



VOTER February 2025

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message -- Diane Molleson

Happy New Year! And Happy (almost) 105th Birthday to League!

On February 3rd, the national League will launch its **new membership system, ChapterSpot**. Please be on the lookout for a message from LWVUS where you will be asked to log into the ChapterSpot portal and create a profile. You will not be asked to renew your membership until it expires a year after you have joined, but you must be entered into the LWVUS's portal so a roster can be created for our League and collect membership dues when it is time for you to renew. (See the Treasurer's report in this issue for more information.)

February 14 is Valentine's Day and the date the League was established in 1920. Ratification of the 19th Amendment occurred six months later in August at the annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Chicago. Every February, Leagues plan a party to celebrate, and this year our birthday celebration will be on February 14th. We hope to see you there.

League's Birthday Lunch

We are celebrating the League's 105th Birthday on Friday, **February 14th at Noon at CG Public House** in the Amon Creek Room (9221 W. Clearwater Ave. in Kennewick). Our guest speaker will be Tracci Dial, Multimedia News Director of Northwest Public Broadcasting. Guests are welcome. RSVP to Diane at molleson@frontier.com by February 12 (acceptances only). Thank you.

Program Planning—Diane Molleson

A mix of veteran and new members attended our annual Program Planning meeting on January 25. At the meeting, our League agreed to continue our **civics education work and extend it to adults**. Suggestions for doing so included collaborating with community groups (e.g. Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts) to be invited to more events where we can reach the parents. It was noted that our League had success at an event last fall explaining the voting process (how to register, why ballots are rejected) to the Spanish-speaking parents of a Boy Scout troop in Pasco with a translator present.

We agreed that our second priority would be to become more informed about immigration in our community and build on our partnership with the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition to support immigrants. Building on these efforts, the following suggestions for upcoming Table Talks included inviting Brian Ace, Chief Executive of the Boys and Girls Club; Barabara Potter of the Legal Aid Society; and an event open to the public on civics education.

In odd-numbered years, members can give the State League ideas for issues to address in the next two years. Those present unanimously agreed to advance the *State of Democracy: Washington* for consideration in the State League’s Program of Work, where it will be voted on at the state convention in June. This educational project was proposed by a committee of 16 members representing eight Leagues throughout the state.

LWVWA Study on Elder Caregiving: Consensus Meeting on February 18th

Do you have \$10,000 a month to spend on healthcare for your spouse and/or family member? Come to our consensus meeting on the LWVWA’s study to learn about caregiving in Washington State for vulnerable adults 60 and over. Although Washington is a leader in prioritizing home and community-based care for elders, many challenges lie ahead. Four LWVBF members will present sections of the study and ask for your input based on the study’s consensus questions. We need your opinions!

The consensus meeting will be held on Zoom following the February Business and Planning/Board meeting on February 18th. (The Board meeting will begin at 5:30 pm.) We expect the consensus meeting to last an hour.

LWVBF Treasurer’s Report – Carla Ciotti

As of November 30, 2024:

Checking is	\$10,364.02
Savings is	<u>\$ 1,857.34</u>
Total	\$12,221.36

As of December 31, 2024:

Checking is	\$8,023.02
Savings is	<u>\$1,857.36</u>
Total	\$9,880.36

Income: \$910.04 In November and December we received \$825 in membership dues. This includes 9 renewing members and 2 new members. Welcome Teri Atwood and Marci Palmer to our League! We also received \$85 in contributions.

Expenses: \$2519.11 In November we paid \$3.11 in PayPal fees. In December we paid the second half of our Per Member Payments for 2023-2024 to both LWVUS and LWVWA. This totaled \$2,091. In addition, we paid \$425 to LWV California for our annual MyLO (website) fee.

Membership campaign: We were able to contact every member to ask if they would like to renew. Five former members have moved and five chose not to renew. As of December 31, our League has 105 members.

Transition to ChapterSpot Membership Platform: The National League of Women Voters (LWVUS) plans to launch the new membership system on February 3, 2025. To prepare for the transition, Diane and Carla set up a Stripe account which will collect dues and funnel them to three different accounts - our local league, LWVWA, and LWVUS. Shirley has brought the Roster up to date and Judy is working on adding new links to our MyLO website.

In February, all members will receive an email asking them to log in to the ChapterSpot portal and create a profile, but they will not be asked to renew their membership until it expires. A group of seven members have volunteered to contact other members in February to inform them of this step and assist if needed.

Information 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>).

Education Fund: There have been two new donations to our scholarship fund. Our balance now stands at \$9,040.42.

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.

From LWVUS – Diane Molleson

The LWVUS Federal Judiciary Study Committee has been preparing materials for League members to consider as we move toward consensus meetings on the federal judiciary.

