

THE

# Voter

LWW

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF SPOKANE AREA

VOLUME LXXXVII ISSUE 4, APRIL 1, 2024

## From the President

Jean Richardson

## Protecting Our Nonpartisan Stance

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan civic organization in partisan times. This last month I have been up close to two examples of how some League members grapple with this and how that may work out for the reputation of the League in the long run.

Some weeks ago one of our more active members contacted me to let me know that she would be testifying at a local government meeting. She stated the topic she would be speaking on, attached a copy of the testimony she planned to read, and stated that she planned to cite existing League positions but would be clear that she was not speaking for the League.

A few weeks after that, I received a very heated email to one of our LWVSA email inboxes from a nonmember who was upset that someone identifying herself as a League of Women Voters member was advocating for a specific candidate in a conversation in the parking lot of a local YMCA. This community member was aware that the League describes itself as a nonpartisan organization.

For many of us, our membership in the League can feel like a credential. The League's long-standing reputation as a civic organization gives it a certain place in our civic life. The League is known for well-considered research which support its positions, registration of voters, and civic education as well as advocacy for its positions. The integrity of the League is in each member's hands.

I'd like to call attention to the first example above as the preferred method of representing oneself as a League member who is not authorized to speak for the League but can share the League's positions on a topic. In the heat of the moment, it can be difficult to remember how precious the League's nonpartisan stance is, and that the public impression of the League's nonpartisanship is as important as the fact of the League's nonpartisanship. While our membership in the League is important and something to be proud of, it does not authorize general members to speak on the behalf of the League unless formally, typically in writing, authorized by the Board to do so.

As I attend various League meetings, I am often impressed by the passion and industry of those of you who volunteer your time to further the mission of this organization. I am heartened to hear that LWVSA members speak up in public about their membership. It's a careful—and vitally important—line to walk, though. Members of this civic organization are encouraged to be politically active, but they are implored to keep their political opinions and activities quite separate from their League membership. To do otherwise is to imperil the foundation of the League's reputation as a civic organization.

## League of Women Voters of Spokane Area Board Meeting Summary

March 20, 2024

The March Board Meeting was held from 4-6 p.m. via Zoom.

**Members present:** Jean Richardson, Elaine Harger, Carol Landa-McVicker, Lin McGinn, Mike Bell

**Guests:** Lunell Haight, Bonnie Bless-Boenish (Clallam County), Stephanie Elie-Martin

Bonnie Bless-Boenish from Clallam County LWV presented an overview of their board's shared leadership model of governance and answered questions.

Mike Bell reported that our checking account has been moved to Numerica Credit Union. The budget committee will be meeting and finalizing the proposed budget for next year that will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in May. He also reported that beginning January 31, 2025 all LWV dues will be paid and distributed through the National League of Women Voters. More information on this will be shared in future news letters.

All committee reports were approved including, Redistricting, Membership, Nominations, Voter Services, Affordable Housing and Homelessness, and Environment.

Next Board meeting will be held via Zoom on April 17, 4-6 p.m. All members are invited to attend. Contact Jean Richardson for the link.

*For more details regarding Board meetings, please contact Carol Landa-McVicker at [cj\\_99224@yahoo.com](mailto:cj_99224@yahoo.com)*



## The confirmed nominees for the 2024 -2025 Board of Directors are:

**President:** Stephanie Elie Martin (2 year term)

**Vice President:** Elaine Harger (returning board member, 1 year remaining)

**Secretary:** TBA

**Treasurer:** TBA

**Director:** Callie Coomes (2 year term)

**Director:** Lin McGinn (1 year remaining)

**Director:** Pamela Joyner (1 year remaining)

**Nominating Committee Chair:** Lunell Haight

This slate (with treasurer) will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on May 14, 2024. Nominations will be taken from the floor also.

*See Nominee Bios Next Page*

## Annual Meeting

**Save the Date!**

**Tuesday, May 14 | 5pm to 8pm**

Spokane Valley Library,  
Zahand Meeting Room East,  
22 N. Herald Road, Spokane Valley

Light Supper provided | RSVP to: [limcginn2@aol.com](mailto:limcginn2@aol.com)

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE SPOKANE AREA

A printable version of  
The Voter is available at [LWVSpokane.org](http://LWVSpokane.org)

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## Calendar



### SPRING 2024

#### AH&HS Meeting

**Sunday, April 7 – 5:30pm to 6:30pm on ZOOM** If you wish to attend, contact us at [lwvsaahhs@gmail.com](mailto:lwvsaahhs@gmail.com) for the link.

