

THE **V**oter

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF SPOKANE AREA

VOLUME LXXXVIII ISSUE 9, September 2025

A printable version of *The Voter* is available at LWVSpokane.org

A Message from Sue and Ruth *September Kickoff*

We hope you all found moments of peace and joy in your summer. As we kick off the coming year for LWVSA, there is much to share with all of you.

First of all, we are delighted with our new board and how well we work together. What a team! Here are the things we are currently working on and changes you can expect to see:

1) Our September 9th general membership meeting will kick off the 2025/26 League season as we take on the subject of "A Constitutional Crisis: Let's Talk About It!" From 5:00 to 6:00pm, a panel of distinguished guests will offer their perspectives on the topic followed by time for questions from you.

2) Also at the Sept. 9 meeting, each LWVSA committee will host a table to share information about activities and how you might get involved. Committee chairs will be available during our social time (4:30-5pm) and after the panel discussion (6:15-7pm). This will give each of you personal one-on-one time to

Message from Sue and Ruth cont'd on page 2

September Calendar

LWVSA Board Meeting, Sept. 4, 5pm-7pm
on Zoom, email ruthmay250@gmail.com for meeting link

AH&HS Comm. Meeting, Sunday, Sept. 7, 5:30pm-6:30pm on Zoom email lwvsaaahs@gmail.com for meeting link

General Membership Meeting and Committee Faire, Sept. 9, Panel discussion-5pm-6pm "A Constitutional Crisis: Let's Talk About It." Committee Faire at 4:30-5pm and again after the program from 6:15-7pm.

Redistricting Committee Meeting, Sept. 18, 3pm, Liberty Park Library, Room B

The Voter Newsletter Deadline is Friday, Sept. 19. Send info to: corderographics@gmail.com

Immigration Committee Meeting, Tuesday, Sept. 23, 7pm-8:30pm on Zoom email lchadez@gmail.com for link.

League Orientation and Lunch, Wed, Sept 24, 11am-1pm See page 10 for details.

Environmental Issues Meeting, Sept 25 6:30-8pm on Zoom, email acomp4274@gmail.com

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explore how your interests, skills, experience and curiosities might fit into ongoing committee work.

3) A board priority is to improve support and communications with our working committees. Moving forward each committee will have a board liaison.

4) Lastly, a new fundraising strategy is being launched as we look to a financially sustainable future for LWVSA. See the article on page 4 from treasurer Mike Bell. New board member Emily Grizzell is assisting him with this project.

Our working committees are lining up a series of fall programs for monthly general membership meetings. Each meeting will be designed to educate, inspire and fortify us in this coming year.

As an organization dedicated to empowering voters and defending democracy, our challeng-

es are great at this moment in time, but with support from the national and Washington State LWV, we will work to stay abreast of the current flood of fast moving developments.

Each one of us is challenged in our League work as we navigate today's troubled waters. We encourage you to keep yourself informed — always according to your own level of engagement and interest — by reading the Washington State and national LWV newsletters when they arrive in your inbox. For our part, we will monitor and regularly share announcements and action items as they arise. See page 3 - Heads Up ... for an example.

You are always welcome to contact either of us with any questions or comments. We welcome your input.

Moving forward together!

Sue and Ruth

Affordable Housing & Homeless Solutions (AH&HS)

Excelsior: A Holistic Approach to Wellness and Care

by Stacey Mainer

On June 23, 2025, three members of the Affordable Housing and Homelessness Solutions committee had the privilege of meeting with Andrew Hill, CEO of Excelsior.

Excelsior traces its history back to 1905, when the Good Shepherd Sisters opened their doors during the Industrial Revolution. Spokane and Seattle were among the last stops for "Orphan Trains" that carried children out west. In 1975, Excelsior formally became the organization it is today—one of the region's largest nonprofits. Remarkably, some employees have been serving there for nearly 50 years.

