

VOTER

September 2026

info@lwv-bf.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Polly Parton

League members and guests celebrated Women's Equality Day and the certification of the Nineteenth Amendment at the Museum at Keewaydin on August 27th. Speaker Gale Metcalf entertained and informed us on the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the 19th Amendment. Thank you to Chris Grantham and Bev Johnson-Torelli for their work on this.



Speaker Gail Metcalf and league member Christine Grantham

As we work to defend democracy, our local tabling and voter engagement events keep us busy. The forum of the top two Congressional District 4 candidates, John Duresky and Amanda McKinney will be livestreamed and recorded on September 30th at NWPB. Beverly Johnson-Torelli leads this in collaboration with AARP of Washington and NWPB.

We are also planning candidate events with the Boys and Girls Club in October. We are looking forward to working with them and thanks to Brianna Harty for her work on this project. More information from Bev Johnson-Torelli will be coming as it is finalized.

A dedicated group of league members are focusing on 'Get Out the Vote' to improve our Benton and Franklin ballot return rates. If you want to join the efforts, please text or email Polly.

QUOTES FOR THE MONTH – “Our Constitution is a document in which our people tell the government what it can do.” Ronald Reagan 1989 farewell speech.

“Find out who you are, and do it on purpose.” Dolly Parton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 4 AND OTHER ELECTION RACES

Voter Forum Committee, Bev Johnson-Torelli

The LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties is again collaborating with NWPB, AARP and the Yakima County League featuring the top two Congressional District 4 candidates, Amanda McKinney and John Duresky. The livestream production (on NWPB) airs on September 30th from 5:30-6:30 p.m. The recording will be posted on YouTube, LWVBF website and others, soon after, until the General Election.

We are considering options for presenting the additional offices that are up for election in this area. As soon as our plans are finalized, we will share the information with our members.

THREATS TO THE 2026 MIDTERMS

Communications Corner - Richard Badalamente

Doesn't it seem as though we're being bombarded by one outrageous thing after another? Well, it seems that way because we are. It's not an accident. Continued challenges to laws, procedures, norms, and to the democratic foundations of our Republic lead to distraction, desensitization, and, unfortunately, inaction. It's termed "outrage fatigue." It's a strategy.

As members of the LWV we are not immune to this, but we have an advantage; we know our mission: protect and expand voting rights. So, when we see attempts to make voter registration more difficult, or to seize or purge state voter rolls, or to post DOJ "election monitors," or deploy ICE agents, at polling places, then we know what our priorities are, and we act.

The American Civil Liberties Union has developed a useful framework for thinking about threats to the 2026 midterm elections. Rather than focusing only on Election Day, the ACLU identifies 25 potential threats across the entire election process—from voter registration and voting through ballot counting, declaration of winners, certification, and ultimately seating elected officials.

Some threats are familiar, as mentioned above. Others concern what might happen after ballots are cast: deliberate delays in counting, mass challenges or rejection of ballots, premature declarations of victory, refusal to accept legitimate results, disruption of certification, or efforts to prevent duly elected members from taking office.

Our team of Election Observers cover elections in Benton County, observing ballot processing, audits, security checks, pre-certification, and certification. Team members stay up to date on voter rights, and on procedures for documenting and reporting possible intimidation or interference.

We've built on our strong working relationship with the Benton County election office to learn how we can help with election preparations and procedures. Understanding procedures for ballot processing, security, recounts, certification, and responding to disruptions helps us distinguish genuine problems from rumors and misinformation.

Our League will continue to work with community organizations, like the Boys and Girls Clubs, Indivisible Tri-Cities, Columbia Basin College, WSU-Tri-Cities, and local media—discussing how Washington's vote-by-mail system actually works, our "grace period" for receipt of ballots, and why legitimate election results may not be known immediately.

The ACLU's central lesson is valuable: election protection cannot begin when a crisis occurs. The best defense against election disruption is preparation—before voting begins, while ballots are counted, and until the lawful winners take office.

If you're interested in converting your floating anxiety into directed action, contact a board member or Polly Parton, about how to get involved.

LWVWA PRESIDENT’S CALL – Polly Parton

From LWVUS

- Advocacy during tabling – know your purpose and audience, separate advocacy from registering/educating voters where appropriate
- National Voter Registration Day – September 15
- National Voter Education Week – October 5-9
- National Election Hero Day – October 20

From LWVWA

- Becoming a Board Member training – Sept. 28, 4 pm, register on LWVWA event calendar
- Phone photography essentials – The Basics, Seeing & Composing presented 10/20 from 6-7:30 pm. The Edit, Polish & Post will be presented in early December. Link is in the (corrected) August 20 newsletter, search for *CORRECTED LINK: In League | August Member Newsletter*
- Washington State Supreme Court candidate information page is still posted on the state website
- Data center Affinity Group (new), Marty Gibbons leads monthly

LWVBF Treasurer’s Report July 2026 - Carla Chiotti, Treasurer

Please watch for membership renewal notices from the League of Women Voters US. Most of our members are due for renewal in September. You have probably received at least one renewal email. Contact Carla with questions at (509) 521-2158. Thank you!

