

THE VOTER



Good March to us all!

Rain, sleet, slush, snow, sunshine, wind, repeat. I like March weather. Having been raised in a hot, humid, no season area, I have always enjoyed changing weather and seasons. Maybe I like change. As I finish up my two years as a co-president of the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area, I have mixed feelings, mirroring our ever changing March weather.

We have a phenomenal board and membership of mostly women and a few good men who step up and out to keep the wheels of democracy rolling. I have received SO much support. And I have made some lifelong friends within the Leagues of Helena and Montana. I figure democracy work is made so much easier when we work as a team registering voters, writing voter guides, presenting educational programs, etc. Friendships can increase our enthusiasm and persistence in our work. We, in Helena and Montana, truly have a team of LWV volunteers.

Holding the position of co-president for this active local league has been very rewarding. Yes, many emails, phone calls, meetings, decisions, and some conflicts have been involved. And without a doubt, I have spent a fair amount of my days and weeks working to fulfill my "presidential" duties. The weather as co-president has been of shifting attentions, mostly fair with unexpected cloud bursts of business. I think my biggest lesson is that I can be a leader of the pack and survive. I learned to better allow myself to make decisions without much fear of making mistakes. Of course, I am completing my two-year term with some personal fatigue. Meanwhile, I am excited for our new leadership. We are moving on, we are taking our turns at the leadership helm, and getting the support we need to do the job well.

I would like all who read this letter to ponder serving in a leadership role for our Helena LWV. New leadership is worthy, possible, and allows for a variety of personalities to work together. Please consider serving on our board or chair a committee. Our goal is to keep moving members onto the board and into leadership roles so that we keep this organization vibrant with new ideas while sticking to our 104-year-old principles.

Still smiling,
Becky Piske



Board Members

Co-president: Sharon Haugen

Co-president: Becky Piske

Treasurer: Julie Huntington

Secretary: Cherri Jones

At-Large Board Members:

Ann Gilkey

Mary "Mickey" Harlow

Mary Johnson

Committee Chairs

Book Group: Cherri Jones

Communications: Patti Borneman

Local Government Study: Sharon Haugen & Mary "Mickey" Harlow

Membership: Wendy Wheeler

Nominating: Lynn Hinch

Program: Darien Scott

Publicity: Marga Lincoln

VOTE411: Becky Piske & Patrice Anderson

Voter Services: Rebecca Johnson

The Voter & Website Editor: Patti Borneman

League of Women Voters
of the Helena Area

PO Box 6534

Helena, MT 59604

Email: lww.helena@gmail.com

You're invited to serve on the LWWHA Board!

We have openings for secretary, treasurer, and an at-large position, to be voted on at our April 15 annual membership meeting.

Please send an email to lww.helena@gmail.com to express your interest and someone on the Nominating Committee will contact you.

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About *The Voter* and Other Communications

The Voter of the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area is published quarterly, each season, and is emailed to all Helena Area members in June, September, December, and March. It includes a recap of accomplishments and upcoming meetings and events, and ways to become or stay involved.

The Montana LWV also publishes a Montana Voter newsletter that is emailed to all Montana members. Remember, when you joined your local league, you also became a member of the State League and the national League of Women Voters.

Staying informed and connected ...

- Read the Monthly Email from our Co-Presidents
- Web: <http://my.lwv.org/montana>
- Email: lwv.helena@gmail.com
- Visit our social media sites at Facebook and Instagram.



Upcoming Member Meetings

Monday, March 18—Membership Meeting on Zoom. *Getting Ready to Vote on Local Government Review.* Sponsored by the Local Government Study Committee. ***Please read your LWWHA March 11 email for details!***

Monday, April 15, 4:30 pm Annual General Meeting, in person at Lewis & Clark Library. Presentation by co-presidents Sharon Haugen and Becky Piske. More info to come.

Saturday/Sunday, May 4-5, LWV MT Membership Retreat, Billings. *Resilience in the League, Resilience for Democracy.* Details will be emailed to all members in April.

Keeping You Informed & Engaged

Keeping our members informed and involved in the activities and the work of our local League is very important to us. Email is the preferred method of communication with our members. For members who do not use email, an alternative form of contact can be arranged.

