



VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

www.lwv-bf.org

July/August 2017

From the President Polly Parton

As I start my term as president, I am aware of my heavy reliance on our past president, Marilyn Perkins, and the other officers, board and committee members. Their expertise and efforts benefit all our members and our larger community. I am amazed at the breadth of knowledge, experience, dedication, curiosity and passions of our members. Participation levels vary from very active, to occasional involvement, to support by continuing their memberships. We appreciate all members' assistance and feedback. We remind you to email/call the chairs of any committees that you may want to engage in.

During the summer, League activities slow down. However, Marilyn Perkins, Kay Ottem and JoAnne Dimond are well into planning July candidate forums for the Primaries, followed by fall forums. We are also planning for our August picnic and speaker, organizing the expansion of the high school civics lessons while the normal business of League goes on (treasurer, secretarial/recording, membership recruitment/retention, program and location planning, publicity, Observer Corps, Facebook and website maintenance, action updates on local and state issues, publishing the Voter, letters to the editor, and more). Enjoy your summer and we hope to see you at our various events!

July 2017 Candidate Forums

Three forums will be held this month to meet the candidates running for city council in Pasco, Richland and Kennewick and the two school board candidates in Pasco. All the candidates will be given time to state their positions, then the moderator will ask them questions. Questions from the audience will be collected, and as time allows, asked of all the candidates. The public is encouraged to attend. (See **page 2 for the Forum schedule**).

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-Torrelli
Diane Molleson
Lora Rathbone
Toyoko Tsukuda

Appointed Directors:

Will be appointed at the next Board Meeting

Candidate Forum Schedule in July 2017

Tuesday, July 11th at 6:30 pm at the HAPO Stage/ John Dam Plaza (815 George Washington Way in Richland)—Richland City Council (fourteen candidates running for four positions)

Monday, July 17 at 6:30 pm at the Mid-Columbia Library (1620 S. Union Street in Kennewick)—Kennewick City Council (nine candidates running for two positions)

Wednesday, July 19th at 6:30 pm at the Pasco Police Training Center (204 W. Clark St. in Pasco)—Pasco City Council (eleven candidates running for two positions) and Pasco School Board (six candidates running for two positions)

Help is especially needed to write questions to ask the candidates. We also need assistance at the forums to greet the public, time the candidates' responses, set up chairs etc. Please send questions to Marilyn Perkins at jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com and also let her know if you can help at any of the forums.

April Table Talk: Carol Moser on Public Health

Carol Moser, the Executive Director of the Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health (GCACH), gave an overview of the Medicaid enrollment numbers in the state of Washington (1,905,946), and the goals of the Health Care Authority to move toward value-based purchasing. She then talked about Accountable Communities of Health and their missions to bring stakeholders and partners together to create a common agenda that addresses whole person health. Washington State has acknowledged that health is more than just the medical system; it is a broad spectrum of systems that encompasses education, workforce, housing, and government. All of these systems need to be working like cogs of a wheel in order to achieve whole person health and healthy communities.

She defined the nine-county region that is a part of the GCACH and described its demographics, noting that 263,028 adults and children receive Medicaid benefits. The GCACH has a two-tiered governance structure consisting of a Leadership Council and a 16 member Governing Board that represents different sectors and counties. They meet once a month to work on common health priorities and currently have five committees addressing the following areas: Obesity/Diabetes, Behavioral Health, Health Youth & Equitable Communities, Oral Health, and Care Coordination. They are currently working on a project plan, due October 23rd, 2017, that can motivate providers to "move the needle" on certain health indicators such as emergency department use, integration of behavioral and primary care, hospital readmissions, chronic conditions. The State of Washington received word from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid on January 9th, 2017 that their Waiver for a Medicaid Transformation Demonstration had been granted for \$1.125 billion, so each ACH is scrambling to develop a comprehensive project plan based on data, needs, capacity, and consumer input that improves health outcomes.

The group then had a robust discussion about the presentation and stated that they had learned a lot about the great work being done through the ACHs.

