



# VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

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

## From the President Marilyn Perkins

It is hard to believe that it is almost April. While only three months have gone by in the calendar year, the League year is almost over. Leagues finish one year and start a new one on the same day –the day of the May Annual Meeting. Elected board members usually serve a two- year term; half are chosen one year, and the other half the next year at the Annual meetings in May. Some may be reelected or change to a different position, but we always like to bring on some new people to broaden the perspective of the board and enhance our connections in the community.

The only officer who does not begin her new position right after the election is the Treasurer, who has until June 30<sup>th</sup> to get the books in order, either to carry on, starting July 1, or be able to hand them over to the new treasurer. We start paying new dues to the state and national levels at this time. We pay dues quarterly over the year. We collect local dues in September from most members, but if you joined on February 1 or later of this year, your next dues won't be due until September of 2018.

I am not telling you all this to make your eyes glaze over, but to encourage you to come to the Annual meeting on May 18th. While we do conduct official League business, it is also a time to meet other members, eat good food and learn about opportunities in the coming year.

Soon after the Annual meeting, we will start planning for any needed July forums for the primaries when there are more than two people running. Voter turnout for the primaries is usually very low, and we are hoping to change this and think of ways to remind, encourage or cajole people to pay attention and vote. As our members are well aware this is an uphill battle, but maybe we should see it as an opportunity to engage more young people and any others who may have thought their vote didn't matter. (Continued on p.2)

April 2017

## Officers

**President:**  
**Marilyn Perkins**  
**1st Vice President:**  
**JoAnne Dimond**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:**  
**Janet Nail**  
**Secretary:**  
**Lora Rathbone**  
**Treasurer:**  
**Shirley Sonnichsen**  
**Voter Editor:**  
**Diane Molleson**

## Elected Directors:

**Bree Bowen**  
**Bev Hunter**  
**Diane Molleson**  
**Toyoko Tsukuda**  
**Susan Leckband**  
**Polly Parton**

## Appointed Directors:

**Ruth Giese**  
**Judy Golberg**  
**Ruvine Jimenez**  
**Beverly Johnson-Torelli**  
**Neil Norman**

## **President's Column** (continued from p. 1)

People are hoping the added interest in national politics will carry over to local races, with more people willing to run and more people voting. I certainly hope that is true and I hope our League can help make that happen.

## **Public Banking Study**

**Toyoko Tsukuda**

Toyoko Tsukuda will be recommending a study of public banking at the League's Annual meeting on May 18, 2017. She will also present this topic at the State Convention, and the State League may, or may not, adopt it as an issue to study.

Unlike privately-owned banks, who are responsible to their shareholders, public banking is operated through institutions owned by the people through their representative governments. Seventeen states have proposed the establishment of a public bank to fund important projects in all areas of government, such as education, infrastructure and health care. To date, only North Dakota has a public bank. In North Dakota, the state deposits its revenues in the Bank of North Dakota. This money is loaned at low interest rates to North Dakota residents, which ensures that a high proportion of state funds are being invested in the state's economy. The earnings on those loans are put back in the state treasury. This enables North Dakota to fund projects without incurring new debt. During the recent credit crisis, it was the only state to report a budget surplus every year since 2008. LWV Vermont adopted a study of public banking in 2013.

## **Orientation for New—and Potential—Members**

**Janet Nail**

Mark **May 6<sup>th</sup>** on your calendar. The League will be having an orientation and brunch at Janet Nail's home for new and potential members. Details will be announced in the May Voter.

Topics will include how the League is structured, available resources offered by local, state, and national Leagues, and learning how to spearhead an official study or a simple information seminar.

After the orientation, LWVBF member Ellyn Murphy will present the Climate Change Toolkit the State League put together and answer questions on the impacts—and latest projections—of climate change. All members are welcome at either, or both, events.

## **Next Generation Public Disclosure Data Access Project**

**Toyoko Tsukuda**

Most PDC data is currently available to the public, but getting to it is not easy. The PDC (Public Disclosure Commission) would be well served to implement Open Data standards that would allow the public to download bulk data and do their own searches. Since October 2016, the PDC has been partnering with a LWVBF member and others from the community to develop a complete replacement for the data access system. The scope of the project includes a new interface for casual browsing, deep data access, and an Open Data interface for large data requests. Most importantly, these goals are being developed by the community.