To ensure League members are as prepared as possible, we have arranged a Town Hall meeting with leading experts, including Alicia Bannon of the Brennan Center, Thomas Berry of the CATO Institute, and Errin Martin of NVG LLC.

The Town Hall will allow League members to learn more about the Federal Judiciary and pose questions to the speakers.

WHAT: Town Hall on the Federal Judiciary

WHEN: Tuesday, February 4, at 4 pm PST

WHERE: [Online via Microsoft Teams](#)

Please note that this is a direct link to the event that will be hosted on Microsoft Teams. If you are unfamiliar with Microsoft Teams, [instructions on how to join the meeting](#) are also available.

At LWVUS Convention 2024, delegates voted to proceed with a study to develop a position on the federal judiciary as an essential component of US democracy. The study's purpose includes addressing concerns and clarifying judicial accountability, transparency, independence, and ethics. For additional information about the study, including the study guide, policy papers, timeline, League discussion group, and scope, please visit the [League Management Site](#). Please direct questions about the study to progplan@lww.org.

Advocacy Update – Lora Rathbone

Legislative Action with the League of Women Voters Washington

From your Action Chair: Easy ways to help get LWVWA priority bills passed during the WA 2025 Legislative session:

1. Sign up for the LWVWA Legislative newsletter. [Click here to subscribe](#). It is sent each Sunday during the session. They provide good descriptions of the bills and straight forward directions.
2. Follow the directions: often the only thing to do is click on a link, state your position (select Pro), then give your contact information. (Later, we will be asked to contact our legislators. See #4).
3. For more impact, you can sign up to send written or oral testimony for bill hearings. To do this click on the bill in the LWVWA action alert OR go to the LWVWA website <https://lwwwa.org/2025Issues/> then click on a topic i.e. Local News and Democracy, then on a bill number in the list of priority bills. If the bill is having a hearing that week there will be a dark green bar “sign up to testify”. Click on that bar, then follow the directions. Or contact me at ldrathbone@outlook.com and I will walk you through it. I would like to help!
4. Attend Lobby days 2025 with LWVWA partners. I could only find these two, and they are both in-person only: [Democracy Lobby Day](#), February 12, Organized by WA Conservation Action, and February 6, in-person, [Environmental Lobby Day](#). [Register here](#).
5. Attend a lobbying meeting with your legislators. If you would like to speak to them in a Zoom meeting, let me know your legislative district, then we’ll plan on a time. We will also have a meeting to plan what to say before we meet with them.

Nominating Committee - Beverly Johnson-Torelli

The Nominating Committee will be contacting you soon to prepare a slate of potential officers to be brought forward at the May 2025 Annual Meeting. Officers are required to serve for one year but may run for additional terms. The offices are President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Ruvine Jimenez (Chair), Michele Pirotte, Margie Bass, Polly Parton and Bev Johnson-Torelli are members of the committee.

Columbia Basin Badger Club – Beverly Johnson-Torelli

On February 20, 2025, at noon, the Columbia Basin Badger Club will be presenting a program entitled Facts and Fiction about Crime and Courts. Speakers will include Kennewick Police

Chief Chris Guerrero and Benton County Prosecuting Attorney Eric Eisinger. Badger Club members are free. Non-members pay \$5.00. Registration is available on the Columbia Basin Badger Club website. The programs are recorded and stored in the video gallery for viewing at your leisure.

LWVBF & TCIC NEW Partnership – Christine Grantham and Carol Larkin

Recently our League made a commitment to partner with the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition at local events that promote both voter registration and election information pertinent to the immigrant community. Since both organizations share similar goals and priorities, we look forward to working with them in the future.

The Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition is a non-partisan community-based group working to build trust and understanding within our community about immigration issues through our community education, engagement, advocacy and immigrant support.

TCIC began meeting on a regular basis to combat the surge of disinformation and ICE Deportations. The services and training this organization provide to protect our immigrant community is just one aspect of TCIC commitment to our neighbors and friends. TCIC provides Education and Outreach such as “Know Your Rights” and TCIC accompaniment program training for volunteers to accompany immigrants to court dates that might intimidate immigrants whose dominate language is not English. They also assist in the WAISN Rapid Response Program (RRP). Teams are needed and training required to document the actions of Immigrant and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions in Benton & Franklin counties. These teams document ICE actions, such as verifying that search warrants are court ordered, signed by a judge and that people’s rights are being observed. Violations of rights can lead to grounds for the individual’s release.

