



# VOTER

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

August 2020

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Brooke DuBois

Janet Nail

Marilyn Perkins

Lora Rathbone

Ann Roberts

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League of Women Voters  
of Benton & Franklin  
Counties  
P. O. Box 765  
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## President's Message

Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Here's August.....! That said, depending on one's perspective, it's either August already, or it feels like it's taken years to get here. In the meantime, our League has had a busy summer making democracy work. The planning and implementation of the virtual primary Candidate Forums culminated on July 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> when they were aired on Northwest Public Broadcasting--NWPB2020. (The September Voter will contain information about the general election Candidate Forums.) Concurrently, the essay contest "Your Vote is Our Future" took place, and the winners from each district will be honored at a virtual ceremony on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

We are pleased to announce that Lunell Haught, the State League President, will be speaking at the event. Thanks to all the League members who contributed to one or both of these worthwhile efforts. They include:

Kay Ottem, JoAnne Dimond, Marilyn Perkins, Ruvine Jimenez, Shirley Sonnichsen, Alice Allison, Leona Hassing, Sabiha Khan, Judy Golberg, JoAnn Bengtson, Janet Nail, Christine Grantham, Val Moffitt, Shari Gasperino, Bree Bowen, Diane Molleson, Peggy Gregory, and Lora Rathbone. I apologize if I missed anyone.

The Board Retreat was held on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our discussion included topics for Table Talks, as well as volunteer opportunities for members. A list of the volunteer opportunities, including Observer Core options, will be forthcoming to encourage all members to get involved.

In addition, if you have an interest in preparing to testify for redistricting after the Census is completed, please let me know ASAP at [sasjoh@aol.com](mailto:sasjoh@aol.com). The goal is for ten Leagues across the state to act as hosts for the training sessions. Karen Crowley from Speak Up School gave a presentation regarding this matter at our June 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Her Power Point is being sent out following the Voter publication to provide everyone with the details. **August 20th is the deadline for a commitment.** Judy Golberg and Kay Ottem have participated in this process in the past, and they both highly recommend our participation.

When you read Judy Golberg's National Convention summary later in this issue of the Voter, you will see a resolution against systemic racism. Coincidentally, on July 16<sup>th</sup>, Miriam Kerzner made a presentation to the Board eliciting curriculum help/input for a Black Lives Matter public leadership class. If you or someone you know are interested, please contact her at: [miriamkerzner@gmail.com](mailto:miriamkerzner@gmail.com)

In closing, I would encourage you to regularly visit our League's website and Facebook page. The information is helpful and keeps members up to date. Also, if you go to the Benton County Auditor's voting site on N. Columbia Center Boulevard in Richland, you will see the LWVBF Suffragist cutout, the TRY's, a Vote411.org sign and other relevant information displayed there. We hope that the items will be of service to the voting public, and we appreciate the collaboration between the League and the Auditor's office.

## Treasurer's Report

Shirley Sonnichsen

*At June 30, 2020:*

Checking is	\$3,235.69
Savings is	<u>\$1,856.52</u>
Total	<u>\$5,092.21</u>

### **Income: \$750**

In June we received \$250 cash from Richland Kiwanis and \$500 from GESA. A check was written to LWVWA Education Fund for \$750. We also have a \$650 grant from the State League. We will ask for this grant money and the \$3,250 in the Ed fund in July. The \$500 from Pasco Education and the \$500 from Kennewick Kiwanis are not going through our League books but will go to the student winners in their districts directly. Grand total of Essay Contest Money is \$5,000. Our League's balance in the State League Education Fund should be ~\$4,122.

### **Expenses: \$1300**

A check was written to the LWV-WA Education Fund for \$750 under the approved project for our High School Essay Contest. We also purchased 50 "The State We're In" books from LWVWA for a total of \$550. A classroom set of 30 were purchased for \$330 and State offered to sell us 20 more for \$11 each so we bought the extra 20. A teacher's guide came with the classroom set. Bev and Chuck picked up the books for distribution.

