



VOTER July 2025

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message – Polly Parton

I had the pleasure of attending the LWVWA Convention virtually this year, and I want to thank the organizers for doing an outstanding job of including virtual participants. The convention featured a lineup of powerful and engaging speakers. Willie Frank III reminded us of the importance of honoring our history and relationships with Tribal Nations. Washington State Attorney General Nick Brown shared insights into current legal and civic challenges, while Dr. Susan Martin's talk "*Are We Still a Nation of Immigrants?*" gave us plenty to reflect on. LWVUS President Diana Wynn was a highlight—her authenticity and passion were both inspiring and energizing.

We also gained a clearer understanding of LWVWA's work behind the scenes to support our local Leagues, from policy advocacy to member engagement. The range of workshops including one on eldercare offered practical views on this important issue.

We hope to have an informational/voter table for the July 17th protest (organized again by Indivisible). We need several volunteers from start to finish. If we have 3 shifts of 2 each that would be ideal and still allow everyone to be involved in the protest (details to come). Please email or text if you can volunteer Polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509-551-3818.

I'm asking each of us as LWV members to find an issue that is important to us and commit to supporting that issue. Will you attend a Table Talk, be an election observer, log into the monthly Board Meeting, attend a committee meeting that interests you, a local protest march or a special event that our local league hosts? I'm never sorry I attended an event; I only regret that I didn't. Join in and remember we don't agree on everything but friends will listen, learn and find our important issues to support.

Election by District Initiative, City of Richland – Judy Golberg

Richland voters will be asked to make a decision this November whether or not to join other First-Class cities in the State to divide its community into five Districts and vote for City Council members within each District plus two at-large members. The organization promoting this Initiative feels this would help the Council members better represent those within their own section of the community. This model is similar to those of Kennewick and Pasco.

For more information, see this [link](#). For your convenience, we are attaching a copy of the article to the email that you receive with this Voter

National Day of Action, July 17th– Lora Rathbone

Five years since the passing of Congressman John Lewis, communities across the country will take to the streets, courthouses, and community spaces to carry forward his fight for justice, voting, rights, and dignity for all.

Consistent with the League's view that we must persist and not just participate in rallies and protests once or twice—rather, continue to be active over and over again—local Leagues are encouraged to participate in this new national day of action [sponsored by 50501](#), by organizing or joining other organizations in protests on this day.

On their Facebook page: Indivisible Tri Cities is joining the National Day of Action on Thursday, July 17th to honor the legacy of John Lewis and carry forward the fight for democracy, justice, and voting rights. Time and location TBD.

LWVBF Treasurer’s Report – Carla Ciotti

As of May 31, 2025:

Checking is	\$3,279.40
<u>Savings is</u>	<u>1,857.43</u>
Total	\$5,136.83

Income:

Membership dues	\$ 8.81
Member donations	640.00

Total income: \$648.81

Expenses:

Scholarships	\$4,000.00
Annual meeting dinners	153.96
Convention Registration fees	455.00
Sec. of State annual report	20.00

Total expenses: \$4,628.96

In May, we received dues from one new member totaling \$8.81. Four members donated a total of \$640.00 to our league in May. Thank you very much.

Expenses were \$4,000.00 for the two scholarships awarded at the annual meeting. We paid \$153.96 to C.G. Public House for the dinners of the scholarship recipients, their parents, and

John Perkins. We also filed the annual corporation report with the Secretary of State's Office and paid the \$20.00 fee.

Please note that LWVBF will receive a reimbursement of \$4,295.88 from our 501(c)3 Education Fund. On May 18th, I filed the Request for Withdrawal of Local League Education Funds form and the Local Education Fund Project Final Report. The withdrawal was approved that day by the Ed Fund Manager. We have not yet received the reimbursement check, but I have been in touch with the Ed Fund Manager who assured me that the check is now in the mail.

Education Fund: Our balance stands at \$12,640.42. This fund will be reduced by \$4,295.88 when we receive the reimbursement check for the scholarship expenses. 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, Attention: 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.

IMPORTANT CHANGES for LWV Membership Renewal: With the new ChapterSpot membership system, dues are now renewed on a rotating annual basis; you will renew a year after your last renewal. Notifications to renew are sent from the LWVUS 60 days prior to the renewal date. Because almost all our members have a September 30th renewal date, most of us will receive this notification in late July. Members who have joined since January 2025 will receive a renewal notice one year from their join date.

