

From the President

Jean Richardson

Who Do We Choose To Be?

The League of Women Voters is famous for being a nonpartisan organization. That is one of the things that draws people to us. This means that, while each individual member is likely politically engaged, the organization and its activities are strictly nonpartisan. The trick is for us to protect our mission through careful adherence to nonpartisanship while we act on behalf of the League—for instance, at tabling events, observing public meetings, and, arguably, at our general membership meeting. Parties, their influence, and public policy change. The League is always focused on its mission.

I can tell you that this is a space in which I can struggle when under emotional duress in relation to the issues of the times. My specific role binds me to nonpartisanship more broadly than almost any other League member. In the few months I have been in office, however, I have noted that more experienced League members are able to keep moving forward on the work of defending democracy and empowering voters and are skilled at setting aside topics that could be partisan in favor of focusing on topics that align with the mission. It's a discipline.

Many people who are dear to me are not necessarily politically aligned with me. This could likely, if I were to poll them, which I don't intend to do, include much of my family. We have similarities in our thinking, but our worldviews differ. It also includes a friend who is much younger than I am (she was born the year Star Wars first

hit the screen) and a former fiancée who—after a somewhat brief and intense rift—has become one of my closest friends. He was one of the people who called to check on me the week that the fires around our city made national news this summer. We stay up until all hours discussing current events and solving the world's problems—even though we disagree about a lot.

I have learned so much from talking with and listening to people who think differently than I do. It's a discipline that has enriched my life and broadened my understanding of the world and at least some of the people in it. There's nothing better than that.

A number of years ago, my younger friend and I decided to have a long and deep conversation about a hot button issue that we knew we disagreed on—something that's in the news a lot. And, after a few hours we were surprised—at least I was surprised—that we were looking at the same evidence for our arguments and coming to two very different conclusions about the best course of action for society. She has four children, and I recently gave her my complete set of the Encyclopedia Britannica Great Books because I knew she was one of the few people who loved learning and reading as much as I do, and her young family could make better use of those books than I would at this point.

And that old flame, well, he acknowledges that he's not quite sure women have souls, though he finds their thinking fascinating. And, he's pretty sure that women entering the workplace has led to a steady decline in our society overall. Yet, there's so much we do agree on. Well, we must have agreed on a few things, right?

When we come together as League members, we come together in common cause: Defending democracy. Empowering voters. This is a big ocean to tip your toe into. This year, we recognize that as we continue to recover from the social, systemic, and immunological impacts of the pandemic, for most of us, this is like coming up from the bottom of the deep end of the pool. The pressure seems to both increase and decrease as you near the surface—and you're not quite sure whether you can breathe. Then, just as you reach the surface someone says something that presses a button you had forgotten you had.

When we come together to defend democracy and empower voters, we encounter deeply held beliefs. In our enthusiasm to support and forward that mission, the tender places are exposed. There are many skills for handling those moments when the temperature of a conversation rises—including the old "count to ten." I used to teach teams a version of "stop, drop, and roll," a phrase used to remind people how to put out the fire if they themselves are aflame. For our purposes, it may be enough to simply acknowledge that we suddenly have realized how deeply we care about the topic under discussion as well as the fact that we are here, now to defend democracy and empower voters. We can let our mission align us while we are functioning as League members.

And then, no matter what side of what issues we land on, we walk our talk and get out there and vote—and help others to do the same.

Summary of Board Meeting - December 20, 2023

- Ann Murphy led a discussion on the request by the State LWV for local league involvement with the State's redistricting committee. A proposal will be brought to the Board in January.
- Approved the Financial Report presented by Treasurer Mike Bell.
- Approved a request to pay a member's dues.
- Approved having an issue forum on the upcoming Spokane City Library District levy. Voter Services Chair, Elaine Harger will coordinate this.
- Discussed participation in the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference on January 27. This would include having a table and speaker on voting rights. Beth Pellicciotti will follow-up on this.
- Approved participation in the LWVWA Video Contest. This is a Civics program with local high school students. Beth and Elaine will work on language in the notification going out to regional school superintendents and principals.
- Approved request from the Affordable Housing & Homeless Solutions Committee to become a General Sponsor of the 2024 Spokane Homeless Connect event on January 25, 2024.
- Approved monthly reports for the Membership and Housing and AHHS Committees.
- Discussed revitalizing the Observer Corps including extending training to high school students. Carol Landa-McVicker is reviewing the online materials and agreed to be listed on the website as the contact person. This is an ongoing discussion.
- Approved Program Planning for the January 7 General Meeting to be held in person at the Shadle Library. Lin McGin will coordinate this.

