



Helena Area LWV ~ VOTER NEWS



Hello Patti,

Your monthly **Voter News** for **August 2024** is here! We won't have a membership meeting this month, which gives us time to plan several exciting meetings and events in September and beyond. In this newsletter you will find:

- Calendar of Events
- Save the Date for the September "Here We Go!" Membership Meeting
- Recap: June 2024 National LWV Convention
- Recap: July Membership Meeting - Senior Health Care in Helena
- Recap: Preserving our Democracy Roundtable
- Upcoming: Book & Discussion Group
- Update: Health Care Committee
- Updated: Local Government Committee
- Voter Registration Update and Kudos to Volunteers
- Coming up in the September LWVHA Voter News
- And, a warm welcome to our new members!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Monday, September 16**—6:15 pm. Special Membership Meeting with Nancy Leifer, Montana LWV President.
- **Tuesday, September 17** - National Voter Registration Day. Mark your calendars for many events throughout this week.
- **Thursday, September 26**, 6:00 pm via Zoom. Book & Discussion Group (details below).

SAVE THE DATE

Here We Go! Monday, September 16, 6:15 pm
Lewis & Clark Library - Large Community Room

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.

*Watch for your invitation postcard.
More details to come in the September Voter News.*

Reflections on Attending the 2024 LWV National Convention

By Cherri Jones, LWVHA Co-president

Five members of the LWVHA attended the LWVUS National Convention from June 26-30, joining the largest Montana contingent (13!) ever. Sharon Haugen, Becky Piske, Cherri Jones, and Rebecca Johnson were voting delegates; Mickey Harlow served as a virtual observer. Rebecca attended in person, giving all of us extra daily insights.

We agreed that attending the National Convention gave us a broader understanding of how important the League's advocacy platform is, and how all Leagues need to focus on these national goals along with attending to other, more local concerns.

Top goals include:

- Expanding voter access
- Redistricting
- Money in Politics
- Fighting Voter Suppression
- Abolishing the Electoral College

Some of us hadn't known we could adopt a position from another local or state League by concurrence. We also learned how members of the Observer Corps have been the "first line of defense" in some localities. All of us were impressed by LWVUS staff, who consistently encouraged local leagues to contact them with questions.

Becky noted "the eloquence of our national leaders; our mentors are worthy of our dues and work and support." She was "touched by the integrity of this organization" and the "demonstration of true grassroots organization."

We urge all members to consider attending the National Convention in 2026 either virtually or in person!

July Membership Meeting Recap:

Senior Health Care in the Helena Area



Jim Marks and Sarah Sandau spoke at the July membership meeting about health care in the Helena community. Health Care Committee member Celeste Jazwinski and Co-president Sharon Haugen hosted.

By Sue Hoell, Chair, Health Care Committee

Our July 15 general membership meeting included two speakers: **Sarah Sandau**, the Lewis and Clark County Community Health Promotion Division Administrator and **Jim Marks**, Director of the Area IV Agency on Aging. They talked about services provided by the county, state, and federal government and about volunteer opportunities.

The Helena League Health Care Committee has narrowed our focus down to health care availability, accessibility, and affordability for senior citizens in the Helena area. We have interviewed several experts and have several more experts to interview and websites to research before we start summarizing the best of the information we found. We want to know how well or not well, available services conform with the national League's position on Health Care (*see below*).

If any of you have had senior health care availability or access issues that you would like to share with us, we would love to hear about them. That would help us focus on the weaknesses in access and availability in Helena and take whatever steps we can to get those issues addressed.



JOIN THE HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE!

The LWWHA Health Care Committee is chaired by Sue Hoell and includes Donna Aline, Connie Griffith, Mary "Mickey" Harlow, and Celeste Jazwinski.

We plan to research and advance State and National Health Care Positions and engage in education and actions that serve our members' interests. We are open to new ideas and activities related to health care in our community.

For more information and to join the committee, send an email to [Sue Hoell](mailto:Sue.Hoell@lwwha.org).

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other US health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.

