

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

On the Web at:
<https://lwvyakimacounty.org>
Find us on Facebook

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2024
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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.

Leadership Team

President: Lee Murdock
Secretary: Betty Van Ryder
Treasurer and Membership:
Janis Luvaas
Dori Baker-Peralta
Criss Bardill
Steve Hill
Kitty Jubran
Karri Livingston
Karen Pilon
Cindy Olivas
Ulla Whitmont

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

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

All members are welcome.

CALENDAR

First Monday of the Month: **LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING.** 4:30 PM at YWCA, Yakima. *All members welcome.*

Tuesday, Feb. 13: **VOTE! SPECIAL ELECTION**
Levy or bond elections for 8 school districts and 1 park district. Ballots must be postmarked as of this date or dropped into an official Ballot Box by end of day. Voting-day registration available at Yakima County Courthouse from 8 AM to 8 PM. *See article on page 3.*

Thursday, Feb. 15: **VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING.** Noon at C & S Coffeehouse, Terrace Heights.

Tuesday, March 12: **WASHINGTON STATE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.** Ballots must be postmarked as of this date or dropped into an official Ballot Box by end of day. *See article on pages 3-4.*

SURVEY OF LWVYC MEMBERS

The LWVYC Leadership Team has decided to retire Community Conversations in favor of quarterly membership meetings. Members are urged to take a few moments to complete a brief survey assessing interest in and availability for such meetings.

Watch for an email with the survey link or a mailing if you do not have email. Please take a little time to provide this valuable feedback.

Thank you!

Message from LWVYC President. . .

**LWVYC ENDORSES CITY MANAGER – COUNCIL
FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

As the President of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County, I am compelled to address the recent discussions surrounding the potential shift to a strong mayor form of government in our city. It is crucial to consider the implications of such a transition in light of our organization's long-standing position on forms of city government.

Since 1979, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County has championed the city manager-council form of city government. This position, developed through extensive study and consensus-building efforts, reflects our commitment to principles of representation, accountability, transparency, citizen participation, and efficient service delivery.

The city manager-council form of government, as endorsed by the League, ensures that the needs of all residents are represented and addressed. Under this model, a professional city manager is hired to oversee the day-to-day operations of the city, working collaboratively with the elected city council to implement policies and initiatives that serve the best interests of the community.

There are several compelling reasons why the city manager-council form of government aligns with our organization's imperatives:

- **Representation and Responsiveness:** A city manager-council system ensures that government decisions are made by elected officials who are directly accountable to the citizens they serve, rather than concentrating power in the hands of a single elected official.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** By providing a clear separation of powers between elected officials and professional city staff, the city manager-council model fosters accountability and transparency in government operations. This separation minimizes the potential for conflicts of interest and ensures that decision-making processes are conducted openly and with public input.
- **Citizen Participation:** The city manager-council form of government encourages citizen participation by providing opportunities for engagement in the policymaking process. Through public hearings, advisory committees, and other mechanisms, residents can actively contribute to the development and implementation of policies that affect their lives.
- **Efficiency and Economy:** By entrusting the day-to-day management of city affairs to a professional city manager, the city manager-council model promotes efficiency and economy in service delivery. City managers bring expertise in municipal administration and resource management, enabling them to effectively allocate resources and streamline operations to meet the needs of the community.

In light of these considerations, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County reaffirms our support for the city manager-council form of city government. We believe that this model best embodies the principles of representative democracy and effective governance, ensuring that our city remains responsive, accountable, and inclusive for all residents.

Sincerely,

Lee Murdock, President

League of Women Voters of Yakima County

Participating in Democracy . . .

FEBRUARY 13 SPECIAL ELECTION WILL DETERMINE FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS AND PARK DISTRICT

Registered voters residing in eight school districts and one park district in Yakima County should have already received ballots for the special election impacting the budgets as listed below in a table from Yakima County Auditor Elections Page: <https://yakimacounty.us/170/Elections>:

10 local ballot measures for 8 school districts and 1 park district		
school districts		
East Valley	Replacement Educational Programs and Operation Levy	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
Granger	Replacement Educational Programs and Operation Levy	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
Mabton	Replacement Educational Programs and Operation Levy	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
Naches Valley	Replacement Educational Programs and Operation Levy	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
	Capital Levy for Health, Safety and Infrastructure Improvements	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
Sunnyside	Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
Wahluke	Capital Levy for Health, Safety and Facility Improvements	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
Wapato	Bonds to Replace Aging Schools - \$33,000,000	super majority = 60% favorable vote
Yakima	Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy	simple majority = 50% + 1 favorable vote
park district		
Naches	Special Levy	super majority = 60% favorable vote

An official *Voters’ Guide* has been mailed to inform voters about the budget requests. This information is also available through the County election page, see link above, by selecting the “web version” of the *Voters’ Guide*. Or connect at <https://voter.votewa.gov/GenericVoterGuide.aspx?e=885&c=39#/> and select the District.

