

## *Mason County League Commemorates Historic Milestones of Women's Civic Involvement*

On March 16, 2010 the League of Women Voters of Mason County (LWVMC) hosted a community gathering entitled *A Celebration of Women*. The Mason County Board of County Commissioners honored LWVMC with a proclamation naming March 16, 2010 *LWV Making Democracy Work Day*.

Sandra Herndon, LWVMC President, explained the purpose of the event. "We're here to celebrate three historical milestones for women. Less than 100 years ago U.S. women won the right to vote, when Congress approved the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. Washington State was in the forefront of this movement, becoming the 5th state to grant suffrage to women in 1910, 10 years before the national vote. The League of Women Voters was formed in 1920 and celebrates our 90th Anniversary this year."

The March 16 event honored the legacy of past and present women leaders of Mason County, remembering the contributions of Ethel Dalby, Irene Davis, Jean Todd Fredson, Ada Myers, Anne Pavel, Mary Theler, and others. Irene Reed (for whom the library is named), Mary "Tollie" Simpson (for whom the Visitor Center is named downtown) were spotlighted as representative of the many great women who have made a difference in our community.

Shanna Stevenson, Coordinator of the Washington State Women's History Consortium, spoke on *Women's Votes, Women's Voices*. Other guest speakers included Billie Howard, Director of Mason County Historical Museum, Stephanie Neil, granddaughter of Irene Davis, Valerie Johnson, granddaughter of Ethel Dalby, Clydene Hostetler, from the *Belfair Herald*, Roslynne Reed, LWVMC Vice-President, Lynda Links, LWVMC Program Co-Chair, and Jeanette Boegl, LWVMC Past President.



Shanna Stevenson, Coordinator of the Washington State Women's History Consortium, was the guest speaker



Lynda Links, LWVMC Program Co-Chair, talking about Ada Myers



Billie Howard, Director, Mason County Historical Museum, talking about Jean Todd Fredson



Sandra Herndon, LWVMC President, introducing the speakers



Stephanie Neil talking about her grandmother, Irene Davis



Valerie Johnson talking about her grandmother, Ethel Dalby



Roslynne Reed, LWVMC Vice President, talking about Ann Pavel of the Skokomish Tribe



Clydene Hostetter of the *Belfair Herald* talking about Mary Theler



Jeanette Boegl, LWVMC past president, acknowledging contemporary women leaders in Mason County

League of Women Voters is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization, open to citizens 18 years or older. It has more than 150,000 members nationwide in about 900 state and local leagues. The goals of LWV are to encourage informed and active participation in government, to influence public policy through education and advocacy, and to discuss important issues, ask difficult questions, and demand accountability.

The Mason County League began in 1972, focusing on local issues and voter services. Irene Davis, Maxine Youens, and Donna Swanson founded our local League. Today LWVMC has many activities and projects, including the *Know Your County* series of programs, and an ongoing *County Budget Study* project. For more on the League of Women Voters of Mason County, please visit our web site at [www.lwvmasoncounty.org](http://www.lwvmasoncounty.org).



More than 60 civic-minded citizens attended LWVMC's *Celebration of Women*.

Photographs by David Mackey