As of July 31, 2026

		Income:	
Checking is	\$6,555.49	Dues	27.22
<u>Savings is</u>	<u>1,857.65</u>	<u>Savings interest</u>	<u>.02</u>
Total	\$8,413.14	Total Income	\$27.24

Expenses: None

Total expenses: 0

Membership Dues and Donations: In July we received dues for one member who chose to automatically renew her membership annually. We also received dues from a new member who had mistakenly joined our League rather than the League where she resides. Her membership was transferred to the correct League and I sent a check for \$13.61, the portion of her dues that we received, to the Seattle/King County LWV.

Expenses: We had no expenses in July.

Education Fund: The Education Fund balance remains at \$14,019.28.

Audit Committee: The Audit Committee, Shirley Sonnichsen, Diane Molleson, and Barb Puigh, will meet at the treasurer's house on August 10th to review the finances for fiscal year 2025-2026. The results will be reported at the August business meeting.

IRS Report: The annual Form 990-N was submitted to the IRS on August 4th.

LWV Membership Renewal: Members will be notified by LWVUS 60 days and 30 days before their renewal date and again on the renewal date. Members will be considered active members for 60 days beyond their renewal date (the grace period). If members do not renew by the end of the grace period, they will be dropped from the national roster and our local league's email list. If you choose Auto Renew, your membership will be automatically renewed on your due date.

Also, when you renew on-line you need to use the email address that is associated with your LWV account. This is how your account is identified. If you use a different email address, you will be registered as a new member and have a duplicate account. If you don't know which email address to use, please contact Carla, Treasurer (509-521-2158) or Shirley, Roster Manager (509-392-1808)

You can also join or renew your membership by writing a check to **LWVUS** and sending it to our local post office box: LWVBF, P.O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352. You choose your dues amount; it must be at least \$20. \$75 is the recommended dues amount.

If you have questions on how to renew, which email address to use, or need to know when your membership is due for renewal, please contact Carla or Shirley (phone numbers above).

Contributions:

To donate 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, 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.

If you would like your donation to go exclusively to our Scholarship Program, please specify that in your note. Also, please contact Carla separately and your donation will be earmarked for scholarships.

To donate to our local league: Members can donate to the League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties by either writing a check to **LWVBF**, P.O. Box 765, Richland, 99352 or clicking the Donate button on our web page <https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>.

Thank you.

Carla Chiotti, LWVBF Treasurer
cchiotti@gmail.com

BOOK CLUB – Polly Parton

Our book for August was *West with Giraffes: A Novel* by Lynda Rutledge, an adventure based on a historic event. The September book is *There is No Place for Us: Working and Homeless in America* by Brian Goldstone. The October book is *The Dream Hotel* by Lala Lalami.

Join us the 2nd Monday each month at 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. For more information. pparton34@gmail.com or 509 -551-3818

Calendar of Events -September, October

(Want to join any event? Text, email or call us)

9/9 Wednesday - Kamiakin Open House
6 - 8 pm Chris G., Judy Blair

9/16 Wednesday – Teacher Open House, at
REACH, 4:30- 6 pm, Bev leads

9/19 Saturday –Tri-City Diversity &
Inclusion Council Cultural Event, Fair
Grounds, noon to 4 pm, Diane M. leads

9/22 Tuesday - Board Meeting 6 pm

9/30 Wednesday – CD4 livestream from
5:30 - 6:30 pm. It will also be recorded at
the same time and available on YouTube
soon after, Bev

Email: info@lwv-bf.org

This is a new email address

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

Facebook: [League of Women Voters of
Benton & Franklin Counties](#)

Mailing Address:

League of Women Voters of Benton and
Franklin Counties
PO Box 765, Richland, WA 99352

OFFICERS:

New 2026-2027 OFFICERS:

President: Polly Parton

1st Vice President: Michelle Pirotte

2nd Vice President: Brianna Harty

Secretary: Diane Molleson

Treasurer: Carla Chiotti

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Richard Badalamente

Margie Bass

Emily Dirkes

Christine Grantham

Sue Thornton

Glenda Williams

APPOINTED DIRECTORS: (TBD)

Bev Johnson-Torelli

JoAnne Dimond

Lora Rathbone

Ruvine Jimenez

Judy Blair

Nominating Committee

Brianna Harty - Chair

Emily Dirkes, Michele Pirotte