



The Voter

Aug.-Sept. 2006
Volume 26, Number 6

Office Phone: (253) 272-1495

Office E-mail: tacomalwv3@juno.com

LWV T-PC
702 BROADWAY SUITE 105
TACOMA, WA 98402
(253) 272-1495

VOTER STAFF:

SUSAN EIDENSCHINK
SUSANEIDEN@JUNO.COM

EILEEN FOX
HELLORADIO@COMCAST.NET

LYZ KURNITZ-THURLOW
LYZKURNITZ@HARBORNET.COM

MELISSA OENNING
ROCKSINPOCKETS@HOTMAIL.COM

MICHELLE PIZZO
PIZZO5X5@EARTHLINK.NET

JOHN THURLOW
JOHNTHURLOW@HARBORNET.COM

CHARLOTTE VALBERT
CVALBERT@EARTHLINK.NET

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County is a non-partisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On August 12th, the new Board of our League met for its annual all-day, very exhausting meeting. Happily, it was also productive. The new members are learning about League and what we're doing, and we have some wonderful new Board members (as well as our continuing wonderful Board members), who have great ideas. Of course, most of what we discussed is what we will be doing this year.

In September, our Unit meetings (see Calendar) will discuss Election Reform. This is a State League consensus – so come prepared to discuss this, and help form a new state position on this issue. Also at the September Unit meetings, we will ask who will serve on all the other committees planning Unit meetings and other events this year. Ideally, each Unit should provide two people to work on each study – one to serve as resource person and one as discussion leader.

Susan Eidenschink, the 2nd Vice President, and Program Chair, is busily making lists of who will do what – so feel free to get in touch with her without waiting for meetings.

In October, we will discuss ballot issues at our Unit meetings. As well as all the state issues this year, there will be many items recommended by the Pierce County Charter Review Commission on our ballots, and a Pierce County Library issue. If you have information about any of these issues which will help us prepare, or will help us present information to our League members and any others who ask, please contact Eileen Fox, the 1st Vice President.

Also in October, we are planning a general public meeting on the United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals. We hope that it will be on October 15th, (United Nations Day – and a world-wide Guinness World Record Stand Up Against Poverty Day), and that it will be a big deal. Stay tuned for further announcements – or call Susan or me to express your brilliant ideas and/or willingness to help.

In November, we will be doing another State League study – Growth Management. We need people willing to take the state information, and add some of our Pierce County information to it, so that it is even more relevant to our members. (contact Susan...)

We do not have the rest of our year fully planned, but lots of ideas for possible meetings were brought up, and we DID adopt two new studies at last spring's Annual Meeting. Both the Affordable Housing and Library committees will be meeting in September – so call Susan or the office if you are interested in helping. We are especially in need of people to discuss the Library issue and help us figure out how we want to handle it.

And of course, there's membership and action and everything else we do. We welcome you to another League year, and we hope we can involve you in our work, and make our work relevant to your needs and interests. Let us know how we're doing.

Lyz



The Board meeting is held on the **second Tuesday** of the month at **4:00 p.m.** at the League Office. Members are welcome to sit in and provide input.

Board of Directors:

President:
Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow

1st Vice President:
Eileen Fox

2nd Vice President:
Susan Eidenschink

Secretary:
Carole Pedersen

Treasurer:
Sue Summers

Directors:
Deb Blakeslee
Karen Forchione
Alan Harvey
Zoeb Mogri
Michele Pizzo
Jacki Skaugt
Virginia Taylor

What's in This Month's Voter?

- Page 1** – President's Message
- Page 2** – Election Reform Units, Affordable Housing, Alan Harvey
- Page 3** – Calendar, Unit Information
- Page 4** – Primary Election, Health Care Resolution, Members on Ballot
- Page 5** – Pierce County Library on Ballot, Washington Women's History
- Page 6** – Instant Runoff Voting on County Ballots
- Page 7** – Port Updates "Comprehensive Scheme", Tax Task Force
- Page 8** – Tacoma Streetcars
- Page 9** – PC Environmental Health, Tahoma Progressive Media Conference
- Page 10** – Health Care Resolution Information Sheet
- Page 11** – Action Workshop Schedule Change!
- Page 12** – New Membership Chair, Membership Form

ELECTION REFORM UNITS

We are beginning the new League year with a state consensus. At the units in September (see dates and places in this issue), we will all be discussing the information on election reform sent by the state and enclosed with this *VOTER*.