**Membership:** We have 3 new members, Theresa Buczek, Jeanne Reardon and Wyndal Espinosa to bring our membership to 63!

*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**

**Advocacy:** League of Women Voters Fighting Voter Suppression

The LWV has suggestions on how we can help fight voter suppression, such as holding our lawmakers accountable when they try to institute last-minute Election Day barriers, or by calling our senators to include \$4 billion in funding to secure our elections in the next stimulus package. Learn more at:

<https://www.lwv.org/voting-rights/fighting-voter-suppression>

# Centennial Committee-Christine Grantham and Janet Nail

## Centennial Celebration Essay Contest

Our essay contest “Your Vote is Our Future” as part of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Women’s Right to Vote has ended. We thank our dedicated judges for their time and effort: Bree Bowen, Dan Clark, Larry Gregory, Bev Johnson-Torelli, Rick Larson, Diane Molleson and Matt Taylor.

The students of the Kennewick, Pasco and Richland School Districts wrote some excellent essays. We are proud of our contestants; our future is in good hands.

The winners are:

**Kennewick School District:** First Place - Liberty Leavitt and Runner-up – Lilly Schuldheisz (Both are students of Kennewick High School)

**Pasco School District:** First Place – Christina Valdez and Runner-up – Calumet Kubalek (Both are students of Pasco High School)

**Richland School District:** First Place – Nathan Shibley (Hanford) and Runner-up – Arianna Caiceros (Richland High)

The good news is our fundraising continued after our essay launch. The actual award will be \$1,200 for the first place winners and \$500 for the runners-up. We regret that our Centennial Banquet where the awards were to be presented had to be cancelled. However, we are planning three Zoom presentations on August 4<sup>th</sup>, one for each school district. **If you would like to view the Zoom presentation, please let us know by August 3 and we will send you the link.**

Email: Janet: [janet@janetnail.com](mailto:janet@janetnail.com) or Chris : [rrgrantham@live.com](mailto:rrgrantham@live.com)

Thanks to these local donors the League of Women Voters was able to provide Tri-Cities high school students with a meaningful award for their entry in our essay contest celebrating 100 years of women’s suffrage.

- Benton County Democratic Central Committee - \$1,500
- League of Women Voters of Washington - \$650
- Kiwanis Club of Kennewick - \$600
- Community First Bank - \$600
- Kiwanis Club of Richland- \$500
- GESA Credit Union - \$500
- HAPO Credit Union - \$500
- Pasco Education Foundation - \$500
- Roof Maxx of the Tri-Cities - \$100
- Anonymous Donor - \$100
- Carol Larkin - \$50

# National Convention

## Report from LWV 54<sup>th</sup> Convention – Women Power the Vote for 100 Years- Judy Golberg

LWV National Convention was held June 25-27 in the comforts of our own homes via Zoom. That meant more of us could “attend” without the added time or money required to travel to Washington, DC. Unfortunately, that also meant we didn’t get to travel to D.C. nor see fellow League members in person.

Along with the usual business of passing a budget, making a few changes to the Bylaws and electing a new Board of Directors and Nominating Committee, the list of Programs passed or reaffirmed, Resolutions, and Concurrences are listed below. Concurrence is the acceptance of a study that has already been approved by one or more States and when approved at national convention becomes part of LWV’s program.

Of note, the newly elected President of LWV is Deborah Ann Turner, MD, JD from Nebraska. Deborah served on the LWVUS National Board from 2016-present. She served as vice president of LWV Iowa from 2011–2015 and President of LWV Des Moines Metropolitan from 2010–2015. Deborah is the Chair of the LWVUS DEI Committee, and is a member of the LWVUS Governance Committee. She obtained her JD from Drake University and her MD from University of Iowa. She has been a Gynecologic Oncologist for 30 years. Deborah served on the Board Regents for the State of Iowa (1999-2006), and was entered into the Iowa Women’s Hall of Fame in 2013.

