



# VOTER

July 2023

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

## President's Message ~ Diane Molleson

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Year in League! I look forward to being your new president and serving with the new and returning officers and board members. We all came into office at our Annual Meeting on May 18. A huge thank you to Beverly-Johnson Torelli, our immediate past president, for answering innumerable questions and easing my transition into this new office.

We truly appreciate the willingness of our members to serve as officers, board members, committee chairs and volunteers. This past May, when our League hosted the 2023 LWVWA Convention in Pasco, twenty-five of our members volunteered! At the Convention, our League received the 2023 LWVWA Strengthening Democracy Award in recognition of our programs directed at Making Democracy Work. These include our candidate forums; our Civics Education program where members make school visits to educate and register students; and active participation in the election observer program, run by the Benton County Auditor's Office.

Bev Johnson-Torelli and others have been busy organizing the candidate forums for the 2023 **Primary Election on August 1**. Sponsored by The League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties and produced by PBS - National Public Broadcasting, they will air on KTNW on July 13 and 14. The five races broadcast because they drew three candidates or more will be Port of Benton Commissioner-District 2, Richland City Council-position 6 on July 13, and RSD School Board Directors School Board Directors 3, 4, and 5 on July 14. The forums will also be available on YouTube, the LWVBF website and FB page, the City of Richland ([www.ci.richland.wa.us](http://www.ci.richland.wa.us)), and the Columbia Basin Badger Club's website through at least August 1.

Our League is currently planning our annual Equality Day picnic on August 15 at Howard Amon Park in Richland and a Wine Night to recruit new members in September. More details on these activities will follow. We also invite you to join

us at our monthly meetings to find out more about what we're doing. The next one will be held on Tuesday, July 18 at 6:00 pm on Zoom. Happy Summer!

## **LWVBF's Monthly Meetings Moving to Tuesdays**

By popular demand, the LWVBF's monthly Business and Planning Meetings (a.k.a Board meetings) will be moving to the third Tuesday of the month. They will continue to be on Zoom at 6 p.m. The next meeting will be on **Tuesday, July 18 at 6:00pm**. All members are welcome to attend!

## **From LWVUS: Members' Rights & Responsibilities**

The National League (LWVUS) has issued the following new Members' Rights and Responsibilities and urges all to take a look:

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/league-fundamentals/member-rights-responsibilities-policy?utm>

To receive the LWV newsletter, The League Update, go to the bottom of the homepage of [LWV.org](http://LWV.org) and sign up for email. It comes every other Thursday.

## **Dates to add to Calendar:**

July 7, 9:00 am ~ Mandatory training for election observers at the Benton County Voting Center (2618 N. Columbia Center Blvd., Richland)

July 12 ~ Ballots for Primary Election mailed

July 13 and 14 ~ Candidate Forums broadcast

July 18, 6:00 pm ~ Business & Planning/Board Meeting via Zoom

August 1 ~ Primary Election

August 15 ~ Equality Day Picnic— North Shelter at Howard Amon Park in Richland, 5:30 pm. You are welcome to come as early as 5:00 pm to set up.

## LWVWA 2023 State Convention ~ Diane Molleson

The LWVBF hosted the State Convention. It was held at the Holiday Inn Express in Pasco from May 4-7. The theme was Discovery 4: Discover Democracy, Discover League, Discover Partners, Discover Tri-Cities.

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—an education project that will look at Multi-Member Districts with Ranked Choice Voting; a study on Caregiving in Washington State: What Exists and What is Needed to Support Seniors and their Caregivers; and a study on Immigration and Immigration Integration in Washington State. In addition, there were talks, workshops, caucuses, nature walks, and a performance from Opera on the Vine.

Highlights from the Workshops I attended:

In *Program from Planning to Position*, Seattle League member Liz Bander led a panel that unpacked the Study process for League members. Looking at the League's recently completed studies on Shorelines and Local News, they offered advice on forming a study committee, writing consensus questions and crafting positions. LWVWA Climate and Energy Issue Chair Marty Gibbons discussed ways to reduce the impacts of methane gas and the need to protect our state's mature forests, and State League President Lunell Haught led a workshop on Leadership (*Leading When You Don't Really Want To*), which focused on how the state League can support local Leagues and the differences between required, preferred and desired activities.

