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



President's Corner

As we welcome in the Spring season, I hope you all are ready for some changes, because there are lots of changes coming our way. There are transitions happening on the local and national level that we all need to be prepared for.

First, the launch of our new website on Club Express is imminent. The last component (our financial piece) is being installed, and then we will be ready to launch. You will receive a welcome letter by email that will explain how to set up your personal account. The current League-wide use of a single password to access the member only section will be a thing of the past.

Second, we have moved our storage unit space to a smaller, less expensive unit. The cost savings were significant (\$130/month) and is a much more efficient use of space. The access code had to be changed as well. If you need to access the unit, please contact Sonia Scaer, Carol Larsen, or me for details.

Third, the Executive Board met to discuss access to place orders with our local printer. While our Education Fund is quite flush, the same cannot be said of our operating funds. Furthermore, the invoices we get from Blue Sky are not terribly detailed, and our treasurer is left to hunt down what, exactly, has been printed. Most often, we don't know who has ordered printed materials.



Robin catches Debi and Sonia tackling the heavy stuff.

This is a big expense. To this end, we are setting in motion some new procedures for having materials printed. They are as follows:

1. Contact our Treasurer, Sonia Scaer, to request a purchase order number
2. If you are printing something that falls under education materials, then YOU must fill out the form requesting Ed Funds. This form can be found on the LWVWA website. It requires the president's approval.
3. Take the material to Blue Sky Printing

This part is important: If you have not followed the procedure, Blue Sky has been informed that the League of Women Voters-Kitsap WILL NOT pay for the print order. Members will have to pay with their own funds, and then file the form for reimbursement with our treasurer.

Last, LWVUS is transitioning to a new dues paying/membership approach. Beginning in January 2025, National will collect all dues payments, and distribute them to the state and local leagues. Additionally, while the minimum dues suggestion is \$75.00, there will also be a "pay what you can" option. The lowest recommended dues amount will be \$20.00. No matter what dues amount is selected, our local League will receive 20%. If you choose to renew or someone joins at a higher amount (say, \$100) we will still receive 20%, as our share. This has the potential to drastically reduce our operating funds. To get around this change, we will have a separate donation option on our website. There will be more to come as the transition is put into motion.

So, a lot of change — but change is the essence of life!
Robin Muir, President LWV-Kitsap

Foster Care and Homelessness

If you are a youth in foster care in the state of Washington, you have a 20-30% chance of being homeless within a year of leaving foster care. In Kitsap County, there is a program working to change that outcome. Greg Williamson (Washington State Department of Youth & Family Housing (DCYF) Manager), Jill Stanton (Executive Director for the Bremerton Housing Authority), and Angela Youtsey (Olive Crest Program Manager), joined the Bremerton/Central Kitsap Unit meeting in March to discuss how a coalition of service providers are working to change the child welfare system in our community through a voucher program called Fostering Youth to Independence (FYI). Our presenters believe that Kitsap County's superpower is its partnerships. Greg, Jill, and Angela shared how many service providers have come together to ensure that FYI housing vouchers for youth in Kitsap County/Bremerton move from a voucher success rate of 30% to 100%.

The service providers include DCYF, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Kitsap County, the City of Bremerton, Olive Crest, Kitsap Mental Health, Olympic College, Scarlet Road, Kitsap Community Resources, WorkSource of Washington, Educational Service District 114, and more. This coalition allows service providers to do what they do best in support of youth aging out of foster care. This collaboration in turn has led to the creation of a housing site in Bremerton called Evergreen Bright Start. Bright Start is opening soon and will provide 24 rental units and onsite services to these young people. Located on Warren Avenue in Bremerton, it is ideally



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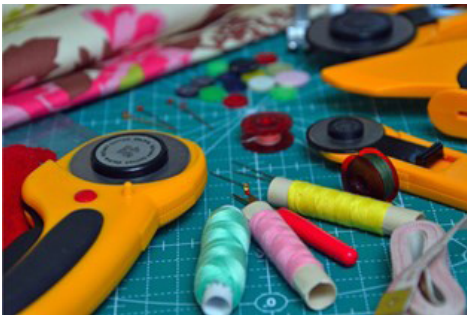
located near support services. Kitsap Mental Health will be moving its youth services onsite to Evergreen Bright Start.

