
The Voter

A newsletter from



Our mission

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Want to work with us? Become a [member](#)!

Want to reach us? We're at info@lwvskc.org!

Let's get ready to vote!

Local officials and ballot measures are up for a vote in Seattle and King County, and the election day deadline is Tuesday, November 2. [Vote411](#) is a League resource to help you register to vote, learn about who and what is on your ballot, find a polling place, and understand vote-by-mail. Share this informational resource with your neighbors!

And check our [website calendar](#) for details on our October candidate forums:

- Monday, September 27 – Seattle Port Commission and Ballot Issues, 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 5 – Shoreline City Council, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, October 7 – Seattle Attorney, 6 p.m.; Lake Forest Park Council, 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 12 – Mercer Island 7 p.m.; Highline School District 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 13 – Auburn City Council, 6:30 p.m.
- Monday, October 18 – West Seattle City Council At-Large, 7 p.m.

This month's features

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November Forum Preview

Thursday November 4, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, via Zoom

The Behavioral Health System In King County: Challenges, Innovations & Opportunities

Tiffanie Rinehart and Mary Kay Taylor



The LWVSKC November Forum on the public behavioral health system and services in King County will focus on the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders. The goal of the Forum is to educate League members, and the public, on changes in the mental health and substance use disorder systems underway as Washington State integrates its behavioral and physical health systems. The Forum will provide an overview of the current mental health and substance use treatment landscape in King County, including policy, services, and opportunities to support legislative efforts at the state level.

Panel participants will include experts from legislators to consumers, who will discuss behavioral health system integration and how services are currently being delivered. They will address issues such as:

- Are people with behavioral health issues getting the help they need in King County?
- Where are the gaps in services, and what innovative support and healing options are in place through public and non-profit organizations?
- What health disparities exist among participants in the system, and how can they be reduced?
- How might the LWVSKC and the general community become engaged in legislative and other efforts aimed at addressing gaps and disparities?
- How can family members and friends recognize if someone in their life is struggling with mental health or a substance abuse disorder, and how can they get help?

Mark your calendars for Thursday November 4 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, and plan to attend this interesting and thought-provoking learning opportunity.

Units Unite Us



Our nine small discussion groups (Units) meet once a month to discuss topical issues and connect members to outreach activities.

Any member can attend any Unit meeting.

Check our [website calendar](#) for locations and times -- including our virtual-only Unit!

Want to Work on Our December Forum on Homelessness?

Thursday December 2 at 7:00 pm

Peter Shapiro



The organizers of the December Forum on homelessness announce opportunities for volunteers interested in researching, writing, and learning more about this complex subject. The program will focus on proven solutions to the chronic homelessness experienced by our neighbors who are living on our streets and in other public spaces.

Another major topic will be the county-wide consolidation of programs under the aegis of the new King County Regional Homelessness Authority. The Authority itself is organizing the transition, scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2022.

Contact Peter Shapiro at j.peter.shapiro@gmail.com.

Interested in Growth in Your Community?

Ann Aagard and Marty Gibbins



Here is an opportunity for League members to become involved in planning for the Growth Management Act Periodic Update of their communities. Under the State's [Growth Management Act](#) (GMA), a series of statutes first adopted in 1990, every county and city is required to conduct a periodic update of its comprehensive plan and development regulations. Counties and

cities must be up-to-date with the requirements of the GMA, including the periodic update requirements, to be eligible for grants and loans from certain State infrastructure programs. The legislatively-mandated updates for King County and our local jurisdictions must be complete in June 2024. Thus, many jurisdictions will begin planning for their updates in 2022.

The updates include reviews and revisions of the Critical Areas Ordinances of their Comprehensive Plans. These Critical Areas include:

- Wetlands
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas, including streams
- Geologically Hazardous Areas
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Aquifer Recharge Areas.

League representatives will partner with other environmental organizations with expertise in Critical Areas and their protection.

If you would like to learn about our Critical Areas and how to participate in planning under GMA, please contact Ann Aagaard at annaagaard2@gmail.com or Marty Gibbins, our State Natural Resource Chair, at mgibbins@lwvwa.org.

Your Voice is Important ...

Lev Elson-Schwab



... and your representatives at all levels want to hear from you! Letters are an extremely effective way of communicating with your elected officials, with legislators understanding that a letter represents not only the position of the writer, but also that of many other constituents who did not take the time to write! The ACLU has provided tips on how to write to your elected officials, and you can find those [here](#).

