LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENTS

This is turning out to be a busy year for the League with many voter registrations, your presidents’ Letter to the Editor regarding National Voter Registration Day, fantastic speakers at the meetings, our participation in the city candidate forums, the climate change committee, a board retreat, interest in a voter roles committee and a fun holiday party – all generating interest in the Billings League. We are excited about our new members this year and hope to add even more this coming year. Please take a look at the calendar and bring along a friend who you think may be interested to learn more about what we do to Make Democracy Work in our community.

Theresa Schneder and Cathy Fitzgerald, Co-Presidents

LEAGUE HOLIDAY PARTY!

WHEN: Saturday, December 2 at 11:30
WHERE: Commons Restaurant, 404 N. 30th
MENU OPTIONS: (Choose at the Commons)
- Salad Entre with Chicken Breast
- Hamburger
- Prime Rib Dip
- Soup and Salad

Bring a Guest, if you like!

Please RSVP to Judy Senteney at judy.senteney@gmail.com
I was able to attend the state board meeting in September with league representatives from around the state. The meeting was full of idea sharing.

Local leagues have been busy with interesting speakers, such as an event in Helena on Civil Discourse that brought a standing-room only crowd. I shared an idea from our board to send news releases about our monthly speakers to other groups in the community who may be interested in the topics and the other local leaders will bring that idea back to their groups. The Bozeman group has initiated a Hospitality Committee to pair up each new member with a long-time member for a more personalized orientation to their league. The Missoula group is planning a Single Payer symposium next March.

Michael Fried presented details on the state board program "Revitalizing Democracy." He proposed a symposium on the legal and scientific connections between climate change and the water in our river basins. The league can promote a democratic approach to finding common ground among all water basin stakeholders considering the impact of climate change. Guided by the data that addresses water quality and quantity, the board hopes to engage stakeholders and the local climate change committees to help rethink regulation of water use. We feel the symposium could educate our communities on the need to address fair use of our water basins. That includes the problems our state faces if we fail, a 3rd time, to renegotiate the 1976 Water Compact.

A committee was formed to plan our first league state retreat next year. The state bylaws were changed last year to have a convention and a retreat on alternate years. Next year is the first year that we will have a retreat and our Billings league will be the first to host! More to come on this topic. If you would like to help, please contact me and I will put you in the communication loop.
Clime Change Committee Report
Kathy Masis, Chair
11 members

LWVB Goal:
Investigate working with Billings community to engage the city council regarding municipal Green House Gas reductions.

Progress:
• Members of the committee have been meeting with members of Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council. No other organizations have joined as of yet.
• A coalition is taking shape, with this goal:

Billings Climate Action Coalition members will work with the Billings community and local government towards a higher level of environmental responsibility in order to promote a healthier and more attractive community.

We will present findings to members Jan 2018 LWVB member meeting.

USLWV Position Statement
Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

Air Quality - Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

Energy - Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Land Use - Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

Water Resources - Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

Waste Management - Promote policies that reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

Nuclear Issues - Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

A closer look at the League’s position and actions on environmental protection can be found at:

http://lwv.org/content/environmental-protection-and-pollution-control
Kathy Masis joined the League 3 years ago, and was elected to the Billings League’s Board in 2017. She moved to Billings in 1993, because of a job with Indian Health Services. She went to nursing and medical school, and did a family medicine residency in Cleveland. She has been interested in climate change since about 1970. In 2014, aided by Betty Whiting and Donald Seibert of LWVB, she started a Citizens’ Climate Lobby group here. It was a June 2017 LWVUS Press Statement against the US pulling out of the global Paris Climate Agreement that brought her attention to the League’s concerns on global warming. She chairs the temporary Committee on Climate Change authorized by the Billings Board in July, to look into local climate issues. Stay tuned for our findings, which we will report in January 2018.