Please read the information, and look over the consensus questions. We will discuss these in our groups and hope to come to consensus. All of the Unit reports will be compiled into one report which will be approved by our Board, and sent to the State Board for consideration with the reports from other Leagues around the state. Look for a proposed new state position later this year.

This is a great way to start the year, and we hope to see you, our grass roots, our strength, our members. (By the way, only members can participate in the discussion when we are trying to reach consensus, so...see the membership form in this issue if you need it. Or bring your checkbook!)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY BEGINS

Last May, at the Annual Meeting, the Tacoma-Pierce County League agreed to take on two studies. One was regarding **affordable housing in Pierce County**. (See the last Voter, or the Annual Meeting Book for more details.)

We are just beginning this study, with some members already signing on, and leaders, Karen Forchione and Roslynn Watson co-chairing the committee -- but we need YOU! We particularly need representatives from the East Pierce County/Puyallup area and from University Place. We haven't started regular meetings yet, so there is still time to get in at the beginning. (Not quite like getting in at the beginning of Microsoft -- but it is affordable and rewarding!) We know League members always want to be part of something big and important in the community... Now is your chance! Please give Karen Forchione a call at 253-589-6953 (or e-mail her -- address below), and she will get you started!

Karen Forchione (karen_f@yahoo.com)

MORE ABOUT BOARD MEMBERS: ALAN HARVEY

Alan is a relatively new member of the Tacoma-Pierce County League. He is a trained economist who has been a long-time activist in tax reform. He assisted in the 2005 League general meeting on taxes and now serves on Tacoma's City Services Tax Task Force, largely as a result of his work with the League. His other public issue interests include transportation, (particularly the role of rail in addressing the transportation crisis,) and the significant problems in campaign financing and fair public elections. Alan is the father of four children and lives in Tacoma's North End.

LWV Calendar

September—Units—Election Reform—

LWVWA Consensus

- 5 UP Evening Unit-6:30-8:30 p.m. -**new location**
- 7 Growth Management-Seattle League 7:30 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church, Harvard & Seneca
- 9 Seniors and Caregivers Comm. Support Forum
9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Oasis of Hope 1937 S. G St.
Tacoma
- 12 Board Meeting 4 p.m. at the Office
- 14 North End Unit - 1-3 p.m.
- 15 Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Unit 6:30-8:30 p.m.
new location
- 8 Lakewood and Neighbors Unit-10 a.m. -Noon
- 9 East Pierce Unit- 10 a.m.-Noon
- 19 Primary Election—7 a.m.-8 p.m.
- 21 WA State Falls Prevention Awareness Day
10 a.m.-2 p.m. U.P. Presbyterian Church
8101 27th St. W., U.P.
- 28 Million Dollar Woman Conference
²⁹ Tacoma Convention Center— for info:
³⁰ www.milliondollarwomanconference.com

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

October—Units—Ballot Issues

- 3 UP Evening Unit 6:30-8:30
- 7 Last day to register to vote
- 7 Tahoma Progressive Media Conference
(see article)
- 10 Board Meeting 4 p.m. at the Office
- 12 North End Unit - 1-3 p.m.
- 12 Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Unit 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 13 Lakewood & Neighbors Unit - 10 a.m.-Noon
- 14 East Pierce Unit -10 a.m.-Noon
- 15 General Meeting (date tentative)
UN and Millennium Development Goals
- 17 Community Services Resource Fair
8 a.m.-2:30 p.m., U.P. Presbyterian Church
- 23 Last day to register to vote in person
at the Auditor's office

November—Units—Growth Management

- 7 Election Day 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
- 7 UP Evening Unit 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 9 North End Unit 1-3 p.m.
- 9 Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Unit 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 10 Lakewood & Neighbors Unit 10 a.m.-Noon
- 11 E. Pierce Unit 10 a/m/-Noon
- 14 Board Meeting 4 p.m. at the Office

UNIT MEETING INFORMATION

NORTH END

Day: Second Thursday
Time: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Place: 3635 N. Washington, Tacoma
Unit leader: Helen Sohlberg, 759-9393

LAKEWOOD AND NEIGHBORS

Day: Second Friday
Time: 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 noon
Place: Steilacoom Community Center
2301 Worthington St., Steilacoom
Unit leader: Ann Elliston, 564-4102

GIG HARBOR-KEY PENINSULA

Day: Second Thursday
Time: 6:30-8:30p.m.
Place: **NEW LOCATION**
Gig Harbor Volunteer Center
3125 Judson, Gig Harbor
Unit leader: Liz Lathrop, 851-2210

