

February Program: To Be Announced

League members were dismayed this month to find out we no longer have a local newspaper for Medford and Ashland. There is a plan for a new media group called EO Media to offer a local newspaper. The CEO, Heidi Wright, has been asked to speak to us and we will find out next week if that is possible. I'm sure we all have lots of questions. If possible, we will Zoom that interview on February 9 and invite other community members if appropriate. An email will be sent to members when confirmed.



Heidi Wright

Announcement

The LWVOR State Convention will be held May 19-21 in Eugene. The conference will be held partly on campus. More information at <https://www.lwvor.org/post/president-s-newsletter-january-2023#viewer-ftljc>

The state League is hoping for a large turnout for this in-person event, so please consider attending.



LWVOR State Convention at The Graduate

Letter from Chair

Repurposing

This is a favorite theme of mine – “repurposing.” I see friends, family, and our League members who have very busy lives. Many of us do what we can and yet often wish it was more. One way to accomplish more without making life more difficult is to “reuse” the work we do or what we learn. Repurposing can refer to many things in our daily life but here I am concentrating on civic activities.

Want an example? If you attend an online council or committee meeting of a local **city or county**, consider writing up a paragraph on an outcome that struck you as worthy to share. The same may be true if you attend a climate change meeting with a group like **Rogue Climate, Rogue River Keepers, SOCAN**, or a local **Sierra** chapter. You may realize there is something you would like to report back. You might discover some unexpected news about recycling from **Rogue Waste** that other members don’t yet know. You may attend an **AAUW** meeting about housing or education and fill us in on the details. You attend a board meeting of **Jackson Library** or **OLLI** and can share the insider scoop. Elsewhere in the newsletter there is an opportunity to follow a grassroots **League health care group** simply by listening in on occasional phone calls. In various avenues of your life, you learn a lot. Now consider sharing it.

Another repurposing is happening in the LWVRV- we’re repurposing our member **Kathleen Donham** as the rotating chair for our League. As you read this newsletter, she will have taken over from me. Any help you can offer her by repurposing the things you have learned will be very much appreciated.

Repurpose on,
Barbara Klein

Deciding on an LWVRV and LWVOR platform of policies

In early January, members were invited to attend our “Open Office Hours” meeting. The members who attended seem to think it was a useful time to learn and even chat. We were all able to weigh in and give ideas about “program planning” (the way the League starts its process of deciding on policies).

There were no proposals or suggestions regarding local (LWVRV) studies, but there was a good deal of discussion on 3 proposals from other Local Leagues. Below is a synopsis of our discussion and decisions to send to the board [\(in blue\)](#).

Barbara Klein

1. **Recall of Elected Officials Study** – **New Study** Kelly Osbourne and Linda Lynch from Lane County started the week of December 1st to lobby other local Leagues looking for support and participation regarding a new state study on the Oregon recall process. Details from the Lane County proposal were shared with LWVRV members who registered for our meeting.

LWVRV: We understand that the recall process in Oregon is something important for League members to understand. LWVOR has a position that states we support the recall process as laid out in the Oregon Constitution.

We would like to request that the **Lane Co.** League (perhaps in cooperation with other local leagues) prepare a white paper or information report to share with members. After that, if it seems clear that further study is needed and that our current position is not sufficient, the need for a study may be clearer.

Additionally, this type of report could be used by local Leagues to provide education to our members and the public. At least one attendee offered to hold an educational meeting for LWVRV.

There was some worry that this type of issue would result in talk of “candidates” or partisan elected officials, and not simply process.

At this point, we do not support the study proposal as presented.

2. **Open Primary Study** – **New Study** suggested by Norman Turrill and others. This is tentative and requirements for presenting his study to LWVOR by March 1, 2023 have not yet been completed. Those requirements would include the specific scope, plan, and tentative committee. LWVOR itself has not done a direct study on Open Primaries, although we do have a national and state position that addresses it **indirectly**, and our new Election Methods report has a section on Open/Closed primaries.

LWVRV: *We do not support this proposal as a study. We recognize that members are involved with the Open Primary issue (including LWVRV members). To date, our local and state Leagues have used positions from both LWVOR and LWVUS. There are still other Leagues to borrow from. We strongly encourage that this issue be approached by **concurrence** with full background materials offered to League members, as well as the proposed concurrence language, well before the state convention.*

Follow-up after Open Office Hours meeting: Barbara Klein and others (including Sally Smith and Rick Bennett) are part of a committee which has developed a proposal on an Open Primaries concurrence to address to state membership at convention.

