

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>
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November
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.

Core Principles

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

- Betty Van Ryder, Secretary
- Cindy Olivas
- Criss Bardill
- Dori Baker-Peralta
- Janis Luvaas, Treasurer and Membership
- Karri Livingston
- Kitty Jubran
- Lee Murdock, President
- Steve Hill
- Susan Kaphammer

Meeting the first Monday of the month at 4:30 pm at the YWCA located at 818 W Yakima Ave, Yakima, WA 98901 in the second-floor conference room.
All members are welcome!

Calendar

- **11-20-24 Membership Meeting** – Join us for our second quarterly Membership meeting. Details below.
- **1-10-24 Voter Services Committee** – Meets at noon at C&S Coffee shop in Terrace Heights.
- **1-6-24 Leadership Team** - Meets the first Monday of the month at 4:30pm at the YWCA – All members are welcome!

Announcements

We invite all members to our second quarterly meeting to learn about current projects and discuss the future direction of the League. We will be meeting at 4:30pm on 11-20-24 at YWCA second floor conference room located at 818 W Yakima Ave, Yakima, WA 98902. Light refreshments will be provided. We look forward to seeing you there!

December Break

In December, our Leadership Team and Voter Services volunteers will be taking a well-deserved break from community events. However, we will be participating in the Yakima Valley Museum Holiday Lights Extravaganza again this year. Our theme is **Season of Hope**. We would like all members to consider their secret (non-partisan) hope for the season and for the year ahead. Put that hope in writing, 15 words or less. We will put your first name and your hope on the tree. The fewer words you use, the larger your hope can be displayed on the tree. Send your hope via email by 11/20 to Janis (janis.luvaas2219@gmail.com), Cindy (cindyolivas@aol.com), or Betty (bettyvryder@charter.net). The Extravaganza will run from December 3rd through the 21st. Please be sure to stop by the museum and see our display!

Message from the LWVYC President

Guest Editorial – Cindy Olivas

Cindy Olivas, a member of the Leadership Team, led the effort to set up the League of Women Voters of Yakima County's ofrenda for the Día de los Muertos celebration, with support from League members Criss Bardill and Joy McKinney. This month's President's message features a guest editorial from Cindy, sharing her experience with the event and reflecting on the meaning of being a League member.

Hello League Members and Friends,

Recently, I was fortunate to help with the building and designing of the League of Women Voters' ofrenda (altar) that was on display at the Valley Mall in Union Gap. It was part of the Dia De Los Muertos celebration. Even though my family did not participate in this tradition, there was a beautiful sense of pride. For one, it brought me closer to who I have become. Second, it showed that the League recognizes the diverse community organizations and their cultures, coming together to honor the loss of loved ones and civic-minded people who served and fought for each of us to live our lives with purpose. We honored Women's Suffrage.

Before the ofrendas were dismantled, I was able to see all the displays. I saw pictures of people I knew and saw as role models, people I have worked with, and people I admired and respected. One woman I knew from childhood made me emotional upon seeing her photo on an altar. She happened to be Hispanic. This woman knew that the fields and orchards would not bring financial stability for her children. She went to college, earned a Bachelor of Education degree, and later a master's in administration. While teaching, she worked with many migrant and Hispanic families to encourage school attendance. She was the first Hispanic woman I knew who had gone to college and pursued an educational career. Her parents and my father's family shared many gatherings and worked in the fields after arriving in Yakima.

My own mother and father did not finish school and never graduated, but my dad instilled in me a commitment to education and strong work ethics. I never stopped thinking about graduating from high school and one day going to college. I graduated high school but didn't attend college until my mid-thirties. This woman was my role model; I never forgot that I could improve my situation in life by seeking higher education. She inspired me not to give up on going to college if that was what I wanted.