Also, TCIC is partnering with Kennewick and Pasco school districts, ESD Migrant Education programs, health services, community school programs, CBC and other organizations throughout Benton & Franklin Counties. They have worked with Northwest Immigrant Rights project, Columbia Legal Services, WAISN, World Relief and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). TCIC has an Emergency Assistance Fund in support of housing, medicine, food and/or utilities. They provide scholarships to immigrant high school students, for DACA renewal, and Opportunity Grants for individuals who are underemployed due to lack of certification of their profession in the U.S.

There are many more programs that are too numerous to list but it is truly amazing what a small group of volunteers can accomplish in just eight years, thanks to the leadership of Marsha Stipe and her dedicated team.

To familiarize you with our new partner, Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, the following is a list of their new initiatives.

If you are interested in working with TCIC you can contact Marsha Stipe, Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition (541) 7200131 or one of the committee chairs.

TCIC New Initiatives

1. Civic Engagement (meeting with elected and appointed officials and community influencers) - Carol Larkin, calarkin45@gmail.com
2. Educating Ourselves and Others – Marsha Stipe, marshastipe@gmail.com
3. Court Accompaniment Program – Donna Kary, dkary01@hotmail.com
4. Rapid Response (TCIC-WAISN Partnership) – Mickey Beary, bearym@charter.net

TCIC Initiatives #1 – Civic Engagement Meeting with Civic Officials

Carol Larkin, a founding member of the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition and myself (Christine Grantham) had the opportunity to meet with the Pasco School District Superintendent Michelle Whitney. We also had the opportunity to meet her entire leadership team. The team reviewed the guidelines for safety and protocol for handling unlawful entry into the schools. They assured us that each Principal and each staff member and employee has been informed of the proper procedures in the event of a suspicious or unlawful order that might be presented to them. The district had already met with the Pasco Police Department for clarification of procedures in the event of an ICE raid. The team has also informed the entire school district staff of the precautions to take if there should be an ICE raid or illegal entry onto school property. The Superintendent has also scheduled an in-person meeting for School Bus Drivers to clarify the guidelines and protocol in the event of any suspicious behavior reassuring them **they should not hesitate to call for assistance immediately if there is any doubt of a student's safety.**

The most impressive step that the district has taken is creating a Pasco School District READINESS PLAN. The district has an on-line network to communicate with parents and students to provide information on safety and community news as well as promote special events.

After our meeting, Carol and I were convinced that the Pasco School District, under the direction of Superintendent Michelle Whitney and her capable staff, are as prepared as any district could be in the event of a possible disruption or unusual occurrence in the Pasco School District. As a result of the meeting, we have been given the opportunity to make presentations to:

1. Parent Education Center classes
2. ATP Chair Training
3. Pac Representatives' planning meeting

Our first official Partnership between LWV & TCIC Event of 2025 will be:

Pasco School District Spring Carnival
March 27th @ Chiawana High School
5:30 – 7:30

LWVBF Holiday Party – Christine Grantham

The League's Annual Holiday Party was a great success thanks to the assortment of yummy goodies provided by our League's gourmet cooks. We had the honor of having Marsha Stipe, Chair of the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition and a member of our league as our guest speaker. Marsha talked about the organization's beginning out of concern for the threats the immigrant community was facing. She recalled some of the many TCIC accomplishments in the eight years since they began in 2017. TCIC has grown from a small group of concerned citizens to an entire network of contacts dedicated to improving access to services available for the minority community.

Marsha invited Monica Ramirez Garcia, a recent recipient of TCIC scholarship program. Monica shared her story of a dream of becoming a school psychologist which did come true thanks to the financial support of TCIC. It is amazing how just a few people have had a tremendous impact on so many lives in our community by lifting them up. Thank you TCIC.

Our league Holiday party was truly a celebration of our organization's commitment to the values of LWV. Thanks to our guest speakers Marsha and Monica. Thanks to the members who served drinks, greeted guests and for entertaining and making new members feel welcome. Thanks also to my granddaughter Lilah Barton for helping. It was a good turnout (34) to celebrate our accomplishments thanks again to the leadership of our President Diane Molleson and all the hard-working board members. HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our Great LWV members for their support!

LWVBF Book Club – Polly Parton

In January, we discussed *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles, I enjoy his style of writing. Reading about young, ambitious, working women (also partiers!) in the late 1930s kept my attention. On February 10th we will review *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid. This is a strong female using her abilities to make her way through life in another era.

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

February 10th – Book Club via Zoom

February 14th – Birthday Party at CG Public House at Noon

February 18th – Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting 5:30 pm via Zoom, followed by Elder Caregiving Study Consensus Meeting via Zoom

March 10th – Book Club via Zoom

March 18th – Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting 6 pm via Zoom

Email: lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

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

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