3. **Greater Idaho Movement** — **New Study**. Brought to LWVOR attention by Diane Shockey of the Klamath League. Klamath may, or may not, be proposing this by themselves. They mentioned that “Movement interest has been placed on 7 county ballots” and ask whether it is “Time to organize effort from other local leagues?” There could be several good committee members as some Leaguers have homes in eastern Oregon. We are not aware of anyone from Rogue Valley League, or our board, being approached about this. For more information see: <https://www.greateridaho.org/>

LWVRV: *We do not support this study. We agree that this is a serious situation, one which some in the state may think could “never happen.” We are not approaching it from that point of view, although we do think the movement is unlikely to gain enough traction to seriously threaten areas like Klamath Falls.*

We also think it is important for other League members around the state to understand the stress that this would cause voters and members in the targeted areas. However, at this point in time, we suggest that members in the **Klamath** League (or others in areas at risk) review state and national positions for one that would support the League’s opposition to such a ballot measure.

Follow-up after “Open Office Hours” meeting: Since our meeting, we were contacted by Diane Shockey of Klamath League regarding possible help from us. Kathleen Donham shared what we discussed at our meeting (above). Klamath is asking LWVRV if anyone will help them review LWV positions (whether national or state) that would fit this situation. Secondly, if another League somewhere in the nation has a position that is relevant, they may be able to adopt it through the concurrence process – slow, but possible. Again, they are seeking our help. Anyone with a couple hours could help tremendously. Please let Barbara Klein know at action@LwvRogueValley.org.

Observer Corp

Rick Bennett, Observer Coordinator

Last year I wrote an article regarding the importance of League observers – why they exist and what they do [Observers, Who Needs Them, Pages 4-5](#) (March, 2022).

With the recent closure of the *Mail Tribune* and the uncertainty with regards to other newspapers and media organizations stepping in to fill the void, I’m again reminded of the importance of observing our local governments’ meetings and being aware of actions that impact our communities.

Below is a recent overview of Medford City Council that Sally Smith submitted. She has observed the Medford City Council for some time now and explains how easy it to observe the Council meetings – in person or online. Whether you’re interested in becoming an observer or not, Sally encourages everyone to take a few minutes to become familiar with your local governments – county, city, school boards, and so forth. After all, decisions are being made – whether it’s at the national level, or state, or the local level – that impact you, your family, and your community.

Medford City Council

Sally Smith, Observer Corp

Medford’s City Council is the governing body of the city government with a mayor elected by the city residents at large and eight Councilors elected by wards. The City is divided into four wards and each ward is represented by two Councilors who serve four-year terms. They are elected only by residents within each respective ward. Each biennium one Councilor from each ward is up for reelection, resulting in members in each ward serving overlapping terms. The mayor is the presiding officer of the City Council and is elected for a four-year term. The mayor and councilors are volunteers and do not receive a salary for their service.

The City Council meets publicly twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 6:00 pm. The meetings are available to watch live streamed on the City of Medford web site [Medford City Council](#) and are also recorded and can be viewed at any time on the same web site. All meeting agendas and documents and

studies being discussed are available to the public on the City's web site. The minutes of previous meetings are also available to be viewed by the public.

I strongly urge all Medford residents to take the time to watch some of the City Council meetings. You'll become familiar with your ward's representatives and their role in the governing of our city. You can watch in person in the council chambers at City Hall or from the comfort of your home. If you choose to watch the streaming version, you can stop the streaming and then pick it up later in the recording. The site is updated frequently and is very user friendly. Happy viewing!



Nominating Committee

Olena Black has bravely volunteered to do nominating this year for a new slate of Board members. When she calls, **please seriously consider** helping with the business of being a functioning League. As we begin to transition to in-person meetings again, although less frequently, we can take the opportunity to get to know our fellow members and their interests better. Please respond to Olena and consider being part of something positive for Making Democracy Work.



In that spirit, I highly recommend a new opinion piece suggested by Our Common Purpose and *The Atlantic Monthly*: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/01/american-identity-democracy-civics-education-requirement/672789/> The League helped support the push for requiring Civics be taught in every high school in Oregon, and it is now a reality. Our Voter Service Unit will encourage implementation of the civics syllabus in the classroom.