#### Lunch with the League

**Friday, April 12 – 12:00pm to 1:00pm**

At The Osprey Restaurant at  
Ruby River Hotel 700 N Division St.  
Spokane, WA 99202

#### General Membership Meeting

**Tuesday, April 9 – 5:30pm to 7:00pm**

Hosted by the Environmental Committee  
- be prepared to learn how the Expo '74  
will be celebrated. Spokane Valley Library,  
22 N Herald Rd, Spokane Valley

#### LWVSA Board Meeting

**Wednesday, April 17 – 4:00pm to**

**6:00pm** Meetings held on third Wed of  
each month via Zoom. All members are  
welcome to attend. Please reach out to  
Jean at [jean@azuregate.net](mailto:jean@azuregate.net) before April  
17 to get the Zoom link

#### Redistricting Task Force Inaugural Meeting Thursday, April 18, at 3:00 – Liberty Park Library (402 S. Pittsburg St, Study B.

#### LWVSA Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, May 14 – 5:00pm to 8:00pm**

Spokane Valley Library,  
Zahand Meeting Room East,  
22 N. Herald Rd. Spokane Valley  
RSVP to: [linmcginn2@aol.com](mailto:linmcginn2@aol.com)

**June 1-2 – LWVWA Council Meeting**  
in Olympia

## Lunch with the League!

LWV Spokane Area Luncheon

**Friday, April 12,  
12pm to 1pm**

The Osprey restaurant,  
in the Ruby River Hotel,  
700 N. Division Street

RSVP to Jean Richardson at:  
[jean@azuregate.net](mailto:jean@azuregate.net) or 509-788-8998  
(texts are welcome)



LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF SPOKANE AREA

## Board of Directors

**President - Jean Richardson**

**Vice President - Pamela Joyner**

**Treasurer - Mike Bell**

**Secretary - Carol Landa-McVicker**

**Director - Lin McGinn**

**Director - Elaine Harger**



Nominating Committee

Lunell Haught

Upcoming Slate of Nominees



Stephanie Elie-Martin — President 2-year term

Stephanie is a writer, leader, educator, and consultant. She is proud to have worked with the State League on the four-year research project examining outcomes of the three strategic plan emphasis areas: making an impact, networking local and state Leagues, and building League capacity. As part of the project she trained volunteers and listened to their interviews of 100 League members about their League experience. She is passionate about increasing League membership especially among the younger demographic. Her PhD in leadership is from Gonzaga University and is the Director of Business Programs and a Professor at Whitworth University. Professionally she focuses on helping adult learners and the businesses they serve thrive. Her research interest lies at the intersection of civil discourse, storytelling, and inclusivity.



Callie Coomes — Director 2-year term

Callie Coomes is a single parent to a 27 year old daughter, an Air Force veteran who served as a K9 cop, a substitute teacher, and an advocate for abused children. She has spent half of her life as a Spokane resident, having attended Shadle Park high school and EWU, before enlisting and traveling around the world to different duty stations in the early to mid 90s. Since returning to the area in 2017, Callie has made a home for herself here and has been guest teaching and volunteering, and she looks forward to advocating for women’s rights and abused kids at the local and state levels.”



Elaine Harger — Vice President, 1-year term

LWV — Member LWVSA since October 2020. Board secretary from 2021-23. Chair of Voter Services from 2023-present and organized eight candidate forums last fall. She has been a member of the Education Committee and this year helped write questions for the KSPS Civics Bowl. As a member of the Environmental Issues Committee, she is helping to organize community conversations about the climate crisis at several libraries as part of the Expo’74 50th anniversary celebrations. She is willing to step into the VP role for one year to continue helping with LWVSA governance. Elaine lives in Spokane Valley with her mother, Lois Harger, and her cat, Charly, and has a garden behind her old wooden quonset hut which needs work.



Lunell Haught — Nominating Committee Chair -2024-2025

Lunell Haught has served on League study committees, moderated forums, and is the current membership chair for the Spokane Area League of Women Voters. She is the immediate past president of the LWV Washington, focusing on Voter Services with state-wide races, relationships with other democracy organizations, researching interests and impact of the League, and networking local Leagues with each other and the state organization before, during and after COVID. She is interested in membership engagement and retention, democracy, and ensuring that the League is a trusted nonpartisan ally. She teaches in the School of Leadership at Gonzaga University, is retired from her own consulting practice, and volunteers as a master gardener. She is the house staff for Tom the Cat, Molly the Dog, and enjoys a music and travel loving household.



