



VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

www.lwv-bf.org

From the President Polly Parton

Good job to all who completed the *They Represent You* pamphlet—the TRYs. The information was researched, edited, printed, organized for distribution and dispersed. This is a valuable resource for our community. If you need copies to distribute, please contact Polly Parton (polly.parton@yahoo.com) or Marilyn Perkins (jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com).

We have two major projects pending – civics presentations for the high schools and planning for the State Council on June 1, 2 and 3 in Richland. Janet Nail and Toyoko Tsukuda are heading the civics project and will be training us in March to present the material. I am excited there is growing interest from the teachers to have these presentations in their classes. This project could expand yearly and become a valuable teaching tool and also give greater exposure to the League's value in our community. Planning for June Council will kick up a notch in March, and we will be asking our members to help in various ways, when they can.

We are also planning to continue our monthly Table Talks in a casual setting to research, learn about and discuss local, state and national issues that are important to us. Look for information in each *Voter* for details. Marilyn Perkins and JoAnne Dimond are co-chairs. Please give feedback to our board to help develop future programs. We hope to see you at a future event!

Table Talk on March 20 Janet Nail

Grab a friend and join League members for a discussion on gun control at our next Table Talk. It will be March 20th at 2:00 p.m. at Janet Nail's home, 135 Meadow Hills Drive, Richland (off of Leslie Road). Janet's number if you need directions: 509-546-1467. No food, just coffee, tea, and water.

March 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
Jo Ann Bengtson

Volunteers Needed for Civics Presentation

Toyoko Tsukuda

So far, four high school teachers (Pasco and Kamiakin) would like our league to give a civics presentation in their classrooms.

The LWVBF Civics Education Committee will hold meetings for civics education volunteers on March 14 and 15 at 4 pm. Please attend **only one** of these meetings and reply to Toyoko Tsukuda (tmjdaddy@gmail.com) with the date you will attend:

Wed, March 14, 4 pm at Starbucks inside Fred Meyer on Wellsian Way, Richland

Thurs, March 15, 4 pm at Benton-Franklin Transit Center, Richland

We will provide civics education materials, coordinate the volunteers for the presentations, and pair a new volunteer with one who presented last year.

New Member Spotlight: Sarah Thornton

I'm grateful for the work of the League locally, at the state level, and nationally. The League's mission is critically important in today's political climate, so I am excited to be a part of it. I've worked with the League's state representative, Catherine Ahl, on the NEWS executive board for a number of years and have been impressed with her passion and dedication to education issues.

I grew up in upstate New York, lived in Venezuela and Germany during high school, and attended Smith College. In 1992, I traveled to Seattle for law school at the University of Washington and fell in love with the Pacific Northwest. I've lived in the Tri-Cities since 1996 and have worked as an attorney (and now attorney/school administrator) in the public sector for 22 years. I live in Richland with my husband and 8 year-old son.

Washington State Legislature Update

Lora Rathbone

As your newly appointed Local League Liaison, I'm providing this information to help you "further the League state-level advocacy." If you are interested in getting my weekly action alerts, contact me at ldrathbone@outlook.com

You can also sign up for the LWVWA weekly action alerts at http://participate.lwv.org/c/9163/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=7214 or <http://participate.lwv.org/c/9163/blastContent.jsp>

For the most current bill information, go to <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/> and type in the bill number. Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000, 8am – 8pm, M-F.

The LWVWA's priorities include the following:

Democracy: Elections, Voting Rights, Campaign Finance

Social Policies: Economic and Social Justice, Healthcare and Behavioral Health, Reproductive Rights, Gun Safety

Education: Fully Fund Education

Climate, Energy, and Natural Resources: Climate Change; Energy; Forests, Rivers, Shorelines, Wetlands and Land Use; Water; Transportation

Revenue: Fair and Adequate Revenue

The WA legislative session is scheduled to end on March 8. After that, we'll focus on federal bills. We plan to hold a meeting to get informed/organized before meeting with our representatives. To see LWV's federal bill priorities, go to <https://www.lwv.org/other-issues>

February 8 Birthday Dinner

Polly Parton

We celebrated the 98th birthday of the League of Women Voters with a dinner and a speaker on the McCleary Decision. Former School Superintendent Mike Blair presented the history and brought us up to date on this Washington State school funding issue. His perspective is unique as he was deeply involved from the beginning of the lawsuit. Michelle Whitney, the Pasco School Superintendent, added a view from the administration's side. John Perkins, a member of the Kennewick Bond and Levy Committee, added local information on school building progress, future building plans and some funding information. As always, we League members use a celebration to learn more about our community and become better- informed voters.

