

# VOTER

[www.lwv-bf.org](http://www.lwv-bf.org)

September 2020

## From the President

**Beverly Johnson-Torelli**

On behalf of our entire League, it is with heavy hearts that we offer condolences to JoAnn and Peter Bengtson, who lost their precious daughter Ellen in a bicycle accident on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers go out to them and their family in this unimaginably difficult time.

August has been a busy month for our League. The essay contest culminated on August 4<sup>th</sup> when the winners from the Kennewick, Richland and Pasco School Districts were recognized in three separate Zoom ceremonies. You will see more detailed information about that later in this publication. However, at this time, I would like to thank and congratulate Christine Grantham, Chair of the Centennial Celebration Committee, and Janet Nail, Essay Chairman. They did an absolutely phenomenal job of bringing forward both the essay contest and the video contest.

The General Election debates/candidate forums are in the planning stages. Our League is again partnering with NWPB (PBS, KTNW) in bringing these virtual events to the public. Depending on candidate availability, the state races may change but currently include the Attorney General and the State Treasurer, on **September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>** respectively. These two debates are being done in conjunction with the Washington State League of Women Voters and will be live webcasts airing from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

## Officers:

**President:**

**Beverly Johnson-Torelli**

**1st Vice President: Diane Molleson**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Polly Parton**

**Secretary: Mary Shaw**

**Treasurer:**

**Shirley Sonnichsen**

**Voter Editor: Peggy Gregory**

## Elected Directors:

**JoAnne Dimond**

**Janet Nail**

**Lora Rathbone**

**Marilyn Perkins**

**Ann Roberts**

## Appointed

### Directors:

**Ruth Giese**

**Leona Hassing**

**Peggy Gregory**

**Sabiha Khan**

**Shari Gasperino**

**JoAnn Bengtson**

## President's Message (Continued from p. 1)

Lunell Haught, the State President, will make the opening remarks on behalf of the League. The debate format for both of these races will be one in which the rebuttal process is used, giving each candidate the opportunity to address what the other has said. As in the Primaries, our League's moderator will be Mr. Matt Loveless, Clinical Assistant Professor of Communication at the Murrow College, WSU, in Pullman. Two panelists from the news media will also be included. Plans for **September 24<sup>th</sup>** are in flux, but the format will be similar to that described above. A date for the 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District debate is under discussion.

Other races being brought to you by LWV-BF and NWPB are planned to be interactive as well. Currently, they are scheduled from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. on **September 30<sup>th</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup>, October 7<sup>th</sup>, and October 8<sup>th</sup>**. Plans are to air three races each evening, including the following:

Benton County Commissioners Districts 1 and 3; Franklin County Commissioners Districts 1 and 2; Superior Court Judge Position 1; Legislative District 8 Representatives Positions 1 and 2; Legislative District 9 Representative Position 1; Legislative District 9 Senate; Legislative District 16 Representatives Positions 1 and 2 and Legislative District 16 Senate

**Because plans are still very fluid in all of these debates/candidate forums, we will publish final details as the dates approach and send them out to our membership.** The debates/candidate forums will also be available for viewing after the initial airing dates and through the election on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In the meantime, thank you for your involvement in our political system and for encouraging everyone you know to exercise their right to vote. To quote one of our essay contest winners, Christina Valdez of Pasco High, "Voting is not just our right, it is our duty to all humanity."

In addition, please see the following interesting information:

On August 24, 2020, an article entitled "Virtual Train Tour Honors 100 Years of Votes for Women" was published in the, Tri-City Herald. I quote: "To mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the Washington State Historical Society, in collaboration with a number of other historical societies and heritage foundations, has created a digital reimaging of a train of suffragists that passed through Washington in 1909. It was thought that the train tour was instrumental in pushing WA to grant suffrage to women in 1910, the first state to do so in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The eight-part video series is called the "Suffrage Special Whistle Stop Tour." The videos are available on the Washington State Historical Society's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

In honor of Equality Day on August 26<sup>th</sup>, Mary Shaw has provided the link below to a free podcast from the National Constitution Center:

<https://constitutioncenter.org/amp/blog/why-august-26-is-known-as-womans-equality-day>

Here's an idea: Before November 3<sup>rd</sup>, pick your favorite ballot box in the Tri-Cities and have your picture taken standing beside it wearing red, white and blue or Suffragist attire. Include a

message with it encouraging people to vote. Then send it to Judy to be posted on our Facebook. There are at least fifteen ballot boxes in Benton and Franklin Counties.

**\*\*\*\*\*The September board meeting will be held on September 10 at 6:00pm via Zoom instead of September 17.**

## Observer Corps~Diane Molleson

The LWV-BF is hoping to resurrect the Observer Corps where members attend events of interest to the community, such as school board, city council, port commissioner, county commissioner meetings etc. and report their observations to the League.