All members receive a monthly update and occasional weekly emails from "Helena LWV" to keep you informed about upcoming meetings and events. Our quarterly newsletter, *The Voter*, is emailed to all members in December, March, June, and September.

About our website: Stay up to date on statewide and local LWV activities and resources at <https://my.lwv.org/montana>. As a member, you can also register for an account to allow you access to the Member-Only section. If you need assistance with this, send an email to lwv.helena@gmail.com.

Join the Membership Committee!

The Membership Committee is always looking for friendly and sociable members interested in welcoming our new members, helping with the annual survey, and planning two membership meetings each year.

Would you like to join us?

Contact: Wendy Wheeler, Chair

Call (406) 465-7464 or email westernwhealers@msn.com

Welcoming our Newest Members!

Jan Jamruszka-Wilson Jolene Jennings
Brianne Lake Kate Lewis Wendy Marsh
Debora Sargent



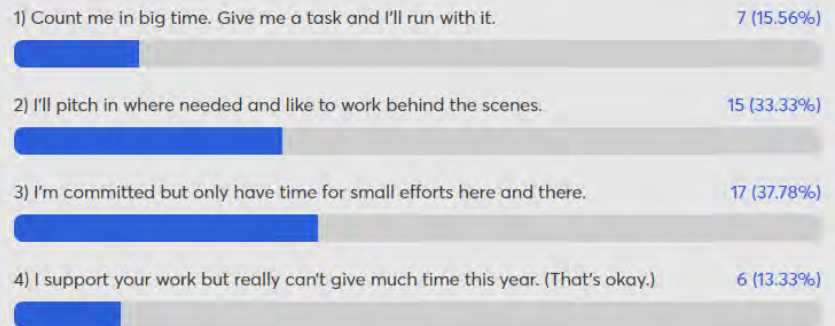
Annual Member Survey Results Are In!

Many thanks to the 45 members who submitted our three-question survey in January. That is almost half of our wonderful membership! Our members support our League chapter's activities in many ways and like the opportunities to learn and be involved.

Mary Johnson was instrumental in designing the survey. Patti Borneman provided the Constant Contact expertise for the delivery of the survey. Board and committee chairs can dive into the responses for assistance in planning activities and garnering help for specific tasks.

The League of Women Voters prioritizes educating and advocating for nonpartisan public policies supporting our democracy. How will you help support the League's priorities? (Select one)

Showing the most recent responses to the question. [See all responses](#) here.