November League Meeting

Speakers: Rick DeVore and Tom Rupsis of Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Board November 2nd, noon Elks Club 934 Lewis

An assessment of $2 million per year supports public parks and recreation in Billings, but the Board wants to increase that to $3 million to provide new development and improvement as the city grows. The presentation on Thursday will detail specific plans for some undeveloped parks currently in the 2,580 acres of park land in Billings.

2018 Dues Notice

Dues for the Billings League for Women Voters are due December 1, 2017.

Individual membership dues = $ 50.00
Household membership dues = $75.00
Student membership dues = $20.00

If you haven’t already paid them, please make checks payable to LWV Billings and send to:

LWV Billings, PO Box 21631, Billings, MT 59104-1631

Or you can bring your payment to the November 2nd meeting or bring it to the Holiday Party.

Thank you!

Cathy Fitzgerald & Theresa Schneder, Co-presidents

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

-Eleanor Roosevelt
CHANGING AMERICAN ELECTIONS was the topic of our speaker, Danny Choriki, at our August 3rd meeting. A native Montanan, Choriki earned his BS and MS degrees from MSU in psychology and did post graduate work at City College, New York. When he was a student at MSU, he ran for the State Legislature as a Libertarian.

Choriki discussed some history of the Electoral College and proposals for altering the way we elect our president. The Electoral College system was established by Article II, Section 1, Clauses 2, 3 and 4, and Amendment 12 of the U.S. Constitution. Choriki pointed out that 240 years ago, the results of local elections would have to be gathered and collated at the various state capitols and then taken to the US capitol by horseback. This task could take 50 to 90 days before the results of a presidential election would be known.

There have been several attempts to revise the Electoral College system. The proposals of most interest to Choriki were the “Direct Election with Instant Runoff” voting of the President and second proportional allocation of electoral votes, referred to as the “National Popular Vote.”

The first of option requires a Constitutional amendment, doing away with the Electoral College, and before that could happen Constitutional Conventions. The Direct Election option provides for voters to rank their preferences of the presidential candidates. The votes would be tallied and if the first choice of a majority of voters got over 50% of the vote, they would be president. If no candidate received a majority of the votes, then, the second-place choices would be tallied, etc.
The second option of proportional voting by the electors, called the “National Popular Vote” proposal requires states to enact laws providing that their electoral votes would be split in accordance with their popular vote percentages. Currently, most states have laws that require or the Electors decide to cast their votes for the presidential candidate with the most votes. Thus, as it currently works, if a state had 15 electoral votes and presidential candidate A received 51% of the votes and presidential candidate B received 48% of the votes, and presidential candidate C received 1% of the votes, Presidential candidate A would get all 15 electoral votes. This “winner take all” method of casting electoral votes is what results in president candidates that have less than the majority of citizen votes being declared the winner. This method would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who received the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia (Territories like Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, although US citizens, do not get to vote for the president).

A brief supplement to Choriki’s talk is provided here for context into the Electoral College system being adopted. When the Constitutional Convention met in the summer of 1787, there was much discussion about whether and what kind of chief executive(s) would be best and once a single chief executive was decided upon, there was much discussion about whether the president should be appointed, and if so by whom, or whether the president should be elected and if so, by whom. There were proponents for the direct election of the president by the voters. The question of popular election was at the center of republican government – “a test of how far men trusted their fellows, how much power they dare grant to the people.”

Under the Articles of Confederation, existing from the time of the Revolutionary War until adoption of our Constitution, the “states” sent their representatives to that Congress. As was pointed out by George Mason, of Virginia, “Congress represented the States not the people of the states.”* It took sixty ballots before the method of selecting the President was decided. Two primary arguments were made against citizens directly electing the president. First was the argument that the passions of the people would be inflamed by demagogues, resulting in the election of presidents who were unfit and two that the states or Congress should choose the chief executive. The compromise was to allow for citizens to vote for the president, but have their votes filtered by the Electoral College, who it was believed would cast their votes for best person, thereby eliminating the feared unfit demagogues.
Discussions about changing our method of electing the president and how to count the votes has been much discussed over the past 15 years. To find out more about the direct election with instant runoff proposal above and others, visit the website: www.fairvote.org. For information about the National Popular Vote, visit the website www.nationalpopularvote.com for information about the status of states passing the necessary laws for National Popular Vote systems, how presidential campaigns would be run with it, and much more. While you’re checking out those websites, take a moment to read the existing Constitutional provisions regulating the election of presidents and the Electoral College.

