



# VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

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

## From the President Polly Parton

December is a quieter month for LWVBF events, but it can also be a time to take stock of the activities you participated in and learned from, the League friends you spent time with, and how your efforts benefitted our members and our community. Please bring these thoughts to our January Program Planning meeting and influence our efforts for the coming year. Participation can range vastly from on-going projects and studies to the briefest advocacy (an e-mail, phone call, post card...).

I also hope we add more opportunities throughout the year to meet and discuss issues, community events and our involvement in an informal setting. It is amazing what we learn in these casual discussions with our fellow League members. I always enjoy and look forward to the vast array of information our members have tucked away in their heads.

Our holiday party is on Sunday, December 3 from 2-4 pm. It is a wonderful afternoon to enjoy snacks with old and new friends and learn something about our community as we continue our tradition to feature a local speaker. See you there!

## Holiday Party Marilyn Perkins

This year's party will be on **Sunday, December 3 from 2-4 pm at the Pasco Goodwill** meeting rooms (3521 W. Court St., Pasco), where we met last year. The rooms are in the strip mall next to the Goodwill store.

Judge Katy Butler will join us as the guest speaker. She will talk about the Mental Health Court—how it's working, how many people it can serve, and what its future will be. Because the citizens in Benton County voted to increase the sales tax for public safety, money was made available for this endeavor.

Please bring any type of appetizer, salty snack, or a desert or drinks. Guests are very welcome. Questions? Contact Marilyn Perkins at [jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com](mailto:jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com)

Dec 2017/Jan 2018

## Officers

**President:**  
**Polly Parton**  
**1st Vice President:**  
**JoAnne Dimond**  
**2nd Vice President:**  
**Janet Nail**  
**Secretary:**  
**Ruvine Jimenez**  
**Treasurer:**  
**Shirley Sonnichsen**  
**Past President:**  
**Marilyn Perkins**  
**Voter Editor:**  
**Diane Molleson**

## Elected Directors:

**Ruth Giese**  
**Beverly Hunter**  
**Beverly Johnson-Torelli**  
**Diane Molleson**  
**Lora Rathbone**  
**Toyoko Tsukuda**

## Appointed Directors:

**Lisabeth Jimenez**  
**Danette Keegan**  
**Sabiha Khan**  
**Chuck Torelli**

## **Program Planning Meeting & Brunch on Jan 13**

### **Marilyn Perkins**

The National Convention for the League of Women Voters will be held in Chicago in June 2018. That means local Leagues throughout the nation will be meeting in January to discuss what they would like to see the National League focus on in the next two years. We can suggest a new study or focus on education or action based on a current position. We will also start the conversation about what our members would like to see our local League do in the coming year. This is a good meeting for NEW MEMBERS to attend. The different levels of League can be a little confusing at first, but as we are all affected by the three levels of government, and we are members at the local, state and national levels and work together on many issues important to all three levels. All levels of League will be looking forward to 2020 when we will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the LWV and the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment giving women the right to vote. (The LWV was founded on February 14, 1920.)

**The Program Planning meeting will be held on Saturday, January 13 at the home of Marilyn Perkins (4512 W. Yellowstone, Kennewick).** From Edison, turn east on Yellowstone. If coming from Highway 240, you would turn left at the first light, and if coming from Canal, you would turn right just after you cross the railroad tracks at the same light. The house is toward the end of the street and the only one with a red tile roof. You may park in the driveway or along the street. We will start gathering at 9:30 am and hopefully start eating by 9:45 or 10:00. Members can contribute juice, fruit, muffins, bagels etc. or a hot dish. Contact Marilyn Perkins ([jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com](mailto:jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com)) if you have any questions.

### **Observer Corps Judy Golberg**

Are you interested in how governmental agencies work and would like to do something useful for the League?

Our League has an invaluable tool in its mission of working for good government when there is a vigorous and lively Observer Corps in place. Participants attend and observe the workings of governmental bodies with rule-making authority. Observer Corps members attend city council, school board, county commission or other agency meetings to listen, observe, and make note of any information our members may wish to know. In particular, the Observer Corps calls the League Board's attention to community and public policy issues that we can act/testify on based on League Position statements. Observers also identify trends or problems for future study and action by the League.

The primary rule is that Observers NEVER speak. You are there to listen and note both the manner of this body and the agenda from which it works. You report back any items of interest to League that are under discussion. You may wish to introduce yourself at the first meeting you attend. For the rest of the period you serve as an observer, you will be a part of the audience only. Please wear your League name tag.

Attend a meeting once and try it. You would be under no obligation. Want to give it a try? Please contact Judy Golberg, 627-5347, [jgolberg@charter.net](mailto:jgolberg@charter.net) for more information.

### **Explore Our Website: [lww-bf.org](http://lww-bf.org)**

We now feature PayPal on our website to make it easier for people to join and donate. If you want to know exactly where our Holiday social or any other event will be held, click on the address and it will bring up a map. Wondering about our history? Want to print a copy of the *They Represent You* brochure? Need another copy of our past VOTERS? Look on the website.