There is no longer a set dues amount. Members pay at least \$20 or more based on their ability. The recommended dues amount is \$75. Our League will receive 20% of the dues amount, minus fees. We recommend that if you would like to donate to our League, please don't add it to your dues because we will only receive a fraction of it. You may donate directly to our local league by going to the LWVBF website (<https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>) and clicking the donation button or by sending a check to LWVBF, P.O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352.

More information on the new membership system can be found on the LWV website at this [link](#).

2025 Legislative Update – Lora Rathbone

This is the final update on the outcome for the LWVWA 2025 Legislative Session priorities. For more details about the bills, click on the bill numbers. Unless noted, all bills go into effect this July.

Making Democracy Work

[SB 5077](#) - Expansion of voter registration services. (Automatic Voter Registration Expansion).
[SB 5400](#) Supporting local news journalism. Some funds would come from for-profit social network sites. Did not pass.

Health Care:

[HB 1142](#) Standardizing basic training and certification requirements for long-term care workers.

[HB 1432](#) Improving access to appropriate mental health and substance abuse disorder services.

Housing:

[HB 1217](#) Rent Stabilization by limiting rent and fee increases. Effective date 5/7/2025.

[HB 1353](#) Self-certification program for accessory dwelling unit project permit applications. Effective date 10/1/2025. [SB 5148](#) also passed and relates to GMA housing requirements.

[HB 1491](#) Transit-Oriented Housing. It helps with affordable housing and promotes use of transit.

Environment

[HB 1409](#) The Clean Fuels Program. Strengthens CFP standards with more incentives for and investments in clean fuels.

[HB 1462](#) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with hydrofluorocarbons.

[SB 5284](#) The Recycling Reform Act. Establishes an extended producer responsibility program for covered packaging and paper products.

Candidates Forums – Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Primary candidate forums for the August Primary election hosted by the LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties and produced by NWPB will be broadcast in July when ballots are sent out. Exact dates and times will be published at a later time. Only those races where three or more candidates filled will be featured.

They include:

Kennewick City Council, Ward 1, POS 1

Kennewick City Council, Ward 3, POS 3

Kennewick School District, Director 1

Richland City Council, POS 3

Richland City Council, POS 4

Richland City Council, POS 6

Richland City Council, POS 7

When the forums are broadcast on KTNW TV in July, they will also be available on YouTube, our League’s website and Facebook pages, and partner sites like the City of Richland and the Columbia Basin Badger Club.

Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) Awareness Project – Richard Badalamente

Richard Badalamente and Christine Brown, of the ERPO Awareness project met with Benton County Prosecuting Attorney, Eric Eisinger in March to recap the ERPO team's meeting with Benton County Police Chiefs the previous February. Discussions included establishing the

difference between petitioning for an ERPO, and servicing an ERPO that had been granted through the court. In Benton and Franklin Counties the sheriff's office services ERPOs. By law, the police can petition for ERPOs, but they appear reluctant to do so.

ERPO team members, JoDee Garretson and Rosanna Herrera (both of SARC) met with members of the Benton County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) to discuss ERPOs. BCSO shared a presentation on civil protection orders used within the department. They have an ERPO policy that is used in training new patrol. The BCSO states that they have no "systemic issues" with ERPOs, nor are there any philosophical issues. They feel the question is whether a judge will grant an order based on the justification provided in the petition.

JoDee Garretson talked with Judge David Petersen about any issues that might exist with the court on granting ERPOs. The judge said if the justification was adequate, an ERPO would be granted. Judge Petersen felt that the main problem regarding the infrequent use of ERPOs in our region was a lack of awareness concerning what they are and how they're used.

In the coming months, the ERPO team is focusing its efforts on raising awareness. The plan is to do this through public media, English and Spanish language brochures, and a series of ERPO "roundtables."

Table Talk Committee – Sue Thornton

The Table Talk Committee works with the Board to invite speakers who inform and educate members and/or the public on various topics. The committee could use additional help to work on details of these in-person meetings. If you enjoy planning and working with others, contact Sue for more information. thornstonsef@yahoo.com or call 551-297-8305. New to League? This is an excellent way to become engaged.

State Convention Report – Marci Palmer

I didn't have any set expectations of the convention; the speakers, the workshops, the field trips, and the overall experience far exceeded what I may have expected.

At this time that we're living through, of political unrest and uncertainty, for me this was exactly where I needed to be and what I needed to experience. The energy and inspiration from the other ladies and a few men was amazing. There was a great sense of togetherness and support for each other.

