



VOTER

October 2023

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Diane Molleson

About thirty people— a mix of veteran League members, new members, and guests— attended the wine social at Janet Nail's home on September 19. We were grateful for the opportunity to get to know our new members and thank Janet Nail for hosting us all. Beth Pellicciotti, the LWVWA's Civics Ed Chair, was our guest speaker, and her informative presentation inspired us to think more about all the ways in which we reach out to students, adults, and potential voters. From candidate forums, voter registration events and Civics Ed presentations in the schools to our participation in the election observer program and Table Talks, we are educating ourselves as well as the public.

Our Candidate Forums will be recorded by NWPB at the end of September and broadcast the week of October 16 on PBS through NWPB and KTNW. They will also appear on YouTube, the LWVBF website and Facebook page , the Badger Club website and the Cities of Richland and Pasco TV sites through election day on November 7. Thank you to all who provided questions for the 22 local races we're covering! They are appreciated. Be sure to tune in to see your questions answered.

During the candidate forums, NWPB will air our video on voting, which features performers from the Pasco High's dance team. League member Christine Grantham thought of this project and took charge of bringing it to fruition with the help of a grant from the State League's Education Fund. The link to this lively video appears in this VOTER. It is a treat to watch.

Our next business and planning meeting will be on Tuesday, October 17 via Zoom. All members are welcome, and we hope you will join us to learn about projects that include gun safety, redistricting, voter registration drives and more.

Voter Registration Drives: Volunteers Needed ~ Diane Molleson

Members can help register voters at the following events:

October 24: Family Night at Cascade Elementary in Kennewick from 5:30pm-7:00 pm. Two volunteers are needed at a table to register voters and speak to students about the importance of voting.

November 8: Naturalization ceremony at the Federal Building in Richland at 10:00 am. Four or more volunteers are needed.

Please contact Diane Molleson at molleson@frontier.com if you can help.

Beth Pellicciotti's Civics Education Presentation ~ Diane Molleson

On September 19 at the LWVBF's wine social, members were treated to an enlightening presentation by LWVWA's Civics Education Chair, Beth Pellicciotti. Beth began by providing a definition of civics education, showing how it focuses on learning how government works, understanding the responsibilities we have to our communities, and inspiring us to be informed citizens. She drew on many examples of local leagues activities to highlight how we're all putting civics education in action in our mission of "empowering voters and defending democracy".

The second part of her talk focused on the League's textbook and teaching guide, *The State We're In*. In 1983, the national League asked all the state Leagues to create a book on their state's history. Unbeknownst to many, the LWVWA has continually been publishing civics textbooks for the past 40 years! Most recently, with the encouragement of the Snohomish League, they have translated their textbooks into Spanish and are reaching out to school districts that have dual-lingual and multi-lingual language programs.

Beth noted that there are 40,000 students now in dual language programs in the state (the majority of these programs are in English and Spanish) and 120,000 students whose first language is not English. She encouraged us to display the textbook when we do tabling and to let teachers know that they are able to request the League's textbook as a supplementary resource for students both at the elementary or middle to high school level. Many already use the textbook to teach Washington State History.

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

On August 31, 2023:

Checking is: \$5,017.78
Savings is: \$1,857.10
Total: \$6,874.88

Income: No transactions

Expenses: No transactions

Membership and Dues:

We have new members, Julie Mercer and Ruvine's husband, George Cutler who joined in September. Our membership now stands at 86. Dues are payable at the end of September, and many have responded already.

Ed Fund:

No changes.

Broadcast Schedule for the Candidate Forums ~ Bev Johnson-Torelli

The General Election is on November 7! The following Candidate Forums will be broadcast on October 16-20 through PBS (Northwest Public Broadcasting and KTNW TV) as listed below. They will also be available digitally through November 7th on YouTube, the League's website/FB - lww-bf.org, Northwest Public Broadcasting - NWPB Vote 2023, the Cities of Richland - ci.richland.wa.us, and Pasco - pasco-wa.gov and the Columbia Basin Badger Club - cbbc.clubexpress.com.
Thanks to everyone who contributed questions for the Candidate Forums. It is appreciated!

