



VOTER

March 2022

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Beverly Johnson-Torelli

"In like a lion, out like a lamb" has traditionally been an apt description for March. Likewise, on March 17th, if we are not Irish, we become Irish-ish just for the day and celebrate by wearing green. Maybe this month we will be lucky and find our pot of gold at the end of a rainbow! March is Women's History Month as well. The following upcoming events are currently on Zoom but as the spring and summer unfold, stay tuned for some of them to possibly be in-person.

Thursday, March 10th -The current sixty-day legislative session will end. Continue to follow and advocate for your preferred bills.

Monday, March 14th at 6:00 pm - Table Talk -The speaker will be Michelle Gerber from the Benton Franklin Recovery Coalition regarding the Substance Use Disorder/Mental Health Facility that is being planned.

Thursday, March 17th at 6:00 pm - Business/Planning (aka Board) Meeting- All members are invited and welcomed to these regularly scheduled meetings, which occur on the third Thursday of each month. The Zoom link is sent to all members, along with the attached meeting materials. During this particular meeting, Sabiha Khan, who is one of our Board members, will give a short explanation of what is happening with the Afghan Resettlement in the Tri-Cities area. She will also address questions from the attendees.

Thursday, April 21st at 6:00 pm - Business/Planning Meeting

Friday, April 22nd - Earth Day!

Monday, April 25th at 6:00 pm - Table Talk- Steve Ghan, retired PNNL Climate Scientist, will be speaking on Climate Change Solutions.

May 16th-20th - The week that Candidates officially file to run for office. **July 15th** - Date for ballots to be mailed out. **August 2nd** Primary Election; **November 8th**

General Election. **Candidate Forums/Debates are generally conducted in July and October.** Contact Bev Johnson-Torelli at SasJohn@aol.com if you are interested in helping with the planning and implementation of the Forums.

Thursday, May 19th at 6:00 pm - LWV-BF Annual Meeting -All members are invited and encouraged to attend.

Third week of June- Date TBD - A Table Talk is being planned to possibly include three speakers: Benton and Franklin Auditors Brenda Chilton and Matt Beaton, as well as Steve Hobbs, WA Secretary of State, regarding election processes.

Thursday, June 16th at 6:00 pm - Business/Planning Meeting

June 23rd-26th-LWV-US Convention will be in Denver, Colorado and will also be virtual. If you are interested in attending and/or being an official delegate, please contact Shirley Sonnichsen at jsson.dawgs@charter.net or Bev Johnson-Torelli at SasJohn@aol.com .

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

At January 31, 2022:

Checking is:	\$9,190.43
Savings is:	\$1,856.81
Total:	\$11,047.24

Income: **\$226.00**
\$225.00 in dues were received from Pam Sensney, Lynne Harrison and Karen Miller.

Expenses: **\$187.00**
Janet Nail was reimbursed \$183.00 for new member badges; \$4.00 PayPal fees.

Membership and Dues: We have 87 members including 7 students, 10 second in household members. The National database was updated before the February 1st deadline.

National Convention:

The National Convention is in Denver CO June 23rd-26th. The in-person registration fee is \$475.00, and the virtual registration fee is \$300.00. Information is in this link.www.lwv.org then National Convention and click on Register for Convention.

LWV-WA Council: State Council will be held in Everett, WA June 10th-12th. This is an important part of League at the State level, and they need 30 local league delegates to attend. The registration is \$150.00, and is hosted by Snohomish and Skagit chapters.

Whether or not you attend the National convention or State Council, we have enough funds to send one or two members. The only caveat is our league requires you to share a room or pay for half if you request a private room.

Education Fund: No change: \$4,611.00.

Note: Our Per Member Payment (PMP) is determined from that database for National and State. We pay \$32.00 per member and \$16.00 for second-in-household to National (LWV-US) We also pay \$19.00 per member and \$9.50 for second-in-household to the State League (LWV-WA). These funds allow them to operate.

Update on the WA Legislative Session ~ Lora Rathbone

The 2022 Legislative session is almost over. It ends on March 10. The LWV WA does such a great job helping us advocate for these important bills. It's not too late to help get some of our priorities over the finish line. Contact me at ldrathbone@outlook.com. if you'd like to get the last updates. Thank you for participating.

Bills for Making Democracy Work

Here is an update on the bills that were discussed with our legislators during LWV-WA Lobby Day, as well as a few other league priorities we have asked you to support. To learn more about them and check their status go to <https://lwwwa.org/2022CurrentIssues>

SB 5148 Harassment of Election Officials passed the Senate: 8th, 9th and 16th LD senators voted for it! Is in the House as of 2/24/22.

