



VOTER

February 2023

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Happy Valentine's Day to Everyone and Happy 103rd Birthday to League!

February 14th is a very important date. Not only is it Valentine's Day, but it also happens to be the date that the League was established in 1920. Love is in the air, and we would love it if you would join us for our League's 103rd birthday celebration on February 17th at noon. The location is CG Public House at 9221

West Clearwater Avenue in Kennewick. Orders will be taken off the menu. Our speaker will be Theresa Roosendaal from the Family Learning Center in Kennewick. Besides our members, the public is invited, so bring interested friends and family. RSVP to Bev at sasjoh@aol.com or 509- 521-0947 no later than Monday, February 13th .

With the establishment of the League and other significant dates in February, perhaps it could be seen as a month of democracy. February 20th is Presidents' Day, which was originally established to honor George Washington's February 22nd birthday. However, in 1971, it was moved to the third Monday in February. Currently, the birthdays of all U.S. presidents, past and present, are celebrated on that date. Abraham Lincoln's birthday was on February 12th . Since his legacy was fighting to end slavery, it is fitting that Black History month is also celebrated in February.

Thanks, and appreciation:

Thanks to Judy Golberg, JoAnne Dimond, Lora Rathbone, Michele Pirotte, Chris Grantham and Ruvine Jimenez for manning or being willing to man a table for registration/education at Kamiakin's Parent-Teacher Conferences on November 21st. We did make a couple of contacts, but because of a scheduling miscommunication at the school, the day didn't go as planned. However, a significant contact was made. A Sylvan Learning employee sitting at another

resource table happened to also be a Girl Scout leader. She took some of our educational handouts to help emphasize to her troops how important voting is to our democracy. The legacy continues!

Christine Grantham was a wonderful hostess for our December 11th Holiday Party, and it was so appreciated. Her house was decorated with numerous beautiful Christmas trees, and the attendees brought delicious treats. Superior Court Judge Norma Rodriguez and District Court Judge Trinity Orosco both gave a very interesting and informative talk on Bail Courts, Drug Courts and various other legal details.

January 14th was our Program Planning session from 10:00 am. to 11:00 am. Although no one volunteered to lead a local study, the top area of interest was homelessness. It was suggested that attendance at the Badger Club program on February 23rd entitled "Addressing Homelessness in Our Community" could act as a starting point. The program is scheduled from noon to 2:00 pm. The link for registration is on our website at www.lwv-bf.org or it can be found at www.columbiabasinbadgers.com It is free for Badger Club members and \$5.00 for non- Badger Club members.

Also, on January 14th from 11:00 am. to noon, the second session of the Shoreline Study Consensus meeting was held. (The first session occurred on December 7th) . Thanks go to Judy Golberg, JoAnne Dimond, Karen Miller, and Shirley Sonnichsen for serving on the Shoreline Study Committee, including their preparation time and the facilitation of the discussion. Also, thanks so much to the members who participated in the consensus discussion. In addition to the committee, they include Leona Hassing, Carla Chiotti, Jane Sereda, Susan Kreid, Lora Rathbone, Polly Parton, Janet Nail, Elisabet Van Swam, Christine Grantham, Peggy Gregory, Diane Molleson, Shari Gasperino, and Wendy Espinosa. We were able to meet the January 16th deadline for submitting our League's consensus information to the state League.

The election observers for the special levy election on February 14th are Chuck Lo Presti (coordinator), Christine Grantham, Carla Chiotti, Jane Serada and Kelly Doyle. Their time and efforts are greatly appreciated. Chris reminds us that although training is required for the observers who enter the cage, anyone can come to the Benton County Voting Center and watch the process. Those who are interested are encouraged to do so.

The Scholarship Committee has been working hard, especially our co-chairs, Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory. Thanks go to them and the other members who have contributed along the way: Shirley Sonnichsen, Leona Hassing, Shari Gasperino, Bree Bowen, Wendy Espinosa, Kirby Amacker, Chris Grantham, and Diane Molleson.

Other Important Events:

REACH is hosting a Teacher Open House on February 1st from 5:00 pm. to 7:00 pm. The League will be attending and hosting a table. League members will be informing teachers of our willingness to do Civics Ed presentations, voter education and registration in their classrooms. The book *Washington: The State We're In* will be given as a door prize. Other groups will also be offering interesting resources. For example, Lora Rathbone will be at the table on Climate Change. Please join us!

Legislative Week- February 6th-10th . Thanks to our Action Chair, Lora Rathbone, for all her work on legislative issues. Please see her article in this Voter.

“The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy” is the current study that will require consensus by March 20th in order to be taken to convention in May. The study is available to read at www.lvwva.org. If you would like to be a discussion leader for our consensus sessions, the training will be available as follows:

January 31st at 11:30am: Discussion Leader Training # 1

February 1st at 6:30pm: Discussion Leader Training # 2

Exciting News! Our League is hosting the LWV WA 2023 Convention on May 4th - 7th at the Holiday Inn Express in Pasco. We are eligible to send 3 to 4 delegates but any and all members are encouraged to attend. More information and registration costs will be available soon.

