

## Helena Area LWV ~ VOTER NEWS



### September 2024

Hello Patti,

In this issue of **The Voter News**, you will find:

- Calendar of Events
- September 16 - Here We Go! Membership Meeting
- September 23 - County Commissioner Candidate Forum
- October 7 - Membership & Public Meeting on Citizen Initiatives
- Montana LWV News from State President Nancy Leifer
- Book & Discussion Group
- Health Care Committee Update
- Observer Corps Report
- Voter Registration Update and Kudos to Volunteers
- Coming up in the October LWVHA Voter News
- Welcoming our new and renewing members!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Monday, September 16, 6:15 pm** Special Membership Meeting with Nancy Leifer, Montana LWV President. In person at Lewis & Clark Library.
- **Tuesday, September 17** - National Voter Registration Day. [Sign up now to help register voters.](#)
- **Monday, September 23, 5:30 pm**, Lewis and Clark County Commissioner Forum, Helena Avenue Theatre. (See details below.)



- **Thursday, September 26, 6:00 pm** via Zoom. Book & Discussion Group (See details below).
- **Monday, October 7, 5:30 pm** - Panel: Do You Know What You're Voting For? Membership Meeting - Public Invited. Lewis & Clark Library and Zoom Webinar (See details below).

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*Here We Go!*

## **LWVHA Membership Meeting**

**Monday, September 16 - 6:15 pm**

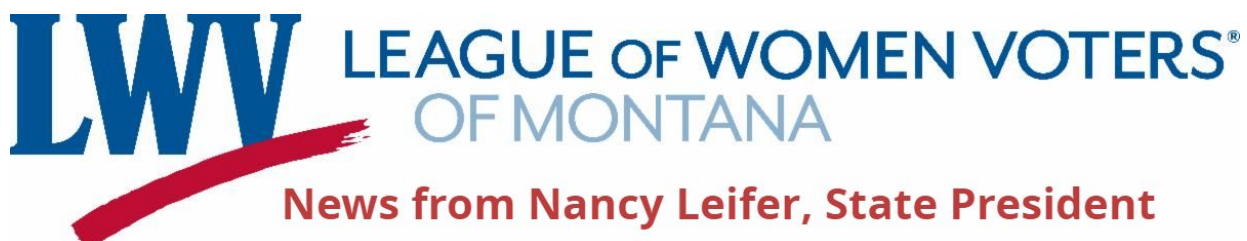
**Lewis & Clark Library, Helena**

**Join us for our fall kick-off meeting and bring a friend!**

Here we go into the 2024 general election and onto the 2025 legislative session. Special guest speaker **Nancy Leifer, Montana LWV President**, will join us in person to discuss the November election and the League's plans for working groups during the legislative session and how individuals can take action.

Nancy will address both the immediate and longer-term vision of what the League needs to do for the future.

- Immediate: focus on the individual League members taking action, initially for the election through voter registration and serving as a Carter Center election observer.
- Upcoming: During the legislative session, attend workshops on how to write to your legislators, how to submit testimony to committees, how to deliver testimony.
- Long-term: Emphasis on living democracy, not just defending it, by putting into practice Braver Angels and similar practices to connect with people across the division of party lines. By doing so, we can rebuild and strengthen community--the foundation of our democracy.



LWV MT to host YSEALI Fellow **Corina "Cor" Encabo** from the Philippines from September 16 through October 11, 2024. LWV MT was approached by the Mansfield Center of the University of Montana, in conjunction with the [U.S. State Department's YSEALI program](#), to host a Fellow for the fall of 2024. Cor is a mid-career professional who works on youth

engagement, climate change, and volunteer coordination. Watch for more information about Cor's special presentation on Youth Engagement via Zoom for all League members, and other opportunities to engage with Cor while she is here.

**CARTER CENTER ELECTION OBSERVATION PROJECT:** Are you eager to do something to support the integrity of the 2024 general election? The Carter Center needs volunteers! The Carter Center is sponsoring the Montana Election Observation Initiative, a nonpartisan observation effort designed to increase trust and transparency around elections. Volunteers will be trained to understand the laws, procedures and safeguards in Montana's electoral process and will verify that those procedures are consistently and correctly followed. Here are the links for more information, and to sign up as a volunteer:

For more information and to sign up: [Montana Election Observation Initiative](#).