But don’t forget to vote: it is our privilege and our responsibility!

MARCH 12 PRIMARY PROVIDES FOR PARTICIPATION IN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PROCESS

The primary process by which the major political parties select their presidential candidate varies state by state and sometimes, confusingly, from one presidential election to the next. This year, registered voters in Washington will be receiving a ballot near the end of February to indicate the choice of either a Republican or Democratic candidate for President. An official *Voters’ Pamphlet* will be mailed prior to the March 12 deadline for submitting ballots.

The *Voters’ Pamphlet* provides information about the nominating process and profiles of the candidates. More comprehensive explanations are available, from our Yakima County Auditor

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MARCH 12 PRIMARY... (Continued from Page 3)

website, in “Presidential Primary FAQs” at <https://www.yakimacounty.us/2873/Presidential-Primary-FAQ>. The information below is excerpted and paraphrased from this site.

✓ State law outlines the logistics of the March Presidential Primary election. Only political parties whose nominees receive at least five percent of the total vote of the last presidential election may participate, which limits this year’s primary to the Republican and Democratic parties.

✓ Each political party by January 9 decided which candidates are on their side of the ballot, which will include candidates who have discontinued their campaigns.

✓ Voters must mark one party and sign the declaration on the return envelope. The party selection will be removed from the voter’s record 60 days after certification of the Presidential Primary and will not affect any future vote.

✓ Voters may select only one candidate for the one party declared or may vote for “Uncommitted Delegates.” Voting for a candidate directs party delegates to support that candidate at their national convention. Voting for uncommitted delegates allows those delegates representing Washington to decide during the national convention.

✓ Once ballots have been returned, votes cannot be changed, even if your candidate drops out.

✓ The political parties will be using the results of the Presidential Primary to allocate delegates as they nominate their candidate at the national conventions. Both parties have adopted rules to guide their allocation. For additional information contact your party:

Washington State Democrats:
PO Box 4027 Seattle, WA 98194
(206) 583-0664

info@wa-democrats.org
www.wa-democrats.org

Washington State Republican Party:
11811 NE 1st St., Ste A306 Bellevue, WA
98005

(425) 460-0570
info@wsrp.org www.wsrp.org

✓ Caucuses are events run by each party to define party platforms and select delegates to the party’s state and nation conventions. For information or to participate, contact your political party.

✓ The August Primary will include local, state and federal races other than U. S. President. The top two candidates will qualify for the November General Election.

STATE LEAGUE NEWSLETTERS INFORM MEMBERS

- [**The Legislative Action Newsletter**](#) is our (LWVWA) weekly newsletter featuring easy-to-follow summaries of the legislative process, updates on key issues, and action alerts. This newsletter is only distributed during Washington's legislative session. Issues are available at: <https://lwvwa.org/page-18731>.
- [**The Evergreen Voter**](#) is our monthly newsletter filled with updates on elections, activities and events around the state, as well as volunteer opportunities. Find issues at: <https://lwvwa.org/Evergreen-Voter>.

Both of these newsletters are distributed by email. If you are not receiving them, sign up at: https://secure.everyaction.com/RD3rhro_pk2IAtf7_loMNQ2.

LWVUS National Convention . . .

ONLINE OPTION OFFERED FOR NATIONAL LEAGUE CONVENTION

The theme of “Turn Up and Turn Out” promises a rich experience for League members at the 2024 National Convention in Washington, DC, or in your own home by online access. Scheduled for June 27 through June 30, the convention is a biennial event that serves as LWVUS's business meeting as well as an opportunity for League members to gather for training and networking.



Each local League is entitled to be represented by one or more delegates. In-person and virtual delegates will have the opportunity to participate in our Convention Plenary and vote on our 2024 – 2026 Program, 2024 – 2026 budget, 2024 – 2026 LWVUS Board of Directors and Nominating Committee, and submitted bylaws amendments. Non-delegates will have opportunities to observe the workings of our organization as well as to benefit from trainings. Program specifics are still being determined.

The cost of in-person attendance – including travel, registration, meals and room – is estimated at approximately \$2200. Local Leagues are encouraged to engage in targeted fundraising to assist attendance. Alternatively, online registration for virtual attendance is only \$125.

The website for our National Convention will be updated on an on-going basis at: <https://web.cvent.com/event/07627034-5f27-44a8-8363-5805fab4b0ef/summary> . Registration is expected to be available on this site by about February 8.

Loss of a Leader . . .

LEAGUE MOURNS LOSS OF LWVUS PRESIDENT DR. DEBORAH ANN TURNER

By Shannon Augustus

Press Release / Last Updated: January 29, 2024

WASHINGTON — It is with profound sadness that the League of Women Voters announces the passing of our esteemed president, Dr. Deborah Ann Turner, who passed away on Sunday, January 28, 2024, from complications from a pulmonary embolism.

