



The Muni News

January 2002 Volume 92, Issue 1

Legislative Preview by Tom Page

The Muni News is published by the Municipal League Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that works in conjunction with the Municipal League of King County to provide the voters and citizens of King County with the resources they need to make informed decisions about civic issues.

The Municipal League is non-partisan and welcomes all points of view. If you have any questions or would like information on joining the Municipal League call 206-622-8333 or send an e-mail to muni@munileague.org.

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On Friday January 11, the Municipal League co-presented City Club's annual Legislative Preview. Essex Porter of KIRO TV moderated the session with House Minority Leader Clyde Ballard, R-Wenatchee; House Speaker Frank Chopp, D-Seattle; Senate Majority Leader Sid Snyder, D-Long Beach; and Senate Minority Leader Jim West, R-Spokane.

Speaking to a packed room at the Washington Athletic Club, all four officials said the budget and transportation are the key issues for the coming session.

"In 2001 we started off with skyrocketing electric rates," said West, "followed by the earthquake, a drought, summer fires, recession, 9/11, and now floods. The budget time bomb has gone off." The panel

identified the economy and rising health care costs as other major issues demanding attention.

A shift in power awaits legislators this session since the Democrats now control both the House and Senate, albeit with a single vote majority in each chamber. Asked if that one vote makes a difference, Snyder explained that even that slight edge gives the Democrats the power to set the agenda and to determine the committee structure in the Senate. Even with this edge, however, he said he wants to see more amicable relations with the Republicans and hopes for a more bipartisan approach.

Chopp also expressed his hope that both parties will work together, especially on transportation, which is **See Preview, Page 3**

New Look for the League by Lonnie Lusardo

This issue of Muni News launches a whole new look for the newsletter, as well as a new logo for the Municipal League. These changes are part of a process to upgrade the appearance of all League communications.

Graphic designer Randi Coffman of Issaquah volunteered to design our new logo. Coffman works for the Washington State Ferries. A team of designers at The Boeing Company lent their expertise as well. The new logo incorporates the most prominent element of the older logo, the torch--a key part of the Municipal League's identify for over 50 years.

Perry Wales, catalog production manager for Eddie Bauer refor-

matted and revitalized the newsletter design. Over the past 10 years, Wales has developed many magazine and catalogue designs. He designed the newsletter to mirror details of the highly successful Muni League Website (www.munileague.org).

With this inaugural issue, we are also welcoming a new editor, Nancy Burkhalter. Nancy is a writer and has taught writing for over 20 years.

A new brochure is being developed to identify the benefits and features of the Municipal League, along with reasons for joining. The Boeing Company is printing the brochure. **See New Look. page 4**

A Word from the Chair by Tom Albro, Board Chair

League Plans for 2002

I am pleased to tell you that the Municipal League is doing well and has a clear focus for 2002. We have three primary goals: first, to shift as an organization from being project oriented to being program oriented; second, to build in the ability to transition leadership as a matter of course; and third, to increase our operating budget to \$150,000 for 2002 (from \$100,000 in 2001).

Achieving these goals will result in the strongest, most effective League any of us has seen in years.

Programs, not just Projects

By shifting from a project to program orientation, we can gain from each effort and build momentum. For example, until 2000 we performed our candidate evaluation work (CEC) as an ad-hoc effort every year. We would recruit a committee, start the process, do the work, and then shut it down every year. Now we treat CEC as a program which the League is committed to. We have a committee of trustees and members that works throughout the year. During the off times they plan, revise the process, and recruit. This allows the quality of the effort and product to get better each year, compounding our gains.

We are applying this approach to everything we do and have organized ourselves into five standing steering committees: CEC, Studies and Projects, Events and Programs, Communications, and Development. All steering committees are open to members, members, and we hope you will volunteer.

Leadership Transition

Difficulty handling leadership transition has caused headaches for many organizations, including us. So, beginning with this year, the Board of Trustees and every standing steering committee will have a vice chair who will serve as chair the following year. This isn't rocket science, but it sure makes a difference.

The League currently has only one paid staff person, Tom Page, our executive director. Tom does a wonderful job and has no plans leave, but this is a precarious situation. So our draft budget for 2002 includes funding for a part-time administrative person. This will not only provide the additional office support that we sorely need but also give us two-deep staffing, allowing us to have a transition in either staff position and still retain some institutional memory.