Speakers included historian Kimberly Hamlin, the LWVUS board liaison to Washington, who gave an enlightening talk on the suffragists and the history of the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. Benton & Franklin Counties Superior Judge Norma Rodriguez and Franklin County District Judge Tiffany Orosco discussed their caseloads and responsibilities, and WSU emeritus professor Nicholas P. Lovrich led a research project on the LWVWA studying who is aware of League, how it is perceived, and how effective it is. The study found that League was effective at educating the public about state and local issues. It was not as effective at connecting with underserved and younger population groups.

It was fun to meet members from all over the state and an honor to be one of the three delegates representing our League.

## Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

On May 31, 2023:

**Checking is:**           \$6,963.64  
**Savings is:**           \$1,857.06  
**Total:**                \$8,820.70

**Income:**                \$2,960.00

We received \$2,100.00 from our LWVWA Ed fund account for the Scholarships per the form submitted. At the state convention a total of \$860.00 was received for Christine's quilt raffle, our League basket, Valerie Moffit's quilt and a sack of potatoes!

**Expenses:**             \$2,901.00

\$2,901.00 -\$2,000.00 for scholarships for Kylie Glendenning and Lacey Hudlow presented at the Annual meeting. \$162.00 was for the families' meals, \$7.00 for their award certificates, and \$723.00 for member registrations to the convention and candy for the welcome packets.

### Membership and Dues:

There were no changes in membership. We have 85 members including 8 students, 9 second- in- household members. The new officers have been entered into the National database.

### Ed Fund:

We have not received an accounting for our State Ed Fund dollars, which was \$12,590.00 previously. We received the \$1,500.00 for the Civics Ed Fund grant. \$2,100.00 was taken out for this year's scholarship winners as well per the forms submitted. I believe that would leave us somewhere in the \$10,00.00 range.

## Convention and Primary Election Articles ~ Bev Johnson-Torelli

Hosting the 2023 LWVWA Convention on May 4-7 was a wonderful opportunity for the LWVBF to demonstrate our hospitality and graciousness. The Leagues across the state rewarded us with many accolades for our efforts. In collaboration with LWVWA, the Convention's theme, **Discovery4**, truly came to life.

**Discover democracy** – Kim Hamlin's presentation on Friday night set the stage for democracy and shined a light on women's issues. Kim, PhD, is a member of the LWVUS Board of Directors and LWV of the Cincinnati Area. She is a historian who

specializes in the US women's rights movement. Our League was the lucky recipient of her latest book presented to us for hosting the Convention. It is entitled *Free Thinker: Sex, Suffrage, and the Extraordinary Life of Helen Hamilton Gardner* (2020). The book profiles the suffragist credited with securing congressional passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

Also, on Friday, Superior Court Judge Norma Rodriguez and District Court Judge Tiffany Orosco shared their wisdom regarding elections for judges.

The Strengthening Democracy Award was well-deserved by our many members who have "Made Democracy Work" for our League. Please see the attachment describing their efforts. We are so grateful for all of them.

**Discover partners** – LWVBF presented the Good Citizen Award to the partners who help us promote democracy through producing, publishing, and broadcasting the Candidate Forums. Our partners through the years include Northwest Public Broadcasting (Greg Mills, producer, Matt Loveless, moderator, Matt Kawamura, digital engineer), City of Richland (Mark Ingham, Mike Charbonneau – current and retired Richland Multimedia Coordinators), City of Pasco (Jon Funfar, Pasco Communications Program Manager), Columbia Basin Badger Club (Kirk Williamson, President.) Greg, Mark, and Kirk were present and accepted the certificates for their respective organizations. Please see the attachment and view our Facebook post.

**Discover the League** – LWVBF had the opportunity to meet with members from Leagues across the state and learn through workshops, plenaries, and consensus meetings. Our volunteers did a wonderful job in whatever they were assigned to do.