Also, my father and I discussed social and political structures around the world when I was very young, at age 8 or 9. I learned about Communism, Socialism, and Capitalism, as well as what the Democratic and Republican parties aspired to do for this country. I became civic-minded and developed a belief in democracy, justice, and equality for all people. I also admired Catherine May, the first woman elected to Congress from Washington State and a U.S. Representative from Washington; we even shared the same birth date.

Being a member of the League of Women Voters in Yakima County has given me opportunities to be involved in many ways, from tabling to participating in community events. I would like to ask each member, what motivated you to join? Was it inspiration from family or education? I would love to see all of us come together to make our organization stronger. This League stays strong when we all pitch in to defend our right to vote and uphold democracy.

I hope to see many of you at our next quarterly meeting on November 20 at 4:30 at the YWCA Second Floor Conference Room.

Cindy Olivas,
LWVYC member since September 2022

Member's Corner

Thank you to our Dedicated Volunteers

As we reflect on the many events this past season, we want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all the incredible League members who helped us make a difference. Your energy and commitment allowed us to connect with our community at a wide range of events. Together, we raised awareness, registered new voters, and spread the word about civic engagement. Here's a look at where we made an impact:

- **Community Celebrations:** We joined in the festivities at Yakima Pride (both the Festival and Parade), Juneteenth, the 4th of July Celebration, El Grito de Independencia, and Día de los Muertos. Thank you for showing up to champion equality and inclusivity!
- **Local Markets:** Our regular presence at the Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market and the Selah United Methodist Church Harvest Market Festival allowed us to engage with the community and offer voter information all season long.
- **Special Events with OIC:** At the OIC Health Fair and the OIC "School is Out" Summer Event, we connected with families and shared valuable resources.
- **Environmental and Health Initiatives:** From Earth Day to health fairs, your support helped us amplify important messages about sustainability and well-being.
- **Jail Voter Registration:** This impactful event at the Yakima County Jail allowed us to bring voter registration directly to individuals who are often overlooked.

Thank you to every member who contributed their time and enthusiasm. Your dedication keeps our mission alive and helps empower our community with every event. We couldn't have done it without you!

New TRY Coming Soon

During our December break, we'll be updating our annual *They Represent You* (TRY) directory. This valuable resource provides contact information for our local, state, and federal representatives, making it easier for our community to stay informed and engaged. Look out for the updated edition in January!



In October, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County, in partnership with the Yakima County Department of Corrections, the Yakima County Auditor's Office, and the State League, held a voter registration event at the Yakima County Jail registering **30 voters**. This collaborative effort aimed to ensure that eligible voters who are incarcerated had the opportunity to register and participate in our democracy.

The League of Women Voters strongly supports protecting and expanding voting rights, including for individuals who are incarcerated but legally eligible to vote. We believe that access to the ballot box is a fundamental right, and that voting is a crucial step towards reintegration and civic engagement for those involved in the criminal justice system. Here are some reflections from our dedicated volunteers:

- *"What an inspiring event! We helped over 30 men and women register to vote, all of whom were very excited to vote. I'll sign up for this event every year!"* – **Deborah Severtson-Coffin**
- *"I enjoyed getting the opportunity to register voters at the Yakima County jail. I was pleasantly surprised by how many people wanted to register to vote!"* – **Nancy Lust**
- *"I loved registering voters at the county jail during election season. It was my first time volunteering with the League. People were eager to register and grateful to see us"* – **Maria Jett**

This event highlights the importance of making voter registration accessible to all eligible community members, including those who are incarcerated. We look forward to continuing this impactful partnership and advocating for voting rights for all.

Member's Corner Continued

Successful Meet & Greet Connects Voters with Local Candidates

On October 17, 2024, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County – Voter Services Committee hosted a Meet & Greet at the Holiday Inn on Yakima Avenue, providing an opportunity for voters to engage directly with candidates in an informal setting. The event aimed to foster civic engagement and raise voter awareness, offering an alternative to a traditional candidate forum.

