



The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

The Voter The Voter

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LWV of Benton Franklin County

Working for a Better Future

Member Spotlight: Darci Coffman, Board Member



The League of Women Voters is one of countless wonderful discoveries I've made online. It honestly amazes me how thoughtful, diligent, and astute the women of this group are. Since I can never seem to commit as much time to League activities as I want to, I really value every chance I get to meet with my fellow Leaguers and learn from them as we work together.



I was born and raised in Joplin, Montana, and like most Montanans living in other states (even fine states like Washington), I look forward to moving back there, probably to Missoula when my husband retires. Meanwhile, the Tri-Cities has been very good to me ever since I moved here as a nanny in 1998. I met Steve that same year, we married in 2003, and we bought our home in Kennewick in 2004. I have earned degrees from two local schools, CBC and WSU-TC, and my teaching certificate through a third, Heritage University. I am proud and happy to say that I teach English and Humanities at Pasco High School, as this job has been a goal of mine for a long time. My next step is an M.A. in English Literature or Linguistics, I think.

My husband and I live with our two Chesapeake Bay Retrievers and try to indulge in our favorite pastimes as often as possible. My favorites are reading, traveling, and spending time with my friends and extended family. I also am a fairly dedicated Red Cross blood donor. June will be a great month for me this year, as my little brother should come home from Iraq, and my mom and I are leaving on a trip to Norway. Steve and I are also very excited to meet our Armenian exchange student sometime in August. I have a lot to be grateful for in my life, no question!

~Darci

Eastern Washington ERA History Project

Kari McClure is a college student on contract with the Washington State History Consortium. The Consortium was created by the Legislature in 2005. It functions as part of the Washington State Historical Society and is charged with a study of the history of the ERA passage in Washington State.

I have been able to supply Kari with seminar planning documents, follow up clippings from the *Tri-City Herald*, reports, fact sheets, etc. She in turn gave me some information concerning the vote tally for Benton and Franklin Counties, Spokane and the State for the state ERA. By my calculations Benton County's yes votes represented 54.8% of the total votes cast and Franklin County's represented 50.7%. The state level was 50.13%. A link to the Washington Women's History Consortium

www.washingtonwomenshistory.org

County Courthouse Issue Update

The *Tri-City Herald* editorial of February 12th concerning this issue was briefly reviewed at the February Board meeting. Retired Judge Fred Staples reports on his blog (staples.net) that he needs 24,700 signatures from Benton County voters (based on the 2008 general election and the statutory requirement that signatures equal at least 1/3 of all the votes cast in the county at the preceding general preceding election) in order to put the issue on the ballot in 2010. He currently has approximately 14,203 signatures which would have been sufficient had he been able to put the issue on the ballot in time for the 2008 election. The new number is based on the large increase in voter participation in the elections in 2008.

In addition to the need for additional signatures, the Attorney General has taken the position that Mr. Staples cannot use the number of voters who voted in the election of 2007 to determine the number of signatures needed. Mr. Staples takes issue with this finding and has announced his intent to file a suit against this ruling.

A Message from Our President Ginger Vetrano

The Washington State Legislature is in full swing now, so be on the watch for bills that our League or the State League has positions on that we can support (or not). The same with the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. Some bills you may want to support personally, but, if they are not League related, please do not mention the League. If they are, please DO mention the League and let me know that you have let your legislators know. We are an action body as well as an educational body.

Ginger

2009 TRYs Distributed

The 2009 edition of "They Represent You" has been printed and distributed throughout our two counties. Again, Judy Golberg did the work of updating the information and preparing the print ready copy. Judy has done it for many years and our League is very grateful for the work she has done. This year it is printed on bright lime green and very easy to spot. When you visit a library or auditor's office you might look to make sure they are displayed. We also distributed to the cities, school districts, senior centers, chambers of commerce, local media outlets and many other locations. The following people helped with proofing and distribution: Judy Chasse, Ruth Giese, Leona Hassing, Kay Ottem and Marilyn Perkins.

Voter Education

Healthcare Overhaul.

The second meeting of the Healthcare Committee was held at the Richland Recreation Center on Tuesday February 17th. The meeting was well attended and Susan Kayser led the group to the beginning of an emerging study outline. The group agreed to continue meeting on The third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 P.M. On March 17, the Richland Recreation is not available, so please note the location is changed. It will be at All Saints Episcopal Church, 1322 Kimball, Richland. The church will be closed so please enter from the parking lot in the rear.

Climate Change/Energy

This committee had its first meeting in January and viewed a background program from PBS titled "Global Warming: The Signs and the Science." The second meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 6 P.M. at the home of Ellyn Murphy, 203 Enterprise (south end of Benton). This is in north Richland.

Calendar

March 5th: Table Talk Alice Bryant's home, 2408 Alexander, Richland, 5:30 Soup and Salad Dinner (\$3.00 Donation) Government Transparency is the topic.

March 10th: Climate Change/Energy Study Group (see story for details).

March 17th: Health Care Study Group (see story for details).

March 19th: Business and Planning Meeting, Lampson Building, Kennewick.

April 2: Table Talk - National Voter Compact is topic (see story for details).

May 21 Annual Meeting: All Saints Episcopal Church, Richland. The meeting includes: *Election of Officers, Budget Adoption, Bylaw Changes, Adoption of Local Program.* If you have input or would like to serve on a committee, the following are the contacts: Budget – JoAnne McLaughlin (438-2330), Bylaws – Shirley Sonnichsen (627-1473), Nominating Committee – Ruth Giese (783-2412), Local Program Planning – Marilyn Perkins (783-8610).

Membership Update

The Membership committee wishes to report that we have a total of 44 members listed on our 2008-09 roster. Of that total there are 38 local members, 2 recruited nationally/paid locally, 3 lifetime members and 1 student. From the Birthday Dinner we received one student membership and one membership is pending. Leona Hassing, Membership Chair

National Popular Vote Compact Topic for April Table Talk

At the April 2 Table Talk meeting, we will be discussing the pros and cons of the National Popular Vote Compact which would allow for the direct election of the President of the United State without changing the Constitution. It would require a change in the way the Electoral College casts its votes. The LWVUS has long supported the direct election of the President, thinking it is essential to representative government; we will be discussing whether this approach is one we want to support. Any such change would have an obvious impact on the way campaigns are run.

Garage Sale

Every two years or so our League holds a garage sale. We are hoping to have it one of the first two weekends in May. It is a good chance to get rid of some of those things filling your drawers and closets that you haven't used in awhile and help our League raise a little money. Any money raised will help us send members to the State Convention the end of May. Items big and small are welcome and any member who has more expensive items and would like to take advantage of the sale can make a donation to League from your profits. If you have a preference of a weekend or would be willing to help contact Marilyn Perkins – 783-8610 or perkinsjohn@msn.com