The need for more active involvement by members was discussed throughout the meeting.

- Pam Joyner is chairing the Nominating Committee and desperately needs volunteers to help with this and assure future leadership for LWVSA. Please contact Pam if you would like to serve on the committee or are interested in a board position next year, including President.

Our board meetings are held the 3 rd Wednesday of each month via Zoom.

All members are welcome to attend. Jean asked that members reach out to her at jean@azuregate.net to express interest in attending and receive a Zoom link.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2024, 4-6 p.m.
For more details regarding the July Board meeting, please contact Carol Landa-McVicker at cj_99224@yahoo.com

It is Time to Renew Your Membership!

Membership Renewals Due Now

With so much at stake—voting rights, civic education, new Spokane County Commissioner districts—your continued membership is vital.

Thank you for the important work you made possible through your membership in the League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area in 2023. Because of your ongoing support, our efforts to empower voters and defend democracy moved forward, despite these difficult times. Please renew your support for next year. It is easy to forget whether you paid this year or last year in these hectic times. Please check your records and verify. **Members whose renewals are not received before January 31 will be removed from both our local and the national database on that date.**

Use your credit card online at lwvspokane.org and click "Join/Renew." <https://my.lwv.org/washington/spokane-area/join-or-renew-form>

OR You can fill out the form on the web site, print and send it with your check. If you have any questions call or email our treasurer, Mike Bell, at 509-710-3892 email mrbellcpa@gmail.com.

Thank you for standing with your League. Wishing you all the best in the coming year!

The Voter January 2024

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Calendar

JANUARY 2024

Tuesday, January 9 - 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
First General Meeting - In-Person only
Program Planning for 2024
Shadle Park Library, 2111 W. Wellesley Ave

Friday, January 12 • 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
LWVSA Luncheon
At The Osprey Restaurant, Inside Ruby River Hotel 700 N Division St. Spokane, WA 99202

Thursday, January 11 • 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
How League Works
Orientation for new and not-so-new members on zoom

OR IN PERSON ON
Saturday, January 30 • 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
How League Works
Orientation for new and not-so-new members with catered lunch (order ahead) at Spokane Public Central Library (just off the central STA line). SIGN UP WITH Lunell Haught 509.443.1319 (land line/no text) Lh1@fastmail.com for in person or Zoom

Wednesday, January 17 • 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
LWVSA Board Meeting
Our board meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month via Zoom. All members are welcome to attend. Jean asked that members reach out to her at jean@azuregate.net to express interest in attending and receive a Zoom link **by Jan. 16th.**

January 22 – 26, 2024 6 pm - 8 pm
Lobby Week
Contact Lunell regarding Lobby Week Attendance Lunell Haught 509.443.1319 (land line/no text)



Lunch with the League!

LWV Spokane Area Luncheon

Friday, January 12, 12pm to 1pm

The Osprey restaurant, Inside Ruby River Hotel, 700 N. Division Street 99202

RSVP to Jean Richardson at jeanazuregate.net or 509-788-8998 (texts are welcome)

Join us! First General Meeting 2024

January 9, 2024

Program Planning for 2024

Help us set a course for next year -
“Making Democracy Work!”

**At the Shadle Park Library
5:30 - 7:00 pm
2111 W. Wellesley Ave.**

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. We empower voters and defend democracy through advocacy, education, and litigation, at the local, state, and national levels.

Nominations Committee Members Urgently Needed

To move forward with the nominations process for next year, we urgently need two more nominations committee members. Please contact Pamela Joyner 509-236-2441 or joynerpam@gmail.com

Shew will provide you with materials on the duties of committee members and the guidelines for the committee.



Board of Directors

President - Jean Richardson

Vice President - Pamela Joyner

Treasurer - Mike Bell

Secretary - Carol Lander-McVicker

Director - Lin McGinn

Director - Elaine Harger

**New Newsletter
Deadlines for 2024.
See last page for
more info.**



AHHS - Affordable Housing and Homelessness Solutions

Becky Dickerhoff

We are looking forward to the New Year and how our unsheltered community will be affected by the political changes with hope and trepidation. The Salvation Army will continue to manage TRAC until at least April. This was a difficult situation for the city. The TRAC has gone way over budget, and the council was given few options to deal with the growing concern about the facility and how it is managed. Our committee will be present at the Spokane Homeless Connect on Jan 25 and the Spokane Valley Homeless Connect later in the year. This is an opportunity for us to register members of this community.