The format allowed attendees to visit candidate tables at their own pace, creating a welcoming space for one-on-one conversations. Candidates who participated included Maria Beltran, Chris Corry, Chase Foster, Jeremie Dufault, Rich Bright, Kyle Curtis, Susan Soto Palmer, LaDon Linde, and Elpidia Saavedra. Unfortunately, Ana Ruiz Kennedy was unable to attend.

The event was co-sponsored by Washington Conservation Action Education Fund, Native Vote Washington Education Fund, Latino Community Fund, NAACP – Yakima Branch, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, Faith Action Network, and Between the Ridges: Alliance for the Common Good.

With approximately 35 attendees and a dedicated team of League volunteers, the evening featured candidate introductions and presentations, where each candidate had three minutes to share their priorities and vision if elected. The setup encouraged personal interactions, allowing voters to ask questions and discuss issues important to them.

While most attendees were already registered voters, the League provided voter registration forms as part of our ongoing commitment to expanding voter access. The event was well-received, offering a valuable platform for direct dialogue between candidates and community members. A special thank you to the Voter Services Committee, their chair Karri Livingston and volunteers Criss Bardill, Cindy Olivas, Kitty Jubran, and Betty Van Ryder

Thank you to all the candidates, sponsors, and volunteers who made this event a success. We look forward to continuing our efforts to promote informed and engaged voting in Yakima County.

Ballot Walk Thru Event Engages Families at EPIC Early Learning Center

On October 24, 2024, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County collaborated with EPIC Early Learning Center to host a **Ballot Walk Thru** event, aimed at increasing civic engagement and voter awareness among local families. Held during EPIC's Family Night, the event provided an informative session on the voting process, coupled with a family-friendly atmosphere that included dinner and supervised crafts for children.

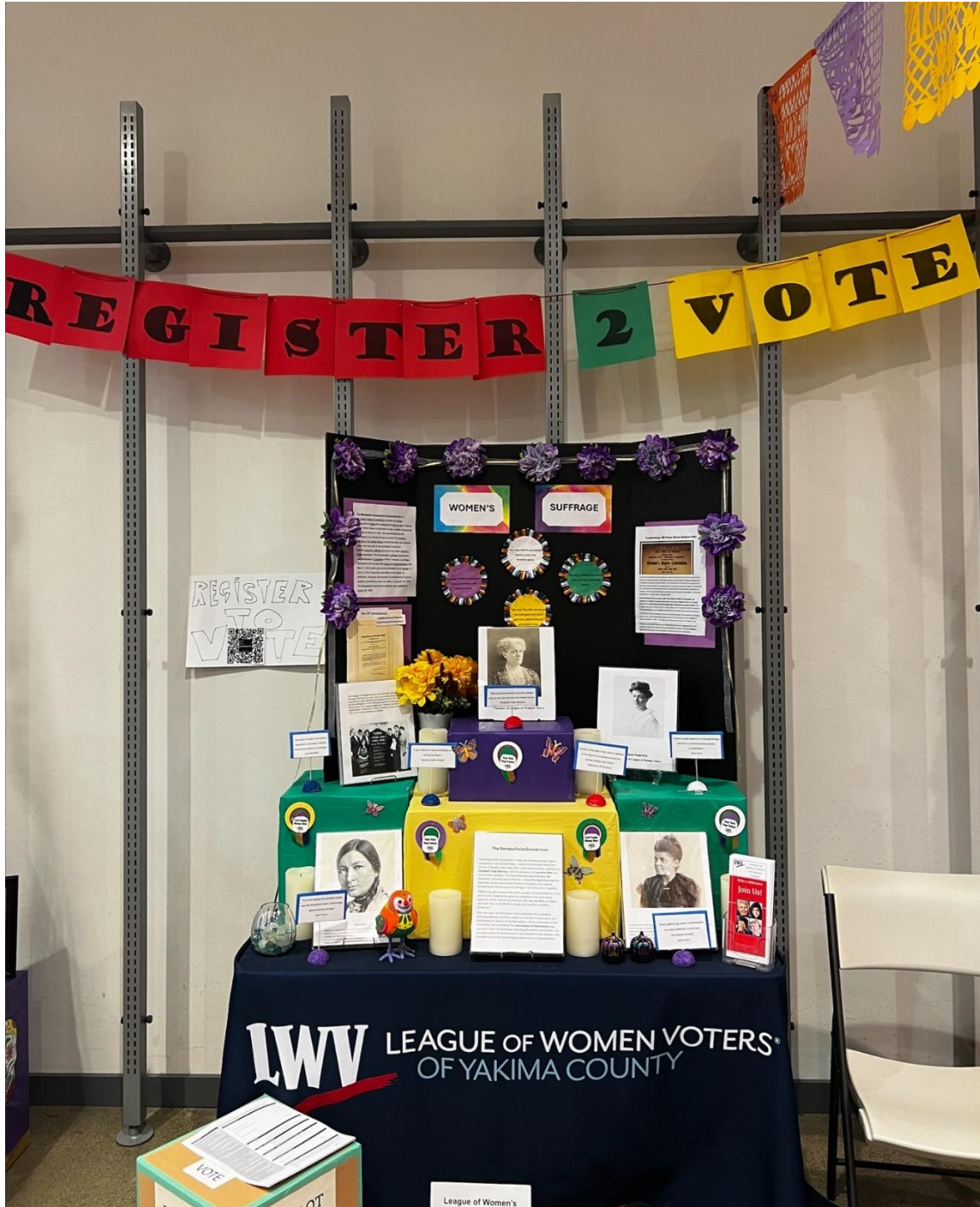
The evening was a great success, with a well-attended presentation by Dori Peralta Baker. Using a PowerPoint tailored for the audience, key topics covered included understanding the ballot, the impact of redistricting on local elections, and the importance of voting for representatives who align with community values. The discussion also clarified that felons could vote, dispelling a common misconception.

