
The Voter

A newsletter from



Our mission

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County, a nonpartisan 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!](mailto:info@lwvskc.org)

December Forum



Join the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County for a free virtual forum –

Homelessness: A New Approach? Or More of the Same?

Will an integrated regional approach to homelessness and additional funding that provides for more effective facilities create the change that our public cries out for?

Thursday, December 2 at 7 p.m.



Erica C. Barnett



Marc Dones



Alison Eisinger



Daniel Malone



Cynthia Stewart

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What to give to the person who has everything?



There's no better gift than a [membership](#) to the League of Women Voters.

Little known secret: you don't have to be a woman to be a member!

Action Chair Lev Elson-Schwab and family pictured left.

Homelessness: A New Approach? Or More of the Same?

Thursday, December 2, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., via Zoom

Peter Shapiro



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Our December Forum returns to the subject of homelessness ... it asks the question:

- ***Will an integrated regional approach to homelessness, and additional funding that provides for more effective facilities, create the change that our public cries out for?***

The program will first review the many causes and effects of homelessness, and current approaches to prevent and mitigate this county-wide problem. It will focus on proven methods to help the many people living on our sidewalks, in our parks, and other public places, and explore best practices for responding to public health and safety concerns.

A second point of focus will be the transition to a regional approach for preventing and reducing homelessness. The newly operational King County Regional Homelessness Authority will be consolidating those efforts as of January 2022. Two years ago, our [Forum on Homelessness](#) featured the legislative work taking place to create the Authority. Now we will focus on the nascent operations of that Authority.

Erica C. Barnett, Publisher and Editor at [PubliCola](#), will moderate the forum.

Erica is an astute observer and reporter on issues of homelessness, the lack of affordable housing, and related policy matters. She will take your questions, and her own, to our panel, all while encouraging robust interaction among the panelists – who have much to talk about with each other.

Panelists include:

Alison Eisinger Executive Director, [Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness](#) (SKCCH, pronounced “Skitch”)

Alison has gained unrivaled knowledge and experience through her many years of supporting the work of SKCCH members who provide desperately needed services for homeless people. Alison is a trusted witness and advocate in legislative chambers and the media: honest, forthright, brave, unflinching, and always totally dedicated to the public interest. Alison will provide an overview of the causes, effects, and current responses to homelessness, which are as varied as the many people who are unhoused. Our evening’s program will then focus on the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness. Unhealthy and unsafe living conditions make it virtually impossible for chronically homeless people to return to productive lives. There are better alternatives.

Daniel Malone Executive Director, [Downtown Emergency Service Center](#) (DESC)

Daniel’s years of work as a service provider at DESC gave him the necessary experience to develop the concept of Permanent Supportive Housing ([PSH](#)) for chronically homeless individuals. PSH is a humane response that has been proven to be less costly than repeated emergency hospitalizations, 911 calls, court time, and other responses to [problems encountered by unhoused people](#). Permanent Supportive Housing works! Can it be brought to the scale of our communities’ needs? Temporary shelter is another option for many unhoused people. For those who may only need and can benefit from temporary shelter, new funding sources have allowed King County and regional municipalities to

purchase hotels to replace the pre-Covid practice of unhealthy [crowded shelters](#). Under Daniel's leadership, DESC is an operator of both Permanent Supportive Housing and a contracted operator of newly purchased hotels in King County.

Marc Dones Chief Executive Officer, [King County Regional Homelessness Authority](#)

The concept of the Authority is to provide efficiency and a unified approach to responding to the region's homelessness problems. Marc will report on the implementation of the Regional Authority, effective on January 1:

- the transfer to the Authority of provider contracts that currently are being administered by cities;
- the future of policy making at the Authority;
- the new structure of governance and oversight;
- and Marc's vision of a better way to help our unhoused population.

