



# VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

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

September 2017

## From the President Polly Parton

Our League members continue to promote education for our community— and ourselves. Kay Ottem, Beverly Johnson-Torelli and Marilyn Perkins organized successful voter primary forums for Richland, Kennewick and Pasco. Senator Sharon Brown was the guest speaker at our August Women's Equality Day and answered questions asked by our attendees. Toyoko Tsukuda worked on public access for political fund raising and spending. Our members are also active with other local groups to educate and improve our communities.

September and October will be busy with Table Talks, National Voters Registration Day, planning for our Washington State Council to be held in the Tri-Cities in early June 2018, and our October candidate forums. Your interests and needs drive the issues we research and present. Please refer to the *Voter* to find events to attend and participate in and contact us to get involved.

## October Candidate Forums

### **Kennewick Candidates, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 to 8:30 pm**

Kennewick School Administration Center  
1000 West 4th Avenue, Kennewick  
Races: City Council, School Board, Benton County Sheriff, Port of Kennewick

### **Pasco Candidates, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm**

Police Training Center  
204 West Clark Street, Pasco  
Races: City Council, School Board and maybe Port of Pasco

### **Richland Candidates, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm**

Carmichael Middle School  
620 Thayer Drive, Richland  
Races: City Council, School Board, Benton County Sheriff

### **West Richland Candidates**

**Date, Time, Location, TBD**

Races: City Council and Mayor

## Officers

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## Elected

### **Directors:**

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

## Appointed

### **Directors:**

Danette Keegan  
Chuck Torelli

## **Committee Report: Public Banking Research** Toyoko Tsukuda

Attendees were Chuck Torelli, Beverly Johnson-Torelli and Polly Parton from the LWVBF joined by Clyde Cramer and Richard Conoboy from the west side of the Cascades in a phone conference.

We discussed entities that are similar to public banks: charter banks and state trust funds. Charter banks are similar to public banks in the way they serve their members rather than shareholders. A public bank's member is the state.

Washington State has the Public Works Trust Fund that has been giving loans for public works in the state. The funding operation was very successful for supporting public projects and earning interest from the loans. California has a similar entity, the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank, which has also been very successful. However, both still fall short of "Public Banking" because they use private banks for their money transactions. We need to know how much interest Washington State earns every year from the state revenue deposited in private banks and how much in fees and loan interest the state has to pay to the private banks.

**The next Public Banking Research Committee meeting is on Thursday, September 14 at 4pm. It is a phone conference meeting. Dial-In Number: [\(605\) 472-5754](tel:6054725754), Access Code: 273105**

## **Civics in the Classroom** Polly Parton

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Kennewick School District's Community Resource Roundtable and made contact with various teachers and schools. Our League is offering a civics class to upper high schoolers highlighting the U.S government's formation, structure and voting rights. This class helps prepare our students to be better-educated voters and involved citizens. Marilyn Perkins organized the first presentation to Amber Wilcox's Pasco High School's class last spring. Marilyn, Janet Nail, Toyoko Tsukuda and I presented, and we enjoyed the students and felt our time in their class was well spent. We hope this class expands to all our high schools. Please contact Polly Parton ([polly.parton@yahoo.com](mailto:polly.parton@yahoo.com)) if you would like to be a future volunteer.

## **Badger Club: Election Discussion** Polly Parton

The August subject for the Badger Club was Election Discussion with local TV personality Christine Brown and political advisor and author Sean S. McGrath (*How To Win*). The main topic was gerrymandering and strategies. McGrath felt gerrymandering expands both the extreme right and the extreme left. While both political parties participate, Mr. McGrath told how Republicans were more successful for 2010 and how the zero years (2010, 2020) make the most of redistricting. Thus, the year 2020 (for legislatures and governorship) is one key to control gerrymandering.