Monday, October 16 - 7:00pm and 11:00pm

- Port of Benton Commissioner District 2 - Vann-Clark and Richardson
- Richland City Council Pos. 5 - Levy and Van Dyke
- Richland City Council Pos. 6 - Madsen and Maier

Tuesday, October 17 - 7:00pm and 11:00pm

- Kennewick School District Dir. 3 - Connors and Petersen
- Kennewick School District Dir. 4 - Gledhill and Massey,
- Kennewick School Dir. 5 - Miller (Peppard withdrew from the campaign. Because it was after May 22, her name will appear on the ballot.)
- Benton City Mayor - Burton and Mokler

- West Richland Council Pos. 7 - Cole and Moran
- Kennewick Council Pos. 7 - Millbauer and Owens

Wednesday, October 18 - 7:00pm and 11:00pm

- Richland City Council Pos. 7 - Short and Whitten
- Richland School District Dir. 3 - Beck and Kapitula
- Richland School Director 4 - Waters and Williams
- Richland School Dir. 5 - Nemeth and Oldson

Thursday, October 19 - 7:00pm and 11:00pm

- Pasco School District Dir. 1 - Guerrero and Norberg
- Pasco School District Dir. 2 - Kennedy and Lucatero
- Pasco School District Dir. 5 - Torres and Simmons
- Pasco City Council Pos. 2 - Campos and Grimm

Friday, October 20 - 7:00pm and 11:00pm

- Pasco City Council Pos. 3 - Brown and Perales
- Pasco City Council Pos. 5 - Czebotar and Milne
- Pasco City Council Pos. 7 - Harpster and Lehrman

Benton County Auditors Monitor Program ~ Charles Lo Presti

The 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 General election.

The Observers Mission Statement is to provide independent observation of election processes with the aim of maintaining 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 paid observer program.

All participants in the paid program, both veterans and new people, are asked 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 **Friday October 13 from 2:00pm to 4:00 pm** at the Voting Center and will cover the elections processes and observing guidelines.

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

Thursday, October 5 Official Logic and Accuracy Test at 11:00am

Friday, October 13 Mandatory training for all election observers at 2:00pm

Wednesday, October 18 Ballots Mailed, official election processes observing begin

Tuesday, November 7 Election Day

Monday, November 27 Pre-Certification at 9:00am

Tuesday, November 28 Certification at 9:00am

Active observing happens between October 23 and November 24 at the Voting Center. 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 scanning and sorting ballots, verifying signatures, and tabulating votes. We've found the election staff welcoming and eager to explain what they are working on, and we remain amazed to learn 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. Although this is an off-year election and the races are mostly local, we expect a higher turnout than the Primary election therefore more busy shifts, so observers are definitely needed.

Again, we are recruiting both veteran and new League members as observers, and **this time we have Kelly Doyle as our new Elections Coordinator, to broaden and deepen our bench.** Charles LoPresti is taking a break. Interested persons please contact Kelly at Sagebrush2616@gmail.com or 509-366-2616 before the training day October 13. One can also contact the Elections Manager Amanda Hatfield at the Voting Center 509-736-2727, or visit <https://www.bentonauditor.com/Current-Election> for more information about the General election.

LWVBF's "Get Out the Vote" video: The Backstory ~ Christine Grantham

In preparation for the LWVWA's 2023 State Convention, I printed famous quotes as tabletop decorations. This line by Abraham Lincoln stood out. "Nations do not die from invasion; they die from internal rotteness."

My worst fear is that we may lose our democracy due to disinformation, lack of confidence in our electoral process and voter apathy. To encourage participation in what is still considered our most precious right as Americans, "The Vote," I wanted to make a video directed at young people before the 2024 primary.

I wanted an effective "GET OUT THE VOTE" tool to encourage voters to turn out and vote. We would produce two 30-second videos, one in English and one in Spanish.

In the summer of 2022, I looked at short clips and videos mostly by professional entertainers promoting voting. There were some that could possibly work, but there are always trademark and licensing restrictions. I would need just the right combination of actors for a play or video and/or background music. The whole project seemed overwhelming.

Then in the Fall of 2022 the LWVBF was asked to participate in the Pasco School District All Staff Welcome Back Expo. At the close of the event, I happened to hear some snappy music and spotted Pasco High School's Dance Team—the dance team of my dreams! Their performance was impeccable, the choreography outstanding and each member unbelievably talented. They fit the bill right down to my wish for a multi-cultural group representing the America of the future. I found the coach and asked if they had ever done any performances like one to encourage voting. The coach was all in and so was the team. It was a GO!

