

League of Women Voters of Benton-Franklin Counties

THE VOTER

Ginger Vetrano, President // Judy Golberg, Editor

P. O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352

December 2009

Calendar of Events

| | | |
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| December 3 | 5:30 PM | TABLE TALK, Thursday evening at Alice Bryant's home, 2408 Alexander, Richland, 375-0189 – All members welcome! Light meal provided (\$3 donations towards food) - see article for topic. Judy and Leona to bring soup. |
| December 13 | 2:00-4:00 PM | HOLIDAY SOCIAL, at Judy Golberg's home, 1914 Meadows Drive North, Richland, 627-5347 – Speaker to discuss: Heritage Trail and River Shore Enhancement. Bring snack to share. |
| December 30 | 7:00 AM | LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST, Legislators have been invited to meet with League members to discuss upcoming legislation. Breakfast will be ordered from the menu - The Country Gentleman, 9221 W. Clearwater Avenue, Kennewick. If you would like to attend, contact Ginger Vetrano so reservations can be made. |
| January 7 | 5:30 PM | TABLE TALK, Thursday evening at Alice Bryant's home, 2408 Alexander, Richland, 375-0189 – All members welcome! Program Planning |
| January | 5:30 PM | BOARD MEETING – All members welcome to attend and participate. JoAnne and Marilyn will provide meal. |



PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

After a successful Action Workshop the first weekend in November, we have a little reprieve before the new year brings in opportunities to address our issues. One of the ways we will do it even before 2010 is to meet with our legislators on Wednesday, December 30th, at 7 AM at The Country Gentleman. If you would like to be a part of that breakfast, let me know. Also let me know of any issues or questions we should bring up at that time. This worked out very well last year and we would like to repeat it. We let them know our priorities, and ask them for theirs. Hopefully there will be some that are the same that all of us can get behind.

Also coming up in December is our Holiday Party on Sunday, the 13th at Judy Golberg's house, 1914 Meadows Drive North (off Gage Blvd.) from 2-4 PM. Bring a goodie to share, or, if you forget, come anyway- there is always plenty. Spouses and guests are welcome too. The speaker will talk about the Heritage Trail and river shore enhancement.

Happy Holidays.

President, [Ginger Vetrano](#), 735-4248

LOCAL LEAGUE

DECEMBER TABLE TALK – Thursday, December 3rd Table Talk will be held at Alice Bryant's home in Richland. The topic to be discussed is:

- Climate Control

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

Report from November Table Talk: Health Care Reform Study Group provided an update and reported on the recent forum.

MEMBERSHIP

2009-2010 dues are ***past due*** and can be paid by sending them to: LWV B-F, Attention- Helen LaDouceur, PO Box 765, Richland 99352. \$60 is the amount to be paid.

ACTION WORKSHOP REPORT

23 League members attended the Action Workshop in Kennewick on Saturday, November 7. League members came from Eastern Washington locations, Pullman, Spokane, Yakima

and Tri-Cities, and LWVWA Lobby team from the West Side.

This workshop is designed to do two things: give us information about the issues that will be key in the 2010 legislative session and show us ways we can each have an impact on legislation we care about. Topics for the workshop were: Washington State Budget Issues, Campaign Finance Reform for Judicial Positions, and Education and Early Learning

Speakers for the workshop were Liz Flynn, Pasco School District, "The Importance of Early Learning & Education K-12"; Craig Salins, Washington Public Campaigns, "Judicial Campaign Finance Reform"; and Barbara Bush, LWVWA, "Washington State Budget".

Morning coffee, tea, muffins and rolls were served at registration, lunch included soups, salads and desserts. As an added bonus our League sold "Soups in a Jar" as a fundraiser. It was a successful workshop. Thanks to our members who organized it and those who attended.