League volunteers set up tables with educational materials about voting and Vote 411, ensuring attendees had access to resources throughout the session. One individual registered to vote during the event, and several others took home registration forms, signaling interest in future participation. EPIC staff played a crucial role by providing interpretive services and audio-visual support, which greatly enhanced the experience for non-English speaking families.

This event marked the first time many participants received detailed information about the voting process. The positive collaboration between EPIC and the League fostered an engaging and welcoming environment, making it a memorable and impactful evening focused on empowering families through education and active civic participation.

Día de los Muertos – Honoring Women's Suffrage Movement

This year, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County celebrated Día de los Muertos with a special ofrenda honoring the legacy of the Women's Suffrage movement. The ofrenda, created by an ad hoc committee led by Cindy Olivas, Criss Bardill, and Joy McKinney, paid tribute to the trailblazing women who played pivotal roles in the fight for women's rights and the right to vote.



Our ofrenda featured five key organizers of the Women's Suffrage movement: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Martha Coffin Wright, Mary Ann M'Clintock, and Jane Hunt. These remarkable women were instrumental in organizing the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, the first women's rights convention in the United States. The altar also recognized Ida B Wells as a strong activist for black women's suffrage, and Native American Zitk'la-Sa' (Red Bird), also known as Gertrude Simmins Bonnin, who fought for women's suffrage and Indigenous voting rights. The display highlighted their contributions and the lasting impact of their activism on our democracy today.

We were especially grateful for the contributions of Peter Monahan, an instructor at Yakima Valley College, who provided a beautifully crafted banner for the ofrenda.

The banner featured a QR code, allowing visitors to easily check their voter registration status, emphasizing the ongoing importance of civic engagement. We thank everyone who contributed to this collaborative effort and look forward to making this a cherished annual tradition.

