ISSUE #1.4

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF LANE COUNTY

The Argus

November 2026



Take a Deep Breath!

At this writing I don't know the outcome of the midterm elections.

My ballot is in, the last of the League presentations are winding down. We will have heard from our local and state election leaders. Not to mention those suffragists and Abigail Scott Dunaway! Whew, it has been quite a midterm ride. Whatever the outcome, you can rest assured that active members of your local League (and those throughout the country) had a hand in getting out the vote and defending democracy. Your many generous contributions to that effort make it all possible.

Democracy isn't only about Election Day. We know that there is more work before us. Yet, for now, let's take a moment to appreciate each other. Take a walk, make a coffee date, share a personal story, toast the season or send a note. Make a connection. Do you take milk or sugar with your tea?

Terry Parker,
President



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Events

There will not be a Speaker series in November or December.
We will start again in January 2027.

We would like to give a shout out to all the numerous volunteers who have helped us with so many events this election year.

A special thanks to Lenice Shaw the Outreach Coordinator, who helped plan and organize these events. There are many many more of you who deserve a round of applause.

Thanks to all.



Kelly DeForrest and Bruce Kelsh

Don't Forget To Get Your Fruit & Nut Order to the Office!

It's that time of year to get your Fruit & Nut order that you received in the U.S. Mail returned to the office before November 20.

You may also order from the convenience of your laptop by going online at www.lwvlc.org.

If you cannot use a case of citrus or apples, please consider donating the produce to Food For Lane County for our greater community good. The order form includes this donation option.

Any questions, please reach out to Laura England Flanigan, development@lwvlc.org



We had a terrific group who participated in stuffing envelopes for our annual Fruit & Nut Fundraiser. Thanks to JoAnn Atwell Scrivner, Janet Brougher,
Rebecca McCroskey, and Linda Ferdowsian for their hard work getting this information to your mailbox.

Democracy at the Grange from One Volunteer's Eye View

By Sherrill Kirchhoff

It was love at first step upon those wooden sidewalks. He (my wonderful future husband) was met by his Aunt Elsie and Uncle Lew, who lived at 38564 Row River Road. Ed's job that summer was to help Uncle Lew, a WWI disabled vet, with chores around “the place.” Soon, Ed wrote his parents that he would NOT be returning to LA; he would live with Aunt and Uncle and would go to school in Cottage Grove. (His parents and older brother moved to Cottage Grove before the end of the summer). Read More (Continued on p. 9)



The Witches Dance



Dana Merryday and Bruce Kelsh

Naturalization Ceremony



The October 22 Naturalization Ceremony included 24 applicants from 16 countries.

The new citizens hailed from Mexico, Philippines, Libya, Iran, Canada, Thailand, Ukraine as well as Georgia to name a few. Beatrice McKenzie, Becky Gladstone and Mary Keating attended as representatives of the League.

Judge Amy Potter administered the citizenship oath and handed out certificates to the new citizens. Judge Potter also mentioned in her speech the importance of immigrants and their contributions to America.

Mary Keating



Kim Weston and Patty Sandoz with a new citizen.



Marj Maxwell
Unit Coordinator

The Evening Zoom Discussion Group, developed to meet needs identified by members who could not attend our daytime or in-town meetings, has been suspended. The inability to find a Discussion Leader coupled with sparse attendance indicates that this time and/or delivery is not working.

If you are interested and able to start a new discussion group, please contact me at units@lwvlc.org or 541-521-3051. It helps if you have a leader and/or suggested meeting place. We hope you will be able to fit one of the remaining Discussion Groups into your schedule. If you are looking for an evening discussion group, check out the Tuesday evening group.

Many thanks to our Discussion Leaders: Nancy Mills, Linda Ferdowsian, Heather Sielinki, Keli Osborn, Terry Parker, Rhonda Livesay, Debbie Christenson, Diana Grandberry, Merle Bottge, and Carol Hildebrand.

Much gratitude to those members who have stepped in to lead groups when leaders have not been able: Lori Barker, Morgan Vierheller, Susan Tavakolian, and others who have stepped up when the need arises.

These folks and the study teams make sure League members have the opportunity to be informed voters and community members.