Ms. Brown stressed how low voter turnout is a critical local issue and she spoke of other states restricting voter rights. Voter fraud claims alienate voters and ignite unfounded suspicions. She offered suggestions of how we can 'fix it' (fix several voting related problems). Her suggestions include the following:

- Both parties having equal representation in redistricting
- Overturn Citizens United
- Make it cool for young people to be involved in voting
- Turn voting into a responsibility
- Washington State should go away from the 'top two' in primaries
- Have time and dollar limits on campaigns

Several of our members were there. I met former state representative Shirley Hankins who asked if our LWV could help Benton City organize voter forums, and I also made some meaningful contacts, thanks to LWVBF member Bev Hunter. It was a great luncheon!

# Women's Equality Day: Senator Sharon Brown

The LWVBF celebrated the 97<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment with a potluck supper at the Sandberg Event Center in West Richland on August 17th. Sharon Brown, the state senator for the 8<sup>th</sup> legislative district (Richland, Kennewick, West Richland), was the guest speaker.

Many of the issues she has worked on as a legislator have come directly from her constituents, she said. She talked about being the Vice-Chair of the Ways and Means Committee and the only woman in that position; the Chair is male and so is the other Vice-Chair, and "when we were around the table negotiating, the men had a tendency to get up and walk into the other room without inviting me." She solved the issue by eventually following them into the office and pulling up a chair and making sure she had an invitation to every single meeting. "To be from eastern Washington and to be able to have that strong of a voice on the composition of a \$34 billion dollar budget was an honor," she said. She noted that the budget satisfied the McCleary Decision; it invested an additional \$1.8 billion in K-12; another \$7.4 billion will be invested in K-12 in the next four years.

Her concern about the high suicide rate in the Tri-Cities led her to Dr. Thatcher Felt, a doctor at the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, who wanted to see behavioral health integrated into the primary care checkups. When he detects a child who has a mental health/behavioral issue, he wants to have a mental health specialist see the patient right away instead of waiting for a referral. With Dr. Felt's input, the bill Senator Brown introduced, The Youth Behavioral Protection Act, removes a bureaucratic obstacle that prevents Medicaid-eligible patients from seeing both a primary care physician and a mental health professional in the same visit. Its goal is to have a behavioral health specialist integrated with a primary care professional by 2020.

She voiced her enthusiasm for STEM education and the need for resources to fill 20,000 STEM jobs in the state, and she was very critical of Governor Inslee's veto of a provision that would have given Washington's manufacturers the lower business-and-operation tax rate paid by Boeing.

Her talk was followed by a lively discussion where she answered questions about charter schools (that we need as many options as necessary), the capital budget, the high rate of teenage pregnancy in the Tri-Cities, clean energy, and the best way to contact legislators (send an email), among other topics. About 25 people attended this event.

## Treasurer's Report

**Shirley Sonnichsen**

At the end of July, checking was \$2,117; savings was \$1,856 for a total of \$3,974.

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Total: \$3,974

Income was \$75 for Rosemarie Quirk dues. Expenses were \$10 for the Secretary of State Charitable organization fee.

We can start paying our dues now but the dues letter will not go out until September (due by September 30). "New" members who joined after February 1 do not have to pay dues in September. We still have 59 members.

I need a couple of volunteers to help with an audit of the books.

## **2017 State Convention Report      Toyoko Tsukuda**

June 4 Plenary Session: “How did the electoral college get so screwed up?”

The current presidential election is decided by the winner-take-all Electoral College system. This system has created battle ground states. As a result, federal policies made are for the battle ground states. Those states get more federal funding and assistance. They also get more exemptions from the No-Child Left Behind policy.

THE NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE INTERSTATE COMPACT would guarantee the presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in 50 states and the District of Columbia. When the total electoral college votes of the states that joined the Compact reaches a majority of the available 538 total, the Compact states’ electors all vote for the candidate chosen by the popular vote.

Currently eleven states (CA, D.C., HI, IL, MA, MD, NJ, NY, RI, VT, and WA) have enacted the law and joined the Compact. They possess 165 electoral votes, which is 61 % of the required majority of 270 electoral votes. Fourteen other states have passed the bill in one of their state chambers. For more information, see <http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/state-status>.