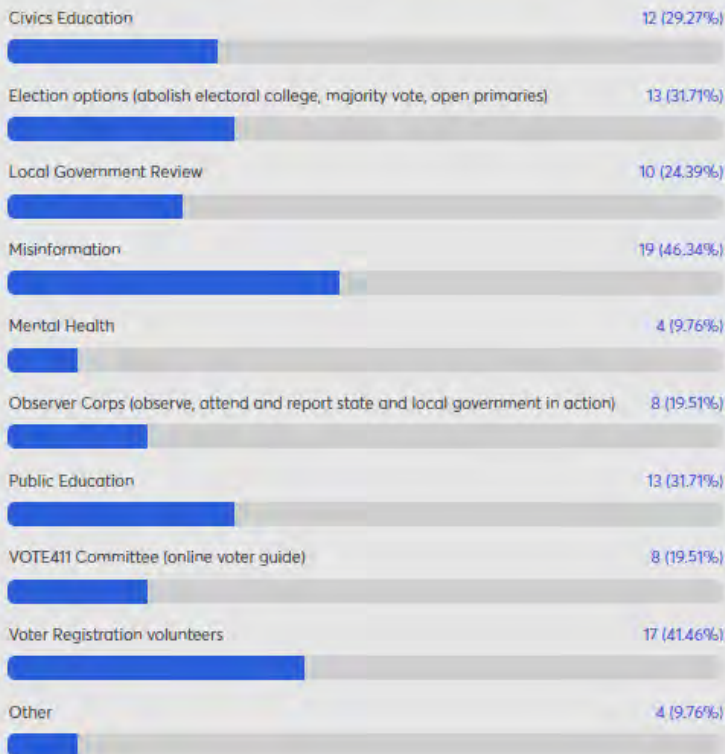


Total responses

45

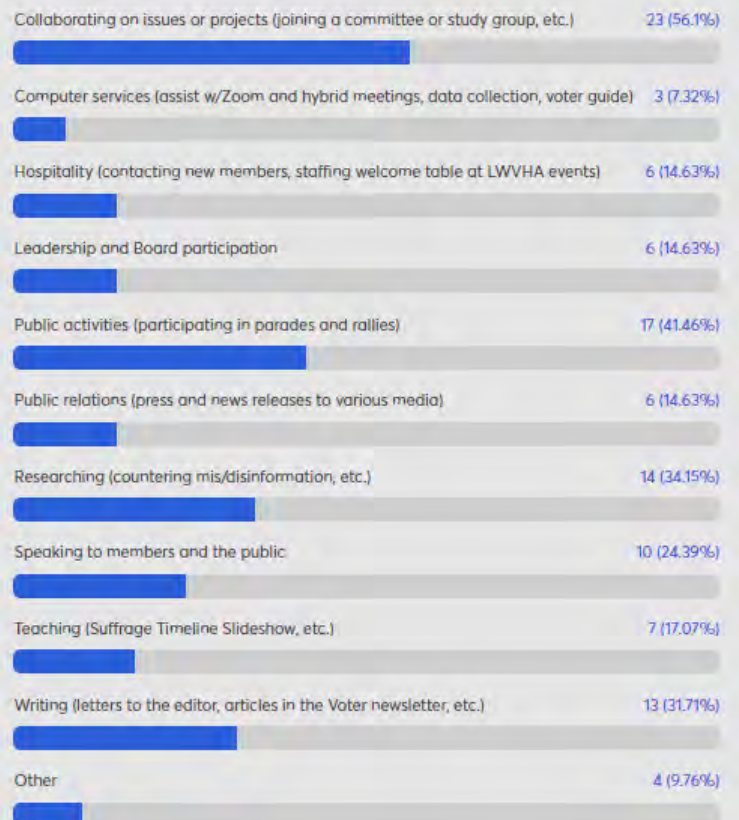
Please choose from our list of current priorities in which you would be willing to participate. (Select up to four)

Showing the most recent responses to the question. [See all responses](#) here.



Which of your specific skills would you like to use while supporting the Helena League? (Select all applicable)

Showing the most recent responses to the question. [See all responses](#) here.

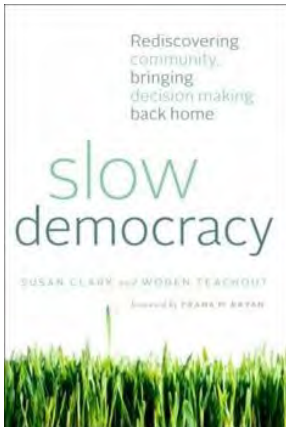


What's Next? Membership Committee members will soon contact members who expressed an interest in participating on a committee, helping with a study, presenting to the public, or helping in other ways.

We are so grateful for the time and energy our members contribute to the League's work.

LWVHA Book Group

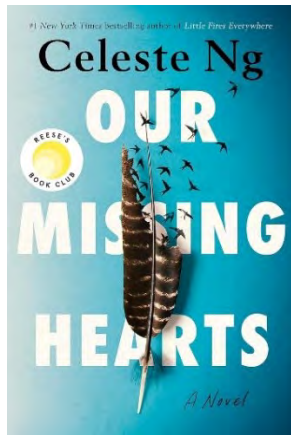
LWVHA's Book Group welcomes new members! Below are upcoming titles. All discussions are via Zoom to better facilitate personal schedules and weather. For more information and to join the Book Group email list, which includes reviews of each title as well as alternate, shorter readings that pertain to the topic, contact cherrijones@missouristate.edu.



Thursday, March 21 (a week early to avoid holiday week), 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. ***Slow Democracy: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back Home*** by Susan Clark and Woden Teachout.

Joan Blades, cofounder of MoveOn.org, states: "Slow Democracy just may be the best thing happening in America today. Connecting in a meaningful way with our community and reclaiming our power as citizens is both powerful and possible. Read this book and consider how this movement can revitalize the communities you care about!"

LWVHA member Anne Hausrath, once a city councilwoman in Boise, Idaho, will lead the discussion.



