

# THE VOTER



## *Democracy is not a spectator sport ...*

Lotte E. Scharfman, a member of the Massachusetts League of Women Voters, has been recognized with first making the observation that “democracy is not a spectator sport.” She was a refugee who escaped with her family from Austria during World War II, and devoted her life to working for the democratic process and to helping citizens gain access to government.

Members of the League of Women Voters are not new to this concept. Democracy is a team sport that requires each of its citizens to be engaged. Voting is only one aspect of this sport. This past year we have tried to prepare our members to be “better players” in the democratic process. Now I am not one for using sports analogies, but I will try.



We learned how our ability to participate in the game was earned through the efforts and hard work of those that came before us. We have recruited more team members through our voter registration activities. Future team members were recruited through our Suffrage Timeline presentation and our student essay contest. Our Local Government Committee helped us to better understand our “home field” and all its advantages and

limitations. The Book and Discussion Group has explored different approaches for learning more about defending democracy so that we can add to our own playbook. Vote 411 is providing us with the needed “stats” we need to stay informed of the players now on the field. We learned, through the Program Committee’s series on media misinformation, it is possible to get mixed signals and it is up to the receiver to sort through these signals to know where to “run the ball.” In June, the Membership Committee will help us learn how to play respectfully and communicate better with the other team.

Throughout this year we have welcomed many new members and are excited about your support and engagement. But we all know democracy is not just a game to watch. We need to be active participants every day to continue to promote and defend this basic principle of freedom and encourage others to do the same.

Thank you for being part of the team!

*Sharon Haugen, Co-President*



Co-presidents Sharon Haugen and Cherri Jones

## 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

Mary Johnson

## Committee Chairs

**Book Group:** Sue Hoell & Niki Whearty

**Communications:** Patti Borneman & Becky Piske

**Local Government Study:** Mary “Mickey” Harlow & Sue Hoell

**Membership:** Wendy Wheeler

**Nominating:** Sue Hoell

**Program:** Darien Scott

**Publicity:** Marga Lincoln

**VOTE411:** Patrice Anderson & Becky Piske

**Voter Services:** Rebecca Johnson

**The Voter Editor:** Patti Borneman

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## CONTENTS

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Co-President's Message .....     | 1 |
| Calendar & Membership News ...   | 2 |
| June Membership Meeting .....    | 3 |
| Book & Discussion Group .....    | 4 |
| Local Government Review .....    | 5 |
| VOTE411, Essay Winners.....      | 6 |
| Voter Registration Update .....  | 7 |
| More Kudos & Civic Ed Update ... | 8 |

## 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](mailto:lwv.helena@gmail.com)
- Visit our social media sites at Facebook and Instagram.



## Upcoming Member Meetings & Events

**Thursday, June 6**—Monthly Member Meeting—Program on Respectful Conversations hosted by the Membership Committee. *See the article on page 3 for details.*

**Monday, June 10**—Last day to register for the National LWV Convention, Washington, D.C., June 27-30. Please email Nancy Leifer, our state president, at [nancyleifer@gmail.com](mailto:nancyleifer@gmail.com) if you plan to register for this meeting. *More information on page 4 of this newsletter.*

**Thursday, June 27**—Book & Discussion Group—*See page 4 for details.*

**Monday, July 15**—The Health Care Committee is sponsoring the program for the July meeting with speakers on local Helena availability, access, and affordability of health care, especially long-term care. We are looking for the specific services, challenges and innovations currently available in Helena. Stay tuned for details!

**Thursday, July 25**—Book & Discussion Group—*See page 4 for details.*

**No meeting in August**—Enjoy our Montana summer!

**Monday, September 16**—Special Membership Meeting with Nancy Leifer, State President



## Welcoming our Newest Members!

**Janet Gates, Connie Griffith,  
Mary Beth Linder, Penny Moon, Mary Sivula,  
Peter Sullivan, Michelle Thibodeau**

## 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 [westernwheelers@msn.com](mailto:westernwheelers@msn.com)

# Respectful Conversations



**Thursday, June 6, 5:15 – 6:30, Lewis & Clark Library  
In-person Membership Meeting**

**Bring a Friend and Practice Respectful Conversations!**

We've all been there – we're having a chat with another person and suddenly it's obvious that there is a divergence of opinions. The conversation can get heated very quickly.

