



VOTER

April 2024

President's Message ~ Diane Molleson

In honor of Women's History Month in March and Black History Month in February, we hosted a Table Talk at the Richland Public Library with Ashley Jenkins as our Guest speaker. Her powerful talk highlighted her personal "sheroes": Fanny Lou Hamer, sharecropper turned civil rights activist, Eleanor Roosevelt and Maya Angelou.

Our League hosted numerous voter registration drives this past month at the following locations: Mid-Columbia Library on Union Street, the Keewaydin Park Library, the West Richland Library, and the Pasco Spring Carnival. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who participated: Pattie Blakeman, Chris Grantham, Klara Hulick, Beverly-Johnson Torelli, Katie Larson, Janet Nail, and Barb Puigh.

We are gearing up for our Annual Meeting on May 21 at CG Public House in Kennewick where we will announce our scholarship winners, pass the proposed budget, approve a new slate of officers and a program of work. All members are encouraged to attend, so please mark your calendars for May 21 at 5:30pm. Please note the date has changed from May 16 to May 21.

In preparation for the Primary Election on August 6, the State League is planning a series of in-person candidate forums to be held throughout the state. Our League will be hosting the forum for the Attorney General in Richland in June (location and exact date to be confirmed). We are very excited and hope for a large crowd. Stay tuned for more details.

Communications Committee

We are pleased to announce that Kirby Amacher has volunteered to chair the League's new Communications Committee. She will oversee and provide up-to-date information on our Webpage, Facebook, and newly launched Instagram account with the help of Bree Bowen, Judy Golberg, Carrie Hallquist, Lynn Harrison and Klara Hulick. Bree will continue to manage our media contacts with radio stations

and newspapers. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact Kirby at Steelhead1107@msn.com or Judy Golberg at jgolberg@charter.net
State Council and National Convention

The State League (LWVWA) is planning its **State Council in Lacey, WA May 31-through June 2** (May 31 is optional). Our League can send three delegates and there is the option to attend in person or virtually. Those who do not sign up as delegates can be observers. The LWVWA will be posting more information on Council soon. Check lwvwa.org for updates.

The LWVUS's **National Convention will be held June 27-30** at the Washington Hilton in **Washington, D.C.** This will be a hybrid event, and League members can attend in-person or online. Our League can send three delegates. So far, we have two members planning to attend, and we would be happy to send a third. For more information, see <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/first-call-2024-national-convention>

We have money in our budget to pay our members' registration fees. These events are a wonderful way to learn more about League. If you are interested in attending one (or both) these gatherings, please let Diane Molleson (molleson@frontier.com) know.

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

As of February 29, 2024:

Checking is:	\$7,205.37
Savings is:	\$1,857.20
Total:	\$9,062.57

Income:	\$000.00
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Expenses:	\$21.00
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\$23.70 was paid to CG Public House for Andy Miller's lunch for the league birthday lunch.

Membership and Dues:

Current membership is 103. We have 12 students and 14 second-in-household. In January 2025, National will be taking over membership and dues. We will still have our membership drive in September, and we will still pay Per Member Payments (PMP's) through June 2025. Details are still being worked out at the national and state levels. Stay tuned.

Budget:

Carla Chiotti, JoAnne Dimond, Janet Nail and the Treasurer met on March 14 and developed the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget. The preliminary budget was presented at the March Board meeting.

Education Fund: \$10,640.00

Michael Martin is the current State Ed Fund Treasurer and per the latest report \$10,640.00 is our total. We had an anonymous donation of \$2,000.00 for a second scholarship which is not reflected in this total. If you would like to donate to the State Education fund for scholarships, please make your check out to LWVWA Education Fund, attention Ed Fund Treasurer. The address is 1511 Third Ave Suite 900, Seattle, WA 98101. Earmark it for our Benton-Franklin League scholarship fund.

League Advocacy ~ Lora Rathbone

LWV-WA 2024 WA State Legislative Success

Here is a list of most of the issue areas followed by the LWVWA Advocacy team, with an example of two bills that passed in each issue. Details on these bills and many more are on the LWVWA website <https://lwvwa.org/current-issues-2024>

Many thanks to all who participated by signing in pro, testifying, or sending comments to their legislators. Now is the time to thank them. The voting record is given below for the 8th, 15th, and 16th legislative districts.

Elections

1241 Addressing Harassment of Election Workers - makes threats to workers a class C felony. The 8th, 15th and 16th legislative districts senators and representatives all voted yes.

5890 Reducing ballot reject rates- through updates to ballot curing, canvassing, reporting, and outreach processes. Unanimous.

Education

2331 Procedures required before books can be removed - to protect materials from arbitrary censorship. Senator Torres - yes; Senators Boehnke & Dozier, and all representatives- no.

5462 Dual and tribal language education to update inclusive materials, including for LGBTQIA+ individuals. The 8th, 15th and 16th legislative districts senators and representatives all voted no.

Housing and Homelessness

1892 Workforce housing accelerator program. To provide loans to organizations to develop housing for low-income households. Effective 06/06/2024. Unanimous.