**HELP PROMOTE VOTE411.ORG:** Non-partisan information about participating in the election and about candidates running for office is hard to find. NOT ANY MORE! VOTE411 is the LWV US-hosted on-line website that has complete information about how to register and vote, and will offer information directly from the candidates themselves beginning September 17. LWV MT partnered with the Montana Free Press to bring [VOTE411.org](#) statewide to Montana this year. Each local League will have 8.5" by 11" posters that you can help distribute to coffee shops and businesses, etc. to help spread the word. Encourage your friends and others to use VOTE411 for Montana-specific election and candidate information!

**POTENTIAL LWV MT VIDEO PROJECT:** "Telling the Story of Democracy in Montana" While the League is committed to having strong research, statistics and factual information to give to the public, none of these are effective ways of engaging most people. Stories are essential to putting life into the cause of democracy and engaging people in learning more about it.

LWV MT has been invited by a foundation to submit a grant application to give the League the skills and equipment needed to record compelling stories of how democracy and Montana's Constitution have affected the lives of individual people in Montana. We would be working with Lara Tomov, a filmmaker in Missoula, who specializes in capturing stories. Volunteers will be needed, if the grant is approved. No skills necessary! Lara will train us on how to do it.

If you are interested in being part of this project, send an email to Nancy with the subject line "Stories" to: [nancleifer@gmail.com](mailto:nancleifer@gmail.com).

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## Lewis and Clark County Commissioner Candidate Forum Monday, September 23 - 5:30 pm Helena Avenue Theatre

Sponsored and moderated by the Helena Area LWV, the candidate forum will be held at the Helena Avenue Theatre, located at 1319 Helena Avenue. There are two candidates running for County Commission: **Joe Dooling** and incumbent **Andy Hunthausen**.

Andy Hunthausen has been County Commissioner since 2007 and is a lifelong resident of Lewis and Clark County. Joe Dooling is a farmer and rancher and is the third generation of his family to call Montana home.

The candidates will each introduce themselves to the audience and then will be asked a series of questions by a moderator. There will also be some time allotted for audience questions. We hope you can join us to meet the candidates and learn more about their positions and vision for Lewis and Clark County.

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## BOOK & DISCUSSION GROUP

### Join us **Thursday, September 26 - 6:00 pm** via Zoom for a very special BDG event with Helena author Diane Carlson Evans

We are reading *Healing Wounds: A Vietnam War Combat Nurse's 10-Year Fight to Win Women a Place of Honor in Washington, D.C.* by Helena author Diane Carlson Evans. This book can be purchased at Helena's locally-owned Montana Book Company. Lewis & Clark Library card-holders can access both the audio and e-book version on [HooplaDigital.com](https://www.hoopladigital.com) and the book is also available for check-out.

There are numerous videos on YouTube featuring Diane Carlson Evans. Here are a couple to start with:

- **American Legion:** Vietnam War combat nurse and 2018 American Legion Distinguished Service Medal recipient shares the route she traveled to immortalize the women who served along with her in Southeast Asia.
- **American Veterans Center:** Diane Carlson Evans served as a U.S. Army nurse during the Vietnam War in the burn unit of the 36th Evacuation Hospital in Vung Tau and later the 71st Evacuation Hospital at Pleiku. She is also Founder and President of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation.

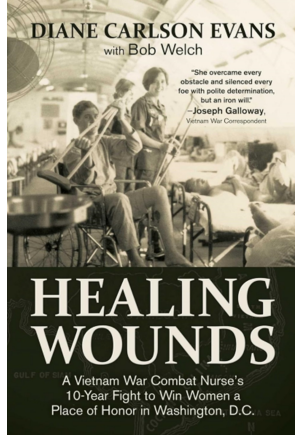


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## *Healing Wounds: A Review*

*By Sue Hoell, Book & Discussion Group Co-chair*

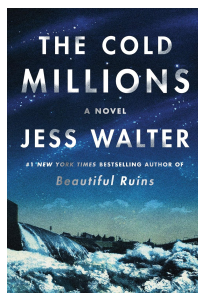
Diane Carlson Evans' story is about growing up on a Minnesota farm, graduating from nursing school in 1967, naively signing up to be a US military nurse during Vietnam, marrying a surgeon, and fighting to get a memorial in Washington DC that recognized



women like her who went to Vietnam and came home to no recognition at all.

But that's just the framework of her story. Her real story is one of a young woman who came of age and made the effort to achieve a goal in spite of enormous obstacles. That's what many women do. We set a goal and do whatever it takes to achieve that goal. Diane's story is a page turner, not because of the specific details of her life, but because of her dogged determination to achieve a goal overcoming many discouraging setbacks.

