

# The League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties

## VOTER Newsletter - August, 2007

PO Box 765, Richland, WA 99352 546-8192

### LEAGUE CALENDAR August/September/October

**Thurs, August 16 Business & Planning Mtg, Lampson Building, Kenn**

**Thurs, August 23 Women's Suffrage Celebration, Howard Amon Park**

**Thurs, Sept 6 Table Talk: Topic: Benton County Criminal Justice Tax Increase Ballot issue**

**Thurs, Sept 20 Business & Planning Mtg, Lampson Building, Kenn.**

**Sat. Oct 20 Yard Sale**

**Membership dues are now due. Send your check for \$50 to Helen LaDouceur or give it to her at the next meeting.**

**Business & Planning Meeting, Thursday, August 16:** At the summer retreat, the Board decided to focus on membership at this meeting. The LWVUS has a major initiative on membership which started last year. If you have ideas for membership or are willing to serve as the membership coordinator, plan to attend this meeting. See the item from the LWVUS below.

We'll be back at the Lampson Building for our next meeting. Remember that we eat at 5:30 pm and start the meeting at 6 pm. All members are welcome.

**Celebration for Women's Suffrage, Thursday, August 23, Howard Amon Park:** Join us for the annual membership picnic and women's suffrage celebration. We will be in a new location; we will still be in Howard Amon Park, but we will use the gazebo at the north end (turn off of George Washington Way at Sterling's). Bring finger foods to share, invite a friend, and bring your spouse and children. We will have a short program to celebrate Women's Equality Day which is August 26.

**Summer Board Retreat:** Our thanks to Ginger Vetrano for hosting our summer meeting. If you weren't there, you missed the glorious view and good conversation.

**Table Talk, Thursday, September 6, 5:30 p.m.:** Benton County voters will get a chance to decide on a new criminal justice sales tax after county commissioners agreed to put the issue on the November ballot. With that in mind our guest for the first Table Talk of the fall will be Richard Nordgren. He will help us better understand the proposal that will be on the ballot.

Table Talk, which meets the first Thursday of each month, begins with visiting and a light meal. While discussions generally center on current events, League subjects will occasionally be included. The meal is prepared by members and donations (\$3 suggested) are collected to cover the cost. All members and friends are invited to attend at the home of Alice Bryant, 2408 Alexander in Richland. Call Alice at 375-0189 for more information, directions, or with suggestions for topics to discuss

**LWV Observer Corps:** Ginger Vetrano is spearheading the formation of an Observer Corps for our League. The purpose of an Observer Corps is to make our League known in the community and to promote governmental transparency.. As an Observer you would attend local governmental council meetings and report back to the League membership on what's happening

in our local area. The meetings could be port or county commission meetings, planning board meetings, school board meetings, or city council meetings. Maybe you already attend some of these meetings or maybe you would like to attend. Contact Ginger at 735-4240 and let her know

**Yard Sale, Saturday Morning, October 20:** The Board has decided to hold a yard sale this fall to assist in meeting our budget requirements, to help meet the LWVWA Education Fund challenge grant, and to help you clean out your house. The sale will be held at Paula Garland's house in Richland. If you are interested in helping to organize the sale, let Leona know. The Board voted to send all proceeds in excess of \$400 to the LWVWA Education Fund to help them with the Education Fund Challenge. Further details will be available in the September VOTER.

### **From the LWVUS: Membership Recruitment Initiative Produces 10% Net Growth**

The five pilot Leagues that participated in the first year of the Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI) have all had a 10% net increase in membership! This is double our initial goal for the year, 5% net growth, and some of the pilots have had growth in excess of 20%. Congratulations to the LWVs of Greater Omaha (NE), Oakland (CA), Palm Beach County (FL), Saginaw County (MI), and Spartanburg County (SC). Their hard work is truly paying off! For more information about the initiative, please visit the [MRI section of the Web site](#) or contact Danielle Duffy, Membership Recruitment Coordinator, at [dduffy@lww.org](mailto:dduffy@lww.org).

### **Key Findings**

1. **Consistent messaging pays off!** Communicating concisely and consistently what the League is all about was crucial to the success of this initiative. Each pilot League fully incorporated messages about the value of membership and consistently delivered them to all potential new members. It is important to repeat that the League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.
2. **Asking works!** Leagues that explicitly invite members of the target audience to join see results. Leagues should ask at meetings, in League materials, in media releases, and at social events. Every interaction or exposure to a potential member is an opportunity to extend an invitation to join the League.
3. **Allied outreach adds value!** Forming partnerships with organizations in your community can elevate the League's visibility within the community and can expose the League to pools of potential members. Organizations want to work with the League—we have great name recognition and a respected reputation. Partnering gives the League a wider reach in the community and the ability to do more.
4. **Media Persistence is key!** Leagues who were persistent in their outreach to local media saw an increase in visibility. Reporters get many releases, requests, and inquiries daily. The League's persistence cuts through the clutter. Reporters will more easily say yes to a story idea, to running your press release, to covering your event, or to being on a League panel, if you've developed a relationship with them. The extra visibility means more potential new members are exposed to your League's great work.
5. **The pilot program is reinvigorating Leagues!** The initiative focused League leaders on a common goal, and their initial successes are bringing new energy and excitement to their boards. Activities designed to bring in new members are also re-engaging existing members who are committed to making their Leagues stronger. The focus on increasing membership is a great way to get EVERYONE involved!

**MESSAGE FROM THE VOTER EDITOR:** Comments, questions, and concerns about this newsletter may be addressed to Jeene Hobbs at 545-0127 or via e-mail at [jhobbs@pocketinet.com](mailto:jhobbs@pocketinet.com). Suggestions and constructive criticisms are welcomed.

*The League of Women Voters of Benton-Franklin Counties affirms its belief in and commitment to pluralism and diversity. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVBF on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or socio-economic level.*