League of Women Voters Statement on 2024 Election Results

In a joint statement, LWVUS President Dianna Wynn and CEO Celina Stewart commended poll workers and volunteers nationwide for ensuring a fair and secure 2024 election. While celebrating the integrity and high turnout, they voiced concern over troubling rhetoric that threatens women’s rights, from healthcare to economic security. As we await final vote certification, the League remains vigilant in advocating for policies that uplift women and uphold democracy, reaffirming our commitment to fight for equitable representation and the protection of every voter’s voice.

Press Release / November 6, 2024

WASHINGTON — The League of Women Voters of the United States president Dianna Wynn and CEO Celina Stewart released the following statement on the 2024 election results:

“The 2024 election underscores the dedication of poll workers, election officials, and volunteers nationwide, who ensured that every eligible vote was counted, and every voice was heard. This year’s election was marked by integrity, transparency, and high turnout. The American people have spoken.

“While we celebrate a fair and secure election, the outcome of this election has made the future for women unclear.

“Given the disturbing rhetoric made during this election season, we are deeply concerned about challenges we may face, particularly regarding the issues that disproportionately affect women, from health care and reproductive rights to economic security and equal representation.

“We are thankful to Leagues across the country for their tremendous work supporting the election infrastructure and supporting voters, as well as every election worker and democracy defender who guaranteed our fair and free voting process. We are thankful for the work they have done so far this cycle and the counting, curing, and certifying work that will take place in the weeks ahead.

“The League is dedicated to our mission of defending democracy. As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advocate for policies that uplift women and ensure equitable representation in all levels of government.”

National League of Women Voters Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

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 identity, 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 and achievements as well.

In the Community

Save the Date – Health Care & Homelessness Community Forum

LWVYC believes safe housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness is essential for a thriving community. The League supports Expanding community understanding that homelessness is a social and health care issue that impacts some populations disproportionately more than others; Addressing gaps in services and resources for housing solutions based on Best Practices; Increasing strategies that address a range of services from Prevention to Permanent Housing; Delivering basic hygiene needs to those who are unsheltered to mitigate public health issues.

We would like to invite community members to the following Community Forum hosted by Pacific Northwest University and Yakima Neighborhood Health Services. There is no cost to attend.

- **Date:** Thursday, November 21st
- **Time:** 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
- **Location:** Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences Butler Haney Hall Auditoriums 301 & 302; 200 University Parkway, Yakima, WA 98901
- **RSVP:** Free Registration – Space Limited – Click the link to register [HEALTH CARE & HOMELESSNESS - YAKIMA COMMUNITY FORUM Tickets, Thu, Nov 21, 2024 at 1:30 PM | Eventbrite](#)

Featuring Dr. Jim O'Connell



Join us on Thursday, November 21st at PNWU for an enlightening afternoon with Dr. Jim O'Connell, a trailblazer in street medicine. Gain invaluable insights into providing compassionate care to people experiencing homelessness and learn how to ensure equitable and dignified access to quality healthcare for all individuals and families in our community. This event is free and open to all faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Space is limited, so pre-registration is required. See below for additional details about this important event.

About the Speaker



Dr. Jim O'Connell, MD (he/him) is the President of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program and an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He received his medical degree from Harvard University in 1982 and completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. O'Connell has been dedicated to providing medical care to homeless individuals since 1985, when he founded the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program. He established the nation's first medical respite program and designed the first computerized medical record for a homeless program. Dr. O'Connell is also the author of "Stories from the Shadows: Reflections of a Street Doctor," which highlights his experience and insights from three decades of service. His efforts are also chronicled in the New York Times Best Seller, *Rough Sleepers* by Tracy Kidder.

[Learn More About the Speaker.](#) Watch a TEDx Talk from the speaker held in Boston [Surprising moments from the front lines of homeless healthcare | Jim O'Connell | TEDxBoston](#)

Questions?

Contact Pacific Northwest University at ipe@pnwu.edu



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 yakimacountylwyc@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