



VOTER

September 2025

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message – Polly Parton

The primary forums are complete (thank-you Bev) and we are planning in-person *Meet the Candidates* meetings for fall. NWPB has been a treasured partner to bring the forums to the public but funding issues prevent this for fall. So, we are planning a *Meet the Candidates* meeting for each of our cities. Richland City Council and School Board are scheduled for Monday 9/29 at 5:30m at the Richland Library. We may include West Richland with Richland because of the shared School Director Positions. Kennewick City Council and School Board is Friday 10/3, 5:30 pm at the Union St. Library. The Pasco date will be announced soon.

Members – we need your help with this. We have a group of Board members and others doing the planning including contacting candidates. With the *Meet the Candidates* format we need multiple volunteers at each of the 3 events. You could volunteer for your city and learn a lot in the process. Email, text or call Polly to volunteer. Polly.parton@yahoo.com 509-551-3818

Check out the Calendar for events and where you can get involved. We have several tabling/voter events in September. Email or call Polly to get involved in one or more and get to know your fellow League members. We're still looking for two committee leads to recruit and confirm volunteers for our Tabling/Voter events. This is a great way to get involved.

Check out our state webpage: <https://www.lwvwa/org/>.

LWVBF Treasurer's Report – Carla Ciotti

As of July 31, 2025:

Checking is	\$7,260.19
Savings is	1,857.46
Total	\$9,117.65

Income:

Membership dues	\$ 83.68
Member donations	\$338.23

Total income: \$421.91

Expenses:

There were no expenses this month.

In July, we received dues from 3 new members and 3 membership renewals, as well as donations from four members. Thank you.

As of August 16th, 18 of the 104 members whose memberships are due on September 30th have renewed their membership.

Education Fund: The balance stands at \$8,744.54. Education Fund reports are received quarterly, so this total does not reflect recent donations 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.

LWV Membership Renewal:

Members with a September 30th renewal date received an email from Membership at LWVUS on August 1st providing a link to renew your membership. If you missed that email, you can renew your membership 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 portal.lwv.org in your browser.

At the LWV Portal you will be asked to enter your email address. 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>

Or you may call one of the following members for help with the new system: Carla Chiotti (509-946-7217), Judy Golberg (509-627-5347), Janet Nail (509-546-1467) or Diane Molleson (509-554-7317).

Please remember **there is no longer a set dues amount.** Members pay \$20 or more based on their ability. The recommended dues are \$75, which is the same as our prior dues. Our League will receive 20% of the dues amount, minus fees. We recommend that if you would like to donate to our League, please do not add it to your dues because we will only receive a fraction of it.

You may donate directly to our local league in one of three ways: continue to the second screen in the membership portal and choose the donate button, or go to the LWVBF website (<https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>) and clicking the donation button or by sending a check to LWVBF, P.O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352.

Thank you for continuing membership and support.

Table Talk on Richland City Council Redistricting – Diane Molleson

Please join us on Friday, September 12 at 2 pm in the Richland Public Library (955 Northgate Drive in Richland) for a presentation of the pros and cons of Richland's Redistricting Plan. Should Richland continue to have at-large districts? Or should it create voting districts within the city and then have each district elect its own representative to city council? This issue will be on the ballot in November. We will be in the Doris Roberts Gallery Room at the library and hope to see you there.

Naturalization Ceremony – Beverly Johnson-Torelli

The next Naturalization Ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, September 16, 2025, at 10:00 am in the Federal Building in Richland. That date also happens to be National Voter Registration Day. 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!

Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) Awareness Project – Richard Badalamente

On August 19, 2025, Richard Badalamente and Diane Molleson, representing the LWV-BF Extreme Risk Protection Order project participated in the 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. The ERPO team, in working to raise community awareness about gun violence, and about ERPOs as a proactive measure useful in preventing gun violence, is hopeful of getting BFHD to incorporate gun violence prevention as a more integral part of the needs assessment and of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) from which it is derived.

We Are in a Constitutional Crisis – Richard Badalamente

The League of Women Voters MUST be seen as a bulwark against authoritarianism. Each day is a new chink in the armor of democracy.

On April 17, 2025, Celina Stewart, CEO, and Dianna Wynn, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States, issued a press release stating that, "**Our country is in a constitutional crisis.**" Since then, things have gotten worse. According to the Brennan Center, the Trump administration's actions this year included:

- Attempting to rewrite election rules to burden voters and usurp control of election systems;
- Targeting or threatening election officials and others who keep elections free and fair;
- Supporting people who undermine election administration;
- Retreating from the federal government's role of protecting voters and the election process.

The national League is at the forefront of the most important federal and state voting rights cases across the United States, including opposition to all forms of voter suppression such as:

- Discriminatory voter ID laws;
- Attacks on voter registration;
- Last-minute Election Day barriers;
- The elimination of voting locations in underserved communities;
- Unjust voter purges and attempts to limit access to early and mail-in voting.

Through it all, the League remains non-partisan, supporting every American's freedom to vote. But recently, the League's non-partisan stance has been challenged by Texas attempting to conduct mid-cycle [redistricting](#), and California Governor Gavin Newsom's effort to redistrict to offset any Republican gains.

