



2026 Annual Meeting

League of Women Voters
Of Benton & Franklin Counties

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Meet at La Bella Vita Kitchen and Bar, 1515 George Washington
Way, Richland
At 5:30 pm

Please **RSVP** for yourself and any guests **by May 12**
To Polly Parton at pparton34@gmail.com or 509-551-3818

Please bring an electronic or printed copy of this Annual
Meeting Packet and wear your League name tag!

Basic Parliamentary Procedure:

Parliamentary procedure is necessary for the orderly conduct of a meeting. However, the agenda and order of business as outlined here are based on the League tradition of allowing as much free debate and interchange of ideas as possible with a minimum need for parliamentary maneuvering.

Business is conducted by acting on motions. A motion must be:

- 1) made
- 2) seconded
- 3) stated by the presiding officer after which it may not be withdrawn without the consent of the assembly
- 4) debated or amended if debatable or amendable
- 5) put to a vote
- 6) the result of the vote is declared by the presiding officer

A subject is introduced by a **main motion**.

While a main motion is being considered, parliamentary motions, which affect either the main motion or the general conduct of the meeting may be made. The main parliamentary motions are:

- 1) **to amend** (debatable, amendable)
- 2) **to refer** to a committee for study or redrafting (debatable, amendable)
- 3) **to postpone** to a stated future time (debatable, amendable)
- 4) **to table** (not debatable, requires a future motion to “take in from the table”)
- 5) **the previous question** (not debatable, assembly votes immediately on whether to close debate on the original motion)
- 6) **to reconsider** (usually debatable, must be made by someone who voted on the prevailing side)
- 7) **point of order** (member feels procedures are not being followed and asks the presiding officer to rule)
- 8) **questions:**
 - a. **parliamentary inquiry** (asks advice as to correct procedures)
 - b. **point of information** (requests facts)
 - c. **question of privilege** (seeks a change for comfort or convenience)
- 9) **to adjourn** (usually not debatable)

Proposed Agenda:

Presentation of the 2026 Marilyn Perkins Scholarship Awards

Call to Order

Introductions

Credentials Report

Adoption of Agenda and Rules

Announcements

Upcoming State Council – June 6-7 (evening of 5th optional) Lacey, WA.

Presentation of 2026-2027 Recommended Local Program

Suggestions for Non-Recommended Local Program

Treasurer’s Report

Presentation of Recommended 2026-2027 Budget

Adoption of 2026-2027 Budget

Report of the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee

Nominations from the Floor

Election of 2026-2027 Officers, Directors, and Nominating Committee

New Business

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Directions to the Board

Adjourn

Nominating Committee Report

The 2025-2026 Nominating Committee is continuing the policy of asking for only a one-year Commitment from elected officers and board members. With that in mind the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee presents **the following candidates to hold a one-year term (May 2026-May 2027) In the position they are being elected to.**

Officers

President:	Polly Parton
1st Vice-President:	Michele Pirotte
2nd Vice-President:	Brianna Harty
Secretary:	Diane Molleson
Treasurer:	Carla Chiotti

Elected Directors

Position 1:	Richard Badalamente
Position 2:	Margie Bass
Position 3:	Emily Dirkes
Position 4:	Christine Grantham
Position 5:	Sue Thornton
Position 6:	Glenda Williams

2026-27 Nominating Committee

- 1. Brianna Harty, Chair**
- 2. Emily Dirkes**
- 3. Michele Pirotte**

Two additional non-board members to be appointed by the board.

Respectfully Submitted by the 26-27 Nominating Committee

Ruvine Jimenez, chair	Brianna Harty
Judy Golberg	Michele Pirotte

Recommended Local Program

No formal study was approved; however, Table Talk ideas for local education programs and topics included: Boys & Girls Club involvement (Brianna H. works for them), Anna King or Tracci Dial speaking on saving local news, upcoming elections, the Benton/Franklin County dispute over the Juvenile Justice Center, Carol Moser to discuss the new advocacy group fighting homelessness, and the pro/con impacts of data centers on power and water supplies. We suggested a Table Talk combining a lecture from the Support, Advocacy and Resource Center (SARC) with a talk on Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) into a comprehensive presentation. Richard Badalamente is our resource for ERPOs.