Thursday, April 25, 2024, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. ***Our Missing Hearts: A Novel*** by Celeste Ng.

Reviewer Bidisha Mamata in the Guardian says "Ng effortlessly combines a character-led family story with a detective tale, a tribute to books and storytelling and a confrontation with history."

Both print and audiobook are available through the Lewis & Clark library system. You might want to start reading this one a bit early.

LWVHA member Mary Johnson will lead our discussion.



Thursday, May 23, 2024, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. ***Nazi Town, USA***.

This PBS documentary tells the largely unknown story of the Bund, which had scores of chapters in suburbs and big cities across the country and represented

what many believe was a real threat of fascist subversion in the United States. The Bund held joint rallies with the Ku Klux Klan and ran dozens of summer camps for children centered around Nazi ideology and imagery. Its melding of patriotic values with virulent anti-Semitism raised thorny issues that we continue to wrestle with today.

Watch on PBS and YouTube. DVD release on March 26; will see if Lewis & Clark Library will purchase it.

Book Group Highlight

In February, Book Group members discussed the stories of many of the Indigenous/American Indian women that author/historian Laura Ferguson wrote about for the book *Beyond Schoolmarms and Madams: Montana Women's Stories*, edited by Martha Kohl.

I think we all came out with a sense of awe at the sheer determination and strength they had as they helped their communities despite the many obstacles they faced.

We especially appreciated the "gossipy bits" that made these women come alive. For example, Lucille Otter registered over 1,000 voters on the Flathead Indian Reservation. She carried registration cards everywhere she went. Once, while out fishing, she met a young woman on horseback – and promptly registered her!

While the book is easiest to read and refer to, you can also find the essays at: [Beyond Schoolmarms and Madams: Montana Women's Stories | Montana Women's History \(montanawomenshistory.org\)](https://montanawomenshistory.org).

~ Cherri Jones



CHAIR THE BOOK GROUP!

Would you like to be the next Book Group Chairperson?

If you're interested in coordinating this fun and educational endeavor, contact Cherri Jones.

Cherri is ready to pass this on to another LWVHA member and invites all inquiries!

Local Government Review in 2024



On Monday, March 18, via a Zoom meeting, the Helena Area League of Women Voters Local Government Study Committee will provide members with a summary of their study results on the current form and structure of both the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County governments and the ten-year review process.

League members will receive copies of the documents and proposed updates to current positions prior to the Zoom meeting.

Look for an email on Monday, March 11 for more information about the March 18 meeting and links to download the documents.

The Montana 1972 Constitution requires that all Montana state municipal, county, and town governments provide residents with an opportunity to vote on whether to form a study committee to review the current structure of their governments. The vote will occur on June 4, 2024, during the Primary Election. Voters will vote yes or no for the review on two separate ballot issues one for the City of Helena and one for Lewis and Clark County.

Speakers' Bureau: The study committee has members willing to attend community meetings and provide information on the ten-year review and the current forms of government for both the city and the county. League members who belong to organizations that would be interested in having a presentation can contact the co-chairs or committee members.

Study committee members presented the Helena Citizens Council with information on their study and the ten-year review process at their meeting on February 28, 2024.

~ Mary (Mickey) Harlow and Sharon Haugen, Co-Chairs

Monday, March 18, 2024

Member Meeting

5:15 pm—via Zoom

All members are invited to our monthly member meeting via Zoom to learn more and ask questions about the Local Government Review process prior to the April 15 annual meeting. Membership will vote on the following proposed position (and review other positions) at the meeting. Please plan to attend!

Proposed New Position: GOVERNMENT

The League supports accountable, stable city and county government with sustainable practices and policies, recruitment and retention of competent staff, fiscally responsible budgeting, and formalized policies for communication and citizen engagement.

Timeline for 2024-2026 Voter Review Process

Note: If citizens do NOT vote to set up a Local Government Review Commission, this timeline ends with the June 4 primary election.

