



VOTER

September 2022

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Beverly Johnson-Torelli

The Benton and Franklin Fair and Rodeo is behind us, school is starting, and September will be the beginning of another beautiful fall season. It's now time to think about the General Election, which is on November 8th. There are several Voter Registration/Education opportunities in the meantime. If you are one of the many League members who indicated that you would like to take part in these activities, now is your chance. We would welcome you at any of the following events. Just join us at least fifteen minutes before the time indicated below. Other opportunities will be announced if/when they are confirmed.

September 14th ~ 10:00 am Naturalization Ceremony at the Federal Building in Richland.

September 20th ~ National Voter Registration Day—League members will be at the Richland Food Bank. Please see Lora Rathbone's article in this Voter for further details.

November 1st ~ 10:00 am Naturalization Ceremony at the Federal Building in Richland.

The LWVBF General Election Forums will be recorded at the end of September in person at the WSU-TC studio without an audience, as they were for the Primary Election. The candidates for 16 races are being invited. Initial broadcasting will be through KTNW TV and Northwest Public Broadcasting (aka NWPB) during the week of October 17th. All shows will be programmed for one hour each except on Thursday, which will be ninety minutes. Partners will again be the Cities of Richland ci.richland.wa.us & TV Channel 192 and Pasco Pasco-wa.gov & TV Channel 191 and the Columbia Basin Badgers Club (columbiabasinbadgers.com). The League's website and Facebook page may be accessed at lwv-bf.org Please send your questions or topics for questions to sasjoh@aol.com no later than September 15th. The General Election is Tuesday, November 8th, 2022. Ballots will be in mailboxes by October 21st. The schedule for broadcasting is as follows:

Monday, October 17th at 7:00 p.m.

8th Legislative District

State Senate - Batchelor and Boehnke

Rep Position 1 - Barnard and Guettner

Rep Position 2 - Connors and Cotta

Tuesday, October 18th at 7:00 p.m.

15th and 16th Legislative Districts

15th Senate - Keesling and Torres

16th Rep Position 1 -Klicker and Strickler

16th Rep Position 2 -Corn and Rude

Wednesday, October 19th at 7:00 p.m.

Pasco School District

District 3 -Brown and Christensen

District 4 -Crosby and Phillips

District 5 (At Large) -Simmons and Trevino

Thursday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m.

Secretary of State -Hobbs and Anderson

Benton Franklin Superior Court -Cicotte and Rodriquez

Benton Franklin District Court -Orosco and Villarreal

Franklin County Sheriff -Raymond and Turner

Friday, October 21st at 7:00 p.m.

Benton County Commissioner Pos. 2 -Alvarez and Jenkin

Benton County Prosecuting Attorney -Eisinger and Lukson

Franklin County Commissioner -Didier and Miller

Congratulations to LWVBF member Anne Collett! She is having an art opening at the Allied Arts Gallery at the Park, 89 Lee Blvd in Richland from 1:00-3:00 pm.on Sunday, September 4th. Anne is inviting all League members to attend. Her last name as an artist is Greenwell. Those of you who were members in 2020 may recall that our League partnered with the Allied Arts Galley for Herstory, along with the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers, in honor of the passage of the 19th Amendment. Anne

was one of the League members who helped judge the contest. Her work will be displayed from August 30th - September 24th.

Meet three Braver Angels in person Saturday, September. 10th, 1:00-3:00 pm Shalom United Church of Christ Richland, WA. Three regional leaders of Braver Angels are coming to Shalom UCC to introduce the Tri-Cities to this exciting nationwide movement. Braver Angels is a national nonprofit, founded after the 2016 election to do something about political polarization in America. Since then, Braver Angels has been bringing Americans on all sides of the political spectrum together to listen to each other with respect and understanding so we can rebuild a UNITED America. Programs are free but donations are welcome; advance registration required. TO REGISTER, VISIT BRAVERANGELS.ORG/EVENTS . The event organizer is Sandy Westin 509-906-1646.

Thursday, September 15th Equality Day Picnic- Highlands Grange Shelter by the Union Street Library in Kennewick – Setup is 4:15 -4:45 - Official Start Time is 5:00 pm. This is in celebration of Women’s Equality Day, which was on August 26th. However, we postponed the event to avoid conflicting with the Benton-Franklin Fair, the start of school, etc. We would love all members to attend. There may even be the chance to meet many new members for the first time and in person! (There will be no separate Board meeting in September.) Please bring food for yourself but a dessert to share. You could call it a “dessert potluck.” Also, there will be an opportunity to learn about the many ways you can become involved in League. Topics include Observer Corps, TRY (They Represent You) pamphlets, voter registration/education, Table Talks, League Studies, Book Club, Candidate Forums, Civics Ed, ballot counting observation, etc. Bring your questions and ideas. We hope to see you there!

