

THE VOTER



This Newsletter is published by and for the
League of Women Voters of Yakima County
PO Box 723, Yakima, WA 98907 509-452-3419

April / May, 2023
Vol.24, No 2

*We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work
on the traditional lands of the fourteen Confederated
Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.*

MISSION STATEMENT:

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

VISION:

We envision a democracy
where every person has the desire,
the right, the knowledge, and the confidence
to participate.

VALUE STATEMENT:

The League believes in the power of women to
create a more perfect democracy.

Officers

President: Lee Murdock
Secretary: Betty Van Ryder
Treasurer and Membership:
Janis Luvaas

Leadership Team

Dori Baker-Peralta
Criss Bardill
Steve Hill
Kitty Jubran
Susan Kaphammer
Cheri Kilty
Karri Livingston
Karen Pilon
Cindy Olivas

Voter Editor: Susan Kaphammer
509-949-0127; susanlkap@gmail.com

The Leadership Team currently meets at 4:30
PM, usually the first Monday of the month at
the YWCA, 818 W Yakima Ave, Yakima.

CALENDAR

Sunday, MAY 21 and Sunday, JUNE 18: LWVYC BOOTH at Farmer's Market. 9AM to 1 PM, Downtown Yakima. *See brief article on Page 2.*

Thursday, MAY 25: COMMUNITY CONVERSATION with Lon Inaba. *See below and flier on Page 3.*

Monday, JUNE 5: LEADERSHIP TEAM. Normally meets the 1st Monday of each month at 4:30 PM at YWCA.

Thursday, JUNE 15: VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE. Noon to 1 PM at C & S Coffeehouse, Terrace Heights. *See article on Page*

Wednesday, JUNE 21: LWVYC ANNUAL MEETING for all League members! 5:00 Gather; 5:30 Meeting at YWCA, 818 W Yakima Ave. *See article on Page 4*

Thursday, JUNE 22: COMMUNITY CONVERSATION with Connie Brumm. *See below and notice on Page 3.*



PRESENTS

Community Conversations

**MAY 25: Lon Inaba, Yakama Nation Farms
Japanese Businesses in Yakima Valley
Before WW II**

**JUNE 22: Connie Brumm, End of Life WA
Death With Dignity/Medical Assistance in Dying**

**4th Thursday of the Month
5:30 PM at Wesley Methodist Church
14 N 48th Ave (48th and Chestnut)**

Message from LWVYC President...

ADVOCATING TO FRIENDS AND FAMILIES

If you are a member of the League of Women Voters then you already know the importance of voting in local elections and how they are an essential part of our democracy, yet they often have the lowest turnout of any election. The following list of speaking points can be helpful in advocating for participation in local elections to friends or family.

- **Your Vote Counts:** Local elections are decided by a smaller number of voters than state or national elections. This means that each vote carries more weight, and your vote can make a real difference in the outcome of the election. In fact, some local elections have been decided by just a handful of votes, so your participation can have a significant impact.
- **Local Issues Affect You:** While state and national issues may get more attention in the news, local issues are the ones that directly affect your daily life. Local elections determine who will make decisions on issues like school funding, road repairs, and public safety, to name just a few. By participating in local elections, you have a say in how your community is run and the policies that affect you and your neighbors.
- **The Importance of Representation:** Local elections are an opportunity to elect representatives who reflect your values and priorities. When you vote in local elections, you have a chance to support candidates who share your vision for your community and can work to address the issues that matter most to you. By electing representatives who understand and care about your concerns, you can help ensure that your voice is heard in the decisions that affect you.
- **Getting Involved:** There are many ways to get involved in local elections, from volunteering for a candidate's campaign to attending local government meetings and town halls.

If you're passionate about your community and want to make a difference, you can even consider running for office yourself. For information on how to file and run for office visit

<https://www.yakimacounty.us/170/Elections>.

Local elections may not get as much attention as state or national elections, but they have a real impact on our daily lives. By participating in local elections and getting involved in the democratic process, you can help ensure that your community is represented by the best possible candidates and policies. So, whether you choose to vote or run for office, make your voice heard in the upcoming local elections!

Lee Murdock, President, League of Women Voters of Yakima County

LWVYC Project

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE MARKET!