Programs and Services

Excelsior provides integrated behavioral health, wellness, and primary care for Spokane residents through three main programs:

- **Excelsior Wellness Center** – Serving children and youth from birth to 21 with complex behavioral needs. The center emphasizes family involvement, intensive outpatient counseling, peer support, advocacy, and care coordination. The goal is to prevent inpatient placement whenever possible. The Excelsior team



Andrew Hill, CEO of Excelsior

is available to families 24/7.

- **Excelsior Family Medicine** – A community-based family practice that offers comprehensive medical care through physicians, nurse practitioners, and counselors. This family practice is open to people of all age and welcome people living in the neighborhood and in Spokane.
- **Excelsior Integrated Care Center** – Supporting young adults with behavioral health and primary care needs, this program focuses on permanent housing and employment. One key initiative is LifePoint, which provides transitional housing for young adults leaving foster care, experiencing homelessness, or recovering from mental health challenges. LifePoint offers a supportive environment that helps participants move toward independence.

Volunteer options are available working in the clothes and food bank.

New Initiatives

Andrew Hill also shared two exciting initiatives:

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Excelsior cont'd from page 2

1. The Wellness Village – A planned development on Excelsior's 35-acre campus that will include multifamily housing, single-family homes, skilled nursing and memory care, and local businesses. Designed to foster interaction across generations, the Wellness Village will provide long-term funding for Excelsior's programs. Community engagement with neighbors will be central to its success.

2. Transitional Housing Units – A more immediate project will add 24 housing units near Northwest Boulevard. These will provide young adults and adults with stable housing and access to vocational mentoring. The long-term vision includes building additional clusters of 24 units,

each centered on mentorship and workforce development.

A Holistic Philosophy

Under Andrew Hill's leadership, Excelsior is committed to holistic care. Their philosophy is to meet each client where they are—physically, emotionally, mentally, intellectually, financially, socially, and spiritually. By integrating education, behavioral health, primary care, and social services, Excelsior builds a foundation for long-term wellness and recovery.

At every step, Excelsior strives to create partnerships, place clients at the center of care, and walk alongside them on their journey toward wellness and independence.

Heads Up — Ready, Set...Inform Yourself! — Be On the Lookout

Heads Up — Registration Open

Sept 9 — LWVWA's MEDIA & NEWS LITERACY: EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP NO. 1

<https://lwwwa.org/event-6258008?CalendarViewType=1&SelectedDate=9/30/2025>

Sept. 16 — LWVWA's A DEMOCRACY POWER-UP: CRAFTING A WINNING LETTER TO THE EDITOR

<https://lwwwa.org/event-6289607?CalendarViewType=1&SelectedDate=9/30/2025>

Oct. 28 — LWVWA's MEDIA & NEWS LITERACY: EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP NO. 2

<https://lwwwa.org/event-6258009?CalendarViewType=1&SelectedDate=10/30/2025>

Ready, Set...Inform Yourself!

LWVWA Resisting Threats to Democracy (member login required for access)

<https://lwwwa.org/RTD-for-members/>

LWVUS Opposes Mid-Cycle Redistricting

<https://www.lvv.org/newsroom/press-releases/league-governors-protect-communities-draw-equitable-mid-cycle-maps>

LWVUS Supports Mail-In Voting

<https://www.lvv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lvv-statement-mail-ballots-and-voting-machines>

Be On the Lookout...for direction from LWVWA & LWVUS

Initiative Measure No. IL26-126 — Proof of citizenship to register to vote

[https://ballotpedia.org/Washington_Require_Proof_of_Citizenship_for_Voter_Registration_Initiative_\(2026\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Washington_Require_Proof_of_Citizenship_for_Voter_Registration_Initiative_(2026))

John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act Amendment — REINTRODUCED

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/14>

**The deadline is September 19 for October issue of *THE VOTER*.
Email submissions to Julie at corderographics@gmail.com**

Donations Allow the Local League to Succeed

by Mike Bell

Did you know? Membership dues cover only about one-fourth of the League of Women Voters Spokane Area (LWVSA) annual operating costs. Donations and contributions cover the rest of the LWVSA's operating needs. I mention this to emphasize how important member donations are to LWVSA's continued success.