Marc Dones (they/them pronouns) is a policy strategist and social justice activist with over 10 years of experience in equitable systems transformation. Prior to taking on the role of CEO for the King County Regional Homelessness Authority, Marc was the founder and Executive Director of the National Innovation Service (NIS), a consulting firm that helps governments redesign their approaches to support marginalized populations. Marc has also held leadership roles in social impact, policy and program design, and continuous improvement at the Center for Social Innovation (C4 Innovations), and is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts (SVA). Marc holds a degree from New York University (NYU) in Psychiatric Anthropology and is an experienced equity trainer.

Cynthia Stewart Housing and Homeless Issue Chair, [League of Women Voters of Washington](#)

Cynthia Stewart has had a multi-faceted career involving staffing policy-makers and serving in management in a variety of positions, including Boeing Field Airport Manager and Thurston County Deputy County Manager. She is a certified mediator and facilitates for various organizations frequently. She is also currently the President of the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County and of Thurston Community Media, immediate Past President of the Hearing Loss Association – WA. She lobbies for the League of Women Voters of Washington on a wide range of issues and has been actively engaged in the homelessness issue for over five years. Legislative action has created new tools for providing resources for local action, such as the purchase of hotels to provide safe and effective shelters, and Cynthia will preview the goals of housing advocates for the State

Legislative session that begins in January. She will describe how you can add your voice in support of reasonable and effective solutions.

Plan to attend this Forum on Homelessness on Thursday, December 2, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., for a lively and thought-provoking evening of discussion about one of our greatest community challenges.

Want to learn more?

The LWVSKC December 2019 forum included insights of people who have experienced homelessness. It provides background and context for our upcoming Forum. You can watch it [here](#).

You can find more oral histories in this October 2021 *The Seattle Times* article, “Homelessness Journeys: Oral Histories”, available [here](#).

[Chronic Homelessness: A Crossroad](#) is a project by former Governor Christine Gregoire which describes an alternative to encampment sweeps and a solution to chronic homelessness. This alternative approach is endorsed by business leaders in the Puget Sound region.

The City of Seattle’s *Report of the Progressive Revenue Task Force on Housing and Homelessness*, [here](#), addresses estimated costs and possible funding mechanisms.

Questions for your discussions about this forum:

- What did you learn about the causes of homelessness?
- What did you learn about the effects of homelessness?
- How can we prevent homelessness?
- Please respond to the following scenario: King County has purchased an apartment building in your neighborhood with plans to house 75 chronically homeless individuals in studio units. The housing will be Permanent Supportive Housing.
 - Do you have any concerns?
 - What can the County do to alleviate your concerns? What can you do?
 - What services need to be in place?
- The forum is entitled *Homelessness: A New Approach? Or More of the Same?* After viewing the forum, how would you characterize the approaches discussed? Why?
- What did you learn about the varying levels of housing and help available depending on the individual’s circumstances and needs?

- What do you think are the major challenges the King County Regional Homelessness Authority will face?
- If you could ask any speaker additional questions, what would they be?
- After viewing the forum, what are your greatest concerns regarding homelessness?
- As a League member, do you have ideas about how, or if, the League should advocate for more resources for housing in King County? Is this a particular concern of yours?

We welcome feedback! Comments? Other questions? Send to program@lwvskc.org.

Members, We Need to Hear from You!

Barbara Tengtio

Photo U.S. Library of Congress



What's on your mind? How do you want to be more engaged? What do you want to learn about? Our **January 6 Program Planning Forum** will focus on you, our League, and what our work for the coming year should look like.

So we can all best prepare for this gathering, please take this brief [survey](#).

You can also copy and paste the link below into your browser:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MG8CLWR>

Meet Your Organizational Concierge

Saunatina Sanchez

Is there something holding you back from being an active League member?

Members who are a part of this organization should feel that they are spending their time in a valuable manner. We've lacked someone to ask about the skills and interests of our membership, in a proactive manner, to connect volunteers with the tasks that need doing. An **organizational concierge**, if you will, keeping track of the big picture so individuals can focus on the details.