- What do you do?
- Throw up your arms and walk away?
- Insult them until THEY walk away?
- Have a respectful conversation that doesn't lead to escalation?

The way in which we respond in these situations is important in any relationship, whether it's at a family picnic or in a professional situation.

To have a conversation about something controversial we first need to learn how to speak with each other to hear and understand different points of view. We may even learn something along the way!

At the meeting on June 6, you will learn techniques to use when you find yourself in an uncomfortable or controversial situation. There will be a chance to practice some of these techniques in small groups and also make suggestions when observing.



***Join us! Bring a Friend!***



## **Kathy McNeill, Facilitator**

**The meeting will be hosted by our League's Membership Committee and facilitated by member Kathy McNeill.**

**Kathy's career in state government involved developing communication, supervisory, and management skills and sometimes gave her practice in having respectful conversations.**

## LWVHA Book & Discussion Group

As a member of the Helena Area League of Women Voters, you are invited to participate in the discussion whether or not you have read the book or article. Join us in June, July and September. We will take August off and have a new Fall list starting in October.



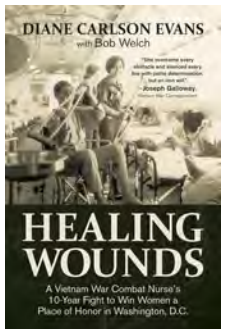
### Thursday, June 27 - 6-7:00 pm on ZOOM:

Members are encouraged to read a banned book of your choice and then give a 2-3 minute report on it at the June 27 meet-up. [Banned Book list](#): The 50 Most Banned Books in America 2024: How Many Have You Read?



### Thursday, July 25, 6-7:00 pm on ZOOM:

“Deb Haaland Confronts the History of the Federal Agency She Leads: *As the first Native American Cabinet member, the Secretary of the Interior has made it part of her job to address the travesties of the past,*” by Casey Cep. *The New Yorker*, April 29, 2024. If you are not a subscriber, send an email to [lww.helena@gmail.com](mailto:lww.helena@gmail.com) and we'll figure out the easiest way to get a copy of the article to you.



**Thursday, September 26, 6-7:00 pm on ZOOM:** *Healing Wounds—A Vietnam War Combat Nurse's 10-year Fight to Win Women a Place of Honor in Washington, D.C.*, Nonfiction, by Helena's Diane Carlson Evans, who might be willing to participate in our discussion of her book. Lewis & Clark Library cardholders can access both the audio and e-book version on HooplaDigital.com and it's available for check-out.

Also, if you are interested, Diane Carlson Evans will appear with Kristin Hannah, author of *The Women* on **Wednesday, June 26** at the Civic Center. Tickets are selling for \$10 and \$30. The event is hosted by the Montana Book Company. [More info here.](#)



## Join the Book & Discussion Group!

Sue Hoell and Niki Whearty are co-chairing 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.

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.

## Montana League Members Attending the National Convention!

Eleven members from Montana are participating in the upcoming 2024 National Convention June 27 to June 30. Montana gets a total of 11 delegates, three from the state board and two each from our four local leagues.

Four members are attending in person: Rosanne Nash (Bozeman and State Board) and Yvonne Redmond (Bozeman), Pam Dimich (Billings), and Rebecca Johnson (Helena and State Board). Seven are attending virtually: DeeDee Wellhaven (Billings), Deb Knight (Bozeman), Becky Piske, Sharon Haugen, and Cherri Jones (Helena), Barb Holmes-Smith and Mary LaPorte (Missoula and State Board). Mary “Mickey” Harlow (Helena) will attend the convention as a non-delegate, virtually.

If you want to attend this convention, please notify our state president, Nancy Leifer at [nancleifer@gmail.com](mailto:nancleifer@gmail.com) and be sure to register by June 10.

More information about the Convention, the schedule of events, and the link to register can be found at the [LWVUS Convention webpage.](#)



# Local Government Review Committee Update



Members of the Local Government Committee—Barb Harris, Sue Hoell, Pat Bik, Sharon Haugen, Cherri Jones, and Mary Harlow—recently completed presentations about the ten-year local government review process to the Helena Citizens Council, the Helena Kiwanis Club, the Business Improvement District (BID) Board of Directors and then to the BID membership.

Committee members said the meetings were well attended and the audience engaged with the speakers. The Local Government Review Committee worked hard to bring this important subject to city and county residents so they would be well informed when faced with this issue on the June 4 primary ballot.