**Discover Tri-Cities** – The other Leagues showed great appreciation for everything the Tri-Cities had to offer. The LWVWA enjoyed the dinner at Bookwalter Winery on May 4th. Several of our League members accompanied them. The tours at the Coyote Mammoth Dig (McBones), the Badger Walk and Bird Watching were greatly appreciated. Opera on the Vine emphasized the wonderful musical talent in the Tri-Cities and was a big hit. The LIGO presentation brought attention to our amazing scientific community. On Friday, May 5, Pasco Mayor, Blanche Barajas, welcomed everyone to our region. It was Cinco de Mayo, and with Pasco's planning underway for their annual parade that weekend, we especially appreciated her time.

### **Additional Highlights**

Other ways our League made the Convention such a success included the beautiful red, white, and blue wreaths that Chris Grantham made. The table tents with famous quotes from suffragists and others completed the theme. Chris also sold the raffle tickets for the fabulous quilt that was originally made for the 2020 Centenary Celebration. Val Moffitt donated another wonderful quilt that she made for the silent auction. The pattern represented all the counties in Washington state. Val's "potato basket" was a big hit as well. Also, for the silent auction, Carla Chiotti and

Bev Johnson-Torelli collaborated on a lovely red, white and blue basket. Carla donated wine from Bookwalter and Goose Ridge, along with locally grown food products like honey and asparagus. Besides the basket itself, Bev's contributions included a cookbook with recipes from the suffragist time period, as well as pasta and sauces from our local Pasta Mama's brand.

Our League also had the opportunity to recognize Chris as our Bridgebuilder. Our Remembrance Award was in memory of Marilyn Perkins. Please see the attachments.

Thanks go to all the LWVBF League members who helped with the Convention. They include: Kirby Amacker, Margie Bass, Bree Bowen, Carla Chiotti, JoAnne Dimond, Kelly Doyle, Brooke Dubois, Wendy Espinosa, Barb Gamber, Judy Golberg, Chris Grantham, Peggy Gregory, Bev Johnson-Torelli, Miriam Kerzner (Convention Director and also on the LWVWA Board), Sabiha Khan, Susan Kreid, Karen Miller, Val Moffitt, Diane Molleson, Janet Nail, Polly Parton, Lora Rathbone, Ann Roberts, Lorie Rowley, Jane Serada, Kathryn Schroeder, Shirley Sonnichsen, Lynn Stedman, and Martha Swedlund. Your efforts are truly appreciated!

The **Primary Election Candidate Forums** will be broadcast on July 13 and July 14 at 7:00 pm. through Northwest Public Broadcasting ([nwpb.org/2023](http://nwpb.org/2023)) and KTNW TV (PBS), YouTube, the Columbia Basin Badger Club website, the City of Richland, and of course the LWVBF Facebook/website at [lwv-bf.org](http://lwv-bf.org). The Candidate Forums will remain available for viewing through Election Day, August 1. Candidates who filed for the positions include the following:

1. Port of Benton, Commissioner District 2 – Cliff Dyer, Scott Keller, Christy Rasmussen
2. Richland City Council, Council Position 6 – Kent Madsen, Kurt Maier, Marc Newman
3. Richland School District, Director No. 3 – Chelsie Beck, Tony Gonzalez, Nino Kapitula
4. Richland School District, Director No. 4 - Aaron C. Riggs, Katrina Waters, Kari Williams
5. Richland School District, Director No. 5 - Matthew J. Bishop, Gene Nemeth, Jill Oldson

The Primary Election is extremely important. When there are three or more candidates in a race, it determines who goes on to the General Election. It also brings out some of the pertinent issues in our local area. Even if you do not live in Richland, it will be worth your time to view these Candidate Forums.