**Editor’s Note:** The previous issue of the *Voter* incorrectly referred to the reports from the LWVWA Convention in June as State Council reports when they should have been titled State Convention reports. The **LWVWA State Convention** was held in June 2017 in Seattle. The **LWVWA State Council** will be held in June 2018 in the Tri-Cities.

## **Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) Update      Toyoko Tsukuda**

On August 2nd, the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) added another helpful tool for the public to explore election campaign finances. The “Campaign Explorer” launched in July offers the ability to compare candidates’ expenditures and contributions in one graph. The graph created by the “Compare Candidates” tool lets users decipher how much money is collected and spent among the candidates at one glance. Shared links allow users to post what they find on Facebook and Twitter. Please visit the PDC website to see the campaign finance reports at <https://www.pdc.wa.gov/browse/campaign-explorer>. Many more improvements are coming to the site. We will keep you posted.

## **Congratulations to Neil Norman      Polly Parton**

LWVBF member Neil Norman was awarded the National Society of Professional Engineers Award for his contribution to the engineering profession, public welfare and humankind (see 8/26 Tri-City Herald: [www.tri-cityherald.com/news/local/hanford/article169455817.html](http://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/local/hanford/article169455817.html)). He has worked on the Mare Island Sub-marine deck-launched missile design in 1952; the Yucca Mountain nuclear repository; the Yugoslavia nuclear waste repository; and Hanford’s former research reactor, the Fast Flux Test Facility. He continues to be active on the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors and he gives presentations to college students on professionalism and ethics. He is a wonderful example of our many League members who continue to contribute to our society and community.

## **Voter Registration Training      Toyoko Tsukuda**

Voter registration training was held on Aug 3, 2017 at the Richland Public Library. Guidance for the training was drafted based on the information from the Washington Secretary of State and the LWV of Seattle-King County. About twenty people attended, including Chuck Torelli and Beverly Johnson Torelli from the LWVBF. The other attendees were from the 4<sup>th</sup> District’s Indivisible group and Consejo Latino. Some are willing to help League with voter registration drives.

# Upcoming Events

## **Finding Your Community**

**Sunday, September 10, 1-3 pm**

Howard Amon Park, by the Fingernail.

Goal: help people find ways to get involved in their community.

## **Bike Ride for Climate**

**Saturday, September 16**

Wheelhouse Community Bike Shop and the Tri-City Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby are organizing a Bike Ride for Climate along the Columbia River on Saturday September 16. A \$20 early registration fee ([Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com)) will support Citizens Climate Education and provide insurance and a shirt for participants. Co-Sponsors Greenies, Markees Cycling Center, Velo City Cycles, and the Mid-Columbia Electric Vehicles Association will provide aid stations and rescue support for the 14-mile upriver and 23-mile downriver rides.

## **LWVBF Calendar**

### **September 2017**

**Thursday, September 7—Table Talk**, 5:30 pm, soup/bread, future events & topics/open discussion, Polly Parton's (316 Northview Loop, West Richland)

**Thursday, September 14— Public banking meeting**, 4 pm, Conference call

**Thursday, September 21— Business and Planning Meeting**, 5:30 pm, BF Transit Center (Richland Wye/1000 Columbia Park Trail) All members are welcome.

**Tuesday, September 26—National Voter Registration Day**, possibly at CBC. Contact Polly Parton ([polly.parton@yahoo.com](mailto:polly.parton@yahoo.com)) to volunteer

### **October 2017**

**Wednesday, October 4—Kennewick Candidate Forum**, 6:30- 8:30 pm, Kennewick School Admin Center (1000 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Kennewick)

**Tuesday, October 10—Tuesday Table Talk**, Snake River Dams, time & location TBD

**Wednesday, October 11—Pasco Candidate Forum**, starts at 6:30 pm, Police Training Center (204 W. Clark St., Pasco)

**Wednesday, October 18—Richland Candidate Forum**, starts at 6:30 pm, Carmichael Middle School (620 Thayer Dr., Richland)

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

Email us at  
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