Longtime Member: Shirley Sonnichsen

Born in Roseburg, Oregon Feb. 7, 1944, I was delivered by my physician grandfather. I was raised in Bellevue, Washington, received a BA in Political Science from the University of Washington in 1966 where I met my husband Jack. We got married on August 12, 1967 — the hottest day of the year. I had only been over the mountains once so it was pretty much of a shock coming to the Tri-Cities. I worked for Computer Sciences Corporation in 1967 until I had my one and only child, Jennifer. I became addicted to tennis and played for many years after Jenny went to school. In 1985, I went to work for PNNL and was there for 19 years. Our daughter, Jennifer, is a Richland High and University of Washington graduate, married to David with two children, Jack and Lucy. They currently live in Woodinville and we visit often. I joined League 20 years ago because of Marilyn Perkins' influence and have been Treasurer most of the time I've been a member. I enjoy League because I like being part of the democratic process: registering voters, holding candidate forums, and having table talk meetings for the relevant issues we study. I also like having conversations with the motivated, intelligent women in the League. I am a cancer survivor since 2009 and appreciate every day I'm here. I support many local animal and environmental groups. I feed feral cats, trap, neuter, and return or try to find homes for them, but lots have ended up at my house.

Treasurer's Report

Shirley Sonnichsen

At the end of January, checking was \$4,063; savings was \$1,856 for a total of \$5,919.

Checking: \$4,063
Savings: \$1,856
Total: \$5,919

Income: We received \$555 in dues and \$175 in contributions for a total of \$730.

Expenses: 3rd qtr. State PMP payment for \$218.50. We have 42 paid members at the end of January and 55 total, including a new member in February, Sarah Thornton.

I updated the National database for the February 1 deadline and we had 52 members for whom we will owe National \$32 and State \$19. We get to keep and operate on \$24 and contributions out of the \$75 dues. Thank you to those who contributed extra.

National Convention "A More Perfect Democracy" is June 28 – July 1, 2018 at the Chicago Hilton. We can send two delegates. The early registration fee is \$450. There is a schedule on the National Website: www.LWV.org. Here is the link to reserve a room with the League rate of \$209: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/reserve-your-hotel-room-hilton-chicago>. The League will reimburse for the registration fee and room (1/2 the room if sharing with a non-member).

OBSERVER CORPS

Polly Parton attended the West Richland City Council Meeting on February 6, 2018

Topics discussed:

- The use of fireworks was brought up by the public. Remarks were divided between those who support fireworks, those who support with restrictions and those who opposed. The Police Chief said people were mostly in compliance with the dates and times fireworks were allowed last year.
- This was the first meeting in the new City building and it was noted it has over-flow capability.
- Council members provided updates on projects they are involved with and asked the citizens to provide more feedback on the topic of fireworks.

Public Banking Committee Update Toyoko Tsukuda

The public banking committee met via a teleconference call on February 19. To understand the pros and cons of having a state-owned bank, we discussed the Debt Affordability Study, published in 2017 by the Washington State Treasurer. Washington has an average debt of \$20.9 billion per year and spends about \$2 billion each year to pay principal and interest on the debt while the state only brings in \$29.7 billion in tax revenue a year (2016). The tax revenue and federal funds for Washington (approximate total \$40 billion) are deposited in private banks, which invest the state's money as part of their capital. The state debt comes from borrowing money for various projects and to maintain infrastructure. We questioned whether North Dakota has experienced any drawbacks from having a public bank; it's the only state that has one. Chuck Torelli searched for potential downsides but has not found any.

Noting that Washington has a large debt and its money, kept in private banks, is not producing appreciable interest, we concluded that a state-owned bank could have a positive impact. The state once had the Public Works Fund, which was similar to a public bank. It started with \$43 million in seed money that was invested in local projects. It increased its assets from interest on loans and was very successful until the legislature took money from the fund. All state revenues would be deposited in the public bank, and it would be independent from the state legislature. The money in the public bank would be used to pay the state's expenses, fund projects and be invested for interest. We discussed how a public bank could be promoted at the local and state level. It was suggested that we propose a broader study to be taken up by the LWVWA. The next meeting is TBD.

LWVWA ACTION WORKSHOP Toyoko Tsukuda

Toyoko Tsukuda attended the LWVWA's Action Workshop in Seattle on January 6. Here is her report:

I. "How to influence legislators" by Kathy Skahara, LWVWA lobby team.

How Bills Get Passed (Citizens' Opportunities For Influence Are In Bold):

1. Initiated as a Draft and Reviewed
2. Co-sponsors recruited, Introduced, and **assigned to Committee**
3. **Public hearing: Amendments, Striker-complete, Replacement**
4. Committee Vote: Referred to financial committee
5. **Approved by financial committee: Sent to Rules**
6. **Approved by Rules: Sent to floor**
7. **On Floor: Amendment**
8. **Almost Always Passes: Rinse and Repeat**
9. **Signed by Governor**

(Continued on next page)

LWVWA ACTION WORKSHOP

Toyoko Tsukuda

Legislators count how many contacts they receive. Personal stories have an effect but initially the contact number counts. Does an email count as a contact? Best: Meeting in person. Second: Phone call to legislator's aides, then 1-800 numbers. Third: Email.

