

Save the Date, Mar. 22
LWVSA's 75th Anniversary
Celebration! See pg. 2

THE **V**oter

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF SPOKANE AREA

VOLUME LXXXVIII ISSUE 2, February 2025
A printable version of The Voter is available at LWVSpokane.org

LWVSA Work With Immigrants & Refugees Continues

By Elaine Harger

LWVSA's successful voter education work this past year translating general election ballots into nine languages and conducting voter education workshops across Spokane has resulted in the establishment of a new Immigration Committee.

The Immigration Committee's first LWVSA program takes place at our February member meeting. Attorney Samuel Smith, who works with Manzanita House, will conduct a know-your-rights workshop for League members. The workshop will cover the constitutional rights of immigrants and refugees in the United States, and will give us an opportunity to learn how we can continue to support Spokane's immigrant communities.

Please attend this timely program. Here are details:

- DATE:** Tuesday, February 11
- TIME:** 4:30pm-6:30pm, program begins at 5:00pm, refreshments at 4:30pm
- LOCATION:** Spokane Central Library, Events A, 906 W. Main Avenue, Spokane 99201

Calendar

- AH&HS Committee Meeting**
Sunday, Feb. 2 meeting link email is lwvsaahhs@gmail.com.
- Membership Meeting,**
Tuesday, Feb. 11, 4:30pm to 6:30pm, at Spokane Central Library, Events A, 906 W. Main Ave.
- Board Meeting, Thursday, Feb. 13, 5pm to 7pm** on Zoom, for meeting link email eharger@drizzle.com
- Lunch with the League**
Friday, Feb 14 at Frankie Doodles Restaurant, 30 E. 3rd Ave.
11am League Orientation
12 noon Lunch
RSVP to Lunell at lh1@fastmail.com or 509-443-1319
- Environmental Issues Committee Meeting, Thursday, Feb. 20, 6:30pm** on Zoom, for a meeting link email amycompestine.lwvsa@gmail.com.
- Criminal Justice Committee**
Feb 24 contact Lin McGinn for information Linmcginn2@aol.com

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LWVWA Two New Studies Ready for Consensus Process

Studies are a longstanding activity of the League of Women Voters. Done by local, state and the national League, studies embody the process through which the League arrives at its positions on public policy. This past summer a Washington state study on "The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy" was adopted by the national League.

LWVSA members are now asked to participate in the process of reading and engaging in consensus conversations about two new studies:

1. Elder Caregiving Study, PDF to download is here: <https://lwvwa.org/eldercare>

Watch LWVWA's recording of the Elder Care-

giving information session here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlbE0n1cOqA>

2. Welcoming Immigrants to Washington State Study, PDF to download and registration for the Feb. 6 information sessions are here: <https://lwvwa.org/immigration>

Please watch for an email from the LWVSA board after Feb. 13 which will inform you of when we in Spokane will have our consensus conversations which will take place via Zoom.

We must report our feedback to the state League by **March 18 for the Elder Caregiving Study**, and by **March 28 for the Welcoming Immigrants Study**.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for our 75th Anniversary Celebration!

On March 22nd we will gather at The Hive to celebrate and honor our past, recognize the work we are doing today and connect all of it to the future. This will be a special time for all our members to come together. Our planning group is coming up with some exciting ideas that include a late afternoon reception. Watch for details but be sure and **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**. Want to join in the planning? Contact Ruth May. ruthmay250@gmail.com.



*Spokane Chapter
started in 1950!*

Of Interest to League Members: Program for Effective Government and WSDOT Connects

WSDOT Connects – People, Places, and Possibilities Community Conversation Series

Focus: Artistic themes and design concepts for architectural features along the NSC and I-90 corridor in the East Central neighborhood

Date: February 19th, 2025

Time: 5pm-doors open,
5:30pm conversations begin

Location: MLK Jr. Community Center, Multipurpose Room, 500 S. Stone St, Spokane

Virtual meeting link: <https://rb.gy/fki4ki>

Please feel free to share this information with others who might be interested in participating.

If you have any questions or additional feedback, don't hesitate to reach out at ERConnects@wsdot.wa.gov

Curious about the Middle East?

The Board of PEG (Program for Effective Government) presents in-person and online **Retired Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker**

Date: Monday, February 3,

Time: 6:00 pm PST

Location: Moran Prairie Library and via Zoom

What role should the United States play? How important is U.S. leadership in keeping the conflict from widening and bringing a relative peace to the region? Are critics of Israel right or misguided? What are some potential endgame scenarios to conflict in Gaza. What are some opportunities in Syria with the new regime? What are the biggest obstacles to peace, and the largest threats to U.S. interests in the Middle East?