How does it work? Membership dues and the method they have been collected have been re-structured recently. Under the new nationwide guidelines, no matter what membership dues amount is paid, the local leagues will only receive 20% while the national and state organizations will receive 80%. None of these payments will be considered a donation.

An example: Under the previous dues method, when a member paid dues of \$150, the first \$75 was shared between the local, state and national organizations. Then 100% of the remaining \$75 was retained by the local league as a contribution. In total the LWVSA retained about \$99 (\$24 from dues plus \$75 from what remained of the \$150).

Under the new method, a dues payment of \$150 from the same member would result in the local league receiving \$30 (20%) while the state and national leagues would share \$120 (80%).

What can you do to help? The LWVUS website now offers members the ability to make separate donations to the local league, state and national organizations. Caution: If the donation does not specify a recipient, the donation will be split between the local league (20%) and state and national organizations (80%). If members intend to donate to the LWVSA through the LWVUS website, please be sure to select the Spokane chapter as the recipient.

There are several other ways to donate to the LWVSA:

- Direct contributions to the LWVSA through our website: <https://my.lwv.org/washington/spokane-area/donate>

These donations are **not tax deductible** because the local league's tax exempt status is 501(c)(4) for organizations allowed to lobby and advocate for or against specific issues.

Indirect contributions to the LWVWA Education

Fund (Education Fund); https://secure.everyaction.com/tx_dUrGil0CeeSbW8xx0Eg2 These contributions **are tax deductible** because the Education Fund is a 501(c)(3) organization. Please make sure you designate the LWVSA (Spokane) as the recipient of the donation. This designation is made at the bottom of the donation form. The LWVSA can then request reimbursement from the Education Fund for program expenses that are consistent with the IRS regulations governing 501(c)(3) organizations.

- **Important and Little Known Option:** Donations from IRA retirement plans. The IRS regulations allow donations made directly to a 501 (c)(3) organization such as the LWVWA Education Fund from a traditional IRA, rollover IRA, or inherited IRA. These donations are a reduction of the annual required minimum distribution (RMD) and a reduction of the donor's taxable income dollar for dollar. For those members with IRA's this election almost guarantees a tax benefit from the contribution. If interested, please review the following information from the IRS.

<https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/retirement-plans-faqs-regarding-iras-distributions-withdrawals>

Other questions? If anyone has any questions about the topic of donations, please contact Michael Bell, Treasurer, LWVSA, email: MRBELLCPA@gmail.com



Board of Directors

Co-President	2 year Co-President Ruth May
Co-President	2 year Co-President Sue Irwin
Treasurer	1 year Treasurer Mike Bell
Secretary	2 year Secretary Samantha Armstrong Ash
Directors	1 year Director Emily Grizzell
	1 year Director Elaine Harger
	1 year Director Kathy West

Environmental Committee Updates

Spokane Waste-to-Energy Tour — A must for your bucket list!

by Amy Compestine

Off the beaten track in Airway Heights is the Spokane Waste-to-Energy plant, the only one of its kind on this side of the country — the closest one to Spokane's is in Oklahoma!

Members of the Environmental Issues Committee toured the Waste-to-Energy (WTE) plant on June 12th, where we learned a lot!

Here is a photo tour of some of the highlights, but a live, in-person tour is not to be missed!

Our guide, Jill Reeves, started with a brief history of the plant and how it operates. The site was built in the 80's, started operating in 1991, and burns 800 tons of garbage per day. Trash is brought to the WTE plant by commercial haulers (Waste Management, Sunshine, Empire), and by individuals, with about 500 vehicles arriving and dumping per day. The most interesting fact we learned on the tour is that ALL trash from Antarctica (!) is sent in refrigerated shipping containers to Spokane for disposal.



Here is a diagram of the plant

This facility was built as a better solution to landfills, because as trash decomposes in landfills harmful things leach into the underlying soil, get into the aquifer, contaminating our drinking water. Plus organic matter in landfills produces methane.

Trash is unloaded from vehicles onto the tipping floor, where bulldozers push it into a pit, piled



Above: Mountain of trash.