Learning about Elected Officials: Priorities, Committees serving on, leading bills introduced; bills passed; years in legislature; other info from homepage; other info from insiders. Ninety percent of your prep time should be spent on knowing the audience, the legislators.

Maximize Your Influence: Find your passion. Know legislators and aides. Follow key legislation. Follow key committees. Amplify your voice. Work with a group, such as the LWVWA Lobby team.

Influencing Elected Officials: Frame the conversation. Tell a Story, not just data. Talk values, not policy. Use benefit language. Listen to their language. Ask for a commitment.

Possible progress in 2018: Equal pay (HB1506, SB5140), Voting Rights (HB1800, SB6002), Ban the box (SB5312), Legal Financial Obligation Reform (HB1783), Capital Budget.

II. "Speaking to Values" by Anna Fahey, Strategic Communication Director of Sightline Institute

Facts vs. Feelings: Use your value language: "I want", "I believe", "I feel strongly."

Create Value Sandwich:

1. First slice of bread: Say "Why it matters." Make it personal
2. The fixings: Your data and findings or your proposed policy solutions
3. Another slice of bread: Say "Why it matters" again.

III. THE LEAGUE LOBBYISTS, NANCY SAPIRO & PAM CRONE. In the 60- day session, if bills are not introduced and heard in the first 2-3 weeks, then nothing will happen to the bills.

Legacy bills introduced: Equal pay, Voting Rights, Reproductive health issues and filling the gap created by changes in the federal health policy, Marijuana, and the Capital Budget. The Carbon Tax is a controversial issue that they don't think will materialize in 2018. Homelessness and housing are primary issues for many legislators. High property taxes and high housing costs, particularly on the west side, are affecting many. Legal Financial Obligation reform: The bill was already heard and probably will be passed in this session.

IV. "LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW" by REP. TANA PENN (41ST DIST) AND MIA GREGERSON (33RD DIST) Penn and Gregerson introduced Legacy bills for women, such as equal opportunity for job training and promotion, eliminating secrecy or informal policies on pay, and ensuring no retribution if women speak about unequal pay. They also discussed "childcare deserts" where funding for childcare is available but no adequate childcare facilities are available to receive the funding.

Q. What do we anticipate for the 2020 census? **A.** The state wants to make sure that all are counted and certified in Washington. Washington gained a large number of people. How the Fed gives money to each state depends on the number of people recorded in the census. There is no federal funding for census-related outreach and the number of census staff has been cut drastically. We need to push the White House to fully fund the Census.

V. "OUR REVENUE AND INCOME INEQUALITY DEBACLE" by MARILYN WATKINS, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTE

Big wins in 2017 are the statewide minimum wage, paid sick days, pregnancy accommodation and family medical leave (most comprehensive law in the nation effective in 2020). More good news was that the poverty rate for single mothers in Washington has fallen from 39.4% to 30.6% (2013 vs. 2016). The median household income went up, but inequality is still high by region and race, and women are paid 76.5% of what men are paid.

The state revenue has not kept pace with the state's needs such as funding public higher education. No major revenue source is likely in 2018. Funding for the McCleary Decision relies on the property tax increase in the areas with soaring housing costs. Governor Inslee plans to use the supplemental budget to pay for teacher's salary increases.

Upcoming Events

Monday March 5, 7 PM - 8:30 pm. Film Screening: *Saving Snow*

This film will be shown in the WSU Auditorium (East 266), and will be followed by a short Q&A. Film length is approximately 55 minutes. The Environmental Club at WSU Tri-Cities and the Tri-Cities Citizens' Climate Lobby are co-hosting this event, which is free and open to the public. To learn more about the movie, visit the "Saving Snow" Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SavingSnowMovie/>.

Saturday March 24, 3 pm. March For Our Lives - Tri Cities

Howard Amon Park, 900 George Washington Way, Richland
We will be marching in solidarity with those in DC and around the country to demand that our representatives make the safety of our schools, communities and children a priority.

LWVBF Calendar

March 2018

Thursday, March 15— Business and Planning Meeting, 5:30 pm, BF Transit Center (Richland Wye/1000 Columbia Park Trail) All members are welcome

Wednesday, March 14 and Thursday, March 15—Civics educator training, 4 pm, Starbucks in Richland's Fred Meyer store on 3/14, BF Transit Center on 3/15

Tuesday, March 20— Table Talk, 2 pm, Janet Nail's home, gun safety

March — Public Banking Meeting, date TBD

April 2018

Thursday, April 19— Business and Planning Meeting, 5:30 pm, BF Transit Center (Richland Wye/1000 Columbia Park Trail) All members are welcome

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

League of Women Voters of
Benton & Franklin
Counties
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