## Strengthening Democracy Award from LWV of Benton & Franklin Counties ~ Bev Johnson-Torelli

The LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties has chosen to “Make Democracy Work” through the efforts of many different members and avenues, rather than a single project. Our **Civics Ed Committee is led by Wendy Espinosa and supported by Janet Nail, Polly Parton**, and others. For several years, they have presented to students in the Tri-Cities area and beyond, in at least five different high schools on multiple occasions, both virtually and in person. They have a prepared presentation but are also flexible in working with the individual teachers on what their classes already know and what would supplement that knowledge. Voter registration may be included for those who are sixteen and older. Between May 2022 and February 2023, League members have covered at least fifteen voter registration/education events at locations such as the Naturalization Ceremonies, Columbia Basin College, foodbanks, school functions, and more. When we think of **Advocacy, Lora Rathbone** automatically comes to mind. She is motivated and passionate, brings our attention to legislation and encourages us to act. She is also on the Civics Ed Committee. To combat fears of election fraud, last June **Chris Grantham** orchestrated a public discussion on **Election Security** at Columbia Basin College. The speakers were the Benton and Franklin Auditors and the Secretary of State. One of the discussion questions concerned the safety of using the Dominion system to count ballots, since Franklin County is the only one in the state that uses it. The Franklin County Auditor assured everyone that there have never been any problems with Dominion. Also through Chris Grantham, there is a video in the works that will feature the Pasco High dance team with a **message about voting**. It will be posted on the Benton County Auditor’s website, as well as many other places. In 2022 the Benton County Auditor invited our League to act as **ballot observers** for the Primary, General, and Special elections. Initially started as a **paid pilot program**, it will continue. **Chuck LoPresti** has done an excellent job as the scheduling **coordinator**. **Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory** are co-chairs of our **Scholarship Committee**. To qualify for one of the two \$1000 scholarships, eligible students must write an essay describing what good citizenship means to them, or their personal pathway to good citizenship in a democratic society. The scholarships were established in memory of Marilyn Perkins, who is described in our Remembrance Award. **Kay Ottem, JoAnne Dimond and Ruvine Jimenez** have been the backbone of our **Candidate Forums**. Kay and Jo Anne have been contacting the candidates to invite them to participate. Kay has also moderated many of our in-person forums. Ruvine has been presenting the League’s introduction to our virtual forums, which are produced and aired by Northwest Public Broadcasting since 2020, they have reached a wide viewing audience. Because of the multiple efforts listed above, it goes without saying that our League makes it happen by reaching hundreds of people with the message that voting, involvement, and knowledge of government are all crucial to democracy.

## **LWVBF Good Citizen Award 2023 Convention ~ Bev Johnson-Torelli**

The following is a transcript of the speech that Bev gave at the convention.

I'm Beverly Johnson-Torelli, President of the LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties. As the host League, we are so excited to have the opportunity to present the Good Citizen Award at the 2023 Convention. As you know, the League of Women Voters celebrates democracy in many forms, but most importantly through the power of the vote. With this in mind, our local League's Good Citizen Award is going to the organizations who have collaborated with us over the years to bring our Candidate Forums to the Tri-Cities and Eastern WA, ensuring an informed public for a democratic society. Starting with the most recent history, in 2020 we were contacted by WSU-Tri-Cities offering to produce and air the League's Candidate Forums on Northwest Public Broadcasting and KTNW TV. The timing was perfect, because shortly thereafter, COVID came along and doing the Forums virtually was the only real option. In 2022 as COVID eased, NWPB was able to bring the Candidates to the WSU-Tri-Cities studio and record them in person. With their involvement, our League's Candidate Forums have consistently been described as so professional, with the ability to reach a broad audience. Our long-time partners, the Cities of Pasco and Richland, are also part of the collaboration. Before virtual forums were necessary, they had hosted our in-person Candidate Forums for many years, including securing the venues, setting everything up, doing the recording, and making the forums available on their City View channels and websites, which they continue to do. For the last two election seasons another Tri-City organization, the Columbia Basin Badger Club joined our collaboration. The Badger Club's philosophy aligns with the League's, as they are also non-partisan. The Badger Club brings potentially controversial topics to the community through civil discourse, and since being on Zoom, they have a broad outreach. They have posted the Forums on their website for their members and the community to view. We appreciate all of these organizations so much. They have been instrumental in making our Candidate Forums successful through producing, publicizing, and making them widely available to the public.

