



## VOTER

May 2021

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

### President's Message ~ Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Included with this mailing is an interesting article about the League of Women Voters, which was written by Gale Metcalf, a retired Tri-City Herald reporter. In celebration of Women's History month, it was in the spring edition of the East Benton County Historical Society Museum publication called the "Courier." Mr. Metcalf is a museum volunteer. Some of our League members are also EBCHS Museum members and/or volunteers.

Mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. It will be held virtually via Zoom, as it was in 2020. The packet will be sent electronically at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Please plan to attend. The Zoom link will be sent to all members. We will look forward to seeing you there!

In other news, the League activity never stops. From January 11<sup>th</sup>, when the 2021 Legislative Session began, through the culmination on April 25<sup>th</sup>, LWVBF members had an opportunity to influence different bills. Advocacy Chair, Lora Rathbone, worked tirelessly to keep us up to date and informed on the specifics of the bills and how to contact our legislators. Regardless of the outcome of any particular legislation, your involvement is appreciated.

In the meantime, our emphasis on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion continues, beginning with a panel presentation in March, two videos in April and an upcoming one on May 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. The Civics Ed Committee has been actively working on a recorded presentation that teachers can use in their classrooms, or they can opt for a "live" presentation on Zoom. More information will be in this Voter and/or in the Annual Meeting packet on several of these topics.

The Candidate Forums Committee had an initial planning meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Candidates are required to officially file between May 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> this year. The emphasis will be on the many local offices in both Benton and Franklin Counties that are up for election in 2021. More information will be forthcoming for the July primaries and the September/October general elections as plans are solidified.

A new member orientation is scheduled for May 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 am. Even if you are not a new member, you are welcome to attend. The Zoom link will be emailed to all new members.

June 24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> is the Virtual 2021 State Convention entitled “The Next Hundred Years: Defending Democracy.” Based on our membership total, our League is now eligible to have four delegates. All members can attend as observers. However, we need delegates so that our voices can be heard. If you are interested in representing us, please let me [sasjoh@aol.com](mailto:sasjoh@aol.com) or Shirley Sonnichsen [jssonn.dawgs@charter.net](mailto:jssonn.dawgs@charter.net) know. To register, go to one of the following links:

<https://lwvwa.org/event-4257964>

<https://lwvwa.org/Convention-2021/>

## **Treasurer’s Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen**

On March 31, 2021:

<b>Checking is:</b>	<b>\$5,624.32</b>
<b>Savings is:</b>	<b>\$1,856.66</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$7,480.96</b>

**Income:**               **\$225**

We received \$225 in dues.

**Expenses:**           **\$407.08**

We paid \$7.44 in PayPal fees and \$399.64 to Marilyn, who paid Bettendorf’s for printing the TRY.

**Membership and dues:** We have 77 members including new members, Carla Chiotti, Marsha Stipe and Janet Taylor who joined in March via PayPal.

**Education Fund:**   **\$604**

We have \$604 to use for TRY’s or other projects if needed.

### **Budget Committee:**

The Proposed FY21-22 Budget was voted on at the April board meeting and approved for the May Annual Meeting. Thanks to the committee, Janet Nail (chair), Ann Roberts, and Peggy Gregory.

### **May Table Talk with Marty Gibbons ~ Lora Rathbone**

Marty Gibbins, Climate Change and Energy Issue Chair for the LWV WA is our guest speaker at our next online Table Talk. He will tell us about climate legislation that passed the 2021 WA State legislative session, as well Federal climate change plans. The table talk is May 6, at 6:00pm. The Zoom link will be sent out earlier that week.

Marty Gibbins, now retired, worked for Boeing in design, analysis, research, and management. His mother was an activist for the League of Women Voters for over 50 years. Marty joined the LWV of Washington in early 2017 and joined the Advocacy Team to promote legislation that ensured a healthy environment for people and wildlife. He served on the State Energy Strategy Advisory Committee in 2020 and on the LWVUS Climate Team.