One Sunday a month our local League will host a booth at the Downtown Yakima Farmers Market to provide voter education and registration, and to make our community presence more visible. The schedule was coordinated with the Asian and Pacific Islanders Coalition who will be at the Market on other Sundays, also focusing on voters. Volunteers have stepped up for our booth on May 21 and June 18.

Please let Lee Murdock know if you can help man the table on any of these later dates: July 23, August 20, September 17, October 15.





**League of Women Voters
of Yakima Valley**

**2023 League Conversation Series
Presents**



**Lon Inaba, General Manager
Yakama Nation Farms**

**Thursday, May 25 at 5:30 pm
Wesley United Methodist Church
14 N 48th Ave (48th & Chestnut)**

Lon Inaba is a third-generation Japanese American farmer, born and raised on the family farm located on the Yakama Reservation. He is General Manager of Yakama Nation Farms and on the boards for the Central Washington Fair Association, The Yakama Reservation Irrigation District, the Yakima Buddhist Church, the Japanese Cemetery Committee, and the Friends of Harrah. Lon will speak on the Japanese business that were thriving in the valley before WWII internment. The Japanese internment is generally recognized as impacting the Japanese farming community, but little is known about the businesses that were also impacted.

JUNE 22 CONVERSATION:

Connie Brumm, End of Life Washington, speaking on Death with Dignity/Medical Assistance in Dying. Learn about criteria and options, including new Washington State Legislation.

April Community Conversation...

MONTHLY PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS RESUME WITH PROGRAM ON FOSTER CARE SERVICES

On Thursday, April 27, a small but engaged group of League and community members attended our first Community Conversation in over 3 years, following the Covid shut down in early 2020. Venus Lomeli of Foster First spoke to us about the Foster First program, which is a non-profit child placing agency that provides behavioral rehabilitative services for foster children ages newborn to 18. Foster First serves children in Yakima, Kittitas, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Benton, Grant and Klickitat Counties.

Venus described the supportive services Foster First provides to their foster placements and families. Foster First works with hard-to-place children who have suffered trauma, neglect, and abuse, and who exhibit behaviors that are challenging to those attempting to care for them. Children typically meet with their Foster First caseworker for 2 hours a week, and the caseworker is readily available to the foster parents, school personnel, and others involved with the care of the child for problem solving, emotional support, and respite care.

Venus engaged in a Q and A with those attending, sharing some stories from her work while protecting the confidentiality of her client children and families. We all benefitted from learning about this important but not widely recognized program in our region.

LWVYC Annual Meeting...

ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR JUNE 21

All members are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County on Wednesday, June 21, beginning at 5:00 PM at the YWCA, 818 W Yakima Ave, Yakima. A light dinner will be provided, with the meeting beginning at 5:30.

This is the opportunity for the full membership to gather and affirm our values and positions, elect officers, review our past year, and consider future directions. In addition, the meeting will feature comments by **Audel Ramirez**, local community organizer.

A detailed Call for the 2023 LWVYC Annual Meeting will be forwarded to each member. Plan to attend as we re-commit to our mission: Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Voter Services Committee...

NEED FOR VOTER ENGAGEMENT NOTED

Our active Voter Services Committee, under the leadership of Karri Livingston, is developing plans for a Ballot Walk-Through Party and Candidate Forums prior to the 2023 elections. Details will be provided as plans are solidified.

The need for Voter Services has been emphasized by the Committee's review of an excerpt from *The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy*, the report of an extensive state-wide LWV study, available at <https://www.lwvwa.org/resources/Documents/Studies/LocalNews/Decline%2036.pdf>

(continued on Page 5)

NEED FOR VOTER ENGAGEMENT NOTED (continued from Page 4)

Excerpt from Page 41:

Voter turnout decreases

Brier Dudley, who writes the Free Press column at The Seattle Times, took note of Yakima County’s November 2021 election and drew a connection between voter turnout and declining newspaper staffing and coverage.

“Difficult market conditions forced the downsizing of the Yakima Herald-Republic in recent years and civic engagement is declining,” Dudley wrote.

