



VOTER

March 2021

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Wow, February, the month of love and hearts, is already behind us. It was a productive month, beginning with February 4th when we celebrated the 101st birthday of the League. Invited guest, Kathy Sakahara of the LWVWA, facilitated a discussion of legislative issues. Kathy is the Issue Chair for Elections, Voting Rights, and Campaign Finance. This was great preparation for the virtual Lobby Week on February 22-26. Several LWVBF members attended. The sessions presented were related to bills the League supports. Several were connected to topics our League has expressed interest in studying or learning more about, such as DEI- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, alternate election options like Ranked Choice Voting, Redistricting, Voting Rights Restoration, Eliminating Advisory Votes, and several others.

Throughout the week, our League members were able to speak directly to Legislators in the 8th and 16th Districts. Janet Nail, Joann Bengtson and Durga Victorine did an outstanding job of speaking for the 8th. Kudos to Christine Grantham, Karen Ringwood, and Leona Hassing for their conversations with the 16th. A very special thanks goes to our Advocacy Chair, Lora Rathbone, for all the work she did behind the scenes to make the meetings successful and for keeping us updated on the bills.

Now we welcome March, a month that contains "the green holiday" that my grandson says is his favorite. Indeed, St. Patrick's Day and the shamrock symbolize good luck, and we hope it will be so, a full year after the statewide shutdown due to COVID-19. Many of us have been lucky enough to receive our vaccinations, but hopefully our teachers and other essential workers will be vaccinated soon. By August, perhaps our schools can return to fulltime in-person instruction and many events and activities can resume, including the League's! If so, we will be lucky indeed, and we will appreciate our "in-person" time so much more than ever before!

Plan to join the Table Talk on March 11th on DEI. Please see Judy Golberg's complete article in this Voter. You won't want to miss this opportunity to engage in a topic that is endorsed by both the National and State Leagues. All members will be sent the Zoom link.

At the March 18th Board Meeting, the path forward for the state and local program planning issues will be determined, so stay tuned for studies, Table Talks, etc. on interesting topics, which will bring many opportunities to be engaged in League. Let's celebrate the Irish and wear green this month!

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

As of January 31, 2021:

Checking is \$5,722.88

Savings is \$1,856.63

Total \$7,579.51

Income: \$785

We received \$225 in dues and \$560 from the "Friends of Justin Raffa". Justin had some funds left over from his campaign and he wanted it to go to an organization that does good work in the community.

Expenses: \$1,759

We paid \$400 for the MyLO website, \$7 in PayPal fees, \$848 for National PMPs and \$504 for State PMPs. The 3rd and 4th quarter Per Member Payments (PMPs) were paid in order to complete those commitments.

Membership and dues: We have 75 members including new members, Carla Chiotti, Naomi Young and Jane Schmoetzer. The National Database was finalized by the end of January. The next fiscal year Per Member Payment is determined by our membership on February 1st. An updated Membership List has been sent to members only.

Education Fund: \$604

We have \$604 to use for TRY's or other projects if needed.

Budget Committee:

The Treasurer and the Budget committee, consisting of two or three members to establish a budget for FY21-22 will meet in March via Zoom.

The budget will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in May. Janet Nail, Ann Roberts, and Peggy Gregory have agreed to be on the committee. The Treasurer does the worksheet but cannot be the Chair.

March Table Talk (DEI) ~ Judy Golberg

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion(DEI)

Exciting news!! LWVBF is so fortunate to have special speakers joining our League members on a Zoom call Thursday evening, 6 PM, March 11, 2021. We are pleased to have community members who will share their story to give us an idea what it is to walk in their shoes PLUS Rev. Rick Matter, of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Kennewick and Episcopal Diocese of Spokane with a message we each should consider. Do not miss this evening's event!! In fact, the DEI committee challenges you to be with us and open your hearts to hear the message. This is a topic that affects all of us whether we are aware of it or not. Mark your calendar now! A link to this Table Talk will be sent a week before and a reminder again that morning. See you then!