How do you see yourself as an active member in the Seattle-King County League? How do you want to use your skills to secure the voting rights of every person in our community? What skills are you interested in developing to become a more effective political actor?

Who am I?



Hi, I'm Saunatina! Joining the League in January 2017, I became active in the Social Justice committee and was the lead organizer of the Forum on the Youth Jail in 2018. Since then I have volunteered in many behind-the-scenes roles, most recently taking on troubleshooting help for Board and Committee leads, which lead to the formation of this position. With 20 years of volunteer and event coordination experience, I've helped with long-range planning and day-of logistics for many different organizations. I look forward to bringing that knowledge to LWVSKC to help our region remain a leader in

voting access and returns.

The Membership Coordinator reports to the Board and acts as the universal liaison for all membership, helping individuals figure out what role you want to engage in and what support you might need to be the most effective in that role. I will hold regular "open office hours," in addition to being available by email and in the ClubExpress Forums.

Your community needs you, and since this is a grassroots organization, we want to make sure your needs matter too.

- **How can I help you be of service?** Reach me at sanchezapps@gmail.com.

Giving Tuesday is November 30

Photo k. kennell



This is a special day when people give to their favorite charities.

Your [donation](#) today will go a long way to help heal our ailing democracy. Beat the rush and make your Giving Tuesday donation to the League of Women Voters Seattle-King County **today!**

District 3 Voters Have One More Ballot Coming!

Sara Thein



On November 17, ballots will be mailed to residents of Seattle City's District 3, to vote on whether to recall (remove from office) their representative, Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant. **Only** residents of Seattle's District 3 will be mailed ballots for the recall election. District 3 covers the Central Seattle area – see a map [here](#) or enter your address [here](#) to determine if you live in District 3 and are eligible to vote in this election.

The ballot packet mailed to residents will look as it normally does. The ballot itself will only contain the singular question of whether or not Councilmember Sawant should be recalled, with **YES** or **NO** options. Ballot drop boxes will open on November 18 and will close promptly at 8:00 p.m. on December 7.

- If Councilmember Sawant is recalled, she will be required to vacate her role on the Seattle City Council. The remaining members of the City Council will appoint a representative to serve in her place until the next general election, in November 2022.

The recall election is based on four charges against Councilmember Sawant (although some media sources highlight only three charges). Judge Jim Rogers of the Superior Court of Washington for King County ruled that the recall could proceed. This ruling, which includes analysis of whether each of the charges brought by the petitioner are factually and legally sufficient, can be viewed [here](#).

The charges include:

- Used City resources to support a ballot initiative and failed to comply with the public disclosure requirements related to such support.
- Disregarded state orders related to COVID-19 by admitting hundreds of people into City Hall on June 9, 2020 when it was closed to the public.
- Led a protest march to Mayor Jenny Durkan's private residence, the location of which Councilmember Sawant knew was protected under state confidentiality laws.

What Turnout Tells Us About How to Increase Voter Participation

Sara Thein



The 2021 general election ballots in Seattle and King County were filled with races for prominent offices and had a diverse slate of candidates – so why did voter turnout dip from the last off-year election in 2019?

As of November 9, a week after the polls closed, overall voter turnout in King County was just shy of 44%, about a 7% decrease from 2019, where voter turnout reached almost 50%.

In 2017, King County voter turnout was only 43%, and in 2015 it was 40%. For comparison state-wide, this year Columbia County, with fewer than 3,000 active registered voters, topped the list with almost 61% turnout – beating the next highest county, Garfield, by 10%.

Let's take a look at some of the possible reasons our voter turnout fluctuated, and other ways in which it followed historical trends.

Races with unopposed candidates draw fewer voters

On election day, high-profile offices like King County Executive, Attorney, and Council; Seattle City Council; and most city mayors and council positions were up for grabs. Compared to 2019, 2021 had about the same total number of candidates on the ballot. The big difference comes in how many of those races were unopposed – 2021 had 14% more races with unopposed candidates than 2019, mostly at the city level (mayor and council races made up 73% of the unopposed candidates).