Membership – Janet Nail

In 2025 the LWVUS adopted a new membership system. In previous years, it was easy to measure membership numbers compared to previous years. Our local league collected dues from new members and from renewal memberships. In February, 2025, LWVUS started collecting all dues and divides the dues between National, State and each local League. Previously, all renewal memberships were collected in September. Now all membership renewals end 12 months from the date they joined. In addition to changing how dues are collected, the types of membership were changed. The free student memberships and the second-in-household memberships were eliminated. Considering all the changes, the LWVBF membership numbers have remained about the same, 104 last year and 103 this year. However, LWVBF will not know how the changes affect the total memberships for a couple of years. Numbers are not the only measure of success. We can celebrate success in the number of members that have stepped up to participate in the events.

MELD (Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development)—Diane Molleson

Membership, Engagement, Leadership Development (MELD) is a program run by the State League. In MELD meetings, local Leagues share their successes and challenges and receive information about programs and resources from the State League facilitator. Our League is in Pod #4 with the Bellingham/Whatcom, Clallam, Kitsap, and Clark County leagues. Our facilitator is Lunell Haught, a former president of the LWVWA, and our board liaison is now Nancy Halvorson. (She replaced our former liaison, Robbie Stolz, in March). We meet monthly on Zoom, and the meetings last one hour. Often a guest speaker is invited. The topics we discuss have included civics education, candidate forums, membership retention, the importance of personal outreach, the LWVUS's new membership system, building partnerships with other groups, participation in the No Kings marches, safety training before marches, Lobby Week, youth involvement, and more. The State Board liaison listens to member comments and ideas and offers assistance, and she keeps us up-to-date on the actions of the State Board. MELD has been a wonderful resource, and I enjoy hearing what other leagues in our pod are doing, and how they are handling their challenges.

Naturalization Ceremonies – Bev Johnson-Torelli

Typically, the LWVBF has participated in three Naturalization Ceremonies a year at the Federal Building in Richland, assisting the Benton and Franklin auditors' offices in offering voter registration. For example, the dates in 2025 were April 15th and September 16th with November 5th being cancelled. The schedule for 2026 includes two (January and April) at the Thomas S. Foley U.S. Courthouse in Spokane and one (January) in Yakima at the William O. Douglas Federal Building. Perhaps other dates and locations will be announced. If so, we will plan to participate. Because there is an effort to prevent groups, such as the League of Women Voters and others, from offering voter registration, the League has engaged in a lawsuit regarding the matter. In the meantime, thanks to all the members who have helped over the past years. A special recognition goes to Marci Palmer who was able to translate for many of the new citizens as they registered to vote.

Scholarship Program – Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory

With the addition of generous donations, we were able to offer three (3) \$2500 scholarships this year. The criterion remains the same with the theme for the essay changing each year. Students who are graduating (not necessarily seniors) from one of the public high schools in either Benton or Franklin Counties who submit an essay up to 500 words based on the theme qualify. There are five judges who base their decisions on a standard judging rubric. The essays are marked with a number that is assigned as it arrives with the completed application. The winners are identified after the judges determine which essays rise to the top. The winners and their families are invited to our Annual meeting in May where they will be awarded a check along with a certificate. This year's theme was: ***Is the Electoral College still relevant? Explain how it works and support your position for or against it.***

Thank you to those who participated in this project: Klara Hulick, Shirley Sonnichsen, Barb Puigh, Carla Chiotti, Michele Pirotte, Diane Molleson, Larry Gregory, Bree Bowen, Bev Johnson-Torelli, and especially all those who donated to the LWVWA Education Fund in our League's name for the scholarship fund.

Winners will be announced soon!

Election Observers – Judy Golberg, Coordinator

The Election Observers continue covering every election in Benton County. Thank you to those who have volunteered this year: Bev Johnson-Torelli, Diane Molleson, Polly Parton, Mary Jo Coblentz, Margie Bass, Pattie Blakeman, Patty Hamilton, Pam Tihista, Carla Chiotti, Chuck LoPresti, Christine Grantham are trained observers, along with me, Judy Golberg. As vacancies arise, we will ask new volunteers to become trained and join the team.

We end the election periods by taking treats to the Election staff. This year we have added Franklin County to the treats. Hopefully, Franklin County will start an observer program! There are also a couple of our League members who are temporary staff members during the elections—at least one in each County! Our elections are safe and we have great confidence in Washington's election process.