### **You Can Be An Advocate ~ Lora Rathbone**

#### **Many Bills Pass the 2021 WA State Legislative Session**

The LWV WA is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Thanks to the hardworking Issue Chairs that helped us work together for league priorities! The WA State legislative session ended on April 25. Many life changing bills passed or will as soon as the Governor signs them. If you sent email, signed letters or made a call, you deserve credit for helping make that happen! Here are a few big wins. To find what else passed, go to each issue at <https://lwvwa.org/2021Issues>

**HB 1078 Voting rights restoration:** strengthens our democracy, increases public safety, and promotes racial justice by automatically restoring the right to vote for every citizen living in the community. *Passed: effective date 1/1/2022.*

**SB 5015 Protecting ballots:** makes placing nongovernmental receptacles that appear to be official drop boxes a gross misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to one year and/or a fine of up to \$5,000. Passed the Senate unanimously. *Passed: effective date 7/25/2021.*

SB 5038 **Protecting the right to assemble**: prohibits openly carried weapons on the state Capitol grounds and at rallies and gatherings on public property. Protects public safety and also enables free, unintimidated speech. (*Likely to pass- delivered to Governor*).

## Civics Education Committee ~ Lora Rathbone

We are now scheduling presentations! The LWV BF Civics Ed committee has been working on making a recording to have available for the schools, but in the meantime, we will be offering our Civics Ed presentation on Zoom. In May we have been asked to do a presentation for a Kamiakin, Richland and Pasco HS class, with the likelihood of several more, including Hanford HS. A brochure was created, printed and is ready to be distributed to teachers.

Our goal is to have a recording made before the end of the school year, or at least before the teacher workshops are held this summer. It turned out to be more difficult than we first expected. Polly has agreed to learn about recording, and we will all work on getting more slides made.

A future goal is to develop and produce a presentation for younger students.

The committee is now led by Wendy Espinosa and presenters include Wendy, Marilyn Perkins, Janet Nail, Polly Parton, Christine Grantham, JoAnn Dimond, with Bev Johnson-Torelli introducing us. I will create and run the power point slides. (Thank you, Wendy,!!)

## Statewide Voter Services Workshop - May 13, 2021, 6:30pm-8 pm

Everyone is welcome to attend the Statewide Voter Services Workshop which includes:

- The Spokane County Auditor, who will explain what the League can do that government can't.
- An invitation to join our statewide Be a Voter campaign and explains advantages for your League.
- Learning how to shape the questions you submit for your local candidate forums and VOTE411.
- The Hispanic Roundtable - will explain how to reach out to Hispanic communities.

You don't have to be a member of Voter Services to participate. Register at [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcocuivqzgsHNbp\\_W-iVk5NtN0cb6iOWPco](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcocuivqzgsHNbp_W-iVk5NtN0cb6iOWPco)

**State LWV WA Convention:** online Thursday, June 24-Monday, June 28  
Learn more about it and register at <https://lwvwa.org/Convention-2021>

## **Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development (MELD) April 19 ~ Polly Parton**

MELD calls provide a monthly interaction between Leagues to network, share ideas, accomplishments and best practices with guidance and mentorship from our coach Lynn Busacca. Our State Liaison Susan Fleming also shares State and National resources with us and gives state leaders summaries from the local Leagues. Benton-Franklin is currently in Pod #5 with members from Kitsap, Grays Harbor and Thurston Counties.

Our calls are 60 minutes, Lynn provides an agenda. Discussions are casual and productive. Some highlights of our last call are-

Hybrid meetings (Zoom and in-person) - we were invited to watch Thurston's 4/20 morning meeting

- I attended (via Zoom) Thurston's **Coffee with League** as their 1<sup>st</sup> hybrid meeting. About 25 attended with, 8-10 (all vaccinated) finishing coffee and breakfast in a dedicated restaurant room, slightly spaced out and 15 were remote on Zoom. A wall screen displayed the Zoom meeting for the restaurant participants. They enabled Closed Caption, which at times was helpful. Sound issues were quickly resolved, and a very productive meeting followed. Most zoom participants were on mute and restaurant people were quiet while the meeting was conducted. Chat was used and participants unmuted when they needed to speak. They opened the meeting 30 minutes early for getting set up, socializing and letting new zoomies get comfortable. Overall, it was a very successful meeting.