Here is a list of potential local government meetings to observe. All meetings online until further notice.

### County Commissioners

Benton County: Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. [www.co.benton.wa.us](http://www.co.benton.wa.us)

Franklin County: Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. [www.co.franklin.wa.us](http://www.co.franklin.wa.us)

### City Council

Kennewick: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month- 6:30 p.m. [www.go2kennewick.com](http://www.go2kennewick.com)

Richland: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month-6:00 p.m. [www.ci.richland.wa.us](http://www.ci.richland.wa.us)

Pasco: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of every month,-7:00 p.m. except observed holidays- [www.pasco-wa.gov](http://www.pasco-wa.gov)

Benton City: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month-7:00 p.m.  
[www.ci.benton-city.wa.us](http://www.ci.benton-city.wa.us)

West Richland: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month-6:00 p.m. [www.westrichland.org](http://www.westrichland.org)

### City Planning Committee (same emails as city council, listed above)

Kennewick: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month- 6:30 p.m.

Richland: 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month - 6:00 p.m.

Pasco: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month- 7:00 p.m.

Richland Library Board: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month-5:30 p.m. [www.myrichlandlibrary.org](http://www.myrichlandlibrary.org)

Mid-Columbia Libraries Board: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month- 5:30 p.m.  
[www.midcolumbialibraries.org](http://www.midcolumbialibraries.org)

### School Districts/ School Board Meetings

Kennewick: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. [www.ksd.org](http://www.ksd.org)

Pasco: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. [www.psd1.org](http://www.psd1.org)

Richland: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. [www.rsd.edu](http://www.rsd.edu)

Benton City: check website for meeting announcements: [www.kibesd.org](http://www.kibesd.org)

### Ports

Benton: 8:30 a.m. Check website for meeting dates [www.portofbenton.com](http://www.portofbenton.com)

Kennewick: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. [www.portofkennewick.org](http://www.portofkennewick.org)

Pasco: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 10:30 a.m. [www.portofpasco.org](http://www.portofpasco.org)

## Irrigation Districts

Kennewick Irrigation District 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. [www.kid.org](http://www.kid.org)

Benton Irrigation District (Benton City) 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m. and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 8:00 a.m. [www.bidwater.org](http://www.bidwater.org)

## Treasurer's Report~Shirley Sonnichsen

*On July 31, 2020:*

Checking is \$6,843.25

Savings is \$1,856.53

Total \$8,699.78

Checking:	\$6,843
Savings:	\$1,856
Total:	\$8,699

**Income: \$4,125**

In July we received the \$650 grant and the \$3,250 Ed fund money from the State League. We also received dues for 3 new members, Theresa Buczek, Jeanne Reardon and Wyndal Espinosa.

**Expenses: \$517.44**

A \$500 check was written to Calumet Kubalek for second place in the High School Essay Contest for Pasco (she was leaving on vacation). The Secretary of State form was completed for our \$10 incorporation fee as a charitable organization; there was \$7.44 in PayPal fees.

**Membership and dues:** Dues are payable September 30 except for students, and those who joined after February 1 who are exempt until September 30, 2021. Janet put together a half sheet for volunteering which is going out with the dues letter. We also have one new student member Arianna Caiceros who was a second-place winner at Richland bringing membership to 64.

**Essay Contest:** All the rest of the winner checks were written and distributed in August. We received a check from HAPO for \$500 and a check from Indivisible for \$182.50 which was just because we are non-partisan, not for the essay contest. I have written a check and filled out the form to deposit \$682.50 in the State Ed fund and that check cleared. I just filled out the form and asked for the \$500 back from the Ed fund for the video contest. Those checks for the video contest winners have been written and Christine is distributing. A project final report may be necessary. The \$182.50 I suggest leaving in the Ed fund for the TRY next year.

**State Council and National Convention:** Please send your receipts for registration to the Treasurer for the "in kind" file. Masks from State Council came to the Post Office box and were distributed.

## Advocacy~Lora Rathbone

### Helping with LWVWA Civics Education Projects

I have been attending the LWVWA Cultivating Civics Conversations and Civics Education Committee. Both groups have asked for our participation.