Left: 5pm at energy-station-no more trash!

up to 4 stories high! The trash is mixed by “Claude the Claw” to fluff and aerate into a yummy “garbage salad” to dry, which is necessary to produce a uniform burn. (Green waste and recycling is brought to the WM recycling center next door.)

Claude drops the trash into a hopper, where it is moved into the furnace, burns at 2500°F and heats a water tank to create steam energy. There are 2 boilers (i.e. furnaces), with space for one more if needed, but the cost today of installing a 3rd boiler would be the same price as building the entire plant in the late 1980s. The water is turned into steam from the boilers, and water is condensed and recirculated to be reused. There is a 20% water loss in the process, which is the water vapor seen leaving the tall 170ft “smoke” stack.

The ash byproduct is mixed with water, creating a “play dough” consistency, then sprayed with lime slurry to stabilize it. The vapor and fly ash is also treated with lime, to contain any harmful chemicals so that wherever it ends up doesn't leach into soil or groundwater, then goes through cloth filters before the cleaned air is released from the “smoke” stack. This process emits CO₂, but no methane. The resulting ash in various states (big clumps down to a fine powder ash) is sold to a landfill in Oregon,

Tour cont'd on page 6



or shipped to other facilities for potential reuse (e.g. road paving), with hopes that more uses for the ash byproduct will be developed in the future.



After we saw trash mountain, we moved to the control room, where we met Joel, who was monitoring steam flows, boiler temps, infrared temps, the ash system, and other information from across the site.

The control room has 8 screens monitoring and trending data, and 2 video screens from all the cameras, showing what is going on around the site. There are also many analog dials and gauges and buttons they don't want you to push! The plant is required to report certain data to EPA and/or Department of Energy from all the information they collect throughout the site.

We saw the furnace burning the trash with a white-hot flame and stalactites on the ceiling from certain heavy metals.

Once a year they clean out the furnace and do regular maintenance, which includes knocking stalactites down and scraping all the surfaces.

We saw the giant pipe called "the Dragon" where steam goes into the condenser to cool and get re-used.

As we concluded the tour, the tipping floor was closing for the day. After 5pm, trash is no longer brought to the site, but the plant operates 24/7 to keep moving trash into the furnace and create steam energy. Spokane WTE sells electricity

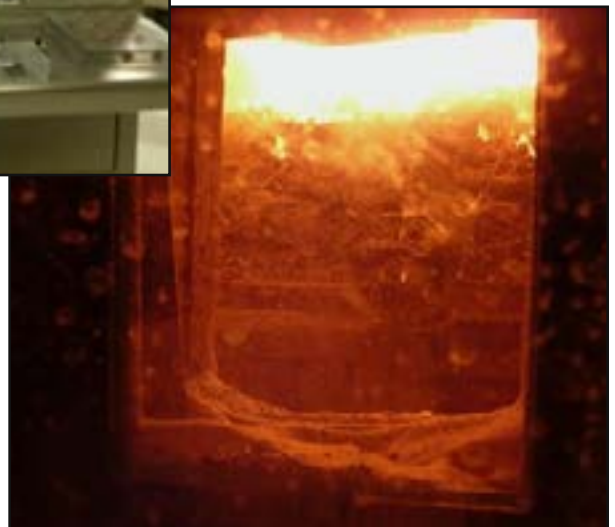


Top left: Operator with screens

Top right: dragon pipe and diagram

Left: dials and gauges

Below: furnace window and flames



to Avista which supplies it to 13,000 homes in the area.

This is not a perfect or completely green process, as there is some waste and emissions generated, but this plant exists because there is so much garbage that needs to be handled.

We simply couldn't show you everything, and highly recommend going see it for yourself!

Want to meet Claude the Claw?

Follow the marmots?

Sign up for your own tour to learn more!

For more information about the waste ambassador program, and to sign up for tours and more click here: <https://ambassadors.spokanecountysolidwaste.org/>

Immigration Committee Updates

Immigration Committee Poised for Action

Committee Co-Chairs: Julia Presar and Louise Chadez
Submitted by: Susan Hales, Immigration Committee Member

Our League's new Immigration Committee is moving forward with subcommittees organizing several planned actions focused on learning about and connecting with immigrant communities in our area and furthering the LWV Civic Education mission.