Chair, [Leona Hassing](#) or 492-4111

ENERGY AND CLIMATE STUDY GROUP

Tour of Bioproducts Science and Engineering Laboratory

On Thursday, November 12th, the Energy and Climate study group toured the Bioproducts Science and Engineering Laboratory (BSEL) at WSU Tri-Cities and learned about bioproducts from BSEL director, Dr. Birgitta Ahring. There are currently 55 PNNL staff and 20 WSU staff located in BSEL. BSEL was designed to accommodate growth and WSU has already hired three new assistant professors. They are offering graduate-level classes in bioproducts engineering and expect their graduate student population to also grow.

Dr. Ahring came to WSU from the Technical University of Denmark, where she previously developed and tested systems for biofuel production. She discussed the importance of developing new, economical processes for converting residues from

crops and forestry to carbon-based liquid fuels and high-value chemicals.

Dr. Ahring is leading a biofuel demonstration that will be part of the Waste Vitrification Plant (or Vit Plant) at Hanford. The Vit Plant is expected to use 60 million gallons of diesel per year during operation. Dr. Ahring will use switchgrass to demonstrate how biodiesel can be generated to reduce the overall amount of diesel that is needed and reduce the carbon footprint of the Vit Plant.

The laboratory space and instrumentation was impressive at BSEL. Dr. Ahring commented that when you combine the capabilities at BSEL with the additional capabilities at PNNL, she can do virtually any experiment, she can imagine. Biofuels research and development has a bright future in the Tri-Cities.

Chair, [Ellyn Murphy](#)

HEALTH CARE STUDY GROUP

Three Focus Group forums were held throughout the Tri-Cities. Comments from participants are in the process of being summarized so they can be shared with our Congressional delegates.

BENTON COUNTY SEAT

The following article was in the Seattle Times:
Petition aims to move Benton County seat to Kennewick
By Yakima Herald-Republic

PROSSER, Benton County - A retired judge who has tried for 25 years to move the Benton County seat from Prosser to the more populated Kennewick says he has enough signatures to put the matter before voters in November 2010.

A petition for a ballot measure will be presented to Benton County commissioners on Monday.

Fred Staples says he won't be there but promises his supporters will bring three boxes of signatures - 20,408 of them - to back up his case.

That should be more than enough to get the measure on the ballot, even if some are ruled invalid, he said.

"They can't throw that many out," said Staples, 76, a retired Benton County Superior Court judge.

It's the second time in a little more than a year he's tried to get the issue on the ballot. In 2008, he turned in about 18,500 signatures. But county commissioners gave them back, saying his timing was off. He needed to wait for an even-year election, they said, pointing to a nonbinding opinion by state Attorney General Rob McKenna.

Staples challenged the decision in Benton County Superior Court and won.

THEY REPRESENT YOU (TRYs)

Information will be finalized for the 2010 issue of the TRY brochure as soon as newly elected representatives have been seated on their respective board or commission.

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

Kennewick Planning Commission: The Kennewick Planning Commission recommended that the developer who wants to put a luxury hotel, spa, and upscale restaurant on the top of Thompson's Hill be denied that opportunity. Many people spoke against it, some spoke for it. Now it goes to the City Council, where the developer will have another chance.

Discussions on the Bridge to Bridge, River to Rail have been held for each of the 7 areas the district was divided into, plus a general discussion that was open to all. Now the consultants have to come up with something that mirrors what the discussions resulted in.

Contact: [Ginger Vetran](#)

Kennewick School Board: The Board discussed the levy amounts for the next two years. Most local school districts will have their elections on February 9th. They were very aware of the state funding problems and are anticipating more cuts in the second year (2011-12), hence a higher levy amount for the second year of the levy. The local levy election committees will be working together on some advertising to help control costs. It will be interesting to watch the state legislature and what happens to state funding. There could be a change in levy equalization funds, with more responsibility shifted back to local districts to raise money.

Contact: [Marilyn Perkins](#)

Port of Kennewick: Newly elected commissioner Skip Novakovich was sworn in November 24 and, with three elected commissioners in place, a decision about Vista Field is expected soon. It doesn't appear that funding is available to close the field but hints of funding to continue, if not enhance, it have been noted. Stay tuned.