If you are joining via zoom please click on the link below at 5:55 p.m. to join the webinar: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81809354436>

AHHS Interview with Zeke Smith, President Empire Health Foundation

By Becky Dickerhoof

When our committee first formed in 2020, we didn't understand housing and homelessness. We began by talking to city officials, providers, and advocates. The information we gathered led to the resolution we submitted to the LWVSA Board. When it was adopted, LWVSA leadership submitted it to the Spokane City Council and Mayor Nadine Woodward. Truly little has changed since we submitted that resolution. Spokane still lacks low-income and affordable housing. For two years the Spokane Regional Housing Collaboration has been meeting to discuss ways to work together to reduce homelessness and increase low-income and affordable housing. Our committee will spend the next several months interviewing the leaders of Spokane and their views on how to move forward.

In December several of our committee members met with Zeke Smith, President of the Empire Health Foundation. We wanted to learn more about Empire's role in the current housing and homelessness crisis in Spokane. We are especially interested in learning about their plans for moving forward.

As a background Zeke explained they became involved with Camp Hope, partnering with Jewels Helping Hands (JHH) and United Way to manage the funds from Commerce. From there they have continued to manage funds to other programs dealing with homelessness in our communities.

Navigation Center: Currently this is a pilot program, temporarily funded by the city operated by Empire, while Revive is the service provider. CHAS Health makes visits as needed. Being a pilot program means they are constantly collecting data and evaluating the program to make improvements and determine how to move forward. They realize already that they need more resources and engagement with the State for funding. The center located at the Cannon Building accepts referrals only from Truth Ministries, The Way Out and JHH. Drop-in centers include Truth Ministries, The Way Out Center and House of Charity. JHH runs respite centers and is based on referrals. The facility only has 30 beds plus a few inclement weather beds. They are committed to fit within the Spokane mayor's goals but realize the navigation hub needs to become bigger at some point, as beds are full and as with every other site there is a wait list. The challenge is to not mix populations, chronic homeless, recently homeless, formerly incarcerated,

as examples, adapt to change in needs, and not duplicate services across the city.

Empire works with the city to fund three scattered sites, Truth Ministries, and Jewels Helping Hands (JHH) at Cedar Center and

Morningstar. Westminster Respite Center, a joint operation with Providence Health, JHH and Empire, opened on Jan 13. Conversations continue with other groups to expand the scattered site concept. The challenge is to create spaces that are small and accept specific populations based on gender, age, physical condition, and marital relationships, for example. But it requires funding and resources that are not currently available. Even the holidays play a part in the current needs as families offer housing at that time for other family members.

We discussed the TRAC shelter closure with Zeke who noted the facility was not well-equipped to handle the needs, lacked a system to connect to housing, and was expensive. Nor in his opinion is TRAC or "warehousing" the answer for emergency environmental shelter.

Zeke supports the regional approach under discussion by the Spokane area authorities and supports working collaboratively with the business community and those with lived experience. Honest discussions and review of what does and does not work are also needed. Empire also recognizes this takes time we don't have.

He left us with these final words:

“With the current estimate of the homeless population in Spokane we need 30 scattered site shelters and we can't over-extend the shelters. With that in mind, we may never get to 30 shelters.”



Zeke Smith, President EHF

LWV Member Dues Collection Changes

On February 3, 2025, the national organization (LWVUS) begins handling all LWV membership enrollments and renewals. Instead of a fixed dues rate, members may choose their dues amount under a pay-what-you-can policy. The goal of these changes is to increase and diversify League membership and strengthen LWV operations across the nation to deliver on our mission and continue as a powerful voice for democracy.

The idea is that a consistent and aligned membership system across all levels of Leagues (local, state, national) will eliminate financial barriers to participation, create an equitable division of dues between levels of the League, and simplify joining the League.

Changes include:

- Recommended dues are \$75; minimum dues \$20; higher dues also an option — ie. pay-what-you-can!
- Membership will be for individuals. Household and student membership, along with sustaining and benefactor member designations are no longer recognized.
- Members will have the option to have their membership auto-renew one year after they have joined or renewed. Membership for all

Leagues will now be on a rolling basis, so a membership lasts for one year, regardless of when it begins.

- Members will receive an email renewal reminder 60 days prior to their expiration date. All emails will provide members with links to the LWVUS member website.
- Members are encouraged to join and renew online by credit card, debit card and other electronic bank transfer.
- Checks will continue to be accepted as long as they are payable to the LWVUS and mailed to the local League office.
- Dues allocations are changing — 20% goes to the local League; 80% is shared between the state and national League.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Donations may be made directly to the Spokane League through the LWVSA website with 100% of the donation going to our local League.