## LWVWA Action Workshop in Olympia

Polly Parton

We had a great turnout in Olympia on November 18 to review and learn about the 2017 legislative session and the 2018 legislative expectations. We studied how we can impact legislation, experienced a great speed dating style discussion of top issues led by our LWVWA Lobby Team, and learned about water issues relating to the Hirst Decision. The afternoon concluded with a tour of the Capitol Building.

Our LWVWA Lobbyist Nancy Sapiro and LWVWA Lobby Team member Kathy Sakahara reviewed the legislative process for passing the operating/capital budget in odd years followed by the supplemental budget in even years. In December, Governor Inslee will propose the supplemental budget, then the House and Senate will reconcile it during the shorter 2018 session. The 2017 operating budget did not pass due to complications from the 2016 Hirst Decision, where Washington's counties must evaluate whether there is adequate water available before permitting new buildings, instead of relying on the State Department of Ecology. Those issues are expected to be resolved so the operating budget can pass in 2018. There is a pent-up demand to pass bills that have languished for the past five years. Two bills likely to pass are the Reproductive Parity Act and the Equal Pay Act.

Former Washington State Senator Karen Fraser waded through the murky results of the 2016 Hirst Decision and the cascading impacts of balancing water rights for humans versus natural/environmental needs, exempt well permits, the Growth Management Act, the state Department of Ecology's involvement, existing and future building permits, and shifts in responsibilities for approvals.

Paula Holyrode of Thurston County aptly summed up the day stressing that each of us **find our passion**. We do not need to address every League issue, but find one to two issues and follow up in various ways. Remember our League of Women reputation is powerful when appropriately used.

## Treasurer's Report

Shirley Sonnichsen

At the end of October, checking was \$3,555; savings was \$1,856 for a total of \$5,411. **Income:** We received \$1,050 in dues and \$150 in contributions for a total of \$1,200.

**Expenses:** Post Office Box - \$112; LWVWA 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter PMP - \$218.50. We have 26 paid members at the end of October. We have 16 members who have not paid; 8 who paid after Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> and do not owe. We have one new member, Peter Bengtson, JoAnne's husband and we welcome him to League. The League PayPal account is on the web site. Go to [www.lwv-bf.org](http://www.lwv-bf.org). There are two buttons, one for membership dues on the "join" page (drop down menu) and one for contributions on the "donate". Please pay your \$75 dues if you have not done so.

Checking: \$3,555
Savings: \$1,856
Total: \$5,411

## Informal Discussion Group

Marilyn Perkins

Some of us in League think there are just too many hot topics to talk about and things to learn and not enough opportunities to do either. We are going to start an informal discussion group that will meet in a member's home, a restaurant, an office or possibly a park as the weather improves. Some of the suggested topics include the Ken Burns' Vietnam series, the sexual harassment/assault "outings" and what they say about our country, and what's good and bad about today's technology. The list could go on, and we will talk a bit about it at the Program Planning meeting. If a time, place and topic are chosen, a notice will be sent to members in January.

## **Nov 2 Public Banking Meeting**

**Toyoko Tsukuda**

Attendees: Polly Parton, Beverly Johnson-Torelli, Chuck Torelli, Clyde Cramer, and Toyoko Tsukuda

The Public Banking (PB) team members listened to the 2012 Washington State Senate Hearing on SB6310, a bill to create the Washington Investment Trust (WIT), a state-owned investment bank.

As an opponent of public banking, State Treasurer James McIntire testified at the WIT hearing that public banking goes against the three core principles of the state treasury: safety, liquidity and return. He said that using the money in the treasury for investment is a risk the state should not take. However, he also mentioned the risk of having state money in private banks, saying the state lost public funds when 20 banks failed prior to 2012.

The following comments and questions were raised after listening to the hearing: Polly thought the opponent wasn't consistent in his testimony on safety. The state lost money in failing private banks yet he thinks that keeping the money in private banks and securities are safer than in a public bank like the proposed WIT.

In his testimony, the State Treasurer also compared the Public Bank of North Dakota (BND) to the WIT. In 2012, BND had more assets (\$3.5 billion) than the Washington State treasury (\$2.5 billion). Toyoko pointed out that in 2017, Washington State had more assets (\$5.2 billion) than BND (\$3.2 billion). Many obscure financial terms in the Treasurer's testimony seem to obfuscate what his real point is for opposing WIT.

Chuck wondered what the motives of the opponent and proponent are. Both brought up the successful example of BND. He wondered if there must be some downside to the BND. Has North Dakota experienced any downside of having the public banking system?

Toyoko noted that we still don't know how much can we earn and save if we deposit the state revenue in a PB and administer it. We need the numbers.

Polly asked if the PB directly invests in local municipalities. If so, will the municipalities benefit more than getting a loan under the current system? Are the municipalities aware of the proposed WIT bill? If so, do they favor the PB system? What is the administrative difference for them under the current system and under the PB system? She also suggested including officers or a board member of LWVWA who has more knowledge about state revenue, or the state treasury in our PB committee conversations. **The next PB meeting will be in January— date TBD.**

## **Grant Applications: Spring 2018 Youth Voter Registration**

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) is pleased to announce a 2018 Youth Voter Registration project. As part of this project, LWVEF will award pass-through grants to state and local Leagues to undertake voter registration activities in high schools, community colleges and alternative/vocational schools in underrepresented communities. Grant applications are due by midnight **December 13, 2017**. Grant decisions will be announced before the holidays.