EAST PIERCE

Day: Second Saturday
Time: 10:00 - 12:00 noon
Place: Puyallup Library
3224 S. Meridian, Puyallup
Unit leader: Ellen Zulauf, 845-9370

UNIVERSITY PLACE-EVENING

Day: First Tuesday
Time: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
NEW LOCATION: United Church,
3912 Grandview Drive West.
University Place
Unit leader: Debi Srail, 565-7874

PRIMARY ELECTION ISSUES

There are two upcoming elections. The primary will be held on September 19, 2006, and the general election is on November 7, 2006. League members Deb Blakeslee and Karen Forchione are compiling election issues for us. The following items are among those to be decided by the primary election:

District	Issue	Required to pass
Pierce County Rural Library (253) 536-6500	see article in this issue.	Simple Majority
Town of Eatonville (360) 832-3361	Ordinance No. 2006-21 concerns an Emergency Medical Service Levy. If approved, the Town would be authorized to collect \$.50 or less per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for ten consecutive years.	60%
City of Tacoma (253) 591-5171	Proposition No. 1 - concerns a proposition to increase the City's Emergency Medical Services regular property tax levy. This proposition would allow the City to increase its current EMS expense levy rate to \$.0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value, for collection in 2007. (Lid Lift)	Simple Majority
City of Tacoma (253) 591-5171	Initiative No. 1 - concerns allowing existing mini casinos to continue to operate. This initiative would amend Substitute Ordinance 26515, allowing four (4) existing state-licensed mini casinos in the City of Tacoma to continue to operate. The prohibition on new casinos would remain.	Simple Majority

Karen Forchione (karen_f@yahoo.com)

HEALTH CARE RESOLUTION FOR TACOMA

The **Health Care Resolution for Tacoma** states: "Every person should have the right to health care of equal high quality. The Washington State Legislature and the U.S. Congress should immediately enact legislation to implement this right."

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County is co-sponsoring this Resolution with Health Care for All-Washington – Pierce County Chapter, and many other organizations, including the Pierce County Central Labor Council, Tacoma Catholic Worker, St Leo’s Parish, Centro Latino, and Community Health Care. The resolution has the endorsement of U.S. Representative Norm Dicks, all of the Washington State Legislators whose districts include Tacoma, Associated Ministries, the Korean Women’s Association, the Micah Project – First United Methodist Church, and Tacoma National Organization for Women.

The collection of signatures began in Tacoma after a July 21st meeting with Mayor Baarsma. Mayor Baarsma is very supportive of this grassroots effort and was, in fact, familiar with and enthused about work being done in San Francisco to cover its uninsured. Most of the Tacoma City Council members have likewise indicated their support for this resolution. The Farmers’ Markets in Tacoma have been great places to collect signatures, and the signature-gathering is going very well – League efforts have procured a total of 1,750 signatures as of August 30th, and many of the co-sponsoring organizations have also collected signatures. Signatures will be gathered until September 15th, and any help from *VOTER* readers or League members will be appreciated. See the information sheet in the *VOTER* (pages 10 and 11), for additional information and a more complete list of supporters. To find out more, or to aid in signature gathering, contact Susan Eidenschink at 253-572-9305.

Susan Eidenschink (susaneiden@juno.com)

MEMBERS ON THE BALLOT

The League of Women Voters encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, but never supports or opposes candidates for office. Therefore, while we are not recommending you vote for them, we are proud of the following members (with apologies to anyone we’ve missed).

Running for office: Rosa Franklin, Barbara Gelman, Tami Green, Patricia Lantz, Dawn Morrell.
 Running for Precinct Committee Officer: Julie Bjornsson, Jake Fey, Rosa Franklin, Gail Kirk, Michelle Pizzo, John Srail, Ellen Zulauf.

PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY ON PRIMARY BALLOT

This September, voters in Pierce County will have an opportunity to restore library funding by increasing Pierce County Library System's current levy rate by 8 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. At the Library System's Board of Trustees public meeting on Wednesday, July 12, the Board passed a resolution to put a levy lid lift on the September 19, 2006 primary ballot.

Currently, taxpayers pay 40 cents for every \$1,000 in assessed property for library services. By state law, library districts may collect up to 50 cents for every \$1,000 in assessed property.

The Board determined that a levy lid lift would help meet the needs of growing and changing communities, while balancing a reasonable tax level for property owners. The Board is concerned about the burden of property taxes on homeowners and is not proposing to increase the tax level to the full amount allowed by law.

On average, homeowners now pay \$90 a year for library services. Restoring library funding to 48 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property would cost the average home assessed at \$244,000 an increase of \$27 in 2007.