Once the new system is up and running, we'll provide Spokane League members with tech navigation details about how exactly the system works. **Watch for the March issue of *The Voter!***

Observer Corps is an opportunity to see first-hand our local government in action and be a connection for the LWVSA if there is something important we may want to take action on. Most meetings can be attended virtually and reporting back to the League is relatively simple. *"Many hands make our work light"*. If interested in observing please contact Sue Irwin at sgirwin@gmail.com

Wed., Feb. 19 is the Deadline for the March issue of *The Voter.*

Please send submissions to: corderographics@gmail.com

Thank You New and Renewing Members!



NEW MEMBERS:

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Sunday Cummins
David Adams
Sonja Bartsch
Deborah Briggs
Barbara Bush
Mardell Cochran
Amy Compestine
Vicky Dalton
Dennis Dellwo
Pat Foster
Sheri Gangitano
Cathy Gunderson
Shirley Grossman

Molly Hannan
Phyllis Holmes
Suzi Hokonson
Ellen Imsland
Favel Jens
Carlin Jude
Steve Kirby
Jerry LeClaire
Rebecca Madany
Joni Marler
Lewis Marler
Gretchen McDevitt
Sylvia Oliver
Lynnette Vehrs
Kathleen West

Membership Committee Updates

By Lunell Haught

Lunch at Frankie Doodles

Friday, February 14 at Frankie Doodle's Restaurant, 30 E 3 rd Ave (off Division) Spokane 99202

11 am join for orientation to the League of Women Voters, **12 noon no-host lunch** – you don't have to eat, but the menu is complete – free parking and on bus route. RSVPs appreciated 509-443-1319 (land line no text, leave name and phone number or email LH1@fastmail.com)

Permanent name tag

If you would like a permanent nametag to take home, email Lunell Haught lh1@fastmail.com with how you want your name to appear and whether you prefer a pin or magnet style. \$12 includes tax, you can pick it up at a League meeting.



Meet your legislators

Although there is no League Lobby Day you can still engage with your legislators. You may just want to arrange a get to know you meeting with other League members. You may want to talk about specific bills the League supports or opposes, in which case you should look at the Legislative newsletter <https://lwvwa.org/page-18731> to make sure you're 'on message'.

Please see League positions in your Member Handbook <https://my.lwv.org/washington/spokane-area/members-only/member-hand-book-organizational-chart-by-laws-standing-committees-annual-report-more>

Washington has one of the most accessible processes for communicating with your elected officials and knowing what's going on. It's one of the reasons you joined the League – to engage first hand, not just read about it. This is not complicated or difficult. The LWVWA legislative newsletter will give you bill ideas (you don't have to do them all) and TVW can keep you informed on what to watch and when to testify. You can share your thoughts (testify) through electronic submission OR live through Zoom at a hearing. Jump in! Questions? Lunell 509-443-1319 or lh1@fastmail.com

Spokane County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is being updated, and public opinion is essential. <https://www.spokanecounty.org/4926/2017-2037-Comprehensive-Plan> Now is a perfect time to get involved. There are several League members involved with various aspects of the plan, which includes housing, transportation, open and natural spaces and more.

Take a look at how you can be involved with the City of Spokane's Climate work

<https://my.spokanecity.org/planspokane/climate-planning/>

League Questionnaire Update

Most members have submitted a questionnaire and/or visited with Welcome Committee members about the League. We know a lot of our members are busy and want to volunteer but not make the League the only thing they do. Some members are also challenged by transportation (we can work around that). Our members like voter registration which is really helping people understand a lot more than registering. It involves explaining the actual voting process. Those who want to work with civics education in the schools need to know that's a long orientation and scheduling process. Many of our members are newish to the area, and finally have time to volunteer or are very concerned about issues related to how our democracy works. Thanks to members who were generous with their comments and time. The Welcome Committee, the Board, and the Committee Chairs have heard you, and are trying to make it easier for you to engage, and clearer about how to do that. **Thanks to all who participated in making the League even better.**

What are you gonna do?

Don't want to be a leader but wouldn't mind helping out from June 2025 through 2027? We have just the deal for you. Contact Pamela Joyner 509-236-2441 joynerpam@gmail.com or Lunell Haught 509-443-1319 (no text) lh1@fastmail.com.

Check out ChapterSpot the new League membership platform
<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/membership/chapterspot-resources>



League of Women Voters' positions and advocacy on Reproductive Rights

Reported by Marilyn Sullivan

At our January member meeting, reproductive rights was the topic of most concern during discussions of LWVSA's program of work for 2025-2027. Here is a summary of League positions and actions.

