**VOTER**

**February 2023**

**Membership Meeting – February 13th, 2023 – 12 Noon**

**Friday Harbor Library & via Zoom**

**The Decline of Local News & Its Impact on Democracy**

Join us at our meeting on Monday to hear updates from your League on local issues and welcome our speakers to the panel discussion on local news and its impact on democracy:

Our speakers at the meeting will be Heather Spaulding, Editor at the Journal of the San Juans, Sharon Kovisto, Editor and Publisher of the San Juan Islander and Mike Sato, Managing Editor and Amy Nelson, founder and publisher of The Salish Current.

The League is currently undergoing the consensus process on its recent study. (The study was prompted by a series of national reports tying the decline of local newspapers nationwide to reduced voter turnout, increased political polarization, higher government costs and less community engagement. It provides an in-depth look at how the local news crisis is playing out in Washington state. (https://lwvwa.org/journalism-study).

The panelists will discuss some of the findings in the study and how it relates to their experience reporting local news, the challenges of covering local news, and possibly ways to support and reimagine local news.

This will be a hybrid meeting. To join via Zoom:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83364651803?pwd=OUhtWHJJK0FQQUduYU5aS3BUT0NwUT09

Meeting ID: 833 6465 1803
Passcode: 49848

**A Recap of our January Program Planning Meeting and Presentation on the Shoreline Study Report**

The turnout was good for our first meeting of the year. This meeting is always a critical one in which we plan for the year ahead as well as submit our top priority items to the state league for consideration in their Program of Work and which then are taken under consideration at the annual convention.

Shelley Kneipp, the state representative for the Shoreline Study report opened the meeting with a power point presentation updating us on the ten questions that make up the initiative and form the basis for the Shoreline Management Act. Three main legislative goals are protecting, public access and planning. She explained how this document regulates the uses and development of shorelines and preserves public access based upon the judicial doctrine – “the public trust doctrine”. A broad range of stakeholders from regulators, academics, environmentalists, and industrialists were consulted and responses compiled while looking for current themes to identify issues.



Lovell Pratt from the Friends of the San Juans prepared and circulated a study consensus report outlining each of the discussion questions, giving background information on each issue and an update on any current position on that issue. This streamlined the voting process and enabled Susan Martin to get the consensus votes needed to cover all of the 9 issues presented. Questions and comments from the membership included reminders to consider the scale and content of each issue and to review and amend guidelines as needed. Our membership was mostly in favor of continuing with our top priority items for the year with a focus on Women’s Reproductive Rights – the Status of Women and US Immigration with an emphasis on integration and naturalization. Additionally, we as a league will lobby to include climate change on the master plan.

**Meeting Dates Winter-Spring 2023**

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| --- | --- |
| **Board Meetings** | **Membership Meetings** |
| Feb 6 | Feb 13 |
| March 6 | March 13 |
| April 3 | April 10 |
| May 1 | May 8 |
| June 5 | June 12  |
| July 3 | *Summer Break* |
| August 7*Board Retreat* | *Summer Break* |

*All members are welcome to attend our board meetings – please send any board member an email and we will send you the zoom link.*

**Observer Corps Update**

The Observer Corps moved from a pilot to a full program in January and each of the volunteers has now covered at least one meeting. We have continued to get good community feedback on the Observer Corps and a request that we add the County Planning Commission to our roster. Our main limit to covering additional meetings is our number of observers, so we invite more members to consider joining the Observer Corps.If you would be willing to attend meetings and take notes, please contact Necia at collquas@netscape.net. She can then use your notes to draft the report.

If anyone would also be willing to cover the **Planning Commission meeting on Friday February** **17**, that would also be welcome.

All reports are posted on our website: https://lwvwa.org/San-Juan and most can also be found on the Journal of the San Juans and the Islander.

Everyone who signs up will get guidance on how to do notes and Necia will prepare a monthly calendar of meetings. Please contact Necia at collquas@netscape.net or 360-370-5502, if you are interested in learning more or in taking part.

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| **Organization** | **Frequency** | **When** | **Time** | **Where**  | **Virtual** | **Volunteer** |
| **SJI School Board** | **Monthly** | **4th Weds** | **5pm** | **HS Library** | **No** | **S. Bowman** |
| **SJI Public Hospital District** | **Monthly** | **4th Weds** | **5.30pm** | **849 Spring St** | **Yes** | **B. Sharp** |
| **Port of FH** | **2 x Month** | **2 & 4th Weds** | **12pm** | **Yacht Club** | **No** | **J. Belcovson** |
| **SJI Fire District 3** | **Monthly** | **2nd Tuesday** | **3pm** | **Mullis Firehouse** | **No** | **M. Martin** |
| **FH Town Council** | **2 x Month** | **1 & 3rd Thurs** | **12pm** | **Council Chambers** | **Yes** |  |
| **County Council** | **2-4 x Month** | **Tues/some****Mon/Weds** | **9am** | **County Office**  | **Yes** |  |

**Around the League – State & National Issues**

The League of Women Voters of Washington and Fix Democracy First are teamed up again for Democracy Lobby Week and other advocacy events during the 2023 Legislative Session. The groups have a long history of partnership, share common interests, work well together, and have adapted from an in-person lobby day on the Hill to a virtual format that lasts an entire week. Learn a little bit more about what to expect from Democracy Lobby Week and how we work together.

The League has thirteen issue chairs who lead research and recommend bills to the lobby agenda. Issue chairs rely on analysis from the League's fourteen coalition partners. The League also has a contract lobbyist who helps guide our strategy so that we can accomplish goals on both democracy issues and other issues that members care about.

