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# The Voter

A newsletter from

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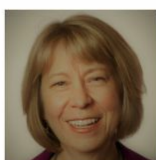
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Join League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County for our April Forum

## Claiming The Power of The Classroom

Teachers are the foundation of family and student connections to the school, and to trusting relationships that can smooth the path to healing this hurt in our schools. How can our community come back stronger than before? Where are the teachers? Why do so many contemplate quitting? What do we need to understand to help?

**Thursday, April 7 at 7 p.m.**



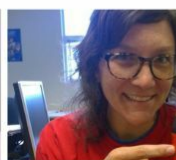
Emilie  
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Teddi  
Beam-Conroy



Shajaira  
López



Jennifer  
Matter



Toni  
O'Neal



Mike  
Simmons

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- Check out our website at <https://lwvskc.org/donate> to find out how.

## Get The Word Out!

LWVSKC's Communications team is looking for new members. Do you like to talk, write, and spread the news? You'll love our work! Contact Lisa Nelson at [communications@lwvskc.org](mailto:communications@lwvskc.org).

## April Forum

### Claiming The Power of The Classroom

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

*Joanna Cullen*



Our panelists work in the schools, and with teachers and future teachers, every day.

- **Join us** for this discussion of the ongoing work and future possibilities!

Chaos seems to reign if we pay attention only to the current news about education. Schools are open; schools are closed. There is staff; the school is closed due to staffing shortages. There is transportation; there are not enough bus drivers; there is no transportation today — and on and on.

Without a focus, this discussion could easily be overwhelming, yet really the most important aspect of public education is the classroom. What is happening there? How are our educators doing? We could ask the same question about the students and families. And we will as students return to the classroom. But, returning to schools in chaos with



inadequate staffing will only add to the distress and anxiety that many students and families are likely already experiencing.

We are looking forward to a discussion that will enlighten us a bit and provide more insight about the questions we should be asking.

- What are the details to watch as schools reopen and local policy makers make plans for the future?

***Teachers make the difference.*** Families know that the teacher makes the difference. Teachers connect the family and student to the school, and that connection is essential to the foundation of trust necessary for student and teacher success, and family engagement. However, a persistent lack of stability in teaching and support staff undermines the entire system. Most teachers enter the profession with a passion to make a difference in the lives of children and their communities, or because of their respect for the educational field and their love of learning or specific content. They expect to earn a respectable salary in a profession that is mobile and stable, but not necessarily to become rich.

The pandemic has magnified issues around staff shortages in education and inequities in staffing. The problems are not new and have needed attention for some time. The demand for teachers has been outpacing the supply for some time due to increased teacher attrition and fewer students entering teacher preparation programs, as detailed in the 2021 educator shortage [report](#) of the Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board.

The impact of teachers on student outcomes cannot be overstated. Teachers are the most influential in-school factor contributing to student success, and are often the first role models that young people encounter outside of their homes. Given the magnitude of their influence, every student in Washington deserves to have excellent, effective, equity-minded teachers as well as an education system that fully supports their learning and growth. A persistent statewide shortage of teachers, however, creates challenges to achieving this.

When emergency rules streamline the certification process to quickly fill the workforce gaps, what support is added to ensure that the teacher is well-supported and prepared? This is an important question as [low-income students are more likely to be taught by less-experienced teachers](#) and attend schools with high rates of teacher turnover.

Experience, along with professional development, generally adds confidence and agility in listening and interacting with students.

While time by itself is not going to make an incompetent teacher great, schools with a more experienced staff in total will result greater student success and less staff burnout. According to research by the National Education Association, the bottom line is, "[a more experienced teaching workforce offers numerous benefits to students and schools](#), including greater individual and collective effectiveness in improving student outcomes as well as greater stability and coherence in instruction and relationship-building—the core work of schools”.

Teacher burnout is a major source of attrition and [this article](#) lists extra role stress like chaperoning, coaching, coordinating programs, or tutoring; lack of mentorship and connection; top down accountability measures; lack of autonomy; and burnout contagion as contributing to teacher burnout. Many of these same factors have to be considered to retain effective and diverse teachers.

For teachers early in their careers, challenging student behavior, isolation, a lack of collegiality and engagement with professional networks, and being overloaded with responsibilities increases [the risk for burnout](#). Overwork is less of a contributing factor to burnout than feeling disconnected from the school, peers, and community.

[Staffing shortages for special ed](#) were at a crisis before the pandemic with [paraeducators filling in as teachers](#).

What training and support do paraeducators receive? They are an important support for classroom teachers and are often given unexpected responsibilities.

***Collaborative community schools can deliver results.*** The Community Schools model seems be showing promise to provide the type of effective support for a pleasant school climate, but understanding the definition and implementation is important, as the school’s families, teachers, and staff are not looked at as simply the receiver of the services, but as a part of the team that plans and delivers. The model does not seem to exist locally. Seattle especially will engage community partners, but not with the collaboration necessary to qualify as within this model.

The Coordinated Care Teams in the San Francisco Unified School District seems to be close to delivering that [collaborative model](#) with [proven success during the pandemic](#). And [this article](#) helps explain how the classroom is important for the success of the model.

For those of us in the community school field, this study helped to undergird an argument we had been making since the inception of the current generation of efforts — strong student supports and additional opportunities cannot compensate for weak instructional programs. Too often we observed that schools would recruit partners to provide health services, offer student and family counseling, and expand after-school programs without doing anything to improve their core instructional program.

**Conclusions** The community school strategy is increasingly recognized as offering such an alternative. It returns the public school to its rightful place as a vital center of community life — where the community’s many assets are mobilized in support of students, families, and neighborhoods.

Remember, experienced, knowledgeable teachers with diverse backgrounds should be involved in curriculum development. They know more about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom.

Given the stakes, we hope to better understand the challenges and the rewards and actions that we can support. Some teachers do stay. Some paraeducators stay, and some become certified teachers.

- ***Prepare to engage and ask questions!***

#### ***Further resources***

**See our review** of “*Teaching When The World Is On Fire: Authentic Classroom Advice From Climate Justice To Black Lives Matter*” on page 29.