League of Women Voters' Statement of Position on Public Policy on Reproductive Choices, as announced by the national board, January 1983: "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices."

One Year after Dobbs: Women in Democracy Will Save Reproductive Rights

- By raising women's voices through public office
- Rights will apply to people who identify female, including nonbinary and transgender people who experience pregnancy. Supporting people who can become pregnant means fighting for a world where equality of the sexes is real and recognized.

At the 2024 Convention, delegates passed a resolution reaffirming the League's commitment to fight for reproductive rights and justice, including bodily autonomy, privacy, reproductive health, and access to contraception and abortion.

LWV's national legislative focuses in 2025:

- Passing voter legislation that protects a woman's right to vote
- Adding sex-based equality to the Constitution with the Equal Rights Amendment
- Restoring our reproductive rights

For more information about the League of Women Voters' history regarding reproductive rights, see Impact on Issues: <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>

LWV Washington State: last year and now

In 2024, the state League:

- Supported successful HB 1009, concerning student health plans to make them subject to the abortion requirements applicable to other health plans.
- Supported successful SB 5068, extending coverage during post partum period through 1 year post partum.
- Supported successfully SB 5140, protecting pregnancy and miscarriage-related patient care.
- Successfully opposed HB 1008, successfully prohibiting abortion on the basis of Down Syndrome.

For the 2025 legislative session, please stay informed about any bills regarding reproductive rights by subscribing to the LWVWA weekly Legislative Action Newsletter at: <https://lwvwa.org/Legislative-action-newsletter>

Program of Work — Report from January LWVSA Meeting

Our January member meeting focused on exploring issues for attention as part of our two-year Program of Work 2025-2027. For specific information about program planning, log-in to LWVWA: <https://lwvwa.org/Program-of-Work-and-Studies>

The following issues garnered special interest at our January meeting. NOTE: LWVSA current work areas were reaffirmed (housing & homelessness; criminal justice; environment; redistricting; voter services). If you are interested in helping in any of these areas, contact the LWVSA member indicated:

- Reproductive rights — review existing League positions for possible update. Contact Marilyn Sullivan after Feb. 18, mmsull@outlook.com
- Immigration — establish as a new LWVSA priority. Contact Susan Hales, susanhales2015@gmail.com
- Local government — review existing League positions for possible update. Contact Carol Landa-McVicker, cj_99224@yahoo.com
- State of Democracy in Washington — support for a study being explored by members of several local/regional Leagues in

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Washington. Contact Lunell Haught, lh1@fastmail.com

- Public education – review existing League positions. No one present volunteered to be the contact for this review. If you are interested, however, contact Elaine Harger, eharger@drizzle.com

Current program of work priorities for LWVSA continue. They are:

- Affordable Housing & Homeless Solutions – Contact lwvsaahs@gmail.com
- Criminal Justice – Contact Lin McGinn, Linmcginn2@aol.com
- Environmental Issues – Contact Amy Compestine, amycompestine.lwvsa@gmail.com
- Redistricting – Contact Mary Lloyd, riteasrain190@gmail.com
- Voter Services (voter registration, voter outreach, voter education) – Contact Elaine Harger, eharger@drizzle.com

Voter Services Report

By Elaine Harger

Upcoming Voter Registration Opportunities

Spokane Public Schools is recognizing “Temperance and Good Citizenship Day” in February and has invited LWVSA members to register students to vote in area high schools during lunchtime. Our ability to do this depends completely on your willingness to volunteer to help. We are looking at the last two weeks in February for these visits. Spokane has seven high schools: Ferris, Lewis & Clark, North Central, On Track Academy, Rogers, Shadle Park, and The Community School.

So far, we have a team for Lewis & Clark H.S. for Feb. 20.

If you are available to spend two hours registering students to vote at any of these schools on any day the last two weeks in February, please contact me. Elaine Harger eharger@drizzle.com 425-221-8294 text 509-893-8862 landline

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SPOKANE AREA

Board of Directors

President - Vacant **Vice President** - Elaine Harger

Treasurer - Mike Bell **Secretary** - Vacant

Directors - Sue Irwin, Pamela Joyner, Ruth May and Lin McGinn,

Lunch with the League *Lunch at Frankie Doodles, 30 E. Third Ave.*

Friday, February 14 (every 2nd Friday of the month)

11am League orientation, learn how you can get the most from your membership. For new and long-term members.

12 noon order lunch or just join in the conversation – you don't have to buy anything! Free parking and on the bus line. (just east of Division on 3rd – meet downstairs in the back) <https://frankiedoodles.net>
RSVP to Lunell at lh1@fastmail.com or 509-443-1319 (land line, no text)



Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, or marital status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission/achievements as well.

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