Nancy Leifer, state president of the League of Women Voters spoke on the topic of Making Democracy Work in the 21st Century and proposals for internal changes to LWV. Ms. Liefer has many years of experience working in federal and state government and for non-profits, prior to becoming state League president. She has a Phd. from the University of Montana, where she studied sociology and political science, and a Masters of Public Affairs from Princeton University.

Leifer spoke about the changes in technology and culture driving the LWV and other civic groups to accept the challenges presented. The LWV, established almost 100 years ago, in 1920, is moving forward to meet these new demands of democracy. Among the changes internal to the LWV changes are changes being made to our computer applications at the National level, making it more accessible to non-members, and the LWV is now accepting members 16 years of age and older, rather than requiring members to be 18 years of age or older.

The LWV is moving forward with efforts to Make Democracy Work in a variety of areas. Much of Leifer’s talk was about the federal campaign finance laws, enabled by the US Supreme Court’s decision in Citizen’s United permitting small groups of wealth people to buy candidates and elections, voter suppression laws, gerrymandering of congressional districts, and congress negating provisions of the National Voter Rights Act.
Leifer referred to the wealthy citizens and corporations (whose identities are often hidden, thanks to our election laws) who purchase candidates and elections through campaign contributions and advertising as “cheating”; taking unfair advantage of candidates who have to pander to them to raise money. She said that “political cheating” robs our country of its ability to respond to change - taking away citizens’ ability to have an open, honest and effective dialogue with their elected representatives and that it limits the ability of small groups of citizens to have the same influence on them, as the candidates and our representatives are already committed to the position of the small group of their financial donors, who ensure their election and re-election.

Leifer spoke of how the LWV is a conservative organization, committed to democracy and defending democracy against the challenges of small groups of wealthy individuals and corporations. “If we are the defenders of democracy, then we need to educate the public about democracy. Take action, include diverse ideas, get members of diverse ideas and young people involved. We need Warriors for Democracy. We are not a country that believes in cheaters. As Defenders and Warriors of Democracy, the LWV needs to use the same level of messaging that the small groups of people controlling elective officers use to control.

Leifer suggested that we read *Capitalism vs. Democracy*, by Timothy Kuhner and *Dark Money* by Jane Mayer to better educate ourselves about the purchase of our democracy, by small groups of the wealthy elite. For how to effect change she recommends that we join the Montana Campaign Finance Reform movement. Their website is [www.montanacampaignfinancereform.com](http://www.montanacampaignfinancereform.com).

**USLWV Position Statement: Reproductive Choices**

Announced by National Board, January 1983

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Find out more about the USLWV Position on Reproductive Choices and the USLWV involvement in this issue at: [http://lwv.org/content/public-policy-reproductive-choices](http://lwv.org/content/public-policy-reproductive-choices)
Wyeth Friday, Director of the Billings’ Planning and Services Department and the Yellowstone County Planning Department and the town of Broadview, spoke at our meeting on October 5th. Mr. Friday received his Bachelor’s Degree from Ithaca College and a Masters from Cornell University. He worked for 13 years in the planning department and became Director in 2016.

Mr. Friday’s topic was the Billings Growth Policy Statement. Growth Policy in Montana goes through a process. It is authorized by the Montana Code, 71-1-605, and provides guidelines which are regulatory in nature, and are to be updated every five years, or so, by county and municipal governments. That last Growth Policy Plan was developed in Billings in 2008. The Growth Policy is a plan, formulated after required public meetings and input, for the growth and changes to the physical space surrounding us.

Growth policy guidelines and goals include consideration of the following factors:

ESSENTIAL INVESTMENTS: Relating to public/private expenditures to public values.