We also want to share with you the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance's recently released Roadmap to Housing Justice. Fund Housing at the scale of need. Stabilize rents statewide. Create equitable access to homeownership. Make rules and laws clear and fair so that tenants can have safe, healthy homes. Build a future of racial justice and social equity into housing policies. Pass policies and invest resources so that people can thrive. Protect people experiencing homelessness until everyone has a home. Prevent homelessness by taking care of our neighbors.

Our committee has also chosen to spend a morning preparing many PB&J sandwiches to be distributed to our currently unsheltered community. We encourage all our League members to remember while we see many, up to a thousand, unsheltered individuals on our streets, there are thousands more who are living in RVs, basements, and on friends' couches, etc. Mead school district estimates over 400 students in their schools are unhoused. This is the season of compassion, and we need to remember to pass that on every day of the year.



Membership

Membership Sessions

I Had No Idea the League of Women Voters Did That

As a League member, you can make your League membership a part-time, full-time or no-time job. You can also be quite active, take time off, or change areas of interest and participation.

League membership can be rewarding, but sometimes it's confusing. Guidance and learning short cuts to get what you want out of your membership is available at two orientation sessions being offered in January. Regardless of how long you've been a member you are welcome to join these sessions. The purpose of these sessions is to demystify League (why do they do it that way?) and ensure your membership gives you what you are looking for. Some people join to meet people with similar interests, to promote a civic agenda, or to work with youth, to name a few options. This is your invitation to become an 'insider'.

Please join Lunell Haught Lh1@fastmail.com in person on Zoom from 7 to 8:30 pm on Thursday, January 11 by sending her an email – you'll get a zoom link to attend. Alternatively, the same program will be presented at a no-host catered lunch at the Central Spokane Public Library from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm on Saturday, January 13. Send Lh1@fastmail.com an email and you'll get the menu selections. You don't have to get a lunch to attend: You are welcome to bring your own lunch, instead.

Lobby Week January 22 – 26, 2024

The Washington State legislative session begins January 8 for its short (60 day) session. <https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Overview.aspx>

Legislation will be moving quickly. The LWVWA has identified bills to support or oppose based on League positions <https://lwwa.org/league-positions> recommended by LWVWA 13 Issue Chairs (volunteer lobbyists) <https://lwwa.org/Lobby-Team-Bios>. The visits of League members during Lobby Week reinforces the grass roots commitment to our priorities. The LWVWA joins Fix Democracy First in this lobbying effort.

The local Leagues participate in Lobby Week (learning about legislation and visiting legislators), and you are invited to join in. Your actual meeting with legislators usually takes about 15 minutes each for all three. You also should budget about an hour to plan how the meetings will be conducted, who will be the leader, who speaks on what topics. You should also have some self-study time to make sure you know important bills.

The most effective lobbying is done by constituents and tends to work even better if the legislator knows you. Spokane Area legislative districts include 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9. If you would like to meet with your legislator (probably via zoom) please contact [Lunell Haught \(Lh1@fastmail.com\)](mailto:Lunell.Haught(Lh1@fastmail.com)) about your interest and what district you reside in. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>

Members in each district may focus on their particular interests for which the League has a position(s).

The Zoom legislative meetings will probably be the week of January 22. People who have done this in the past (many years) have exclaimed about what a great thing this is. This is a high impact, short term volunteer engagement with loads of opportunity for making a contribution and as well as forming local and state level connections. Come on along!

For those who want to extend reading about lobbying to actually taking action, tentative plans include:

Fall - LWV Spokane Area members meeting others who want to have “get acquainted” visits with their legislators (Districts 3, 4, 6, 7, 9) in Spokane.

December - Action Workshop focused on League interests in the 2024 legislative session.

February - an excursion to Olympia and have either an in-person or a virtual visit to legislators in early 2024.