We can be a part of the coalition as individuals and as an organization. The apartments will be available sometime in May, but much is needed to prepare them for the new tenants: nightlights to feel safe; Nest doorbells for security; Orca cards for transportation; basic staples; cleaning products; furnishings. You may be a mentor for moral support or donate money to help pay the first and last months' rent or cleaning deposit. Amy Waterman has offered to collect and deliver our donations, so feel free to bring them to the April 13th meeting. Reach out to Amy at amy.m.watermanmn@gmail.com if you want to donate before the meeting.

A recording of this discussion may be found on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/Bd0pA8khy-bc> where you may find more ways to help. Notes from the meeting will be available on our League website.

Maureen Cervinsky

All League Volunteer Opportunity



Kitsap League members are invited to sew laundry bags as part of a "welcome to your first home" gift for the opening of Evergreen Bright Start. Bright Start is the 24-unit apartment complex opening in May for youth aging out of foster care.

Robin Muir has invited us to her home on Thursday, April 11th, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. (come when you can, leave when you must) to sew. Robin has bolts of batik material in red and blue to use, and we will collect sewing thread and cord for the drawstring. We also collect detergent and fabric softener. Members who do not sew may cut material and thread the drawstrings, so non-sewers want-

ing to help have plenty they can do. Let Robin know you plan to attend and receive directions to her home.

Maureen Cervinsky

Committee News

Forums Committee

Are you ready? Just a bit of your time can help ALL Kitsap Voters have the information they need to cast an informed ballot in the primary on August 6.

How can you help? For each of the contested seats with 3 or more candidates, we will need your help to plan, schedule, organize, time, moderate and gently remind candidates for the upcoming elections.

When? Now, just email the Voter Forums chair Kim Abel at kimabellwvwa@gmail.com or text her at 360-874-6774 to find out how your energy can make this happen!

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May 6 - 10, 2024

Filing Week for Candidates

- US Congressional District 6
- Court of Appeals, Div. 2, Dist. 2
- District 1 County Commissioner
- District 2 County Commissioner
- Kitsap County Superior Court - all 8 positions
- 23rd Legislative District Senator and 2 Representatives
- 26th Legislative District 2 Representatives
- 35th Legislative District 2 Representatives

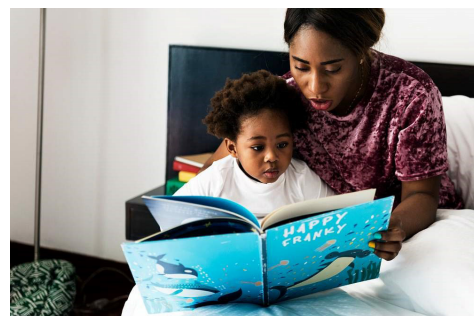
May 13 is the last day to withdraw and the work begins on the 14th to set Primary election Candidate Forums.

Early Education: 0 to 3

The 0 to Three Committee has been monitoring the progress of childcare and early learning bills in this last 2024 legislative session. We are pleased to report that The Fair Start for Kids Act passed in 2021 will continue to receive funding.

Other more incremental funding bills were passed that increased funding for facilities, grants, and loans (HB2195); increased access to paid sick leave (SB5793); and broadened eligibility for HB1945 Working Connections Child Care.

Karen Tvedt, who follows child care and early learning issues for the state League wrote and I'll quote, "I see two major areas to watch: 1) if passed Initiative 2109, proposing the repeal of the Capital Gains Tax, would create a major hole in state childcare funding (my understanding is that the state board has not yet taken a position on the initiatives but is expected to do so in April); and 2) work is ongoing on an implementation plan to expand access to the state child care system that would limit family contributions toward child care to no more than 7% of household income and provide living wages and benefits for child care providers."