Increase Operating Budget

In order to fund the efforts outlined above, we need to increase our revenues (memberships, sponsorships, and gifts). Even though our Development Steering Committee will plan and coordinate

Initiative Process Review by Mark Koenig

Last Fall, the League instituted a new program to research and report on matters relevant to our mission, and to provide thoughtful data in a timely manner to inform public debate on key issues.

The first topic of study is the initiative process. Since September a committee of League and volunteers members have worked their way through mountains of books, reports, studies, and other commentary on the initiative process and met with experts in the field.

this effort, fundraising is really done by everybody. This includes you.

Committee will plan and coordinate this effort, fundraising is really done by everybody. This includes you.

We have worked extremely hard to use the funds given to the League in the most effective way possible. We are ready for the next step. With more, we can and will do more. I am certain you will hear from us soon asking for your support. Please help us now, and send in a check to:

The Municipal League Of King County

810 Third Avenue, Suite 224
Seattle, WA 98104-1651

Please write "2002 Fundraising" in the memo section. Or save the stamp and donate online at: www.munileague.org/donate.htm

Thank you for your financial support. Achieving these goals will make us the strongest, most effective League any of us has seen in years. It's about time. We have so much work to do!

In January, the committee will present a draft report and recommendations to the Board for review.

In its report, the Committee will:

- * Describe the current state of the initiative process
- * Explain any shortcomings in the process that interfere with "good government"
- * Discuss potential improvements to the initiative process.

The Municipal League report on the initiative process will be available in mid- to late February.

2001 Civic Scholar Essay by Mina Manchester

America Under Attack!
America At War!
America Stands United!

Headlines flash by on television and newspapers across the country. Every day the radio blares more facts and statistics about the recent crisis that has overtaken our land. I went to New York, and I saw firsthand the devastation that took place there. I just got back from Los Angeles, where west coasters are struggling under the inconvenience of heightened airport security, and I finally returned home to Seattle to find people burdened with the prospect of an uncertain future. I have been traveling across this great nation to tour universities and colleges where I might spend the next four years of my life. At all of the campuses I visited, I found an environment where learning is the ultimate goal, and I realized for the first time just how important my education is. Although New York and Los Angeles are two different cities on two different coastlines, the people in both states taught me that as Americans we secure our freedoms through our education.

A well-rounded education is what gives us in-sight into issues that define our lives.

Education is many things. It is knowledge of history, politics, math, science, literature, and economics. It is a base to stand on to get acquainted with the world. It is also a tool that we use in America to make informed decisions. As a country that values equality in our government, we believe that every citizen should have the right to vote. The right to vote comes with the privilege of living in this country, but it also comes with responsibility. As citizens we have the responsibility to educate ourselves as to who we are voting for. Education offers us the luxury of being able to decide who will make the best candidate, who will lead our local government offices, and who has the best interest of the people at heart. Without education, we would not be able to discriminate between a mayor who will tax us unfairly on our property values, and a mayor who will try to alleviate traffic congestion. A well-rounded education is what gives us insight into

issues that define our lives.

The central issues in America today revolve around the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Americans are standing up for their rights, and in some cases forfeiting freedoms in the interest of national security. Our freedom of press, and freedom of speech are in question, and the very core of the Constitution is being tested. Some of the most educated people in America are left with innumerable questions, and very few answers. In times like these what can we do as citizens? We can reason our actions logically, and use our minds to develop strategies for survival. Every citizen in America can protect their way of life by watching the news, and remaining informed about current events. Merely listening to our President address the nation is enough to dwell on for weeks. By using an education to understand current issues we can hope to protect some of our freedoms, so that we never lose sight of what we stand for.

Development Committee: We're Baaaack... by Brian Thomas

I remember the Municipal League as the respected activist group that spurred Forward Thrust, reformed county government, jump-started METRO, and demanded campaign disclosure. Many of you are faithful members of our 92 year-old organization and wonder where those dynamic years have gone. Well.... **We're baaaack!**

The Municipal League is again poised to be at the forefront of reform and change. Challenging transportation, fiscal and governance problems remain unresolved.

It takes dedicated citizens, like you, to force solutions. We did it before and are doing it again!

Believe me, the Municipal League of King County will be a major player in the future of this region. What better reason to make sure you have a voice in the direction this new vitality will take us? If you haven't renewed your membership, please do it now... yes, right now. Don't wait until tomorrow. You are vital to making government work and what better way to do it than through your Municipal League.

