



The Muni News

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2002 Candidate Evaluations Released

By *Lonnie Lusardo*

After four weeks of training, interviews, final rating reviews, and approval by the Municipal League Board of Trustees, this year's candidate evaluation cycle ended with the release of more than 125 ratings in over 70 legislative and judicial races

2002 candidate evaluations.

The evaluations were released Monday, August 26. See the insert for a complete list of ratings; more information about the ratings and the candidates will be published in the League's *Election Report*, mailed to all members and distributed widely through libraries and other organizations in King County.

Judicial Committee Returns After 10 Years

This year, after a 10-year hiatus, the Municipal League evaluated judicial candidates. Sandra Driscoll chaired the Judicial Committee, with Vice Chair Norma Jean Hanson. David Byers served as parliamentarian. Judicial evaluations were brought back following requests from Municipal League members and voters who feel candidates for judge positions are frequently the least well known. This year the committee evaluated candidates for King County Superior Court, King County District Court, and Washington State Court of Appeals.

Three Legislative Committees

Keven Franklin chaired the Central CEC, with Vice Chair Cheryl Harlick. Todd Slind served as parliamentarian.

The North-East CEC was chaired by Tami Landberg, with Vice Chair Nancy Burkhalter. Lyn Reynolds served as parliamentarian.

For the third consecutive year, Jennifer Piccolo chaired the South CEC with Vice Chair

Terry Perrson. Lael Braymer was parliamentarian.

With the combined help of more than 45 committee members, the 2002 evaluation cycle totaled over 3000 hours of volunteer commitment, including background research, interviews training, and other meetings. Jennie Keith led a team of interns who facilitated the process from start to finish: Michael Arnette, Rebecca Cooper, Erin Gulick, Michael Horner and Brian Sutherland.

Look for the Municipal League ratings in your favorite daily newspaper. A complete listing of all candidate evaluations is available at the Municipal League website www.munileague.org.

League Honors Outstanding Citizens, Organizations

By *Put Barber*

"This is the longest day of the year," said **Graham Johnson** on June 21, "and I'm relishing every minute of it." Johnson was "relishing" his award as **Public Employee of the Year** given him by the League at its 2002 Civic Awards banquet. He was recognized for his service as nonvoting chair of the commission that redrew Washington's legislative and congressional district boundaries following the 2000 census, and for his many years as director of the state's Public Disclosure Commission.

An audience of 450 League members and friends applauded as he and seven other award winners were presented:

Lindsay Palmer - Citizen of the Year. Palmer is the public education director of the widely admired King County Sexual Assault Resource Center.

Rep. Ida Ballasiotes - Public Official of the Year. Ballasiotes retires this year after five terms in Olympia representing the 41st District.

Chevrolet of Issaquah - Business of the Year. The employees and owners contribute throughout the community year round.

Pioneer Human Services - Organization of the Year. This is a path-breaking self-supporting leader in finding ways to help needy people.

KUOW 94.5 FM - Governmental News Reporting. Throughout the day and week, public affairs broadcasts bring information and insight to Northwest audiences.

Rep. Helen Sommers - Warren Magnuson Award. For many years, Sommers has led the House Budget Committee while representing the 36th Legislative District since 1973.

Sen. Dan McDonald - James R. Ellis Regional Leadership. McDonald retires this year after serving in many leadership positions in the Legislature and representing the 48th District for 24 years.

In accepting his award, Sen. McDonald noted that his grandfather had been among the founding board members of the Municipal League and that it gave him special pride to receive recognition from the organization 90-plus years later.

After congratulating the award winners, Alan Mulally, president and chief executive officer of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, delivered the keynote address. Mulally emphasized the company's deep roots in the Pacific Northwest and its determination to remain a strong participant in the region's economy.

Mulally focused on the importance of efficient and reliable transportation. "Our failure to invest in transportation infrastructure before it was needed," he said, "is hurting Boeing, and everyone else who builds things in the Northwest today. And our employees steal time from their families at the beginning and end of every day because they have to pay

congestion taxes on their way to and from work."

Long-term League member Jim Ellis ended the question period with an informal comment that recalled the key role Boeing has played in support of civic improvements over decades. "So please," he concluded to strong applause, "stay strong and stay here."

League Trustee Randy Revelle, as master of ceremonies, kept the event on schedule and invited everyone to attend next year. Deryl Brown-Archie chaired the Trustee Nominations Committee that included Rowan Hinds, Gary McLean, and Bob Roberts. The League's Programs and Events Committee planned the event. Members included chair Putnam Barber, Elma Borbe, Rod Dembowski, Jessica Fleenor, Wilda Heard, Tom Page, Randy Revelle, and Herb Robinson.

At the start of the event, Barber recognized the event sponsors: The Boeing Company, Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, Microsoft and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. He also thanked the more than 30 table hosts who helped to turn out a lively audience for the event.