In addition, the League of Women Voters has provided a fantastic tool that you can use to find your representatives at all levels. Following [this link](#) will allow you to determine who represents you. You can also go directly to the [Washington State Legislature District Finder](#), input your home address, and get the full contact info, including email addresses of your state Senators and Representatives, as well as your U.S. Senators and Congressional Representative. To find your county Council member, use [this tool](#) and input your home address.

And, just to check and make sure that you are registered to vote, please follow [this link](#) where you can register, update your registration status, and learn what's on your ballot.

Take a few minutes today to make your voice heard!



Voter Services Updates



September 28 was [National Voter Registration Day!](#) LWVSKC members teamed up with League members from Kitsap County to register voters – including updating voter addresses – on the Bremerton-Seattle and Southworth-Fauntleroy ferries. Volunteers in Port Townsend and Edmonds walked through the passenger waiting areas at the docks.



Also on September 28, at the North King County Unit meeting, Sarah Phillips offered training on how to help new voters register to vote right on their personal cell phones. Cell phone registration allows us to remain COVID-safe while registering new voters. We can wear masks and stand six feet apart while our new voters fill out the information on their cell phones!

Contact Sarah Phillips at sarah.phillips@comcast.net.

Introducing the Welcoming Team!

Heather Kelly and Saunatina Sanchez



Imagine you're attending a meeting with a group of people you've never met. You arrive and realize you're the only new face in the room. Folks are clustered in small groups making small talk and laughing. When the meeting begins, you introduce yourself and people smile back warmly. As things progress, you realize you aren't familiar with anything they're discussing and don't know how to contribute. You feel anxious, wondering how you can possibly get up to speed. The meeting wraps up and one of the participants walks you out to your car. "See you next month!" she says. You nod, wondering

if you'll be back.

Now imagine you're walking into the same meeting for the first time. You've visited the group's webpage describing their current projects and meeting schedule. After you signed up, the group leader called you to introduce herself and emailed you the meeting agenda. You walk up to the door of the meeting and someone greets you by name. You met her for coffee last week to learn more about the group. She offers you a seat and introduces you to everyone. The meeting begins and you listen for ways to contribute. You have a lot to learn, but you know you'll get there with support.

When you're new to a group, sometimes all it takes is a small gesture to make you feel welcome and included. Those gestures are second nature to some of us, while others might feel shy or uncertain how to welcome someone new. Sometimes, like in the first scenario above, we are so eager to catch up with those we already know that we don't notice a new face.

The newly-formed Welcoming Team is here to help. We've been brainstorming processes to help new members hit the ground running, like holding regular orientations and appointing welcoming ambassadors. There are only five of us at the moment (including two Board members), so if you're interested in helping us roll out the red carpet, please join our team! Email president@lwvskc.org for upcoming meeting times.

Connecting With Our Leadership

Sara Beth Miller, Unit Liaison Director



I'm the new Unit Liaison for the Seattle-King County League, and one of the new freshmen on the Board this year! There are several of us in this new "Class of '21" and we've already had some great opportunities to work together. Our freshman cohort represents a diverse range of professional, volunteer, and life experiences, but also shares optimism, enthusiasm, and the willingness to step up and jump in!

Getting to know these talented colleagues has confirmed for me the wisdom of deciding to join the League two-and-a-half years ago. As is true for many other new League members, my impetus for joining was the 2016 election, and the realization that democracy is not guaranteed in this country of ours.

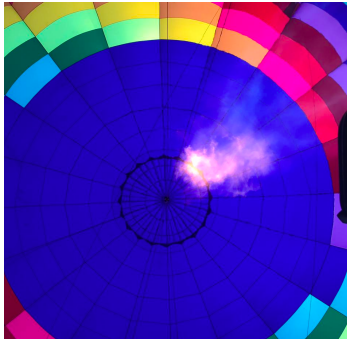
Why did I choose the League over the many, many other fine organizations promoting activism and change? My choice was partly due to familiarity and family history. My mother, a League member, grew up in Western New York State near Rochester, the home of Susan B. Anthony, and Seneca Falls, the birthplace of the Suffrage movement and home to Elizabeth Cady Stanton. When I was a kid, my family made summer pilgrimages to both of these legendary locations. My proximity to that history gave the League a luster and gravitas that the newer organizations just didn't have.