I am chairing the new Development

Committee, which will seek to increase membership and focus our activities on our mission and the desire of our members. It is important that your voice be heard. Please let us know your expectations for the Municipal League in 2002.

Civic Award Nominations

Who are the outstanding public servants in our region? Who deserves special recognition for service to the people of King County?

Send in your nominations for Civic Awards. Call (206) 622-8333 for a nomination form or e-mail muni@munileague.org.

Calendar of Events

Monday, January 21 6–8:00 p.m.
Board of Trustees Meeting
810 Third Avenue, Room 425

Saturday, February 2
9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

League Board Retreat
Call the League office for location
at 206-622-8333.

Monday, February 4 6–8:00 p.m.
Executive Committee
810 Third Avenue, Room 224

Thursday, February 7 6–9 p.m.
Forum On Race: Community
Dinner and Dialogue featuring James
Loewen, author of *"Lies My Teacher
Told Me: What Your American History
Textbook Got Wrong"*.

Seattle Center in the NW Rooms
Donation requested. To register
call Lynn Coriano at the Urban
Enterprise Center at 206-389-7337.

Monday, February 11 6–8:00 p.m.
Board of Trustees Meeting
Preston, Gates & Ellis, LLP
701 Fifth Avenue, 50th floor

Friday, February 15 12–1:30 p.m.
City Club Luncheon
**A Conversation with Governor
Gary Locke**

Washington Athletic Club
1325 Sixth Avenue
Call 206-682-7395 for reservations.
Discount for League members.

Tuesday, February 19 8–9:30 p.m.
The Evergreen State Society
Monthly Roundtable
Seattle University 12th & Columbia
Bellarmino Hall in the 1891 Room
Call 206-329-5640 for information.

Tuesday, April 9 12–1:30 p.m.
City Club Luncheon with
Journalist Daniel Schorr
Seattle Sheraton, 6th & Pike
Reservations due by March 4 at
206-682-7395 – League members
receive discounted rate.

Issue Studies Near Completion

by Lucy Steers

The Municipal League will complete a number of long-term projects dealing with community issues in the next few weeks. These include our Taking the Pulse project, the Seattle Issues Committee's study of Seattle City Light, and the study of Initiatives and Referenda in Washington State.

The goal for the Taking the Pulse project, funded by Weyerhaeuser, was to gather the opinions of King County residents about the League's political process and public engagement in civic matters. To that end, League members gathered surveys from attendees at the 2000 and 2001 Civic Awards luncheons as well as from a variety of community, social and civic groups around the county. Respondents could also fill out the survey on the Municipal League's website. Survey results from the 750+ responses will be released soon.

The Seattle Issues Committee has been studying Seattle City Light for the past few months and is awaiting updated financial data from the utility before finalizing the project. The committee will release the report, including recommendations, to the Municipal League's Board of Trustees in a

few weeks (probably February) and then to the public upon Board approval.

The Initiative and Referenda Committee has been analyzing the strengths and problems with the initiative process in Washington State. The Committee's nearly completed report will also be released to the Board in the next few weeks, then to the public. It will include recommendations for reforming the process.

The goal of our Projects and Issues activity is to inform members and the public about important community issues, and ultimately bring about positive change through informed advocacy. Once these projects are completed and the final reports made public, the Municipal League will select new topics for study. Anyone interested in serving on one of our committees should call the Municipal League office at (206)622-8333. We will be recruiting new committee members to serve on our study committees in the near future. Come join us in making a difference!

New Look for the League from page 1

The logo, new newsletter and brochure are part of a strategy to boost memberships among individual and corporate members, attract a new cadre of young citizens voters, and present a fresh look to the organization.

The Board of Trustees wishes to express its appreciation to the professionals and organizations that contributed their time, talent and resources to this effort.

Thank you!

Legislative Preview, continued from Page 1

"This will be the worst session ever - but only because all the other sessions are finished."
Sen. Sid Snyder (D-Long Beach)

vital to the state's economic vitality. "Transportation used to be a bipartisan issue," he said.

Ballard agreed. "I want to return to that. We'll work any way we can together, but that doesn't mean just giving the Democrats a vote without input. We will not abandon principles."

Panel members said that agreeing on a budget will be a tremendous challenge. The projected shortfall is about \$1.25 billion. This deficit resulted from an \$800 million drop in projected revenues due to the recession. Other spending requirements, including recently passed initiatives, increased K-12 enrollment, and other state obligations, have shrunk the budget by an additional \$400 million.

