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This Newsletter published by and for the League of Women Voters of Yakima County

PO Box 723 Yakima WA 98907 509-452-3419

April, 2019

Vol.19, No 4

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

**VISION**

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

**VALUE STATEMENT**

The League believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

**Calendar**

Tuesday, April 23, 5:30 PM ***League Conversation***

Wesley United Methodist Church (see enclosed announcement)

Wednesday, April 24, **Kara Kondo Luncheon** (see attached flyer)

Monday, May 6, 4 PM**, Leadership Team Meeting**, League office at UU Church. LT Meetings are open to all members, please enter through alley door.

**SAVE-THE-DATE:** Tuesday, May 13, **LWVYC Annual Meeting**, more info to come

March 26

April1, 4 PM

## **Officers**

*Co-Presidents:*  Cynthia Garrick and

Criss Bardill

*Secretary:* Karen Pilon

*Treasurer:* Janis Luvaas

Board of Directors

Kathy Lambert

Rhonda Hauff,

Kitty Jubran

Elaine Smith

*Voter Editor:* Criss Bardill

965-2351 or cbardill@gmail.com

The Board meets at 4:00 PM the 1st Monday of each month at the League office.

**All members are welcome to attend.**

**Notes From Cynthia and Criss**

We are pleased with the response from members to our appeal for donations to support our local League activities. If you have not yet participated in this fund drive, we hope you will give it some consideration.

Please mark your calendars for the **Annual Meeting** on Tuesday, **May 13**, starting at 5:30 with a social mixer. Dinner will be provided, and we will be voting to expand our Leadership Team, develop more committee structure, and set goals for the 2019-2020 year. Your participation is important, plus we need a quorum. The Call will be coming to you near the end of this month and we hope you will RSVP yes!

***LEAGUE CONVERSATIONS***

On Tuesday, **April 23**, at 5:30 PM, Will Denton, the Census representative in our area, will talk about the Census processes and its importance to our country. This event isopen to the public and will be held at Wesley United Methodist Church at 14 N 48th Avenue (corner of 48th and Chestnut) in Yakima.

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For those of you who attended the February *Conversation* On the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the following article from the March 20 Washington Post may be of interest.

**Bob Ferguson** **and** **Fawn Sharp**

*Bob Ferguson is the attorney general of Washington State. Fawn Sharp is president of the Quinault Indian Nation.*

If an American child is abused or neglected while living overseas, we expect our government to get involved. If an American couple chooses to adopt a child from another country, it’s no surprise to anyone when that government wants to be engaged in the process to ensure fairness, equity and safety for their children.

The United States’ sovereign tribal nations are no different. Unfortunately, Judge Reed O’Connor of the Northern District of Texas [upset this principle](https://www.texastribune.org/2018/10/05/federal-judge-texas-strikes-down-indian-child-welfare-act/) and limited tribal nations’ abilities to protect Native American children when he declared the Indian Child Welfare Act unconstitutional last year. This dangerous verdict cannot stand.

For 40 years, the act has protected the best interests of Native children and helped preserve the integrity of tribal nations across the United States. The law was [enacted in 1978](https://www.nicwa.org/about-icwa/) in response to the widespread historical practices of removing Native children, often by force or under duress, from their families and placing them with foster or adoptive parents who did not share their heritage — and in the process, detaching them from their Nation, culture, heritage and the communities that cherish them. A [report released that year](https://www.narf.org/nill/documents/icwa/federal/lh/hr1386.pdf) by Rep. Morris Udall (D-Ariz.), who championed the bill, described the number of families subject to this process as “alarmingly high.”

Having survived genocide, catastrophic plagues and systematic oppression on a continental scale, tribes have withstood the test of time by painstakingly rebuilding their identities and healing their communities one child, one family at a time. The multigenerational trauma already caused by centuries of family disruption and dismemberment has only compounded the importance to tribal nations of ensuring their little ones are given every opportunity to retain their identity and home among their people.

The Indian Child Welfare Act aimed to aid in this process by setting high standards that caseworkers must meet when they explore whether a child who is either a member of a tribe or eligible for tribal membership ought to be removed from his or her parents. Those rules include a requirement that families receive support that could help them retain custody of their children; a preference for foster or adoptive placements with members of the child’s family, tribe or other Native Americans; and efforts to include not just children’s parents but also tribal officials in these processes.

For Native children, the ICWA has protected their right to know and understand their own culture. For many, it has allowed ongoing connection to extended families and tribal communities, allowing important cultural traditions to be passed down and tribal nations to build brighter futures.

Research shows that there are [important long-term benefits](https://www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Attachment-and-bonding-NICWA-final-breif-092817.pdf) to being raised with a distinct cultural identity as a Native person. For youth, this secure sense of cultural identity is[linked](http://harvardpublichealthreview.org/protecting-the-public-health-of-indian-tribes-the-indian-child-welfare-act/) to higher self-esteem, better education attainment, and lower rates of mental health problems and substance abuse.

But recently, critics of the ICWA have attempted to attack the legislation by distorting its meaning. The act is based on citizenship. Several state [attorneys general](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/texas/article/Native-American-child-welfare-law-faces-biggest-13681072.php), led by Ken Paxton of Texas, convinced O’Connor to strike down the ICWA by arguing inaccurately that the law is based on race and is thus unconstitutional.

Though this latest assault on the ICWA is not the first, it is based on the same fundamentally flawed argument that ignores the sovereignty of tribal nations and the benefits to Native children of growing up with access to their traditions.

These arguments are also historically ignorant, both of the harm that has been done by breaking up Native families and of the successes the ICWA has achieved. The law has created a vehicle for states and tribal nations to work together to create the best environment possible for Native children and families. Those efforts focus on placing children in the best possible homes, factoring their health, welfare and culture into the decision.

In [a 2013 court filing](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/supreme_court_preview/briefs-v2/12-399_amcu_casey_family_programs.pdf), a group of child-welfare organizations said the ICWA was “the gold standard for child welfare policies and practices that should be afforded to all children, and that it would work serious harm to child welfare programs nationwide for this Court to curtail the Act’s protections and standards.”

No citizen of any sovereign nation deserves any less. [Four tribal nations](https://www.nicwa.org/policy-update/), including the Quinault Indian Nation in Washington state, as well as attorneys general from Washington and several other states have come together to file “friend of the court” briefs in the case defending the law to guarantee that they get it.

**Humanities Washington and Yakima YWCA Presents**

**Let’s Talk About Race**

With warmth and openness, renowned author and professor Clyde Ford leads a discussion on race in modern-day America with a heavy emphasis on audience participation. Meant for people of all races, participants will come away with tools for engaging in conversations about race in an honest, transparent, and meaningful way. Though ambitious, this talk aims to make a difference in bridging and healing the racial divide.

Thursday, April 18th, 6-8 PM

Yakima Valley Museum, 2105 Tieton Drive

This is a free public event

<https://p-upload.facebook.com/events/2200276076877447/>

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***League of Women Voters of Yakima County***

**Cordially invites you to: JOIN US!**

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Membership:** \_\_\_\_\_\_$60 Basic\_\_\_\_\_\_$40 Each additional family member at same residence

Sustaining Gift: $25 \_\_\_\_\_ $40 \_\_\_\_\_ $60 \_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your Sustaining gift will help support our local activities.

**Make checks payable to:** LWVYC, PO Box 723, YAKIMA WA 98907

## VOTER INFORMATION WEBSITES

Secretary of State [www.secstate.wa.gov/](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/)

LWVWA- Vote 411 Yakima County Auditor

[www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) <http://yakimacounty.us/170/Elections>