The Board concluded the need for a levy lid lift exists for the following reasons:

- The Library System has not been able to keep up with needs created by a 49 percent population growth in the Library System's service area since 1996.
- Revenues are barely keeping up with the cost to run libraries. Since 2002, the Library cut more than \$1 million in operations and services.
- The Library lags behind nearly all other similar-sized library systems in Western Washington for important library services. For example, the Library is open fewer hours than nearly all other library systems and customers wait an average of 19 weeks for a popular book, which is well over twice as long as at other libraries.

The levy lid lift would bring customers the following major services:

- Expand open hours by 18 percent by opening all libraries on Mondays during the day and evening, nine libraries on Sundays, and six libraries on Thursday evenings.
- Offer a wider variety of books, CDs and other materials, and cut the time people wait for books by 30 percent.
- Improve services for kids and teenagers to help them read, do homework, and be successful in school.

Upgrade technology and services for customers and offer more computers with Internet access.

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County has no position on this levy and offers this for your information only. Only communities served by the Pierce County Library will see this on their ballots.

For more information about the levy lid lift: www.pcl.wa.us/funding.

Nancy Pearson

WASHINGTON WOMEN'S HISTORY CONSORTIUM

Two of our outstanding state League members, Sue Lean and Dorothy Sale, serve on this newly-formed Consortium that is an outgrowth of legislation that many of us promoted.

Their first report to the Governor includes: "and outreach partnerships...working in collaboration with the Secretary of State, League of Women Voters, and other voting advocacy groups to highlight the struggle for women's suffrage in WA through voter information materials."

In addition, they are sponsoring a luncheon, in celebration of the approaching 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in WA (1910), at the History Museum in Tacoma on November 8, 2006. They would like the League to fill a table. The cost is \$2,000 per table and seating is limited. Individual tickets are \$200. If you want to go, contact Barbara Seitle (bseitle@whidbey.com) or Karen Verrill (gokarl1@comcast.net).

INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING ON COUNTY BALLOTS

Voting reform advocates across the country are excited about Pierce County's Proposed Charter Amendment 3, on the November 7th ballot. If Amendment 3 passes, Pierce County will become one of the largest jurisdictions in the country to use Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). Pierce County will also offer a model for Washington State as the State continues to search for a more popular system than the blanket primary. IRV has all the advantages of a blanket primary, but reflects the First Amendment rights of association of political parties. IRV achieves a majority winner in a single higher-turnout election.

Amendment 3 would implement IRV for all County offices beginning in 2008, except for Prosecuting Attorney and Judges. (Many Commissioners were uncertain whether the County had the legal authority to use IRV for Prosecutor and Judge positions, and therefore opted to exclude those offices.) The Amendment was placed on the ballot by a vote of the Pierce County Charter Review Commission in June, 2006. Support by the League was critical in its passage. Amendment 3 and IRV have local endorsers from both major political parties, independents, and other parties. Nationally, IRV is endorsed by Representatives Dennis Kucinich and Jesse Jackson, Jr. A more complete list of endorsements can be found at www.yesonthree.com.

Citizens for a Better Ballot has been formed to campaign for and promote Amendment 3. Ryan Griffin of FairVote, a leading national voting reform organization, will manage the campaign. Given the relatively low public awareness of IRV and the Amendment, the campaign will soon be posting yard-signs and distributing literature. The campaign will bring John Anderson, independent Presidential candidate in 1980, and current co-director of FairVote, to Pierce County from October 4th to October 8th to raise awareness of IRV and Amendment 3; speaking times and venues will be scheduled shortly.

One obstacle facing the campaign is opposition by Pierce County Auditor, Pat McCarthy. McCarthy claims implementation of IRV will cost nearly 3 million dollars. Voting experts involved in implementing IRV in other jurisdictions, however, consider this number exaggerated, and instead put the first-time cost at closer to \$200,000. Sequoia, the vendor for voting equipment in Pierce County, has already agreed to develop IRV software for Alameda County, CA, so Pierce County would simply need to upgrade already-developed software. Members of the Pierce County and statewide IRV movement are lining up support in Olympia for legislation that will implement IRV for Prosecuting Attorney and Judges at the County level, and to give all taxing jurisdictions in the County (cities, park-districts, etc.) the option of using IRV. If that legislation passes, local election primaries can be eliminated, saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars each year, and quickly offsetting start-up costs. Ultimately, there will likely be considerable cost savings if Amendment 3 passes.

