



March Unit meetings on “Food Insecurity”—chronic inability to meet one’s nutritional needs

by Lucinda Wingard

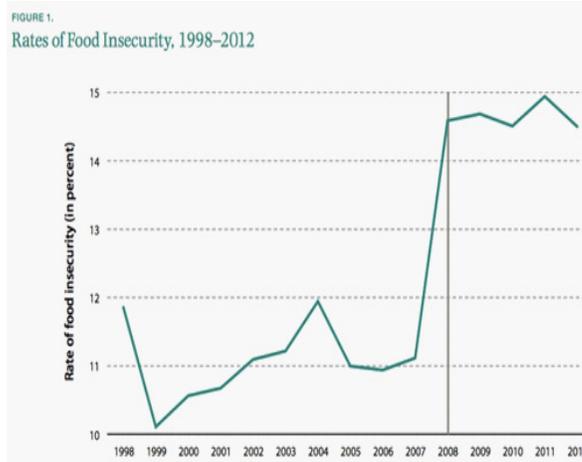
Time was that living in poverty in the US did not necessarily mean going hungry. But times have changed. Good nutrition is out of reach for a substantial number of children and families. Why? We will get a clearer picture of hunger in Pierce County from our guest speakers at the March unit meetings, and then we can explore causes and possible solutions.

- Is there a technological solution? What about GMOs?
- In the face of climate change, will we have to change our diet?

Each unit discussion will be different, according to where members want to take this discussion that begins with these facts:

Hunger in our communities is a problem that gets lost in the news of political unrest, violence, injustice, the Super Bowl, and dog rescues. So in March we are going to shut out that cacophony and concentrate on some of the following:

- What is the extent of hunger in Pierce County? (Who and where are the underfed?)
- What food resources do low-income residents have in Pierce County?
- What are the sources of “healthy, affordable food” for the hungry?
- What are the effects of hunger on individuals and on Pierce County society?
- How or why is obesity related to low-income?
- What actions to end hunger/malnutrition/obesity are effective?
- What can be done to improve how the food production stream delivers nutrition to the hungry?



Rates of Food Insecurity, 1998 - 2012

“Similar to families living in poverty, many families in America’s struggling lower-middle class are not comfortably able to afford a sufficient diet. Food insecurity in households with children is widespread, existing in every state. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) serves a fundamental role in mitigating food insecurity and providing food assistance to both poor and struggling lower-middle-class

- families.
- Roughly 40 percent of children in the struggling lower-middle class experience food insecurity or obesity, or both.
- More than one in five children faces food insecurity in thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia.
- Nearly 90 percent of SNAP recipients live in a household with at least one child, one disabled individual, or one elderly individual.”

Source: [The Hamilton Project](#)

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The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Tacoma Charter Review

by Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow

The City of Tacoma is currently in the midst of a Charter Review process. The Charter Review Committee will be meeting Mondays and Wednesdays until they make their report and recommendations go to the City Council on May 6th. The meetings, at which the public is welcome, are at 7 p.m. in room 16 of the Tacoma City Hall, 747 Market Street.

What are they talking about? Everything. At the recent public hearing, most public comment was in favor of changing Tacoma to a Strong Mayor system from the current Council- Manager system. (See your TRY for descriptions of both.) The lone voice speaking out in favor of the current form of government was mine. On behalf of our Co-Presidents, I read our local League's position on Tacoma City Government.

Our League has had a position on Tacoma City Government since the early 1950s, when we were instrumental in getting Tacoma's government changed TO Council- Manager. (See your Handbook for our complete position.) Long-time League members, as well as many long-time residents, do NOT remember the good old days of corruption fondly.

During the last decade, we reviewed our position. New study convinced us to continue to support it. As well, we support having some Council members elected by district and some at-large. This seems to give a good balance. There are those who want to see all of our Council members elected by district. Something else to think about... What are the benefits and losses?

To comment on either of these issues, or any others which you may have, please attend the next public hearing on March 31st. These are held in the City Council Chamber. Anyone may have three minutes to comment. As well, you may write or e-mail the Committee (Bill Baarsma, Chair). And,

don't forget that our own Terri Baker is on the committee. Letters to the Editor are also a good way to comment. Don't forget that you may write or comment, and quote the League position as a supporter, but only the President(s) or someone so designated, may speak in the name of the League.

There is also comment on giving the City Council control over Tacoma Public Utilities. This has raised some outcry. There is no League position on this – but that doesn't mean we shouldn't care, or feel able to throw our individual two cents in.