SB 5560 Approval and submission of the redistricting plan. Passed the Senate. Dozier-yes; Brown and Schoesler excused. Is in the House as of 2/24/22.

SB 5583 Local redistricting must count people in their home districts. Passed the Senate: 8th, and 16^h LD senators voted nay. Is in the House as of 2/24/22.

SB 5597 Enhanced Washington Voting Rights Act. Passed the Senate: 8th, 9th and 16th LD senators voted nay. Is in the House as of 2/24/22.

HB 1630 Restrictions on the possession of weapons in certain locations. Extended to schools, election centers and more. Passed the House: 8th, 9th and 16th LD reps voted nay. As of 2/24 is in the Senate.

Bills that are dead for this session:

SB 5182 Eliminating Advisory Votes

SB 5584/S HB 1156 Local Options Bill: for local jurisdictions to use Ranked Choice Voting if they choose.

HB 1926/SB 5851 Ranked Choice Voting for Presidential Primaries.

SB 5636 Secure Automatic Voter Registration .

League Priority Bills on Other Issues:

HB 1664 Increasing the number of school nurses. It passed the House. 8th,9th,16th LD reps voted no except Rep Rude. As of 2/24 is in the Senate Ways & Means, Senator Brown's committee.

HB 1141 Increasing access to the death with dignity act. Skyler Rude is the sponsor. Passed the House with all 8th & 9th LD reps voting no; Rude voted yes, Schmick was excused. In the Senate as of 2/24/22

HB 1860 Preventing homelessness among persons discharging from inpatient behavioral health settings. Passed the House. All 8th, 9th and 16th LD reps voted yes. In the Senate as of 2/24/22.

E2SHB 1691 Financial responsibility requirements related to oil spills. All 8th, 9th and 16th LD representatives voted for it. In the Senate as of 2/24/22.

Civics Education ~ Wendy Espinosa

Our Civics Education Committee continues to meet the first Saturday of every month. On February 5th our agenda included a general discussion on where we are now and plans for future civic engagement.

The committee agreed to continue our Power Point presentation for middle and high school students, possibly in person once the mask mandate is removed. A video of our presentation is still a possibility but producing it is not simple. I've contacted Tri-Tech Skills Center about making this a student project. Their film instructor responded saying students are working on other projects at this time but would be happy to revisit our proposal in August for the 2022-23 school year.

Other suggestions for Civic Education include posting more on our local league's Facebook Page, asking drama clubs to enact our civics presentation, and utilizing

the Secretary of State's Video: Temperance and Good Citizenship for classroom presentations.

The WA State LWV Education Committee is almost finished with its inventory of youth Civic Education activities. The inventory draws on the experiences of local leagues throughout the state. It includes contact information and good outreach ideas. This will be a very valuable planning tool for LWV-WA. Leagues.

Regarding Elementary Civic Education, I asked our board to purchase copies of The State We're In: Your Guide to State, Tribal, and Local Government, Elementary Edition for each of our committee members. This text was written for and financed by the LWV-WA Education Fund, particularly for Washington State Students. It has been approved by the OSPI and EDU for classroom use. It is nonpartisan and well written, and a teacher's guide is available. I hope we may include this text in future Civic Education activities as it's already being used by several Washington School Districts.

Our next meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2022, 10:00 a.m. on ZOOM.

Link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89129172777?pwd=TG5QRWZlK0xjWUJmcFN2L1EvQkdKQT09>

Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development ~ Polly Parton

MELD Zoom Meeting-Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development, February 7th

MELD calls share between leagues ideas, accomplishments and best practices with guidance and mentorship from our coach Lynn Busacca. We are Pod #4 including Benton-Franklin, Mason, Thurston, Kitsap, Lewis and Clallam Counties. Our State Liaison gives state leader summaries from the local Leagues. Our calls are usually 60 minutes, Lynn provides an agenda. Discussions are casual and productive.

Contact Polly Parton at polly.parton@yahoo.com if you would like to join the next call.

Leader- Carol Goss, (Thurston County) filling in for Lynn Busacca (Mason County).
Attendees- Bonnie Bless-Boenish (filling in for Maren Halvorsen, Clallum), Maree Lerchen, Unit at Large (Lewis), Shelley Kneip (Thurston), Polly Parton (Benton-Franklin) and Carol Larson (Kitsap).