A victory for Amendment 3 will make Pierce County a national leader in the voting-reform movement. Research from the experiences of San Francisco and Burlington, Vermont indicates that ranked voting is not difficult for voters, and requires only a modest voter education campaign. Assistance from the League of Women Voters can make the difference!

League members can help Amendment 3 by scheduling speaking engagements at civic organizations; distributing literature; putting up yard signs; neighborhood canvassing; or donating to organizations such as Citizens for a Better Ballot, 1119 Pacific Ave #1103, Tacoma, WA 98402 (www.yesonthree.com). League members are also encouraged to send supportive letters to the editors of The News Tribune, Peninsula Gateway, and the Puyallup Herald.

Contact Ryan Griffin at 253-228-1991 or Richard Anderson-Connolly at 253-761-0466 for more information or to volunteer.

Richard Anderson-Connolly (raconnolly@ups.edu)

PORT OF TACOMA UPDATES ITS “COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME OF HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS”

The Port of Tacoma is required by Washington law to maintain a statement outlining its intended territorial scope and activities. The Port of Tacoma Commission has maintained this statement, the “Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements,” through the years, since its inception in 1919 (last updated in 1996, and recommended in the last audit for an update), and recently undertook a review and update/amendment process. Over the course of two Commission meetings, on July 6th and August 3, 2006, the commissioners considered updated language and heard public questions and comment on the intended updates, adopting the updated statement on the 3rd of August. (The second meeting was necessary for the resolution to include the Thurston County property noted below, the purchase of which was not complete on the date of the first meeting.)

The principal changes involve expanding the “footprint” of the Port’s intended activities beyond the traditional Tacoma tideflats and the Fredrickson developments, acknowledged in the Puget Sound Regional Council’s “Manufacturing and Industrial Centers” to include territory in the Puyallup valley through Fife to Puyallup, along the railroad right-of-way into Sumner, along the west shore of Commencement Bay to Old Town, along the east shore to the marinas below the Cliff House, and including newly-purchased (jointly-owned with the Port of Olympia) land in Thurston County. These updates were presented by Robert Goodstein, the Port’s attorney, and were characterized as a bureaucratic exercise to meet the law’s requirements and not to be confused with the Port’s strategic plan. Nonetheless, the statement does indicate what the Port considers to be within its scope, and should be of interest to the public at large and especially to those whose residential or business interests are within the intended footprint.

For the July meeting, the agenda published the week before (and sent to those on the Port’s mail and e-mail list, and published on its website), clearly indicated an opportunity for public comment, and a few members of the public spoke up. One was a regular commenter, concerned about legal title issues on Port property; he was ruled out of order on this topic, and encouraged to discuss his issues with Port staff. Another, a resident of Marine View Drive on the east shore of Commencement Bay, was concerned about Port intentions to develop industrial activities amid the houses there. Port staff indicated that plans “at this time” included only environmental improvement projects along the shore. No comments were offered at the August meeting, and the resolution was adopted.

The conduct of this transaction appeared to be consistent with requirements for informing the public of matters coming before the commissioners, and offered, as it should, opportunity for comment. The League’s and TNT’s attention to the commissioner’s processes seems to have had a good effect, but there was not much actual public input in the process. I believe that the League should stay aware of the Port’s planning activities and, as the Port considers updates to its long-term plans, monitor that processes are working effectively to educate the public about opportunities to understand and comment on key direction or policy-setting matters.

John Thurlow (johnthurlow@harbornet.com)

TAX FORCE WINDING DOWN

Tacoma's City Services Tax Task Force is a committee of stakeholders empanelled by the city council to look into revenue alternatives to looming budget shortfalls. Last year, City Manager Eric Anderson, after extensive consultation with community groups, proposed a property-based tax that would serve as the dedicated funding source for police, fire and library, the city's core services. The Task Force was charged with examining this plan and coming up with other options. I was selected as one of the members largely by reason of my work with the League.

The final report of the Task Force will be forwarded to the City Council at the end of this month. I plan a separate extended report to the League on the process and outcomes and possibilities, which should be available by the end of September. (Continued next page)

(Continued from previous page)

Our stakeholders have been very protective of their stakes, and at this point it looks like the City Council will have plenty of paper, but little consensus, from our group, although an official position has not been adopted at this writing. This may be just as well, since the council will need to sort through the issues and options themselves.

