



## VOTER

March 2024

### President's Message ~ Diane Molleson

Warm greetings! February was the League's birthday month, and we celebrated with a lunch at CG Public House on February 16. Andy Miller, Benton County's retired Prosecuting Attorney was Guest speaker. He shared many stories about the cases he tried over his 36 years as Washington State's longest serving prosecutor. He covered the changes he observed in the criminal justice system, in particular the development of mental health and veterans' courts. He strongly believes in the value of therapeutic courts and second chances, but also feels there must be accountability for the sake of the victims and their families.

The presidential primary is on March 12. Unlike other elections, you must select a political party affiliation on the ballot envelope. (Your party affiliation will be removed from your voter record 60 days after the election.) For your vote to count, you can vote for only one candidate, and the candidate you mark on the ballot must match the political party you selected on the return envelope. Learn more at [www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/helpful-information/presidential-primary-faq](http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/helpful-information/presidential-primary-faq)

Numerous voter registration drives are planned at high schools and libraries throughout the Tri-Cities, and we are looking for volunteers to register and educate voters. More complete information is in a separate article. We are also **hosting** a Table Talk to honor Black History **on March 15 at the Richland Public Library at 1:30 pm**. Our next board/planning meeting is on March 19 at 6:00 pm on Zoom, and as usual, all members are welcome. We hope you will join us for the meeting or at other events.

### Voter Registration Drives

Thanks to the efforts of Chris Grantham, we have numerous voter drives scheduled this month and are looking for volunteers. The schedule is listed below. Please contact Chris Grantham at [christinegrantham3@gmail.com](mailto:christinegrantham3@gmail.com) or 509-845-0820 if you can help. Even where one or two volunteers are already listed, one more would be welcome.

Thursday, March 14, 12:00pm - 4:00pm  
Kennewick Public Library  
1620 S. Union Street  
Kennewick, 99338

Saturday, March 16, 12:00pm - 4:00pm (Contact Diane)  
West Richland Public Library  
3803 W. Van Giesen St.  
West Richland, 99353

Tuesday, March 19, 12:15pm - 4:00pm  
Keewaydin Park Library  
405 S. Dayton St.  
Kennewick, 99336

Thursday, March 28, 5:00pm - 7:30pm  
Chiawana High School, Pasco Spring Carnival (Contact Chris & Bev)  
8125 W. Argent Rd.  
Pasco, 99301

WSU-Tri-Cities

March, date and time TBD

### **Table Talk on March 15**

The LWV-BF will be hosting a Table Talk on March 15 at the Richland Public Library (955 Northgate Drive in Richland) at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Room A & B. Our guest speaker will be Ashley Jenkins who will discuss local Black history. We hope you will join us!

### **They Represent You (TRYs)**

Our 2024 TRY pamphlet has now been printed and is being distributed to the auditors' offices, city halls, ports, community centers, schools and other organizations. It can be found on our website at [www.lwv-bf.org](http://www.lwv-bf.org) under Publications. If members need copies for voter registrations or other events, or if anyone would like a printed copy, please contact Diane Molleson at [molleson@frontier.com](mailto:molleson@frontier.com)

## Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

On January 31, 2024:

**Checking is:** \$7,225.60  
**Savings is:** \$1,857.18  
**Total:** \$9,082.78

**Income:** \$260.00  
\$260.00 was received for dues.

**Expenses:** \$335.00  
\$327.75 was paid to the State League for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, Per Member Payment (PMP), and \$6.99 in PayPal fees.

### Membership and Dues:

Current membership is 103. We have 11 students and 13 second-in-household. Carla Chiotti did some training on the national database, and we updated it with new members. The final update was done by February 1, 2024, and transferred to Excel and charted. I believe in Fiscal Year (FY), 2025 National staff will be taking over membership and dues, but not in time for this year's membership drive in September 2024. Details are still being worked out at the national and state levels.

**Education Fund:** \$10,640.00  
Per Michael Martin, current State Ed Treasurer's most recent report.

## League Advocacy ~ Lora Rathbone

### Advocacy Report on the Washington Legislative Session

The 2024 legislative session will end March 7. Check the LWV- WA website [here](#) to see which bills passed. You may also attend a Legislative Wrap up on March 11 (see ACT on Zoom).