- **March 11, 2024** Deadline for governing bodies to call for local government review
- **June 4, 2024** Primary election citizens vote on whether or not they want to conduct local government review
- **June 18, 2024** Beginning of study commission candidate filing
- **August 12, 2024** Last day for local government review commission candidates to file declaration of nomination by 5:00 p.m.
- **November 5, 2024** Study commission election
- **Late November** Study commissioners have their first meeting and are sworn in no later than 10 days after the election to the study commission is declared or certified

2024 Local Government Review in Montana

[MT LWV webpage on Local Government Review](#)

[MSU Local Government Center](#)

[MT Voter Review](#)

[Download Dan Clark's Slides from our October webinar.](#)

HOW TO NAVIGATE MISINFORMATION ONLINE

with Author, Researcher and Stanford Professor
Sam Wineburg

On March 6, 2024, Professor Sam Wineburg gave a delightful, entertaining, informative, and interactive presentation titled “How to Navigate Misinformation Online.” His program was based on his book *Verified: How to Think Straight, Get Duped Less and Make Better Decisions about What to Believe Online*.

Forty people attended in person at Lewis & Clark Library and 166 joined the Zoom webinar, sponsored by the Library. A wonderful turnout!

We came away learning how to do **Lateral Reading** (open up more browser tabs and research the sources) and **Click Restraint** (don't click on the first search engine result, but scroll down until you find more credible sites). Don't believe everything you read on a site's **About** page and the .org or .com at the end of a web address can be obtained by anyone.

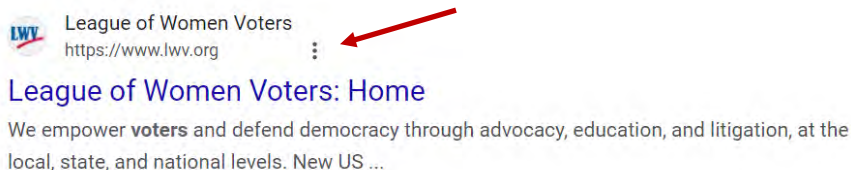
Professor Wineburg promised attendees that they would learn how to safely navigate the Internet in under 60 seconds and he delivered. One of the tricks he shared was clicking on the three dots in a Google search to learn more about a site (see example below).

Wineburg said that Google is designed to give you results based on your keywords, so be specific about your request. If you want unbiased information, make sure your request is unbiased. He emphasized that it's more important to be cautious rather than skeptical. When you are cautious, you know how to verify the credibility of information and can trust what you read or see on the Internet.

This webinar was not recorded, but we have provided links to Professor Wineburg's website on our Understanding Misinformation webpage (see link below).

Thanks to Darien Scott and Mary Johnson for their notes from this webinar. And a very big thank you to the entire Program Committee for their work in pulling together and promoting the second in our series on misinformation in this election year.

Have you noticed these three dots when you do a Google search?



Google's own explanation: “Now, wherever you're searching, you'll see three dots next to most results on Google Search. Tapping those three dots gives you a way to learn more about where the information you're seeing is coming from and how our systems determined it would be useful for your query.”

Staying on Top of Election Dis- & Misinformation

Thanks to Voter Services Chair, Rebecca Johnson, a new LWV Montana webpage has some great resources to better understand and debunk dis- and misinformation. The site at <https://my.lwv.org/montana/civics-education/understanding-misinformation> includes information from the League of Women Voters of the United States, News Literacy Project, and Rumorgard.org. Also included are Professor Lee Banville's comprehensive list of fact-checking websites, and the website of Professor Sam Wineburg, who just presented on safely navigating the Internet via webinar on March 6, 2024.

The videos on the Understanding Misinformation webpage—available via YouTube—are excellent additions to any Civics Education lesson plan: “How to find local news you can trust,” “PBS NewsHour Classroom Lesson: An experiment in misinformation,” and a TED Talk, “How we can protect truth in the age of misinformation.”

“ Is this information trying to inform me, persuade me, or manipulate me? ”

If you know of a misinformation resource that should be added to this page, please send an email to lwv.helena@gmail.com.



Voter Registration Going Strong!

Volunteers in the Helena area are stepping up to help meet an audacious goal of registering at least 1,000 voters in the Helena area during this election year.