The Hechinger Report: [More studies mark the pandemic’s toll on student achievement](#)

NPR: [Lawmakers are rewriting rules as schools grapple with teacher shortages](#)

The Nation: [Why Teachers Are Dropping Out](#)

White House press release: [President Biden is calling on Congress to invest \\$9 billion in American teachers, addressing shortages, improving training and supports for teachers, and boosting teacher diversity.](#)

PBS: [Schools across the country are struggling to find staff. Here’s why](#)

Seattle Times: [Substitute shortages, staff burnout lead to Seattle-area school cancellations](#)

Seattle Times: [Ballard High principal retaliated against student for questioning whether assignment was racist, investigation finds](#)

Learning Policy Institute: [A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S.](#)

Washington Student Achievement Council: [The Washington State Educator Workforce Program \(EWP\) provides financial aid to attract and retain teachers to work in subjects or locations of high need known as shortage areas](#)

Science Direct: [Towards an understanding of teacher attrition](#)

Teacher residency:  
<https://education.uw.edu/programs/teacher/seattle-teacher-residency>

Department of Education press release: [U.S. Department of Education Announces Joint Temporary Action with U.S. Department of Transportation to Help Address School Bus Driver Labor Shortage](#)

**New state legislation** that provides additional funding for schools passed this year.

- [Enrollment stabilization](#).
- [Physical, social, and emotional support](#): Concerning prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools.
- [Digital divide](#): Closing the digital equity divide by increasing the accessibility and affordability of telecommunications services, devices, and training.

### **Questions for discussion**

- Do you know any public-school teachers? If so, what are they saying about the issues facing the classroom today?
- Has the pandemic altered the emotional health of their students, according to the teachers you know?

- Did this program clarify any issues around teaching for you? If so, what did you learn?
- Many teachers are retiring earlier than planned due to stresses in the classrooms. Do you think that preventative actions could be taken?
- Our panelists are trying to support the teacher profession by supporting current teachers and training new teachers to enter the classroom. Will this be enough to solve the teacher crisis? If not, what other actions can be taken to attract and maintain excellent teachers?

Panelists will include:

<b><i>Teddi Beam-Conroy, Ph.D.</i></b>	Director, Elementary Teacher Education University of Washington
<b><i>Jennifer Matter</i></b>	President, Seattle Education Association
<b><i>Shajaira López, Ed.D.</i></b>	Director of Secondary Language Learning Highline Public Schools   Language Learning Department
<b><i>Toni O’Neal M.Ed.</i></b>	Professional Growth and Educator Support (PGES) Consulting Teacher, Human Resources   Seattle Public Schools

***Emilie Hard***, Director of Equity, Tahoma Schools, will moderate the forum.

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A big ***thank you*** to Education Committee members Pat Griffith, Dianne Ramsey, and Meg Van Wyk!

## The April Special Election Is Coming!

The ballot is relatively small this year, but ***vital*** for the [Issaquah School District](#).

- Voter turnout in these “other” elections is typically around 30-40%.

- **Let's increase that number!** Your vote is crucial to ensuring critical funding for our schools!



Ballots and voters' pamphlets for the special election will be mailed on **Wednesday, April 6**, and election day is **Tuesday, April 26**. These votes are for [three ballot measures](#) that ask voters to approve or reject levies targeted for specific purposes:

- [Educational Programs and Operations](#)
- [Capital Projects](#) (Technology and Critical Repairs)
- [School Buses](#).

## November Elections: Learn About Empty Chair Debates



**2022 is a general election year!** League volunteers organize candidate forums and debates for our communities, helping to provide voters with the tools they need to cast an informed ballot. But what about when candidates don't show? What if some candidates just won't appear, no matter how effectively the League volunteers point out the costs and benefits? If an event is left with only one candidate, the idea of an "empty chair" debate can come into play.

LWVWA's Voter Services Committee is presenting two workshops to help with planning for debates, including empty chair debates. **Interested?** The first workshop is April 2. Learn more [here](#), and register [here](#).

## Membership, Engagement, & Leadership Development (MELD)

Lauren Pixley



Are you interested in connecting with other League members from across the state?

The Membership, Engagement, & Leadership Development (MELD) Network is the LWVWA's way of building in another communication channel between the local Leagues and the state and national boards on a monthly basis. LWVSKC is looking for a representative to join a MELD pod!

Local League MELD Team Representatives (time commitment 2-5 hours per month) would have the opportunity to:

- Participate in monthly Pod calls.
- Share monthly summary of personal and Local League successes/challenges.
- Share news from other local, state, and national Leagues with the LWVSKC board and members by attending monthly LWVSKC board meetings.
- Offer coaching and resources to help the League with membership, engagement, and leadership development tasks.

This opportunity is perfect for a new member who wants to get more involved in the League!

Please contact Lauren Pixley, Volunteer Coordinator, at [lauren.pixley@lwvskc.org](mailto:lauren.pixley@lwvskc.org) for more information.

## Second Lake Forest Park Town Hall Meeting on Climate

Saturday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. via Zoom

**Save the date and register early!** Register [here](#).

Sarah Phillips



Celebrate Earth Day by thinking and planning about what you can do about climate!

Our keynote speaker will be talking to us about climate anxiety and hope. This will be followed by a local professor sharing with us the local implications of climate action.



The other elements of the program include a youth panel and breakout rooms with information and action on: E-Bikes, E-Vehicles, Home Energy Audits, Recycling and Composting, and Planting with Natives.

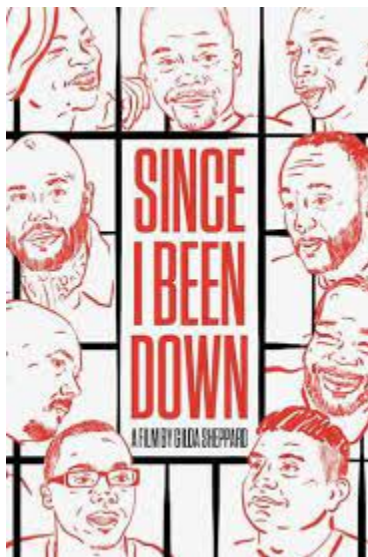
For more information contact [lfptownhall@gmail.com](mailto:lfptownhall@gmail.com).