Affordable Housing and Homelessness Solutions (AHHS)

Spokane’s Fentanyl Crisis

Becky Dickerhoof

During the month of February our committee continued to attend the Homeless Coalition, the Spokane City Council and Spokane County meetings. We have also kept abreast of the efforts of Village CoHousing Works and supplied PB&J sandwiches to the JHH warming centers. We are concerned as the weather continues to be in the 20s and 30s that the city has run out of emergency funds to continue to provide warming centers. Plans failed to be instituted last fall and the city has been playing catchup with a drastic lack of funds. Many community members and religious organizations have stepped up to help create four warming centers. As of this newsletter, only two remain active.

In March we learned that fentanyl and other opioids have reached crisis levels in Spokane. However, due to lack of data collection by the Spokane County Health Department (SCHD) and no clear way for our emergency services and hospitals to record and submit data to our governmental agencies, Spokane is relying on anecdotal summaries of current overdose mortalities and morbidities. I have included the link to the investigative article published by Range Media explaining the costs of failing to collect and distribute this critical data.

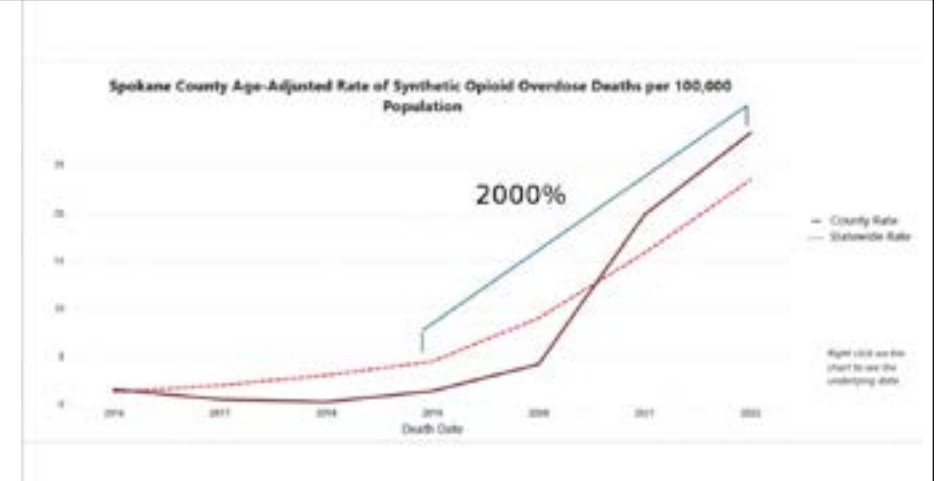


'Anecdotally, we're seeing more dead people.' - RANGE Media

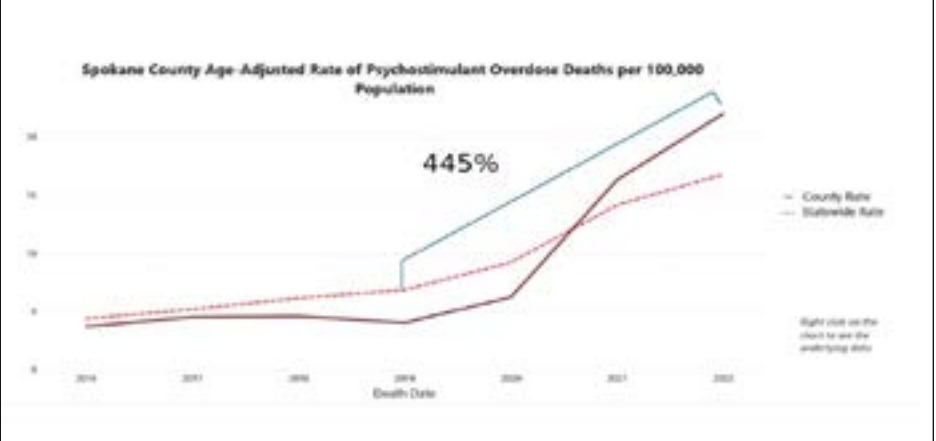
Service providers, emergency responders, civil servants and politicians all agree: Spokane has an overdose crisis. But because of inadequate data collection, no one knows exactly how bad it is.

- RANGE Media

Recently Dr. Bob Lutz, WADOH, testified before Spokane City Council to provide the data the state has and what he has learned from reviewing their data.



This graph shows how deaths from Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids have grown by 2000% since 2019 in Spokane County.



This graph shows how the deaths from Cocaine and other psychostimulants have grown by 445% since 2019 in our county. It is important that SCHD collect this data and make it available to our governmental entities so they can access all the resources available to deal with the fentanyl crisis. This crisis affects everyone, whether you are dealing with housing insecurity or not. What I found most startling is many of those who are unsheltered use

meth to stay alert and avoid becoming a victim of theft and rape. Dr. Lutz pointed out that all the street drugs now available contain fentanyl which makes them even more addictive. It is a choice no one should have to make.