The city manager's proposal to include the property of nonprofits in the base for the city services tax has drawn the most fire, and with the elimination of this as a serious option, the interest of the group has waned. The major weakness of the city manager's plan, in my view, was its elimination of the B&O and city's local-option sales tax in favor of a much larger city property levy. I proposed an alternative that would retain the dedicated funding, accountability and transparency measures, and some minor taxation of "profitable" nonprofits from the city manager's proposal, but which would modify the tax base so as not to "load up" on the property tax. Aside from this and the original proposal, no other major options have been examined.

Four other supplemental revenue-generating options were suggested, again all from this corner. To this point, our group has not been able to put aside individual interests to fully engage the significant problem we are all facing. During the upcoming budget year, the issues will be front and center, as the decline in revenues threatens the most basic of public services: police, fire, library, streets and roads. Whether we will allow a continual deterioration of these services, or whether we will use foresight to close the gaps, will be a matter of intense public debate over the next year. It will make a long-term difference whether citizens are myopically self-interested or whether they are responsible and informed.

Alan Harvey

TACOMA'S CITIZENS ORGANIZE TO TALK ABOUT STREETCARS

The Greater-Tacoma area boasted an extensive electric streetcar system in the 1930s. With over 125 miles of track, service operated at 6-minute headways in most areas, and provided regional interurban transit to the Kent Valley, Puyallup, Steilacoom, and Seattle. It was clean, fast, efficient, and affordable. Tacoma's line met its demise in April of 1938 due to massive federal funding of a highway infrastructure (specifically Highway 99), various restrictions on the finances of the Tacoma Railway and Power Company (like excessive taxes and government caps on fares), and a strange provision by the franchise itself which required the company to pave all roads the streetcars ran along – encouraging the use of automobiles on the same right of way as the streetcars, and ultimately resulting in degraded quality of service and fewer fare-paying passengers.

With exorbitant gas prices, global climate concerns, traffic and growth management, it is possible that public policy decisions of the past were not forward-looking enough. Morgan Alexander, a local real estate agent and founder of the local organization, Tacoma Streetcar, is working for change. Alexander has developed a website with a concept plan for some routes, computer-generated pictures of what the system might look like on the ground, a draft funding plan, and a growing email list of supporters. Alexander has also been pushing public representatives at Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, and the Tacoma City Council to consider streetcars instead of light rail. In June, the Tacoma City Council passed a resolution instructing City staff, in conjunction with Pierce Transit, to conduct a study about mass transit technologies that might be used in constructing a streetcar-type system for linking Tacoma's neighborhoods and business districts.

Alexander favors streetcars as opposed to light rail for various reasons: streetcars are smaller and leaner, resulting in lower excavation costs; streetcar scale means less on-street parking will need to be removed to make room for stations and passing streetcars; and old-fashioned streetcars recall Tacoma's own rail history. Alexander thinks the entire twenty-five mile system he envisions would cost approximately \$250 million to build, operate, and maintain for twenty years – with an option for adding fares and/or advertising to offset costs. (The cost of a 5.5-mile extension of Sound Transit's light rail system from Downtown Tacoma to TCC has been estimated at about \$600 million.) With Alexander's present model, trains would serve all of 6th and Pacific Avenues, and some linking neighborhoods between the 6th Avenue, Proctor, and Stadium districts.

Alexander has held a few public open houses in the past few months to generate public interest and discussion. He intends to form a Board for a non-profit organization to work with the government streetcar study group, and to gather support for a streetcar measure when it comes to voters in a year or two.

To get more involved or to find more information visit: www.tacomastreetcar.org.

Chris Karnes (chris.tacoma@gmail.com)

PIERCE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS PROJECT

This project, steered by Marianne Seifert of Tacoma –Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD), has a goal of identifying environmental health (EH) indicators for the purpose of:

- raising awareness of the connection between environment and health
- informing and motivating decisions and actions by allocating proper resources
- improving the EH of people, in general, and preventing degradation
- involving more people in future EH work

A meeting of representatives from community, business, and county organizations was held on June 21st to discuss the project. Kathy McVay, Chairperson of Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health, gave the opening remarks and welcomed the attendees. The group was also addressed by Frank DiBiase, of the TPCHD - EH Program. After discussion of various issues, it was decided that workgroups concerned with five areas of EH priorities would be formed: air, water, food chain, land use, and waste.

Zoeb Mogri volunteered to be in the Air and Land Use workgroups; Liz Lathrop and Shera Mogri volunteered to be in the Water Group. Separate meetings to develop meaningful indicators for EH workgroups will be scheduled during the summer and fall.

