



VOTER

November 2025

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message – Polly Parton

Our awesome members continue to support our community at education, tabling, speaking and protesting events this fall. Some examples are the candidate events (for four cities), Rivers Edge Constitution Day, Legacy High Fall Festival, Kamiakin Resource Night, Lewis & Clark Elementary Open House, No Kings Protest, Mid-Columbia Library Voter Night and the Naturalization Ceremonies. Our Election Observation Process is fully underway with our dedicated observers and our organizers Kelly Doyle and Judy Golberg. If you are interested in the observer service please let us know and we'll notify you next year for training. [Elections Hero Day](#) is Monday, November 3rd. Remember to thank our election officials and staff, they ensure our voting process is secure.

Watch for notice of our post-election social. It's always a great evening where we learn something and enjoy great conversation. Then save the date of Sunday December 14th, 2 – 4 pm for the Holiday Party. We're confirming our guest speaker now and your plus one or friend or neighbor is welcome. This will be at my home, 316 Northview Loop, West Richland.

Do you want to get more involved in something? Email, text or call Polly and let me know what you are interested in.

pparton34@gmail.com **509-551-3818** (Polly recently changed her email address, please update your contacts.)

New Member Welcome Social - Janet Nail, Membership Chair

It is that time of year when the seasoned members welcome the new members to the League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties. The social will be on Thursday, November 13th at 5:30 pm at the home of Janet Nail, 135 Meadow Hills Drive, Richland. Join us for heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine and good conversation. RSVP 509-546-1467 or janet@janetnail.com. Feel free to invite a friend.

The social will be the “kick-off” to fill bags for the homeless. Please bring warm socks to add to each bag. (Costco has some good buys for men and women's socks.) The League plans on presenting the bags to Jane Schmoetzer of All Saints Episcopal Church at the Holiday Party in December.

Communications Corner – Richard Badalamente

Your Communication's Committee will publish a column in the Voter every month, beginning with this edition. Our focus will be on the process and content of communications that reflect the League of Women Voters mission and values, with particular emphasis on our non-partisan promise to the American voter.

For the League of Women Voters (LWV), being non-partisan means the organization does not support or oppose political parties or candidates. This principle is a cornerstone of the LWV, ensuring its focus remains on issues and voters, not partisan politics. This is particularly important in the current political climate, where divisiveness, anger, and anxiety seem to prevail.

As a non-partisan organization, the League encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We act in support of, or in opposition to, selected governmental issues. Our members conduct in-depth studies before we take a position.

League members, as individuals, may of course support candidates of the political party of their choice. When they do so, they must be careful to avoid association with the League. This applies to both traditional media, e.g., newspapers, and digital/social media, e.g., Facebook and Instagram.

In future columns we'll cover topics ranging from the League's Unite and Rise 8.5 Initiative to Defend Democracy to an examination of selected League of Women Voters positions at the National, State, and Benton-Franklin levels. Members are always welcome to voice their opinion on what should be covered here. Email our Communications Team Leader, Carrie Hallquist, Atomicturtles@fastmail.com.

Required Minimum Distribuion Use For Contributing To Charatable Initiatives – Richard Badlamente

A Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) is the smallest amount of money you must take out each year from certain retirement accounts—like traditional IRAs and 401(k)s—after you reach a specific age. The law requiring RMDs comes from the Internal Revenue Code, Section 401(a)(9). It applies to most people who have tax-deferred retirement savings, meaning they haven't yet paid income tax on the money in those accounts.

You must take your first RMD by April 1 of the year after you turn 72½, and by **December 31** every year after that. The government requires this so that taxes can eventually be collected on the money that has grown tax-free for years.

RMDs can be used for charitable giving through something called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). This allows you to give up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to a charity or non-profit, like the League of Women Voters Education Fund, or the Tri-Cities Food Bank, for example, without paying taxes on that amount, while still meeting your RMD requirement.

If you don't take your RMD on time, **the IRS charges a 50% penalty** on the amount you failed to withdraw. This rule encourages compliance and ensures that deferred taxes are eventually paid.