Communications Committee – Judy Golberg

Bree Bowen, Carrie Hallquist, Klara Hulick, Richard Badalamente, Polly Parton, Judy Golberg are meeting monthly to plan how League can better reach our membership as well as the public to inform folks about issues, events, and news that affect our community. The goal is to reach out with any means at our disposal—email, webpage, newsletter, Facebook, Instagram, and the media. If you enjoy this type of activity, please consider joining the committee. Your skills and ideas would be appreciated.

Webmaster – Judy Golberg

Without the assistance of Klara Hulick, our webpage would remain somewhat boring. Yes, boring! LWVBF needs a new webmaster so I'm asking if anyone is interested in learning to take on the role. I know we have members who could become the webmaster but are shy at speaking up. This is a role I have had since *forever* and need to find a replacement. Klara is a full-time college student who also does amazing volunteer work as well! There are great resources for this position so please consider volunteering. Thank you for considering this ask.

2026 Washington Legislative Session Report—

Lora Rathbone, LWVBF Advocacy Chair

The WA State League of Women Voters (LWVWA) provides valuable information to the local leagues during the Washington State legislative session to simplify participation in our state's bill making process. Together, we can have a significant influence on the outcome of new policy for our state.

Advocacy chairs from local leagues then relay that information to our members and encourage their involvement. Members are invited to sign up for the LWVWA Legislative newsletters that send easy-to-follow instructions each Sunday during the session, for action to take the following week. People can also go to the website for [action alerts](#). This action is as simple as responding “pro” or “con” to a bill and sending comments to our legislators, or giving written and oral testimony during bill hearings. This year was a short session, running from January until March 12.

The LWVWA advocacy team chooses from thousands of bills to prioritize. The decisions are based on league [positions](#). Issues include Making Democracy Work (Civics Education, Local News, and more), Environment (Climate crisis, Forests, Waste Diversion, and more), and social/economic concerns.

Because of the state's budget shortfall, we were also asked to advocate for additional revenue. The deficit “stems from an unanticipated downturn in forecast revenue combined with an upturn in services needed and committed.” And “because Washington state has the second most regressive tax structure in the US, there is no way under the current system to raise adequate revenue.” The League asked that legislators not reduce services and not increase regressive forms of tax to generate new revenue; rather, that they consider new progressive sources of revenue”. We were successful in passing SB 6346, establishing a tax on incomes

exceeding \$1 million annually. It funds K-12 education, health care, higher education, other essential governmental services, and the working families' tax credit, and reduces certain sales and use taxes, and certain business and occupation taxes. The LWV WA legislative wrap up is [HERE](#).

The advocacy chair also organizes members to meet with their legislators during LWVWA Lobby Week. A few LWVBF members met on-line with their legislators in the 8th and 16th legislative districts and asked them to support LWV WA priorities. We plan to meet with our legislators before the 2027 legislative session when they are not as busy.

Throughout the year, we also follow the [LWV US action alerts](#). Currently the LWV asks members to [tell Congress to reject anti-voter policies](#) and oppose the SAVE Act Suite of Bills that would create barriers to the voting process.

LWVBF Book Club - Polly Parton

Book club members meet on-line and discuss a monthly selection of historical fiction, dystopian science fiction, political memoir, nonfiction, social justice, fantasy romance and fiction books. We like a variety of genres and always learn something. We keep our Zoom meeting to one hour, even with a friendly chat. We meet the 2nd Monday of the month at 6 pm. Check the Voter each month for what we're reading.

President's Report

LWVBF June 2025-May 31, 2026: A Brief Summary of Our Members' Many Activities

2025

At our Annual Meeting on May 15th two \$2,000 scholarships were awarded to Kaylen Garza and Eliza Kelly. This continues to honor the memory of Marilyn Perkins, our beloved past President and outstanding LWV member. Her husband, John Perkins, attended and we thanked him for the generous donation that started this wonderful tradition.

2025 LWVWA Convention was held at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, Washington from June 6-8. Over 150 League members in Washington State attended. We sent five delegates: Shari Gasperino, Diane Molleson and Marci Palmer were in person, and Leona Hassing and Polly Parton tuned in virtually. Judy Golberg served as the State League's Parliamentarian. The Convention's theme, *Stand Up for Democracy*, was reflected in the speakers. Willie Frank III spoke on 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 spoke on "Are We Still a Nation of Immigrants?" LWVUS President Diana Wynn was both inspiring and energizing.

