with us. It was a great way to learn more about this Portland treasure, which now tops our list of best places to take visitors. 3) Technical advice from computer guru and League member, Norman Turrill. Thanks to Norman, financial reports are going out to Board members online these days.

We can't wait to see what goodies will be available at Convention 2010 this spring!

FYI: We're going to offer delivery of firewood split from trees we cut down last year.

Membership

A Decade Gone and to Come

Beth Johnson

Another decade gone. The "oughts"? The "noughts"? Or just "Thank goodness!"?

The reality, for me at least, is that the decades are flying by and I begin to think of "legacy."

Mementos, once put aside in a sturdy trunk--better now digitalized for my daughters and grandchildren? (and if I do that I can send discs to the nieces and nephews--and grands, and even greats!)

And how shall we preserve, extend, and--dare we even think it?--improve the legacy of the League? Those same daughters and nieces, and sons and nephews, need to be invited, inspired and, hopefully, become committed not only to the ideals of the League, but to its day to day functioning. What will/should the League look like? Younger? With less personal time to share with us? More diverse?

What do we need most to attract them? We have a great website. Can we find more ways to share and entice through the web? Possibly. More personal outreach? Always. More attention to the Hispanic and other ethnic communities? Absolutely. But HOW?

What is YOUR best idea? Share it with us, the Membership Committee, of which YOU are the most important part.

New Members

Paul Bennett • *National*

Laura Coates • *National*

Marjorie Enneking • *National*

Penelope Schott • *National*

New Members

Beverly Bruender

Marsha Parks

Cary Turkon

February General Meeting: Creating a Sustainable Future

Bev Wilson

What he said was a real mouthful. David Bragdon, Metro Council President, described sustainability as the ability of a society to continue doing what it's doing without decreasing the possibility that the society will continue. He continued with the observation that our American lifestyle is not sustainable, we can't continue economic policies of borrowing against the future, often at short-term gain vs. long-term values, and we can't continue using up our finite resources. That stark truth underlined all that followed. The role of government is to encourage positive choices via legislation and taxes.

Metro Council addresses five policy areas:

- Transportation accounts for one third of our fossil fuel use. Metro plans and encourages public transport expansion and other transport options to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Metro manages our solid waste and we are recycling 57-58% of it. Metro is working to make it easier for us to recycle.
- Metro promotes the financial and environmental advantages of green buildings.
- Metro has used the money provided by bond measures to buy 10,000 acres of open land chosen by scientific teams aiming to protect watersheds, species, and access.
- Metro is charged with planning for our future population growth based on projected birth rates and immigration. Metro plans to prevent sprawl by redeveloping existing neighborhoods, promoting urban density, and preserving farmlands.

Michael Armstrong, Deputy Director, Bureau for Planning and Sustainability, City of Portland, discussed many of these topics with additional

points and emphasis on carbon emissions as part of the city's Climate Action Plan as well as the Portland Plan.

The PDC's economic policy of encouraging sustainability in new construction has led to 50% of these buildings receiving LEED certification. Portland's land use and transportation policies are structured to shape where communities grow, and to encourage neighborhoods where residents can walk to community resources within 20 minutes. The city aims for 43 acres of ecoroofs, 1,000 new community garden plots, use of more locally grown food, and encouragement of retrofitting homes for less environmental impact. With 1990 as the base year, Portland has reduced carbon emissions faster than the US as a whole even as our population grew, but still falls short of the decrease that would avoid severe climate disruption.

Dianne Ripley, Equity Agenda Coordinator for the Coalition for a Livable Future, includes equity as a key component of sustainability. The Coalition has created a research-based Equity Atlas as a graphic way to illustrate how equity relates to so-

cial justice and fairness. The graphic showing the distribution of Afro-Americans in the metro area was followed by graphics showing where full-service groceries were located, and where sidewalks that kids could use to walk safely to school were located. Access to healthy food and the ability to walk to school would help reduce childhood obesity. Some members of the Coalition are health-care organizations that view inequity as a marker for the decreased possibility for healthy lives.

Ms. Ripley described sustainability as a three-legged stool consisting of equity, environmental factors and economic outputs. Equity speaks to achieving sustainability by understanding how these issues interrelate. She said that Portland has tended to address racial segregation as an affordable housing problem. Ripley observed that people choose to live and work where they feel safe and comfortable, which in the past, was often in ghettos that may no longer exist. The Office of Neighborhood Involvement has had helpful discussion across racial lines dealing with racial issues as products of the overlapping areas of concern mentioned above.

LWVUS 49th National Convention June 11-15, 2010, Atlanta, Georgia

Making Democracy Work: A History of Change, A Future of Hope

All League members are invited to attend Convention and be part of the excitement as the appointed Convention delegates debate and adopt the 2010-2012 National Program, the LWVUS Budget for the next fiscal year, and amendments to the LWVUS Bylaws. Delegates will also be choosing the LWVUS Board officers, directors and nominating committee for the next biennium.

Members interested in attending should contact Betsy Pratt or the League office for more information (503-228-1675 or info@lwvpdx.org).

Calendar

March 2010							April 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	
2: LWVCRR 10:30 am, Room 433 3: Exec Committee 12:00 pm, Room 520 9: General Meeting 7:00 pm, Board Room, Mult. Bldg. 12: Voter Deadline 15: Board Meeting 5:45 pm, Room 433 23: Mailing Party 10:00 am, Room 520 26: Office Closed 26: Action Committee 1:00 pm, Room 433	7: Exec Committee 12:00 pm, Room 520 13: Candidate Forum 7:00 pm, Board Room, Mult. Bldg. 16: Voter Deadline 19: Board Meeting 5:45 pm, Room 433 21: Candidate Forum 12:00 noon, Board Room, Mult. Bldg. 23: Action Committee 1:00 pm, Room 433 27: Mailing Party 10:00 am, Room 520												

March Unit Meetings

We will continue our discussion about Portland public schools. The study committee has been at work since 2008 with a charge from the Convention to review our current positions from the perspective of our system today and recommend consolidations, deletions and updates. The committee has focused their evaluation this year on equity and structure within the districts. Don't miss this important discussion!

Unit 1 – Southwest

Monday, Mar. 22, 7:00 p.m.

Leader – Ann Mulrone

Host – Donna Ward

Unit 2 – Southeast

Monday, Mar. 22, 10:00 a.m.

Leader – Mary McWilliams

Host – Thelma Lester Clark

Unit 4 – North/Northeast

Thursday, Mar. 18, 1:00 p.m.

Leader – Susan Proppe Tong

Host – Doris Fong

Unit 5 – Terwilliger Plaza

Monday, Mar. 15, 3:00 p.m.

Leader – Jeanne Steed

No host – Convene at Terwilliger Plaza Auditorium A, 2545 SW Terwilliger Blvd.

Unit 6 – Southwest/Northwest Hills

Friday, Mar. 19, 9:30 a.m.

Leader – Debbie Kaye

Host – Jane Gigler

Unit 7 – Vermont Hills

Monday, Mar. 15, 9:30 a.m.

Leader – Jeanne Steed

Host – Jeanne Steed

Unit 8 – Online

Leader: Kathleen Hersh

Location: groups.yahoo.com/group/LWVPDXVirtualUnit/

New Members

Diane Boose • *National*

Stephanie Harper • *National*

Sara Olson • *National*

Calendar Location Key:

Room 520 and **Room 433** are located at our office building: Board of Trade Building, 310 SW 4th Avenue, Portland (4th Avenue between Stark and Oak Streets)

The **Mult. Bldg.** is located at 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard. The Board Room is located on the first floor.



The League of Women of Voters® of Portland

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