The 0 to Three Committee has been hard at work updating its PowerPoint presentation and redoing its flyers in Spanish as well as English to include maternal health. We are now in the process of getting final approvals from the various organizations included before having the flyers printed.

The Chair, Rosalind, has attended the Peninsula Early Childhood Coalition monthly to keep abreast of the activity in the field.

Rosalind Renouard, Committee Chair

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MELD-Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development

In Washington state, the League of Women Voters has had a long-standing Membership Engagement and Leadership Development (MELD) program. This program is a conduit for communication among all levels of the League, local, state, and national.

MELD representatives from Leagues in Benton Franklin, Thurston, Bellingham, and Kitsap attended the February 26 meeting. Membership discussion centered on how to recruit members to volunteer for chapter projects and recruiting younger and more diverse members.

Successes and Issues raised at the February MELD POD meeting included:

- The Bellingham unit created short video clips that highlight Civics issues and have gotten good feedback on the results. They are willing to share. The link to the videos resource also is in the Evergreen Voter. Zaria, a college student member, said that being persistently invited to activities has made a difference to her staying with the League.
- Thurston spotlighted Black history month by attending a popup Black History Museum at a local church where several League members attended. Local League also reenacted scenes from a book about the first Black LWV leader. It was well attended and enjoyable. Thoughts were that the League could sponsor other pop-up venues.
- Kitsap representative highlighted that we have 165 members among the 4 units. Membership chair, Carol Larson, meets individually with each new member. Our program meeting was successful. Sharing leadership on projects resulted in more volunteers. It was suggested that an orientation engagement meeting for new members would be helpful maybe quarterly. Lunell Haugh said that there had been an orientation for new members before COVID.
- Benton Franklin had good participation in its program planning meeting. There is a strong interest in Civics education in their group.

MELD meets by Zoom on the 4th Monday of each month around 5 p.m. and is facilitated by Lunell Haught. Any member can access the virtual meetings. The current focus is on membership retention. Also in discussion is the Transformation Journey to new guidelines about dues money allocations, DEI, and a roundtable discussion of what is going well with each unit and what we can improve on. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 25.

Raejean Avalo, Chair

Another Reminder of the Need for Redistricting Reform

Redistricting made the headlines last week in Washington state. The result is a new map for LD15 in eastern Washington which includes parts of Pasco and Yakima. This was the result of a decision by U.S. District Court Judge Lasnik in *Soto Palmer v. Hobbs* where he concurred with the plaintiffs that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Acts (VRA) had been violated when the maps were drawn by the Washington State Bipartisan Commission in 2021. A key component of drawing district maps is to comply with the VRA and to take into consideration “communities of interest” (COI). In this case the Hispanic community is the COI and when the 2021 maps were drawn that community was divided which resulted in a dilution of their voting power in violation of the VRA. The ruling and new map will address this. The decision is being appealed but, unless there is a stay, the 2024 election will move forward with these maps.

The new map for LD15 has repercussions for surrounding districts as you might imagine. Almost 500,000 people will be changing districts, and it will impact five (5) legislators. There were multiple lawsuits in addition to *Soto Palmer v. Hobbs* because of the maps drawn by the Bipartisan Redistricting Commission; these are time consuming, costly, and add to the dissatisfaction with the institutions that are key to the continued success of our democracy.

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Washington State's Congressional and Legislative districts have been drawn since 1983 by a bipartisan redistricting commission that is formed every 10 years following the census. The 2021 redistricting commission did not complete the maps on time, was not transparent, and, in fact, met behind closed doors to negotiate. Selecting the commissioners is partisan and the map drawing process became highly partisan with minimal transparency. And the voices of 40% of the voters who are independent or unaffiliated were not even represented since only Democrats or Republicans are included on the commission.