Event and Action Highlights:

Cross-Cultural Learning Subcommittee (Susan Hales and Louise Chadez, Chairs) is collaborating with local nonprofit organizations to present cross-cultural learning workshops for League members and the public. The first will be in early November at the Women's Club (428 W. 9th Ave.). A follow-up workshop will be in late January. Look for details at the General Meeting on September 9.

Welcoming Immigrants Subcommittee (Julia Presar, Chair) is planning presentations on the LWV State Study "Welcoming Immigrants to Washington State" (Nov. 2024).

Also mark your calendars for Tuesday, October 14. Heather Richardson, Director, English Language Development, SPS, will speak about how our schools help immigrant students learning English.

Subcommittee on Partnering with Immigrant Led/Support Organizations (Alysha Brady, Chair) is conducting outreach and collaborating with the other subcommittees on concrete action steps.

Subcommittee on Assisting Immigrants in Care-giving Roles (Louise Chadez, Chair) is currently conducting research.

Suggested Actions for All League Members to Support Immigrants:

- Support immigrants by patronizing businesses owned by immigrants and others in BIPOC communities. See AHANA's Multi-Ethnic Business Directory at: ahana-meba.org
- Continue outreach to nonprofits working directly with area immigrants and submit volunteer applications. Latinos en Spokane (latinosenspokane.org) is calling for September event volunteers, Nuestras Raices ask us to go to nuestrasraiceswa.org and follow instructions to get involved. IRC (kimberly.curry@rescue.org) has a call out now for tax prep volunteers.

Immigration Committee Meetings

are on Zoom on the 4th Tuesdays of the month, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm. All are welcome! Please join us! Email ichadez@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Thank You New & Renewed Members!



NEW MEMBERS

Jeanine Ehrig
Brandie Otter
Linda Prussack
Nora Scott
Rylie Van Court

RENEWED MEMBERS

Cynthia Villines
Betty Wells
Sally Philips

(since 8-26-25)

Voter Services Report

Volunteers make the League's voter outreach in Spokane possible! Thanks to all who step up to lend a hand!

by Elaine Harger

In July and August, volunteers guaranteed the League was present at three out of four opportunities — Freedom in the Arboretum on July 4, Chief Garry Neighborhood's Annual Picnic on July 19, and Garland Pride on August 16. Sadly, no volunteers signed up to help for Unity in the Community and so, for the first time since the pandemic, the League was not present at this annual gathering of community organizations in Riverfront Park.

Several new League members are learning the ropes of tabling and the importance of:

- eye contact
- friendly demeanor
- nonpartisan
- quick questions
- invitation to engage in activity

Our most recent event, Garland Pride, featured a voting activity based on the event's theme The Wizard of Oz. The LWVSA activity had voters choose which traits represented by the various characters from Oz are most needed in today's world. Here are the results:

- Love (represented by the Tin Man) -- 27 votes
- Courage (represented by the Cowardly Lion) -- 22 votes
- Welcoming Communities (represented by the Munchkins of Oz) -- 20 votes
- Truth (represented by Dorothy's admonition

of the Wizard of Oz) -- 17 votes

- Deep Thinking (represented by the Scarecrow) -- 10 votes

Write-in candidates included:

- All the above -- 3 votes
- Solidarity (local, national, international) -- 1 vote
- Empathy -- 1 vote
- Assume positive intent -- 1 vote

A total of 101 votes were cast, which means LWVSA engaged one-on-one with at least that many people. Many thanks to the outreach efforts of Alysha, Darla, Stephanie, Briana, Brandie, and Suzi.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

Logan Block Party — Friday, September 12 from 4-7pm at Mission Park, 1208 E. Mission Ave. in Spokane. This annual event brings together neighbors across Logan and the Gonzaga community to celebrate, have fun, and get to know one another.