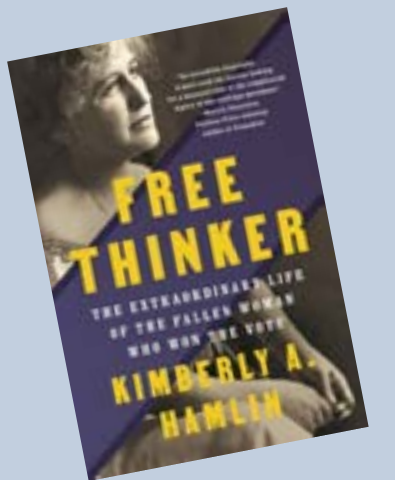
Sound interesting?

Get yourself a copy of the book, either from the library or your favorite bookstore and start reading! Conversations about the book will take place later in the fall, so you've plenty time. The Voter will keep you informed about upcoming dates.

For more information contact Lunell Haught at LH1@fastmail.com.

Also, check out this website:

<https://www.kimberlyhamlin.com/author/writing/free-thinker/>



WELCOME MEMBERS

New member Sandra Neperud joined LWVSA in December.

We had eight renewing members in December.

Thank you members!



Need a Member Directory?

A printable pdf of the most recent issue of the member directory can be found on the Members Only page of LWVSpokane.org.



December General Membership Meeting

A Sweet Time Enjoyed by All

Despite the dark and cold of winter and the usual technological glitches of hybrid meetings, fifteen LWVSA members enjoyed a sweet evening at our December 12 general membership meeting. We met at the Spokane Public Library’s new art studio facility on Sprague — The Hive.

Mary Coltrane, LWVWA president, made a cross-state trek to talk with Spokane members about the League, its mission, activities, and opportunities for involvement. One highlight of her presentation was to say that the LWVWA study on local news is being forwarded for consideration at this year’s national convention. If approved, our study would provide LWV to engage in lobbying for legislation to support local news reporting nationally.

Conversation with Mary was followed up with a holiday cookie and recipe exchange: Peanut Butter Bars, Grandma Isabell’s Short Bread Cookies, Christmas Kiss Cookies, Gingerbread, Springerels, Soft Mincemeat Cookies, Sugar Cookies, Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies and more!

LWVSA Environment Committee



EXPO’74 — 50 Year of Environmental Awareness

Community Conversations
on the Climate Crisis

May 4 to July 4, 2024

HELP NEEDED:

The LWVSA Environmental Issues Committee members and other interested League members are planning the facilitation and format of community conversations in partnership with Spokane County Library District. The following information will appear in the spring issue of SCLD’s publication Engage.

Here’s what what we need you to do:

- Read description of Expo’74 event below
- What questions and/or techniques would you ask if facilitating a community conversation?
 - Provide between 1 and 6 questions and/or facilitation ideas.
- What would you recommend in terms of resources for a handout?
- Would you be willing to consider volunteering for one of the community conversations? Volunteer needs are for co-facilitators, welcomers, and League info table monitors.

If you are interested in participating in our planning efforts, please contact Elaine Harger, eharger@drizzle.com, 509-893-8862 (landline), 425-221-8294 (texts).

EVENT DESCRIPTION:

Expo’74 was the first World’s Fair to focus on environmental issues. In 1974, the greenhouse effect, industrial pollution of water, soil and air, nuclear waste, deforestation, and loss of wild habitats were of great concern globally. Fifty years later, the planet is experiencing the effects of five decades of only minor action to solve these problems — wildfires, floods, sea level rise, hurricanes and tornadoes, species extinction, social tensions and dislocation. The Spokane County Library District and the League of Women Voters Spokane Area, invite the public to engage in community conversations during Expo’74 50th Anniversary to talk about how individuals, neighborhoods, and municipalities can take action to prepare for the impacts of the climate crisis. Come to these events to share your concerns, ask questions, and exchange ideas with others. For those who wish to learn more about the climate crisis, Spokane County Library District librarians and League of Women Voters Spokane Area recommend any or all of the following books.