The next LWVWA Climate Action Caucus is now Thursday, September 15th at 6:00 pm. If you have not attended before and would like to, contact Deb Wallace for a formal announcement and link: debwallace11@icloud.com or 360-280-7258.

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

As of July 31, 2022:

Checking is:	\$5,755.02
Savings is:	\$1,856.90
Total:	\$7,611.92

It is FY 2022-23 starting July 1, 2022 and ends June 30, 2023.

Income: \$300.00
We received dues from 4 new members.

Expenses: \$1,260.91
\$53.50 to Peggy Gregory for reserving the large, covered picnic area, \$693.10 to CBC for the forum, and \$504.98 to Miriam Kirzner who attended State Council in Everett.

Membership and Dues:

We have 97 members including 10 students, 11 second- in- household members. We welcome new members Barbara Gamber, Janelle Downs, Kirby Amacker, Lorie Rowley, Karis Alderson. (Marilyn Quadrel and Katherine Torelli did not get deposited until August).

Education Fund:

Our scholarship project for this year will be \$2,100.00 from our State Education fund approved by the board. The Treasurer will send in a project request. The Scholarship committee will meet August 17th to discuss John's \$10,000.00 donation in Marilyn's honor and try to determine a path forward. Each project needs to be approved by the board. Bev and I went to lunch with John, and he said that whatever is easier for our League is good. He wants to make a donation this year.

We have \$2,211.00 remaining in our State Education fund according to my records. Below is what Elsie Heinrick on the Ed Fund Review Board said about our project(s):

Benton Franklin should have a project plan (approved by their Board) which outlines purpose of the scholarship project (and how it relates to League priorities), permissible uses of scholarship, eligibility or applicants, selection process, etc.

The donation to the Benton Franklin C-3 Education Fund can be made all at once and according to C-3 rules, it is tax deductible. Then the LWVWA would manage the money as they do for all other local leagues. Whenever Benton Franklin wants to award a scholarship, I think they would apply to LWVWA Ed Fund using their

project description and all other pertinent data required by the form. When the award is done, they would file a final report. It would be an ongoing project.

Voting Registration and Education ~ Lora Rathbone

Volunteers needed

Tuesday September 20th is National Voter Registration Day. The League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin counties will have a table outdoors at the Richland Food Bank that day to register people to vote and provide information on the November election and voting in general. We have done this in the past and had a good response. We also have left over school supplies to hand out.

The Richland Food Bank is open: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00am -11:30am. We will want to set up early (8:00am) as people start lining up. If you only have an hour that will still help.

If there is enough interest, we could also be there on Thursday the 22nd. Learn more about the Tri-City Food Banks at <https://tri-citiesfoodbanks.org/>

If you would like to help at the table, please contact Lora at ldrathbone@outlook.com.

Scholarship Committee ~ Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory, Co-Chairs

LOOKING FOR HELP!! IS THIS YOU??

A new committee is being formed for the purpose of finalizing criteria, setting timelines, and establishing a scholarship program so LWVBF can issue two \$1,000 scholarships to public high school students who are graduating over the next five years. Two scholarships were presented this year at our annual meeting in May. This scholarship project will support our civic education position through the expectation that the students will write an essay on what good citizenship means to them, or their personal pathway to good citizenship in a democratic society.

Marilyn Perkins was a long-time League member who died in 2021. Many friends and family made donations to League in Marilyn's name to honor her work promoting democracy, teaching civics and introducing young people to voting and the League. Marilyn served as president of our local League for several terms, moderated many candidate forums, served on the state board, and connected so many others through League.

John Perkins would like to continue the process of presenting scholarships to encourage high school students to continue their education. John is donating a total of \$10,000 that will allow for two scholarships to be presented over the next five years in Marilyn's name.

For new and long-time members who are interested in working on a scholarship committee, we welcome your participation. Our meetings will be held via Zoom in the evening. The next one is scheduled for Wednesday, September 21st, 6:30pm. There will be some committee work contacting the local high schools, working together on developing an application and judging form and then contacting or serving as application judges. If this is something that interests you, please contact either Judy (509-627-5347) or Peggy (509-551-3542) or email us: igolberg@charter.net or palfgreg@gmail.com. A small group of members met August 17th, to agree to the basic plan of work. Next, with the help of those of you who are willing to step up and participate, our work will begin.