Tribal Study Update Project – Chris Murray

A two-year study of the current status of tribal nations in Washington was authorized by LWWA at the 2025 annual convention. The new study will support updating positions on tribal issues that are based on an LWWA study that was completed in 1980, and will allow for greater ability to ally with native American nations around issues they bring forth and also expand LWWA membership's knowledge of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. Current plans are to identify national and state policy changes affecting the tribes, and to solicit information from the tribes regarding issues where they would like the support of LWW positions.

I have volunteered to participate in the study group, and we began meeting in September. In addition to statewide issues, we'll also be gathering information on important local tribes. I'll be focusing on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation (CTUIR) and the Yakama Nation, both of which occupied homelands in the Tri-Cities and the surrounding region "from time immemorial". I'll also do research on a land acknowledgment that reminds us of the role of regional tribes in caring for the lands we live on. If anyone would like more information about the goals and progress of the study, please contact Chris Murray, chrismurray92@gmail.com.

Notes From the Washington League Presidents Call – Polly Parton

Check out the LWWA website <https://www.lwwa.org> You don't have to have your password to log in to the members-only site. They have removed confidential lists and contact information. They listened to members' suggestions! There is lots of impactful information to see where you can get involved.

To find newsletters you can subscribe to, go to State website (above) click on *About Us*, then *Member Newsletters*

- **In League** – with member content to make the most of your League membership, once monthly on the third week.
- **The Evergreen Voter** - with updates on elections, activities & events, every other month.
- **Resisting Threats to Democracy** – how to resist threats to democracy, every second and fourth week.
- **The Legislative Action Newsletter** - with key issues and action alerts through the State Legislative Session.

November 3rd is Elections Hero Day, so if you get a chance, thank our local election staff for all they do. Do you want to better understand the 2026 legislative session, which begins January 11? Check out Lora's article about the Action Workshop on Saturday November 1st. It's online so you can watch all or selected sections. The State Civics Education Committee will focus on *The State We're In: Washington – Your guide to State, Tribal and Local Government*. This textbook from the League of Women Voters is for middle school and up.

LWVWA State Board Opportunities – Tricia Grantham

To All League Members: We welcome anyone who is interested or has questions about being on the State Board or how to apply.

We on the Nominating Committee are having two Meet & Greet Zoom sessions on November 12th at 6:30pm and on December 6th at 10:30am.

Whether you are exploring the idea of joining the State Board, or are ready to apply – we would love to chat with you and answer your questions.

We'll share what some current and past Board members love about being on the Board and what it's meant to them.

Please join us, Tricia Grantham, Member, LWVWA Nominating Committee,
tricia.grantham@gmail.com

LWVBF Treasurer's Report – Carla Ciotti

As of September 30, 2025:

Checking is	\$4,828.04
<u>Savings is</u>	<u>1,857.49</u>
Total	\$6,685.53

Income:

Membership dues	\$ 239.66
Member donations	\$ 507.45
Savings interest	.01

Total income: \$747.12

Expenses:

LWVUS PMP	\$2,752.00
LWVWA PMP	\$ 817.00
Zoom annual fee	\$ 173.81

Total Expenses: \$3742.81

In September we received dues from 17 returning members and donations from nine members. Thank you!

We recorded one in-kind donation of \$37.38 for three posters to use at tabling events.

PMPS: The Per Member Payments for both LWVUS and LWVWA have been paid in full. Because of the new membership system, this is the last time we had to pay PMPs.

Education Fund: Our 501(c)3 Education Fund received another donation. The balance is now \$16,894.54.

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.

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 and using PayPal <https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>.

LWV Membership Renewal: Thank you to members who have recently renewed their memberships. **If you still need to renew, you may renew in one of two ways.**

If you prefer to renew your membership by check: To pay dues with a check please send a check (minimum \$20, recommended \$75) made out to LWVUS to LWVBF, P.O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352. Please do not include a donation to our league in your dues check. If you would like to donate to our League, please write a separate check made out to LWVBF and send it to our P.O. Box. Thank you.

If you prefer to renew on-line: You can renew your membership **online** in one of two ways:

1. Go to our league website (<https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>) and clicking the JOIN button. On the next page you will click the Join/Renew button to go to the Membership portal.
2. Go directly to the national website by entering <https://portal.lwv.org/home> in your browser.