The Washington Redistricting Reform Task Force has been working since 2022 to find solutions. We clearly need to reform the process of redistricting. Part of this process is learning about the stories here in Kitsap so that we understand who key COIs are and how they've been affected by where district lines have been drawn. We also need to identify key organizations that have an interest in redistricting reform. This is not a process that will be driven by legislators. It is a process that will be driven by the voters of Washington state and LWV-Kitsap has an important role to play.

How did the changes to the districts map in Kitsap County impact you and your community?

What local Kitsap organizations are important to include in this conversation?

Feel free to reach out to Carolyn Burger at carolyn4bi@gmail.com with this information or let her know if you are interested in being a part of the LWV-Kitsap Redistricting Reform Local Action Team (LAT). For information on this decision and the maps, see the links below.

Articles on the new maps for LD15:

[New legislative map approved Friday brings big change for Yakima Valley | Government | yakimaherald.com](https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/government/new-legislative-map-approved-friday-brings-big-change-for-yakima-valley)

[Judge redraws WA's legislative map after lawsuit over Latino voters | The Seattle Times](https://www.seattletimes.com/politics/government/judge-redraws-wa-s-legislative-map-after-lawsuit-over-latino-voters/)

[After court ruling, new Central WA legislative maps could mean shakeup in Olympia | The Seattle Times](https://www.seattletimes.com/politics/government/after-court-ruling-new-central-wa-legislative-maps-could-mean-shakeup-in-olympia/)

[Axios Seattle](https://www.axios.com/news/politics/government/axios-seattle)

[Judge sets new boundaries for Washington legislative district • Washington State Standard](https://www.washingtonstandard.com/news/government/judge-sets-new-boundaries-for-washington-legislative-district/)

Carolyn Burger

The Oath of Citizenship: A Member's Perspective

I recently had the privilege of attending a citizenship ceremony for a young woman with whom I worked through Kitsap Immigration Assistance Center (KIAC). It was a very emotional experience and one that brought to mind how much I take for granted my own citizenship and the inherent rights and responsibilities therein. Take note of the Oath as stated below and ponder its message:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.

Granted, this is an oath pledged by those coming into citizenship through the USCIS but is no less

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relevant to all of us as U.S. born citizens of the United States of America.

I was taken aback by the words of the Oath of Allegiance. I realized I was personally ignorant of the responsibilities assigned to me as a citizen. We may be aware of our rights but are we equally aware of our responsibilities?

Carol Larsen

GOTV at Barker Creek Community School

On February 28, Robin Muir, Janice McLemore and Debi Barner had the pleasure of attending Leap into the Future at Barker Creek Community School in Bremerton where they provided Get Out the Vote (GOTV) information for the high school students.

The event consisted of an information room with groups from the Marine Corps, Skookum (job opportunities for individuals with disabilities), Kitsap Library, Kitsap Transit, and about ten others. While the information room was open all day, there were three twenty-minute sessions happening in rooms around the campus. Representatives from Kitsap Fire, Commercial Driver School, DigiPen Institute of Technology, Kitsap Building Association, and more shared learning and job opportunities with the students.



Robin shared information about voting in the Presidential Primary, the General Election, why we vote, and how even one vote can make a big difference. Maureen Cervinsky dedicated hours to creating the PowerPoint that Robin used for her presentation.

Janis covered the GOTV table chatting with about 30 students and handing out bookmarks and Trifolds. She even assisted a young lady to register a new signature with the Auditors' Office. She also gave out a couple of LWV Membership forms, so hopefully the LWVK gains

some new members.

The League members were there from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m and were treated to the soup and salad bar set up by the staff for the presenters. There was even a Barker Baker Contest with yummy desserts for us to judge.

The students and fellow presenters were a joy to spend the day with. Robin and Debi fondly recalled meeting a young man who had just spoken with a firefighter about employment. The young man was thrilled to think about having a job where he could save lives.