Books written for adults

- Afterglow: Climate Fiction for Future Ancestors, edited by Grist
- All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis, by Ayana Johnson, K. Wilkinson
- Believers: Making a Life at the End of the World,by Lisa Wells
- Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in an Age of Extinction, by Michelle Nijhuis
- A Bigger Picture: My Fight to Bring a New African Voice to the Climate Crisis, by Vanessa Nakate
- The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go from Here, by Hope Jahren

Books written for young adults

- Global: One Fragile World. an Epic Fight for Survival, by Eoin Colfer, A. Donkin, and Giovanni Rigano
- How to Change Everything: The Young Human’s Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other, by Naomi Klein
- No Planet B: A Teen Vogue Guide to the Climate Crisis, edited by Lucy Diavolo
- The Twenty-One: The True Story of the Youth Who Sued the U.S. Government Over Climate Change, by Elizabeth Rusch
- Two Degrees, by Alan Gratz
- A World Without Fish, by Mark Kurlansky

Books written for children

- Greta and the Giants, by Zoe Tucker and Zoe Persico
- Here, the Dot We Call Home, by Laura Alary
- Little Pine Cone: Wildfires and the Natural World, by Johanna Wagstaffe and Julie McLaughlin
- Sea Bear: A Journey for Survival, by Lindsay Moore
- Stand Up! Speak Up! A story inspired by the climate change revolution, by Andrew Joyner
- To Change a Planet, by Christina Soontornvat and Rahele Jomepour Bell

Continued above

WSU Use-of-Force Database
Focus Group Participation

Our League was invited to participate in a focus group, on December 5, conducted by WSU researchers on a state legislated project to create and maintain a police use-of-force database. LWVSA determined that state and national LWV positions regarding law enforcement encouraged our involvement:

- Encourage community participation in the development of policing policy.
- Provide police accountability via independent citizen oversight of law enforcement and publicly available data on officer conduct.
- Standardize data and setting up systems so that information can be easily shared among criminal justice agencies.

Becky Dickerhoof and Elaine Harger, LWVSA members, learned how the “Data Exchange for Public Safety” will be constructed by experts in technology development, criminal justice, statistics, data analysis, communications and training.

The goal is to create a publicly accessible, user-friendly, open-source database to track policing information

as a means to promote openness, transparency, and accountability; build stronger police-community relations; improve trust and confidence in policing services; evaluate specific areas of concern such as biased policing and excessive use of force; and, ultimately, improve the quality of policing services throughout Washington.

Data will be collected from every police and sheriff department in Washington with an eye on how fully each department cooperates in data submission. WSU and Seattle University researchers will use data from 911 calls and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) records to populate the database. The expectation is that the data will provide a full understanding of use-of-force by police, help evaluate data reporting methods, and improve police training programs.

Researchers expect to have the database, with five years worth of data, available in June 2024 in order to begin the next step in the project — public education regarding the database’s existence, availability and use. Stay tuned!

Environmental Committee Continued

DATES & LOCATIONS:

- SPOKANE VALLEY Wednesday, May 8, 6:30-8:00pm
- CHENEY Wednesday, May 15, 6-7:30pm
- ARGONNE Thursday, June 6, 4-5:30pm
- NORTH SPOKANE. Saturday, June 8, 2-3:30pm
- MORAN PRAIRIE Wednesday, June 12, 2-3:30pm
- DEER PARK Thursday, June 27, 5-6:00pm
- If you are interested please contact Elaine Harger at eharger@drizzle.com; 509-893-8862 (landline); 425-221-8294(texts).



Voter Services

Elaine Harger, Chair

Looking Back

December Voter Service activities included voter registration volunteers Julia Presar and Sally Phillips at the Thomas Foley Courthouse on Dec. 15 for the monthly naturalization ceremony, and me at Central Valley High School participating in a student organized and led event on Dec. 5.

CommunityVoice: A Collaboration Between Students & Community Change-Makers, was organized by CVHS’s Junior States of America club. About 100 students and a couple teachers attended the event, which was held in the school’s absolutely beautiful and spacious library.

I was invited to represent LWVSA, and got to sit on the stage with: Travis Scott, a candidate in the November election for Liberty Lake City Council; Cindy McMullen, newly reelected member of the CVSD Board of Directors; Carmela Convoy, Chair of the Spokane County Democrats; Tim Hattenburg, newly reelected Spokane Valley City Council member; and Vicky Dalton, Spokane County Auditor. Students asked excellent questions, and those on stage shared lots of interesting stories and insights.

Looking Forward

LWVSA Voter Services will be busy in January and February.

There will be naturalization ceremonies for voter registration volunteers. Dates not yet available, but Sally will let registration volunteers know when and where help is needed.