At the LWV Portal you will be asked to enter your email address (Please use the email address you used the last time you renewed. If you are not sure of what email address you used, please contact me (509) 521-2158 or Shirley (509)392-1808). You will receive a verification code. After entering your verification code, you will go to a page that shows your virtual membership card. Select the “renew” button in the upper right corner of your virtual membership card and follow the instructions on the following pages.

For step-by-step instructions on how to renew, an LWV Member User Guide is available at:

<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/LWV%20Portal%20Users%20Guide%20for%20Members.pdf>

Or, you may view a video at:

<https://vimeo.com/1046821379/ac6c340f06?share=copy>

You may call one of the following members with questions: Carla Chiotti (509-521-2158), Judy Golberg (509-627-5347), Janet Nail (509-546-1467), Diane Molleson (509-554-7317), or Shirley Sonnichsen (509-392-1808)

If you have not renewed your membership, one of the above members will contact you soon to remind you to please join. Thank you for your continuing membership and support.

LWVWA Action Workshop – Lora Rathbone

LWVWA Action Workshop: a preview of the 2026 WA Legislative Session

On November 1st, from 9 am to 4 pm, the LWVWA [Advocacy Team](#) will be providing an online workshop on what to expect in the 2026 legislative session, which begins January 11th. “The Legislature will be making some very important decisions this year,” said LWVWA Advocacy Director Cynthia Stewart. “And so, what we’ll be doing on that Saturday is providing background on whole range of issues.” The overview of the 2026 session starts at 9 am, priority issues presentations start at 11 am, and include Democracy, Environment, Health Care, Housing, Education, and Criminal Justice. A review of Lobby Week will be held at 3:25 pm. The schedule is found [here](#) and register [here](#). Don’t feel you need to attend the whole thing, but you will find it very interesting!

Naturalization Ceremony – Beverly Johnson-Torelli

The last Naturalization Ceremony of 2025 is scheduled for Wednesday, November 5th at 10 am at the Federal Building, 825 Jadwin in Richland. If you have never seen the ceremony and/or would like to help with voter registration contact Bev Johnson-Torelli at sasjoh@aol.com or (509) 521-0947. New League members might be especially interested in attending, as a record number of newly minted citizens usually register on that particular occasion. Thanks to all who have helped in the past!

LWVBF Book Club – Polly Parton

For October we read both *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah and *You Should Talk to Someone* by Lori Gottlieb. *The Great Alone* (young adult) was semi-autobiographical. Lenni’s parents moved (or fled) to Alaska in the 1970’s. As a young teen she dealt with her father spiraling with war PTSD and her mother repeatedly enduring spousal abuse while in denial. Our second book, *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone* was a memoir of a therapist also seeing a therapist. I highly recommend it, as it is filled with humor, heartbreak and a journey to self-understanding.

Our November read is *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon inspired by the life and diary of Martha Ballard, an 18th century midwife.

Join us the second Monday each month (November 10th) 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. parton34@gmail.com or 509 -551-3818.

Calendar Of Events

November

- 1 LWWA Action Workshop Online
- 3 Election Hero Day
- 4 General Election Day
- 5 Naturalization Ceremony
- 13 New Member Social, 5:30 pm, Home of Janet Nail
- 10 Book Club via Zoom
- 18 LWVBF Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting via Zoom

December

- 14 Holiday Party, 2 – 4 pm, Home of Polly Parton

Email: lww.of.bf@gmail.com

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

Facebook: [League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties](https://www.facebook.com/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Benton-Franklin-Counties-100000000000000)

Mailing Address:

League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties
P.O. Box 765
Richland, WA 99352

OFFICERS:

President: Polly Parton
1st Vice President: Ruvine Jimenez
2nd Vice President: Michelle Pirotte
Secretary: Diane Molleson
Treasurer: Carla Chiotti

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Margie Bass
Brianna Harty
Marci Palmer
Mary Shaw
Glenda Williams
Shirley Sonnichsen

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Lora Rathbone
JoAnne Dimond
Leona Hassing
Beverly Johnson-Torelli
Richard Badalamente
Emily Dirkes

VOTER EDITOR: JoAnne Dimond