One of those commenting at the last meeting, speaking for a change in government, said we seem to fix things by firing our City manager every few years. I repeated this to my husband. EXACTLY! he said. Firing a City Manager is a lot easier than getting rid of an elected Mayor!

As many have pointed out, who you elect is more important than the form of government. You can have great people or terrible people in either form of government, which is why we pay attention to who is running. However, the Council-Manager form seems to give us more flexibility in dealing with whatever we have!

This Charter Review process is important. Every ten years we get to look at our Charter and see what changes are needed. The committee gets to recommend changes to the council, and then the Council decides whether to put them on the ballot. (There were eleven last time around, as I recall.) If you care, get involved. Make your voices heard.



Survey Findings on Health Care

by Susan Eidenschink

During the fall of 2013, the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) participated in Community Forums Network (CFN) survey on Health Care in Washington. Nearly 3,000 survey responses were received, and over 150 people (actually 153) designated LWVWA as the organization they chose to be a grant recipient. Non-profit organizations participating in the Health Care Survey totaled 114. As a result of those of you who took the survey and made this designation, LWVWA received a grant of \$1000. You can see other information on the survey grants at <http://www.communityforumsnetwork.org/>.

The results of the survey will be presented to Washington state legislators to show them the opinions of those who took the survey. It is the hope and expectation of CFN that the areas of consensus are useful to policymakers in creating more solution-based approaches to the biggest challenges we face in our communities. The survey questions that received consensus were the following:

- 1. Should the state Legislature allow Registered Dental Hygienists to provide independent prevention services to those in need of dental care who are not currently being served by the private practice dental model? 75% answered YES** to this question.
- 2. Should the state create financial incentives, such as guaranteed student loan repayment plan, for physicians who choose to do a family medicine residency in Washington, and for general internists, family physicians and pediatricians to practice medicine in Washington for at least five years? 66% answered YES** to this question.
- 3. Should the state expand health care insurance through Medicaid to all immigrant family members who qualify and are lawfully residing in Washington, even if they have been in the U.S. less than five years? 33% answered YES** to this question, and **30% more answered a qualified YES if they established Washington residency for one year.**
- 4. Do you believe that health care insurance should be universal?** (In other words, health care insurance is something the government should provide for everyone, or require every adult to purchase for themselves and their families, or something that government should allow each adult to choose to buy, or not?) **44.9% answered that government should provide health care insurance to everyone;** and **15.4% answered that the government should require every adult to purchase health care insurance for themselves and their families.**
- 5. If someone has adequate financial resources or government assistance, they have a moral duty to get health care insurance for themselves and/or their family members. 64% answered that they agree or strongly agree with this statement.**

League was provided a breakdown of areas in Washington State where League members took the survey and indicated LWVWA as the organization to which they wanted grant money to go.

- 53 of the 153 survey respondents were from areas with zip codes of 980xx, 981xx, and 982xx.
- 75 of the 153 survey respondents were from areas with zip codes of 983xx, 984xx, and 985xx.

The Community Forums Network has decided not to sponsor any more surveys, so I'm glad that we participated in this last one. Thank you for your participation in the survey.

Firearm Deaths in Washington State

by Mary Ann Leskie

At the April Unit meetings, LWVT-PC will discuss gun responsibility. Below are some facts to think about concerning gun deaths in Washington.

This is from a report by the State Office of Financial Management. Some of the report's key findings are

- Firearm deaths currently exceed motor vehicle crash deaths.
- Suicides account for nearly 80% of all firearm deaths.
- Males are at greatest risk for firearm deaths: older males have the highest suicide rate; younger males, the highest homicide rate.
- Eastern Washington has higher firearm homicide and suicide rates than Western Washington.
- High firearm suicide-rate regions and clusters have corresponding measure of high unemployment, low life satisfaction, little emotional support, poor quality of life and high firearm availability.
- High firearm-rate regions and clusters have corresponding measures of low income and low educational attainment.
- Washington's firearm suicide rate is higher than the U.S. rate; Washington's firearm homicide rate is lower.
- Washington's firearm sales have been markedly increasing.