Only about 15% of the bills introduced will pass this session. The only Democracy bill that we were following that is likely to pass is HB 1241, Addressing Harassment of Election Workers. This bill makes threats to election workers a class C felony regardless of how the threat is delivered. It also allows for those election workers who are harassed to apply to the Address Confidentiality Program to protect their home addresses. More good news is that HB 2247 Addressing behavioral health provider shortages, is likely to pass, as is HB1052 which would create a financial incentive to nonprofit organizations that provide affordable housing.

## ACT on Zoom

“League members statewide and guests who want to be informed citizen advocates are all welcome to attend the ACT (Action Coffee Time) via Zoom. The sessions are held Mondays through March 11 from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. Each session is recorded and posted to their YouTube channel so you can view them anytime.” Register [HERE](#). The sessions began in January to help inform people about bills before the legislature, but these following sessions remain:

3/4: Climate Crisis Discussion: Marty Gibbins, Climate & Energy Issue Chair, Moderator

3/11: Legislative Wrap Up from Advocacy Team Issue Chairs.

3/18: News, Opinion & Propaganda in 2024: DiMario Phipps-Smith, News Literacy Project.

3/25: Election Security: Your Ballot's Journey through the Election Process: Garth Fell, Auditor, Snohomish County.

## Redistricting Reform Task Force ~ Leona Hassing

### New Legislative Maps Update

The [Soto Palmer v Hobbs lawsuit](#) that declared a Yakima Valley legislative district discriminatory towards Latino voters has forced the drawing of new legislative districts in central Washington. After a hearing on Friday, February 9, remedial map 3A, (5 remedial maps were submitted), is the leading candidate for the new legislative map. This map changes 13 districts: 2,5,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16,17,20,31 - with the most significant changes to 14 and 15. The Office of the Secretary of State has confirmed that these lines will displace Sen. Hawkins(12), Sen. Torres(15), Sen. King(14), Rep. Corry(14) and Rep. Mosbrucker(14). The State has deferred to the courts to draw the maps. The remedial maps do comply with redistricting principles and the top metrics are the same or better than the enacted maps. The final map, drawn with assistance of a court appointed special master, [Karin Mac Donald](#), is due on **March 25, 2024**.

Judge Robert Steven Lasnik appointed Karin Mac Donald, a redistricting expert from California, as special master to assist the court in evaluating the proposed maps. Mac Donald, director of the Election Administration Research Center at University of California, Berkeley, was the principal consultant to the California Citizens Redistricting Commission in 2011 and 2021.

Judge Robert Stephen Lasnik serves as a senior United States district judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington.

If changes close to 3A are enacted, LD14 will be a district where Latino voters have a very good chance to elect the candidates of their choice, and a new map will be disruptive to thousands of voters who will be changed to new districts.

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

In February we discussed *How the Penguins Saved Veronica* by Hazel Prior. A charming story of finding our family (relations or not). We can change and grow through hardships and become the person we want to be. Our upcoming choices are April- *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* by Helen Simonson, May- *The Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles and June- *The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonasson. Let's get reading!

Join us Monday, March 11, 6:00pm via Zoom by emailing or texting Polly Parton to be added to the Zoom link. [Polly.parton@yahoo.com](mailto:Polly.parton@yahoo.com) or 509-551-3818. We keep the discussion to one hour.

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**March 6, 4:00-6:00pm** ~ Homeschool Night at the REACH Museum

**March 11, 6:00pm** ~ Book club via Zoom

**March 15, 1:30pm** ~ Table Talk, Richland Public Library Conference Room A&B

**March 19, 6:00pm** ~ Business/Board Meeting via Zoom

**May 16** ~ Annual Meeting, Location and time to be determined

**May 31-June 2** ~ LWV-WA Council in Olympia (May 31 optional)

**June 28-June 30** ~ LWV-US National Convention in Washington DC

**Email us at:**

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

**Mailing Address:**

League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties  
P.O. Box 765  
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**League Webpage:**

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

**OFFICERS:**

President: Diane Molleson  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Peggy Gregory  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Sue Thornton  
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