Rebecca Johnson reports that in Lewis and Clark County there are currently 50,390 registered voters. There are 6,387 eligible voters who are not currently registered and 9,777 inactive voters. She says our work is to find these almost 17,000 voters to help them get registered to vote. Rebecca also reports that 151 voters have been registered so far. **We will need all the help possible to register more voters in 2024.**

Help register voters at **Lewis & Clark Library** during the month of March. Volunteers are still needed for the Saturday shift from **1-2 pm on March 16, 23 and 30**. Click [HERE](#) to sign up.

Voter Services is working with MontPIRG to place five VR drop boxes around Helena: Carroll College Campus Center, Dear Potato Bakery, General Mercantile, Montana Book Company, and they are looking for one more location (any ideas?). Thank you Lynn and Felomina for helping with this project.

How busy have voter registration volunteers been this year? The next page of this newsletter *celebrates* and *acknowledges* the wonderful work of our Voter Services crew. Read on and be inspired!

Help Register Montanans to Vote!

Join the friendly folks who help empower voters and defend democracy! If you are interested in helping with voter registration, please contact Rebecca at (406) 223-4300 or send her an email: rebeccainmt@gmail.com.

You will receive a weekly online newsletter with volunteer opportunities as well as one-on-one voter registration training and voting material supplies at no cost to you.



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTANA MT VOTING PLAN CARD

GET READY TO VOTE

- ☐ **Check Your Voter Registration** MyVoterPageMT.com
Are you voting in person or by ballot (absentee)? View a sample ballot. Find your House and Senate district number and polling location. Is your address current?
- ☐ **Register to Vote** mtvr.org/mwv
Fill out the VR form. Receive your completed VR form & a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Sign, date, add ID#; then mail form to Elections Office to register to vote.
- ☐ **Find More Voting Resources at Montana LWV website**
my.lwv.org/montana/voter-resources

Supported by the League of Women Voters Education Fund



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTANA MT VOTING PLAN CARD

VOTING

- ☐ **Vote by Mail (Absentee)**
Absentee ballots are mailed 3 weeks before election. Mail ballot 10 days before Election Day. Remember to sign your ballot envelope.
- ☐ **Vote In Person Early or on Election Day**
Vote at the Elections Office starting 30 days before Election Day. Bring proper ID to vote at polls on Election Day. votemt.gov/voter-identification/
- ☐ **Research Candidates @ VOTE411.org, Check Out Voter Guides, Learn to Identify Election Misinformation** my.lwv.org/montana/voter-resources
Find non-partisan info on candidates and ballot initiatives with VOTE411.org/montana

In coordination with our state League and funding from a Citizen Voter Project grant, newly designed Montana Voting Plan cards have been printed. The Helena League is now handing out 500 postcards to local voters.

Suffrage Timeline Presentations - One Done and One Coming Up

On March 7th, we presented the Suffrage Timeline to four classes at Helena High School. Thank you, Sherry and Ann for reaching out to Helena High School teacher Bob Poelking to schedule these presentations. Thank you Becky, Rebecca, and Niki for presenting the Suffrage Timeline to high school students.

Next **Monday, March 11th at 6:00 pm**, Laura and Rebecca will be at Brothers Tapworks (the former Panhandler on the Walking Mall) to present the Suffrage Timeline during The Soapbox. Visit their [website](#) for more information.

Please come out and join the fun!

BUSY, BUSY, BUSY!

That is how to describe voter registration in Helena. We have been very busy registering voters all across Helena. Welcome to all the new volunteers who recently signed up to help register voters. Together we will make a huge difference.

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers (Pat, Becky, Nicole, Clare and Rebecca) who show up at the county jail twice a month to register voters. This is a big deal as this is a new project which still has some wrinkles to work out. Thank you for sticking with registering this community of voters.

Thank you Tana and Nancy who showed up every week at Lewis & Clark Library to register voters in February. It is a true sign of dedication to register voters.

Thank you DeeDee and Clare for organizing the many voter registration events at the senior centers around Helena these past months. Thank you DeeDee for reaching out directly to ensure all seniors at the 13 centers in Helena have access to our voter registration services. Your efforts are truly inspiring.

Thank you to our five volunteers (Sher, Sarah, Cathy, Clare and Nancy) who signed up to register voters at the upcoming St. Patrick's Day Parade in Butte on March 17th. Nothing goes better with green beer, than registering voters!

Thank you, Felomina, for volunteering to register voters every Sunday at Lewis & Clark Library.