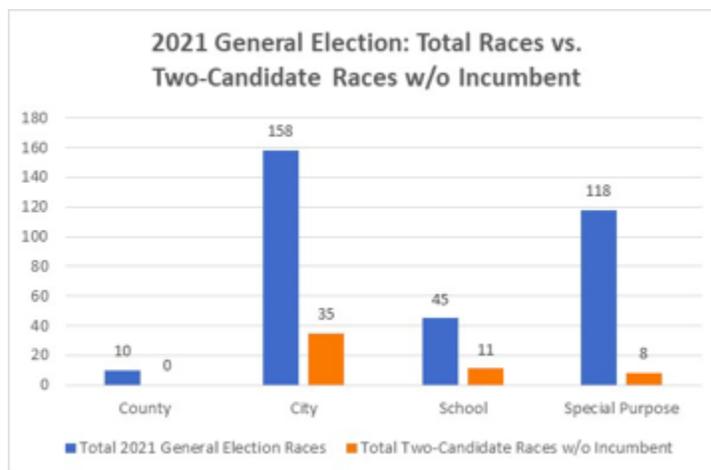


Figure 1: Total Races in the 2021 General Election where Neither Candidate was the Incumbent

Only 16% of ballot races in the 2021 general election had fresh faces to choose from — that means 84% of 2021 races were either unopposed or had an incumbent running against a challenger ... a recipe for apathy.

We saw the lowest levels of voter turnout in Congressional District 8 (37%), Legislative District 30 (30%), and County Council District 7 (30%). These districts overlap in south King County where it borders Pierce County — areas like Federal Way, Auburn, Milton, Algona, and Pacific. The voter demographics here don't line up with those groups that have tended to vote the least in the past — they consist of mostly middle-class white voters. Instead, it turns out that these southern and rural areas of King County had the lowest number of competitive races. Here, only 19% to 39% of races actually had two candidates to choose from. In contrast, the Seattle area had the highest voter turnout — and all the Seattle races had competing candidates.

- **What's the bottom line?** People are less likely to vote when races are unopposed or are between an incumbent and another candidate, believing that their vote doesn't matter.



Figure 2.1: 2021 General Election - Districts with the Highest Turnout



Figure 2.2: 2021 General Election - Districts with the Lowest Turnout

Races with unopposed incumbents erode the power of the vote

In 2021, every county race and almost every school board race that was unopposed was held by an incumbent. The vast majority of city (71%) and special purpose district (69%) races that were unopposed also presented the only option as the incumbent.

- **What might this tell us?** People are less likely to even *run* for office when the incumbent is running.
- **How might we fix this?** Help people run for office! More candidates to choose from means more voter participation!

As you may know, the League of Women Voters is non-partisan and doesn't endorse candidates or comment on candidate races. We can, however, investigate **how we can do better** – through our Voter Services and our Action Committees – at educating our members and community on:

- how to run for office
- how to connect with resources
- how to help remove the barriers to entry when facing incumbents.

It can be intimidating, especially when facing the current office holder, but there are plenty of resources out there to help people get started and find support in running for local office.

Young voters are key to increasing voter participation

In 2021, the highest levels of voter turnout were seen in Congressional District 7 (53%), Legislative District 36 (57%), and County Council District 4 (56%). All of these districts overlap in the northwest Seattle areas of Queen Anne, Magnolia, and Ballard. Why did these districts have the highest turnout and what do they have in common? When we look at the demographics of this region, and compare them to the demographics of voters that historically participate at high rates, these line up well – wealthy, white residents.

But there's one demographic that doesn't match up – age. Residents in northwest Seattle only make up about 10-15% of the 65+ age group that tends to return the majority of ballots. Here's another way of looking at it: grouping the age ranges into young (18-34), middle-aged (35-64), and older voters (65+), the middle-aged group votes at roughly the same proportion as 65+ and represents more than half of ballots cast. Yet young voter turnout is still at an abysmal 18%.

