

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MASON COUNTY

## Annual Report 2016-2017

Here's an update on what our chapter has been up to since last year:

Our theme for the year was Public Health, so we tailor-made our program that way.

In **September**, aside from the numerous Initiatives and offices we had on our ballot, we had a unique concern. The County had two ballot issues, one for the formation of a Parks district, and another for the election of five commissioners to run it. What was unusual about these two issues was that even if you voted AGAINST the formation of the district, you could still vote FOR the commissioners. The League had a debate on the pros and cons of the measure and ultimately it failed. The picture on the other page is Cindy Shotts. She's one of our incoming Vice Presidents.

In **October**, we held a candidates' forum at the new beautiful PUD building. We set it up in a speed-dating format, with candidates moving to each table and speaking with a static group. It allowed all attendees to get a little time with each candidate in a smaller group. If anyone wants more information on how to set it up, Amy Davis, Lynn Busacca, or I would be happy to speak with you.

In **November**, we had a presentation on Creating a Culture of Health, Hope, and Wellness in Mason County, kind of working towards a holistic health topic. We also lost a great League member, Jeannette Boegl, who was really inspiring to all who knew her. In her memory, we set up an educational fund.

In **December**, we started talking about the election in February with the passage of a bond to replace the local high school and one of the elementary schools, and to improve the other schools in Shelton's district. Here's an example of things that are wished for, but not necessarily brought to fruition—we would have loved to have high schoolers debate the issue of replacing the school, but it never happened for timing reasons. That's the down part of being President, wanting to do something to educate your community but not having ample time.

In **January**, the discussion was on Judging the Courts: Treatment and Alternatives to Incarceration. And of course there was the march in Olympia, which several of our members attended.

In **February**, we had a talk on Mental Health issues, and the concept of moral reconnection. That word is kind of archaic, and the word ego replaced it; it's becoming more mainstream now. Our suggestions for statewide studies were Mental Health, an action campaign to decentralize treatment; UBI: Universal Basic Income; and a Housing Affordability study.

In **March**, we were invited to join in the 'March for Science' in April in support of "STEAM" programs: Science, Technology, Engineering Art and Mathematics. Our program was on the health of our forests.

In **April**, our membership climbed to 35. We hosted two speakers. Robert Sauerlender, Mason County Court Commissioner, who gave an excellent overview of M.A.T. [Medication Assisted Treatment] in Mason County. Sara Multanen-Karr of Evergreen Treatment Services gave background on M.A.T. access and delivery in our region.

In **May**, we focused our efforts on registering high school students to vote, at the three high schools in our area, Shelton, CHOICE, and North Mason. We had been planning a tour of Quixote Village but it wasn't possible, as the tiny homes are now occupied and tours would be disruptive at that point. Another example of the great ideas that sometimes don't happen, but that just makes us think even harder! The program was organized to promote understanding of the issues related to the current shellfish ban in Hammersley Inlet and Oakland Bay, which is really timely and has a huge effect on our local economy.

One of the advantages to living in a small town is that you have great relationships with the local press. We've had four of our meetings covered in the Mason County Journal, plus letters to the editor on the voter registration drive, the Parks proposition, and just an overall bonhomie about everything that we do in the community. So my advice to other Leagues is to try to build that relationship to make voters aware of issues.

As for next year? We'll come up with ideas at our Planning session on Thursday, June 19 from 11:30 to about 2:30. Connie Simpson has graciously offered her house for a session of brainstorming and scheduling. All are invited; see Connie for directions and what to bring.