## May Movie Night Preview

### *Since I Been Down*

Available for viewing May 2-7, run time 1 hour 45 minutes

*Adele Reynolds*



In 1993 Washington State was the first state to implement the “three strikes” sentencing policy. In this film we meet Tacoma’s Kimonti Carter, “former president and a current member of a prisoner-initiated program, the Black Prisoners’ Caucus. At 34, Kimonti founded TEACH (Taking Education and Creating History), a remarkably innovative prisoner education program.”

We see Kimonti and a group of his peers maneuver through a pathway of few and narrow choices, “joining gangs as early as 11 years of age. The community is profoundly impacted by the city’s disinvestment in housing, education, and employment,” as well as by criminal justice policies in the 1990s.

The film’s narrative, told by the people who have lived this reality, “unravels intimate stories from interviews brought to life through archival footage, cinema verité discussions, masquerade, and dance. It explores why children sometimes commit violent crime, and how these children – now adults – are breaking free and creating a model of justice that is transforming their lives, our humanity, and the quality of life for all our children.” Watch the trailer [here](#), and register to view the film [here](#). You can also find it on our [event calendar](#) on our website, [lwvskc.org](http://lwvskc.org). A discussion guide is here: <http://sibd.us/discussionguide>.

## We're Having A Party!



Tuesday, May 24 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. via Zoom

***Come to our party!*** Mark your calendar for Tuesday, May 24 and join in the fun! LWVSKC's "Defending Democracy Across Generations" party is something you don't want to miss out on. This is a virtual event, but some of you may wish to gather in small groups as well to enhance your experience.

***Why?*** It's time to gather and review our past and look to our future. We all have a role to play, and what better way than a party to celebrate our accomplishments and help continue our work?

***How will it work?*** The party from 6 to 7 p.m. is free to all members and we look forward to seeing you there!

Additionally, you can enjoy a pre-party Happy Hour package from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. for a small fee. Each package includes your choice of a bottle of wine or non-alcoholic beverage and an array of appetizers, generously suitable for one, or lightly for two people to share. You can enjoy your own online party with others, or arrange to meet in your own small groups and order several Happy Hour packages to share before the main party starts. During this time, you'll be able to socialize with friends and enjoy a surprise or two.

Finally, you can book a private room on Zoom for a group of friends or a Unit to share throughout the party for an additional fee. Your private room will be your special space to share conversation, catch up — and talk about the party, of course. All who book a room will have the opportunity for an extra surprise too!

**Let's get ready!** Talk to your friends — members and non-members alike are welcome! Partner organizations with which you work are welcome! Invite folks to come! Discuss it at your next Unit meeting, and make a plan as a Unit to order some Happy Hour packages and maybe book a private room to share!

- **Look for your invitation coming soon!**

## Approval Voting — Wrong for Seattle

*Lev Elson-Schwab*

The advocacy group [Seattle Approves](#) asked LWVSKC to evaluate Initiative Measure No. 134, also known as I-134, which proposes to implement approval voting for primary elections in Seattle. Under the provisions of I-134, each Seattle voter in a primary election would cast votes for as many candidates as the voter “approves of”. The two candidates in the primary with the most “approvals” from voters would advance to compete in the election. In order for I-134 to appear on the November 2022 general election ballot, its supporters will need to collect more than 26,000 signatures from voters, within 180 days after the petition receives final status.

As leaders in empowering voters and defending democracy, LWVSKC takes any proposed changes to voting laws, and our position on such changes, extremely seriously. To that end, LWVSKC formed an endorsement evaluation team. The team thoroughly researched approval voting and I-134; interviewed both supporters and opponents of I-134; and examined relevant League positions in relation to the initiative. As a result of this work, the endorsement evaluation team presented the Board with a recommendation, fairly representing the arguments for and against approval voting. The Board subsequently voted unanimously to oppose the effort, to urge Seattle voters to decline to sign petitions for I-134, and to advise Seattle voters to vote against I-134 should it appear on November's ballot.

The reasons for the Board's opposition to I-134 are many.

- Approval voting is largely untested. In the United States, only St. Louis, Missouri has used approval voting for primaries for municipal elections. Only Fargo, North Dakota has used approval voting for elections for municipal offices.
- As of mid-March, out-of-state donors had provided 81% of the \$276,116 raised by Seattle Approves to promote I-134. One such donor, the [Center for Election Science](#), a 501(c)(3) organization, provided over \$170,700. Only 16% of funding to advocate for I-134 was from donors resident in Seattle.

- Outside the request to LWVSKC, the Seattle Approves organizers did not meaningfully engage local organizations already working on election reform before filing I-134. The organizers did not seek to build consensus with these organizations or solicit public comment. Seattle Approves appears to be operating largely unilaterally.
- A strong coalition of local organizations, including LWVSKC, does favor ranked choice voting. In ranked choice voting, each voter marks as many candidates as they choose to endorse, in order of preference. If approval voting were adopted, it could stall the progress that LWVSKC and local partner organizations have made toward this alternate election reform. Ranked choice voting has a track record in 500 elections across 26 jurisdictions in the United States, and shows significant benefits in electing more diverse candidates.
- Approval voting allows voters a binary choice on each candidate — approve or not approve. Ranked choice voting allows voters to express more detail about their approval of candidates, as well as to not approve. In approval voting, unlike in ranked choice voting, voters cannot vote for a less-preferred candidate without the risk of causing their more-preferred candidate to lose. Like the current voting set-up, this feature of approval voting increases the opportunity for voters to use the system to shape an outcome, rather than to express a sincere preference for a candidate.
- This coalition in favor of ranked choice voting has worked together for years on voting justice issues and has a history of success, in contrast to the organizers of Seattle Approves. The coalition includes organizations that center their work in communities of underrepresented voters, including BIPOC communities. Together these organizations have successfully supported the Washington Voting Rights Act; same-day registration; automatic voter registration; pre-registration; voting rights restoration for those released from prison; and the establishment of democracy vouchers in Seattle.

