



VOTER

August 2021

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Candidate Forums: Thanks to everyone who helped produce the LWV Candidate Forums. It was a true collaborative effort with our media partners: KTNW (Tom Hungate), NWPB (Greg Mills and Matt Loveless - moderator, Murrow College), the City of Richland (Mark Ingham), the City of Pasco (Jon Funfar) and KNDU anchor Tracci Dial - moderator. Thanks also to Ruvine Jimenez, who gave the opening remarks on behalf of the League, Kay Ottem and Jo Anne Dimond, who contacted the candidates multiple times, Judy Golberg, who posted the forums on the League's Facebook and website, and to the Badger Club, who posted the forums on their website. Also, thanks to all the League members who contributed questions and/or topics for questions. We couldn't have done it without you! Hopefully, we achieved the goal of helping voters make informed decisions on their primary ballots for August 3rd.

Women's Equality Day - August 26th: A memorial was dedicated at the Occoquan Regional Park in Lorton, Virginia by the **Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association** on May 16, 2021. It permanently commemorates the decades long fight for the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote in 1920. The dedication was originally planned for 2020 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary. According to the information sent to the League, "the location was selected because of its proximity to the former Occoquan Workhouse where dozens of Suffragists were incarcerated in 1917 for picketing the White House. The inhumane treatment of those brave women became public knowledge and in turn, became one of the significant turning points in the fight for the 19th Amendment. Of course, the history of the fight for women's suffrage is much longer and broader with many turning points less celebrated but equally significant." The memorial is made of 19 different stations covering the entire movement from 1848-1920. Guests are greeted by a bronze, life-size statue of Alice Paul, who led the Women's National Party. It also features statues of Mary Church Terrell, NAACP co-founder, and Carrie

Chapman Catt, president of the National American Suffrage Association and founder of the League of Women Voters.” Our picnic on August 26th, the day the 19th Amendment was signed, will celebrate Women’s Equality Day. The fight continues today for every citizen’s right to vote.

50th Anniversary of the 26th Amendment: Our picnic will also celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the 26th Amendment, which was passed in July of 1971. We invite all members to join us. The passage of the amendment was largely influenced by the fact that 18-year-olds were being called to fight the Vietnam war, but the voting age was 21. The irony of being asked to potentially sacrifice their lives for their country but not being allowed to vote was questioned. Please learn more about this at the link below:

https://www.lwv.org/blog/celebrating-50th-anniversary-26th-amendment?utm_source=LeagueUpdate&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=07152021

LWVWA Civics Education Projects about Public Health Districts (PHD’s) -Recently, the League was contacted by Jody Disney. She is part of the team working on the PHD Civics Ed program that LWVWA approved at convention. She is reaching out to health – related issues committees or individual members who have a special interest in health. If you of you are interested, please contact her at: jodyannette1@gail.com or (520) 468-9499.

The Next 100 Years Defending Democracy June 24th-28th LWVWA Virtual Convention- Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Some key highlights that resonated with me as a delegate were as follows:

- Jerry Price, National Board-Certified Teacher, Social Studies Program Supervisor, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), spoke on “Civics Education in Washington State.” He was quite complimentary to the League of Women Voters as a partner to OSPI, especially in regard to the development of the books “The State We’re In: Washington.” Originally for secondary students, a book for the elementary level is now being made available. Teacher Guides are included with class sets. Mr. Price credits the partnership between OSPI, the League, and several other partners for the fact that a separate one semester class in Civics Ed is now going to be required at the high school level.
- Washington’s Public Hospital Districts and Their Role in Your Local Community’s Health Care System Program of Work. - This was a caucus regarding a Recommended Program of Work proposal presented by the Clallam LWV Healthcare Committee proposal. The goal is the provide access

to needed local healthcare through (a) Affordable healthcare for all (b) Local availability of all legal services, e.g., reproductive health care, end of life services, mental health, etc. (c) Maintaining Olympic Medical Center as a public secular hospital. Public Hospital Districts are formed by a vote of local residents and are governed by an elected Board of Commissioners. Nearly half of all hospitals in Washington State are Public Hospital Districts. All but a few are in rural or frontier areas. Thirty-one of them are Critical Access Hospitals.