Here with us tonight representing Northwest Public Broadcasting is producer Greg Mills. Greg oversees all of the NWPB processes, coordinates with our League, lends his voice on air for whatever is needed, edits and then sends the finished product to our League and our other partners for publication. Representing the City of Richland are the current and retired Multimedia Coordinators, Mark Ingham and Michael Charbonneau. As stated above, Michael worked with us on in-person forums for many years. When he retired, Mark stepped in. For the Primary in 2021, the Cities of Richland and Pasco recorded their respective races virtually and sent them to NWPB to be broadcast. Mark has also helped NWPB with editing. The City of Pasco Communications Program Manager, Jon Funfar, has worked with Michael, Mark and NWPB throughout the years to bring our Forums to life. Kirk Williamson is the President of the Columbia Basin Badger Club (BC). It was under his leadership that the BC began publishing the Candidate Forums on their



website. The programs that BC produces are outstanding and through Zoom, speakers from all over the world are featured, most recently one from Ukraine. (NWPB Matt Loveless moderator and Matt Kawamura, digital manager and Jon Funfar were unable to attend due to other obligations.)

At this time, I would like to present certificates to all of these organizations with the representative individuals' names on them. We can't thank them enough and are excited to have the collaboration continue.

### **Membership Recognition Award – Bridge Maker from LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties ~ Bev Johnson- Torelli**

Christine Grantham definitely deserves the Bridge Maker Award from our League. She reaches out to others wherever she is. Several newer members recently joined our League due to her invitation and encouragement. She made sure that they attended our in-person League Birthday Celebration and were enthusiastically welcomed. On several occasions, Chris has graciously hosted our Holiday Party in December in her beautifully decorated home. As part of the nominating committee for the past two years, she has helped reach out to all members. Chris can be found at many of our voter registration events, either attending or arranging them, greeting both members and participants. She also sends special cards to League members for various occasions. It's easy to see why Chris is being recognized as the Bridge Maker for the League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties.

### **Remembrance Award from LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties ~ Bev Johnson-Torelli**

**Marilyn Perkins 2/20/1948 to 5/19/2021**

For our community, Marilyn Perkins was truly the face of League. She was an inspiration who influenced many of us to join. Marilyn had a bachelor's in history with a minor in math, which explains why she forgot more history than some of us ever knew. She was able to relay that information during Civics Ed presentations to students, including the dates. Marilyn was president of the LWV of Benton and Franklin counties at least four times, served on the state board, attended national conventions, state conventions, councils, and was a MELD coach. Candidate forum questions were her specialty. She also moderated many of the forums herself. She could be found doing Voter Registration at the Naturalization Ceremonies in the Federal Bldg. in Richland, at senior centers, back to school nights, various League events, even going to the auditor's office to pick up the forms. She was instrumental in organizing and delivering TRY's. If there was a need, she filled it. A scholarship fund has been established from community and family donations in honor of

Marilyn, enabling our League to give \$,1,000.00 each to two students for seven years total to eligible high school applicants.

### **Benton County Auditors Monitor Program ~ Charles Lo Presti**

The LWVBF has been notified that Benton County Auditors' paid election monitor program is continuing. This is a call for our veteran observers, and new observers to consider working the forthcoming Primary election. Active election observing will be conducted between mid-July and mid-August.

The Observers Mission Statement is: To provide independent observation and maintain confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the election process. Only the two major political parties and the League Women Voters are allowed to provide observers for this Washington State-sponsored paid observer program.

All participants, both veterans and new people, are supposed to take the mandatory training at the Benton County Auditor's Elections Office (Voting Center), 2618 N. Columbia Center Blvd, Richland, WA, since some of the Voting Center's procedures may be updated. This training will be held July 7 at 9:00 am at the Benton County, and will cover the elections processes, and may include a fire drill.