Is Your Ballot Secure ~ Christine Grantham

The League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties had the unique opportunity and honor of having Washington Secretary of State Steve Hobbs as our keynote speaker on June 22nd to lead us in "Is Your Ballot Secure?" discussion along with Benton County Auditor Brenda Chilton and Franklin County Auditor Matt Beaton.

Secretary of State Hobbs gave a thorough overview of the State's "Election Process" and welcomed questions from the audience. Our Benton & Franklin auditors addressed over sixty audience questions taking turns when questions were pertinent to their county. The auditors' answers were detailed and thoughtful as they listed examples to distinguish any irregularities in the various processes of the election cycle some specific to their own jurisdictions. They were patient, courteous including one another in additional comments and explanations to clarify each question raised. The public discussion ended nearly an hour and a half later. They seemed to enjoy the interaction with the audience with interest and enthusiasm. Thanks to our Moderator KNDU News Anchor Tracci Dial who skillfully deciphered all those scribbles of handwritten questions making the question-and-answer period seem flawless.

As the evening ended and every question was addressed, I believe each one of us left with a new awareness and appreciation for the detail of processing our votes; and a consensus of assurance that our auditors are doing everything conceivable to make the complicated process of handling ballots as efficient as humanly possible with transparency.

The League was honored to have the Washington Secretary of State travel to the Tri-Cities to participate in this event. Thanks to our local wonderful Auditors Brenda Chilton and Matt Beaton for their dedication to the public service. They were most helpful in sharing ideas, time, and enthusiasm in preparing for this forum. The evening was a wonderful opportunity for the residents of our two counties to engage “in person” with the three most important elected officials in our state and a rare example of Republicans and Democrats working harmoniously together. It was heartwarming to see!

Although we did not draw the audience we anticipated, we couldn't have asked for a better outcome for those of us that attended this forum; a renewed confidence that our election process is in the capable hands of our elected officials and our ballots are indeed safe and secure. As members of our democratic society, we must believe our votes count and continue to actively participate in our most precious duty as Americans – “Our Right to Vote”. This honest and open discussion was much appreciated and assured us that in the State of Washington “**Your Ballot Is Secure!**”

Thanks to Columbia Basin College President Dr. Rebekah Woods for her warm welcome and KNDU NEWS ANCHOR Tracci Dial for moderating. Thank you to our Auditors Brenda Chilton and Matt Beaton for their time and participation. A special thanks to President Beverly-Johnson Torelli, and Judy Golberg for their support and all the League members for their participation in making this event possible.

LWVBF Book Club ~ Polly Parton

We enjoyed the June 13th selection of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman, a fictional story of a young woman dealing with past trauma, depression, and mental illness. We skipped meeting in July and August, but will meet again via zoom on Monday, September 12th at 6:00pm for one hour. Peggy Gregory will lead the discussion of *Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love* by Dani Shapiro. If you want to join us, please text, or email me so you can be added to the September 12th zoom link. Polly Parton: 509-551-3818 or polly.parton@yahoo.com

Hanford Advisory Board Vacancy ~ Susie Q Leckband

The LWV of Washington State has had a seat on the Hanford Advisory Board for more than 25 years, primary and alternate. I have resigned from the alternate position as of June 30, 2022. If you are interested in being appointed to the Board as the alternate LWV representative, please notify Lunell Haught at the state league office at President@lwvwa.org. The state LWV President is the authorized person to put names forward to the US Department of Energy for consideration. Typically, the term is for 2 years with term limits of 3 total terms. The Board has 5 subcommittees where the bulk of the work is done. The Board passes advice and recommendations via a consensus process after becoming as educated as possible on each issue in the workplan. Full Board meetings are 4 or 5 times a year with subcommittees meeting a bit more often. Meetings may be virtual, hybrid or in person depending on circumstances. Currently the primary member for the League is Jan Cantrell who lives in Bellingham. Hopefully, someone from the local LWVBF is interested in Hanford cleanup and has the time and interest in this volunteer position.

Experiences and Impressions from our Participation in Benton County's Election Security Pilot Program ~ Charles A. LoPresti

President Beverly Johnson-Torelli notified the League of Women Voters of Benton-Franklin Counties to advise us of a unique opportunity to become trained election observers for the Primary election. Three organizations were invited to become involved: the partisan Republican and Democratic Parties of Benton County, and the non-partisan League of Women Voters. Bev invited expressions of interest from League members, and eight took the training and served as observers: Christine and Rich Grantham, Miriam Kerzner, Susan Kreid, Janie Treadway, Polly Parton, Kelly Doyle, and Charles LoPresti. Our observing team contributed input and took time to review this article. Charles served as coordinator of the election observer team, with duties mainly to maintain a schedule of observers, and keep everyone informed and in the loop.