The budget for the coming year is very conservative but current projects throughout the Port district continue to be funded. Taxpayers will not experience a tax increase. And, a ray of sunshine, the Richland Landfill and the Clean Air Authority are working with the Port for efficient disposal of six mobile homes that cannot be reused due to age and other problems. The Landfill was to be the ultimate destination for the homes but because they likely contained asbestos, the Clean Air Authority also was involved. Tests confirmed that five of the six did have asbestos. Had they been dismantled at the Willow Trailer Park site, the ground would likely have been contaminated and additional mitigation would have been necessary. With inter-agency cooperation, the homes will be moved to the Landfill for safe dismantlement.

Contact: [Helen LaDouceur](#)

Richland City Council: The \$239,000,000 annual budget passed on the second reading. The council complimented the city staff for their efforts.

The council heard the first reading on curbside recycling and landfill fees. Staff has proposed a trash pickup fee increase, adding curbside recycling as an option, and adding a \$10.00 fee for trash delivered to the landfill. There will more than likely consider alternatives at the second reading.

The council will also be considering a utility fee increase in the next few months. The amount of the increase will depend on whether needed repairs to existing sewer and water lines can or should be delayed.

Contact: [Janet Nail](#)

We can use additional Observers for other Boards and Commissions so if you have an interest in participating, please contact [Helen LaDouceur](#).

THINKING AHEAD

League's 90th Birthday – February 14, 2010
Women's Equality Day - August 26, 2010
LWVWA Convention – May 19-22, 2011

We welcome all help with planning these events. If you want to help in any capacity, contact [Ginger Vetrano](#), [Marilyn Perkins](#) or [Judy Golberg](#).

STATE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
LWVWA

Friends of League Fundraising Letter

Last year the LWV Clallam County developed a Friends of the League list (which was supplied by League board members and portfolio chairs) and out of the 280+ letters sent, we brought in over \$1000. To some of you from larger Leagues this might not sound like much but it was a boon to our budget.

Our State League Fall fundraising letter brought in over \$10,000 from members and I would like to send out a request for funds to some of our "friends" who know and support the work that we do. The letter would be very similar to the one we sent out last month to Leaguers across the state.

Please send Claudia a list of at least 5 friends, neighbors, family members, or colleagues including their addresses before the end of the month. For those of you who are members of coalitions, representing the League, you might want to consider including some of those people. This list will not be shared and we will be very gentle and professional in

our approach to the "Friends of the League" that you supply.

Our goal during this biennium is to build up support for our activities and look at ways to develop sustainable funding for the future of our State League, through our Legacy Project, Letters to Leaguers and Friends of the League, and foundations and businesses. We understand the saying that you can't continue to go the well, but we also know that different people give to different causes. There are so many different activities that Leaguers and our "friends" can and will support, which will allow us to help local Leagues, do more advocacy, fund the TSWI and support program.

Please call me or email me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Penney Van Vleet
 Development Chair
 360/682-0071
pvv@olypen.com

Claudia's address at the State League office is:
lwwa@lwwa.org

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

First Call to LWVUS Convention 2010 has been issued:

When: June 11-15, 2010
 Where: Atlanta Marriott Marquis

For more information: [Convention Page](#)

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. (This is not always possible since many times it could be a link to a video or no longer available.)

Take a newspaper headline quiz on [usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com) to see how well you read the newspaper at:
<http://www.usatoday.com/news/news-quiz.htm>

An informative Tri-City Herald article <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/kennewick_pasco_richland/story/796050.html> titled "Regional Facilities Oversight targets funding options" was in the November 17 edition. It tells of discussions at the November 16 Regional Facilities Oversight committee's meeting and quotes city officials' reports of property and sales tax levels in their respective cities. Contacts: Ginger Vetrano <<mailto:vetrano@charter.net>> or Helen LaDouceur <<mailto:hel.lou@gte.net>> .