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

As of December 31 2022:

Checking is:	\$8,019.55
Savings is:	\$1,856.98
Total:	\$9,876.53

Income: \$400.00

We received \$375.00 in dues and \$25.00 in contributions.

Expenses: \$00.00

Membership and Dues: We currently have 89 members including 8 students, and 8 second-in-household members. The National member database must be updated by February 1, 2023. This database “roster” determines what our Per Member Payment (PMP) we are charged by National and State Leagues. Seven members have unpaid dues and have been notified that they will be dropped from the rolls on January 31st if their dues are still unpaid.

2023-24 Budget: Janet Nail and Judy Golberg have volunteered to be on the committee. A draft budget will be presented at the February or March board meeting.

Ed Fund: A \$98.00 donation was made in November by Amanda Tipton. The total Ed Fund account is now \$12,698.00.

Legislative Action ~ Lora Rathbone

From your Action Chair-

Easy ways to participate in the WA 2023 Legislative session:

1. Follow the directions from the LWV WA in their Legislative newsletter. Click here to [Subscribe](#)
Often the only thing to do is click on a link, select Pro, then give your contact information.
2. For a little more depth, contact me at ldrathbone@outlook.com I will forward the newsletter and give some tips on testimony. We could work together and share what to say.
3. Go to the LWV WA website to learn about the bills and follow the instructions there. <https://lwvwa.org/current-issues-2023>
4. Attend Democracy Lobby Week virtual events, jointly sponsored with Fix Democracy First, February 6-10. Evening sessions include hearing about current legislation, learning from democracy experts, and getting lobbying tips on how to talk to your legislators. For the schedule go to <https://lwvwa.org/> Click here to [Register](#).
5. Attend a lobbying meeting with our legislators. I plan to set up our own meeting whenever we can find the best time for the most people to attend. (Not during the LWV WA democracy week). If you would like to speak to them in a Zoom meeting, let me know your legislative district. Then we'll plan on a time. We will also have a meeting to plan what to say before we meet our legislators.

Learn about WA State Legislative topics at ACTviaZoom

These presentations by the LWV WA are on Mondays at 10am. Go to [ACTviaZoom Registration](#)

These are the remaining sessions:

February 6 th -	Lobby Week Special: How a Bill becomes Law
February 13 th	Climate/Energy Legislation discussed by LWV WA Issue Chairs
February 20 th	People Powered Elections: Statewide Democracy Vouchers
February 27 th	Zero Waste WA: Consumer Environmental Legislation
March 6 th	Citizens Climate Lobby: Clean Energy Transition/Inflation Reduction Act Benefits

Scholarship Committee: ~ Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory, Co-chairs

To update members on plans to award \$1,000.00 scholarships to two students graduating from a public high school in Benton or Franklin Counties, the committee has 1) developed an online-application form; 2) called all school districts to create a list of contacts who oversee the scholarship applications for their students; 3) reviewed and updated the judges' scoring documentation; and 4) have the commitment of seven judges to complete the task.

The application will be available to students by January 31st with the deadline for submittal March 27th. Each application will be accompanied by an essay indicating what good citizenship means to the applicant, or their personal pathway to good citizenship in a democratic society.

These scholarships will be awarded at our May 18th Annual Meeting.

Winter Carnival ~ Chris Grantham

The League has been invited to participate in the Pasco School District "Winter Carnival" Thursday, February 23rd, 2023, at Chiawana High School from 5:30pm-7:30pm.

This event is open to all Pasco School District Students, Employees and Families. There will be food trucks, games, prizes and entertainment. This could be a great opportunity for the League to register voters at the largest high school in the state and make some contact with Pasco residents. A table and 2 chairs will be provided, and we are encouraged to provide a fun activity at our table.

For more information contact:

Chris Grantham @ 509 845-0820

LWV BF Book Club ~ Polly Parton

Join us Monday February 13th at 6:00pm via Zoom for a discussion on *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. Peggy Gregory will lead this entertaining look back at a unique woman breaking into new fields. On March 13th Carla Chiotti will lead *Unbroken: A World War II story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand, a non-fiction about an Olympic track star surviving as a POW. April's book will be *Snow Child* by Eowyn Ivey, a magical story about brutal life in Alaska in the 1920's. Email or text Polly Parton to be added to the Zoom link polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509-551-3818.

Tax Structure Work Group Update

The following is the follow up of the tax structure work group's presentation to our board in late 2021.

I hope you are doing well and enjoying the new year so far! Thank you, again, for getting involved in the [Tax Structure Work Group](#)'s efforts last year to gather feedback from community members and businesses about Washington State's taxes. I'm writing to share updates on the Tax Structure Work Group's recommendations and next steps.