On August 13, 2025, the LWV of California wrote to Governor Newsom expressing their "strong opposition" to his redistricting plan. Governor Newsom counters that "We must fight fire with fire." The League has a long history of opposing partisan redistricting, aka, gerrymandering. On its website, the League notes that it continues to sue to protect voters and ensure equitable redistricting. So, the League isn't just opposing Governor Newsom's threat of partisan gerrymandering, it's opposing gerrymandering in general.

That said, people are rightly concerned about President Trump's effort to rig the midterms by getting states, led by Republican legislatures, to redraw their political maps to give Republicans an advantage in the coming election. The League makes it clear it will fight this in court. But the League will not endorse partisan gerrymandering in Democratic-led states as a quid-pro-quo; that would forever harm its ability to act as an objective referee of voting rights. So, what will the League do to resist Trump's attacks on the Constitution?

The League has [said what it's doing](#) (Read about their Unite & Rise 8.5 campaign.) Here are some actions members can take:

- Commit to action: [Sign our commitment](#) to Unite and Rise for democracy!
- Protect equal voting rights: Tell your representatives to support the [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act!](#)
- “Turn Up the Heat” on elected officials: [Connect directly with your representatives](#) on the issues that matter (like their vote on the ["One Big Beautiful Bill"](#)) via Town Halls and other opportunities.
- Raise your voice about illegal deportations: join mobilizations around immigrant rights and due process with organizations like the [National Partnership for New Americans](#), [United We Dream](#), and others.
- Act locally: Join local organizations like [your state or local League](#) to act on the issues that matter in your community.

LWV-BF members are, of course, free to speak out and take action they feel is necessary in defending democracy. But any partisan actions must be under their own name, not that of the League.

Two Workshops Being Offered by LWV of Washington - Judy Golberg

WANT TO KNOW HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR SYSTEM 2 BRAIN?

Register now for The Power of Critical Thinking Zoom workshop on Sept. 9th.

Critical thinking helps us analyze information to make sound conclusions or informed choices. It helps us wade through the deluge of information we're flooded with every day.

But critical thinking takes effort. It requires us to engage our System 2 Brain and understand how our System 1 Brain affects us.

Learn more by attending **The Power of Critical Thinking from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 9.** This interactive, online workshop – presented by skilled League facilitators, each with more than 20 years experience teaching media and news literacy – will help you become a savvy consumer of news and information.

[Register now for The Power of Critical Thinking.](#)

[Get more information](#) about Media & News Literacy: Educational Workshops, including what you need to do before attending.

Register now for The Letter To The Editor Workshop on September 16th.

Registration is now open for a hands-on, online workshop at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 16, that will provide guidance to improve your letter-writing skills.

[Register at this link.](#)

State Advocacy Director Cynthia Stewart emphasized that letters to the editor are a smart way to help respond to the increased attacks on our democratic system of government.

Stewart emphasized that the privilege of speaking – or writing – and identifying oneself as a representative of the League is limited to the state president, Local League presidents or their specified representatives.

“But that doesn’t mean every member can’t take pen to paper or boot up her computer and express her thoughts about the importance of voting rights, reproductive rights, being a nation of immigrants and ethical behavior,” she said.

Democracy Power-Up!

The letter-to-the-editor workshop and The Power of Critical Thinking are part of LWVWA’s “Democracy Power-Up!” series. These learning opportunities are designed to help League members across the state respond to the constitutional crisis and defend democracy.

American Revolution Presentation – Polly Parton

Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025
6:30 – 8 pm
WSU Tri-Cities East Auditorium
2710 Crimson Way, Richland

Northwest Public Broadcasting, together with Washington State University Tri-Cities, presents ‘The American Revolution: Screening & Community Conversation.’ The event will feature a showing of the new Ken Burns documentary, *The American Revolution: Reflections on the American experience* by local students and community members, and presentations by storyteller Arthur Broady and keynote speaker Lawrence B. A. Hatter, WSU associate professor of history. This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be provided, while supplies last. Doors open at 6 pm. First come, first seated. (RSVP link to come)

LWV-BF Book Club – Polly Parton

The Book of Lost Names by Kristin Harmel is our September book. A historical fictional story of Eva in Nazi-occupied France who forges identification documents for Jewish children escaping to Switzerland. The secret book records their true identity.

In August we read *On Desperate Ground* by Hampton Sides. The 17-day battle in the frozen mountains of North Korea in 1950 reveals the brutal cost of war. I’m reminded that we maintain over 25,000 U.S. troops in South Korea almost 75 years later as part of the Mutual Defense Treaty.

Join us the 2nd Monday each month (Sept. 8th) 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. Polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509 -551-3818

Calendar Of Events

September

- 8 Book Club via Zoom
- 9 Power of Critical Thinking Workshop via Zoom
- 12 Table Talk – Richland City Council Redistricting
- 16 Letter to the Editor Online Workshop
- 16 LWVBF Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting via Zoom, 6 pm
- 16 Naturalization Ceremony, Richland Federal Building, 10 am
- 29 Richland Candidates Meet and Greet

October

- 3 Kennewick Candidates Meet and Greet
- 23 Presentation on the American Revolution, WSU Tri-Cities

Email: lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

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

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

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