



“The Municipal League’s Candidate Evaluation program is the most comprehensive and unbiased interview of candidates running for office.”

- King County Council Chairwoman Julia Patterson

2008 CANDIDATE EVALUATION PROGRAM UNDERWAY

By Gabe Meyer

The Municipal League's Candidate Evaluation Committee (CEC) process is the region's only independent, non-partisan, non-agenda-driven evaluation of candidates for public office. At a recent ceremony where the King County Council proclaimed April 24 as Municipal League of King County Day, Council Chairwoman Julia Patterson praised the Candidate Evaluation program: “The Municipal League’s Candidate Evaluation program is the most comprehensive and unbiased interview of candidates running for office. For many, it's the most meaningful because there is no ax to grind. The Municipal League provides the region with an unduplicated service.”

We are now recruiting volunteer committee members to serve on the CEC -- you too can take part in this outstanding process! As a Candidate Investigator, you will have the opportunity to meet the candidates, learn more about local issues and network with other civic-minded individuals.

Committee members research and interview candidates -- almost like a job interview -- and are committed to developing ratings that are free from ideology or partisan factors. Ratings are based on the candidates' involvement, effectiveness, character and knowledge. We ask committee members to refrain from actively supporting local candidates that we rate.

The time commitment is only 12 evenings, including two training sessions, eight interview nights and two evenings of reviews -- much shorter than in past years!

Here's the 2008 CEC timeline:

CEC Training Sessions — June 3 & 4

Candidate Investigations — June 9 - 13 (no meetings)

Candidate Evaluation Committee Meetings — June 16 - 19 & 23 - 26

Final Committee Review — July 7 or 8

Board Final Review — July 14 or 15

CEC applications can be found at www.munileague.org/cec.

If you would like more information or an application, please contact Gabe Meyer at gabe4munileague@gmail.com or contact our Candidate Evaluation Committee Coordinator, Mary Harris, at 206-264-1070 or cec@munileague.org.

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Board Members Chris Johnson, Brad Meacham, and Bob Klein with members of the King County Council, which proclaimed April 24 Municipal League Day.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

By Brad Meacham



*Municipal League Chair
Brad Meacham*

I just got back from a short vacation in Istanbul, an ancient yet vibrant metropolis that reminded me of the opportunities we have here in Seattle. I realized again how great our young city already is -- and the chance we have to make this place even better.

During my tenure as chair, I hope to help the Municipal League take a bigger role in fostering effective and accountable government so that the Seattle area can fulfill its potential. Here's a quick update on our progress.

In April, we celebrated outstanding contributions to the community at the 49th annual Civic Awards. The event -- which drew more than 300 guests -- was a huge success in terms of visibility in the community and money raised. Plus, it was a lot of fun. We launched a new Quarterly Breakfast Series for members with new Seattle Superintendent Maria Goodloe-Johnson. We also began revamping our Transportation Committee to take a stronger role in transportation policy in King County.

Now our attention is turning to this year's Candidate Evaluation process. I'm excited by our plans to field committees that will evaluate candidates for public office throughout the county, while also explaining the process better and making the final ratings more useful to voters. The Candidate Evaluation Committee is the League's signature program and we're looking forward to gaining momentum during this critical election year.

Continuing to build the support necessary for these great programs, of course, requires fundraising and expanding the League's membership. I urge you to make a financial contribution and show your support by volunteering with this year's CEC. Feel free to contact me any time to share your thoughts.

LEAGUE COMMITTEES DIG INTO REGIONAL POLICY

By Saul Ettlin

The Municipal League Foundation currently has three issue committees meeting on a regular basis. The committee areas are transportation, the Port of Seattle, and land use.

The Transportation Committee is focusing on the emergent issues of congestion pricing in the region and is just beginning to look at public transportation in King County. To get involved, contact Committee Chair Rodney Wendt at R.G.Wendt@comcast.net.

The Port Study Committee continues to meet and gather information. The committee is examining the Port's mission and governance, tax authority, land holdings, ethics and open-meeting policies. The Committee expects to make a series of recommendations this fall. For information or to participate, please contact Committee Chair Bruce Carter at brucedcarter@hotmail.com.

Our Private Rights/Public Rights Committee is also continuing to meet. This study committee is examining the manner in which governments regulate land use throughout King County, and in particular the conflicts between regulators and those being regulated. Meetings are held in Seattle and Bellevue. For information, contact either committee co-chairs: Lucy Steers at lbsteers@comcast.net or Putnam Barber at putnam.barber@gmail.com.

CIVIC SCHOLAR NAMED

Dalia Amin, of Renton, was the recipient of the Civic Scholar Scholarship at this year's Civic Awards. This award is given to a high school junior or senior who demonstrates outstanding civic engagement and volunteer community involvement.