As you know, the Tax Structure Work Group spent 2021 gathering feedback from taxpayers on tax type options. In 2022, the Work Group studied and refined tax proposals. Using the feedback from Washingtonians and analysis by the Department of Revenue, the Work Group decided on two policy recommendations to the Washington State Legislature:

- Replace Washington State's current business and occupation (B&O) tax with a margin tax.
- Replace the current 1% property tax limit factor with a limit factor tied to population growth and inflation for local governments.

On January 19, a bill regarding the margin tax (SB 5482) was introduced in the Washington State Senate. Information about this bill, including dates for public hearings, is available on the [legislature's website](#).

You can find more information about the Work Group's recommendations and updates on related bills on the [Recommendations page of the Tax Structure Work Group website](#). Also on this page (and attached to this email), is a visual one-pager that summarizes the Work Group's process and decisions between 2021 and now.

Please feel free to share the visual one-pager and any of these other updates with your members who got involved in this statewide conversation about Washington State's taxes.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Pauline Mogilevsky, Triangle Associates, Inc. 206-981-2217

LWV Observers will participate in the Levy Election ~ Chuck Lo Presti

LWV Observers will observe ballot processes for the School Levy voting, as part of Benton County's Paid Observer Program. The Observer's Mission Statement is: "To provide an independent observation and maintain confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the election process." Only the two major political parties and the League of Women Voters are allowed to provide observers for this Washington State-sponsored Program.

Levies for five school districts are on the ballots, and our LWV chapter will provide five observers - Carla Chiotti, Kelly Doyle, Chris Grantham, Jane Sereda, and Chuck LoPresti - serving as official observers at the Voting Center for this election. These official observers are those who received the Voting Center's training in mid-January, which updated them on changes to the ballot processing procedures and provided them updated/rewritten manuals.

To provide a schedule of events, ballots are to be mailed out around Wednesday the 25th of January, ballot sorting begins the afternoon of Monday, January 30th, and final tabulations are performed the evening of Election Day, February 14th. Finally, Certification is scheduled for Friday, February 24th.

Briefly, ballot processes performed at the Voting Center include collecting the ballots from the Post Office, Drop Boxes, and the Voting Center. Then follow tasks such as sorting, signature verification, opening ballots, machine scanning, handling ballots with scanning problems, and finally tabulating ballots for the final vote counts. After the election, the paper ballots are archived for varying periods up to two years. The Benton County Auditor's website <https://www.bentonauditor.com/Current-Election> has a lot of information, including flowcharts and YouTube videos about elections and ballot

processing in Benton County.

The election observers are allowed to observe these processes as part of an effort to make ballot processing as transparent as possible while maintaining secret ballots and election integrity. These processes are carried out between 9:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-4:0 pm between January 30th and February 24th

We've found the election staff welcoming and eager to explain what they are working on, and we are always amazed to learn from them at how much meticulous work goes into running an election and processing ballots.

We are reminded that unofficial observing of election and ballot processes is open to anybody; that is, anyone is welcome to drop in during Voting Center working hours (9:00am – 4:00pm), and witness the action from a special area for drop-ins, not in the work spaces. Only the official trained observers (e.g., our five stalwarts listed above, one at a time) observe from within the workspaces ("cages"), while following special no contact/no interference rules, noting anything that seems noteworthy.

So if you would like to get a taste of election observing, come visit the Voting Center. It's a few blocks north of the Columbia Center Mall, at 2618 N Columbia Center Blvd, Richland. It's best to call them at (509) 736-2727, before showing up to make sure they are actually processing ballots that day.

Career Day Events at Chiawana & Rivers Edge High Schools

Chiawana High School is having their annual Career Day on February 13th.

River's Edge High School is having a Career "Week" from March 27 through March 31st. While the League is not in the business of speaking to students about careers, this could be an opportunity to set up a voter registration booth.

If anyone is interested, please contact Ana Tuiaea-Rudd, Chiawana High School, at 509.543.6786, ext. 5697, or Trevor MacDuff, River's Edge High School, at 509.967.6455. They are also actively looking for community volunteers to help at both events.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 31st , 11:30am ~ Decline of Local News & Impact on Democracy
Discussion Leader Training #1

February 1st , 6:30pm ~ Decline of Local News & Impact on Democracy Discussion
Leader Training #2

February 1st , 5:00pm-7:00pm ~ Teacher Open House, REACH

February 6th- 10th , ~ Legislative Week

February 13th , 8:30am-9:40am ~ Career Day at Chiawana High School

February 13th , 6:00pm ~Book club via Zoom

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

February 17th , 12:00pm~ League 103rd Birthday Celebration, CG Public House,
Kennewick

February 23rd , 12:00pm-2:00pm ~ Addressing Homelessness in our Community.
Badger Club Register at www.columbiabasinbadgers.com or www.lwv.bf.org

February 23rd , 5:30pm-7:30pm. ~ Pasco School District Winter Carnival at
Chiawana High School

March 27th-31st , ~ Career Week Rivers Edge High School

lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

Mailing Address:

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

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