Barbara Klein, Action Chair, hosted a nationwide event
sponsored by **LWV Rogue Valley**

Data & Proportional Representation

(Ranked Choice Voting style)

Featuring
Deb Otis,
Research Director
at FairVote



Meeting can be watched on the LWVOR YouTube Channel, here:
[Data & Proportional Representation: A Look at Data Related to Proportional Ranked Choice Voting.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6fv_MOcm5U)
Or copy link below to **Data & Proportional Representation** featuring Deb Otis, from FairVote.
Hosted by LWV Rogue Valley Oregon and Sacramento County, CA.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6fv_MOcm5U



Voter Service News — by Kathleen Donham

How did the League perform at the last Election Nov 2022? That was the topic of the Oregon League Voter Service meeting on line last week chaired by Peggy Bengry. There were wins and losses. We and several other Leagues have experienced candidates not wanting to participate. Others have resorted to doing candidate interviews (taped) instead and informing all concerned that we will just report that certain candidates refused to participate. The interviews will be shown on Vote411. That may be a good tactic for our League, and I welcome members to help me with those decisions. The Voter Service committee will become an interest group (Unit) this spring and meetings will begin in March.

There were also problems getting candidates to participate in Vote411 and some of those problems have been addressed with technical fixes. President Becky Gladstone reminds us that the League shines on the local level with candidate information and encourages us to keep up the forums—at the level of school boards and other volunteer public offices. I have listed the races that will be included in the next election Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

Southern Oregon ESD	Greensprings Fire District
Ashland School District #5	Jackson County Fire District #3
Butte Falls School District #91	Jackson County Fire District #4
Central Point School District #6	Jackson County Fire District #5
Eagle Point School District #9	Lake Creek Fire District
Medford School District #549C	Medford Rural Fire District #2
Phoenix-Talent School District #4	Prospect Rural Fire District
Pinehurst School District #94	Rogue River Rural Fire District
Prospect School District #59	Charlotte Anne Water District
Rogue River School District #35	Elk City Water District
Applegate Valley Fire District #9	Jackson County Library District
Colestin Fire District	Rogue Valley Transportation Dist.
Evans Valley Fire District #6	Rogue Valley Sewer Services Dist.
Rogue Community College	
Three Rivers School District	

All of these districts will have their listings of candidates filed starting in February and lasting until March 16. Vote411 volunteers enter that data onto data sheets provided to the website. We will need extra volunteers. (Many thanks to Jim Buck and Mary Sinclair).



Mock elections were held at Logos School this fall, but the public schools have not shown an interest. If you are acquainted with teachers in the Rogue Valley that might be amenable to school mock elections, please let me know: Kathleen Donham 541-772-5044

New Unit meeting

Ranked Choice Voting Explored by LWVRV

Date: Friday, February 24th

Time: 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Location: Ashland Library, **Guanajuato Room**

Join League members to discuss the issue of Ranked Choice Voting in the Rogue Valley.

Now is your time to be part of a movement.

During this 1st meeting, plans of future meetings and possible other locations will be decided by the group.

Host: Barbara Klein. Contact her at action@lwvroguevalley.org

Health Care “Watcher” ?

If you are interested in Health Care but not sure what YOU could do with your limited time, consider this. We can connect you to a group of grassroots League members nationwide who meet online. You can hear what is going on in other states and consider reporting back to our local League when something is of interest.

It’s about an hour a week on the weeks that they meet. They often have intros for new attendees, as well as announcements. As a new attendee you would not be expected to do much more than say why you are there. (Hint: you are interested in Health Care for All.)

If you are interested, contact action chair at action@lwvroguevalley.org



LWVRV Calendar

February

- Thursday 9 EO Media Representative presentation, 12:00, Zoom (**tentative**)
- Thursday 16 Board Meeting, 10:00
- Friday 24 Ranked Choice Voting Unit meeting, 1:30-3:00 PM, Ashland Library
- Monday 27 Newsletter submissions due

March

- Thursday 9 Classroom Law Project, 12:00
- Thursday 16 Board Meeting, 10:00
- Monday 27 Newsletter submissions due

Note: The 2023 (82nd) Regular Legislative Session began on January 17 and will run until June 25. If you're not already getting the LWVOR Action Committee's weekly Legislative Report, go to www.lwvor.org and sign up.

- The League of Women Voters Rogue Valley welcomes submissions to the newsletter, *The Voters' Voice*. Editor Jim Buck can be reached at newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org and 541-830-0602.
- LWVRV
P.O. Box 8555
Medford, OR 97501
- Contact the webmaster:
webadmin@lwvroguevalley.org
- Website: <https://lwvroguevalley.org/wp>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvr/>
- Email: pres@lwvroguevalley.org
- If you must have a mailed paper copy of this newsletter, please call Jim at 541-830-0602 or email newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org
- You should also be receiving newsletters by email from State and National.
- **For a membership application**, go [here](#)