

League of Women Voters of Benton-Franklin Counties

THE VOTER

Ginger Vetrano, President // Judy Golberg, Editor

P. O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352

April 2010

Calendar of Events

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| April 1 | 5:30 PM | TABLE TALK, Thursday evening at Alice Bryant's home, 2408 Alexander, Richland, 375-0189 – All members welcome! |
| April 15 | 5:30 PM | BOARD MEETING, Lampson Building, Kennewick – Open to all members |
| May 6 | 5:30 PM | TABLE TALK, Thursday evening at Alice Bryant's home, 2408 Alexander, Richland, 375-0189 – All members welcome! |
| May 20 | 5:30 PM | ANNUAL MEETING |

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Health care reform has passed! Now the Senate will change a few details while there are those still hoping to derail it in some way. While the League hoped for a public option that did not occur, changes can still be made in the future. At least the basics are set and people will not be denied health care because of preexisting illness and there won't be caps on coverage.

Now, on to immigration problems: There is always something new coming up (or old issues revisited) and the League tries to address them in a non-partisan way. As we discuss what we want to study this next year (if anything), think about local issues that need to be addressed, as well as how state and national issues impact us.

President, [Ginger Vetrano](#), 783-9205 (new)

LOCAL LEAGUE

APRIL TABLE TALK – Thursday, April 1 - Table Talk is held at Alice Bryant's home in Richland. The topics to be discussed are:

- Senator Jerome Delvin will discuss the recent Legislative session, the state budget and what he would like to see in the future.
- Commissioner Leo Bowman will discuss county seat move.

A light meal will be provided. \$3 is a suggested contribution toward the meal.

Report from March 4 Table Talk: Speaker from the City of Richland informed members about the new recycling program that will begin soon. The City found there is a greater need to provide yard waste pick up. Recycling will be optional.

JUNE TABLE TALK

Traditionally, our League has ended our year with a joint outing/dinner in early June instead of the normal Table Talk. Last year we had a tour of the new Health Department and went to dinner together afterwards. In past years we had a tour of downtown Kennewick and have visited two different wineries. If there is something in our area that you want to know more about or if you have any suggestions for such an activity contact [Marilyn Perkins](#).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

To be elected at the May annual meeting - President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and three directors. Anyone interested in serving in one of these Board positions can contact the committee at rwhitegiese@aol.com or phone Ruth at 783-2412. Thanks

BUDGET

Every year our League members adopt a budget at the Annual Meeting. Before we can do that a committee must put together a budget for the upcoming year. We tend to be very frugal with our money, but it is important that our budget reflect the priorities we think are important. If you would be willing to help draft a proposed budget, contact

[Marilyn Perkins](#). No prior experience is necessary. The perspective of newer members would be welcome. This would involve one two-hour meeting sometime before the April 15 board meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of February 2010, LWVB-F has \$4,295.20 in checking and \$1,600.01 in savings for a total of \$5,805.21.

LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING

There is still time to suggest any local program planning ideas for the 2010-2011 League year.

During the last two meetings ideas have been suggested, including:

1. City fees structure (how are they determined, based on what, who does it, etc.)
2. Consolidation of cities
3. Sustainability programs
4. Mixed land use, transportation
5. Access to and understanding of our food sources
6. Performance benchmarks to help communities to receive grants
7. Shoreline development
8. Unmet needs of medical care
9. Domestic Violence Services. DV Services of Benton-Franklin Counties gave a presentation to board members on the need to make changes that would address the needs of both the abused and the abusers.
10. Local governments benefiting from and encouraging a greener approach to power and lifestyles in our communities. Ellyn has information regarding an organization that cities can join (the ICLEI) that provides leadership in this area. Other cities in our state are participating in this program. We could look at what is currently being done in our communities toward these goals, how other cities rate the program and determine if we should recommend joining.

If any member has a suggestion contact [Marilyn Perkins](#), 783-8610 before the April 15 board meeting. The board will make a recommendation at that time and all other recommendations will be listed for consideration at the Annual Meeting.

BENTON COUNTY SEAT MOVE

At the League's regular board meeting on March 18, as the Voter Education Chair, Kathy Utz suggested that a letter be written directly to the Board of Commissioners with a copy to the Tri-City Herald Editorial Board. This action is proposed in view of the impending certification that an adequate number of Benton County voters had signed a petition requiring that the issue of the location of the county seat be put to a vote this November. See the following draft of a letter that was proposed for review by our League Board. The board agreed to pursue implementing these suggestions as action following our study.