As LWVSKC's President Heather Kelly noted in a press release, "The League stands with [Washington for Equitable Representation](#) in recognizing that equitable election reform

has to include a path to proportional representation; ranked choice voting offers that path, approval voting does not.”

The right to vote is a pillar of democracy. The League of Women Voters believes that each voter deserves an equal opportunity to make their voice heard in our democracy. We are dedicated to supporting changes which foster fair and effective representation. As Martin Luther King said, “The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by human beings for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison people because they are different from others.” We believe that it is incumbent on all of us to protect that right and move with all deliberate speed towards the most representative and fair forms of voting that we can achieve.

## Do you know a fellow member in need of cheering up?

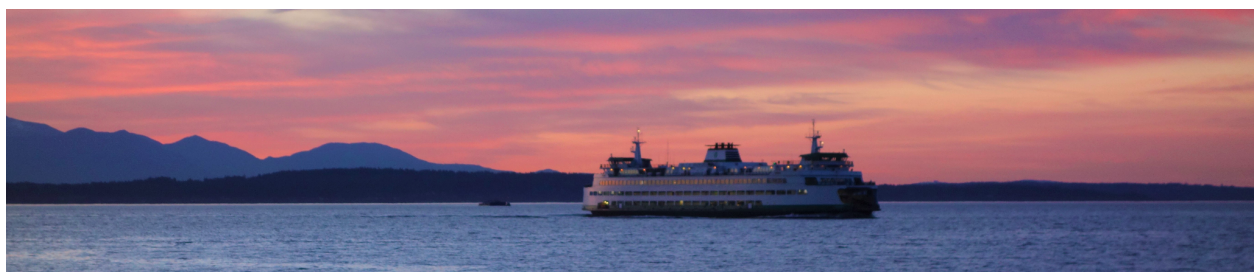


Perhaps you know someone who is recovering from surgery, struggling with work or family, or just having a trying time at the moment.

- If so, please [fill out this form](#), and the LWVSKC Bright Light will reach out to the member with a note to cheer them up, and remind them that they’re part of our League community.

## In Memoriam and in Gratitude to Nadine Baker

*Heather Kelly*



*Photo credit k.kennell*

In March, the League received a generous bequest from long-time member Nadine Baker. I phoned Nadine’s daughter, Carol, to express our deep gratitude for Nadine’s contribution. Carol graciously spent some time sharing stories and memories of her mother, who passed away in 2020.



Nadine was a long-time League member who lived on Mercer Island. Carol believes her mother joined the League when they were living in Seattle. After they moved to Mercer Island in the late 1960s, Nadine joined that unit and remained an active member for many years. Nadine enjoyed the local meetings and the people she met with. Nadine was also passionate about League forums, and was the carpool queen on the East Side. Carol remembers her mother inviting her and her siblings to the forums many times. Nadine also liked to represent the League out in the community, where she was active in registering voters.

Nadine had a busy career and family life outside the League as well. She had five children and returned to school to earn her nursing degree. She was someone who just had a passion for learning, which motivated her to volunteer with the League even though she was a busy working parent. Nadine worked at Pacific Medical on Beacon Hill and Providence Cherry Heights. She also worked as a traveling nurse.

After retirement, Nadine stayed involved with the League even while pursuing other interests, such as traveling with ElderHostel (now RoadScholar). Nadine also loved visiting the ocean. Carol has many fond memories of their family taking trips to the shore.

When I asked Carol what motivated her mother to give back to the League, Carol put it simply: Nadine just really liked what we did! The League was a big part of Nadine's very full life. In the League, she found friends, issues to study, and opportunities for service.

I never had the privilege of meeting Nadine, but we are connected through our shared commitment to this organization. I am determined to honor her legacy, and the effort of so many members who have come before me, in all that we do today.

Honoring LWVSKC with a bequest is one way to lift up the next generation of members and ensure that our local democracy remains strong for years to come. To learn more about bequests, please visit <https://lwvskc.org/donate>.



## Connecting With the Community

*This month, President Heather Kelly interviewed LWVSKC veteran Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis.*

Watch this Zoom interview [here](#). A transcript follows.

HEATHER: Okay, so this is our third in a series of Connecting With the Community. And I'm here today with Lucy Gaskell-Gaddis of West Seattle. And the first question I have for you, Lucy, is, when did you join the League?



LUCY: Well, I think sometime in the early 80s. I have ... I, actually, fortunately found a little bio that I had written, which gives all the information on my experiences with the League. Which is really good, because my memory is not as good as things on paper. So I think it was probably in the early 80s. And I started becoming active in education.

HEATHER: So that's what was ... that specific issue that brought you to the League?

LUCY: Primarily. I had been a teacher. I actually had two careers. I was a teacher in California for five years, and I had taught overseas for a couple years in the Peace Corps. But when I came to Washington, they wouldn't accept my credential, for these odd reasons, of California not requiring education classes. But anyway ... and then in '76, I went back to graduate school. And so I became a bureaucrat, worked in finance, at the City of Seattle. So I have had two careers. But education, I discovered, was still my first love. So, primarily, when my daughter started school, and I got involved in the school district, I really, you know, decided this is what I want to spend my time doing.

HEATHER: Um, what's your daughter's name?

LUCY: Hilary. Hilary with one "L".

HEATHER: Okay. So when you were ... did you teach in California? Because I'm from California.

LUCY: Oh, I taught in the Los Angeles School District. I was over in East LA. I've forgotten exactly (where). But, anyway, I was there for five years. And then I moved to Seattle.



HEATHER: Very cool. I was in LA Unified School District, as a student for kindergarten through fourth grade. And I actually attended Edison Elementary, which is in, like, Mar Vista, and it was a Spanish-English immersion. And so, it was so cool, because I got to learn another language right when your brain is, you know, in that sponge mode. And I was grateful for that.