The data is not easy to find but if you want more information contact

CDS-Dashboards@DOH.WA.GOV

Civic Education

Civics Bowl is Coming!

Beth Pellicciotti

On March 8, Spokane League members and friends of League became stand-ins for high school students in the KSPS Civics Bowl Dress Rehearsal (for past episodes of the KSPS Civics Bowl, see KSPS Civics Bowl website).

Hitting buzzers and trying to remember answers on history and government, eight panelists competed for points. In two hours of rehearsal, they ran through toss-up questions, lightning rounds, and head-to-head competitions. KSPS president and general manager, Gary Stokes, called the questions, and KSPS staff worked on camera angles and righting the prompter. It was fun; it was humbling, especially for those participants who had written the Civics Bowl questions.

Plan to watch the actual high school participants



From left to right: Beth Pellicciotti, Kirk Alliman, Elaine Harger, Jean Alliman and Susan Gray. Gary Stokes as moderator. This round is called, “head-to-head.” Questions come quickly, and we punched a buzzer to answer the questions.

Photo by Zana Morrow, KSPS-PBS

starting April 8 (KSPS Civics Bowl website). When you hear students answering civics questions, say a “thank-you” to League members and friends of League who wrote over 600 questions that made this competition possible.



Environmental Committee

April General Meeting – preview  
Expo ‘74 50th anniversary events

By Amy Compestine

The Environmental Issues Committee asks you to save the date for the April General Meeting! The presentation will be a preview of the events to be held May-June at various libraries in the Spokane County Library District, during the 50th anniversary of Expo ‘74. You’re invited to our “Community Conversation,” to talk about how individuals, neighborhoods, and municipalities can take action to prepare for the impacts of the climate crisis. Share your concerns, ask questions, and exchange ideas with others.

Please plan on participating in the discussion, as we would appreciate your feedback on how to best facilitate discussions on the climate crisis with a diverse audience with varying viewpoints on this topic. **We hope to see you there!**

Tuesday, April 9th 2024, 5:30-7:00pm  
at the Spokane Valley Library (Diane Z Meeting Room West)



expo'74  
50th Celebration

NEW! Redistricting Task Force  
Get on Board for Redistricting Reform in Washington

By Mary Lloyd

On January 19, 2024, the LWV Spokane Area Board of Directors approved the assembly for our LWV Redistricting Reform Task Force (RRTF) - Spokane Area (LWVSA) -Local Area Team (LAT). As with any team, setting our objectives will be a living document as the yearly goals are met and more goals are sought. The formation of the local team members is guided by the LWVWA Redistricting Reform Task Force <https://www.lwvwa.org/redistricting/>

This Task Force is supported by the LWVWA and LWVUS positions on Redistricting.

The state goal for the redistricting reform is to have the state Legislature make Constitution changes to provide for a non-partisan redistricting commission. Once the Legislature approves the Constitutional Amendment, the measure will go to a vote of the people in Washington. This resultant commission would be one that promotes equity and inclusion and empanels individuals from a diverse array of backgrounds. Diversity would include age, abilities ethnicity, gender identity, geographical location, indigenous background, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, judicial involvement, and veteran status.

With local LWV teams working hand-in-hand with the goals for our state, the Legislative Map would be in-place for the 2030 census.

Our local team is ready to broaden the network of people working for redistricting reform in our area. If you have an interest in learning more, **please attend the inaugural LAT formal meeting on Thursday, April 18, at 3:00pm – Liberty Park Library (402 S. Pittsburg St, Study B. Regular meetings will continue on the third Thursday of the month at 3:00pm.** You'll meet our local League Spokane team members, Mary Lloyd, chair; Ann Murphy- also the LWVSA Representative and our local liaison to the LWVWA RRTF; and Louise Chadez, team lead connecting our LAT to area Service Organizations, Civic Groups and other essential community members.