Those items approved:

- Abolish the electoral college by Constitutional amendment as a LWVUS action focus for the 2020-2022 biennium. (The League has had a position on direct popular vote since 1970.)
- Concurred with New Mexico to restrict the transfer of Federal Public Land.
- Approved the Voter Representation/Electoral Systems Concurrence to support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable and enhance representation for all voters be adopted.
- Reaffirmed the LWV commitment to Immigration reform, for efficient, expeditious immigrant entry into the United States. The League stands in solidarity with immigrants and our immigrant rights community partners. Congress must take immediate action to pass common sense, fair immigration policies that end the crisis at our borders, end the separation of families, ensure their health and safety, and provide a clear path to citizenship, including DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) young people.
- Resolved that the League advocate against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement, and call for prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism, and the harm that it causes. Additionally, the LWV resolved that the League help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident; that Black, Indigenous and all people of color (BIPOC) deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done, so that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and gender identity or sexual orientation we may truly become a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all".

- Approved the motion for the LWVUS call for an immediate, wide-scale, mobilization by the United States, to restore, protect and fund an ecologically sustainable environment and climate, based on an interrelated approach that is environmentally sound, science based, just and equitable, dedicated to adequately addressing the scale and speed of the global climate change emergency.

## Report from LWVUS 54<sup>th</sup> National Convention - Beverly Johnson-Torelli

In addition to the items Judy mentioned, the following were some of the other topics covered at the National Convention:

- **Privacy and Cybersecurity Today**--Given the importance of this topic to almost every entity in the US, the LWV of Oregon is targeting the 2022 LWVUS convention for Concurrence on this issue.
- **Using the Power of Music to GOTV**--Music videos were shared from a new musical, PERFECT 36, which features Carrie Chapman Catt and takes place in Nashville during the 24 hours leading up to the vote to ratify.
- **Rebuilding Trust in Each Other to Save Our Civil Society**--Dr. Carolyn Lukensmeyer, Executive Director Emerita of the National Institute for Civil Discourse, with 30 years of experience in civil discourse and democracy building, was the featured speaker. It was both interesting and enlightening to hear Carolyn speak on this timely topic
- **Improving Civics Education and Strengthening Democracy with the Harvard Case Study Method**--David Moss, Harvard Business School Professor, uses the case study method to teach US history in high schools around the country. This has made Civics truly relevant for his students. Currently, his project has taken hold in 44 states and with 63 League chapters.
- **Youth Voter Registration and Education Programs**--High school voter registration programs were discussed, including the obstacles that COVID-19 brings. Two Leagues (one large and one small) have registered over 20,000 high school student voters starting with the Class of 2017.
- **Engaging Non-Voters & Seldom Voters in Lowest Turnout Precincts**--Before the 2018 midterms, the LWV of Port Washington Manhasset (NY) did a thorough analysis of the voter precincts in their area. Then they focused on 5 of the lowest turnout precincts, encouraging other grassroots organizers to do the same. They did comprehensive canvassing, encouraged potential voters to “stroll to the polls,” and partnered with students to do door hangers. In 2018, turnout rose by as much as 30 points. In 2019, they canvassed voters who now encourage others to vote.
- **America’s Choices in the Health Care Debate-Defining the Priorities, Understanding the Costs, and What We Can Do**-- Seven Leagues, including LWV of Washington, focused on the urgency of Health Care Reform including the impact of COVID-19, the major proposals for change and which one(s) fit best with the League’s position.

Overall, the 54<sup>th</sup> National Convention was a worthwhile experience. Thank you for the opportunity to represent our League as a voting delegate.

## Recommend Reading-Val Moffitt

I am currently listening to *The Color of Compromise, The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* by Jemar Tisby. Regardless of your faith walk or possibly even lack of interest in religious life, I recommend this book as a timely read for historical background for much of today's political divisiveness, social unrest and as tool to help us move forward (as Christians and/or Americans).

Released in January 2019, this book is not intended as a shaming, but as a review of where we have come from to provide a better understanding of people of faith's reactions, actions, or lack thereof and a hope for better days ahead-with our willingness to act. Churches often were the center of society acting as schools, town halls, meeting houses, courthouses, etc...during the week. They had/can have great influence on public matters. There is also a study guide and video series, but I have not looked at those materials. I am sure there could be a way to use them for a class via technology if there was an interest.

I hope you are keeping cool and safe. BE WELL

**August 2020**

**Centennial Essay Presentations via Zoom August 4**

**Board Meeting via Zoom August 20**