Candidates Forums – Bev Johnson-Torelli led the LWVBF and Northwest Public Broadcasting partnership, to bring us the 2025 Primary Candidate Forums. They were available on KTNW TV 31.1 and on YouTube, the League’s website, Facebook, and via partner sites like the City of Richland and Columbia Basin Badger Club. However, because of reduced funding we pivoted to in-person Meet the Candidates events for fall. Thank you to the many members that made this possible for the Richland, West Richland, Kennewick and Pasco candidates.

Thank you to Richard Badalamente for various articles, such as “*We Are in a Constitutional Crisis*” in the September Voter and “*Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) Awareness Project*” in July, among others.

Richard Badalamente and Diane Molleson, represented the LWVBF Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) project at the August 19th Benton-Franklin Health Department forum on the Community Health Needs Assessment. The Health Needs Assessment is an on-going program that helps identify the community health priorities over the next 3 to 5 years.

Naturalization Ceremonies – Beverly Johnson-Torelli Tuesday, continued to lead our participation in the Naturalization Ceremonies for 2025-2026. They are held at the Federal Building in Richland.

Diane Molleson led the well-attended Table Talk on the pros and cons of Richland’s Districting Plan on September 12. Should Richland continue to have at-large districts? Or should it create voting districts within the city? The ballot in November failed but our voters are better for this education.

Many members tabled and spoke at community and school events, including the Tumbleweed Music Festival informational/voter table August 30th. Volunteers were Polly Parton, Glenda Williams, Marci Palmer, Denise Wimett, Richard Badalamente, Carla Chiotti and Diane Molleson. At River’s Edge Constitution Day on September 17th, Brianna Harty presented and Jane Sereda tabled. Bev Johnson-Torelli and Denise Wimett tabled at the September 23rd Legacy High School Fall Fest. Diane Molleson, Elaine Hetherington, and Lisa Peppard attended the September 25th Lewis & Clark Elementary Open House. Glenda Williams presented and Polly Parton tabled to a group of young voters at Voter Education Night at the Union Street Library on October 28th.

On October 23rd LWVBF was proud to partner with Northwest Public Broadcasting and Washington State University Tri-Cities for the screening of Ken Burns’ “The American Revolution”. The keynote speaker was Lawrence B. A. Hatter, WSU associate professor of history. Storyteller Arthur Broady, who resides in the Tri-Cities, gave a wonderful historical presentation. Beverly Johnson-Torelli hosted an information table and several LWVBF members attended.

At the New Member Welcome Social on November 13th, Janet Nail spearheaded the effort to collect new warm socks to present to All Saints Episcopal Church at our Holiday Party in December. Kennewick Councilman Chuck Torelli gave valuable insights on the process for

citizens to effect change. Chuck discussed the functions of city government, how to proceed when having a concern with a city operation, and the differences between the four city governments.

At our December 14th Holiday Party, our guest speaker was Jane Schmoetzer, Rector at All Saints Episcopal Church in Richland. The All Saints Warming Center (part of the Interfaith Homeless Team) has provided an overnight shelter on severe weather nights for individuals and families for the past two years. Janet Nail presented the warm socks and warmers that members had contributed.

At our monthly book club, led by Polly Parton, we read and discussed a wide variety of political, historical fiction, science, and contemporary books. Our members stay informed on a wide variety of interests.

No Kings Day – various members attended local No Kings Protests. Elaine Hetherington and Carla Chotti hosted a LWV table at the March 28th protest.

Notes From the monthly Washington State League Presidents Call – Polly Parton reports on what other local leagues in our state are doing and relays information from the State and National leaders.

Online Workshops offered by the LWVWA News & Media Literacy team included *Get to Know Artificial Intelligence (AI)*, *Crafting a Winning Letter to the Editor*, *Techniques Used to Sway Opinion*, *Making Sense of Information*, and *The Power of Critical Thinking*.

2026

Our Program Planning meeting on January 17 was held at Polly Parton’s home. Judy Golberg, Diane Molleson, and Bev Johnson-Torelli assisted Polly in planning this event. See the Program Planning Report in this packet for more details.