Discussion Leader Briefing: Nov. 3 @ 2:00 – 3:30 at the League Office
175 West B Street, #2 Springfield, OR 97477
Zoom link: contact technologydir@lwvlc.org
Briefing provides a study review for Discussion Leaders. Members may attend. Please let Marj Maxwell know if you plan to attend. 541-521-3051 or marjmaxwell@gmail.com or units@gmail.com

Unit Meeting Times & Locations

Novembers' Discussion groups meet November 9-13.

There will be no Briefing or Discussion Groups in December.

Discussion Group Topic: Separation of Church and State

Monday, 2:00 pm, Nov. 9 (in person)
Anne Best's home, 3433 Olive Street, Eugene, 541-521-9136, annieb49@gmail.com
Discussion Leader: Lori Barker, loribarker@lwvlc.org

Tuesday 10am, Nov. 10 (in person)
Coburg Road/ The Springs at Greer Gardens, 1282 Goodpasture Island Rd., Eugene
Discussion Leader: Linda Ferdowsian, 541-579-1866, Lferdowsian@yahoo.com

NEW Evening Option !!! Tuesday 7:00 pm, Nov. 10 (in person)
Heather Sielicki's home, 1555 E. 31st Ave, Eugene
Discussion Leader: Heather Sielicki, 541-579-4407, sielicki@gmail.com

Thursday, 11am, Nov. 12 (hybrid: in person and Zoom)
Middlefield Oaks, 1500 Village Dr., Cottage Grove
Discussion Leader: Debbie Christenson
Zoom operator: Linda Ferdowsian
Request zoom link: office @lwvlc.org

Friday, 10am, Nov. 13 (in person only)
First United Methodist Church, 1376 Olive St., Eugene
Discussion Leader: Diana Grandberry, 541-342-8402, 76music79@comcast.net

Friday, 1pm Nov. 13 (in person)
Cascade Manor, 65 W 30th Ave, Eugene, in the Solarium
Discussion Leader: Merle Bottge, 541-434-4191

Program

Sharon Amasha and Lori Barker, Program Co-chairs

"The First Amendment is part of the genius of American life. It has protected the common good from religious factionalism, and it has ensured the integrity of faith from too close an alliance with the state."
—Randall Balmer, *Solemn Reverence* (2021)

The third study of the year, "The Separation of Church and State," is complete and will be discussed at November unit meetings. The study focuses on the First Amendment's establishment and free exercise clauses: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…"

The study begins with the history of those clauses and then traces how the U.S. Supreme Court's approach to interpreting them has changed over time. Earlier decisions emphasized a wall of separation between church and state. More recent decisions have moved away from that approach, allowing direct government funding of religious institutions and, in some circumstances, exemptions from generally applicable laws for people who say those laws conflict with their religious beliefs.

The paper also examines the influence of conservative Christians and the rise of Christian nationalism on these legal developments. It includes a preview of cases the Supreme Court is expected to consider over the coming year.

League Observes Logic and Accuracy at Elections Office

The League of Women Voters of Lane County was well represented at the Lane County Elections Office on Wednesday, October 21 for a tour of the facility and to observe the Logic and Accuracy Testing of the ballot counting system.

We observed a variety of ballot procedures performed by the office and learned Observer Rules, check-in procedures and pestered our gracious host, Tommy Gong, with League-Wise questions.

What we learned is that the public and all League members are able to view these processes and procedures online at the Lane County Elections Website.

On the website there is a livestream link of each of the distinct rooms where voting processes happen. One can watch a ballot processing video to see how it all works.

A link to Frequently Asked Questions and some newly produced graphics describing the election processes are available for reference. Check it out!

Link: Elections



Ruth Seeger
Membership Chair

Membership



Welcome to Our Newest Members

"Individually, we are one drop. TOGETHER, we are an ocean."
–Ryunosuke Satoro

Please help us welcome the following eight new members to the League of Women Voters of Lane County:

Kimberly Fresenburg, Molly Widmer, Marilyn Nersesian, Judy Cottrell, Ivy Medow, Persia Hejazi, Martha Wallin, and Greta Utecht.

We are delighted you have stepped up to do the important work of the League, along with more than 300 other people in Lane County!



Morgan Vierheller
Advocacy Chair

Advocacy

Oregon Immigrant Rights Legislation Update

Drafted by Beatrice McKenzie, LWVLC Advocacy Committee member

Oregon State Representative Lisa Fragala recently spoke about legislation passed in the 2026 short session to protect immigrant Oregonians and plans for the 2027 regular session.