As it turned out, both the city and county “Study Commission Questions” did not pass. If voters had approved them, this LWVHA committee would have encouraged citizens to run for the City of Helena or Lewis and Clark County study committees. These citizen candidates would have then been elected in the November 5, 2024, general election, and the local government review process would then begin.

Unless the Montana Legislature changes the law, this option to review and change our local government structure will come up again in 2034. We hope the League is still going strong in ten years and will again endeavor to educate and involve citizens in the review process.

Our Local Government Review Committee laid the groundwork for continued outreach on governmental matters that impact our community and we congratulate them on their efforts.

## LWVHA features June 4 ballot issues at May Meeting

The Local Government Review Committee sponsored an informational public meeting during the May 13 membership meeting to help voters learn more about the issues that were on the June 4 primary election ballot.

Helena Police Chief Brett Petty and Fire Chief Jon Campbell presented information on the safety levy ballot issues and the bond issue for a new fire station, and answered questions from the committee and attendees during the meeting.

The Local Government Review ballot issue was presented by LWVHA Co-president Cherri Jones on its history, importance, and the process.

The meeting was offered in-person and via Zoom to members and the general public.



Barb Harris and Mary “Mickey” Harlow at the Kiwanis Club

## Representing LWV at HOMETOWN HELENA

The LWVHA thanks Mickey Harlow and Barb Harris for their dedication to learning about the current events in our greater Helena Area.

They regularly attend the weekly meetings of Hometown Helena that start bright and early at Helena College every Thursday at 7:00 am.

Both Mickey and Barb are recognized as LWV members and report on our League activities when asked to do so.

They also alert the LWVHA board to any new information from the Hometown Helena meeting that might be relevant to our LWVHA projects and topics.

***Thank you, you early birds,  
Mickey and Barb!***



Question to our members who vote ... that's probably ALL of us: *Have you seen our online VOTE411 LWV voter guide for any of the past two elections?*

Both our local Helena LWV and our Montana LWV organizations have worked to complete this VOTE411 online voter guide. We covered the May 7, June 4, and will cover the Nov 5 elections.

You can check the site by simply typing in "VOTE411." Once on site, your address is required so that the correct ballot information will then pop up on your screen. We encourage all members to check this site. Encourage your friends to use this site.

If you find errors or note missing information, please send an email to the VOTE411 Committee at [lwv.helena@gmail.com](mailto:lwv.helena@gmail.com). We appreciate your feedback!

With assistance from the Montana State Library, this poster was emailed to all libraries in Montana for the June 4 election and a General Election poster will be sent in September.

## Announcing the winners of the LWVHA Student Essay Contest!

First: **Nathaniel Fang**

Second: **Elizabeth Currier**

Third: **Eva Hicks**

Members Ann Gilkey and Sherry Meador organized the contest and Barb Harris donated the prize money. Their essays have been published on the [Montana LWV website here](#).

*The ability to vote is a privilege that generations before me have worked to obtain, and now it is my duty to earn that privilege and utilize their efforts, working to shape the world into something that I believe would be best for the future.*

-- Nathaniel Fang

**MONTANA VOTERS,**  
**ARE YOU READY TO VOTE?**

Election Day is **June 4, 2024**

Check your registration and get personalized ballot information at [VOTE411.org](https://VOTE411.org).

**READ**  
what Montana candidates  
are saying at [VOTE411.ORG](https://VOTE411.ORG)

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'  
OF MONTANA

VOTE411.org is a project of the League of Women Voters Education Fund

## 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—[lwv.helena@gmail.com](mailto:lwv.helena@gmail.com)**
- For more information, contact Sherry Meador at [lwv.helena@gmail.com](mailto:lwv.helena@gmail.com).

## Voter Registration Rock Stars!

**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.**

Over the last month, our voter registration volunteers registered 77 voters at senior centers, the Helena pre-release center, at drop boxes around Helena, Shodair Hospital, Library, county jail, the naturalization ceremony at the US Citizenship & Immigration Services office, the Helena Parole Office, and at Boyd Andrew Community Center. Volunteers also handed out many mail-in VR forms to folks who wanted to vote in the Primary Election. We also gave out 250 voter guides to voters all around Helena. Our volunteers also worked with teens involved with The Democracy Project to register voters at Lewis & Clark Library. **BIG thank you to DeeDee, Kerry, Nancy, Clare, Rebecca, Becky, Janet, Lynn, Pat, Sher, Nicole, Cathy, Felomina, Susan D, Carol, Judy, Chandra, Pat, Susan E, and Laura.**

Becky, Rebecca and Nicole helped voters in the county jail complete their ballots for the School and Primary Elections to ensure their vote counted. For the first time, we were called by the Elections Office to assist a voter who is legally blind to help this voter complete their ballot.