But it was the way the League worked that really appealed to me after the events of 2016. I've always been a partisan hot-head about issues and candidates. I've squandered a lot of time in heated arguments that made me feel righteous but did little to influence others. In this new post-2016 world, I realized that my indignation was not going to change any minds. For me, the essential appeal of the League was its non-partisan, information-based approach. Through the process of sensibly registering more people to vote, and offering solid information about how their communities actually work, the League empowers voters to change the future direction of their cities, states, and country. WOW.

That's why I'm here, and why I'm committed to learning, communicating, and growing with the League.

Board Brief

Heather Kelly, President



This month, I'd like to share a little bit about how our Board is coming together and why that matters.

Our Board met on August 31 for a retreat. Typically, Board retreats are a chance to connect and identify goals and priorities for the year ahead. I drafted the agenda with those things in mind, but I also asked our Board members to weigh in with their own goals for the day.

Reviewing their contributions really opened my eyes to the power and potential of this group. Our Board members wanted to understand not just how the League works, but also each other. Throughout the day, we explored how to communicate with and support one another. We shared how we like to be treated and brainstormed ways to build trust and accountability. We made room for these conversations and fell behind on our agenda.

You might wonder, "But wait! What about the business of the League?! When will you get to those agenda items?" My response is this: When tasks and logistics become more important than our relationships with one another, our organization suffers. We cannot create a welcoming environment that appeals to new members if we're always cutting straight to the chase. Many of us have jobs and come to the League for something else — a community joined in a common purpose.

I believe that the health of our community is the business of the League. When we cultivate friendships and spend time getting to know one another, communication improves. Members are more motivated to get engaged because their work is valued. People can ask questions or ask for help because that's what friends are for. Our first regular Board meeting was September 11 (tomorrow, as I write this). We will pick up where we left off at the retreat and continue strengthening our relationships.

This year, I am looking forward to working and laughing in equal measure!

The Danger of a Single Story

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Learning Lab #9

Heather Kelly

This month, I'm going to share a little bit about the work we are undertaking to advance DEI at the Board level. One of our new Board members, Tania Hino, has generously offered to support the Board in its study of diversity, equity, and inclusion. One of the first resources Tania shared with us was a TED Talk, The Danger of a Single Story, by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. I highly recommend watching the recording, available [here](#).



Adichie (*pictured left*) highlights the way stories about a few people can evolve into stereotypes about an entire group. The more social and political influence the storyteller has, the more widespread the stereotype can become. Adichie wonders what would change if people told stories that highlighted commonalities, not to erase the differences, but to counteract stereotypes and restore balance to our perceptions of other races.

After watching the TED Talk, I found myself thinking of Adichie's message in a Zoom meeting with another group. The meeting facilitator kicked things off by describing her appearance to accommodate participants who were visually impaired. We then broke into pairs to practice sharing our own physical descriptions out loud. I described the room I was in, my hairstyle and headset, my skin and hair color, and my outfit. As I spoke, I became aware that even though I was describing the most superficial parts of myself, my words construct a story about *me*.

Often when we talk about DEI, we emphasize differences. Those conversations are important and necessary to our understanding of privilege and systemic oppression, and yet I wonder how they impact our perceptions of one another. As a white woman, I know I enjoy racial privilege, but does that really tell me anything meaningful about the Black, brown, and other people of color in my life? How do we acknowledge that racism exists, but avoid reducing people to mere products of racist systems?

These themes come up often in our DEI Discussion Group. We don't have all the answers, but we do share ideas for navigating these thorny issues. If you are looking for a supportive environment to learn about DEI, join us on Wednesday October 20 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm for our next virtual meeting. Email president@lwvskc.org for the link!

Compassion Seattle – Where We Stand

Lev Elson-Schwab



Earlier this summer we put out a call for your feedback, thoughts, and opinions about the proposed “Compassion Seattle” charter amendment ... and you answered the call! Your voices have been heard, thank you for your responses! Over 84% of the many responses that we received wanted the League to take a strong stance in opposition to CA-29, with about 6% of respondents not recommending one stance or another. Your stories, thoughts, cited articles, and links to League positions helped inform our work!

While some members favored the measure “...if it honestly helps the people by providing housing and resources,” many were vehemently opposed on the grounds that “...a Charter Amendment is the wrong way to achieve this desired goal,” and “(G)iving further justification for the homeless camp sweeps without providing a solution to our housing crisis is not good public policy.”

Thanks in part to the letters and emails we received, along with some fantastic research and interviews conducted by the endorsement committee, we were well-informed and ready to move forward, sharing our data with our Board and discussing future plans of action.