The details of her story have another important aspect – that war is a male thing, and that many men are offended that women participate in this entrenched display of masculinity. Our nation has thousands of statues, monuments, and museums filled with art glorifying male violence and destruction, and perhaps a handful of monuments honoring compassion and caring about other human beings. Correcting that blight on our culture is worth the massive effort that Diane Carlson Evans pursued on behalf of all decent humanitarian citizens.



**Coming up:** In October, the Book & Discussion Group will take part in the community Big Read sponsored by Lewis & Clark Library. Free copies of Jess Walter's book *The Cold Millions* will be available at the Library at the end of September and in early October. This historical fiction book is based on the free speech riots of 1909 and 1910 that took place in Spokane, Washington. The Library hosts lots of activities and programs throughout the Big Read month of October. Look for more information coming from the Library soon.

In November, the BDG hopes to tackle the hot topic of the Electoral College. Stay tuned.

***We maintain a separate list of BDG members who receive reminders and the Zoom link. Please send an email to [lww.helena@gmail.com](mailto:lww.helena@gmail.com) to be placed on the list.***

*Sue Hoell and Niki Whearty are co-chairs of the Book & Discussion Group (BDG) and welcome your ideas and suggestions for future selections. We read books, articles, and essays and watch films or TV programs. Members are welcome to attend the BDG meetings (mostly on Zoom) to share or to listen and learn.*

## LWVHA Health Care Committee Update



The LWVHA Health Care Committee is examining access and availability of health care services for seniors in Helena. We plan to see how well Helena services comply with LWV State and National positions on health care. We plan to be well-informed in advising our delegates as they are asked to weigh in on possible updates to those positions at State and National Conventions.

In September, 2024 we are looking at Hospice options in Helena. Any League member interested in this topic is invited to join our committee. We typically meet on Zoom, interview experts, and plan to collaborate on compiling our findings to share with other Helena League members.

*Committee Members: Sue Hoell, Chair, Mickey Harlow, Celeste Jazwinski, Donna Aline, and Connie*

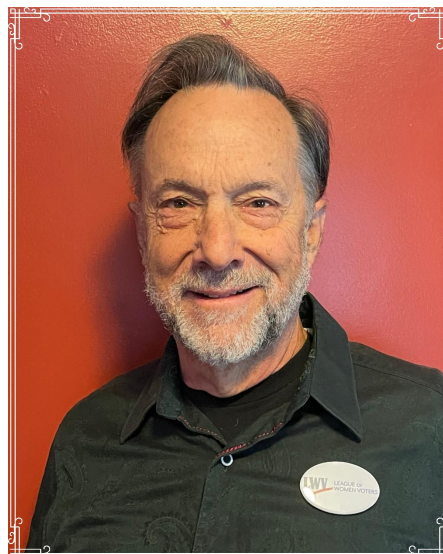


## BECOME A LEAGUE OBSERVER!

Serving as a League Observer is a way for members to become familiar with their elected officials and share observations and meeting information with the League. The Local Government Committee invites League members to observe city and county commission meetings, school board meetings, other relevant public meetings, and the early-morning Hometown Helena meetings.

Observer Corps guidelines have been revised and will be available at the September 16 membership meeting where members can sign up with the Observer Corps.

If you're interested or have questions, send an email to Mickey Harlow at [harlow54@msn.com](mailto:harlow54@msn.com).



Helena LWV member Bob Jones observes City Commission and City Administrative meetings.

### Helena City Commission REPORT BY OBSERVER BOB JONES

The City Commission met August 26, 2024. They debated and passed a resolution (by a 4-1 vote) to limit the number of meetings that commissioners could attend via video in a year. The resolution created a policy that requires that city commissioners attend at least 50% of the meetings in person.

About 50 to 60 City Commission meetings are held each year. The proposed changes relate directly to the democratic procedures used for deliberation and to the means of sharing information with the community.

To learn more about the Commission's work, visit the [City Commission](#) website.



## VOTER REGISTRATION NEWS

*Kudos to our Wonderful Volunteers!*

*By Rebecca Johnson, Chair, Voter Services*

Over the month of August, 16 voter registration volunteers registered 128 voters at 18 different places/events around Helena. Thank you Clare, Nancy, Rebecca, DeeDee, Sher, Filomena, Lynne, Donna, Janet, Cathy, Cherri, Bob, Marjean, Becky, Darien and Kathy.