- **Caucus on Privacy and Cybersecurity.** The presenters stressed that these issues have become a critical concern for information and communication technologies (ICTs). Legislation has been introduced across the U.S., yet the LWV has not adopted a privacy or cybersecurity position statement, a prerequisite to the League’s meaningful participation in policy dialogues. A draft of a Concurrence Resolution Model on Privacy and Cybersecurity was included.
- **Bylaws** - There was considerable controversy regarding one bylaw in particular, although it eventually passed. The LWVWA Board will now have staggered terms, which will help with the mentorship of newer members. However, it adds “electing officers and directors” to the duties of the council meeting in even-numbered years. This also increases the number of delegates present required for quorum at Council. If the number of delegates to council increases, the quorum must logically increase as well. Therefore, the cost of hosting Council may equal that of Convention since sending more delegates increases the cost of expenses. This may put a greater burden on local Leagues, especially if these meetings are held in person. An additional impact may be the change of Council from an educational format to one more similar to Convention.

Treasurer’s Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

At Fiscal Year End June 30, 2021:

Checking is:	\$5,791.45
Savings is:	\$1,856.70
Total:	\$7,648.15

Income: \$75.00
 We received dues for Muriel Templeton.

Expenses: \$36.00

Peggy Gregory was reimbursed for the rental of the Highlands Grange Picnic Shelter, located at the park by the Mid-Columbia Library on Union Street in Kennewick.

Membership and Dues:

We have 82 members including 7 students, 8 with second in household.

Education Fund: At the end of June, the total Ed fund is \$2,522. \$1,618 was in memory of Marilyn Perkins.

A new fiscal year begins July 1, 2021.

Help Wanted ~ Judy Golberg

1. Administrator for LWV of Benton & Franklin Counties Facebook page.
2. Also available—lessons and responsibility for adding items to LWVB-F webpage. The software for webpage can do so much more than we are doing due to the lack of time on my part. Please contact me if interested or have more questions. Judy Golberg, 509-627-5347 or jgolberg@charter.net

LWVWA 2021 State Convention ~ Diane Molleson

The LWVWA's state convention was held June 24-28, online. The theme was The Next 100 Years: Defending Democracy.

The convention consisted of plenary sessions where delegates discussed and ultimately voted on the state League's budget, proposed Bylaw changes, elected new officers, and approved the Program of Work. In addition, there were workshops and caucuses on a wide range of topics from cybersecurity to the decline of local and regional news. The caucuses can be viewed on the state League's website on the 2021 Convention Portal: <https://lwwwa.org/c2021Portal>

Here are highlights from some of the caucuses:

Public Hospital Districts (PHDs): Public Hospital Districts receive little publicity, but there are 57 PHDs in the state, and they are paid for out of a miniscule portion of our property taxes. With hospital associations becoming increasingly controlled by religious entities, a PHD could offer services a religious provider doesn't. The session explored the role PHDs have in the local community's health care system. This topic, led by the LWV of Clallam County, was approved as an educational program.

Climate Change Legislation in the WA State 2021 Session: Marty Gibbons, the Climate issue chair for the LWVWA, described the principal climate bills that passed and the continuing legislative and regulatory hurdles that remain.

Deliberative Democracy and Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR): Kathy Sakahara explained the CIR process and its role in providing voters with objective, accurate information on initiatives. She also led a lively discussion on the ways deliberative democracy can lead to less political polarization, more understanding and better-informed decisions—and better-informed citizens.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Washington: We broke up into small groups to share what our Leagues were doing re. DEI. I was paired with members from Thurston and Clark counties whose DEI work included a book group; working with Cielo, a resource center and community hub for Latino immigrants (Thurston League), outreach to tribal members; and co-sponsoring events with other groups at the Lacey Cultural Event Hub (Clark County), among other ideas.

I was impressed by the Washington Leagues' passion, professionalism, and openness to ideas. It was fun to “see” members from all over the state, even if it was on Zoom, and it was an honor to be one of the four delegates representing our League.

Observer Corps ~ Diane Molleson

The LWVBF has an Observer Corps where members attend and observe the workings of local governmental agencies with rule-making authority, such as school boards, city councils, ports, irrigation districts, and library boards, among others. Observers attend the meetings of these agencies and report their observations to the League.

We currently have members observing the Richland and West Richland city council and the Richland city planning commission. We would welcome additional observers.

If you would like to become part of our Observer Corps, or just want more information, please contact Diane Molleson at molleson@frontier.com

Letter to the Editor Tri-City Herald ~ Diane Molleson

Redistricting is Underway. Below is the letter to the editor submitted to the Tri-City Herald July 19.

The redistricting process is underway in Washington state and the Redistricting Commission needs your input. Every 10 years, after the federal census, Washington state redraws the boundaries of congressional and legislative electoral districts to ensure each district represents an equal number of residents. Our population has grown by more than 14% since 2010, and district lines will shift to reflect this growth.