LUCY: Well, I taught English as a second language. So I was the reverse ... because I had taught overseas. And so my experience, in teaching English to foreign students ... and that's actually what I did. When I came up to Seattle, I worked at a private language center. And it was mostly students, and tourists, and particularly students who were coming to the UW. And they wanted to brush up on their English. And at that time, we had quite a few Iranian students. This was before 1979. And then also Arab and Japanese, and Mexicans, and then tourists. So that, basically, was my career in teaching English as a second language.

HEATHER: Right. That's really interesting. Um, so you, you were in the public school sector, and then you were in the private. Did you feel like, you know, were, like, pluses and minuses to each. Well, do you have a preference?

LUCY: No, the private language center was just ... it wasn't related to schooling. It was just a language center, if people came to learn English. So my experience has been both with myself and teaching, and also my daughter was ... has been in the public schools. She went to Seattle Public Schools. And so that's where I ended up becoming a ... because I could afford to quit my job. I ended up being, you know, the super volunteer, and I felt fortunate to have that opportunity.

HEATHER: So were you active, I guess, in the PTA then?

LUCY: Yes. And also, my daughter, her elementary school was Kimball, and at the time there, they wanted to ... they got money to build, rebuild a playground. And so this was in '92 or '93, sometime like then anyway. We had a group of people who were building a playground. So it helped that I have a financial background too.

HEATHER: Yeah, absolutely. Fundraising is always a coveted skill.

LUCY: Yeah. Anyway. So, as a result of her going to schools, I got involved, both in the school district, and also in Schools First and statewide initiatives. I have a longtime friend who convinced me to become involved in Schools First. So one of the things I've done is to

represent the League in multiple organizations, educational organizations, Schools First. And some other things we can talk about.

HEATHER: Got it. So you were a big proponent of the levies. You know, one of the things that I've realized and learned from activists in, sort of, public education and that realm, is that there's this, like, tension almost between wanting to fully fund public schools, and wanting students in the meantime, to not flounder, and suffer, and to have access to adequate resources. And we're under this, you know, regressive tax system. So for you, did the levies feel like a solution to that? Or, you know, what, how do you generally feel about public school funding?

LUCY: Well, I think that the state should take on more responsibility. I mean, the levies are a very unequal way of funding the schools. But, at the time ... that's all you have, right, still true. And so, you know... and then, there was the other thing that I got involved in, was actually in the 90s, early learning ... or actually was more like the early 2000s, the issue of early learning came to the fore. And so we did, at the city (level), I was chair of the Education Committee at that point, and we ended up doing a study on early learning. And then the State League did a study on early learning. And one of the people primarily responsible for bringing this issue was Ruth Kagi, was a longtime League member and representative. And she really pushed the issue. And then the research, of course, has shown in the last 20 years, how important early learning is to children's education. So that was the other area that I got very involved in.

HEATHER: That's really neat. I mean, and it really is, like, you know, a women's lib issue, or however you want to characterize it. Because, for me, I have a six year old and a nine year old. And having preschool meant I could dedicate myself to my career, and know that they were thriving and developing in a safe, loving environment. But, you know, we were paying through the nose. It was so expensive. And I know that there's this big push for sort of, like, universal free preschool right now. And it feels like a continuing conversation across the generations.

LUCY: Well, I think that the pandemic has demonstrated the need, I mean, my daughter, she was in daycare, with, after, you know, four months. And she was there until she went to school. And that's when, you know, the daycare was easy, you know, you drop them all right, back (then), and it was really good daycare. But then when she went to school, and at the time, in 1991, we had to pay for an after-school program, because she had to spend all this time. So it was a difficult issue at that time. But now, I think it did demonstrate how important childcare is not only to children, but also to women who work, or parents.

HEATHER: Right. It brings, it restores balance. Yeah. So, yeah. Well, thank you for all your work on that. I know that our Education Committee today is probably relying on those positions that emerged from your study to advocate. I know that the Board has probably cited them to advocate for some of the levies that we've considered in the past few years.

I want to ask you about charter schools because that's an area where I'm still learning and again, it feels like there's no perfect solution. But you feel strongly. I read your editorial, or your letter to the editor, in the Times a few years back that the League had misstepped by, you know, opposing charter school funding. I don't mean to put you on the hot seat, but I'm just really interested for two reasons. One, when the League does something on an issue that a member cares about, that the member disagrees with, how does that affect your relationship to the organization? And two, what value do charter schools have in your opinion?

LUCY: Well, I, yeah, so I was very much opposed to the League's position on charter schools. And primarily because I saw it as an alternative. It wasn't a threat to the public schools, it was alternative, and it was essentially public education, because the state did allow funding for the students who chose that option. So I thought, hey, if they provide an education that's more suited to some children than others, then why not? What's the threat? You know, I didn't see the rationale for opposing charter schools. But we haven't gotten into the whole issue of the Families and Education Levy, because that's actually one of the reasons that I have not participated in the League. In 2000 ... 2003 was the beginning. I think it was under Norm Rice, when he had a group of people come together from all sorts of areas, and I represented the League of Women Voters on developing the Family and Education Levy. It was the first time it occurred. And I eventually became a member in 2009, of the Oversight Committee. So I spent ten years on the Family and (Education) Levy Oversight Committee. And one of the things that happened, that ... I don't remember which one it was, it may have been, it may have been the most recent one ... where, where they joined the Family (and) Education Levy, and the Preschool Levy. And the League came out against it. And I was just appalled, because of our strong support for education in the past. And so I, you know, I stopped going to the Education Committee meetings, and things. I just said, Now, I disagree with you. Not violently, what's the right word?

HEATHER: Yeah. Passionately.

LUCY: Yeah, so, that's one reason why I have been, kind of, missing in action for the last few years, because of my disagreement on that. And so one of the issues that came up when the Board made that decision, was looking at the history of our positions on some

things. And I wasn't the only one who was very upset that we didn't support the levy. I don't remember the reasons now, why we didn't. But anyway, that created some consternation among some League members, especially older League members. I guess that's where history comes in. And, you remember, the history of things?