*If you have more interest in and want to be more informed and involved and would like some background information, please contact Mary Lloyd at [riteasrain190@gmail.com](mailto:riteasrain190@gmail.com).*

Voter Services

Voter Services Report

by Elaine Harger

**VOTER REGISTRATION:** The League in Spokane is gearing up for springtime voter service activities! In addition to monthly registering new U.S. citizens at naturalization ceremonies, we have volunteer opportunities at three upcoming events:

**April 5 -- SNAP Resource Fair,**  
10am to 3pm, The Hive, Spokane

**May 11 -- Mayfest,**  
10am to 4pm, in downtown Cheney

**June 8 -- Spokane Pride,**  
11am to 7pm, in Riverfront Park

More are sure to materialize. **To volunteer for voter registration, contact Sally Phillips via email at [phillips1948@comcast.net](mailto:phillips1948@comcast.net).**

**BALLOT TRANSLATION UPDATE:** The ballot translation project is moving right along. Susan Hales and her team have sent outreach letters to organizations connected to Spokane's vibrant immigrant communities, and are expecting to translate ballots and voting materials into nine different languages.

**LWVWA OPPORTUNITY:** The state League is beginning the process of writing informational flyers on the state-wide initiatives to appear on the November ballot. The initiatives include:

**2109:** To repeal the capital gains excise tax imposed

on long-term capital assets by individuals with capital gains over \$250,000.

**2117:** To prohibit carbon tax credit trading and repeal provisions of the 2021 Washington Climate Commitment Act (CCA), a state law that provided for a cap and invest program designed to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 95% by 2050.

**2124:** To allow employees and self-employed individuals to opt out of the state's long-term services and supports trust health care program.

If you have interest and/or expertise in these areas and would like to be considered for the team writing the flyers, please let me know.

**VOTER SERVICES VS ADVOCACY:** On March 13, voter services chairs from around the state met to learn about the initiative and referendum processes in Washington and hear about how the League helps empower voters with respect to these. Mary Coltrane, LWVWA president, provided a very clear description of how the League engages in – and maintains a clear line of separation – between our voter services work and our advocacy work.

**Voter services work,** which includes voter registration, civics education, candidate forums, and other informational outreach to voters is nonpartisan. League members provide solely factual information.

**Advocacy work,** on the other hand, informs the public of official League positions on issues.

**It is essential, that these two types of activities be kept separate.** We might want to have a discussion about this at one of our membership meetings. **Stay tuned!**

Update from our friends in Myanmar

Many of us in the Spokane League will remember Mi Ko and Zin Thu, U.S. State Department fellows who visited us from Myanmar in 2019. Lunell Haught just received a letter from Mi Ko. She writes that both she and Zin Thu are still doing well, and they send their best to all their friends in the Spokane League. They have happy memories of their time with us.

Many of us in the Spokane League were involved in the fall of 2019 in hosting two U.S. State Department fellows from Myanmar. Mi Ko and Zin Thu visited our League and Spokane to learn more about our democracy work -- candidate forums, teaching in schools, and informing voters about election processes. We had a wonderful visit with them.

The fellows stayed at Ann Murphy's home, and I was the scheduler and driver to their appointments and school observations. Lunell Haught and Ann introduced them to state League work with a trip to the Seattle area.

Occasionally we hear from Mi Ko and Zin Thu, and naturally we worry about them, given the military takeover in Myanmar.



U.S. State Department  
Fellows Zin Thu - above  
and Mi Ko - left





## Thank You New and Renewing Members!

### RENEWING:

Barbara Morkill

Nora Scott

Rachel Sterett

### NEW:

Lynn Davis



LWVSA's brochure, *They Represent You* lists everyone who represents you in our LWVSA area. The brochures have been printed and will be available in the Spokane and Spokane County Libraries, at the Board of Elections and at our tabling events.

*Thank you to Avista for printing these at no charge*

## Interested in Volunteering?

### WHO DO YOU CALL?

Contact the individuals below to participate in events and on Committees:

Affordable Housing - [LWVSAAHHS@gmail.com](mailto:LWVSAAHHS@gmail.com).

Communications - Jean Richardson [jean@azuregate.net](mailto:jean@azuregate.net)

Environmental Issues - Amy Compestine [acomp4274@gmail.com](mailto:acomp4274@gmail.com)

Redistricting Task Force - Mary Lloyd [riteasrain190@gmail.com](mailto:riteasrain190@gmail.com)

Voter Services - Elaine Harger [eharger@drizzle.com](mailto:eharger@drizzle.com)

**Interested in Leadership?** *Not sure what is a good fit for your skills and schedule?*

Contact Jean Richardson and get your questions answered. 503-788-8998  
or [LWSAleadership@gmail.com](mailto:LWSAleadership@gmail.com)

Join the  
League of Women Voters  
of Spokane Area

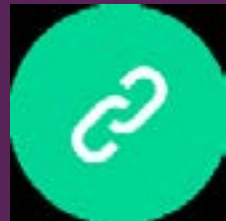
follow this link

**[Join or Renew Online](#)**

### \$75 Dues Allocation



*Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*



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