Responsibility for drawing new maps rests with the Washington State Redistricting Commission, which consists of four voting members - two Democrats and two Republicans - and a fifth, nonvoting chairperson selected by the commissioners. The Redistricting Commission's site: <https://www.redistricting.wa.gov> offers many ways to provide public input: testifying at a virtual public meeting (July 24), emailing, or mailing comments, or voice mail. Comments in any language are welcome.

The League of Women Voters has created tools to help residents craft effective personal testimony. You can find many resources on their Speakup website <https://lwvwa.org/speakup>. The state League will present a mapping recommendation to the commission. They are hosting listening sessions regionally and statewide to get feedback from community members on draft versions of these maps. To follow this process, see <https://lwvwa.org/redistricting>

Please join us in advocating for maps that fairly represent our changing demographics.

The League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties

LWVUS ~ Judy Golberg

If you haven't already signed up to receive the bi-monthly publication from LWVUS *League Update*, it is simple to do. Just click on http://participate.lwv.org/signup_page/league-update and your national League information will be delivered directly to your email address.

LWVWA 2021 State Convention ~ Polly Parton

Virtual State convention hit at the height of the extreme heat. It was a welcome respite from my forced home confinement as I enjoyed and learned from many varied topics. A few of my favorites were:

- *Civics Ed for Adults*— adult learning can be partnerships/presentations at libraries, discussions groups at local malls, social media posts and ‘Coffee with League’ are venues for promoting civil discussion and learning. A review of political jargon and vocabulary could be helpful. Civic refresher courses for new releases from jail have been done. Duties and responsibilities of elected officials could be summarized at the start of candidate forums for a fuller understanding of these positions.
- *Deliberative Democracy and Citizens’ Initiative Review (CIR)*- Kathy Sakahara did a great job explaining the in-depth CIR process and the value it adds to our voter pamphlet in summarizing pros and cons of initiatives.
- Dr. Margo Hill told a passionate story of her native American great-grandmother and her difficult path to success, the need to support women (especially indigenous) and how crimes were not (and still not?) fully pursued.
- *Washington State Local and Regional News Study*- the decline of local and regional journalism impacts our partisanship as national news focuses on controversy and political differences for ratings. Community involvement, community health and emerging disease discovery depend on local news. Fewer candidates challenge incumbents for local office with less local news. What can be done to address this such as, tax credits for journalist sustainability and promotion of non-profit news? This was approved as a state study.
- Katherine Murphy presented an emotional and loving Story Corps short film of a daughter and father working through their sharp political differences and the need to address (not avoid) and accept each other.
- *Being an Ally in Our Diverse State* - Am I aware of silent practices that impact native Americans, trans populations, those with unseen disabilities? How can I be an ally to advocate for multicultural perspectives in a multi-issue society? Overcoming my fear of getting it wrong is key for me to learn from and get involved with groups with diverse issues, views, and challenges.
- *Public Banking* The more I learn about this the more I am convinced our state would benefit greatly with this. I view it as investing in our local needs (infrastructure...) as opposed to adding profit to corporate banks.
- *Be A Voter Campaign* – yard signs with non-partisan ‘Be A Voter’ can be used over multiple years. I will get in touch with Mary Coltrane or others from Thurstan Co. about this.

Women's Equality Day Celebration Picnic ~ Peggy Gregory

We will celebrate on August 26 from 5:00-7:30pm at Highlands Grange Park Picnic Shelter. The shelter is the large shelter close to the parking lot and Mid-Columbia library at 1620 S Union St Kennewick.

Please bring your own meal, nonalcoholic beverage, and chair.

DEI ~ Judy Golberg

Coming in the fall! **DEI Committee** will meet again in September. Diversity within our community adds to our experiences and broadens our knowledge. Have you noticed inequitable processes around you? Do we offer the same opportunities to all our citizens? What can we do to help improve those opportunities? How inclusive is our organization and what can we do to be more open and inviting to all? Consider joining our League's committee and offer your opinions. Questions? Contact Judy Golberg, jgolberg@charter.net.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 19, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Board Meeting All members are welcome to participate

August 26, 5:00pm ~ Women's Equality Day Celebration Picnic

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

OFFICERS:

President: Beverly Johnson-Torelli
1st Vice President: Diane Molleson
2nd Vice President: Polly Parton
Secretary: Sandra Hendry
Treasurer: Shirley Sonnichsen
Voter Editor: Peggy Gregory

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

JoAnne Dimond
Wendy Espinosa
Ruvine Jimenez
Janet Nail
Lora Rathbone
Ann Roberts

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

TBD