During the event, four 18-year-olds and five 16- and 17-year-olds were registered. The League members also fielded questions and disseminated information.

Debi Barner

Unit News

Bainbridge Island Unit

The BI Unit holds its business meetings, quarterly, by Zoom. Meetings are scheduled for the 4th Wednesday of the month in June, September, and December at 6:30 p.m. At the last meeting, on March 27, the agenda was an open discussion about what we want to do and who will volunteer to

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help empower local voters during this election year.

In addition to our quarterly business meetings, we are also planning monthly casual get togethers at various places, various days of the week, and various times of the day. This past February, we met for morning coffee at Cups Espresso. The next get together will be held on April 4 at 6:30p.m. where we will meet at Westside Pizza near Safeway. If you have any questions, please contact Maurie Louis at maurie.louis@comcast.net.

Maurie Louis, Unit Chair

Bremerton/Central Kitsap Unit

On Saturday, April 13 (second Saturday of the month), Harriette Bryant, CEO for the Kitsap YWCA, will be our guest. We have asked Harriette to share with us the YWCA's program to support women and children experiencing domestic abuse. The Kitsap YWCA located at 905 Pacific Avenue, Bremerton, is the only one in Kitsap County. Raejean Bridges-Avalos is our lead for this meeting. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact Raejean. Our meetings are hybrid. We meet in-person at the Kitsap United Way conference room, 645 Fourth Street, Bremerton, from 10 a.m. to noon. People wishing to attend remotely do so via Zoom.

We are reconnecting with the Bremerton Coffee Oasis, 822 Burwell Street. Amy Waterman is heading up this effort and is looking for a few Kitsap League members who will join her in these conversations. The first visit will be April 5, between 2:30 and 5 p.m. Amy is hoping that this will become a monthly event. Contact Amy for information.

Our book group met on March 27 to discuss the book, *So You Want to Solve Homelessness? Start Here* by Andrew Hening. The second meeting will be April 3, from 2 to 5 p.m., at The Pearl on Oyster Bay, 550 Russell Road, Bremerton. All interested League members are invited. You need not have read the book to attend and contribute to the discussion. Kathleen Cahall is the lead for this event and thank you to Pat Troxell for securing The Pearl for these two meetings.

The Kitsap Youth Rally for Human Rights is an annual event. The rally is for students by students, and ten Kitsap County secondary schools and five school organizations participated. This year it was held at Olympic College on Wednesday, March 19. The League was invited to participate. Candy Rankin, Raejean Bridges-Avalos, Suzanne Schreiner, and Maureen Cervinsky were assigned a table for the five-and-a-half-hour event. They joined more than 20 other community organizations serving youth in our county. The students were wonderful and very interested in registering/preregistering to vote. One young lady shared that her goal was to become president in 2044! Candy assured her that she had Candy's vote.

Bookmarks for future voters with the QR code for online registration were the most popular item (if the student has a driver's license or state ID they may register online). A number of paper registrations were sent home with the auditor's address and a postage stamp in place for students who needed to submit a signature.

Buttons and stickers flew off the table. Another plus, our League volunteers had the opportunity to meet leaders of other service organizations. Harriette Bryant, YMCA's CEO and our April guest, was at the adjoining table.

Maureen Cervinsky, Unit Chair



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North Kitsap

The North Kitsap unit met at the end of March. The next scheduled meeting is April 22 and will be held at the Kitsap Regional Library in Poulsbo. The meeting's start time is 10:30 a.m. If you have any questions, please contact Carol Larsen at 360-265-8132, clarsen88@gmail.com.

Carol Larsen, Interim Unit Chair

South Kitsap Unit

The SK Unit usually meets the second Tuesday of the month in the morning. We are transitioning out of Zoom meetings to in-person meetings. Any member of LWVK is welcome to join us at our meetings!

Our next meeting on April 9 will be in-person with Port Orchard Mayor Rob Putaansuu at Port Orchard City Hall's Council Chambers, 216 Prospect Street, Port Orchard, at 10:15 a.m. Please bring your questions on development, roadwork, roundabouts, etc. Susan Daniel will chair this meeting.