League Chair Tom Albro followed with an outline of some of the League's accomplishments. "Some people fondly call the Municipal League a good government organization," he said. "And that's true. But much more importantly, the League is a good citizen organization, a group that makes it possible for individuals, working together, to contribute their time, thoughts, and talent to making King County a better place to live." (See his column on the next page.) He invited everyone to participate in the League.

To close the session, Randy Revelle drew three door-prizes: Virginia Howell won a lunch with County Executive Ron Sims; Mark Barbieri won a lunch with Secretary of State Sam Reed; and Sherry Shanabarger won two tickets to the Washington News Council dinner, where all of Washington's ex-governors will be guests of honor later this year.

Our Cause is Citizenship!

By Tom Albro, Chairman

Some fondly call The Municipal League a good government group. This is accurate in a sense, but more than that, though, I believe we are a good citizen group.

As Americans, we have struggled for and earned the right to rule ourselves. We are not ruled by a foreign state, a monarch, or an authoritarian regime. We are self-governing and therefore there is no valid distinction between people and government in this country.

What has been secured by the sacrifices of so many, however, can only be preserved by ordinary diligence—the diligence of our everyday citizenship. Citizens select the office holder. Citizens tax themselves to pay for their public institutions. Citizens hold their government accountable and take it to task when it falls short.

The Municipal League is a good citizen group. We are good citizens, and we help others be good ones too.

For nearly 100 years straight, League volunteers, ordinary informed citizens, have objectively rated countless candidates running in thousands of political contests. These ratings represent the only non-partisan, non-agenda-driven system of evaluating political aspirants that exists in King County today or, for that matter, at any time over the past nine decades.

League evaluations are based on candidates' fitness for public office, not their political platforms. Volunteer committees conduct personal interviews with candidates and examine their public records and backgrounds. This information is used to rate each candidate on civic involvement, effectiveness, character and knowledge.

Voters in King County rely on this information. Municipal League candidate ratings make them more informed voters and help them to be better citizens.

Rating candidates and voting are important but by no means everything. Citizens need to

have a causal relationship toward their elected bodies and government structures. We need to pilot the ship. The best phrase for this is civic activism.

This is why the League convenes citizen study committees and works to shape and reshape our civic institutions to better serve us all. Let me give you some examples.

Consider what would happen if the Port of Seattle were privately owned. Although it is hard to ponder now, in 1910 it was an open question. In fact, the railroad and shipping companies were posturing for control.

Members of the Municipal League succeeded in making our port a public asset and its commissioners directly elected by the voters. There is no doubt that we are better served today by a public port authority than we would have been with a privately owned port.

How about during the 1950s when it was unsafe to eat the fish in Lake Washington or swim in its waters? League members labored to form a utility district that would see to the treatment and rerouting of all the wastewater entering the lake. It worked! The Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle, better known as Metro, was formed, and we have been swimming and fishing in the lake for more than a generation.

Just this year, the League issued a report on Seattle City Light, looking specifically at its planning capability, its response to volatility in the wholesale power market, and its use of debt. This substantive study helped to point up the problems at the public utility and prompt the mayor to form a task force. The Seattle City Council has now hired an expert auditor to study the matter as well.

Our committee's challenge now is to work with these efforts and to make sure the root causes of the problems are addressed. We are on the job because the Municipal League is a good citizen group and citizen action is the name of the game.

Over the years, there have been scores of League efforts, and there will be countless

more. Many were successful, some failed, but all were helpful in the cause of citizenship.

Since September 11th, a new wave of patriotism has been sweeping our nation. Patriotism is wonderful because it can fan the flame of active citizenship. The emotion of patriotism, however, without the action of citizenship is an empty vessel. Patriotism alone just doesn't make a difference.

When coupled together however, patriotism and active citizenship secure our liberties, strengthen our values, and make almost all civic actions doable. This, is what the Municipal League is about, and why I refer to us as a good citizen group.

So if you are a member of the League, thank you. What we do is important and makes a difference. If you are not yet a member, I urge you to join us. Because your Municipal League is a good citizen group. And now, as much as ever, we need good citizens.

Goodbye and Thanks

Tom Page recently resigned from his position as Executive Director of the Municipal League of King County to pursue other opportunities. The Board members would like to express our appreciation to Tom for his considerable contributions to the goals and activities of the League. We will miss his informed and enthusiastic guidance. Please join us in wishing Tom success in his future endeavors.

Tom's vacancy increases volunteer opportunities!! If you're interested in helping with short or long term projects—administrative or strategic—please call the League office and let us know. We welcome your involvement!

Finally—Political Info with “No Spin”

By David Bangs

This election, King County voters can get up to speed on candidates and issues quickly by going to <http://www.kingcountyvoter.net>. Not only does the site include Muni League candidate evaluations, it also features in-depth profiles of more than 100 candidates appearing on King County ballots.