2026 session

In the 2026 short session, Oregon legislators proposed 15-20 immigration justice and federal response bills. The following are the most prominent in the Immigrant Justice Package signed by Governor Kotek in April 2026.
Read More (Continued on p. 10)



Naturalization Ceremony



Nancy Mills

Voter Services Chair

One-Stop Shopping for Elections Information

The League is particularly effective in providing easy access to information about elections, but we may be less effective in publicizing this beyond our membership. In that vein, here is a summary of the nonpartisan information we have available, in two areas.

The League website, under Voter Information, offers a wealth of information about candidates and ballot measures, as well as quick links to Lane County and Oregon voter information. These include dropbox locations, accessible voting options, and information about election security.

The website also has candidate responses to questions in a variety of candidate forums. Because many of these have already occurred, there are also links to recordings of the forums. Ballot measures, which also ask for voter information, are frequently hard to understand just from the material included with the ballot, but the League has voters covered. The nonpartisan League explanations on the ballot measures can also be found under Voter Information, both in print and video format.

Finally, the LWV has a national program to provide voter information for the races/measures on each voter's ballot via Vote411.org. This includes local races, like water districts, for which there are rarely candidate forums.

Please check out these resources, and help your friends and neighbors find them and use them.

No Kings Message: Vote Early!

LWVLC members were among the several thousand attendees at the No Kings event October 17 at Eugene City Hall. It wasn't your typical No Kings: Instead of protesting, the goal of events across the nation was to get out the vote and to encourage folks to vote early.

The focus was on creating a joyous atmosphere where people could celebrate their opportunity to vote. With dancing drop boxes and the Samba Ja percussion ensemble providing audio excitement, League members in their suffragist outfits (or facsimiles of them) fit in perfectly.

A large group at the Eugene event walked from a previous No Kings gathering at Alton Park, arriving at the City Hall with singing, drumming, and chanting. According to Lane County Clerk Tommy Gong, the number of ballots already received at the Elections Office is far more than expected for a midterm election and comparable to the number of ballots seen in presidential elections at this stage in the process.

If you have not yet voted, do so as soon as possible, and use drop boxes, return your ballot to the elections office, or mail at least a week early.



Nancy Mills, Sherill Kirchoff, Terry Parker, Susan Ban manning the table at No Kings March

2026/2027 Board Members

President: Terry Parker
president@lwvlc.org

Co-VP: Beatrice McKenzie
vicepresident@lwvlc.org
Co-VP: Susan Ban
susanban@lwvlc.org

Advocacy: Morgan Vierheller
advocacy@lwvlc.org

Communications: Vacant

Development: Laura England Flanigan
development@lwvlc.org

Historian: Charlcie Kaylor
historian@lwvlc.org

Membership: Ruth Seeger
membership@lwvlc.org

Program Co-Chairs:
Sharon Amasha
program@lwvlc.org
Lori Barker
loribarker@lwvlc.org

Secretary: Jeanne Taylor
secretary@lwvlc.org

Technology: Vacant

Treasurer: Patty Sandoz
treasurer@lwvlc.org

Voter Services: Nancy Mills
voterservice@lwvlc.org

Off Board:
Office: Linda Ferdowsian
office@lwvlc.org
Nominating Committee: Paula Grisafi
paligri1@gmail.com
Technology: Rhonda Livesay
technologydir@lwvlc.org
Units: Marj Maxwell
units@lwvlc.org

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www.unique.cc

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www.dotdotsons.com

Bel Ami
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Cindy Hookland, Stylist

Art's Watch Repair
541-689-2481

Folkways Imports, Inc.
541-431-3411

Hazelnut Hill
www.hazelnuthill.com

Shelton McMurphy Johnson House Museum
541-484-0808
www.smjhouse.org

Aayres Appliance Repairs, LLC
541-746-5771
www.aayresappliancerepair.com

Lane Forest Products
541-345-9085
www.laneforest.com

Thank you to the businesses who help support the League.

LWV of Lane County
175 West B Street, E-2
Springfield, OR 97477
541-343-7917
www.lwvlc.org

Democracy at the Grange, cont.