Public Banking Research Meeting on August 3rd

LWVBF member Toyoko Tsukuda is heading a committee to research public banking in Washington State. Their first meeting was held on June 29th. **The next meeting will be on Thursday, August 3rd at 4 pm in the Richland Public Library.** The purpose of this committee is to gather information about this issue, not come to a consensus. This is not an official study sanctioned by the state League. Please contact Toyoko if you would like to participate.

LWVWA State Council: Workshop on Redistricting

Toyoko Tsukuda

Why Redistricting Matters?

In this map where W: women and M: Men, the outcome is quite different depending on how the lines are drawn.

<u>W W W</u>	vs	W W W
<u>W W W</u>		W W W
<u>M M M</u>		M M M

Washington State had gerrymandering leaning to Democrats, but that was neutralized after the Redistricting Commission was instituted in 1983. There are seven states, including Washington, which have a redistricting commissions drawing maps for both the state and U.S. congressional districts.

Maps are drawn for the districts in Washington following these steps:

Step 1. The count (Census), Step 2. Reapportionment, and Step 3. Redistricting

The Washington State Redistricting Commission consists of five commissioners who are appointed. *“No elected official and no person elected to a legislative district, county, or state political party office may serve on the commission. Majority and minority leaders of the House and Senate each select one. These four select a non-voting fifth to chair the commission....”*, (Washington State Constitution, Article II, Chap.43). Three out of four votes are needed to determine the final maps of the districts. The legislators can make technical corrections and the governor has no say in this process.

The process of redistricting is done with two commissioners meeting to draw two maps (one for the state and the other for U.S. congressional district). They meet in all the two-commissioner combinations to draw and modify the maps. They then show the draft maps to the public and hold public hearings. Public input is very important. Visit the WA redistricting Q & A site: www.redistricting.wa.gov/faq.asp

The LWVWA conducted a review of Washington’s redistricting process and found the following: lack of transparency, protection of incumbents, lack of diversity, focus on state legislative office, an emphasis on drawing safe districts, and a need to better educate the public. The LWVWA is educating the public for the 2021 Washington State redistricting process.

Treasurer’s Report

Shirley Sonnichsen

At the end of May we have \$3,371 in checking and \$1,856 in savings for a total of \$5,227. We had dues from Zahra Roach, Chuck Torrelli, Barbara McIntyre and Debra Bowen. We also had scholarship funds of \$263 donated for students and others who might need help. For expenses we paid \$16 for our domain name, lwv-bf.org. We also paid \$50 for the room at All Saints Church for the annual meeting and \$64.62 for name tags. JoAnn Bengtson’s registration fee for \$165 was paid with the League debit card. Marilyn Perkins and Shirley Sonnichsen had extra activities so will be paid back for the registration fee and one night’s hotel cost. Those checks will need to be cashed before the end of the fiscal year on June 30th. We now have 58 members, and while we will always be recruiting new volunteers, we are excited to announce that we reached our membership goals this year!

Checking: \$3,371
Savings: \$1,856
Total: \$5,227

2017 State Council Report

Shirley Sonnichsen

State Council was held in Seattle on June 2 - 4.

Marilyn Perkins and I put together the LWVBF basket and we believe our basket took top dollar (\$160) at the convention. Thanks to everyone for their donations. On Friday, our LWVUS Board Member and liaison to LWV Washington did a presentation on “A Transformational Journey: Connecting, Engaging, and Leading into the 21st Century.” Her workshop was a Q&A session where she stressed being respectful of other members and listening to what they have to say, and deciding what you as a League want to accomplish and who you are. (Her presentation will be posted on the LWVWA website.) I also went to the WA 2017 Budget Q&A workshop. The treasurers from both the 501-3c and 4c were there to questions. I think I was the only treasurer there other than Seattle’s.

Noah Purcell, Solicitor General, State of Washington, was our speaker at dinner. (All the meals were buffet style). He was the attorney who successfully argued the case before the Federal Ninth Circuit Court against President Trump’s immigration order. He emphasized what a group effort it was. Large corporations and private firms donated their lawyers. They had several all night sessions and people brought them food, offered child sitting services and helped immensely in meeting their mandated deadlines. He was my favorite speaker.