Highlighted events in August:

- Rebecca, Janet and Donna traveled to Cut Bank where we registered citizens at the library and senior center, and put up voter registration posters all around town. Our visit got the attention of two Cut Bank residents who plan to organize a candidate forum in the Cut Bank area next year. They also might join our League.
- Several members marched in the PRIDE Parade and volunteers registered many citizens at different PRIDE Week events.
- A group of VR volunteers helped register 30 students at Carroll College during their Club Fair event.
- Kathy, Darien, and Rebecca presented both the Suffrage Timeline and Nitty Gritty of Voting presentations at the Florence Crittenton Center.

We have registered 584 voters so far this election year. We need **all hands on deck** to help register voters on National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, September 17th. This day will be bigger and better as we now have three volunteers planning lots of events throughout the day. **Help us reach our goal of 1,000 voters registered before the November 5 election.** Please sign up at <https://x.gldn.io/CpOUibCN2Lb!>



Nancy Perry and Clare Kearns at the Farmer's Market.



Rebecca Johnson and Cathy Duncan at a PRIDE event in early August.



Sher Ehret and Rebecca Johnson at a Union VR event.



Donna Aline registering a voter at a Cut Bank VR event.

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Our volunteers do amazing voter registration work all across the Helena area. Voter registration is an incredible experience and we are always recruiting new volunteers to join us.

Please email Rebecca at [rebeccainmt@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccainmt@gmail.com) if you want to help register voters.



# SAVE THE DATE!

## October Membership & Public Meeting

### Monday, October 7 - 5:30 pm

### Lewis & Clark Library and via Zoom

Our October Membership Meeting will be a special public forum to learn more about CI-126, CI-127, and CI-128. This meeting is open to the public and offered via Zoom and in-person at Lewis & Clark Library, starting at 5:30 pm. Zoom attendees must pre-register. **Watch for another notice later this month about the meeting with the link to register on the Library's website.**

CI-126 would create an open primary system in Montana, allowing voters to choose any candidate on the primary ballot regardless of the candidate's party affiliation. All candidates would appear on one ballot in June rather than separate party ballots, with the top four candidates for each office going on to the general election in November.

CI-127 would require that the winner of the general election receive a majority of the votes – more than 50 percent.

Frank Garner, a former Republican State Representative from Kalispell and board member with Montanans for Election Reform (a coalition of Republicans, Democrats and third-party advocates), will speak in support of the two initiatives.

Speaking in opposition to these two initiatives will be former Republican Montana legislator and Bozeman attorney Matthew G. Monforton.

Retired Montana Supreme Court Justice Patricia Cotter will explain the effect of Constitutional amendments generally. She will also discuss the reason that CI-128 is on the ballot. If passed, it would provide a right for women to obtain a pre-viability abortion.

If the gubernatorial debate is scheduled that evening, it will be shown at the Library just following the meeting. Pizza and other refreshments will be available.

*Please save the date and plan to join us with a friend!*



## Janet Weeks Andrew

September 27, 1953 - July 29, 2024

We were saddened to learn of former League member Janet Andrew's passing. She was known, loved, and admired by many in our community: from her love of animals and support of the Lewis and Clark Humane Society; her long career at the Office of Public Instruction; and, as Becky Piske remembered, her "strong voice of reason" and "pointed and pertinent" letters to the editor of the Independent Record and likely other publications.

Janet was also an active member of our local League. She registered voters and served on our Board. We send our deepest condolences to her family and loved ones.

### 2025-26 Board Members

Co-president: Sharon Haugen

Co-president: Cherri Jones

Treasurer: Connie Griffith

Secretary: Denise Pengeroth

### At-Large Board Members:

Ann Gilkey

Mary "Mickey" Harlow

Julie Huntington

### Committee Chairs

Book & Discussion Group: Sue Hoell & Niki Whearty

Communications: Patti Borneman & Becky Piske

Local Government Study: Mickey Harlow & Sue Hoell

Membership: Wendy Wheeler

Nominating: Becky Piske

Program: Mary Johnson

Publicity: Marga Lincoln

VOTE411: Patrice Anderson & Becky Piske

Voter Services: Rebecca Johnson

*The Voter* Editor: Patti Borneman

## Coming up in the October issue of Helena Area LWV Voter News

- Recap of September 16 Meeting: Getting and staying involved in the LWV.
- October 7 Membership Meeting open to all with forum on Citizen Initiatives; Zoom registration link.
- Launching the 2025 Student Essay Contest.
- Update on Corina "Cor" Encabo's fellowship.
- Book & Discussion Group participation in the Library's Big READ community event.
- And much more!

**WELCOMING OUR NEW &  
RENEWING MEMBERS!**  
**Robyn Morrison & Stephanie Wallace**



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