On **January 25**, LWVSA will do voter registration at the Homeless Connect event at the Spokane Convention Center. AHHS committee members will be staffing the table. More info here: <https://www.spokaneconnect.org/>

On **January 27**, LWVSA will also do registration and participate in a workshop on voter rights at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference. Details here <https://www.thefighttree.org/2024-EWLCFlier.pdf>

On Tuesday, February 13, Voter Services will be in charge of the monthly membership meeting. The agenda will include hands-on training in voter registration. The meeting will take place at the Liberty Park Library, 402 S. Pittsburgh Street, Spokane. Time will be from 5:30-7:00 P.M.

This is your chance to get trained on registering voters for the upcoming 2024 election year. Bring a friend!

On Tuesday, November 5...Election Day ‘24! In 2020, LWVSA provided voters with an invaluable service -- ballots translated into 6 different languages for area voters. We wish to do so again and need a team for the project. Volunteers are needed for fundraising, finding out which languages to focus on, production and distribution of translations, and coordinating a public awareness campaign of translation availability.

Volunteers are needed a.s.a.p. to get the project started in a timely manner. Please contact Susan Hales if you are interested in helping.

Susan’s email is susanhales2015@gmail.com.

This is your chance to empower voters and defend democracy in the upcoming 2024 election year.

Wishing you all the best for 2024!

Elaine, eharger@drizzle.com and 509-893-8862 (texts)

Interested in Volunteering?

WHO DO YOU CALL?

Contact the individuals below to participate in events and on Committees:

Affordable Housing - LWVSAAHHS@gmail.com.

Communications - Jean Richardson jean@azuregate.net

Environmental Issues - Amy Compestine acomp4274@gmail.com

Voter Services - Elaine Harger eharger@drizzle.com

Interested in Leadership?

Not sure what is a good fit for your skills and schedule?

Contact Jean Richardson and get your questions answered. 503-788-8998 or LWSAleadership@gmail.com

New Deadlines for *The Voter* Newsletter in 2024.

In an effort to ensure you receive your newsletter before the first of the new month, deadlines are earlier this year.

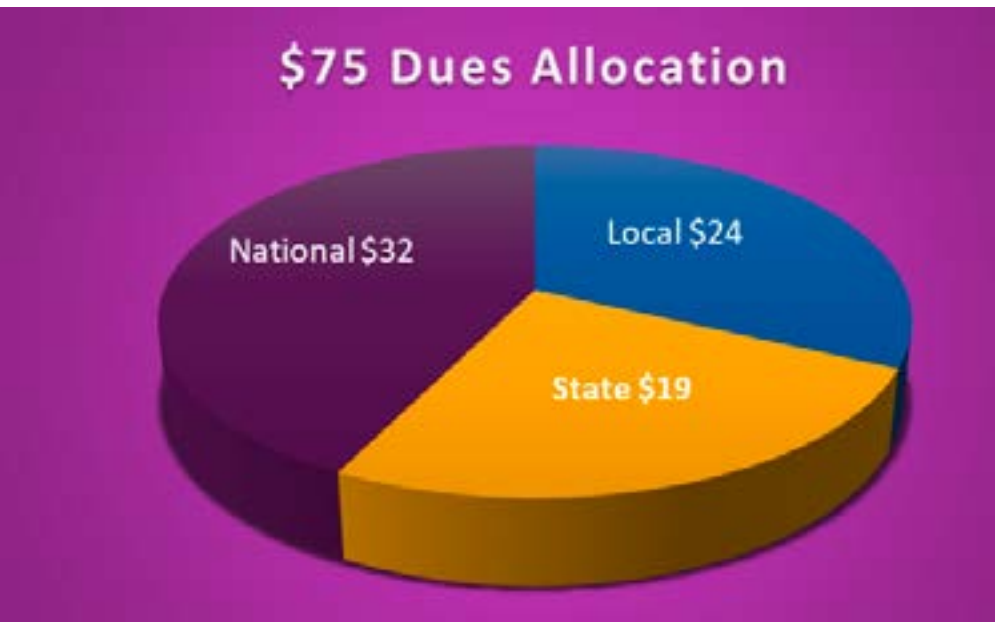
Friday, January 19 for **February** issue of *The Voter*
Friday, February 16 for **March** issue of *The Voter*
Friday, March 15 for **April** issue of *The Voter*
Friday, April 19 for **May** issue of *The Voter*

Send submissions or questions to Julie Cordero: 509-768-2998 (text ok) or email corderographics@gmail.com

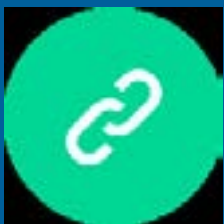
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