Bylaws ~ Judy Golberg

Bylaws are reviewed annually and any proposed amendments are voted on at the Annual Meeting May 20.

If you are interested in reviewing what is in our Bylaws, a copy is posted on our webpage under Member Tools: <https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties/member-tools>. Any member is welcome to suggest an amendment. If you do have a suggestion, please send to me jgolberg@charter.net or Peggy Gregory at mapeg@ymail.com prior to 3/16.

Also, if you would like a preview of what the committee is proposing, drop me a line at jgolberg@charter.net and I'll share a copy of this draft document. Proposed changes will be shared with the entire membership after the Board approves them in April and then prior to the Annual Meeting packet that will be sent or delivered to you.

Nominating Committee ~ Judy Golberg

It is not too late to offer your name as a candidate for the slate officers, the Board of Directors, next year's Nominating Committee, or to volunteer for any of the committees or other opportunities to be involved. Email was sent to you 2/19/21. Contact one of the members of the committee if you are willing to serve: Ann Roberts, Susan Kreid, Sandra Hendry, Marilyn Perkins, or Judy Golberg. Thank you.

You Can Be An Advocate ~ Lora Rathbone

The 2021 WA State Legislative session is only halfway through and we have already done so much! As I write, LWVWA Democracy Lobby week is still happening, with interesting and informative presentations on a variety of Democracy topics every day. (February 22-26).

Several of us from LWVBF in the 8th, and 16th legislative districts met with our state legislators. The league asked us to inform them of the league's top priorities which are:

1. **Voting Rights Restoration - 1078.** This would promote racial justice by automatically restoring the right to vote for every citizen living in the community once they served their time. Currently rights are not restored until after they finish parole which has caused confusion.
2. **Closing the Revolving door - 5170.** Establishes a one-year "cooling off" period before elected officials and high-level employees can work as a lobbyist. It would build public trust.
3. **Harassment of Election Officials - 5148.** Makes harassment of election workers a class C felony.
4. **Remove Advisory Votes- 5182.** They regard decisions on state expenditures that have already been passed by legislators. This is confusing to voters. Removing them would save \$156K-194K.
5. **Ranked Choice Voting- 1156.** Having more than one choice should make campaigns more focused on the issues than on the politician and should lower election costs.

Learn more at <https://lwvwa.org/elections>

We also asked for support of **SB 5044**: - would add equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism to existing cultural competency training for school board directors, district staff, and school staff.

Learn more at <https://lwvwa.org/education2>

I will continue to forward the LWVWA Legislative newsletter and high light action alerts for a variety of topics, or you can sign up for the [legislative newsletter here](#).

Or email Lora at ldrathbone@outlook.com

LWVWA bills I am following include:

HB 1297: Working Family Tax credit (Rep Boehnke is supporting it), and **SB 5096 Capital Gains tax** learn more at <https://lwvwa.org/revenue>

SB 5160: Provide certain tenant protections during and after public health emergencies. Senator Brown votes “without recommendation” which means she could still be persuaded to support it. Will be voted on in the Senate soon.

<https://lwvwa.org/housing>

SB 5373: The Washington Strong Act authorizes nearly \$5B of green bonds to invest in infrastructure and mitigation to reduce climate change and transition to a clean economy. This bill has large revenue implications, so it is not subject to ordinary cut-off dates. **HB 1050: Reducing GHG emissions from hydrofluorocarbons.** **SB 5141: Implementing the recommendations of (HEAL Act).** **HB 1099: Improving the state’s climate response through updates to the state’s comprehensive planning framework.** Learn more at <https://lwvwa.org/climate-change> .

Civics Education Committee ~ Lora Rathbone

The Benton Franklin League of Women Voters met early February to discuss what we would like to do for Civics education and how to get the word out to teachers that we would like to offer this service to them.

We are looking at offering on-line presentations to young and high school students. We will be meeting again early March to learn what we’ve found out so far from the school districts and plan our next steps. Contact me at ldrathbone@outlook.com if you would like to join us and help.

Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development (MELD) ~Polly Parton

February 15th zoom meeting

MELD calls provide a monthly interaction between Leagues to network, share ideas, accomplishments and best practices with guidance and mentorship from our coach Lynn Busacca. Our State Liaison Susan Fleming, also shares State and National resources with us and gives state leaders summaries from the local Leagues. Benton-Franklin is currently in Pod #5 with members from Kitsap, Grays Harbor and Thurston Counties.

Our calls are 60 minutes, Lynn provides an agenda. Discussions are casual and productive. Some highlights of our last call are:

- Lynn forwards us various articles and information. I noted the use of ‘consent agendas’ could be useful for our board meetings. I will forward the article to our officers.
- Per Carol Goss (Thurston League), they are reviewing/revitalizing an Observer Corps activity. Tony Wilson suggested having a spot to put current observer reports on each leagues website for members to review (more timely than monthly Voter).
- Per Tony Wilson, they are working on *Civil Discourse* workshops. This may be a 2 - 3 year project.
- Per Susan Fleming, State Convention topics are still being reviewed. Some ideas are:
 - how leagues could work with groups that are NOT non-partisan
 - what 2021 state legislation was partisan and non-partisan
 - any other suggestions?
- Katherine Murphy will present a series of workshops on *Learning to Talk About Race*, starting in March.
- Our March MELD meeting will discuss how we can gather skills/interests/passions information on our members.

They Represent You (TRY) ~ Marilyn Perkins

Our League as well as most other Leagues in the nation publish a directory of elected officials that represent their area, starting with the President. It also includes state, county, and local officials. We have been decreasing our printed copies the last few years and because Covid-19 created distribution challenges, we only printed 500 this year. We do want to get at least one to every member who would like to have one. If you would like to have a few extra to share we can try and accommodate that too.

A few people have volunteered to have some at their home where you could pick them up. They include Lora Rathbone in North Richland, Shirley Sonnichsen in South Richland (Hills West), Polly Parton in West Richland, Marilyn Perkins in northwest Kennewick, Bev Johnson-Torelli in south central Kennewick, and Ruvine Jimenez at her Pasco office on Court Street across from the Post Office. If this isn't convenient for you or you need an updated membership roster, contact Marilyn Perkins at 783-8610 and one will be delivered or mailed to you.

TRYs are also available on our web site and this is a direct link to it and you are welcome to print your own, just click on 2021.

<https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties/publications>

Name Tags ~ Marilyn Perkins

Our League provides a name tag for all its members. Because we are not currently meeting in person, we have six that have not been given to some of our newer members. They are Laura Hendrickson, Sabastian Marichalar, Barbara McIntyre, Michele Pirotte, Karen Ringwood, and Janie Treadway. We are planning on ordering some for the following new members: Kathy Blaisdell, Theresa Buczek, Arianna Caiceros, Carla Ciotti, Kelly Doyle, Wendy Espinosa, Cait Guyette, Amy Hatfield, Carol Larkin, Amedee Marx, Jeanne Reardon, Diana Ruff, Naomi Solomon-Oblath, Martha Swedlund, Dale Width, Kylee Yearsley, and Naomi Young.

The name tags are usually magnetic, but you may request a pin instead. For newer members, please check and make sure we have your name spelled correctly. If you are a member who has lost their name tag, we can order you a new one if you would like. The cost to you is \$8. Contact Marilyn Perkins at 783-8610 or jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 11, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Table Talk on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

March 18, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Business and Planning Meeting

May 20, ~ Annual Meeting

Email us at:

lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

Mailing Address:

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P.O.Box 765
Richland, WA 999352

OFFICERS:

President: Beverly Johnson-Torelli
1st Vice President: Diane Molleson
2nd Vice President: Polly Parton
Secretary: Mary Shaw
Treasurer: Shirley Sonnichsen
Voter Editor: Peggy Gregory

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

JoAnne Dimond
Janet Nail
Marilyn Perkins
Lora Rathbone
Ann Roberts

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

JoAnn Bengtson
Shari Gasperino
Ruth Giese
Peggy Gregory
Leona Hassing
Sabiha Khan