HEATHER: Yeah. I mean, I was on the Board when, when we, when we voted, and, you know, I feel like I'm definitely still learning how to navigate those decisions in a way that doesn't alienate people or, or dismiss somebody's hard work over the decades. I certainly, like, don't have any intention of kind of, you know, flying in the face of all that effort. And at the same time, I feel like it was always a challenge for me, like I said before, as a new League member, and especially as a Board member, of understanding what the League's history was, and involvement was on a particular issue, because I feel like our history is really hard to access. You know what I mean? Like, it's really just through conversations like this. But, you know ... and reaching out to the Education Committee, of course, is always a part of our decision-making process as a board on these levies. But, you know, to really appreciate how much dedication and commitment someone like you put behind the levy that we were considering. It's just ... it's something that I feel like we really need to work on, bringing that history to the surface.

LUCY: Well, what, at the time, one of the big issues for the board was the process by which they make decisions ... and I, I think the Education Committee supported it. I don't remember ... It was a very unusual situation, because the League had supported all the previous ones. And I didn't take it personally, in that sense. I was just on the opposite side of it. But it was wrapped up in the whole issue of how the Board makes its recommendations, and what role historical decisions play. So it was bigger than the issue of just that particular levy. It was really, you know, how much influence does the particular committee (have) in this situation? It was the Education Committee, and there were some people on the Education Committee who were, who were strongly against the levy. So, but it was, it's a difficult issue for the Board. I mean, I was on the Board for four or five years, in the 2000s. And so I had faced some of those issues also. And just ... the process became convoluted.

HEATHER: Yeah, you know, questions and concerns about process, and transparency around process, I think I've seen come up over and over again, and I've certainly raised them in some contexts with the state board. And, you know, again, I feel like that's an area we could really, I mean, we got to practice what we preach, right? So we asked, we asked our elected officials to, to, you know, make their meetings accessible and intelligible. So people can really understand what's going on. And, you know, I feel like I'm very much representing the membership. And finding ways to gather input on, especially, like,

controversial issues, is really important to me, and allowing members an opportunity to ask questions, or get insight into how we're approaching a decision is also important. And at the end of the day, I feel like, you know, it's the Board's duty to make the hard decision, knowing that we're definitely going to frustrate someone. But it's really, you know, it is about the process, and really having people feel listened to, even if their opinion doesn't carry the day. You know what I mean? Like giving them a voice.

LUCY: And the other thing to consider though, actually is the League's reputation kind of took a hit a little bit with that because the League was seen ... and I've been involved in Schools First, where I was just one of a number of organizations ... and the League had been seen in this situation (as a) very strong advocate for education. So it was quite a surprise when the League came out against the levies. But anyway, it's more ... it's a bigger issue than just the levies, in terms of making our positions. And we have, I don't know, at one point, I think there was an effort to review all the positions, because some of them get very outdated. But that's what when the League makes a decision about things, and moves or acts on it, that it needs to have some firm foundation, and things change over time.

HEATHER: Absolutely. I mean, even the language of our positions sometimes when you read them, you know the intent but it feels outdated, or it feels a little clunky, just because people talk about things differently now. So we just did an overhaul of our positions. Not an overhaul. That's an overstatement, but a review, to look for areas where, without changing the substance of the position, we could update the language, and, like, things like "drug abuse", calling it, like, "substance use disorders". Things like that, where the official vernacular has changed in the medical journals. We will put all of those proposals to the members at this annual meeting for their review and consideration. But yeah, I mean, there's no real roadmap for just changing a couple words of a position, right. Like, there's ... there's no rule that says we can't — and so, so one of the things that we've been working on communicating a little better about is, when there is a rule, or when we're proposing something, because, you know, it might be a preference. Because that was another challenge for me coming into the League. What are the rules? What are just best practices? What are the official Board policies? And yeah, navigating all of those in tandem, is sometimes tricky, too.

So, so let's see, I wanted to ask you if there was any favorite moment, or project, or person that stood out to you in your League experience, as really representing to you, "This is what it should feel like to be in League together"?

LUCY: Well, I think my work on the Education Committee, and representing the League on the Family and Education Committee, was a high point. I ended up leaving in 2019 because

I felt that the makeup of the committee had changed. And they had more people who represented organizations that were involved in early learning, or preschool, or even the colleges. But working on the committees, and doing some of those studies, were really the highlights. Just getting involved in something because it expanded my own interest. And that's how you keep people involved. It's like people who are really ... I have a friend who's big on helping on voting, and you know, and so she's been involved in some of the organizations involved in voting because it expands her basic interest. So I mean, that's what's a nice thing about the League, is there is a variety, you know. You've got Voter Service, you've got climate change, you've got a variety of different topics. And so you can attract people with that. And that's ... it's not a one-topic organization. I think that's one of the benefits of being a League member. And, you know, I still support the League, and I read the newsletters and that kind of stuff. I've just ... I mean, partly, I'm just not that active as an activist anymore.

HEATHER: Well, I'm really grateful for your time. Since you were so active in the League, it's really nice to kind of connect with people in different stages of their, sort of, relationship with the League, you know, because you always learn something new when somebody has a perspective as a longtime member, who has sort of one foot out the door, or a brand-new member, who's sort of found herself in a leadership role, like, right away. Everybody kind of has something a little different to share. And the collective wisdom is pretty astonishing. So, we appreciate your time.

LUCY: Well, thank you for thinking of me. One person who you might be interested in interviewing, who has a long history, is Nancy Bagley. Yeah, she's a longtime member who's been very active along with her husband. And she and I were cohorts for quite a while over education.

HEATHER: Well, maybe I could entice you to interview her.

LUCY: I'm not sure that would be the best, because I think we need someone with a different perspective. And I mean, part of it is, as you were saying, there's this generational divide. I'm of the older generation. Yeah. And so there's new concerns, and new ways of doing things. And that's why it's good to have you interviewing me because you have a different perspective.

HEATHER: Well, I appreciate that. And I mean, you know, our ability to adapt without losing our history, I think, is like an ever-present challenge. And that's kind of what this project is all about. And on that note, actually, we're scheduling some opportunities for members and supporters to explore our archives through, like, virtual library hours with

UW because they host our archives. So if you're ever interested, there's an entire box of materials on the League's history and education that, you know, you're welcome to peruse. So just let me know.