Compounding this challenge is the need to make up the entire shortfall in the second year of a two-year budget, when half the remaining budget is off-limits

because of the state constitutionally mandated commitment to education. Snyder put the deficit in perspective saying that filling the budget hole is equivalent to closing three Universities of Washington. "This will be the worst session ever," he said, and then added with a smile, "but only because all the other sessions are finished."

Panelists' views varied as to what they are willing to cut to balance the budget. West called for an immediate freeze on state hiring, a reduction in travel, and a lifting of the ban on contracting out some state activities. Chopp acknowledged that it is essential to preserve a safety net; however, there are some human services that are useful, but not essential, like the W-plex program, which follows up with people after they leave welfare. There was a bipartisan moment when Ballard and Snyder agreed there are no easy cuts or major programs to eliminate. As Ballard put it, "There's no one big thing. We need to go through the budget and cut where we can. We can solve these things, but it must be in a sustainable manner."

Solving the transportation problem was a thornier issue. While all said they wanted to pass a transportation package, no one could say just what might be in it. Panelists had mixed responses to Governor Gary

Locke's proposed raise in the gas tax by 9 cents per gallon phased in over three years. They said they are still considering the idea to allow for regional differences so that areas could vote to tax themselves to fund improvements.

The Republicans were strongly in favor of a public vote to approve any transportation proposal. West urged a fast-track approach, which would require the Legislature to deliver a transportation package by January 25, which would be put to a statewide vote in a March 12 special election. Chopp said that a vote of the people will be part of any transportation deal. He emphasized the need for a campaign to educate voters so there would be a chance for it to pass. However, he thought that such an information campaign might be difficult or impossible to mount by early March.

The final question from the moderator asked the legislative leaders to give advice to the media for the upcoming session. All strongly expressed their desire for more and better reporting of legislative news.

"Cover it!" said Chopp. "TV news is reduced to murder, sports, and weather. Without better coverage people won't know what's going on."

Ballard concurred, saying many articles about Olympia leave him wondering, "Who'd they talk to for that?"

You don't need to be left wondering this legislative session. Find links to state government, including proposed budgets and legislation, hearing schedules, contact information for elected officials and more on the Municipal League website at www.munileague.org.

Join our annual Legislative Field Trip to Olympia!

In March the League will sponsor our second annual field trip to Olympia for League members and high school students from across King County. The specific date will be determined in late January.

The visit will include visits to legislative chambers, the Temple of Justice, and lunch with elected officials. In the afternoon there will be time to meet with legislators and sit in on committee hearings.

We are providing this opportunity to League members for only \$10 (\$20 for non-members). The cost includes transportation and lunch. Call the League office for details and reservations at (206) 622-8333.

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.munileague.org

Election Watch Report: A Memorable Night for All!

Nervous candidates, League members, Candidate Evaluation Committee volunteers and political junkies of all stripes turned out for Election Watch 2001 at Town Hall to wind up the campaign season and track the vote. We watched up-to-the-minute voting results, thanks the excellent election Web sites at King County Records and Elections and the Washington Secretary of State's Office. A number of past and present elected officials attended, including Seattle City Council Member (and recent Civic Award winner) Margaret Pageler, and Secretary of State Sam Reed, who gave a terrific off-the-cuff talk on elections and civic responsibility to a visiting Boy Scout troop.

The boisterous atmosphere was thick with tales of campaign intrigue and political gossip, but compared to prior Election Watch parties, there was an underlying seriousness to the conversation. Every conversation expressed renewed appreciation for our democratic traditions and the very American habit of resolving political disputes at the ballot box.

Adding to this celebration of our democracy

was a remarkable group of young people – the 2001 Civic Scholars. In the past the League has presented the Civic Scholar award at the Civic Awards luncheon. This year we decided to break with custom and incorporate the essay contest for high school students with election night festivities.

Dozens of King County students submitted essays. The five finalists attended Election Watch and took part in the award ceremony. Top honors went to Mina Manchester, a senior at Shorewood High School in Shoreline. Thanks to a generous gift from AT&T Wireless, the 2001 Civic Scholar Award included a \$1000 scholarship, which Mina will use for college. You can find her winning essay on page 3.

The other finalists were David Borton, senior-Shorecrest High School (Shoreline); Heather Bugni, junior-Shorecrest; Kelsey Denney, senior-Shorecrest; and Peter Anderson, junior-Roosevelt High School (Seattle). You can read their excellent and thoughtful compositions on the League's Website at www.munileague.org.

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