The new Web site is a collaboration between the Municipal League and a group of civic-minded, cyber-savvy volunteers, formerly known as the Seattle Voter Project, who already had a similar Web site up and running.

The Seattle Voter Project was the brainchild of Princeton University junior Michael Regnier. With a school grant and borrowed office, he and four others developed an informative Web site covering all local candidates in Seattle's 2000 election. Their motivation was simple—to build a site where citizens weary of superficial election coverage could find unbiased election information, aptly reflected in their motto: "The spin stops here."

The Web site is now run by Shorecrest High School seniors Rebecca Cooper, Jessica Tseng, and four others. While it posts Municipal League candidate ratings, it also includes photos, bios, positions on issues, and much more.

The League is delighted to tap into the resources of these young, talented citizens so it can reach more King County citizens with voting information. And King County citizens have a way to access unbiased information at one Web address. Please let us know what you think about this new addition to the Muni League cyber family.

Tell your friends!

What: Information, biographies, resumes, platforms, philosophies, endorsements, campaign finances, and ratings of legislative, judicial candidates from King County

When: Now! **Where:** <http://www.kingcountyvoter.net> **Bias:** Zero

Future of King County Study to Begin: Volunteers Wanted

By Lucy Steers

The Municipal League is launching its new study, the Future of King County, in September. Interim co-chairs Elma Borbe and Jennifer Piccolo, both Board members, are recruiting committee members now. The goal of the study is to provide balanced public information on the role and functions of King County, so that public officials can rely on informed public input as they make the tough decisions.

In Phase 1 of the study, participants will gather information on the services performed by King County, such as whether they are optional, or mandated by federal or state law; how the various services are funded; and what trends exist.

In Phase 2, participants will analyze areas of concern identified in Phase 1.

If you would like to serve on this committee, please send a brief letter of interest to the Municipal League at 810 Third Ave., Suite 224, Seattle, WA 98104, or email us at muni@munileague.org. Please include your contact information.

Thanks to our current volunteers. We believe this study is timely and important, and are excited about getting to work.

To get involved, call Lucy Steers, Chair, Issues Management Committee at 206-725-8691 or email lbsteers@attbi.com

What Did I Get Out of It? : One CEC Volunteer's Experience:

By Nancy Burkhalter

When I want my son to do something, he often quips, "What'll I get out of it?" As irked as I am at such cheek, I thought it reasonable to ask what I'm getting out of my Candidate Evaluation Committee work.

I signed up for the CEC for three reasons: I wanted to learn about the issues, meet political aspirants, and above all serve my community. Missions accomplished. Upon reflection, however, I discovered I'd gained far more than just that.

First, I came away with an appreciation for candidate earnestness. All of them were dead serious about improving their district and making a difference in Olympia. They want to help; never mind this session is forecast to be a real hornet's nest. I admire all of them for their gumption and resolve.

Second, I saw first hand what campaigns entail. Frankly, I think 'campaign' should be spelled 'campain' because it looks like a mountain of difficulty: this brochure, that fundraiser, this town meeting, that Muni League interview. Yikes. And all this so they can go to Olympia to solve our state's ills and without any money to do it. I don't know about you, but an overdraft of \$10 ruins my whole day, let alone a \$2 billion one. I guess that's why they're running and I'm not.

Third, I learned to suspend my political views. At first I felt disloyal, but I became more and more adept at sifting through beliefs (mine and the candidates') in the service of finding true leaders. It occurred to me that if we don't want partisan bickering among out representatives, perhaps we shouldn't be voting in a partisan way.

Finally, I renewed my faith in politics and people. Just running for office takes guts, stamina, confidence, and support of many kinds. But get this: Many of the candidates thanked us for doing this for the Municipal League. We should be thanking everyone seeking public office. They must be made of some rare stardust. Even if they don't win, they have risked mightily by putting themselves out there.

League Supports Seattle Housing Levy

Voting at its August meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Municipal League gave its support to the renewal of the Seattle Housing Levy that will be on the September primary ballot.

. The new 7-year levy would raise \$86 million, an amount calculated to maintain the average annual housing production taking into account rising real estate and building costs. The \$86 million is proposed to be leveraged with state, federal and private funds to produce some 2,044 units of affordable and low-income housing.

The League's statement of support concludes, "In balance, the Trustees believe that the need for low income housing assistance has become,

if anything, more acute, previous levy administration has been both prudent and effective, the proposed levy was developed carefully with broad input, and that this important ballot measure is therefore worthy of support."

The full statement can be found on the Municipal League Website at <http://www.munileague.org>

Join the Municipal League

The Municipal League of King County depends on members for both the revenue and the volunteer involvement to maintain its long-standing commitment to empowered citizens making informed choices for good government in King County. Visit the website or call (206)622-8333 for membership information. If you're not already a member, join today!



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