PLACE MAKING: Enhancing maintain, preserving and improving existing public places.

COMMUNITY FABRIC: Making the spaces attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings.

STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS: Providing livable, safe, sociable and resilient neighborhoods.

HOME BASE: Providing healthy, safe and diverse housing options.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS: For transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all.

PROSPERITY: Promoting equal opportunity and economic advancement.
All of the above factors are taken into consideration, together with the anticipated population growths or decreases, anticipated population of the area in 10, 20, 30 years and the ages of that anticipated population and their wants and needs, the existing 2008 growth policy, water, waste water and storm water plans, etc. When zoning laws are considered, the Growth, Policy is considered for future changes, when development, be it residential, industrial, retail or a mix thereof is considered the Growth Policy is considered. The Growth Policy is developed through meetings with stakeholders, of which the Billings LWV is one, public meetings and the concurrence of the City Council.

A copy of the Billings 2016 Growth Policy Plan and how it was developed can be found at the website: www.ci.billings.mt/184/planning. It can, also, be accessed from the Yellowstone County websites: co.yellowstone.mt.gov/planning.

Further reading about city planning can be found in three (3) articles published in the July 2017 issue of Scientific American; How Cities Could Save Us, by William McDonough, on how “Urban areas can improve the planet as well as people’s lives if we design them to be much more resourceful with energy, water, food and minerals. Tapping The Trash by Michael L. Webber, on how “Transforming Costly wastes into valuable resources can make cities highly effective.” And From Parking Lot To Paradise, by Carlo Ratti and Assaf Biderman, how “A moving web of sensor-laden vehicles and smart intersections will transform how we get around town.” All of these articles provide useful insights about how we can plan for a future that is people and environmentally friendly.

Finally, the Planning Division website provides access to information about the various departments and commissions and boards that govern zoning, parks, water supplies, transportation, etc. Many of these organizations depend upon public participation on them and are looking for citizens who are willing to serve on their boards. The dates and times of the meetings of the various boards, commissions and departments are published on the website and you can request that the minutes of the meetings and other information be provided to you via email.

USLWV Position Statement: Immigration

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.
The nominating committee of Billings League of Women Voters is now in the process of filling a slate of nominees for Board members and officers for election in April. Two members at large as well as a president and vice president will be elected at the Annual Meeting. All of these positions are two (2) years positions. The At-Large Board members provide useful input as to the current and future activities of the Board and frequently serve as Chair or Vice-Chair of various committees. The Board meets once a month and all members are eligible for the Board. Those who want to help guide the League in the coming year or who have questions about duties of Board members are encouraged to contact nominating committee members for information. A description of the President’s role is provided below.

LaVerne Frank, chair
Jean Ott
Lorraine Collins

**LWV of Billings**

**President Role Description**

**Role**
To oversee and coordinate the activities of the League and to ensure that the League continues to serve the best interests of the community and of its members.

**General Responsibilities**
- Plan, coordinate, and preside at meetings of the board and at the annual meeting.
- Identify and recruit members for League responsibilities.
- Represent the League to the public, government officials, the media and other levels of the League.
- With the assistance of the board, set policies and goals.
- Serve as a catalyst to encourage activities which are in the best interests of the League.
- Seek ways to cooperate with and use the expertise of individuals and groups to further the goals of the League.
- Advise, assist, and encourage individual board members as needed. Supervise work of board members to ensure meeting of deadlines and competent performance.
- Review and approve all major League publications before printing.
- Serve as an ex officio member of all committees, except nominating committee.
President Role Description