The positions of the LWV of the United States are published in their [Impact on Issues](#) document, an in-depth and lengthy read, and a valuable resource for the work we're all doing.

Ellingson and Racicot Inspire Action at *Preserving our Democracy* Event

Former Governor Marc Racicot

Marc Racicot has served the state of Montana for over 40 years as a deputy county attorney, special prosecutor, Attorney General and our 21st governor. He cares deeply for the future of democracy in our state.



**Wed
7
Aug**



Mae Nan Ellingson

Mae Nan was the youngest delegate to the 1972 Constitutional Convention and has had a long and storied career serving and shaping our great state.

By Cherri Jones, LWWHA Co-president

On August 7, more than 120 people attended a roundtable event at Carroll College, "Preserving our Democracy: Action Items for Every Montana Citizen." This series, sponsored by the Montana LWV and Democracy Sentry, and organized by Helenan Kim Longcake, was "designed to use history to guide action in the present to protect our future."

The forum included former Governor **Marc Racicot**, who served as Montana's 21st governor from 1993 to 2001, and **Mae Nan Ellingson**, delegate at the 1972 Constitutional Convention and one of the founders of Friends of the Montana Constitution.

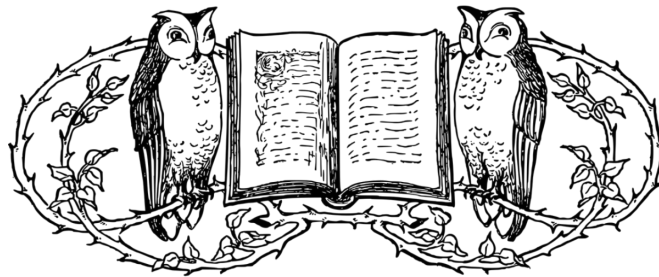
Helena LWV Co-president Sharon Haugen opened and closed the forum and Jacob Linfesty, President and Co-founder of the Montana Transparency Project,

moderated thoughtful questions from the audience.

The history of the Montana Constitution, debunking mis- and disinformation, the need for more civic education in our schools and the community, and the value of public participation in the political process were central themes at this highly engaging public meeting.

Helena Civic TV recorded the meeting and the video will be available within a week or so of the event. Visit their website at <https://www.helenacivictv.org>.

Thanks to Rebecca Johnson, Wendy Wheeler, and Mary Johnson for their assistance at this event.



LWVHA Book & Discussion Group to meet September 26th



By Niki Whearty, Book & Discussion Group Co-chair

It's been a hot time in the old town of Helena this last month but cooler days are coming. That means more good days for curling up with an engaging book and discussing contemporary topics.

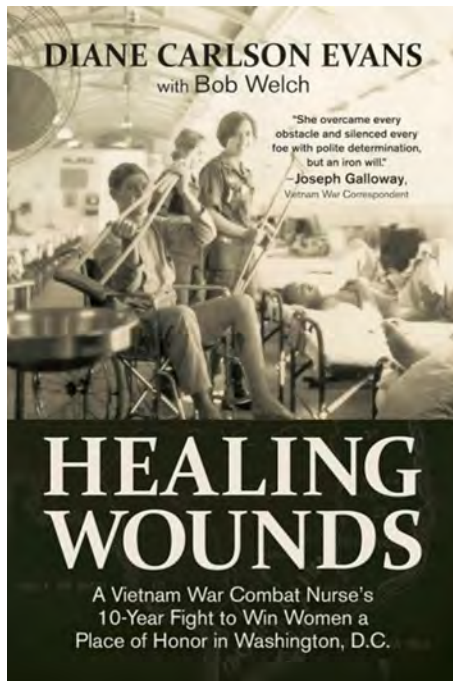
In September, the Book and Discussion group will be reading *Healing Wounds: A Vietnam War Combat Nurse's 10-Year Fight to Win Women a Place of Honor in Washington, D.C.* by Diane Carlson Evans (at left). Diane lives in Helena and will be joining us on Zoom on **Thursday, September 26** to answer our questions and share insights into her book.

In October, the BDG 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.