LUCY: Yeah, it's probably a few years ago, I finally emptied out my house of League documents. I figured it has been, you know, 15 years or so. Part of it is just an overall issue of we've got too much stuff in our house.

HEATHER: Yeah, I can relate to that! Some things don't change across generations. Well, it was really nice to spend some time with you this morning. And yeah, I'll see you on email. If there's anything you ever need or any want to express about our work, I would love to hear from you.

LUCY: Okay, thank you very much.

HEATHER: Thanks. Take care. Bye bye.

## Board Brief

*Heather Kelly, President*



We've come to the time of year when the Board is looking both backward and forward. Thinking back to our retreat in September, we had an ambitious agenda for the year that included launching a new website, creating a digital file sharing system and membership directory, building and documenting board processes, and strengthening relationships across the organization. Looking ahead, we have two forums and our annual meeting ahead of us in addition to a big ol' party on May 24 where we'll celebrate LWVSKC: Defending Democracy Across Generations.

It's in this in-between time of the year when I feel the widest range of emotions about our work. I am so incredibly proud of our Board, League leaders, and members who have faced all the challenges of the past year with open minds and hearts. We are a very determined bunch! Seeing the way League members have served others during this heavy time has reminded me of the League's capacity to stay resilient and do good when it is needed most. In fact, it feels like we found a second wind in this pandemic and are tackling more this year than I could have ever imagined!



I am also going to miss the fabulous Board members whose terms are coming to an end. We did not have a chance to get to know one another offline, share a meal, or meet each other's friends and families. I will never again underestimate the power of connecting in person when you're working as a team. Despite these barriers, the Board showed incredible courage and determination to make things work. Many League leaders and members did the same. I know how much effort it took for us all to persist through COVID, and our community is stronger for it. To all those of you who reached out to someone who fell out of touch, or went the extra mile to include someone in a League event, thank you.

But the League year isn't over yet! I am also grateful for what is present right now. New blooms popping up promise another fresh start. Despite all the uncertainty in the world today, the League will always offer ways to regroup, team up, and try again.

Cheers,  
Heather Kelly

## Units Unite Us

*Sarah Beth Miller*



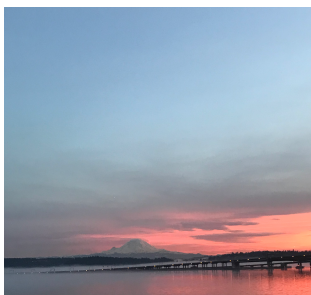
Our nine small discussion groups (Units) meet once a month to discuss topical issues and connect members to outreach activities.

Any member can attend any Unit meeting.

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

## Getting to Know Our Units: Southend

*Sarah Beth Miller, Unit Coordinator*



This is a brief profile of the Southend (South Seattle) Unit through the eyes of three of its members. Nancy Eitreim has been a Southender since the 1970s. Chris Chavez, current co-lead of the Unit, joined up in 2019. And Marilyn Kent is the newest member, having joined this fall. This is just a very small sample of the

extraordinary women of the Southend Unit, whose accomplishments will be related in future articles!

Nancy Eitreim was 30 years old with a toddler in the early 1970s. For her, joining the Unit of the Seattle League then known as “Mount Baker” was a chance to talk with other women about current events. But the bigger draw was the free baby-sitting that was offered during the meeting! The upcoming 2020 election was the motivation for Chris Chavez to join the Unit — she was eager to do whatever she could to register voters and help assure a fair election process. Marilyn Kent had just moved to the Seattle area from Snohomish County, where she had been an active League member. She wanted to connect with local Leaguers to find out more about issues in South Seattle and King County.

The Southend Unit has a proud history, recalls Nancy Eitreim. But she wants to make clear that Laura Weese, now at Horizon House/First Hill Unit, was a Southend Unit member well before Nancy got on board! Over the decades, the Unit has produced many LWVSKC Board members and three or four Board presidents. In the 70s, the Unit’s main issue was school desegregation. The cross-generational Unit (then called the Mt. Baker Unit) did lots of desegregation work, and pressured the Seattle LWV into a public position on desegregation. Nancy recalls that the Unit and League were sometimes in conflict with the Seattle School Board, and that the League didn’t always prevail. One point of contention centered around John Muir Elementary School in Mt. Baker. Despite the fact that John Muir’s neighborhood was already racially diverse, the School Board insisted on bussing students from the Southend all the way up to Broadview in north Seattle to achieve desegregation. The Unit took a stand in support of making John Muir Elementary a neighborhood school to avoid a lengthy and unnecessary bus trip for Southend students. As Nancy describes it, the struggle wasn’t pretty, and it wasn’t entirely successful, but the Southend Unit did stake an important claim for desegregation.

Current co-lead of the Southend Unit, Chris Chavez has been pleased to encounter a group of interesting women who come from different walks of life, but who are all inspired to work to preserve democracy. In the three years that she’s been a member, the Unit has worked on voting rights, civics education, and climate, all of which are primary interests for the group. But every month there are so many other issues that members want to discuss, and just focusing on a few is hard to achieve.

Chris is determined to “grow” the Unit, to increase membership and involve more young members, because, “We need to get the next generation involved, now!” She talks about the LWV often with her daughter in Portland, who is in her 30s and a new mother. Chris’s daughter advises a stronger social media presence for the LWV, and she imagines a group

of other young moms (and dads) who meet to talk about their toddlers, but who might also benefit from an LWV connection that would broaden their conversations beyond diapers to defending democracy.

New member Marylin Kent joined the Southend Unit this past fall. She had previously been active in the Snohomish League, but having moved to King County recently, she looked forward to meeting local Leaguers. Marylin is a retired pediatric nurse and when living in Snohomish, she was very active in issues involving children.