The updated schedule as compiled from the County Election Manager and the Auditor's website at this point is:

- July 7           Mandatory training for all election observers at 9:00am
- July 7           Official Logic and Accuracy Test at 11:00am
- July 12          Ballots Mailed, official election processes observing begin
- August 1        Election Day
- August 14      Pre-Certification at 9:00am
- August 15      Certification at 9:00am

During the period of active observing, shift times are expected to be 9:00am to 12:00pm and 1:00pm to 4:00pm (with a lunch break.)

The election processes include operations such as scanning, verifying signatures, sorting, and tabulating votes as the ballots are received. We've found the election staff welcoming and eager to explain what they are working on, and we remain amazed to learn from them at how much organizing and meticulous work goes into running an election and processing ballots. Only the officially trained observers observe election processes from within the workspaces, following special no

contact/no interference rules, noting anything that seems noteworthy.

Interested League members contact LWVBF Elections Coordinator Chuck LoPresti at 509-460-3312 or [lopresti@owt.com](mailto:lopresti@owt.com) (if you haven't already). One can also contact the Elections Manager Amanda Hatfield at the Voting Center 509-736-2727 for information.

## **LWVBF Book Club ~ Polly Parton**

Join us Monday July 10 as we discuss *Dinner with Ruth* by Nina Totenberg. The friendship of Totenberg and Ginsburg started in 1971, covers friendship, feminism and the courts. For August we will read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison.

June 12, we reviewed *The Last Bus to Wisdom* by Ivan Doig. This final novel from a great American story teller is set in 1951 at a ranch in Montana. We switched to this book choice as we needed an upbeat start to our summer.

Join in a great hour (yes, we keep this to one hour!) of discussion via Zoom by emailing or texting Polly Parton to be added to the link at [polly.parton@yahoo.com](mailto:polly.parton@yahoo.com) or 509-551-3818.

## **Scholarship Committee ~ Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory**

In the 2023 Annual Meeting report from the Scholarship Committee, there was an error that, for historical purposes, we will correct. There was no essay contest in 2022. The scholarship winners were selected based on their academic achievements, involvement in their school activities, and the fact that they had known the late Marilyn Perkins through her work with civic education in the local schools, specifically Richland High, her alma mater. No other recipients will ever again have that privilege. In addition, they had joined the League and were active student members.

Our scholarship program began in memory of longtime League member Marilyn Perkins who passed away in May 2020. The numerous donations given in her memory allowed us to give out the two scholarships in May 2022. Thanks to a \$10,000.00 donation from Marilyn's husband, John, we can continue to give out scholarships of \$1,000.00 each to two high school students for an additional five years.

The scholarships are awarded to graduating public high school students in Benton and Franklin Counties who plan to further their education. This year, candidates had to write an essay stating what good citizenship meant to them, or their personal pathway to good citizenship. The recipients of the 2023 scholarships, which were awarded at our Annual Meeting in May, are Kylie Glendenning and

Lacey Hudlow. Both graduated this June from Connell High School. Kylie plans to go to the University of Phoenix to become a licensed mental health counselor working, in particular, with victims of sex trafficking. Lacey hopes to become a pediatrician with her own practice.

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

July 7, 9:00am ~ Mandatory training for election observers at the Benton County Auditors Elections Office (2628 N. Columbia Center Blvd. Richland

July 12 ~ Ballots for primary elections mailed

July 13 and 14 ~ Candidate forums broadcast

July 18, 6:00pm ~ Business and Planning Meeting via Zoom

August 1 ~ Primary Election

August 15, 5:30pm ~ Equality Day Picnic at North Shelter at Howard Amon Park, Richland. Come as early as 5:00pm to set up.

**Email us at:**

[lwv.of.bf@gmail.com](mailto:lwv.of.bf@gmail.com)

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**OFFICERS:**

President: Diane Molleson  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Peggy Gregory  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Wendy Espinosa  
Secretary: Carla Chioti  
Treasurer: Shirley Sonnichsen

**ELECTED DIRECTORS:**

JoAnne Dimond  
Leona Hassing  
Karen Miller  
Janet Nail  
Polly Parton  
Lora Rathbone

**APPOINTED DIRECTORS:**

TBD

**Voter Editor:** Peggy Gregory