The caucuses went on until 10 p.m. I went to “Election Reform,” which emphasized automatic voter registration, but until that happens some ideas included registering voters at food banks, Goodwill, having computers for online registration, registering voters at art fairs and Juneteenth. Make sure you let people know felons can vote. Obtain a unique “url” from the auditors so you can track who you’ve registered. Do a QR code to get to the site for Voter Registration. The homeless can give a geographic area instead of an address to register in a precinct. They could receive mail at a shelter address or a family residence. Have community colleges ask students if they want to register to vote when they sign up for classes online. There are “league New Media” templates. National Registration day is the 3rd Tuesday in September. The LWVUS has media tweets and does the work. They suggest having a cartoon on card stock, information on VOTE 411, a giveaway, etc. Other suggestions are a booth at farmer’s markets, and publicized drop box parties, “Ballots and Baristas” or “Think and Drink.”

Saturday our first speaker was Josh Parker who talked about “Civic Literacy and the Fight Against Political Passivity.” I wish all teachers were that motivated. LWVBF member Ellyn Murphy gave a report on the Climate Change Toolkit, which Richard Badlamante collaborated on. The toolkit includes information on how to respond to deniers, resources, and suggestions for speakers. After lunch we had a presentation by State Representative Gerry Pollet – “Update on the Hanford Contamination Crisis.” His presentation was very one-sided, alarmist presentation, and I heard members saying they were terrified.

I attended the workshop “Taking the Initiative on Democracy: Electoral Reform on the Ballot.” Election-related legislation includes automatic voter registration, same day registration (on election day); allowing preregistration for 16 and 17 year olds, and Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. Prepaid postage on ballots and having enough permanent, well-placed ballot boxes would make voting easier. There should also be drop boxes on campuses. In 2017, the legislature passed SSB 5472, which required one ballot box for every 15000 registered voters and one in each city, town, and census-designated area with a post office. The Washington Voting Rights Act has been introduced in the legislature every year since 2013. It meets the three criteria in our position on election methods: how well they promote “representative-ness, citizen participation and accountability.”

The featured speaker at dinner was Cheryl Stumbo – “Becoming Present – Personal Journey to Activism.” She told us her story of being shot and the trauma it caused. After recovering for a year from her wound, she started speaking about her experience. She is a member of the Alliance for People Against Gun Violence.

On Sunday we conducted the Plenary business— adopted the budget, the PMP, Election of Officers, Introduction of the New Board, and Adoption of Resolutions. Marilyn Perkins was recruited to be the Resolutions Committee Chair. She invited all to the State Council in the Tri-Cities in 2018.

June Table Talk: Native Plants

Polly Parton

At the June 10th Table Talk, we learned of the beauty, variety and sustainability of native plants. Heather Wendt from the Native Plant Society led a walking tour of my block in West Richland, highlighting four gardens. I was amazed at the colors, textures, and types of desert plants—and the benefits they offer. Most native plants need little or no watering after they are established.

Then Gretchen Graber, a botanist, discussed good bugs/bad bugs and how to safely encourage the former and discourage the latter. Knowledge is the key to improving our outdoor and indoor environments. She also informed us about the Bureau and Land Management project she is involved with to restore the Sage- Grouse populations and their habitat environments. To wrap up, my neighbor Karl Fecht, a retired geologist, explained how changing climate, geology and environments have caused plants to evolve in our area.

This has inspired me to plan a spot in my new yard for a native/ no water flower garden. We will try to include information about the native plant sale this fall.

Calendar

July 2017

Tuesday, July 11—Richland City Council Candidate Forum, 6:30 pm, HAPO Stage, John Dam Plaza (815 GW Way in Richland)

Monday, July 17— Kennewick City Council Candidate Forum, 6:30 pm, Mid-Columbia Library (1620 Union St. in Kennewick)

Wednesday, July 19—Pasco Candidates Forum for city council and school board, 6:30 pm, Pasco Police Training Center (204 W. Clark St. in Pasco)

Thursday, July 27—Business and Planning Meeting, 5:30 pm, BF Transit Center (Richland Wye/Columbia Park Trail) All members are welcome.

August 2017

Thursday, August 3— Public banking meeting, 4 pm, Richland Public Library (955 Northgate Dr. in Richland)

August—League's annual Women's Equality picnic (date, time and location TBD)

Email us at
lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

League of Women Voters of
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