1. **Role of State Officials Education Project:** our league agreed to join members from other leagues to contribute to a series of articles for our local papers on what our state officials do. Often people don't vote because they don't feel they know enough about what the candidates do and how they may impact their life. Adults will learn when they recognize the need for that learning. This is the same concept as the "Who Decides" portion of our Civics' Education presentation for students.
2. **LWVWA Civics Education Committee** - A small group of LWV members throughout the state are meeting to compile resources to teach Civics and Voter education to adults in our communities. They are gathering successful practices and programs from leagues across the state. These resources will be available on the state website. An example is the new voting tool "Why Vote?" from the Right Question Institute. <https://rightquestion.org/voter-engagement/> It's designed to help people feel a sense of urgency to vote, and it leads them to becoming more motivated and determined to vote. Their materials are free to use and are non-partisan.

## Centennial Committee~Christine Grantham

As chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the League of Women Voters Board of Directors and our President Beverly Johnson-Torelli for the opportunity to chair this important committee. Our President's guidance and foresight brought our Centennial Committee together and their support was essential in the success of the Centennial Celebration.

At the first committee meeting Janet Nail enthusiastically volunteered to chair our Essay Contest. She put her heart and soul into this project. She maneuvered the various challenges we faced including changing the format to entirely online due to the pandemic. Janet orchestrated a completely fair and unbiased contest, as the essays were given numbers, but no other identifying information, other than the school district they represented. Therefore, none of the judges knew anything about the contestants. Without her leadership and determination this essay contest would not have been possible and the great success it was.

At the close of the contest "Your Vote is Our Future" we received 25 essays from three of the Tri-City high schools. It seemed as if each essay had an entirely different perspective in their presentation supporting the importance of voting in a democratic society. The student essays were professionally researched, thought provoking and compelling, sometimes bringing us to tears. So compelling, the seven judges found the final selection challenging due to the outstanding quality of the essays.

After reading each essay it seemed they all should have won! There was not one that seemed as if it was just a last-minute attempt without any thorough thought process. They were all just wonderful essays. In short, our Essay Contest was outstanding and a great success!!

Although these young people are only a sampling of their generation, they bring a strength and clarity about the importance of America's greatest gift – The Right to Vote!

While the Centennial Committee's plans for a banquet was cancelled, we were successful in our goal of reaching out to high school students through "Your Vote Is Our Future" essay contest. In the middle of a pandemic we achieved one of the benchmarks of every League, to encourage voter participation whatever the age. We believe these students are on their way to achieving the League of Women Voters goal to empower citizens to shape better communities in order to become an educated electorate!!

Janet and I thank the following Centennial Committee members for their support:

JoAnne Dimond  
Peggy Gregory  
Shari Gasperino  
Judy Golberg  
Bev Johnson-Torelli

Janet Nail  
Marilyn Perkins  
Shirley Sonnichsen  
Joann Bengtson  
Valerie Moffitt

Thanks also to my daughter Tabitha Zinsli for making our beautiful red, white and blue Essay Contest Certificates. They were impressive!

**A NOTE OF THANKS from CHRISTINA VALDEZ  
Pasco 1st Place Winner**

I would like to "thank you" for the opportunity to express my opinion and writing ability through the "Your Vote is Our Future" contest, as well as for the \$1,200 award. I think it's amazing that you have these competitions for students like me and everyone who entered the contest. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> of hopefully many scholarship-type awards I will earn and this 1<sup>st</sup> achievement gives me great optimism for what I can do in the future. Thank you for everything you've done!

Sincerely,  
Christina Valdez

## Centennial Celebration Essay Contest~Janet Nail

“Your Vote is Our Future” essay contest winners were honored at three separate Zoom presentations on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Each of the Kennewick, Pasco and Richland School Districts had their own presentation. Bev Johnson-Torelli, President of the League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties, was the Greeter and Moderator. Lunell Haught, President of the League of Women Voters of Washington congratulated the winners at each presentation. Christine Grantham, Centennial Celebration Chairman, spoke about the importance of young voters and Janet Nail, Essay Chairman, introduced the winners and gave some background about the contest.

**Kennewick School District:** First place winner, Liberty Leavitt, and runner-up, Lilly Schuldheisz, zoomed in with their families. Both students are from Kennewick High School and were congratulated by Desiree Martinez, Assistant Principal of Kennewick High School.

**Pasco School District:** First place winner, Christina Valdez and runner-up Calumet Kubalek were present. Christina zoomed in with her family from Pasco. Cal was on vacation in California but was able to be honored along with Christina via Zoom. Both are students of Pasco High School and were congratulated by Jake Stueckle, Principal of Pasco High School.

**Richland School District:** First place winner, Nathan Shibley of Hanford High School and runner-up, Arianna Caicerros of Richland High attended along with family. Arianna’s aunt, Rosa Duterte, from France, and her Language Arts teacher, Erin Colclasure, joined us. They were congratulated by Rick Donahue of the Richland School Board.

