



VOTER

April 2025

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President's Message -- Diane Molleson

We celebrated the coming of Spring and St Patrick's Day with a Go Green event on March 21st that featured Courtney Flatt, senior environmental correspondent for Northwest Public Broadcasting; Lora Rathbone, our Advocacy Chair; and Carmine Hanks, a member of the Citizen's Climate Lobby. Their lively talks encompassed the impacts of a warming ocean, solution-based journalism, and the climate bills before the Washington State legislature. Lora has a full report in this issue.

Many thanks to our Table Talk Committee: Christine Grantham, Sabiha Khan and Sue Thornton for all their work on this event. They are planning a Spring Fling on April 9th with a guest speaker. (See details in a separate article).

The first Naturalization ceremony of the year will be held on **April 15th at 10 am** at the Federal Building in Richland. Please let me know at molleson@frontier.com if you would like to volunteer for this event.

The LWVWA is planning its State Convention in Vancouver, Washington on June 5-8. The (very timely) theme is Stand Up for Democracy and guest speakers will include WA State Attorney General Nick Brown and LWVUS President Dianna Wynn. In addition, there will be a stand-alone Q&A session with Dianna Wynn, for members to ask, among other things, what people can do as individuals to Stand Up for Democracy and what LWVUS would like to see local Leagues do. If you are interested in being a delegate at Convention (our League can send four), please let me know. For more information, and to register for this event, go to <https://lwvwa.org/Convention-2025-Details/>

LWVUS Responds to President Trump's Executive Order on Elections

Read their statement here:

<https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/dangerous-attempt-silence-american-voters-lwv-responds-president-trumps>

Help Wanted: MELD Representative for Our League

A huge thank you to Leona Hassing who has served as the LWVBF's MELD (Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development) Representative for the past three years. In MELD meetings, local Leagues can share their successes and challenges and receive information about programs and resources from the State League facilitator and the local leagues in their pods. Our League's Pod meets the fourth Monday of the month at 5:15 p.m. on Zoom. The meetings last one hour. This is a great opportunity for a new or more veteran member who would like to find out more about League. If you are interested, please contact Diane at molleson@frontier.com.

From LWVWA: Help Shape the League's Media & News Literacy Project!

Take a short survey by 5 p.m. April 11

This fall the League of Women Voters of Washington plans to launch a series of educational workshops on media and news literacy. Before we begin the work, we'd like to know what you want to learn so you can be a savvy consumer of media and news.

Please take 10 minutes before 5 p.m. Friday, April 11 to answer the brief questions in our [Media & News Literacy survey](#)

Based on your input, we will begin designing the online training so it empowers you to know what information to trust.

We'll provide a preview of the Media & News Literacy: Educational Workshops at the state convention in June, where we will seek your additional feedback.

[Take the Media & News Literacy Survey Now!](#)

LWVWA: Federal Judiciary Study Statewide Consensus Meeting

LWVWA will hold a consensus meeting that will be open to all members who have not otherwise participated in a local League consensus meeting on the study. The meeting will be on **Saturday April 5th from 10 am to noon**. Only LWV members may participate in this meeting and can register [here](#). Attendees should have read the study, study guide and the consensus questions and be prepared to discuss each issue. Depending upon the number of registrants, we may break into smaller groups and divide up issues, then reconvening in a larger group. Responses to the consensus questions are due April 14, 2025 and must be submitted through the online survey form.

For any questions or for more information, contact Shelley Kneip at skneip@lwvwa.org.

The LWVUS Study consists of nine short policy briefs on various subjects, and an index of key terms to be familiar with. Here are links to the policy briefs:

- [Financial Disclosure](#)
- [Judge Shopping](#)
- [Judicial Ethics and Enforcement](#)
- [Legitimacy and the US Supreme Court](#)
- [Recusal](#)
- [Representation](#)
- [Shadow Docket](#)
- [Stare Decisis and Binding Precedent](#)
- [Structural reforms for the US Supreme Court](#)
- [Key Terms for the Federal Judiciary Study](#)

Additional background information from the Study Committee includes: [Understanding Federal Courts](#); [US Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges](#); and [Congressional Research Service Paper, *The Supreme Court Adopts a Code of Conduct*](#). (If the links do not open on a simple click, try Ctrl+click (PC) or Cmd+click (Mac)). Also, and in case you missed it, LWVUS hosted a 90-minute “[Town Hall](#)” that was recorded and on the website. A [Study Guide](#) outlines the consensus process.

Spring Fling Potluck – Christine Grantham

It is almost Easter, the flowers are blooming, and the bunnies are hopping about. So put on your prettiest Easter Bonnet for LWVBF’s EASTER PARADE. Our Table Talk Committee Sue Thornton, Sabiha Khan and Christine Grantham have planned a relaxing evening for visiting and getting to know our new members and renewing old acquaintances. It’s spring so let’s slow down and take time to “smell the flowers”. Bring whatever you would like to share for our “Spring Fling” Potluck. Mark your calendar for **Wednesday April 9th**. We hope to see you there in your very best “Easter Bonnet”!