1998 Concerning co-living housing. Allows shared housing where residents have their own bedroom but share living space. Effective 06/06/2024. House: unanimous; all our senators- yes.

Health Care

SB 5986 Protecting consumers from out-of-network health care service charges. Effective 06/06/2024. Unanimous.

2SHB 1929 Supporting young adults following inpatient behavioral health treatment. Provides transitional housing. Effective 06/06/2024. Unanimous.

Criminal Justice

HB 2099 Ensuring that people in state care and custody have valid IDs before discharged. Senators Dozier and Torres – Yes; Boehnke- no. All 8th, 15th, 16th representatives- no.

SB 6009 Prohibiting the use of hog-tying by law enforcement. Senate: unanimous; House: all voted yes except Representative Klicker.

Environment

HB 1012 Creating an extreme weather response grant program. Funds for communities with emergency management. but few resources. Effective 06/06/2024. Unanimous. Senators Boehnke and Representative Sandlin voted yes, the rest of our senators and representatives voted no.

HB 1368 Zero Emissions School Buses. For healthier air for children and reduced lifecycle operating costs. The 8th, 15th and 16th legislative districts senators and representatives all voted No.

Redistricting Reform Task Force ~ Leona Hassing

Finalized on Friday 03/25/2024 with a Court Order from Judge Lasnik, new maps are the remedy from the Soto Palmer v Hobbs decision. Despite a last-minute attempt by the Intervenor-Defendant's to put forth a simpler change, the Plaintiff's 3A map was adjusted for technical fixes and made law in Map 3B. 13 districts, (2,5,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16,17,20,31), in 15 counties are affected. Most significant changes are to districts 14 and 15.

Over half a million people will change districts and 5 legislators are no longer in the district they represent. The Office of the Secretary of State has confirmed that these

lines will displace Senators Hawkins(12), Torres(15), King(14), Representatives Corry(14) and Mosbrucker(14). Senator Torres will finish her term.

The decision is being appealed to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals for a stay. The election process will move forward with this map towards the 2024 election unless there is a ruling.

Join the Redistricting Reform Task Force for a briefing on the Washington State's new legislative maps.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?
WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?

New Legislative Map Briefings

Wednesday, 04/10/2024 6:30pm-8:00pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81886694099?pwd=TEhZSDRxMFNuRUUpYd0VLSkgzdFRvdz09>

Saturday, 04/13/24 10:30am-12:00noon

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89028354082?pwd=VVVsUitoeFRHNGw5TzRMbGRkYTIxQT09>

To view the new legislative map click on <https://crosscut.com/briefs/2024/03/us-appeals-court-wont-block-was-new-legislative-district-map>

Membership, Engagement, Leadership Development (MELD) ~ Leona Hassing

Eight members attended the MELD Pod 4 meeting with Lunell Haught, facilitator, Nancy Halverson, Board liaison and representatives from Bellingham/Whatcom, Clallam, Kitsap, Thurston, and Benton/Franklin counties.

The meeting started with members sharing their League's activities and the development of ideas. Individual members shared what is going well, and what they need from state league.

Topics included but were not limited to tabling, DEI activities, involvement of new members, "Coffee with League", observer corps, personal outreach, political forums, civics ed, retention of members and youth involvement.

The state board will be discussing how the League can moderate a forum on certain initiatives when LWVWA has a position "against" each of the Initiatives. Of the six state initiatives that gathered enough signatures to receive action, three were

passed during the legislative session and three will be on the November ballot. The league has experienced pushback on the topic, thus the reason to review the policy.

In preparation for Council, Nancy, board liaison, was seeking suggestions and ideas to incorporate into the MELD workshop. She received many worthy ideas to pursue.

LWVBF Book Club ~ Polly Parton

Major Pettigrew's Last Stand by Helen Simonson is our April Book

In March we discussed *Hello Beautiful* by Ann Napolitano. It had mixed reviews with a largely female cast (sisters) and William suffering from long-term depression, however I appreciated the strong family story and acknowledging mental issues (especially depression) may be a long-term challenge for families. May will be *The Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles and June is *The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonasson. We will be selecting our next book list soon. Let's get reading!

Join us Monday, April 8th, 6:00 pm via Zoom by emailing or texting Polly Parton to be added to the link. We keep the discussion to one hour.

Polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509 -551-3818

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 8, 6:00pm ~ Book club via Zoom

April 16, 6:00pm ~ Business/Board Meeting via Zoom

May 21, 5:30pm ~ Annual Meeting at CG Public House, Kennewick

May 31-June 2 ~ LWVWA Council in Olympia (May 31 optional)

June 28-June 30 ~ LWVUS National Convention in Washington DC

Email us at:

lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

Mailing Address:

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

League Webpage:

www.lwv-bf.org

OFFICERS:

President: Diane Molleson
1st Vice President: Peggy Gregory
2nd Vice President: Sue Thornton
Secretary: Carla Chiotti
Treasurer: Shirley Sonnichsen
Immediate Past President: Bev
Johnson-Torelli

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Leona Hassing
Karen Miller
Janet Nail
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APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

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