The convention inspired me. It recharged my mind and soul to continue working along the path that was forged by courageous women long ago. I felt truly fortunate to have met so many volunteers that work to strengthen their communities, to make them safer and better places to live. There was much to walk away with from this convention; my take away was what we're doing as a League matters. There is hope in action and our voices carry power.

State Convention Report – Leona Hassing

Members the League of Women Voters of Washington were fortunate to have the option of virtual attendance at the state convention, June 6-8 in Vancouver, WA. There was hardly a time during the convention when the logistics were not top notch. Front row seats when watching President Mary convene the convention, the outstanding program speakers and participating in the variety of workshop sessions. As a virtual delegate, missing is the camaraderie among the in-person delegates, sharing ideas and thoughts in the moment.

The credentials reports showed an attendance of a little over 100 voting delegates. The virtual attendance ranged from 6-10 (6-10%) at the activities of the convention. Hats off to everyone (especially Amy Peloff!) for their skills in organizing the virtual portion, as well as the audio-visual components at the convention. It couldn't have been easy! Appreciation is due to all state officials, staff and delegates for an enjoyable, rewarding and professional experience. We should all be proud.

State Convention Report – Diane Molleson

The 2025 LWVWA Convention was held at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, Washington from June 6-8. Over 150 League members in Washington State attended. Our League sent five delegates: Shari Gasperino, Diane Molleson and Marci Palmer were there in person, and Leona Hassing and Polly Parton tuned in virtually. In addition, Judy Golberg served as the State League's Parliamentarian. The Convention's theme, Stand Up for Democracy, was reflected in the line-up of speakers.

LWVUS President Dianna Wynn spoke about the dire need to protect voting rights and the Constitution. She made us all aware of the LWVUS's Unite and Rise 8.5 campaign to motivate 8.5 million people to engage, mobilize and push back against anti-democratic threats. She noted that "according to research, 3.5 percent of a population can successfully pressure a government to accommodate their movement, leading to policy change. Approximately 245 million Americans were eligible to vote in the 2024 general election; 3.5 percent of these eligible voters is roughly 8.5 million voters.

Washington State's Attorney General Nick Brown discussed the lawsuits he and his staff are pursuing against the abuses of the current administration. When asked what keeps him going, he credited his great staff and the important work they all feel called on to do to meet this moment of "crisis." University of Washington professor and former professional basketball player Kate Starbird provided thought-provoking commentary on her extensive research on online rumors during crises. Presenting case studies of online falsehoods, she showed us how rumors spread, and how they can be exploited to shape political outcomes.

In addition, there were lectures, workshops and plenary sessions. The workshops included topics such as the "Ballot Translation Project", "Redistricting", "Elder Caregiving Study", "Does This Plastic Make Me Look Fat?", "Health of Democracy in Washington State", and "Media Literacy and News Education Project", among others.

In the four plenary sessions, delegates voted on a budget, a slate of officers, an update to the State Bylaws, and a Program of Work. The approved program included updating the 1980 Tribal Positions Study and the Democracy Educational Project.

Many thanks to the LWVBF members who contributed to our League's gift basket. It brought in \$75 at the silent auction. Our League also brought back a box of pocket constitutions the LWVWA was distributing that we can share at our future tabling and voter registration events. It was a privilege to be one of our League's five delegates at such a thought-provoking and inspiring event.

LWVBF Book Club – Polly Parton

Join us in July as we read *Go as a River* by Shelley Reed, a story of love, strength and growth in beautiful Colorado.

In May we discussed *Total Garbage: How We Can Fix Our Waste and Heal Our World* by Edward Humes. We learned many practical ideas such as bring your own leftover container to the restaurant, use (all) the food you buy, and new products as shampoo bars and Who Gives a Crap toilet paper. The 3 Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) have grown to 8 - Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Rethink, Repower, Recycle, and Rot.

Our June book was *A Fever in the Heartland* by Timothy Egan, about the Ku Klux Klan. D.C Stevenson was a charismatic conman in the height of KKK growth and power using bullying, bribery and corruption. Madge Oberholtzer was the woman who took him down from her grave and helped to undermine the KKK and nearly wrecked a political party in 1925.

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

July

14 Book Club via Zoom

15 LWVBF Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting via Zoom, 6 pm
Candidates Forums to be broadcast, dates TBD.

August

11 Book Club via Zoom

19 LWVBF Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting via Zoom, 6 pm

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/LeagueofWomenVotersofBentonFranklinCounties)

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