Our guest speaker, Executive Director of the Tri-Cities Food Bank, V.J. Meadows will talk about the increasing demand for food assistance in our community. The food bank is preparing for a new surge of families in need as the federal government may be looking to slash billions from SNAP and direct food aid. Several key US Department of Agriculture programs that bought produce for food banks directly from farmers and growers were eliminated this week. If you would like to donate to the Tri-Cities Food Bank, consider bringing any of the following items: peanut butter, tuna fish, canned fruit, canned veggies, pasta, and soup of any kind.

DATE: Wednesday, April 9th

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

PLACE: 105105 East Tripple Vista Drive in Kennewick

RSVP: Sue Thornton (541) 297-8305

Optional: Bring a main dish, salad or dessert for our potluck and let us know when you RSVP.

LWVBF Treasurer's Report – Carla Ciotti

As of February 28, 2025:

Checking is	\$7,990.78
Savings is	<u>\$1,857.38</u>
Total	\$9,848.16

Income and Expenses: In February, we received one new membership from Dartanya Helgeson. We also collected \$619.00 from members for the Birthday Lunch at CG Public House. We paid \$664.85 to CG Public House. Unfortunately, because of the wintery weather a few members who had sent an RSVP were not able to attend.

Transition to ChapterSpot Membership Platform: The National League of Women Voters (LWVUS) launched the new membership system on February 3, 2025. As of March 13th, League members, other than selected officers, have not received an email asking them to log in to the ChapterSpot portal and create a profile. Members will not be asked to renew their membership until it expires in the fall. After the invitations are sent, a group of seven members have volunteered to contact other members to inform them of this step and assist if needed. The Join/Renew button has been placed on the LWVBF webpage and is working. On March 4, Maria Bang joined our league. Welcome, Maria.

Information on the new ChapterSpot membership system is available for all members on the [ChapterSpot Resources page](https://www.lwv.org/league-management/membership/chapterspot-resources) of the LWVUS Management Site (<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/membership/chapterspot-resources>).

Budget Committee: The Budget Committee consisting of Shirley Sonnichsen, Janet Nail, Christine Grantham, and Carla Chiotti, met on March 12th to create a draft budget for fiscal year 2025-2026. Given the new membership system, this task was quite a challenge. The draft budget will be presented to the Board for approval at the April meeting, and to the general membership at the annual meeting in May for final approval.

Education Fund: We received an update on the balance of the Education Fund on February 28, 2025. Three more members sent contributions to our Education Fund at the Seattle address given below. These donations totaled \$2,600. Our balance stands at \$11,640.42.

On February 22, the Project Approval Request to use \$4500 of our Education Fund for scholarships and expenses was approved by the LWVWA Education Fund Board. Our chapter plans to award two scholarships of \$2,000 each.

Members can donate to our education fund by sending a check to: **LWV-WA Education Fund**. The address is 1511 Third Avenue, Suite 801, Seattle, WA, 98101, Attn: Ed Fund Treasurer. Please note on the check or separately that your donation is for the Benton-Franklin League Education Fund. Donations to the Education Fund are tax deductible. Thank you.

Making Donations to LWVBF - Carla Ciotti

Many members of LWVBF have generously made donations to our local league usually by adding money to their annual dues. With the change to the new ChapterSpot Membership System, donations made by increasing your annual dues will be divided among National, State, and Local leagues. Our share will be 20%, minus processing fees.

When you are asked to renew your membership, we would like to encourage you to pay the recommended dues of \$75 (this has been our league's regular dues amount), then use another method to donate extra to our league.

Ways to donate to our local league:

1. The recommended method is - write a check! A check written to LWVBF and mailed to P.O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352 will be deposited into our bank account and used for local programs and operating expenses. Every penny of your donation will go to our league. Although our league is a charitable, non-profit organization, we are not a 501(c) 3, so this donation will not be tax-deductible. Donations will be greatly appreciated, especially during the uncertainty of the ChapterSpot transition.
2. Go to our website, <https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>. The Donate button will take you to a page where you can donate either to the Education Fund (more on that below) or to the League of Women Voters. If you choose the second option, you will be directed to another page that gives you a choice to either donate by check or to continue and donate using PayPal with your credit card. Donations will come directly to our local league, minus PayPal fees.
3. Go through the LWVUS ChapterSpot website when you pay your dues. The donation button for local leagues will be on the page following your dues renewal page. Remember if you simply add money to your dues amount we will only receive a fraction of it. If you use the donation button we will receive the amount minus Stripe transaction fees.

What about donations to the Education Fund?