She was on the Snohomish League's Childrens' Services Committee and helped spearhead an extensive study of homelessness among youth in the area. The Snohomish League worked closely with the Zonta Club of Everett. (Zonta is an international organization that provides activities focusing on improving the lives of women and girls in Snohomish County as well as other locations in Washington State). Along with other volunteers, Marylin worked with homeless youth at an outreach center for Cocoon House, a non-profit that conducts outreach and arranges short and long term housing for homeless young people. Both the League and Zonta supported the youth with food and gift donations. Marylin also attended the meetings of two Snohomish County Task Forces, on Human Trafficking and Homelessness, and reported back to the League's Committee.

Now that she has joined the Southend Unit, Marylin is experiencing the League through Zoom, which is quite different from the in-person engagement she had with the Snohomish LWV. In spite of the limitations of Zoom, she has been impressed by watching the Forums and she appreciates the follow-up discussions she has had with the Unit.

As the "historian" of this small sample of Southend Unit members, Nancy Eitreim recalls that in the 1970s and 1980s, legendary Unit member Lila Bulen lived in a large house on Cascadia Avenue with a glorious view of Lake Washington. Lila founded the Jolly Rogers Motorcycle Club with her husband, which once numbered 100 members, including a woman's division and a motorcycle stunt-and-drill team that rode white Harleys in the Seattle Seafair parade. The Southend Unit met at Lila's lakeview home every month for several years. In those days, a big fundraiser for the League was the storied "Political Party and Auction." Hundreds of people attended, including candidates for upcoming elections. All of the Seattle-King County units would vie to procure popular items for the auction. One of the most highly prized (and remunerative) items donated was a Seafair Lunch at Lila Bulen's house, where the guests could view the Seafair spectacle and hydroplane races from the vantage of her deck. The Southend (Mount Baker) Unit made and served all of the food for the event, and everyone wanted to come! It was a remarkable, fun event and a very effective way to raise funds.

Considering her long history in the Southend Unit, Nancy was asked what she sees in the future for the Southend Unit. She responded, “That we all get together in person to have FUN! And welcome new members, have good discussions and debates about issues and League positions, and get active on them!”

## ***Teaching When The World Is On Fire: Authentic Classroom Advice From Climate Justice To Black Lives Matter***

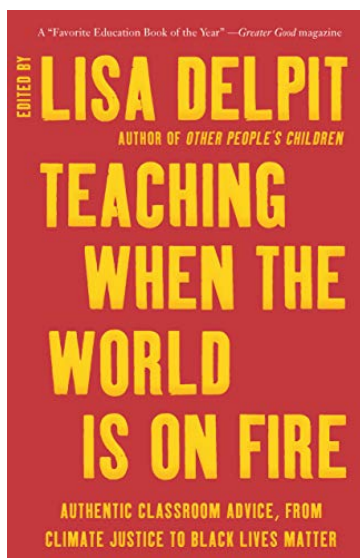
**Edited by Lisa Delpit**

### Book Review

*Vicky Downs*

This book is a collection of inspiring articles giving advice to K-12 teachers. They cover such topics as Politics, Safety, Race, Gender/Sex, Climate and Culture and show how to deal with them in the classroom. I found that, sometimes, this practical advice helped me see how I too could deal with these issues.

Today, our children can have no reassurance that “the nation has a moral high ground.” Helpfully, the first article by William Ayers points out that “those of us who understand learning to be expansive, dynamic, and idiosyncratic, [tend to] believe that an excellent education is the natural right of every child.” The articles (most are 5-10 pages) try to remind teachers of “guiding principles and offer constructive hands-on advice.”



The section entitled “Race Matters” includes one article in which the author points out that schools “where black children come to be educated must be willing to accept there are ways of looking at the world, modes of communication and approaches to teaching and learning, that are unique to Black people.” Clearly, Black pedagogy requires “a space for dialogue about the social and psychological baggage that comes from being Black in a White school.”

The author goes on to suggest ways to use dialogue unrelated to classroom teaching. For example, four to six students and the teacher could gather together before school, during lunch,

or after school. Such discussions, she writes, can help students to “present their true selves to the teacher” and help the teacher to “better meet [the students’] specific needs.”

Wayne Au and Jesse Hagopian’s article, “How One Elementary School Sparked a Citywide Movement,” shows how Black men in Seattle showed up to “change the narrative around education and race.” Those men helped devote the day’s teaching to issues of racial justice. In so doing, this Seattle elementary school “galvanized a growing citywide movement to make Black lives matter in Seattle schools.”

Another huge issue for schools is discussed in the section entitled “Sexual Harassment.” Camila Goitia writes about students gathering to discuss, and then find ways to ensure there are “actual consequences for persistent sexual harassment.” They also explain the need for a written statement on how the school will protect students, and create a more supportive environment for victims.

“Climate Change Meets a Stubborn Obstacle” points out that “adolescents are still heavily influenced by their parents, but they’re also figuring themselves out.” The authors of this article show how a science class field trip can find ways for students to use their eyes to see for themselves what the climate is doing to plants, insects, and more. For “children of Trump supporters who doubt climate change,” this can be a mind changer. When this happens, young students have to figure out how or even if, they can discuss the new idea with their parents.

As late as 1950, farming and fishing were still part of most adult’s lives. Today most adults work in offices or factories in which seasonal changes are irrelevant. This book can help teachers and those of us who have lived far from towns and cities, to see how climate is changing more than just the local area, and in ways we are likely to understand immediately.

“Today’s teachers are most often undervalued, underpaid and under estimated” but they can make the “biggest differences for children in schools that offer no safer haven.”

This book suggests ways to understand, support and encourage our schools and teachers, and is a positive and sometimes stimulating read.

## We'd Like to Hear From You!

**Not sure who to reach?** You can always find us at [info@lwvskc.org](mailto:info@lwvskc.org) or 206-329-4848.

**Find us on the web** at [lwvskc.org](http://lwvskc.org)!

**Membership coordinator** Saunatina Sanchez is at [membership@lwvskc.org](mailto:membership@lwvskc.org) and holds in-person and virtual office hours. Check our [events calendar](#)!

**Want to stop by our office?** We have office hours every Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We're located at:

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