

VOTER

www.lwv-bf.org

April 2020

From the President

Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Wow! Who would have guessed that 2020 and the advent of the Coronavirus would have changed our lives so quickly and so dramatically! To carry on the business of the LWVBF during these trying times, our March 19 Board Meeting was conducted through a teleconference via the generosity of Judy Golberg. Assuming nothing changes by April 16, we will hold our next Board Meeting by accessing Zoom, which is being offered for video conferencing through the WA State League. A telephone number will be available as well, for those who prefer that option. If you are not on the Board but would like to participate in the meeting, please contact me at: sasjoh@aol.com or (509) 521-0947, and I will send you the information.

Since the League annual meetings are to be held in May, or no later than June, our state presidents are sharing ideas on how that might be accomplished, in case we are still doing business electronically by then. One idea was to use Survey Monkey, or some other like service, to gather information. Our LWVBF Annual Meeting is scheduled for May 21 but could be held on June 18 as an alternative. We will be considering changes to our bylaws at our annual meeting to formally address connecting electronically.

Karen Crowley from Snohomish County and a member of the League's Washington State Redistricting Committee contacted us regarding a project called "Speak Up Schools." It is intended to prepare residents across the state to provide powerful and effective testimony to the Redistricting Commission in the spring of 2021, after the Census has been tabulated. The Committee has prepared a PowerPoint that describes the effort and how our League can get involved. They want to get at least ten Leagues across the state to
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Officers:

President:
Beverly Johnson-Torelli
1st Vice President:
JoAnne Dimond
2nd Vice President:
Janet Nail
Secretary:
Polly Parton
Treasurer:
Shirley Sonnichsen
Past President:
JoAnn Bengtson
Voter Editor:
Diane Molleson

Elected

Directors:

JoAnn Bengtson
Heather Cunningham
Shari Gasperino
Diane Molleson
Lora Rathbone
Virginia Rogalsky

Appointed

Directors:

Bree Bowen
Ruth Giese
Christine Grantham

President's Message (Continued from p. 1)

participate. Apparently, we were involved ten years ago. Karen would like to make a twenty-minute virtual presentation to us within the next few months. I told her we would discuss it at our April Board meeting and get back with her. I also told her to tentatively count us in on the project.

Another program that might be of interest in regard to Civics Education is "Kids Voting USA," which works in concert with the "State We're In" texts. The LWVWA is signing and funding an agreement to make this program available to all local Leagues with school programs. The 6th grade and up curriculum and teacher's guide is posted at: www.lwvwa.org/The-state-we-are-in. Also, online books may be accessed through public libraries for free.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion survey yielded that age and income were the most diverse aspects of the Leagues who responded. If you would like to view the DEI videos, go to: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/lwv-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-webinars>

Regarding State Council on May 29, 30, 31: Whether to cancel or not is being considered. At this time, potential participants may register without payment. Stay tuned as we travel through the next several challenging months.

From LWV: The 2020 Census

Why it Matters:

The U.S. Census data is used to make decisions about education, healthcare, infrastructure, and political representation. With increased growth in the country, getting an accurate and complete count of every person living within is crucial to ensure that each state receives funding to support the number of residents.

What We're Doing:

The League's Census work will occur in three phases: (1) *Education*; (2) *Get Out to Count activities*, (3) *Watchdog reporting*. In the months leading up to Census Day—April 1, 2020—Leagues around the country will be in communities sharing information and resources about how to participate and the importance of the U.S. Census. On Census Day, the League will work in coalition to help get everyone counted, work in Complete Count Committees to share information about low-reporting areas, and communicate where additional support is needed. Once the Census count wraps up in the Summer/Fall of 2020, the Leagues will remain in communities and will report on any issues from the ground.

Webpage, Facebook and Twitter Opportunities

Judy Golberg

Thank you Shirley Sonnichsen and JoAnne Dimond for taking the time to learn how to edit our webpage: www.lwv-bf.org If anyone else is up to the challenge, I would be happy to give you some basic lessons. Our *League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties Facebook* page provides another opportunity for members to be involved. The goal is to keep it current, non-partisan and full of educational information for our community as it relates to voting, registering and learning about League issues. If requests come from people who want to know more about those running for office, they are referred to VOTE411.org where the candidates write their own information. Our League could create a Twitter account if someone would like to maintain it. Meanwhile there are a few of us who use our personal Twitter accounts to share League information.

Centennial Celebration Banquet

Christine Grantham

Saturday, August 8, 6:30 p.m., Hanford House

We continue planning for our Centennial Celebration Banquet still scheduled for August 8, 2020. Some of our work is on hold due to stay at home and social distancing orders resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

Janet Nail, our Essay Contest Chairman, has been busy preparing to launch our local high school essay contest, "Your Vote is Our Future" in April. We will be contacting all three school districts so they can add to their websites, plus we are gathering emails of teachers to let them know about the contest. The \$500 award in each district should draw participants. The information will be available on our LWVBF website plus our Facebook page so be sure to share and like when you see it. If you think of other ways to publicize our contest, let us know.