“In November’s election, voter turnout was an abysmal 32%, the second worst showing among Washington’s 39 counties. Only Franklin County, where the Tri-City Herald slashed its newsroom even further, saw a worse turnout of just 29%. Turnout was even worse in Southeast Yakima, where just 14% of voters in District 2 participated in the City Council election. Of the district’s 4,332 registered voters, only 619 voted.”

This reinforces how essential are the efforts of the League of Women Voters and our Voter Services Committee members as we work toward our vision: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

Remembrance...

JOYCE DENNISON

Joyce Dennison, long-time active member of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County, passed away on March 30th at the age of 98. Joyce was honored as a lifetime member, and she is remembered as a strong supporter of the vision and values of the League of Women Voters since her joining in the 1960’s.

In addition to serving as treasurer for many years, Joyce participated in study groups on topics including water issues and children’s health. A 2014 article in the *Yakima Herald Republic* profiled Joyce Dennison and Ruth Coffin Schroeder in organizing League sponsored public forums following a report critical of the court system. The reporter noted that “Schroeder and Dennison worked together on the study of the county’s juvenile justice system decades ago.”

Joyce was Executive Director of Central Washington Camp Fire for many years, and the organization grew and flourished under her leadership. She also served the community in various capacities, including as Board Chairwoman for Yakima’s Planned Parenthood. She had been active in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima, often working with the children’s religious education programs.

Never shy to share her wisdom and common sense, a quick search of *Yakima Herald Republic* archives revealed seven published Letters to the Editor between 2013 and 2018. She took Rep. Doc Hastings to task for voting against reauthorization of Violence Against Women legislation, expressed appreciation for the newspaper coverage of candidates in several elections, and commented on the downtown plaza controversy. In May, 2019, she noted the newspaper’s coverage of missing indigenous women. “Both the news stories and the editorial comments are reminders to those of us who have the privilege of living on Yakama Nation ceded land that we need to improve our criminal justice systems. We have a civic obligation to ensure that all women in our midst are treated justly.”

Joyce Dennison’s husband, Clay, preceded her in death, and she is survived by three sons. In a conversation later in life with Criss Bardill, Joyce affirmed, “The League of Women Voters has always been near and dear to my heart.” Rest in Peace, Joyce.



LWVWA Redistricting Reform Campaign...

LOCAL LEAGUE MEMBERS JOIN STATE REFORM EFFORT

Steve Hill and Dori Peralta Baker will be working on the Redistricting Reform Campaign made official by delegates at the recent League State Convention. With passage of the resolution, titled “Washington Deserves Better for 2031 Redistricting,” the LWVWA adopted the “goal of passing a state constitutional amendment to create an independent people-focused commission.”

Efforts in the next two years include ensuring a LWVWA Board liaison to the campaign, conducting fundraising efforts, supporting a “democracy survey” to set a benchmark for success, and “building a strong network of local and statewide partners and allies” for Redistricting Reform. DEI Policy – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – is central to the concept of fair representation.

Alison McCaffree, State League Issue Chair, notes that Redistricting Reform “is a marathon, not a sprint.” But with wide participation and commitment, the path forward is possible.

LWVWA State Convention...

LOCAL LEAGUE LEADERS AND SUCCESSES RECOGNIZED

Local League Roll Call: Yakima County



Executive Committee of the Board of LWVYC

President: Lee Murdock

Secretary: Betty Van Ryder

Treasurer and Membership: Janis Luvaas

Directors of the Board

Dori Peralta Baker, Steve Hill, Criss Bardill, Cindy Olivas, Karen Pilon,
Kitty Jubran, Quinn Dalan

Voter Editor: Susan Kaphammer

Voter Services Chair: Karri Livingston

Time was set aside at the recent State Convention to recognize local League Leaders and celebrate successes with a PowerPoint “Local League Roll Call.” This is how we looked!

Local League Roll Call: Yakima County



Highlights

- ★ Developed a "How to Select Judicial Candidates" brochure ★
- ★ Formed a cross-sector collaborative of non-partisan, civic engagement groups ★
- ★ Developed a formal website, with a blog from the president ★
- ★ Revamped the "They Represent You" based on the King County model ★
- ★ Participate in many local events to increase LWVYC's public presence ★
- ★ Hosted candidate forums for County Commissioner candidates ★

LWVWA Legislative Wrap-up...