Phase 1 of the Data Access Project was completed on Mar 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017. In 14 weeks, the team published 5 million records on the State of Washington's Open Data Portal. The data sets include the following: all campaign finance contributions, expenditures, debts, loans, and pledges; campaign finance registrations, reporting history, and filings; lobbyist employment registrations, compensation, and expenditures; and independent electioneering and communications. Each of the data sets is updated daily. The data catalog contains complete metadata for each dataset, making it easy to understand what is included.

The PDC will again be partnering with members of the community for Phase 2, Specific Search, and Phase 3, Fuzzy Search. Both projects will start in April.

## April Table Talk: Public Health

Carol Moser, the executive Director of Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health, will be the guest speaker at our **April Table Talk on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm in the Ben Franklin Transit Center** (Richland Wye/ 1000 Columbia Park Trail). She will be giving a general overview of the Greater Columbia ACH and what it does.

Carol Moser provided the following description about the organization:

“The Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health (GCACH) is a collaboration of community leaders from a variety of sectors with a common interest in improving health. Accountable Communities of Health (ACHs) are an essential component of Washington's Health Innovation Plan, known as "Healthier Washington," which aims to transform the health system in the state to bring better health, better care and lower costs to Washington residents. Greater Columbia ACH includes 10 counties and the Yakama Nation.”

### Treasurer's Report

#### Shirley Sonnichsen

At the end of February, checking was \$3,956; savings was \$1,856 for a total of \$5,812.

Checking: \$3,956
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Total: \$5,812

**Income:** We received \$822 from the table talk with Leo Perales at the Shilo and Kelly Pflieger's dues.

**Expenses:** Expenses were \$634 to Columbia Catering for the same table talk.

**Membership:** Danette Keagan is our newest member. Denomy Dage has two friends who would like to join but they do not have checkbooks so will hopefully come to the next meeting. Their names are Bonnie Kendall from Richland and Kate Moran from West Richland. We will send them the Voter and any other information. We welcome these three members to the League. This would put our membership number at 55.

### State Convention in June

#### Marilyn Perkins

The State Convention is a time when local Leagues come together to share ideas, attend workshops and vote on business for the state for the next two years. It is a great opportunity to meet members from around Washington and gain a better understanding of what the State League does. This year, the convention will be held **June 2-4** in Seattle. We can send delegates (who vote) and observers who are part of everything else, and we hope to send at least four people from our League. If you are interested or want to learn more, please contact Marilyn Perkins at [jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com](mailto:jmperkins.cougs@frontier.com)

### March Table Talk on Syrian Refugees

The LWVBF's March Table Talk on Syrian refugees featured guest speaker Amira al Salami, who works in the Richland office of World Relief, an organization that helps refugees start a new life in the U.S. From Iraq, Amira is a refugee herself. “No one really wants to leave their homeland,” she said. “Nobody can understand it until they become refugees, which is something I personally do not wish for any person.” Amira lived in Jordan for about 18 months before she was allowed to come to the U.S. For some, the wait is longer and includes living in refugee camps where food is rationed. Amira noted there's plenty of food the first ten days, enough for the next ten days, but by the last ten days food is so scarce, “nobody has enough energy to talk.” A former English professor at a university in Iraq, Amira was surprised by her limited career options in the U.S. She turned down an offer to be a kindergarten aide, saying she could be more useful as a translator. Happy at her job for World Relief, she “feels blessed” to be in America. Amira ended her talk by introducing a newly arrived Syrian family. Her talk was well attended and open to the public.

## March for Science, Tri-Cities

The Tri-Cities March for Science will be held on April 22, from 11am-3pm at John Day Dam Plaza in Richland. There will be speakers, science events for children, exhibits, and more. Marches across the country are being planned in conjunction with the March for Science in D.C. For more information, visit <https://marchforscience.com/>

To sign up for the League's legislative newsletter, go to <http://www.lvwva.org/positions.html> and click **League's Legislative Newsletter and Action Alerts.**

To find legislative bills and your legislators, go to <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>

## Calendar

### April 2017

**Thursday, April 6**—April Table Talk on public health with Carol Moser, 5:30 pm, BF Transit Center (Richland Wye/ 1000 Columbia Park Trail)

**Thursday, April 20**—Business & Planning Meeting, 5:30 pm, BF Transit Center (Richland Wye/ 1000 Columbia Park Trail). All members are welcome.

**Saturday, April 22**—March for Science, Tri-Cities. For more information, visit <https://marchforscience.com/>

### May 2017

**Saturday, May 6**— New Member Orientation and Brunch at Janet Nail's home

**Thursday, May 18**—Annual Meeting, location TBD

### June 2017

**June 2-4**—State Convention in Seattle

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

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