This may be the perfect time to engage high school students in a subject pertinent to every citizen. Our goal is to inspire students to explore why it is important to vote as the upcoming election is approaching. The Committee continues to look for donors to support the high school essay contest. If you know of any organization willing to make contributions to our Centennial Youth Project, contact Christine Grantham (rrgrantham@live.com). Donations can be made through the League of Women Voters Education Fund:

LWVBF Education Fund
P O BOX 765
Richland, WA 99352

Help Needed for Fundraiser

Valerie Moffitt

In order to provide prizes for the "Your Vote is Our Future" high school essay contest, we are seeking to partner with civic organizations or individuals to give \$500 for our first-place winners or \$250 for our runners-up. Prizes will be awarded directly to winning students at the August 8 Centennial Celebration banquet, and donors will be acknowledged.

If you are willing, please give us contact information for civic clubs where you are members or think of members you know in Rotary, Kiwanis, Eagles, Elks, Lions, Association of University Women, Soroptimists, Optimists or others.

If you wish to be the contact person, we can provide you with an official letter, mission statement and other support - **TODAY!**

If you want us to make the request, we need club contact information or donation request forms – **TODAY!**

If you know of someone who wants to give corporately or individually please ask them – **TODAY!**

The more prizes the better! Thank you for helping make the "Your Vote is Our Future" high school essay contest successful and fun for as many students as possible.

Kennewick Kiwanis were approached by Janet Nail and have pledged a \$500 prize! Valerie Moffitt contacted the Sunrise Rotary, PK Rotary, Columbia Center Rotary, Pasco Education Foundation, and Kennewick Education Foundation this week. Who can you help us contact?

We also welcome donations to help underwrite other Centennial Celebration expenses. Please let us know of any restrictions on donations sent to LWVBF so these are tracked appropriately.

If you have questions, please contact Valerie Moffitt at bobvalmoffitt@gmail.com or Janet Nail at janet@janetnail.com

2020 WA State Legislative Update

Lora Rathbone

The 2020 Legislative Session adjourned on March 12. Of particular note was the effort to supply extra funding for the Coronavirus response and increased state funding toward solutions for affordable housing and reducing the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. Described here are the bills for democracy that passed. The bill to end advisory votes, which the LWVBF chose to focus on, did not. Please thank your legislators for their support; how they voted is mentioned after each bill. And thank YOU for making the calls that helped to get these bills passed!

Democracy:

HB 2421- Election Costs Reimbursement: The LWVWA worked on this bill for years. It requires the state to pay a proportional cost for each state election as every other jurisdiction does. This will provide a stable funding source to county election officers who can use some of that money for election security and voter outreach. Some counties haven't had a local voters' pamphlet due to lack of funds. This bill specifically requires the production of that pamphlet. Last minute negotiations to keep the additional funding for voter outreach in the bill failed, but the bill as passed is still a major victory! Support for election cost reimbursement came primarily from the county auditors, with the League being the only major group working on its passage. We often hear how critical the League's voice is in representing the voters' interests on these issues. All the 8, 9 and 16th LD legislators voted yes.

SB 6152- Election Financing: Requires that only entities, including corporations, who certify that less than 50% of their stock is owned by foreign nationals can make political contributions. All the 8, 9 and 16th LD legislators voted yes. **Effective date 6/11/2020.**

ESB 6313- Increasing Opportunities for Young Voters: Allows those who will be 18 by the time of the general election to vote in the primary. It also sets up student engagement hubs at public universities where students can register to vote, get a replacement ballot and receive nonpartisan voter information. All the 8, 9 and 16th LD legislators voted against it. (We will check with WSU- TC to see how we can help this fall.)

For information about bills on other issues the LWVWA supported that passed, email Lora at ldrathbone@outlook.com

To receive the LWVWA's Legislative newsletter, sign up at this link:

http://participate.lwv.org/c/9163/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=7467

National Vote by Mail

Lora Rathbone

The Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act (NDEBA) would ensure voters have 20 days of early voting in all states, require that all mail-in ballots submitted during 21 days leading to an election be counted, and that all voters have the option to request absentee ballots. Senator Patty Murray is a co-sponsor. Learn more at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3440>

Nominating Committee

Judy Golberg

Thank you to those who have agreed to serve on next year's Board or the Nominating Committee. If you want to be involved and were not contacted, please let us know. We have appointed Board positions as well as other opportunities to participate. The slate of officers will be listed in the Annual Meeting packet that should be ready before the end of April. Thank you to this year's committee: Christine Grantham, Bev Hunter, Mary Shaw and Shirley Sonnichsen.