You can read the entire report at this site:

<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/ResearchBriefs/2013/brief071.pdf>

| PIERCE COUNTY FATAL GUN INJURIES 2008-2012 | | | |
|--|---------|----------|-------|
| (WA State Dept of Health 2012) | | | |
| Unintentional | Suicide | Homicide | Total |
| 5 | 308 | 104 | 417 |

| 2011 WASHINGTON STATE FIREARMS DEATHS | | | |
|--|---------|----------|-------|
| (Seattle Town Hall on Gun Violence Feb 2013) | | | |
| Accidental | Suicide | Homicide | Total |
| 9 | 492 | 92 | 593 |

Firearm Deaths in Washington State - continued

| 2009 Homicides by Firearms in North America | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| (UN Office on Drugs and Crime) | | |
| Country | # Homicides | % 100K Pop |
| Canada | 173 | 0.5% |
| United States | 10300 | 3.3% |
| Mexico | 8804 | 7.9% |

From the Co-President

by Ruth Ann Hatchett

Our membership is growing thanks to the terrific work of the membership committee led by Diane Kerlin. At the end of January our membership was up to 126. Thanks to all of you who are reaching out on behalf of the League.

A good opportunity to introduce our work to community members is the up-coming Sunshine Forum on March 20. We host a forum each year during Sunshine Week to promote open government. This year our speaker is Libby Carr representing WAmend. WAmend is a coalition of grassroots organizations who believe that

unlimited and anonymous money has corrupted our political system. WAmend supports Initiative 1329 to put the State of Washington on record as calling for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The amendment will empower the people to pass laws which will limit and control money in politics. Another way to provide opportunities to become acquainted with our work is to invite your friends to come participate in interesting and relevant unit programs. Let's keep the momentum going.

2014 TRY for Pierce County

Our new 2014 TRY (booklet of elected officials) was printed in early February. Many League members received a 2014 TRY for Pierce County at the Unit Meetings in February. Many TRYs have been distributed to elected officials, libraries, public schools, and non-profit organizations. Our 2014 TRY can be viewed on our website at www.lwvwa.org/tacoma. If you did not receive a 2014 TRY, check out the library nearest you or stop by our League office at 702 Broadway, Suite 105, Tacoma, or contact the LWVT-PC office by email, lwvtacomapierce@gmail.com, or by phone, 253-272-1495.

Board of Directors

Voter Volunteers:
 Connie Ozmer
 Marie Cameron
 Susan Eidenschink

Please send comments or suggestions for The Voter to lwvtaco-mapierce@gmail.com

| | | |
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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 in and mailings of the Washington State and National League of Women Voters (LWVWA and LWVUS)!

Membership for one year is \$60 (for two Members of a household - \$90). Student membership is \$30 but we are currently offering it at half-price, and even have scholarships available at this time! Membership dues are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund (by separate check, and they are 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

Get Involved!!!

Attend a Unit Meeting

TACOMA

Day/Time: Second Thursdays / 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Place: N. Tacoma Police Substation, 5140 N. 26th St.

Unit leader: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow, lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com

LAKEWOOD AND NEIGHBORS

Day/Time: Second Fridays / 10:00 a.m. - noon

Place: Steilacoom Community Center 2301 Worthington St., Steilacoom

Unit leader: Ann Elliston, 253-564-4102

EAST PIERCE

Day/Time: Second Saturdays / 10:00 a.m. - noon

Place: Puyallup Library, 324 S. Meridian, Puy.

Unit leader: Ellen Zulauf, See Membership Directory

GIG HARBOR-KEY PENINSULA

Day/Time: Second Saturdays / 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Place: Harbor History Museum, 4121 Harborview Dr., GH

Unit leader: Sharon Peace-Doane, 253-265-0841

*The heart of a
volunteer is not
measured in size,
but by the depth
of the commit-
ment to make a
difference in the
lives of others.*

~ DeAnn Hollis

~ Remember to set your clock ahead one hour on March 9th ~

Volunteer Your Time

Voter Printing and Mailing

Each month the Voter is printed and prepared for mailing. This happens at the end of each month. If you like a little physical work once in awhile, contact Susan Eidenschink.

Community Fundraising

We're gearing up for a concerted effort to establish relationships with Pierce County businesses that will potentially donate to the League to support our work (and accomplishments)! We'll discuss this initiative in March Units, but in the meantime, please think about contacts you have in area businesses that could help open doors and your willingness to join the outreach effort.