The local press reported on the Pilot Program. Northwest Public Radio interviewed staff and observers at the Voting Center late July. Here is a link to their news article: <https://www.nwpb.org/2022/07/28/paid-ballot-observers-in-benton-county/>. A Tri-City Herald article on the program was published July 14th <https://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/politics-government/election/article263293768.html>

This article for The Voter seeks to inform League members of our training and participation in the Pilot Program.

Training Observers

We attended training sessions at the Voting Center a few days before the primary ballots were mailed out. The first training (optional) was witnessing one of the State of Washington's Logic and Accuracy tests, which was conducted a week before ballots were mailed out. This test 1 is designed to test a predetermined output of results of all races. The Secretary of State's election administrators, visiting on site, provided test ballots marked in series of patterns designed to allow rapid assessment of scanning and tabulating accuracy and pinpointing failures. It is essentially a test that what we marked and had on the spreadsheet matched what was tabulated with the Auditor's Clear Ballot vote tabulating equipment. Benton County's equipment proved to deliver expected correct results. A link to a photo of the ballot sorting equipment is: <https://runbeck.net/agilis-ballot-sorting-system>. This link details capabilities of these modern ballot processing systems. The second (mandatory) training was led by Elections Manager Amanda Hatfield. Staff demonstrated to us the ballot processing equipment, and went over the many processes involved to collect ballots, verify voter signatures and addresses, check voters against the Benton County Auditor's voting rolls, open ballot envelopes, optically scan ballots so that they could be tabulated by machine, handle discrepancies such as no signatures and misread ballots, maintain accurate counts of ballots received and verified from various streams, and finally perform and report vote tabulations. An important feature was handling ballots which were identified as incomplete and needing to be "cured", such as unsigned ballots and signature discrepancies.

Finally, we were instructed in the rules for observers during the conduct of these processes. We observers were provided badges with keypad entry, and lockers with locks to store our personal effects, including cell phones and lunches, and how to conduct ourselves around working staff. Visitors including observers were to log in and log out at the front desk. We could observe the processes, but not interact with or distract the staff. If we had questions, we were supposed to write them on clipboards and give them to supervisors. Also, the processes were conducted according to strict hours in two shifts: 9:00 am- 12:00 pm, and 1:00pm-4:00pm <https://www.sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/TestingtheBallotTabulationSystem.pdf>

During processing, no more than three official observers were allowed inside the cages. Extra observers were allowed to view the proceedings from outside the secure cages.

Benton County's New Voting Center

A word about the Voting Center is in order. It is a clean new facility in the former Brutzman's Office Supply space. The whole area is well lit, quiet and air conditioned to provide comfortable working conditions and stable temperature and

humidity for the staff and the machines. The front office serves the public, receiving citizens registering to vote, and picking up replacement ballots. The much larger back office is not open to the public. The back office is organized into several working areas, enclosed in wire cages accessed by keypad, where the staff processes the ballots at workstations, and using optical sorting and scanning machines. The Auditor's office hires security for specific days during election week. The most important feature is that the ballot processing was performed in a secure facility.

Observing the Ballot Processing

As observers, we found the staff invariably courteous and willing to take time to explain details of the processes, even spontaneously before anyone asked. They made clear to us what they were doing and why. We were made to feel welcome and told they were glad to have us there to watch the show. The operation seemed to have the marks of comprehensive systems design by systems analysts with experience in large scale elections. The system by its design looks to reduce the risk of a single person affecting the results. Lots of thought has been put into designing ballot envelopes which are easy to handle correctly and make ready to feed into the machine scanners. The staff were handling ballots from several streams: from the US mails, the Auditor's drop boxes, and ballots dropped off at the voting center. Trained temporary workers who had passed background checks opened the ballot envelopes under staff supervision. Many of the ballot processes (e.g., sorting, scanning, keeping records) were handled by staffers working in pairs to check each other. Intermediate counts of processed items were made at various stages to assure that no ballots were ever unaccounted for. Votes were not tabulated until election night after the polls closed. We observed staffers performing periodic maintenance on the processing machines. The system has to accommodate exceptions such as unsigned ballots in a seamless and transparent fashion, with provision for allowing exceptional ballots to be "cured". Signature verification was a special case. Every ballot was hand-checked for signatures, and every signature was hand-checked against signatures already on file. That's 40,000 signatures in the 2022 Primary election. The staffers matching ballot signatures against previous signatures on hand received Washington State Patrol signature training and were provided electronic visualization equipment to facilitate signature pattern recognition.