LEGISLATIVE SUCCESSES... AND WORK CONTINUES

League staff and members tracked and lobbied for (and against!) hundreds of bills on 17 issues under three categories: Making Democracy Work, Environment, and Social and Economic Policy. Remember that LWV positions come from the general membership through study and consensus through all levels of our organization. This year's session ended on April 23, with mixed results for League positions. It is time to chronicle our successes and note the many issues that require ongoing advocacy. With limited space, this article will highlight only a few of the many results. Issue papers and detailed updates on all 17 issues are available at: <https://lwvwa.org/current-issues-2023>.

ELECTIONS: Clarify Washington Voting Rights Act as to what constitutes a violation to better provide equal opportunity to elect candidates of choice. Advisory Votes, which have no impact and could confuse and discourage voters, are abolished. Provide for Automatic Voter Registration at Department of Licensing for easier and more secure voter registration.

MONEY IN POLITICS: Provide improved transparency in Grassroots Lobbying Disclosure. Define synthetic media and provide relief for candidates and campaigns wrongly impacted.

EDUCATION: Increase special education funding and provide for in-depth audit and review of the state's special education system.

CLIMATE CRISIS AND ENERGY: Budget investments in climate justice and reducing greenhouse gas footprint. Add requirement to Growth Management Act for local governments to plan specifically for climate change challenges.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT: Update state's planning framework to improve state's response to climate change. Increase middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS: Add protection for manufactured/mobile homeowners when the land they rent is sold. Increase median income limits on public housing authority financed housing to increase access for populations challenged to find affordable housing despite higher incomes.

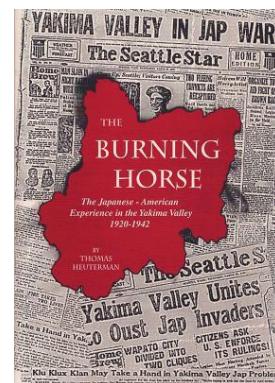
HEALTH CARE: Require health insurance plans to pay for audiologist evaluation and hearing instruments. Increase access to Death with Dignity or Medical Aid in Dying. *NOTE: Topic of our June Community Conversation.*

Book Suggestion...

THE BURNING HORSE by THOMAS HEUTERMAN

Our member, Dori Peralta Baker, recommends this book, subtitled: *Japanese-American Experience in the Yakima Valley, 1920-1942*. The topic coincides with our scheduled May 25 Community Conversation by Lon Inaba. See flyer on Page 3. Several copies are available at Yakima Valley Libraries. Excerpts from the summary on the YVL webpage:

For the tribes of the Yakima Indian Federation, the word yakima meant beautiful land, but for the Japanese settlers in the early 'twenties, yaki meant burning, and uma meant horse. Their ideographs take on additional significance when considering the racist campaigns directed against them by the American Legion, the local, state, and congressional politicians, the newspapers of the Yakima Valley, and the Hearst papers in Seattle and California.... Dr. Heuterman details the Japanese-American experience in the two decades leading to the internment, after the outbreak of World War II, of western-region Issei and Nisei, the immigrants and first-generation Japanese Americans who came to farm the marginal lands of the Yakima Valley in eastern Washington after World War I.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy. We will actively work to remove barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA COUNTY

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Cordially invites you to: JOIN US!

New Member Renewing Member

Name: _____

Membership Categories:

Address: _____

_____ \$10 Student

_____ \$60 Basic

Phone: _____

_____ \$40 Each added
family member at the same
residence

E-Mail: _____

Scholarships are available for potential members who cannot afford dues. Please contact us at yakimacountylwvyc@gmail.com

Additional Sustaining Gift: \$60 _____ \$40 _____ \$25 _____ Other: _____

Your Sustaining Gift will help support our local activities.

Make checks payable to: LWVYC And mail to: LWVYC, PO Box 723, YAKIMA WA 98907

Please note: Our fiscal year is July 1 through June 30. Initial dues received before December 31 will be subject to renewal on June 30 of the following year. Initial dues received after January 1 will be subject to renewal on June 30 of the year following that year.

Examples: a) Initial dues paid October 10, 2022, renewal date June 30, 2023
b) Initial dues paid February 24, 2023, renewal date June 30, 2024