Another first was our participation in the East Helena Memorial Day Parade. We handed out lots of candy, future voter stickers, and voting plan cards. We received many thanks for marching in the parade. Thank you Cathy, Becky, Paul, Laura, Janet, Sharon, Kerry, Will, Felomina, Cherri, and Bob for your efforts showing how much the League respects our veterans and their commitment to our country. Thank you, Will, for carrying the U.S. flag.

***You are invited to march in the Last Chance Stampede Parade on July 27 and the PRIDE Parade on August 3. If interested, email Rebecca at [rebeccainmt@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccainmt@gmail.com).***



L-R front row: Carol Bruderer and Susan Duncan. Back row: Cathy Duncan, Pat Bik, Clare Kearns, Judy Fjell at the US Citizenship & Immigration Field Office in Helena for the Naturalization Ceremony on April 18th.



L-R: Kerry Krebill, Janet Gates, Laura Gerlach, Will Garvin, Sharon Haugen, Paul Pacini, Becky Piske, Rebecca Johnson, Bob Jones and the photographer was Cherri Jones.



Lynn, Pat and Nancy at the Naturalization Ceremony in Helena on May 16th

## Helena Area Voter Registration Opportunities

Visit this [website](#) to see where volunteers are needed.

**If you have received training, go ahead and register for an open spot. If you are new to voter registration, contact Rebecca at (406) 223-4300 or send her an email at [rebeccainmt@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccainmt@gmail.com).**

## More Voter Registration Rock Stars!



Lynn and Felomina

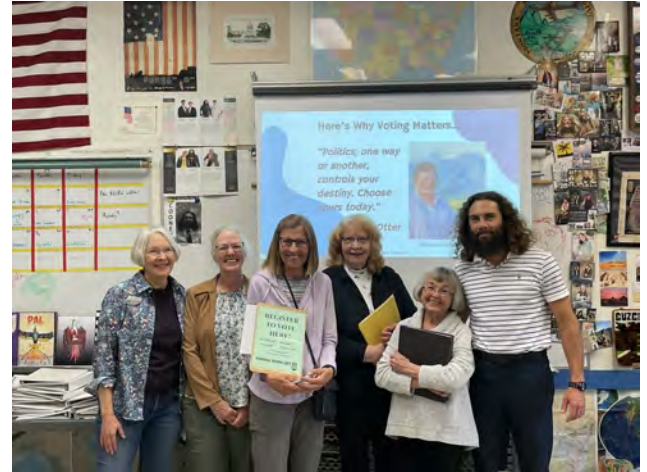


Clare, Ronnie and Nancy



Cathy and Becky at the Library

## Civic Ed Presentations!



Cherri Jones, Rebecca Johnson, DeeDee Cress, Kathy McNeill, and Darien Scott with PAL teacher Mr. Cooney.

In May, league members Becky and Rebecca presented the Nitty Gritty of Voting and Suffrage Timeline presentations to students at Boyd Andrew Community Service Center. While there, Becky assisted one student who needed help reading his ballot to vote in the Primary Election.

Kathy, Darien, and Rebecca presented the Suffrage Timeline presentation to students at PAL High School with assistance from DeeDee and Cherri. Laura and Rebecca presented the Nitty Gritty of Voting presentation to students at CTI as well. Please welcome our newest presenter Kathy.

Our presenter team is growing! If interested in being part of the presenter team, please email Rebecca at [rebeccainmt@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccainmt@gmail.com).

*"Our volunteer work matters. Over the past months, VR volunteers have registered eligible folks in the county jail which came full circle with Becky, an election judge, helping a young voter recently out of jail to get his ballot completed for the upcoming school election to have his voice counted. It is quite amazing to see the end results of our VR work when an eligible voter experiencing obstacles to voting, casts his vote in our elections. No obstacle is too big for determined volunteers to ensure every voter and their vote matters."*

— Rebecca Johnson, State LWV Voter Services Chair

## 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 at [rebeccainmt@gmail.com](mailto: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.