New member ideas-

- ask new members for worst/best times for orientation meetings (Lynn).
- when possible, do a phone welcome/ interview/questionnaire (Carol Goss).
- a welcome to League phone call from the President or other officer, can make a lasting impression (Lynn).

Phone Tree ideas

- ask for volunteers that are more social on the phone, this can provide better results and can be a great fit for some members (Carol Goss).

Tony Wilson

- Thurston League (Tony Wilson) continues to work with Club Express to set up a new website for fall roll out. He noted good websites are important to younger members. Some at state are watching if this could be a good fit for State or local leagues.

Susan Fleming

- (reporting for State Board)- State Convention workshops may include DEI, civics-education, democracy, voter services, climate change and caucuses on public banking and privacy in the digital age.

## **Membership Orientation on May 1<sup>st</sup> ~ Janet Nail**

What is a Table Talk? How can I advocate for a proposed bill? What is my League doing to educate young people about civics? Where does my dues payment go? How do I sign-up to register voters and other voter service tasks? Who can submit an article to our Voter newsletter?

Whether you are a long-time member or new to the League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties, Membership Orientation has something for you. **[Join us on a Zoom meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 am.](#)** It will be short hour-long presentation and we hope you will join us. Zoom link will sent to all new members at the end of April. If you would like the Zoom link, please contact Janet at 509-546-1467 or [janet@janetnail.com](mailto:janet@janetnail.com)

## **TRY ~ Marilyn Perkins**

They Represent You (our TRYs)

For many decades, we have published our TRYs, which is a tri-fold compact pamphlet that lists all our elected officials, from the President to the local Port Commissioners. We would distribute them around the community and let the public know they were available, and they have always been very popular. Because of the pandemic, we printed fewer this year, but finding places that were open and would take them, was more difficult than we expected. Which means, we still have some we can distribute. If you work or frequent someplace that you think might be interested in having them for the public or if you would like one or two mailed to you, contact Marilyn Perkins. [jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com](mailto:jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com)

## **The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment**

The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was passed by Congress on March 23, 1971 and was passed into law on July 1, 1971, making the ratification process the shortest in our Nation's history. That means citizens who are 18 and older have had the right to vote for 50 years, and that is certainly worth celebrating. It had been proposed earlier but the Vietnam War was the driving force behind the amendment. People old enough to go to war, but not old enough to vote; it was hard to defend that reality. We would like to have some celebration/recognition of this event, especially since our number of student members has been growing. If you would like to help or have any suggestions, contact Marilyn Perkins at [jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com](mailto:jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com)

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

April 29, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Table Talk, Racism: The Power of Illusion

May 1, 10:00am ~ Zoom New Member Orientation

May 6, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Table Talk Climate Legislation

May 13, 6:30pm ~ Zoom State Voter Services Workshop

May 20, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Annual Meeting

May 27, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Table Talk, Racism: The Power of Illusion

June 24 through June 28 ~ Virtual State Convention: The Next Hundred Years: Defending Democracy

### **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  
Richland, WA 99352

**OFFICERS:**

President: Beverly Johnson-Torelli

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Diane Molleson

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Polly Parton

Secretary: Mary Shaw

Treasurer: Shirley Sonnichsen

Voter Editor: Peggy Gregory

**ELECTED DIRECTORS:**

JoAnne Dimond

Janet Nail

Marilyn Perkins

Lora Rathbone

Ann Roberts

**APPOINTED DIRECTORS:**

JoAnn Bengtson

Shari Gasperino

Ruth Giese

Peggy Gregory

Leona Hassing

Sabiha Khan