

## Why I joined the League of Women Voters of Bellingham/Whatcom County...

"I joined the League because I believe that each of us needs to participate in civic affairs. As a naturalized citizen, I was impressed with the grassroots involvement of Americans in the election process. The League provided a nonpartisan way to learn about issues and candidates and an opportunity to discuss them with other community members. The League studies issues in depth and does not rely on sound bites. Its members are intelligent and thoughtful."

*Elsie Heinrick*

"For years as a busy single parent, I depended on the League of Women Voters for impartial, thorough information on voting issues. When my son left for college, my job with the State of Alaska required frequent travel, making it difficult to attend meetings. As a recent retiree, I'm excited to have the opportunity to participate in the important work of the League. I want to assist others who may not have the time to delve into current issues but can depend on the League for unbiased, carefully researched information."

*Sherry Kew*

"I had known about the League and their "above reproach" reputation for years, and more recently was impressed by the thoughtful, action-oriented League members I came into contact with from time to time. My doorway to the league came through my interests in clean campaign financing and fair elections. My involvement in these areas resulted in an invitation to join the League, and that's all it took. I had been curious about who could join and how one joined for some time -- thought it might be "by invitation" only, and had been too busy ask. Now I know that all of us who care about the health of our communities and our democracy are warmly welcomed to join. I've also learned that it's not just for women. The local League of Women programs are highly educational and generally very interesting, and are a great way to stay abreast of issues which are important in this complicated world in which we live."

*Roni Beall*

"I joined the League when my youngest child went to kindergarten and I wanted to discuss something other than diapers and dishes. One of the most impressive things to me about League was the depth of their studies. I remember working on a study of the State Justice System. We toured courts and jails; talked with local prosecuting attorneys and public defenders. Not only did we come up with recommendations to improve the system, but I personally learned a lot about my community. That was 40 years ago, and I am still impressed with League studies and with the opportunities to work on the important issues of the day."

*Judy Corliss*

“I joined the League around 1973. Having worked my way through college and graduated at the tender age of 42, I felt ready to accept the invitation of two active Leaguer friends of mine to join and participate in a local study on Education which was taking place. Since Education had long been of special interest to me – I was a former school board member – this study was of particular interest. I appreciated the League’s way of looking at all sides of an issue before taking a position. Being part of such a non-partisan group had always been a comfortable role for me.

I have continued to be active in the League and other service organizations, enjoying the opportunity of working with other smart, active people who are striving to make our community a better place in which to live.”

*Margaret Woll*

“Last year I found myself annoyed and confused about the immigration debate. I have many friends in the League and have been impressed with League forums and presentations. When I heard the national league was doing an immigration study, it immediately grabbed my interest. I was asked to participate and joined our local league's immigration committee. I spent the next few months working with intelligent committed women on a study of this issue, which led to a nationwide consensus position by the League.

This is the great benefit of the League. You are not alone. It provides a non-partisan forum for people who care, to discuss and work on the issues that confront our communities and our nation.”

*Jayne Freudenberger*

“Although I loved being a wife and the mother of young children, my husband's job often took him out of town and I was left craving intelligent adult conversation and projects. The League put balance back into my life. When my children entered school I became absorbed with graduate work and career but as soon as I retired and moved to Bellingham I looked up the League and was delighted to find a large group of active, wonderful women.

I especially enjoyed the immigration study. It's wonderful to realize that people all over the country are studying the same subject in order to arrive at informed opinions. Some of the on-line people had opinions so different from my own but that too added to my knowledge. Study, the consensus process, and a non-partisan approach have created an organization that is respected across the country. I'm proud to be part of the LWV.”

*Dorothy Davis*

“Several women I admired were active in the League. When I went to my first meeting, I knew at least 10 members and realized I could find the information I needed to understand what was happening in my community. I immediately joined because of the League's reputation for non-partisan investigation of issues. The League gives me the opportunity to inform myself, so I may draw my own conclusions. I also found a place I can contribute and enjoy the support of men and women who have a different life experience from my own but are willing to work together with a common purpose. “

*Georgia MacGregor*

I joined the League about 6 years ago when my husband, Chad Haberstroh, was asked to be a speaker at a League meeting dealing with economic issues. He and I both joined and became increasingly interested in the thoughtful, balanced way in which issues were presented.

As a Canadian citizen and legal U.S. resident, I needed to know more about United States governance and all matter of political issues, and League has been an ideal place to learn.

In League I have found a group of like-minded women and men who are actively engaged in effecting change on the local, state, national and international levels.

*Phyllis Haberstroh*

“I was 28 years old when I joined the League. Our daughters were ages two and 3 months old and I was "climbing the wall" for women of intellect. I went to one meeting and offered my home to hold "unit meetings" (common in other Leagues) so I wouldn't have to find a baby sitter. That started a long history in the League--in Eugene, OR; Bainbridge Island and Pullman, WA; --then Ruston, LA; and Charlotte, NC although I was not active in the last two.

In the 70's, I served on the WA State board and was a "national trainer" in group dynamics. 24 of us from the US were trained in DC and Greensboro, NC and then traveled to state and local Leagues to share the training--one in Bellingham when Harriet Spanel was President!

When moving to Bellingham (1998), I knew that the best way to get to know a community was to join the League. The League is a "home" for women who want to explore current issues even if they are controversial. It expands our horizons and helps all League members come to agreement in order to make a changes important to our society.”

*Jo Morgan*

“I had been familiar with the League through National (The League of Women Voters has organizations at the local, state, and national levels) and I have contributed to them for years. I didn't think I qualified for membership because I was then still a Canadian citizen. One day Dr. Chad Haberstroh was giving a talk on Economics. I saw the ad in the paper, and both my husband and I went to hear him. I was then in the process of becoming an American citizen, and as soon as I had my new citizenship, I joined the League because I was so impressed with their work.

After a few years as a member, I was "talked into" becoming a board member by my neighbor, Dorothy Davis. I think the League does important work, and I was very glad I was persuaded to help in it. By that time I had met a number of smart and dedicated women members, and I think joining the League was one of the best things I did. A hurrah for democracy as envisioned by the League!”

*Ingeborg Paulus*

“I joined the League of Women Voters after working on a statewide campaign fighting an initiative that was designed to eliminate commercial fishing in Washington State (I-640). My husband is a fisherman. The methodical and balanced deliberation that the League put into deciding whether or not to support our position was remarkable. I was so impressed that I became a member and have been ever since – 13 years now. The League is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.”

*Tanya Baumgart*