Join us Thursday, September 26 at 6:00 pm for a very special BDG event with Helena author Diane

Carlson Evans on Zoom



This book can be purchased at Helena's locally-owned Montana Book Company.

Lewis & Clark Library cardholders 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.

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 who will join us on Zoom.

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.

We maintain a separate list of BDG members who receive reminders and the Zoom link. Please send an email to 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.

Local Government Committee Update



By Mickey Harlow, Co-chair and Cherri Jones, Co-president

On August 7, Mickey Harlow, Pat Bik and our co-presidents met with Montana Free Press Editor Brad Tyer and Helena Reporter JoVonne Wagner to introduce ourselves and explore opportunities for working together. As of June 2024, LWVUS has adopted a new position on local news and its importance in combating the news desert that exists nationwide.

To support our own local news services, members might consider signing up for the

If there are other local news outlets that you know of, please contact us so we can get the word out.

The Local Government Committee is also in the process of finalizing the documents and guidelines for the new Helena LWV Observer Corps.

Working hard to register voters! KUDOS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!



By Rebecca Johnson, Helena Area LWV and Montana State Voter Services Chair

As of August 6th, volunteers have registered 478 voters in the Helena area moving ever closer to our goal to register 1,000 voters before the 2024 general election.

Currently in Lewis and Clark County, there are approximately 6,400 unregistered eligible voters and 8,900 inactive voters. These eligible-to-vote citizens are our target audience when we are out in the community registering voters. As part of our voter registration efforts, we also promote the League's Voter Resources webpage and VOTE411.org website.

This past month, volunteers have registered voters at these places and events:

- Helena Food Share, weekly
- Senior Commodity Days in late July
- Helena Indian Alliance Health Fair on the Walking Mall
- Farmers Market every Saturday
- County Jail twice monthly
- Pride Week parade and events including a night visit to bars and breweries
- Shakespeare in the Parks at Anchor Park

Darien, Kathy and Rebecca presented two voting education slide shows to residents at the Florence Crittenton Home. Staff expressed appreciation: "Thanks so much for coming, I really felt like the clients opened up and got to learn about voting from your presentations."

Pictured above are voter registration volunteers Clare Kearns and Laura Gerlach, working at the Saturday Farmers Market. Pictured below are the LWVHA members who marched in the Pride Parade.

We will continue to register voters until Monday, October 7, when late registration begins, requiring voters to hand carry their registration forms to the elections office. We have 60 days remaining to register voters. Mark your calendars to volunteer to register voters for Tuesday, September 17, National Voter Registration Day and Week.

We will have many opportunities for volunteers to join us in this last push towards our goal of 1,000 voters registered.



League members marching in the August 3rd Pride Parade: Bob Jones, Rebecca Johnson, Will Garvin, Sharon Haugen, Clare Kearns, and Cherri Jones, photographer.

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 if you want to help register voters.

Board Members

Co-president: Sharon Haugen

Co-president: Cherri Jones

Treasurer: Connie Griffith

Secretary: Denise Pengerth

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

Health Care: Sue Hoell

Local Government: Mary "Mickey"

Harlow & Sue Hoell

Membership: Wendy Wheeler

Coming up in the September issue of Helena Area LWV Voter News

- Details about the Monday, September 16th "Here We Go!" member meeting. Please mark your calendar and invite a friend to attend.
- Opportunities to get involved in National Voter Registration Day on September 17th. The Helena Area LWV is planning a week-long focus on registering voters.
- And much more!

WELCOMING OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Nominating: Becky Piske
Program: Mary Johnson
Publicity: Marga Lincoln
VOTE411: Patrice Anderson &
Becky Piske
Voter Services: Rebecca Johnson
The Voter Editor: Patti Borneman



The Helena LWV Voter News is published monthly and sent via email to all members with email addresses. Emails are also sent as reminders and updates for specific events or outreach opportunities. We occasionally send postcards to our members. The Montana LWV also publishes a Voter newsletter that is sent to all members by the local leagues.



**Visit our
Website**

League of Women Voters of the Helena Area | PO Box 6534 | Helena, MT 59604 US

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