Specific Duties

- Make a list of work/deadlines and distribute it to the board.
- Develop a regular system for conferring with board members in order to make plans and to check on their implementation.
- Plan the board meetings.
- Prepare an agenda. Confer with committee chairs about the time she/he will need, as well as the nature of the discussion and the decisions necessary at this time. Every meeting should include a membership report and a treasurer's report, and the treasurer can estimate how much time at the board meeting needs to be spent on financial matters. Policy decisions should be made by the whole board.
- Distribute a timed agenda to board members ahead of the meeting, along with the minutes of the previous meeting. Much time can be saved if Board members circulate written reports (usually by email) prior to the meeting, so that allocated time can be spent on discussion rather than on describing the content of the report. Absentees should notify the president (or designated person) before the meeting, send written reports, and inform themselves of pertinent matters after the meeting.
- The president acts as discussion leader, to keep discussion focused, not to intrude personal viewpoints. Simple parliamentary procedure is advisable for clarity and brevity. Keep a record of things to do and things which have been assigned to others. Start and end on time. Good minutes help everyone do a better job. Having someone review the draft before duplicating will minimize the need for corrections. Minutes should contain the board's decisions, who will do them, and when.
- All statements and official letters should carry the name of the president and, if desired, the appropriate chairperson.
- All public statements should be checked with the president and, if there is anything questionable, cleared with the board.
- All public meetings, communications and publications (including bulletins) should be approved by the president or a designee. Reports should be kept of all meetings and on interviews conducted.
- Monitor all League communications and address personally or delegate to the appropriate person.
- Maintain a record of all documents required for League and IRS compliance and keep everything that your League would need for its historic record. Save state and national League materials only as long as they are current or until they have been replaced by updated materials. Be sure that each board member also maintains appropriate files. Ask for, and keep year-end reports.
### CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2017-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2(^{nd})</td>
<td>Meeting – Billings Parks</td>
<td>Elks Club, Billings</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 7(^{th})</td>
<td>General Election Billings Mayor &amp; City Council Candidates</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 20(^{th})</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2(^{nd})</td>
<td>Holiday Gathering/Party</td>
<td>The Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 4(^{th})</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Elks Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15(^{th})</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1(^{st})</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Elks Club</td>
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<td>February 19(^{th})</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1(^{st})</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Elks Club</td>
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<td>March 19(^{th})</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5(^{th})</td>
<td>Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Elks Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22(^{nd})</td>
<td>Earth Day Voter Registration</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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Look for emails concerning additional events.

Please plan on attending the Holiday party! Details are on the front page, and you will be receiving a post card in the mail.

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**New Member Spotlight**

Lee Miller is one of the Billings LWV newest members. She is from Atlanta and has lived in Billings for 12 years. She is a System Analyst with degrees in Information Systems, Business and Romance Languages. She recently joined the LWV in order to be more informed and politically involved regarding issues such as women's rights and the environment.

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Dorothy Eck, a longtime member of the League of Women Voters, who helped to craft Montana's Constitution, at the 1972 Constitutional Convention died September 23, 2017. After her stint as President of the LWV of Montana, Dorothy Eck ran and was elected, several times, to the Montana Legislature, where she served for many years. Her civic engagement in her community and state, exemplifies the best of what the League of Women Voters is all about. Her spirit lives on in all of us.

*(Photo: Sean Sperry, AP)*
The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, we do not support or oppose any political candidate, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Visit us on Facebook @LWVBILLINGS or at our web site: www.lwvbillings.org

DONATIONS
Contributions can be made to the Billings League of Women Voters (BLWV) or the Billings League of Women Voters Education Fund (BLWVEF). Contributions made payable to the Billings League of Women Voter of Billings, a 501 (c)(4) organization, are not tax deductible. Contributions made payable to the Billings League of Women Voters Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization, are tax deductible to the extent permitted by lase.

My gift is for (please check one) _____ BLWV ______ BLWVEF

CONTRIBUTION INFORMATION:
(PLEASE PRINT)
NAME: _______________________________________________________
ADDRESS: ______________________________________________________
C/S/Z: _______________________________________________________
Email: _______________________________________________________
Home Phone: ___________________________________________________
Cell Phone: ___________________________________________________

Please make checks payable to: The Billings League of Women Voters
Please mail checks to: BLWV, PO Box 21631, Billings, MT 59104-1631
Thank you for supporting the League of Women Voters. Only with your support can we achieve our mission!