"As a high school student, Dalia Amin has shown impressive commitment to her community," said Brad Meacham, Municipal League chairman. "She deserves special recognition for her efforts to promote citizenship and provide services to those in need by founding a non-profit organization."

At Renton's Lindbergh High School, Dalia Amin is Vice President and Bulletin Editor of Key Club and is a representative for the Washington State Kurdish community. Amin created Family Care, a group to provide support to newcomers by helping translate documents, search for jobs, manage cases and apply for citizenship. Amin also participates in the Kurdish Community in the State of Washington (KCSW) and, as the secretary of the organization, is the youngest and only female representative in the country.

The Civic Scholar Award was created in 1994 to reward civic engagement by youth. Recipients receive a partial college scholarship.

"I urge you to make a financial contribution and show your support by volunteering with this year's CEC."

CIVIC AWARDS A BIG SUCCESS!

By Cynara Lilly

On Thursday, April 24, more than 300 people packed the Paccar Pavilion at the Seattle Art Museum Sculpture Park. They were there to honor this year's Civic Awards recipients, eat great food, drink wine, check out the view and do a little schmoozing.

The sell-out crowd set a record for Civic Awards attendance, and the ceremony brought out some of King County's most dedicated civic servants. Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, Bellevue Mayor Grant Degginger, Seattle City Councilwoman Jean Godden, and Seeds of Compassion Chairman and former Superintendent of Seattle Schools Raj Manhas introduced award winners to rounds of applause.

In an especially touching moment, former Board Chair Bruce Carter presented six-year Municipal League board member and tireless volunteer Sandra Driscoll with the Mary Skelton Memorial Volunteer Award.

In addition to honoring this year's impressive recipients, guests also got to mingle with elected officials, meet fellow Municipal League members, and enjoy spectacular views. Many thanks to all who attended, brought friends, gave generously or volunteered.

Be on the lookout to nominate dedicated, deserving individuals for next year's awards.

We are proud to celebrate the 2008 awardees:

Lisa Macfarlane, Citizen of the Year

Connie Marshall, Public Official of the Year

Dwight Dively, Public Employee of the Year

Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, Organization of the Year

David Postman, Governmental News Reporting of the Year

John Stanton and Norm Rice, James R. Ellis Regional Leadership

Sandra Driscoll, Mary Skelton Memorial Volunteer

The League created the Civic Awards in 1960 to honor a diverse array of our community's leadership.



THE TOP-TWO PRIMARY IS BACK

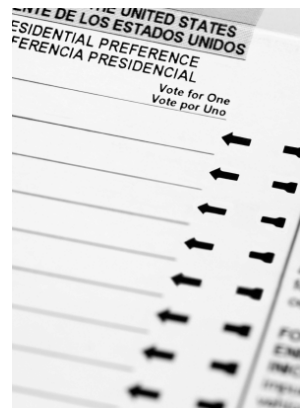
By Kathy Elias

The U.S. Supreme Court in March upheld Washington's top-two primary system, delivering a win for voters who in 2004 approved Initiative 872. The decision represents a loss for the state's political parties which argued that "pick a party" primaries give voters more choices and greater diversity of views among the top candidates. The parties particularly were opposed to the possibility that the top two candidates might be of the same party.

Proponents of the top-two system argued that most of Washington's voters are independent and want to vote for individuals, not parties. They felt that political parties should not have control over the primary election because these are publicly funded elections and these are public officials we are electing. Voters, not parties, should have the freedom to choose the process. The top-two system will be in place for this year's August 19 primary election. The history of court decisions on this issue reflects deep division in our state over this vital good-government issue:

- 1935: Washington adopts a "blanket" primary that allows voters to pick a favorite for each office without regard to party label.
- June 2000: The U.S. Supreme Court invalidates a similar system adopted by California. Washington continues to use its blanket primary, though, when U.S. District Judge Frank Burgess sides with the state.
- September 2003: The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturns Burgess.
- March 2004: After the U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear the state's appeal, lawmakers in Olympia approve a primary that allows the top two vote-getters to advance, without regard to party.
- April 2004: Gov. Gary Locke vetoes the top-two part of the bill.
- September 2004: Washington holds its first pick-a-party primary. It proves very unpopular.
- November 2004: Voters approve Initiative 872, creating a top-two system, by a 60 percent Yes vote.
- July 2005: U.S. District Judge Thomas Zilly throws out the top-two system, saying it infringes on the political parties' right to pick their own nominees.
- August 2006: The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upholds Zilly's ruling.
- March 18, 2008: The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the top-two primary is legal.

Chronology courtesy of The Seattle Times



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SUPPORT THE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

Your support helps the volunteers of the League to research candidates and tackle policy issues. Specifically, your contribution supports our Candidate Evaluation Committees (CEC), our Ballot Issues committee and all our efforts to monitor local government.

Visit www.munileague.org to make a contribution or contact the Municipal League office.