A fearless advocate for voting rights and women’s rights, Dr. Turner devoted her life’s work to impacting meaningful changes in the lives of voters across the nation. As the 20th president of the 103-year-old voting rights organization, Dr. Turner played a pivotal role in fighting for a more fair and representative union, while uplifting racial equity in the League’s mission work.

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LEAGUE MOURNS LOSS... (Continued from Page 5)

Dr. Turner first joined the League of Women Voters of Metro Des Moines in 2010 and later served as president until 2015. At the same time, she also served on the LWV of Iowa board as the state vice president from 2011 to 2015, becoming co-president in 2015. In her dual roles with state and local Leagues, Deborah has devoted her leadership to strengthening relationships between local leagues and the state Board.

“Dr. Turner was the consummate leader who poured her heart and soul for the preservation of our democracy,” said Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO of the League of Women Voters. “Her leadership exemplified grace, empathy, strength, and determination, and we will forever be grateful for her passion and dedication to this organization.”

Dr. Turner practiced gynecologic oncology for 35 years, working directly with patients and teaching students and trained residents in university programs across the Midwest. She participated in a dozen international medical missions and served as the associate medical director of Planned Parenthood of North Central States.

The League of Women Voters staff, board, and Leagues from across the country mourn this loss, and our thoughts are with Dr. Turner’s family during this difficult time. We are committed to honoring her legacy by continuing to uphold our values to empower voters and build a stronger, more inclusive democracy.



Voter Services Committee Outreach . . .

YOUTH LEARN ABOUT ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Five of our dedicated members met on January 15 in Yakima with 4-H members to encourage civic involvement. Katie Dunn, Yakima County Know Your Government Coordinator for 4-H, organized the session which included a Zoom connection with additional 4-H members in Ellensburg.

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YOUTH LEARN... (Continued from Page 6)

Kitty Jubran, Cindy Olivas, Karri Livingston, Barb Schultz, and Joy McKinny (left to right in the picture) outlined the registration and voting processes. They also stressed the importance of seeking good information about issues and candidates. The youth were attentive and appreciative, and Katie Dunn reported, "It was a great experience."



Voter Services Committee Meeting. . .

COUNTY AUDITOR AND ELECTIONS DIRECTOR BRIEF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Local League member Cindy Olivas first met with Charles Ross, Yakima County Auditor, in December with concerns about candidates not putting their information in the *Voters' Guide*. This resulted in both Charles Ross and Kathy Fisher, Yakima County Elections Director, meeting with our Voter Services committee on January 11.

The wide-ranging conversation provided important information and context for our work on behalf of voters. As captured by Committee Chair Karri Livingston (with minor editing):

- Yakima County is one of the top 5 elections offices in the state and is leading the state in bilingual services; half of the election's team is bilingual.
- Yakima County is very transparent with elections, anyone can come and watch how ballots are counted.
- The Public Disclosure Commission can require candidates to provide financial information about their campaign, but the County cannot compel candidates to put information in the *Voters' Guide*.
- Some candidates miss the deadline to put information in the guide.
- Auditors provide a website that containing information on candidates.
- Yakima County spent \$109,000 to publish the *Voters' Guide* this past year.
- Federal Law mandated in 2004 that the guide include Spanish translation.
- The Auditor's office provides voting information packets to high schools at the end of the year.
- There are 135,000 registered voters in Yakima County; 74% of registered voters vote during presidential elections.
- Free postage on the ballots did not really help with returns.

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COUNTY AUDITOR... (Continued from Page 7)

- The biggest bloc of voters by age in the county are 55 and older.
- For close elections the county does a hand recount. One found only a difference of 2 votes.
- Joe Brusich, County Prosecutor, is committed to prosecuting any voter fraud.
- Voters need to use a similar stylistic signature when signing their ballot; similar to their registration forms.
- Charles believes that door-knocking is better for candidates to get their messages out to voters.
- Voters control the system. Know what you are voting for. If you do not know and you cannot find out about the person or the issue do not just randomly vote; all boxes on the ballot do not need to be completed.

The committee thanked Ross and Fisher for their time and all of their efforts on behalf of voters. As Karri expressed, "What a great meeting today!"

Local League Activity. . .

LWVYC REPRESENTED AT MUSEUM HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

Local League members, Cindy Olivas, Janis Luvaas, and Susan Kaphammer, crafted dozens of red and blue tissue paper flowers to decorate the League Holiday Tree at the Yakima Valley Museum. Michael Murdock set up the tree, which was completed with lights and purple ribbon to reflect the theme of compromise: Purple – The Meet in the Middle Color. Additional messages included: Democracy Works When We All Work Together.

Our tree joined over 30 others from community organizations. Visitors could award trees with tickets that earned the League \$55. But more important is the opportunity to present ourselves to the community and express support for democracy.

Cindy Olivas and Janis Luvaas puzzle over making flowers..



LWV is fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice.

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.

There shall be no 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