Treasurer's Report

Shirley Sonnichsen

On February 29, 2020:

Checking is \$3,537.89
Savings is \$1,856.45
Total \$5,394.45

Checking: \$3,537
Savings: \$1,856
Total: \$5,394

Income: \$441.01

- Member dues of \$75, \$241 for hats and sashes plus \$125 for contribution from Bev for suffragette cutout.

Expenses: \$532.14

- \$532.14 for TRY printing.

Membership: We have 53 paid members at the end of February. We have a new student, Kylee Yearsley, which brings our total membership to 60.

Budget Committee: The budget committee consists of Diane Molleson, Janet Nail and myself. We met in early March and the preliminary FY20-21 Budget is complete. It will be presented at the April meeting. We have budgeted \$10,000 for the 100th anniversary celebration in August.

Ed Funds: We have \$221.54 in the State Ed fund. The balance in our National Ed Fund of \$479.55 will be deposited in our account to cover most of the TRY printing cost.

National Convention June 25-28, 2020: \$399 – registration fee; two voting delegates eligible.

State Council: May 30-31st in Yakima: “Registration: \$119 - Includes all materials, breaks, lunch, dinner and—if you stay in the Red Lion hotel (\$99 plus tax per double room)—it includes breakfast, free parking and airport pickup. To get this rate, tell them you are booking for the League of Women Voters event.” Stay tuned.

Center for Sharing at the Collegium Cafe in Pasco

Beverly Johnson-Torelli

During 2020, this year of the Centenary, our League is being asked by many groups to participate in their activities. For example, on March 5, in celebration of International Women's Day and with the theme of Bread and Roses, Bev, dressed as a Suffragist, discussed notable local women at the Center for Sharing at the Collegium in Pasco. The women included Josephine Corliss Preston from Walla Walla, the first female elected official in WA. She was the Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1913-1928. Others covered were Zelma Maine Jackson, a black female geologist and one of the Daughters of Hanford; Sandra Hill, retired from the Pasco School District and the 2013 State Superintendent of the Year; and Rebekah Woods who became the first female President of CBC in 2017. Bev was also asked to relate the story of Bread and Roses, featuring Suffragist Helen Todd and four of her friends. They used the new technology of the time, the automobile, to campaign for a woman's right to vote. A group from the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers gave an excellent performance, and other guests described inspirational stories of several amazing women. The event was well attended.

Civics Education

Marilyn Perkins

On March 6, Janet Nail, Lora Rathbone and I had the pleasure of giving a civics presentation to Ryan McCord's English class at Kamiakin High School. Janet and Lora dressed in period costume, and we all wore our “Votes for Women” sashes. We had sent photos in a power point (Continued on next page).

Civics Education (Continued from previous page)

presentation that Ryan had shared with his class. It was a list of government jobs, and students were supposed to identify which level of government was responsible for funding and providing that service.

During the presentation, we discussed the suffrage movement, how voting rights became more inclusive over many decades, and ways they could become better informed, including Vote 411.org and fact checking. Our visit occurred before the presidential primary and one student had already registered and voted. We helped others register and told those who were old enough they could take their form to the Auditor's Office and get a ballot that day.

There wasn't nearly enough time for everything and we tried to include the students in the discussion too. We were planning to present to six classes at Richland High on March 23, but that was postponed, though there is a chance we could do it on Zoom. One of the great things to come out of our presentation was that Kylee Yearsley became our newest student member.

Ryan has done an admirable job of preparing his students to become voting citizens. They have written letters to President Trump and Congressman Newhouse. (I mentioned that Rep. Boehnke was a Kamiakin grad.) When things return to our new normal, I am hoping Ryan can be another educational partner we can work with.

Civics education is fun, but challenging. Trying to condense everything we would like students to know, while trying to inspire them to become lifelong voters is not easy. Hopefully more members will be able to join us in this endeavor. If you would like to become a member of the civics committee, contact Lora Rathbone at ldrathbone@outlook.com

Coronavirus Outbreak

We would like to hear your thoughts on how you feel the U.S. is responding to the coronavirus pandemic. What should we learn going forward? We will publish your submissions in the next issue of the VOTER. Please send any comments to Diane at molleson@frontier.com

LWV: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI)

The League's Shur Fellows have prepared a glossary of commonly used words as part of their work on DEI. Here is this month's word:

Prejudice: A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Source: Racial Equity Tools; Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit.

LWVBF Calendar

April 2020

Thursday, April 16— Business and Planning Meeting, 6 p.m. Video conference through Zoom. All members are welcome.

May 2020

Friday, May 1—Naturalization Ceremony, TBD

Thursday, May 21—Annual Meeting, TBD

Friday-Sunday, May 29, 30 and 31— State League Council, Yakima, TBD

June 2020

Thursday, June 18— Alternative date for Annual Meeting

Friday- Sunday, June 26, 27 and 28— National LWV Conference, Washington D.C.

August 2020

Saturday, August 8—Centennial Commemoration Banquet, Richland Hanford House

Email us at
lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

League of Women Voters of
Benton & Franklin
Counties
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