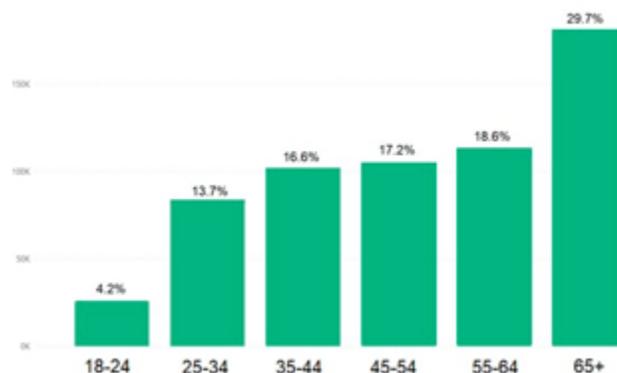
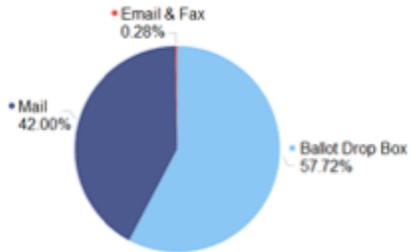


Figure 3: King County Ballots Returned by Age in the 2021 General Election

- ***How might we fix this?*** As in past election cycles, the youth vote is in desperate need of attention. The Voter Services Committee is currently working on expanding our work in schools to get students pre-registered to vote, and educated on why voting is important.

- **Want to volunteer?** Contact voterservice@lwvskc.org.

Some areas where Seattle and King County followed state-wide trends



Other statistics followed historical election-day trends amongst all counties in Washington – whether it’s an “off year” or not. Most people returned their ballots on Election Day; participation rates among age groups increased as age increased (with turnout of 18 to 24-year-olds at a paltry 4%); and more people used drop boxes to return their ballots. On a positive note,

confidence in the mail system showed a marked increase over 2020, with the percentage of people returning their ballot via USPS reaching pre-2020 levels.

Want to see the data? Look [here](#), at:

<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/elections/results/ballot-return-statistics.aspx>

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Tell Us Your Story!

Tania Hino and Lev Elson-Schwab



My name is Tania Hino.

It is a great honor to be the lead of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) effort for the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County. I am an immigrant from Mexico who moved to Seattle 25-plus years ago, and made the Pacific Northwest my new home. Not only am I passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion, I also have the educational background in this area, along with my lived experience as an immigrant and as a person of color. I have lived through many racial aggressions, discrimination, and microaggressions throughout my life until now. It was especially hard during the Trump era when he started his campaign with the statement “Mexicans are rapists.” I clearly remember how difficult and unpleasant it was to discuss that with my children.

It is long overdue, and I am glad that our League is trying to incorporate, and attempting to use, the lens of DEI going forward. I know that our Board of Directors are passionate about moving forward and creating a DEI framework. We, the Board of Directors, are currently reading the book “White Tears Brown Scars” by Ruby Hamad. We are all excited to start working on our implicit biases, which we all carry, to pursue an antiracist organization. It is hard work and time-consuming — but not impossible. The DEI Committee, made up of Lev Elson-Schwab and Heather Kelly, has been working hard to come up with a framework that will help us develop an antiracist decision-making process and collaboration with our Committee.

In the end, we all have implicit biases and working **through** them is the only way to change. If we are serious about change, then we have to go **through** uncomfortable situations. We need to stop trying to dodge the process — and that is the only way to grow. When we work on our identity project (click here to learn about how to create your own identity project), work on our implicit biases, and honor our mistakes of racism, that is when we will start moving forward to liberation, to antiracist livelihood.

This is your moment. Be brave and share your stories with us.

We start our chain of DEI storytelling with Lev Elson-Schwab.

- Thank you Lev for being vulnerable and brave.