The week of March 4-8 has been a week of voter registration. Our volunteers have been busy registering voters at the library all week, Eagle Manor Residencies, both Helena College campuses, Carroll College campus, and ME Anderson Apartments. We hope to organize several more week-filled voter registration events over the next seven months.

~ Rebecca Johnson, Chair, Voter Services Committee



Susan and Patty at the PRIDE Drag Show



Clare, Ronnie, Dick, and Nancy at the naturalization ceremony in Helena.



Dawes and DeeDee with new student voter bags that were delivered to 23 high school teachers in Helena.



Laura and Nancy with a student at East Helena High School.



Clare, Ronnie and Nancy at Touchmark.

Thanks to all the amazing volunteers in these photos for their great work to register voters at places around town or help with voter services!



VOTE411.ORG

Non-partisan, personalized voting information you need

FIRST-TIME VOTER CHECKLIST

✓ Register to vote

✓ Find your polling place

✓ See what's on your ballot

✓ Check if you need an ID

✓ Vote!

VOTE 411

Help Needed for VOTE411

We now have a statewide VOTE411 committee, made up of members from the local leagues in Billings, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula, that are working to cover all the statewide races. Local leagues will also work on gathering information for their local elections.

The VOTE411 Committee is currently preparing to put out the VOTE411 Voter Guide for the school and special district elections on May 7, and the primary elections right after, on June 4.

The time period between when election candidates and levies or measures are finalized and the time when ballots go out is quite short, so we are looking for volunteers to gather the needed information. The June 4 election is particularly important because many of the races are likely to be decided in the primary.

Volunteers Needed! The LWV of Montana is officially in a partnership with the Montana Free Press (MTFP) to share VOTE411 information for the 2024 election. We need volunteers to help check email addresses for candidates and to make phone calls to encourage participation.

If you would like to help, please send an email with "VOTE411" in the subject line to: nandleifer@gmail.com.

New Health Care Committee

Sue Hoell, LWVHA member and past president, is offering to chair and lead a new Health Care Committee for the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area (LWVHA).

Health Care is a vast and expansive topic. The National League has a great Health Care position advocating for universal health care including mental health access, affordability, and more.

The National League also has a Privatization Position. Since privatization seems to have complicated and degraded health care, the Vermont League is now asking that the National League Position on Privatization be updated to include language on needed action when privatization seems to be counterproductive.

Members of the Vermont League who have a medical background have put together some amazing information on this issue. At our Member Meeting in July, the LWVHA Health Care Committee could discuss the current National League positions on Health Care and Privatization, and the information provided by the Vermont League for updating the National Privatization Position regarding health care.

Sue is looking for a few interested members to join her in this effort. If you are interested, please send an email to suehoell056@gmail.com.



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF MONTANA

First Call!

Montana LWV Member Retreat
May 4-5, 2024—Billings

Plan now to participate in the LWV Montana membership retreat: *Resilience in the League, Resilience for Democracy*. The Retreat will begin with lunch at noon, Saturday, May 4, then continue through the afternoon with presentations and the formal business of the meeting ending at 5:00 pm.

The Retreat continues with a social hour, dinner and special speaker Saturday night, then reconvenes Sunday morning for several hours of workshops. You can sign up for just the day, Saturday, and head back home, or sign up for the full two days and stay overnight.

The Billings League is offering home stays with Billings League members for \$10/night and preparing meals to keep the cost of the Retreat as low as possible.

More details and registration information will be sent to all Montana members in early April.

Gather up a car-full of fellow League members and plan to come to Billings! The League's strength comes from the quality of our relationships with each other, and we need all the strength we can get to meet the challenges of the year ahead.

~ Nancy Leifer, President, Montana LWV



ESSAY CONTEST

For Helena Area Students in High School

DUE: Friday, March 22, 2024

Write an essay, answering:
What Voting Means to Me

First prize: \$200

Second prize: \$100

Third prize: \$50

ESSAY RULES

- 500-1,000 words
- Include your name, phone number, email address, and school/class on the essay.
- Attach your essay as a Word or PDF document and email to: **Sherry Meador—lww.helena@gmail.com**
- For more information, contact Sherry Meador at lww.helena@gmail.com.