On January 21st, members tabled at the Virgie Robinson Resource Fair and will again for their April 29th Carnival Event. Members Polly Parton, Elaine Hetherington, Janet Nail and Cheryl Klym tabled and presented “Civics and Your Local Government” at The Career Day and Job Fair, sponsored by Rivers Edge High School on March 27 at the Richland Community Center. It was well attended with various high school students in our area. Margie Bass, Donna Kary and Carol Larkin hosted a table at Orion High School where “Hidden in Plain Sight” was presented to parents on April 1st. Bev Johnson-Torelli, Mary Jo Coblenz and Valerie Moffitt tabled at the Sageview High School Spring Carnival on April 2. The spinning wheel Civics Ed game is a winner for both kids and parents. Thank you to Margie Bass for the wheel!

We celebrated LWV’s 106th birthday on February 19th at CG Public House. LWVBF members Carla Chiotti, Donna Kary, Sonee Wilson, Carol Larkin and Glenda Williams (also members of the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition TCIC) gave a presentation on local immigration issues.

LWVBF approved concurrence on the LWVWA position on the rights of immigrants in the United States. This will be submitted for consideration at the National Convention in June.

The LWVBF signed on as partners for America 250 to celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary. We join the LWVWA and LWV for this celebration.

Defending Democracy was our Table Talk theme on April 3rd at the Richland Library. We hosted Loren Malone, a co-founder of Indivisible Tri-Cities. We learned both LWV and Indivisible have similar missions. Loren reviewed many current threats to our democracy and gave ways to meet this challenge. An open discussion followed the presentation.

Beverly Johnson-Torelli is taking the planning lead on the 4th Congressional District race for the primary and general election. We (LWVBF) are partnering with AARP, NWPB, and the Yakima and Kittitas League presidents and are planning for district-wide access.

I apologize as I'm sure I missed an event or some volunteer activities. I appreciate that our members are very engaged in causes and activities, and I do thank every member that generously volunteered their time and energy.

Polly Parton

LWVBF President 2025-2026

LWV-BF PROPOSED 2026-27 Budget

Income				
	2025-26		2026-27	
Dues for 2026-27	80@13.61	\$ 1,089	100@\$10	\$ 1,000
Dues (Reserves)		\$ 3,297		\$ 595
Contributions		\$ 6,200		\$ 7,000
Member Contributions		\$ 800		\$ 1,200
Non-Member Contributions		\$ 100		\$ 100
Reserves-Ed Fund (Scholarships, TRY)		\$ 4,500		\$ 5,700
Other		\$ 1,000		\$ 500
Interest from savings		\$ 0.20		\$ 0.20
Table Talk/Special Events		\$ 500		\$ 500
In-Kind Contributions (Member)		\$ 500		\$ -
		\$ 11,586		\$ 9,095
Expenses				
	2025-26		2026-27	
Operating Costs		\$ 1,110		\$ 920
Meeting Facilities (incl Zoom)		\$ 300		\$ 200
Incorporation Fee		\$ 20		\$ 20
Post Office Box Rental		\$ 240		\$ 250
Web Site Creation/Maintenance		\$ 500		\$ 450
Board and Administration		\$ 340		\$ 175
Annual Picnic		\$ 50		\$ 50
Public Relations/Miscellaneous		\$ -		\$ -
Board & Administration		\$ 130		\$ -
Sunshine Fund		\$ 10		\$ 25
President's Materials		\$ 50		\$ 50
Treasurer's Materials		\$ 100		\$ 50
Convention and Workshops		\$ -		\$ 1,250
National Convention		\$ -		\$ -
State Convention/Council		\$ -		\$ 1,250
Workshops		\$ -		\$ -
Member Services		\$ 1,250		\$ 750
Recruitment & Membership		\$ 250		\$ 250
Programs- Events		\$ 500		\$ 250
Annual Meeting		\$ 500		\$ 250
VOTER		\$ -		\$ -
Educational Activities		\$ 4,500		\$ 5,950
Voter Service		\$ -		\$ 250
Educational Support/Scholarships/TRY		\$ 4,000		\$ 5,700
Action/Advocacy		\$ -		\$ 50
		\$ 11,229		\$ 9,095