Hello everyone. My name is Lev Elson-Schwab and my family came to what is now known as the United States while fleeing religious persecution. I joined the League of Women Voters because of what we stand for, and so that I could leverage my white, male privilege to support League values. One of the League of Women Voters values that resonates for me is that of justice, specifically justice in the form of diversity, in the form of equity and in the form of inclusion.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) lead, Tania Hino, asked me to share why these values are so important to me and why I have committed to educating myself and leaning into this work.

As a Jew, we have a very recent cultural history of religious persecution and attempted genocide, and there’s a phrase that we use to remember that history: ***never again***. This phrase appears on many Holocaust memorials, and to some, it’s an injunction against a second Holocaust of the Jewish people. But to many of us, it’s a call to recognize even the first steps along this path, and to recognize it no matter who is being oppressed.

- ***It’s a call to fight against that type of bigotry and injustice from the start.***

This is a responsibility I take seriously, and while I can't undo centuries of racism and bigotry in America, I can endeavor to make the systems that I work and live in more just, more inclusive, and more equitable.

Tania and I would like to invite you to **share your stories** of why DEI is important to you, and what you are doing to make the world a better place for those who have been traditionally underrepresented and marginalized.

- **Please send these stories**, or any questions or concerns that you have, **jointly** to Lev Elson-Schwab at action@lwvskc.org and Tania Hino at tania.hino@lwvskc.org.

Wherever you are on your DEI journey, if it is important to you, the League of Women Voters has put together some resources to help you along the way. You can find our policy [here](#), definitions of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [here](#), and a guide [here](#). The League of Women Voters has provided these resources for you because of our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in both principle and practice. Thank you very much!

Connecting With Our Leadership

Sara Thein, Voter Services Co-Chair



Hello, League members! My name is Sara Thein and I'm co-chair of the Voter Services committee along with Chelsea Jordan. I'm relatively new to the League —I began my involvement at the state level last year working on Elections Advocacy with Kathy Sakahara, in particular, building a case for passing a bill that would launch a pilot project for CIR (Citizens Initiative Review) panels in Washington state. A CIR assembles a committee of everyday voters to read complex (and often intentionally confusing) ballot measures, putting

them into plain language for voters, and coming to a recommendation on whether to approve or reject — all without the influence of special interests that tend to dominate advocacy for ballot measures.

Through volunteering at the state level, I was nominated to the Seattle-King County Board and immediately made my passion for Voter Services known. I am an engineer by education and trade — I worked at Boeing for eight years before joining Alaska Airlines as a Flight Operations Engineer in February — and have always been passionate about using data and statistics to tell a story and drive strategy and action. In between jobs, I received a degree in Election Administration from the University of Minnesota and volunteered with King County Elections Voter Services for the 2020 Primary and General Elections — what an experience! Working with voters during a prominent and engaging presidential election while navigating COVID was the

experience of a lifetime. My dream job would be to work full-time for King County Elections analyzing voter turnout statistics and demographics to help drive policy and target outreach to increase participation in every election (or being elected as Director of Elections for King County if I really want to dream big!).

Until then, I'm bringing those passions and skills to LWVSKC and helping to reform our voter outreach efforts using data and building programs that actively engage historically low-turnout voters – in particular, working with schools to get students registered, educated, and active in the voting process. I'm also helping to advance our technology capabilities so that we can better match members with volunteer opportunities and focus our communication on the most precise audience. Another major effort we're undertaking is strengthening up our partnerships with King County Elections and other non-profit organizations they work with through the Voter Education Fund to make sure we're all communicating, sharing best practices, not overlapping efforts, and using our expertise and influence as a League to educate and advance the causes of others.

I live in Issaquah with my wife and two German Shepherds (Eleanor and Rigby) and enjoy hiking, singing, trivia, and traveling. I'm grateful to work for an airline which makes it much easier to visit my friends and family back in Chicago where I grew up. I'm annoyingly optimistic, always making jokes, and believe that empathy and kindness are the solution to everything. I'm a huge baseball (White Sox), women's soccer, and musical fan and lately am obsessed with the AppleTV show Ted Lasso, so I leave you with a quote by the titular lead, played by Jason Sudekis:

- "I ain't too crazy about [the phrase] 'It's the hope that kills you.' I disagree, you know? I think it's the lack of hope that comes and gets you. ***See, I believe in hope. I believe in belief.***"

I believe we can do great things together, and I'm looking forward to working with all of you!