Members can donate to our education fund by sending a check to: LWVWA Education Fund. The address is 1511 Third Avenue, Suite 801, Seattle, WA, 98101, Attn: Ed Fund Treasurer. Please note on the check or separately that your donation is for the Benton-Franklin League Education Fund. This is a 501(c)3 fund so donations are tax deductible. The funds are used for sponsoring our scholarship program and can be used for other educational purposes.

This information is quite confusing. If you have questions, please, contact Carla at (509) 946-7217 or (509) 521-2158 or Shirley Sonnichsen at (509) 392-1808 or Diane Molleson at (509) 554-7317.

Go Green Table Talk, March 21st, 2025 – Lora Rathbone

NW Public Broadcasting senior environmental correspondent Courtney Flatt was our guest speaker at our Go Green Table Talk in March. We also heard from Carmine Hanks, a member of the Tri-Cities Citizens' Climate lobby, and current Master of Science in Science Communications student. Having taken a course in [solutions journalism](#), she said there is evidence that it helps with news fatigue and reader agency. Carmine then guided people on being part of the solution by commenting on LWVWA environmental bills currently making it through the Washington State Legislature. A handout was provided with a list of bills. (You can also find the bills at lwvwa.org/2025Issues.) The table was decorated in St. Patrick's Day lucky Irish green, offering green cookies, beverages, and "hot toddies" (tea and coffee).

The process to choose bills:

Lora explained the process the LWVWA uses to choose bills for our local leagues to advocate for. The number of bills the LWVWA issue teams consider is impressive! Decisions are based on league positions, including that climate change is real and needs to be addressed. "We now have no time to lose in implementing broad policy to slow planetary warming." [In Feb. 2024, global temperatures passed the critical 1.5C threshold above pre-industrial levels and remained a full 12 months for the first time. - World Meteorological Organization]. Although solutions must align globally, state and local Leagues and individuals have a critical role to play in working to limit future climate change and protect the planet." - *Issue Team Chair: Martin Gibbins*, mgibbins@lwvwa.org

Why should our league be involved?

- The league has a respected moderate voice, and a wide-reaching scope of educated activists, which means we can make a difference!
- Washington state has the capability to lead the nation and the world in the necessary transition from fossil fuels, creating good jobs and better health.
- Locally we are transitioning from Hanford site cleanup to being a center for renewable energy research and development, which is of interest to our legislators.

Courtney Flatt's presentation:

Courtney stressed that climate change is the biggest environmental problem of our time. She played a recording of her [radio story](#) about the impact on the ocean: warming temperatures, lower oxygen levels, and acidification is harming sea life including salmon.

Another story was about [people living near a landfill](#). Courtney is now using Solutions Journalism, and gave HB 1154, re: landfill permits, as an example of how people can be part of the solution. She and other journalists have also moved away from "telling both sides" and just report the facts - what the science says.

2025 Legislative Update from the LWVWA – Lora Rathbone

The WA Senate and House will be releasing their budget proposals this week on Monday, March 24th. Negotiations among legislators will then ensue over the next few weeks. The expenditures

approved in the final budget will need to be backed by adequate forecast revenue to be considered a “balanced budget”. There are three budgets that the Legislature adopts. These are the operating budget (General Fund), the capital budget and the transportation budget. Each has challenges because the forecast revenues are not adequate to cover the estimated costs of existing services. Please go to the latest newsletter at <https://lwvwa.org/Legislative-action-newsletter> to see how you can help our state fund needed services.

Scholarship Committee - Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory

The deadline for the 2025 scholarship is April 6. So far, applications have come from most of the high schools in our two Counties. The judges will begin scoring the essays with this year's theme "*How would you persuade citizens to register and vote in local elections (levies/bonds, school board, city, or county officials)?*". The two winners will be awarded \$2,000 each at our annual meeting in May.

LWVBF Book Club – Polly Parton

On March 10th as we discussed *The Quiet Damage* by Jesselyn Cook. Some books tell us disturbing stories in real time, this is one about the family damage that can be done by QAnon extremist beliefs. April's read will be *Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame* by Olivia Ford. It's a fun read about aging, secrets and a passion for baking.

Join us the 2nd Monday each month, 6 pm via Zoom by emailing or texting Polly Parton to be added to the link. We keep discussions to one hour. Please join in even if you did not squeeze the book into your schedule. Polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509-551-3818

Calendar Of Events

April:

5th: LWVWA State Wide Consensus Meeting on Federal Judiciary Study, 10 am to noon, via Zoom

9th: Spring Fling Table Talk Potluck, Home of Chistine Grantham, 5:30 pm

15th: LWVBF Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting via Zoom, 6 pm

15th: Naturalization Ceremony, Federal Building in Richland, 10 am

May:

15th: LWVBF Annual Meeting

June:

6 – 8: LWVWA Convention at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, WA

Email: lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

Instagram: [lwv.of.bf](https://www.instagram.com/lwv.of.bf)

Facebook: [League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofWomenVotersofBenton&FranklinCounties)

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