Signatures on file were available for each voter from several sources, and the trained signature checkers were able to see and account for the evolution of individual signatures over years of time.

Maintaining a schedule of observers entailed assigning one "official" designated person for each 3-hour shift. Some shifts were quite active, while others were light on activities, with nothing observable happening. Observing ballot processing is a monotonous process, requiring maintaining focus and attention on the part of the

observers. Fortunately, the shifts were short (three hours) and there was opportunity to walk around and observe different processing activities and observing was a comfortable activity. With our allocated number of “official” LWV observers available, each individual worked three or four shifts on average, some full days, some half-days depending on personal schedules. LWV observers were assigned over a total of 18 days during the Primary “season” (30 3-hour shifts). We emphasized having the maximum number of shifts attended by scheduled LWV observers.

Observers not scheduled were welcome to attend as well, sitting in designated areas. The whole operation was remarkable for its lack of drama. Much has been written about questionable activities at various voting centers. None of us saw anything that appeared questionable. There were no hidden troves of ballots discovered on election day, nor midnight drop-offs of coffins stuffed with ballots, no demonstrations, and nobody being frog-marched away. We saw only dedicated staff and temporary workers quietly and efficiently processing ballots and showing exceptional courtesy to us observers.

Our last visit as observers was ceremonial. After a single recount, the election was officially completely certified at 11:00 am August 23rd by the County Commissioners, represented by Commissioner Shon Small as well as Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Reid Hay and Chief Deputy Auditor Lorene Roe. Three of the LWV observers attended: Christine, Susan, and Charles. Afterwards Christine provided a lemon cake that was served to all. The whole certification and reception were over in a half-hour.

At the Certification, we confirmed that the Election Security Pilot Program will be continued into the General Election, and it will no longer be a pilot program. Our Elections Manager is formulating plans to implement certain improvements, among which will be arrangements to provide for more transparent observing of the processes with less disturbance of the staff.

We’ll be looking for LWV members to continue to serve the electorate of Benton County as election observers, or to sign up as new observers.

Conclusions

It is evident that Washington State’s mail-in ballot system makes for a more uniform, reliable, and credible election system. The elections staff continually showed a high level of professionalism. Our observers did a great job! I personally found my confidence in the Benton County Auditor’s elections administration confirmed, having actually witnessed the Auditor’s staff in action. As a post-mortem and in the spirit of continuous improvement, we members of an impartial observer team should be asking:

- What could we have done better as observers?
- What do we need to know to be better prepared to observe effectively?
- How could observer training be improved?

As lead author, I cannot resist a personal conclusion: there has been a public focus on the vote counting business as an avenue for committing voter fraud and stealing elections, but the real voting fraud and stealing is more likely to occur before any votes are counted. That would include dishonest election campaigns, manipulation of voter registries, making it harder for some people to vote, gerrymandering districts to arrange for having candidates choose their electors, attempts to negate or overturn elections, and similar nefarious acts. Most of this is not under effective control of the County Auditor or election administration. As an organization, the League needs to consider and advocate improvements or reforms to address these aspects of the elections process. Your author presents this article in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Addendum to:

Benton County's Election Security Pilot Program by Charles LoPresti

Check Out Benton County's YouTube video presentations that are outstanding! If you are planning to participate in the Observer Program this is all very relevant information.

(YouTube Benton Co Wa Auditor) Chris

1. Vote By Mail
2. Agilis Ballot Sorting System
3. Certifying The Election
4. Your Signature Matters

Suggested Reading: Chuck LoPresti & Kelly Doyle

Jonathan Haidt "Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion"

George LaKoff "Don't Think Of an Elephant! Know Your Values And Frame The Debate"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 14th, 10:00am ~ Naturalization Ceremony at the Richland Federal Building

September 15th, 5:00pm-7:00pm ~ Women's Equality Day Celebration Picnic

September 20, 8:00am ~ National Voter Registration Day at Richland Food Bank. Details in Lora Rathbone's article.

October 20th, 6:00pm ~ Business/Planning Board Meeting via Zoom

November 1st, 10:00am ~ Naturalization Ceremony at the Richland Federal Building

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