Board Brief

Heather Kelly, President

Photo k. kennell



With the most recent election behind us, we took time at the November board meeting to reflect on what we've accomplished so far this fall as a board. It doesn't always feel comfortable to pat ourselves on the back, but acknowledging our achievements can help us focus and stay motivated. It is also important to me that we model the kind of culture we

wish to create in the League, where people feel seen and appreciated for their work rather than taken for granted!

So, if I may, I'd like to give thanks to this incredible team and request a round of applause for them! Here is just a small sample of what they've done:

Kathy Sakahara, 1st VP — provided primary support of DEI, units, action, communications, and development portfolios; shared onboarding duties for new board members; hosted and co-facilitated board retreat; oversaw strategic plan review; suggested best practices for advocacy, coalition-building, fundraising, and communications

Barb Tengtio, 2nd VP — drafted major sections of strategic and development plans; collaborated with member Joanna Cullen on review of positions to identify potential topics for future study and improvements to outdated language; kept board and executive committee meetings on track with suggestions for shared editing

Barbara Erickson, Secretary—circulated draft minutes at record speed to facilitate board work between meetings, developed new format for board minutes with a focus on action items, kept us smiling with cartoons and kind words

Marilee Fuller, c(4) Treasurer—tended to the financial health of the advocacy branch of our organization during a pandemic; identified ways to simplify and improve bookkeeping for future treasurers; supported rallies for democracy in downtown Seattle

Katie Dudley, c(3) Treasurer—had a baby, then juggled COVID-related childcare challenges and a return to work all while getting back up to speed on our financials and integrating our new team after her board leave

Lauren Pixley, Volunteer Coordinator—collaborated with Unit Leader Judy Deiro on new member orientation to be expanded across the state, supported LWVWA redistricting schools, co-led Observer Corps, all while working more than full time in health care

Sara Thein, Voter Services Co-Chair—developed new technology-focused approach to voter outreach with new voter database; met with representatives from King County Elections, Seattle Public Schools, and others to expand partnerships, oversaw ballot curing project, created a poster version of They Represent You (TRY), began developing voter registration and civic education toolkits for schools

Chelsea Jordan, Voter Services Co-Chair—moderated numerous candidate forums resulting in numerous accolades and donations to the League from grateful community partners and members of the public

Lev Elson-Schwab, Action Chair—led endorsement teams in bringing recommendations to the board; identified next steps for expanding the Action Team; researched methods of becoming more proactive in our advocacy on ballot measures and upcoming legislation.

Meg Van Wyck, Development Chair—pinpointed improvements for recordkeeping to streamline fundraising efforts; drafted and edited fundraising communications; coordinated with partner organizations on candidate forums

Lisa Nelson, Communications Chair—created and launched a new website, conducted trainings on the website for members and League leaders, proposed best practices around data privacy, participated in DEI discussion groups

Adele Reynolds, Program Chair—developed sustainable timelines and processes for virtual forums that can be replicated by future Program Chairs, authored voter articles and other marketing materials for events, created volunteer teams to plan four forums that reached nearly 800 attendees

Tania Hino, Director at Large—conducted the first DEI Board survey, developed the first formal Board DEI training and discussion, led effort to draft new DEI section of strategic plan (all while recovering from hip surgery and leading Somos Mujeres Latinas, another nonprofit).

Mary Taylor, Director at Large—researched endorsements, conducted outreach and planning for wildly well-attended Behavioral Health forum last month; supported committee advocating for new LWVWA criminal justice positions, provided donor support

Saunatina Sanchez, Membership Coordinator (off-Board)—identified a need for more structured member support, drafted a proposal for a new role to meet that need, met with the board to integrate into the team, provided technical assistance for multiple forums, offered trainings for members and League leaders on technology and communications

Now I'm eager to hear what you have accomplished this fall!