On 27 August, King County Superior Judge Catherine Shaffer struck the charter amendment from the November ballot because of its conflicts with state law. Nonetheless, this amendment, or a similar one, may resurface. The Board will continue to monitor the issue and will be prepared for future action.

The problem of homelessness is real. It cannot and should not be ignored. This proposed amendment did not address root causes, but instead sought to punish people for trying to meet their basic needs, such as shelter, sleep, and food. As the French journalist Anatole France wrote in 1894, “In its majestic equality, the law forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, beg in the streets, and steal loaves of bread.” Meaningful steps toward solving our housing crisis should reflect considerations such as Seattle’s lack of adequate affordable permanent housing; our history of racial injustice; and the observable fact that punishing people for being poor only exacerbates the housing crisis. Such considerations

were absent from CA-29, but merit consideration in future proposals if they are to succeed.

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County supports measures to provide basic food, shelter, and health care for those unable to provide it for themselves, programs that promote individual choice of housing by enhancing the availability and affordability of alternatives throughout the region, and low-income housing programs which meet the needs of low-income persons. Our position to support programs to aid homeless families and single adults to prevent homelessness states that programs should ensure accessibility of services, increase outreach and engagement, and provide resources and support services.

ClubExpress FAQs

Lisa Nelson



Thank you to everyone who has visited and logged in to our [new website](#)! We thought we'd share some frequently asked questions to help you get oriented. If you have a question that is not answered here, please email Lisa Nelson at webmaster@lwvskc.org.

Q: New website? What new website?

A: Find us at <https://lwvskc.org>. We are now running on the ClubExpress platform, which will reduce the workload of managing our membership as well as improve options for communication and member connection. Please check it out!

Q: I'm a League member. How do I log in for the first time?

A: Check your email for a message with the subject line: League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County - Web Site Access. This contains your username and temporary password, along with instructions for logging in for the first time. LWV-SKC President Heather Kelly guides you through the first time logging in in this [YouTube video](#).

Q: Should I log in every time I visit?

A: Yes! We encourage you to log in every time you visit the site. Look for the blue Member Login button in the upper right corner of the website (blue bar if you are on a mobile device). This Member Login option will appear on every page in the header until you log in.

Logging in is the only way to access the membership directory, discussion forums, and current volunteer opportunities for members.

Q: What if I forgot my username or password?

A: If you forget your username and/or password, click the Forgot My Username/Password button on the [Login page](#).

The system will prompt you to enter your email address and, optionally, your first name. Be sure to use the email address you gave to the League. When you click OK, the system will search for this information in our membership database.

If one matching record is found, the username and a new temporary password is generated and will be emailed to you. Use this username and temporary password to log in.

If no match was found, or if multiple matches were found, the system cannot generate a new temporary password. If this happens, or if your email address is no longer valid, call the League office at 206-329-4848 or call ClubExpress toll-free on (866) 457-2582 to have your password reset manually.

Q: Why does the Membership Directory look empty?

A: To see a full list of members in the directory, just click on the Search button. If you wish to narrow your search, first enter the name of the person you are looking for in the Search Text box and then click the Search button. (Clicking on the Search button to get a full list of results will work for any Search box on the website!)

Q: Why can't I find my League friend in the Membership Directory?

A: Each member gets to choose how much (if any) information to share in the directory. While we encourage everyone to participate in the directory, we respect that some members will choose not to.

Looking to contact a board member? Visit the [Board & Staff](#) page for a full list of emails.

Q: What are discussion forums?

A: In the context of our website home, [discussion forums](#) are a place to connect with other members of our League. We'll be adding more forums based on interests and activities, so check back often.

[Learn more about using forums.](#)

Q: Where can I learn more about how to use the website?

A: The [Getting Started Guide](#) is a great place to learn about how to make the most of our site.

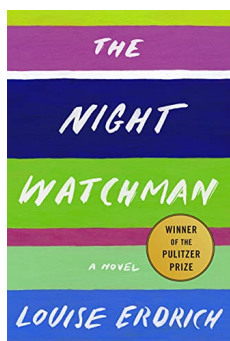
See you on the site!

The Night Watchman, Louise Erdrich

Book Review

Vicky Downs

This novel is based on the life of Erdrich's Native American grandfather, who helped his people keep their land. He worked as a night watchman in a jewel-bearing plant in North Dakota, ensuring no robbers came in the wee hours to steal the bearing jewels. He was also a Chippewa Nation council member. In the book he is called Thomas Wazhasht.