The day before the Zoom presentation Christine Grantham, Janet Nail and Marilyn Perkins, dressed in their women’s suffrage attire, traveled to each home to deliver a \$1,200 check to the winners and \$500 check to the runners-up. Since Calumet Kubalek was leaving on vacation, Christine Grantham had delivered her check previously. In addition to the award checks, they also received Susan B. Anthony dollars and a certificate.

To top off the essay contest organized as part of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Women’s Right to Vote, the Centennial Committee sponsored a video contest for the winners and runners-up encompassing the topic, “Your Vote is Our Future”. The video awards of \$250 each were given to Nathan Shibley of Hanford High and Liberty Leavitt of Kennewick High School. The videos can be viewed at the League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties website.

## Celebration of 100 years of Women’s Suffrage~Marilyn Perkins

This year, there has been much richly deserved recognition of 100 years of women voting. There has also been much attention given to women and men who were denied their voting rights based on the color of their skin until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

There are two dates in August, the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup> that are associated with the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was first passed by over a 2/3’s vote in the House of Representatives in January of 1918. It failed by two votes that year in the Senate, but finally passed in June of 1919 and was sent to the states for ratification. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36<sup>th</sup> and final state needed to vote for ratification. A legislator, Harry T.



Burn, who was only twenty-three, and had planned to vote against it, received a letter from his mother telling him “Don’t forget to be a good boy and help out Mrs. Catt” and to vote for the amendment, which he did. He also became a famous part of suffrage history. It was signed into law by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby on August 26<sup>th</sup> and became a part of the Constitution. No women were invited to the signing, and no photographs were taken. Eight million women voted in the 1920 election. August 26<sup>th</sup> is now known as Women’s Equality Day. Our League has traditionally held a picnic on this date. However we agreed a zoom picnic would not be that much fun.

Several states would challenge this amendment in 1922, saying they didn’t ratify the amendment and that their state constitutions forbid women from voting. The Supreme Court unanimously ruled against them. It would take over 60 years for the 14 remaining states to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, with Mississippi being the last in 1984.

When the Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision, *Shelby County v. Holder* was handed down in 2013 saying there was no longer racial disparity in voting, and undid many of the protections of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, voter suppression has increased, so there will always be work to do to register voters and protect their voting rights.

Next year, will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment giving 18-20 year-old citizens the right to vote. More on that next year.

**Zoom Meetings** - Many of us are new to zoom or have not connected yet. Kara Perkins, daughter of Marilyn Perkins said she could help by sending out the link for people to sign on and maybe hold a short practice zoom meeting. Contact Marilyn, [jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com](mailto:jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com) if you are interested in participating.

### **Candidate Debates – Questions needed**

We are still in the planning stages for the general election candidate debates, which means we will need more questions. We still haven’t confirmed the State Attorney General’s candidate or the State Treasurer, but are somewhat optimistic. We are also hoping to feature the candidates for the Fourth Congressional District.

In addition, we will cover the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> legislative district races. Last, but not least will be the county commissioner and Superior Court Judge races for both counties.

We need more questions, some of which might need a little research and background information. We try to ask them as impartially as possible.

If you are willing to help, please contact Marilyn Perkins. If you know other people in the community who could contribute questions or suggest topics, please ask them too.

Marilyn Perkins: [jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com](mailto:jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com)

### **Recommended Reading~Val Moffitt**

Here are books you might consider reading or listening to:

*The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. Released in 2015, 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with current forward added. 250 weeks on NYT bestseller list.



*Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Released in 2015, Pulitzer finalist. Written to his son.

*Racism Without Racists* by Edwardo Bonilla-Silva. Released in 2017, in its 5<sup>th</sup> edition. I have not finished this one. There is a lot of research data that I am struggling to get through, but it serves the author's purpose--no doubt required reading for college students. This book is often quoted by other authors. I am taking a break, so it is back on my Libby app hold list for a later date.

*White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo release in 2018. Author is an antiracist educator.

*When the Truth Is All You Have* by Jim McCloskey. Released in 2020. This book focuses on the wrongly convicted. Forward written by John Grisham.

I know you may think I need to lighten up. I am sure my neighbors wonder what I am listening to when I am out weeding. There is certainly a good cause for "good trouble".

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### September and October 2020

**Board Meeting via Zoom September 10 at 6:00pm rescheduled from September 17**

**General Election Debates/Candidate Forums**

**September 16 and 17 at 7:00pm**

September 24 tentative, currently in planning stage

**September 30 at 7:00pm**

**October 1 at 7:00pm**

**October 7 at 7:00pm**

**October 8 at 7:00pm**

Email us at  
[lwv.of.bf@gmail.com](mailto:lwv.of.bf@gmail.com)

League of Women Voters of  
Benton & Franklin  
Counties  
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