The first meeting of the Pierce County EH Indicators Water Workgroup was held on August 15th. Criteria for ranking and selecting EH indicators were developed, chief among these being risks to health; public concern; emotional and economic impacts on individuals and communities; and relevance to Pierce County residents, policy makers, and organizations. A variety of possible EH water indicators were discussed; some of these will be selected and ranked in the next meeting, to be held in September.

Reports summarizing information from each workgroup will be drafted this winter, and will be updated periodically to track trends.

Zoeb Mogri (zsmogri@wamail.net)

TAHOMA PROGRESSIVE MEDIA CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 7TH

The Tacoma/Pierce County Progressive Roundtable invites the public, and especially members of the League of Women Voters, to attend the Tahoma Progressive Media Conference at 10:00 a.m. on October 7th, at the IBEW Labor Hall, 3049 S. 36th St., Tacoma, WA.

The Progressive Roundtable is a networking forum that encourages and facilitates ally-building and partnerships between community leaders and activists. Roundtable participants seek advice and resources from each other, organize collaborations between activist communities, hear about grassroots news and efforts, and find mutual support for events and endeavors. Members of the League, ACLU, Associated Ministries, Democracy for America, America in Solidarity, Tacoma Catholic Worker, and United for Peace Pierce County are among the regular attendees.

The Roundtable noted a consistent and increasingly unified complaint from its participants: that Pierce County has minimal alternative and/or progressive media presence, and that majority-held or imbalanced media coverage is a disservice to citizens. In light of the energy and commitment of the proponents for more progressive media exposure, the Roundtable has announced and is organizing a panel and forum focusing specifically on Pierce County media availability and opportunities. Chosen speakers and leaders will lead discussion and activities designed to galvanize and increase progressive media movement and presence in community radio, public television, periodicals/print, and internet space. Alternative media forms, such as documentaries, guerrilla art, and CD/DVD production, will also have visibility at the conference.

The Tahoma Progressive Media Conference is receiving wide interest and participation from the progressive community, and is endorsed by the local ACLU chapter, UFPPC, and America in Solidarity. For more information, or to participate in or support this event, email progressiveroundtable@yahoo.com, or attend the next Progressive Roundtable at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, September 22nd at Commencement Bay Coffee Co., 2354 S. Jefferson Ave., Tacoma. (7:00 a.m. meetings are held every fourth Friday of the month at that location.)

Michelle Pizzo (pizzo5x5@earthlink.net)

HEALTH CARE IS A RIGHT RESOLUTION

Every person should have the right to health care of equal high quality. The Washington State Legislature and the U.S. Congress should immediately enact legislation to implement this right.

Purpose of Resolution:

- To raise awareness of our health care crisis
 - To show grassroots support for health care for all
- To educate our community about current enacted and pending legislation to obtain health care for all

Current enacted and pending legislation for health care for all:

U.S. Congress: <http://Thomas.loc.gov>

HR 676 United States National Health Insurance Act sponsored by Representative John Conyers, Jr. with 72 co-sponsors

- HR 1200 American Health Security Act sponsored by Rep. Jim McDermott with 62 co-sponsors
- SB 2772 The Health Partnership Act sponsored by Sen. George Voinovich and Sen. Jeff Bingaman

State Legislatures: National Conference of State Legislatures, www.ncsl.org/programs/health/universalhealth200.htm

- California <http://info.sen.ca.gov> SB 840 Single-Payer Health Care Coverage introduced by State Senator Sheila Kuehl
 - Maine <http://www.dirigohealth.maine.gov> Dirigo Health Enacted June 2003
 - Maryland <http://mlis.state.md.us/2005rs/billfile/sb0790.htm> Fair Share Health Care, Enacted January 2006
 - Massachusetts <http://www.mass.gov/legis> HB 4850 Health Care Access and Affordability Act, Enacted April 2006
 - Vermont <http://www.leg.state.vt.us> H.0861 Health Care Affordability for Vermonters, Enacted May 2006
- San Francisco Universal Health Care Plan, Introduced by Mayor Newsom, February 2006. http://www.sfgov.org/site/mayor_page.asp?id=37485

Co-sponsors of Health Care Is a Right Resolution:

League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County
702 Broadway, Suite 105, Tacoma, WA 98402
253-272-1495

Health Care for All - Washington – Pierce County Chapter
PO Box 5565, Tacoma, WA 98415-0565

Pierce County Central Labor Council

Tacoma Catholic Worker

St Leo's Parish

Centro Latino

Community Health Care

Pierce County Human Services Coalition

Planned Parenthood of Western Washington

Tahoma Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans

Washington Citizen Action

Health Care for All – Washington

Uplift International

(Continued on following page)