The team selected the slogan "YOUR VOTE, YOUR VOICE, YOUR FUTURE" and had the slogan printed on their red, white, and blue tee-shirts. The Dance Team coach, Rebecca Schwan, has been with the Pasco School District for 24 years and is an outstanding choreographer. She has coached semiprofessional dance and cheer teams and was inducted into the Washington State Hall of Fame for Dance and Cheer in 2015. Most importantly, she has a unique connection with her team. Together they create incredible routines. So now I could begin the project.

The next piece of the puzzle was to find a videographer. Most of the professionals I interviewed were out of my price range, but I happened to find Tyler West who had just moved to the area. He understood the frustration of voter apathy and was eager to be part of the project.

There was another bonus that came as a total surprise. At the suggestion of the dance coach, I talked to The Pasco School District Community Outreach Supervisor, Gracie-Valle Chimal. Gracie was familiar with the League's work and immediately offered to assist in any way. She understood the importance and urgency of a community project to stimulate interest and turnout prior to the 2024 election. Gracie has worked in radio and broadcasting, has public affairs experience, and also speaks fluent Spanish.

She and I hit it off immediately and I know my project would never have come to fruition without her professional guidance, suggestions, and advice. She critiqued our practices and proved to be a master of what to cut to keep us within our 30 second limit. Ultimately, she knew the importance of protecting the League's name and the integrity of our project.

The GOTV video was finally finished in June 2023. It was completed with the help of a \$1,500.00 grant from the State League's Education Fund, which paid the cost of the videographer. Here is the link in English and Spanish so you can watch it:

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!Ah1rUQEIS9Efg6U8J-TO1fM9Kz5XJw?e=cLuAcb>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfCJHI8LYUI&authuser=0>

<https://youtu.be/pfCJHI8LYUI>

LWVWA Resolution to Preserve Mature Forests - Ways We Can Help ~Lora Rathbone

The LWVWA passed a resolution in May 2023 to preserve mature forests on state-managed lands in Washington. To learn more about the role of forest preservation in mitigating the effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity, so that we might better speak for the forests as we work to protect them, go to [Forests-Climate Solutions!](#) It is a link to the LWVWA webinar held Sept. 13, 2023.

This information was sent to our league from Kate Lunceford kurlykate888@gmail.com the LWVWA Issue Chair for forests. The group is planning to invite other local Leagues to advocate in their forested counties. If there are no forests, Leagues can advocate with the Dept. of Natural Resources for state-wide policy to protect mature forests in Washington. Kate is working on a toolkit to help other counties do what they are doing in Snohomish County to lobby their county council. They would also like help researching and writing testimony for the 2024 Washington legislative session. Please let Kate know if you would like to participate.

Redistricting Reform Campaign (RRC) Task Force ~ Leona Hassing

The WA State Redistricting commission is a bipartisan commission of 5 members; 2 Democrats and 2 Republicans and a non-partisan chair which convenes every 10 years to redistrict the state's legislative / congressional districts after the census figures has been compiled.

The commission started the redistricting process early in the spring of 2021. Alison McCaffree, as League Census and Redistricting Chair, led a campaign during the Redistricting process to train volunteers to testify and to develop ideas for alternative maps. The process lasted several months with a deadline of November 30, 2021.

The actions of the final days of the commission were unfortunate. It was chaotic, the midnight deadline came, and maps were submitted. Note that the Tri-City area now has 4 Legislative Districts; 8, 9, 15 and 16, and there were similar incidents, statewide.

LWVWA formed the Redistricting Reform Campaign (RRC) Task Force, with Alison McCaffree as chair. The charge was to investigate reforming the existing redistricting commission so 10 years hence, the commission would become a people focused commission.

The major obstacle, though, was that it would take a constitutional amendment to change the WA State Redistricting commission. This would not be an easy task.

The Redistricting Reform Campaign (RRC) Task Force will investigate options, study examples from other states and develop a redistricting commission plan that could pass as a constitutional amendment.

Breaking news...

A lawsuit was filed, Soto Palmer VS Hobbs.

The federal courts ordered that Washington redraw Legislative District 15, in Central WA including parts of the City of Yakima and Pasco.

The decision in Soto-Palmer v. Hobbs is a decisive win for Latino voters in the Yakima area who do not have equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice. This decision bolsters the LWVWA's position that Washington's bipartisan commission needs major reforms. WA Legislative Leadership is letting the courts draw the new maps.