But I digress:
On October 3, 2026, a bevy of LWV members, many of us in full suffragist costume, arrived at the Row River Grange, 34360 Row River Road, for the Democracy at the Grange event, as part of its annual Fall Harvest Festival. This “return to Row River” felt real. I had the “shivering fits.” Like the 13-year-old Ed, much of life beyond this spot seemed scary and uneasy. But the Grange was ready: Members were welcoming, soup was hot, history was amazing and presented by none other than Abe Lincoln!

The Grange event was also fun. We were greeted by Grange members who were organized and ready. This was not their first rodeo! The membership had been busy being a Grange since 1935.

We could have been on set of an MGM epic blockbuster (Cottage Grove is known for that!). Instead, we were there to celebrate the leadership role played by the Grange in the fight (not a word used loosely) for women suffrage. The Vote.

Our heroine, Abigail Scott Duniway and her sisters, were “on set,” prevailing against all odds to secure the Vote for Women! Abigail (played by League member Mary Sue Backus) set the crowd afire with her earnest, from-the-heart-appeal: "Uncle Sam! Don't forget your Mother!" Abigail and her Greek chorus, mostly clad in all-white (except for that pesky Alice Paul--other side of the tracks) echoed her wish–nay, her demand: "Sing it strong and hearty."

One foolish fop in the audience dared to declare his fears for cold suppers and nights sleeping on the couch. He was summarily dismissed as handsome, but ignorant.

Others of his persuasion offered their support for suffrage–none other than Uncle Sam! How could we lose the campaign for women's suffrage?

It was hard to say goodbye to feelings of camaraderie and purpose, but Row River will always be the anchor for what's real and what's important: family, country, the right to VOTE! Although had it come to a vote that day, the Witches would have topped us. They were hot; we were not!

Thanks to the America 250 Oregon Commission for sponsorship of the day's programs, as well as to the host of volunteers who helped with voter registration, wonderful signage, the seamstresses at the Grange Sewing Club, apple cider pressing, auction donations, and spirited reenactments of a time that seems closer and closer to the present.

And of course, to the members of the Row River Grange, our fearless partner in the endeavor, many thanks and hoping for more connections in the months ahead.



Mary Sue Backus, Rick Larson, Barb Cowan, and Dana Merryday

Oregon Immigrant Rights Legislation Update - cont.

Law Enforcement Accountability and Visibility Act limits the use of facemasks by law enforcement agents, including local, state, and federal police. Agents may use facemasks for medical reasons and if involved in a SWAT team operation.

Protect Your Door Act allows people to sue anyone who comes through their door without a judicial warrant or consent from the homeowner. This restates a constitutional right under the Fourth Amendment protecting people from unreasonable searches and seizures by the government.

School ICE Notifications Act requires K-12 schools and higher education institutions to create alert systems to notify students and families when ICE is confirmed to be on school campuses. This law is now implemented in the Eugene-Springfield area.

Healthcare without Fear Act. After ICE took a family in Portland into custody when seeking emergency care for their 7-year old child, Representative Ricki Ruiz spent time getting the family released with the help of Attorney General Rayfield and Governor Kotek. Under this law, hospitals are prohibited from disclosing information about patients' immigration status and country of birth. Certain areas of hospitals are protected from intrusion by federal agents.

2027 session

Legislators started working in Summer 2026 to craft legislation in advance of the "Legislative Concepts" draft deadline. Bills are to be introduced by December 9. Fragala mentioned several bills that did not pass in the 2026 session that are likely to be reintroduced.

Among them:

- The Recourse Act (HB 4143) would allow the state to withhold payments to the federal government for unlawfully withholding funds that were allocated by Congress to fund programs in Oregon.
- The Universal Representation Fund (HB 4117) would declare an emergency and add funds for legal representation for immigrants fighting deportation.

Immigration and healthcare policies would be strengthened.

Steps taken so far toward Oregon's Healthcare for All program would be protected. In 2022, Oregon added the right to cost-effective, clinically appropriate, and affordable healthcare to its constitution; Healthcare for All seeks to secure that right. However, last week 600,000 Oregonians received notification they will need to recertify for Medicaid every six months. The Oregon Health Plan estimates that 200,000-300,000 people will lose coverage.

Other priorities in the upcoming session, Fragala asserted, are to protect sites such as courts, food pantries, and child welfare offices from immigration enforcement actions, to ban the use of shock electric gloves by police or federal agents, and to protect elections from interference.