Before we advocate for a bill or respond to a support request, we must answer two very important questions:

1. Does the League have a position on the issue. LWVWA positions are found in the Program in Action, revised every two years based on events and decisions during that time. We also use positions from LWVUS to support our advocacy work.
2. How will the bill affect communities of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, religious minorities, and others? We are fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice, which means that we must consider the impacts of a bill on all individuals, households, and communities.

Lobby week is virtual, though Fix Democracy First and the League members once gathered in Olympia. While this is for several reasons, chief among them is that our citizen lobbyists have outgrown the convenient spaces available! Other organizations still visit in person, and almost every day a (smaller) group is on the Capitol campus. It is fun and a real show of interest and commitment, but there just isn’t enough room now. This change also accommodates more schedules—both legislators' and members'. Citizen lobbyists start together on the first day and then meet with legislators, throughout the week, as is convenient, and come together in the evenings to learn (and celebrate the work).

Although League and Fix Democracy First members don't show up in force, this new, less visible lobbying is just as impactful. A recent survey of the public described the League of Women Voters of Washington as knowledgeable, active, nonpartisan, and a group working towards fairness and equality on voting and civil rights. That's a reputation to keep, and each member contributes to it.

 *Lunell Haught, LWVWA President*

**The National League Responds**

**to Biden’s State of the Union Address**

WASHINGTON—The League of Women Voters of the United States’ president **Dr. Deborah Turner** issued the following statement in response to President Biden’s State of the Union address:

 “In last night’s State of the Union address, President Biden touched on many important issues impacting our country, including the foundation of our democracy.

 “For the last few years, our democracy has been threatened and attacked. The continuous spread of lies and mis- and disinformation has sown seeds of mistrust, which led to a deadly insurrection against the will of the American people. We must do more to fortify trust in our democratic institutions. There is no greater way to do that than to protect the right to vote — the backbone of our democracy.

 “At the League, our mission is to empower voters and defend democracy. We believe everyone deserves an equal opportunity to have their voice heard. The right to vote is the most basic and essential promise of our nation.

“President Biden said, ‘Democracy must not be a partisan issue. It must be an American issue.’ We couldn’t agree more. The right to vote is not a partisan issue; it is an American issue, a fundamental freedom of our democracy that must be protected at all costs. It's time for Congress to send legislation that protects voters and expands access to the ballot to the desk of our President so that he can sign it into law."

**Help Wanted!**

The League is looking for a tech savvy person who can help us navigate our hybrid monthly meetings both with in-the-room technology and via the zoom feed.

Please contact Susan Martin at martinsf@georgetown.edu if you or someone you know may be able to assist us on an ongoing, one time a month basis.

**We Heard You!**

At the member retreat in November, there was a lot of praise and enthusiasm for our candidate forums.  Now we need your help, we need volunteers for this next cycle of voter forums. Or are there other areas of the League business or projects that you are interested in?

Board members are actively involved in organizational governance and work collaboratively to progress the mission of the League – if you are interested in joining our board please email us at  pres.lwvsji@gmail.com



The newly updated TRY brochures will be available at our next meeting on Monday, February 13th.

The TRY brochure is a very comprehensive list of local officials and a valuable resource for information on who represents you.

A digital version is also available on our website at https://www.lwvwa.org/San-Juan

*A great way to stay current and involved is to sign up for the Legislative Newsletter from the WA League. This provides a weekly update on key issues in the legislature, including Action Alerts for upcoming votes and information on current activity on major bills. Newsletters come out every Sunday during the Legislative Session.*

*Click here:* *sign up for the Legislative Newsletter*

**Join Your Local League!**

Are you passionate about democracy and looking for a community of like-minded people? The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person 16 and older may become a voting member of the League. When you join a local League, you automatically become a member of the state and national Leagues, as well.

**Follow Us on Facebook!**

Follow what local, state and national league are up to at our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/LWVSanJuans. We are working on our website – stay tuned for updates and check it out at https://www.lwvwa.org/San-Juan

**Board Members of the League of Women Voters of the San Juan’s**

**Officers**

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Diana Sibert 360-370-5269 dianasibert@gmail.com

*Nominating Committee: Audra Adelberger, Mary Campanella, Robbie Lawson, Leslie Veirs*

*Hello Members:*

*A big thank you to members who have recently paid dues.*

*We are well into our current fiscal year which started on June 1, 2022.  When you receive an updated roster in your email box please look at the column (labeled "Paid thru") near the far-right-hand side to see if you are paid through 5/31/2023.  If not, please consider sending your check in to our PO Box.  Also please let us know of any changes that need to be made to your contact information.  Thank you for continuing to support the important work that we do.*

When you join the League, your dues go to three different places: to National League to help support voting rights advocacy efforts, to State League for voter education as well as advocacy for state issues that League supports; and then there are a few dollars left to support our local forums and programs. Below are the different levels of dues payments and the PO Box number.  If you choose to give at a higher level than the “Regular” level, the extra money stays with our local League to support our important work here. Thanks for supporting LWV at all levels!

YES! I want to become a member of the League of Women Voters of the San Juan’s.

***Name(s)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Address\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Email\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

Circle one:

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|  | **Regular** | **Carrie Chapman Catt** | **Susan B. Anthony** |
| **Individual** | $60 | $100 to $249 | $250 and up |
| **Family** | $90 | $150to $374 | $375 and up |
| **Student** | $35 |  |  |

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the League of Women Voters of WA Education Fund and have enclosed a separate check (to LWVWA─EF) in the amount of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**PLEASE RETURN TO:** League of Women Voters of the San Juans

PO Box 784

Friday Harbor, WA 98250

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