Maree Lerchen is back working to establish a new League branch in her large area near Packwood. She has sold her real estate business but will retain her license and work part-time in retirement.

Polly reported the civics education group is struggling with Zoom vs live vs pre-recorded lessons for high school students. We are challenged by a lack of technical know how and may reach out to high schools, drama classes and a tech savvy former teacher for some assistance and involvement.

Bonnie reported that working this last year with a council of Directors (instead of a President) was working well. Her club successfully uses Club Express. They have four primary areas of focus: keeping public hospitals public or less restrictive because of religious guidelines, climate, civics education including the 18-35 age group as the lowest voting group and demographics of new members.

Shelley Kneip noted that they are trying to fill the slate of officers for the coming term and may need to change their by-laws to allow another form of leadership. Their voter service committee wants to reach out to youth and get them involved. One idea was to have members of a school debate team ask questions at forums or make short statements that would be aired on local service TV station.

Carol G. reported sponsoring a forum, *A Look at Local Tribal Approaches to Health Care* on Feb. 23rd. One of the speakers will present a day in the life in a Tribal health clinic. The other speaker is Vicki Lowe, Executive Director of the American Indian Health Commission for Washington State (AIHC).

Carol Larsen reported successfully using Mail Chimp to consolidate various event notices for each month. Program planning resulted in goals of protecting our democracy, civics education and misinformation. A March meeting will focus on climate issues and an April meeting will focus on health issues. She will turn the membership committee over to a three- or four-person group. Some board members are leaving to work on partisan issues for the coming year. They currently have a president, but they are having difficulty filling board of director vacancies.

Shelley Kneip said they are developing voter forum policies for co-sponsors and endorsing groups. One idea is asking for any specific endorsement to be delayed until after the forums are held.

Tri-Cities Addiction, Recovery and Rehabilitation Facility in the Tri-Cities ~ Polly Parton

Are you interested in the efforts to establish an addiction, recovery and rehabilitation facility in the Tri Cities? Michelle Gerber will update the Tri-Cities AAUW (American Association of University Women) on Saturday, March 19th at 2:00pm. Please join us by contacting tricitiesaauw@gmail.com or Judy Blair or Polly Parton for the Zoom link.

League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties Student Member ~ Janet Nail

Arianna Caiceros

In celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Women's Right to Vote in 2020, the League of Woman Voters of Benton & Franklin County anniversary launched an essay contest in the Pasco, Kennewick and Richland School Districts. The second-place winner of the Richland School District portion of the contest was Arianna Caiceros. Arianna joined the League the following year as a student member. This gave us the opportunity to know and appreciate a dynamic student.

We congratulate Arianna on her recent achievements as a senior at Richland High School. She has been recognized by the College Board as part of the top 1% in Washington State for her high achieving academics. She is also a recipient of the National Hispanic Recognition Award due to scoring in the top 10% of Washingtonians for PSAT/NWSQT.

Arianna hopes to be the first in her family to graduate with a college degree. Her teachers rave about her, saying she is a "star at Richland High". Erin Coleclasure, her Advancement Via Individual Determination teacher, advises Arianna was the one who founded Richland High's first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and she tutors underclassmen on her free time working closely with the Superintendent. She has also been chosen for the Princeton scholarship,

Arianna dreams of becoming either a teacher or an educator in the school administration in hopes of changing education for the better. The League knows whatever career path she chooses she will be a success.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (The following local events are currently on Zoom , but as spring and summer unfold, stay tuned for some of them to possibly be in-person)

March 14, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Table Talk Substance Abuse Disorder/Mental Health Facility, Michelle Gerber

March 17, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Business/Planning (aka Board Meeting) All members are welcome to participate

April 21, 6:00pm ~ Business/Planning Meeting

April 25, 6:00pm ~ Table Talk Climate Change Solutions , Steve Ghan

May 19, 6:00pm ~ Annual Meeting

June 3rd week ~ Table talk Benton & Franklin counties auditors (Date & In-person or

June 16, 6:00pm ~ Business Planning Meeting (In-person or Zoom TBD)

June 23rd-26th ~ LWV-US Convention

June 10th-12th ~ LWV-WA State Council

July and October ~ Candidate Forums/Debates

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:

Bree Bowen
JoAnne Dimond
Wendy Espinosa
Ruvine Jimenez
Janet Nail
Lora Rathbone

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Christine Grantham
Peggy Gregory
Leona Hassing
Sabiha Khan