## **EPA Accepting Comments on Plan to Repeal the Clean Power Plan**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its plan to move forward with the repeal of the Clean Power Plan, which would regulate the carbon pollution from existing power plants. The EPA is holding a public hearing next week in Charleston, WV and members of the public can submit comments to the EPA through the online rulemaking portal on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) through **January 16, 2018**.

## **Public Disclosure Commission's Next Generation Campaign Finance Data Access Tools: Project Completed October 26**

The new tools mark the culmination of a year-long project that overhauled how the PDC delivers information about campaigns and lobbyists to the public. The project represents the biggest improvement to the agency's data access systems since 2008.

"The PDC's mission has always been to help Washingtonians make informed decisions about the influence of money in the political process," said Commissioner David Ammons, who covered the PDC's early days during his 37 years in the Associated Press's Capitol bureau. "Fulfilling that mission depends on not only robust disclosure, but also easy and meaningful access to the information. These upgrades are a huge step in that direction."

The new database search provides one-stop searching for most inquiries about candidates, political committees, independent expenditures, lawmaker surplus accounts, and state lobbying activity. The improved interface includes Campaign Explorer's accordion-style menu of races and the Campaigns in Your Voting District filter that allows PDC homepage visitors to focus their searches on the races appearing on their own ballots.

An active group of stakeholders that met every two weeks drove the project's development, and many of the features now available to PDC website visitors were first suggested by the group. Its members include Cheryl Aichele, Parkside Neighborhood Association; Clyde E. Cramer of Arlington; Conner Edwards of Olympia; Abraham Epton, Socrata; Lea Galanter, League of Women Voters; Bridget McLeman of Vancouver; Chad Magendanz, Voter Science LLC; Toby Nixon, Washington Coalition for Open Government; Toyoko Tsukuda, The League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties, and Andrew Villeneuve, Northwest Progressive Institute.

This work is made possible partly by a \$150,000 annual appropriation that the Legislature first funded in the 2015-17 budget.

A video on how to use the new site:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkXrMOaQxj4&feature=youtu.be>

### **My Volunteer Experience for the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) Toyoko Tsukuda**

In 2016, the League's TWIL (*This Week In League*) had an article seeking volunteers to be stakeholders for the Public Disclosure Commission's Next Generation Campaign Finance Data Access Project. I immediately answered the call. The PDC was instituted by a Washington State people's initiative in 1972. The PDC states, "The Open Government Act constitutes one of the most exhaustive disclosure laws in the country and serves to build public confidence in the political process and government." One of the driving forces to create the PDC was the LWVWA.

The PDC Next Generation Data Access Project aimed to make a user-friendly Internet site for campaign finance data. Five to six core stakeholders participated in discussions every two weeks by Skype, phone or walk-ins from October 2016 to October 2017. As the PDC staff implemented new features, the stakeholders tried out and critiqued the features. The PDC staff and the stakeholders became an effective team designing a set of Open Data containing 5 million records (as the 1<sup>st</sup> phase) and creating "easy to navigate" access to the massive campaign finance records (as the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase). Over 470 new features, many requested by the stakeholders, were added to the design of the next generation data access. I felt great joy working with the staff and other stakeholders and a sense of accomplishment seeing the new data access tools.

# Upcoming Events

## **RESULTS Advocacy Training**

**Saturday, December 9 at 2 PM - 5 PM**

**Shalom United Church of Christ, 505 McMurray St, Richland**

Join volunteers from the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, RESULTS Tri-Cities and Indivisible to learn more about effective advocacy from Judy Arbogast, a RESULTS trainer. Since its start in 1980, RESULTS has grown to a movement of more than 800 grassroots volunteers dedicated to ending poverty. Come learn how to get the best results for your efforts at influencing our legislators on the issues you care about.

## **Kennewick Irrigation District Elections**

Voting for the Kennewick Irrigation District is scheduled for **December 12 from 1-8 pm** at the KID office, 2015 S. Ely St., Kennewick.

## LWVBF Calendar

### December 2017

**Saturday, December 2—LWVWA Action Workshop in Tacoma, Homeless/Housing**

**Sunday, December 3—Holiday Party, Goodwill (3521 W. Court St., Pasco), 2-4 pm**

**No Board Meeting**

### January 2018

**Saturday, January 13— January Program Planning Meeting, Marilyn Perkin's home, 9:30 am**

**Saturday, January 6— LWVWA Action Workshop in Seattle, Revenue Issues**

**Thursday, January 18— Business and Planning Meeting, 5:30 pm, BF Transit Center (Richland Wye/1000 Columbia Park Trail) All members are welcome**

**January—Public Banking meeting, date TBD**

Email us at  
[lww.of.bf@gmail.com](mailto:lww.of.bf@gmail.com)

League of Women Voters of  
Benton & Franklin  
Counties  
**P. O. Box 765,  
Richland WA 99352**