Valley Fest — Saturday, September 20 from 10am-4pm at Mirabeau Point Park, 13500 E Mirabeau Parkway in Spokane Valley. Another annual event for the City of Spokane Valley and friends.

Contact me at eharger@drizzle.com if you'd like to volunteer for any of these events.

We need you!

Defending democracy starts at home.

State and national elections are important, of course, but the real change and infrastructure for democracy is local. Community boards and commissions are the beginning and frequently the end of democracy. Think about school, planning, park, and library boards. This is where League members play an important role in securing democracy.

Attend, testify, and observe meetings. Better yet, apply to be on a board.

<https://www.spokanecounty.gov/2061/Current-Vacancies>

<https://my.spokanecity.org/bcc/>

https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/MonthlyOutreachReport_1.pdf

How can you get involved in LWV – Spokane Area?

by Julia Presar

Look through opportunities in the Volunteer Corner and connect with those people.

Read the updates in this Voter from Committees and reach out to the author if you want more information about what you read.

Go the website <https://my.lwv.org/washington/spokane-area> and peruse the calendar, the issues and the Member Handbook <https://my.lwv.org/washington/spokane-area/members-only/member-handbook-organizational-chart-bylaws-standing-committees-annual-report-more>

As a wise LWV - Spokane Area member once said, “The League is not a train that you jump on. It is a wagon, and you can either pull it or push it, but it won’t move unless you reach out and grab hold.”

Volunteer Corner – Grab the Wagon!	
Opportunities	Contacts
Are you a public speaker? You can give presentations to high school classes, business, immigrant and religious organizations. Topics include civics education and voter information.	Reach out to Beth Pelliciotti pelliccmb@gmail.com
Do you want to welcome new citizens to democracy and voting? You can work with a partner and register naturalized citizens to vote at events throughout the summer.	Reach out to Sally Phillips phillips1948@comcast.net
Do you like connecting with people in a casual environment? Do you have ideas about how to engage the public in a fair/festival setting? Thoughts on table-top games? You could give input on innovative ways to encourage civic action.	Reach out to Elaine Harger eharger@drizzle.com
Are you comfortable in online meetings? You could attend a monthly zoom meeting where people share league activities around the state and then report back to the LWVSA board.	Reach out to Lunell Haight lh1@fasmail.com
Do you enjoy listening, learning and taking notes? You could observe local meetings (government, advocacy) and then report back to the Observer Corp or the Affordable Housing/Homelessness Committee.	Reach out to Sue Irwin for local government meetings sgirwin@gmail.com or to Sherri Gangitano lwvsaahhs@gmail.com for meetings regarding housing.

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

Welcoming Committee Updates

by Lunell Haught

Welcome Committee: Orientation and any/all member and guest Lunches

On the Fourth Wednesday of the month the Welcome Committee presents basic League information to members at 11 am. This is followed by a no-host lunch – come for part or all of this informal, informative gathering at Frankie Doodle's 30 E Third in Spokane, free parking, on a bus line. Let Lunell know if you can join us lh1@fastmail.com. If you forget to let her know come anyway, you're always welcome!

Deep Dives

There is a place for you on a state study committee. Why do state studies matter?

The only way the League can comment on and promote public policy is if the League has a 'position' on the issue. This means that a state-wide committee has studied it, the study has gone to each of our 2500 members and they have met in local groups to come to consensus (not vote) on what our position/recommendations should be about the issue, and it has been adopted. This means League members have taken a deep dive into an issue.

The most valuable thing the League has is its credibility. We know this from internal and external assessments about the League. Credibility is built on understanding what/why we're advocating.

You can do more than just be concerned about Housing, Treaty Rights, and the State of Democracy in Washington. These three issues are the subject of state studies that you can join. East side members should be on these committees (this means you). It is a huge learning experience and you can do as much or as little as you want. There are many important roles you can choose from, there are usually at least a dozen people on a committee, and you can meet people you never thought you'd know. This is one of the richest parts of your League membership. Don't miss the opportunity-this is what you paid for!

Contact Lunell Haught lh1@fastmail.com for details.

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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