Our May meeting has been moved to Wednesday, May 15, at the Port Orchard Library meeting room, 87 Sidney Ave., Port Orchard, at 10:15 a.m. (We could not find an available meeting room in South Kitsap on May 14 without paying a hefty fee.) Our guest speaker will be Mandy Wood, South Kitsap High School librarian. Fights over which books belong on library shelves have put librarians in the center of a culture war across the US, and our South Kitsap librarians have not escaped these attacks. Contact: Janet Stegemeyer, jans@oz.net, 360-471-9470.

Janet Stegemeyer, Unit Chair

Voter Team

If you have questions or would like to submit an article for a future issue of the Voter, please reach out to Cat. The Voter team welcomes your feedback! As we are working with a short deadline, please send your Voter content in article format – if you want assistance, please reach out to Cat before the 21st; she is happy to help!

Editor: Katie Pratt

Layout: Barb Willock

Content: Cat Freudenberg

Mark Your Calendar

Wed Apr 3, 2024

2 p.m. – 5 p.m.: Bremerton/CK Book Club

Where: The Pearl on Oyster Bay, 550 Russell Road, Bremerton

Tue Apr 4, 2024

12 p.m. - 1 p.m.: League of Women Voters US Webinar: Executive and Regulatory Advocacy

In addition to the legislative advocacy that the League conducts, certain issues also require advocacy with the Executive branch- both through working with the White House and federal agencies. Especially in moments when legislative advocacy stalls, due to gridlock in Congress or other hurdles,

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it is key to find other avenues to pursue our policy goals. Join this webinar to learn about LWVUS' efforts on advocacy with the executive branch and our goals for regulatory action this Congress. When you register, be sure to adjust the time zone to your device, otherwise the program time will be displayed in ET. Register here: <https://web.cvent.com/event/09a56f40-00f1-4a74-a869-e0099b-c0fcc1/register>

Sat Apr 6, 2024

10 a.m. - noon: LWV-Kitsap Board Meeting

Where: The Pearl on Oyster Bay, 550 Russell Road, Bremerton

Tue Apr 9, 2024

10:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: SK Unit Meeting

In person meeting with Mayor Rob Putaansuu

Where: Port Orchard City Hall Chambers, 216 Prospect Street, Port Orchard

Fri Apr 12, 2024

12:30 - 2 p.m.: Healthcare Committee

Sat Apr 13, 2024

10 a.m. - noon: LWV CK/Bremerton Unit Meeting

Where: United Way of Kitsap County, 645 4th Street, Unit 101, Bremerton

Mon Apr 22, 2024

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.: N Kitsap Unit Meeting

Where: Kitsap Regional Library Poulsbo

Sat May 4, 2024

10 a.m. - noon: LWV-Kitsap Board Meeting

Where: The Pearl on Oyster Bay, 550 Russell Road, Bremerton

Fri May 10, 2024

12:30 - 2 p.m.: Healthcare Committee

Wed May 15, 2024

10:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: SK Unit Meeting

In person meeting with guest speaker Mandy Wood, SK High School Librarian

Where: Port Orchard Library meeting room, 87 Sidney Avenue, Port Orchard

May 18, 2024 - SAVE THE DATE!

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

LWVK Annual Meeting

Where: Eagles Nest, Kitsap Fairgrounds, Bremerton (Hybrid)

Details: Please remember to submit any proposals for programs to the Board for approval by April 6, 2024. Proposals must be received in advance of the annual meeting to allow for the board to review and recommend the work for a vote by the members.

We also will present an overview of the new website and voting for new members to the Board of Directors. A soup and salad lunch will be provided. Donations will be accepted.

Mon May 27, 2024

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.: N Kitsap Unit Meeting

Where: Kitsap Regional Library Poulsbo

June 27-30, 2024