In 1953 an “emancipation” bill was heading to the floor of the United States Congress. At that time the government “was fed up with Indians” and wanted to push them off the reservations and force them to “take care of themselves like any other Americans.”

The Chippewa council members knew the bill was not about “emancipation” or “freedom” for Indians, but rather, it was a “terminator” that threatened the rights of Native Americans to their own land and to their very identity. How could the government abandon treaties made in good faith with Native Americans, “for as long as the grasses shall grow and the rivers run?”

Who could make a difference? Thomas’ last name was “Wazhasht, which means ‘muskrat’: the lowly, hardworking water-loving rodent.” Was that a good name for a quiet man who was asked to make an enormous effort finding and then getting every single tribal member to sign his petition to the U.S. Congress? Could he go all the way to Washington, D.C. to speak to people he did not know, many of whom were strongly racist?

Fortunately, he knew how to find help within the tribe. Thomas’s niece Patrice was valedictorian at her high school. She was a strong young woman determined to live a better life than her alcoholic father, who returned home every so often to steal whatever money he could find. She had already taken responsibility for her mother, whose kind heart drove her to help others. Thomas would not count on Patrice’s younger brother, nor her older sister who had left for Minneapolis and may have had a baby, but he would find ways to use Patrice to help their people.

Like others in the tribe, Thomas knew how to “read” those he cared for. He could guess why Patrice would leave her beloved reservation to go with little money to a huge city she did not know. He knew she would find a way to support herself, and would understand why she might choose to dance in an immodest costume at a “club” that might be exactly the right place to meet people who could lead her to her sister. Roderick, a childhood classmate, long dead, appears to Thomas as a ghost, a person he cannot get out of his head.

Roderick reminds Thomas how helpful it had been to “butter up” a difficult teacher, ‘way back when they were young. Thomas realizes that idea might be just what he needs to soften up a difficult Senator.



In her novel, Erdrich (*pictured left*) shows readers there is much we all can admire about Native American cultures. I fell for the quiet, hard-working Thomas when a white man asked if marriage to Patrice would make him an Indian. Thomas responded, “No ... you could not be Indian. But we could like you anyway.”

Native Americans have to work hard to hold on to their cultures, and this book shows us what we would all miss without them.

We'd Like to Hear From You!

Not sure who to reach? You can always find us at info@lwvskc.org or 206-329-4848!

Executive Committee of the Board of LWVSKC

President	Heather Kelly	president@lwvskc.org
First Vice-President	Kathy Sakhara	kathy.sakhara@lwvskc.org
Second Vice-President	Barbara Tengtio	2ndVP@lwvskc.org
Secretary	Barbara Erickson	secretary@lwvskc.org
Treasurer	Marilee Fuller	treasurer@lwvskc.org

Directors of the Board of LWVSKC

Action Chair	Lev Elson-Schwab	action@lwvskc.org
Communications Chair	Lisa Nelson	communications@lwvskc.org
Voter Services Co-Chair	Chelsea Jordan	voterservice@lwvskc.org
Voter Services Co-Chair	Sara Thein	voterservice@lwvskc.org
Volunteer Coordinator	Lauren Pixley	lauren.pixley@lwvskc.org
Program Chair	Adele Reynolds	program@lwvskc.org
Unit Liaison	Sarah Beth Miller	unitliaison@lwvskc.org
Director-at-Large	Mary Taylor	mary.taylor@lwvskc.org
Director-at-Large	Tania Hino	tania.hino@lwvskc.org
Development Chair	Meg Van Wyk	meg.vanwyk@lwvskc.org

Education Fund of LWVSKC

Board members also serve as the Education Fund Board.

Treasurer	open	efttreasurer@lwvskc.org
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Committee Chairs for LWVSKC

Economics and Taxation	Nora Leach	nleech2002@yahoo.com
Education	Joanna Cullen	jfoxcullen@gmail.com
Climate Change	MAK Mitchell	mak@armak.us
Investment	Cindy Piennett	cindypiennett@gmail.com
Observer Corps	Heather Kelly	president@lwvskc.org

Nominating Committee for LWV-SKC

Chair	Joanna Cullen	nominations@lwvskc.org
Member	Jerri Gordon	nominations@lwvskc.org
Member	Pat Griffith	nominations@lwvskc.org

Find us on the web at lwvskc.org!