"The League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties urges the Board of Benton County Commissioners to begin the process of obtaining a qualified planning consultant with relevant experience in responding to the challenges associated with the creation of a financial impact statement as outlined by the RCW.

The recent presentation to the Board of County Commissioners by the Benton County Auditor told of a review of some 19,000 signatures and ultimate verification of 14,368 signatures as being registered Benton County voters. This tally reflects the considerable amount of time and effort on the part of volunteer signature gathers and most importantly reflects the desire of Benton County citizens to put this issue to a vote.

It is critically important that the required financial analysis is both objective and as accurate as possible. Even though these calculations and estimates may be based on "best guesses" as reflected in the statutes in using the term "probable" costs and impact, it is especially necessary to predict future impacts.

It is important that community debates prior to the November 2010 Election begin with the best and most objective data available so that citizens will be able to feel confident about the wisdom of their choice in this vote.

While the statute requires that "the county shall issue a statement analyzing the financial impact of the proposed change at least sixty days before the election", we believe that the more time allowed to complete, distribute and engage the community, the better. The location of the county seat only increases in importance as the County continues with its rapid growth in population.

If begun now, a selection of a planner could be made by May 1, the same date when the Board can first accept the petitions. That will allow for at least some four months before the 60 day deadline for the completion of the impact statement.”

Initially, RCW 36.12.010 and RCW 36.12.080 were included as part of the body of this draft, but after the recent Tri-City Herald article, it was apparent that the Board of Commissioners is aware of its responsibility in this matter. It may be still a good idea to send a second document with the letter containing the entire language of both bills.

The second part of the proposal was to see if League can publish an editorial column with the Tri-City Herald and perhaps the Yakima Herald.

This column would deal with both the mechanics of voting (as covered in the RCWs) and the why behind our local League’s support of a change in the location of the county seat. It should also be explained that while League never supports candidates, we do study issues and then act on the basis of the conclusions reached as a result of the study.

Another suggestion might be to consider the immediate creation of a Task Force which would consist of elected county officials, members of the justice system, representatives of the other Benton County municipalities, as well as a cross section of citizens who could assist and monitor the progress (or lack thereof) of the professional planner.

Your comments, questions and suggestions concerning this important matter would be appreciated. Email communications seem to work best for many of us, but calling will work as well.

[Kathy Utz](#), 375-1852

WOMEN’S EQUALITY DAY

Work has begun on planning the August 26 celebration that will honor women who have served our communities in elected positions. Contact [Ginger](#), [Susan Kayser](#), [Marilyn Perkins](#) or [Leona Hassing](#) if you can help.

OBSERVER CORPS

Reports were given at the March board meeting on the following:

- Janet Nail reported on the city of Richland
- Helen LaDouceur reported on the Port of Kennewick
- Leona Hassing reported on the City of Pasco
- Ginger Vetrano reported on the Kennewick Planning Commission.

If you are interested in details, please contact the individual who reported.

THINKING AHEAD

LWVBF Annual Meeting – May 20, 2010

LWVWA Council – May 22-23, 2010

Women’s Equality Day - August 26, 2010

LWVWA Eastside Action Workshop – October 23, 2010 in Kennewick

LWVWA Convention – May 19-22, 2011

STATE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

LWVWA

State Council : The theme for this year’s Council meeting is: **Reason Isn’t Enough -How to Have Civil Discussions in Uncivil Times.** Council is scheduled May 22-23 in Bellingham. Please contact Ginger if you are interested in attending.

State Convention: The Committee contracted with the Shilo Inn in Richland for the May 19-22, 2011 convention. There will be plenty of projects to help with so be thinking about what you can do to help make this a successful event.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS US

NATIONAL CONVENTION JUNE 11-15, 2010

The LWVUS invites all members to join fellow Leaguers in Atlanta to celebrate 90 remarkable years of League achievements and chart the course for the next biennium of League programs.

In Case You Missed It!

The following links to articles, Editorials and interesting "stuff" are provided for the benefits of those who can access the Internet and missed seeing these tidbits. For those of you without computer access and the article sounds interesting, please contact me (627-5347) or the person listed and we will try to print it and mail it.

"Change of Subject" "Change of Subject" by Chicago Tribune op-ed columnist Eric Zorn contains observations, reports, tips, referrals and tirades, though not necessarily in that order.

http://blogs.chicagotribune.com/news_columnists_ezorn/

Did you know you can sign up to read the Tri-City Herald's E-version? It is the exact same newspaper that you receive in print? You do have to register but it is free. <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/1491>