(Continued from previous page)

Endorsers of Health Care Is a Right Resolution:

- U.S. Representative Norm Dicks
- Retired State Senator Lorraine Wojahn
- State Representative Eileen Cody, Chair of House Health Care Committee
- State Representative Steve Conway
- State Representative Jeannie Darneille
- State Representative Dennis Flannigan
- State Senator Rosa Franklin
- State Representative Tami Green
- State Senator Karen Keiser, Chair of Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee
- State Representative Steve Kirby
- State Senator Debbie Regala

- Associated Ministries
- Korean Women's Association
- Micah Project – First United Methodist Church
- Tacoma National Organization for Women

Recommended Books and Websites:

- Health Care Meltdown: Confronting the Myths and Fixing Our Failing System by Bob LeBow, M.D., M.P.H.
- The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation www.kff.org
- Physicians for a National Health Program www.pnhp.org
- National Coalition of Health Care www.uhcan.org
- Health Care for All – Washington www.healthcareforallwa.org

**League of Women Voters of Washington
ACTION WORKSHOP DATE IS CHANGED!!**

DUE TO AN UNFORESEEN CONFLICT AT THE CHURCH, WE MUST MOVE THE DATE OF THE ACTION WORKSHOP TO THE FOLLOWING SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18.

**SAME TIME – 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM
SAME PLACE – St Andrews Lutheran Church, Bellevue
DIFFERENT DATE – Saturday, November 18th**



**League of Women Voters of Washington's
ACTION WORKSHOP
Saturday, November 18, 2006**

St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 2650 – 148th Avenue SE, Bellevue

Registration (\$20) begins at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and rolls
Program 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/email: _____

Send a check to LWVWA, 4710 University Way NE, #214, Seattle, WA 98105

NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – LOOKING FOR LEAGUE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES?

Hello, *VOTER* readers!

Deb Blakeslee has passed on the Membership Chair torch to me, and I am shining it in the corners looking for you!

You may recall that in my recent “New Board Member Profile” I waxed poetic about the League. There’s good reason for that – this is an organization with an amazing history and some really incredible successes. The League of Women Voters is an impressive group to belong to and work with.

Many of the *VOTER* readers are not members of League. Obviously you don’t need to be – but why aren’t you? What’s stopping you? Your receipt of the *VOTER* tells us you have an open mind and love information and education. Why, you’re half a League member already! Give me a call – we want you, your big brain, and your interest in (and knowledge of) the community. League “sells itself,” so we truly want to know what your reservations are or how to further entice you.

Many of the *VOTER* readers ARE members of League. You sustain this organization, and the League is grateful for members at large. But what is your passion? What would you like to share with the rest of your community? We can find a place for you and your special interests and knowledge -- it’s very valuable to us and we do not want to neglect the talent right under our noses. Please call me – I am looking forward to hearing from you and helping you.

We have some creative and low-stress outreach plans to find new League members. I am especially committed to diversity in the League membership. If you already know me, you’ll know I do not “talk the talk.” But I need our experienced and energetic Leaguers to “walk the walk” with me while we support our League with a larger and vibrant membership. If you’ve worked in Membership before and fell away – I’ll be calling you soon for your input. I need your expertise and your history. If you haven’t – this is the time to get involved. Please call me at 253-720-1291 any time to join, “re-up,” share, seek, or guide, or e-mail me at your convenience at pizzo5x5@earthlink.net.

Michelle Pizzo

Join the Tacoma – Pierce County League of Women Voters

Any citizen of voting age, 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 and mailings of the Washington State and National League of Women Voters.

Membership for one year is \$55 (for two members of a household - \$82.50). Student membership is \$27.50. Membership dues are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund (separate check, tax deductible) and/or the General Fund are welcome.

Name _____ Phone _____ email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Comments: _____

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County
 702 Broadway, Suite #105
 Tacoma, WA 98402-3710

**League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County
702 Broadway, Suite 105
Tacoma, Washington 98402**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Tacoma, WA
Permit No. 181

Join the Tacoma – Pierce County League of Women Voters

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

Any citizen of voting age, 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 and mailings of the Washington State and National League of Women Voters.

Membership for one year is \$55 (for two members of a household - \$82.50). Student membership is \$27.50. Membership dues are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund (separate check, tax deductible) and/or the General Fund are welcome.

Name _____ Phone _____ email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Comments: _____

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County
702 Broadway, Suite #105
Tacoma, WA 98402-3710