Their quote in the Seattle times article said it was "the most expedient and non-political way to move forward." The governor's office and the Latino Democratic Caucus agree; however the Senate Republican leader is against the move. The new maps could affect districts west of the Cascades or create some expansive eastern WA districts.

At this point, the RRC Task Force is developing a plan of work as to revising the WA State Redistricting Commission. Statewide, League members are being asked to contribute time and effort to the RRC task force. Partnerships with like-minded groups will be added to the committee as time goes on. The RRC Task Force will also follow the progress of the Soyo-Palmer v. Hobbs lawsuit.

MELD (Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development) ~ Leona Hassing

In Washington state, the League of Women Voters has had a long-standing Membership Engagement and Leadership Development (MELD) program. This program is a conduit for communication among all levels of the League, local, state, and national. MELD meetings are where local Leagues can share their successes and challenges and receive information about programs and resources from state, national, and local Leagues. MELD meetings allow League members to stay connected to programs and resources that benefit local Leagues.

The local League members from across the state who are in a MELD meeting, along with a facilitator and a Board representative, are called a pod. The four pod facilitators manage each group, meeting virtually via Zoom once a month with representatives from four or five local Leagues and the state Board. The Board member provides updates, answer questions, listens to members' concerns and thoughts, and then takes the comments and suggestions back to the Board.

MELD POD #4 started the year with some changes. Lynn Busacca, who has been the POD facilitator for 7 years, left and will go to be a member of another POD but not the facilitator. The new facilitator is Lunell Haught, previous state president and last year the board rep for POD #4. The board representative is Susan Baird-Joshi.

POD #4 consists of the following leagues: Clallam Co. LWV, Grey's Harbor LWV, Kitsap Co. LWV, Lewis Co. UAL, Thurston Co. LWV and Benton-Franklin, LWV.

An agenda and Zoom link are sent prior to each meeting. Meetings start with sharing something about each committee member and what is going well or could be improved within your League and then discussion on the identified topic.

Susan Baird-Joshi, state board representative, led Fix Democracy First Happy Hour a lengthy discussion on State League, starting with the difference between the C4 and C3 accounts. An additional issues position, called Journalism and Democracy was created. Deanne Finken as the chair. The idea came from the newspaper study which League completed earlier. Susan talked about the action workshop and the short legislative session this year.

Fix Democracy First Schedule ~ Leona Hassing

Cindy Black, CEO of Fix Democracy First is a friend of League. Cindy assists League with Lobby Week each year and continues to partner with other League activities. Fix Democracy First is following the Redistricting Reform Campaign (RRC) Task Force and is promoting League legislative action in Olympia during the session.

SO... Grab a drink and come hear about the latest democracy news, ongoing efforts to fix democracy, and actions you can take at their weekly [Democracy Happy Hour](#), Wednesdays @ 5:00pm PT. Zoom link will be sent upon registration.

Oct 4 - Oregon's Effort for Campaign Finance Reform with Dan Meek

Oct 11 - U.S. Supreme Court Cases to Watch in the 2023-2024 Term

Oct 18 - Protecting Elections & Election Workers with Mary Hall, Thurston County Auditor.

LWVBF Book Club ~ Polly Parton

Our September book was *Forever* by Judy Bloom and we went down memory lane of how our young teenage coming of age compared to Katherine in *Forever*. Oh, if only we knew then what we know now!

Please join us October 9 at 6:00pm to discuss *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan about the 1910 Northwest fire with the background of conservation and politics. In November we will read *Mad Honey* by Jennifer Finley Boulanger & Jodi Picoult and in December we will read *In the Garden of Beasts* by Erik Larson.

Join us for an hour of discussion via Zoom by emailing or texting Polly Parton to be added to the link.

Polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509 -551-3818

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 9, 6:00pm ~ Book Club via Zoom

October 17, 6:00pm ~ Business/Board Meeting via Zoom

October 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20, 7:00pm & 11:00pm~ Candidate Forums via broadcast

October 24, 5:30pm-7:00pm ~ Voter Registration Cascade Elementary School

November 7 ~ Election Day

November 8, 10:00am ~ Naturalization Ceremony Federal Building, Richland

November 21, 6:00pm ~ Business/Board Meeting via Zoom

Email us at:

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