LWVT-PC Calendar 2013 - 2014

March 8 - 10:00 am - noon - East Pierce Unit Meeting (Subject: Food Insecurity)
March 8 - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Gig Harbor Unit Meeting (Subject: Food Insecurity)
March 12 - Pierce Conservation District Election - See article in this Voter
March 13 - 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm - Tacoma Unit Meeting (Subject: Food Insecurity)
March 14 - 10:00 am - noon - Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting (Subject: Food Insecurity)
March 18 - 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm - LWVT-PC Board Meeting
March 20 - 6:15 pm - 8:00 pm - General Meeting - Sunshine Week Forum
March 20 - Deadline for April Voter Articles

April 10 - 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm - Tacoma Unit Meeting (Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)
April 11 - 10:00 am - noon - Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting (Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)
April 11 - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Gig Harbor Unit Meeting (Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)
April 12 - 10:00 am - noon - East Pierce

Unit Meeting (Subject: Gun Safety and Responsibility)
April 15 - 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm - LWVT-PC Board Meeting
April 20 - Deadline for May Voter articles

May 7 - 9:00 am - 3:00 pm - Project Homeless Connect, Puyallup Fair Grounds
May 8 - 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm - Tacoma Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
May 9 - 10:00 am - noon - Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
May 10 - 10:00 am - noon - East Pierce Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
May 10 - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Gig Harbor Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants - Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
May 20 - 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm - LWVT-PC Board Meeting

June 14 - Annual Meeting
June 20 - Deadline for June/July Voter articles

Committee Members and Speaker Suggestions solicited for May Unit Meetings on Immigration Reform

The May Unit meetings will study the pending or proposed legislation concerning undocumented immigrants at local, state, and national levels. Lucinda Wingard is assembling a committee of members interested in the topic and in leading discussions at our four meetings. She'd also like any suggestions for speakers with expertise or experience concerning immigration policies.

Please contact Lucinda by phone at 253-858-3647 or email WingardJL@comcast.net

Welcome New Members!

Marianne Seifert
Judith Wood

**Remember the Sunshine Forum is
March 20th: 6:15 pm - 8:00pm at the
TNT - 1950 S State St, Tacoma.**

LWVT-PC Board Meeting Summary: February 18, 2014

by John Thurlow

A quorum of the Board discussed the following topics:

- **LWVT-PC has 126 members**, and has been congratulated on its growth by Kim Abel, LWVWA President.
- **Fundraising:** John Thurlow will brief the March Units on developing a “case” package for soliciting donations, and reviewing opportunities for engaging with area businesses. The overall fundraising committee still needs a Chair to coordinate all the different efforts being considered to bolster LWVT-PC’s finances, such as member auctions, hosting meetings, and a yard sale.
- **Web presence:** The Board reconfirmed the use of the current site for the time being. Support from the web team at LWVWA is satisfactory.
- **Publicity:** Area publications will include the Lakewood Suburban Times. Members are asked for lively pictures (with identifying data) for the Facebook page.
- **Sunshine Week:** Our public meeting is scheduled for March 20th, 6:00 refreshments; 6:15 convene to 8pm adjournment, at TNT’s meeting room. Members are asked to come at 5:30pm to help set up. There are lots of volunteers bringing refreshments.
- **Tacoma Charter Review:** Many speakers at the February 10th public meeting spoke in favor of strong mayor-council government. Members are asked to speak out in favor of the LWVT-PC’s position on Tacoma government favoring council-manager government.
- **Unit meetings:** The February LWVUS Agriculture study consensus discussions went well, and results should be approved next month. The Food Insecurity topic for March will require active participation from members. April will address gun history, culture, statistics, and public health issues; members will lead the discussion.
- **Civility in Democracy:** The Board agreed to co-sponsor with mediation and facilitation experts a public workshop for area government boards to learn how to overcome conflicts and communicate in a more constructive way, perhaps in August.
- **The Budget Committee** was confirmed as Susan Eidenschink, Mary Ann Leskie, Kathy Sommers, Mark San Souci, and John Thurlow.
- **Tours of the NW Detention Center:** The Board agreed to organize a tour for a limited group as an eye-opening opportunity – more to come.



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Tacoma, WA 98402

Phone: (253) 272-1495 Email: lwvtacomapierce@gmail.com Web: www.lwwwa.org/tacoma



In Memoriam: Linda Perdue

Linda Perdue died in late January 2014. Linda was active in many community organizations despite having multiple sclerosis for 38 years. Linda was a long time member of the League of Women Voters. A celebration of her life was held on February 9th and donations may be made in her name to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Greater Northwest Chapter, <http://main.nationalmssociety.org/goto/LauraHigdon14>.