Who did you take care of? How did you serve your community? What challenges did you face? What did you learn?

- **Toot your own horn** in an email to me at president@lwvskc.org.

For all those things and more, here's to you!

Units Unite Us

Sarah Beth Miller



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.

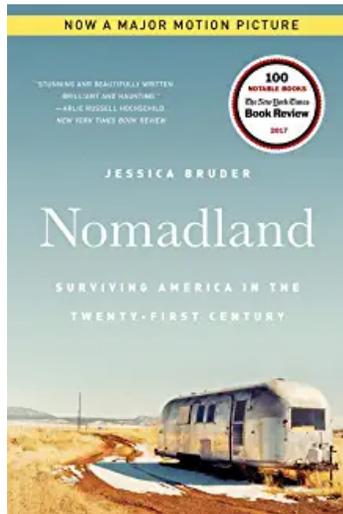
Check our [website calendar](#) for locations and times -- including our virtual-only Unit!

Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century

Jessica Bruder

Book Review

Vicky Downs



Empire was once a village that had “factory jobs offering workers a sure footing in the middle class and the chance to raise a family without fear of displacement.” Anna Marks, a fifteen-year employee, said it was “a really good place to save money.”

On December 2, 2010, the manager announced the factory was shutting down. Suddenly all employees were jobless and would soon lose housing as well. Over the next few months, they joined the thousands who lost jobs and homes in the Recession.

All over the country, many people who had lost work realized they needed to be “unshackled from rent and mortgages as a way to get by,” and decided to move into vans, second-hand RVs, school buses, pick-up campers, travel trailers and ordinary sedans. Some from Empire joined those who had already done so.

Who are these people on “wheel-estate”? David moved into his Prius, pointing out that “My cooking and sleeping are the most important things for me, and that’s what make me feel like I’m on a retired-guy adventure.” He replaced the front passenger seat of his Prius

with a sturdy counter. He uses this to fix meals, with an “induction hot plate, which he plugged into a power inverter that ran off the car’s battery.” He says the Prius’s “most significant advantage as a home [is] that it is essentially a smart power generator on wheels.” He also has a custom-made tent connected to the back of the vehicle.

A 67-year-old San Francisco cab driver, a 66-year-old ex-general contractor and a 38-year-old woman with a master’s degree, are all on wheels and often looking for work. They’d quickly learned to join fitness clubs for access to showers, and to wash their clothes in laundromats. They needed money for food and gas, and occasional problems with their vehicles. Finding temporary jobs became essential.

At a distance, it would be easy to assume these nomads were ordinary middle-class people traveling for pleasure, but that would not be true. Bruder’s book shows many of them are older people looking for work that is not too physically demanding, and near a place where they can park their car overnight and perhaps hook up for fresh water and electricity. Lots of campgrounds and large stores don’t want drivers to park overnight.

Large corporations need temporary workers, especially in the months before Christmas. Some do sometimes provide a place where people can park, but I was shocked to read that some companies seem to treat their low-paid workers more like robots than real human beings. One woman developed wrist problems caused by repetitive work, but the company appeared more interested in getting the work done at low pay, not protecting the woman’s health issues.

In summer, some large campgrounds need low-wage workers to show visitors and campers where they can cook food or put up their tent. They must also keep the showers and bathrooms clean, and if some group is noisy or rowdy, they are expected to quiet them down. However, they are only paid for forty hours of work a week, though the work inevitably takes much more time than that, and extra pay for extra work is out of the question.

I was impressed by the “can do” spirit of the people I met in this book, and look forward to watching the [movie](#). The book introduces us to many Americans we can be proud of. But it makes me angry about what is happening in America, with billionaires at one end and hard-working people not being paid a living wage at the other.

This book tells us how some people without housing are surviving in America. I found it both important and disturbing.

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

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