



LWVGL Voter

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Lafayette, Indiana

Winter 2012

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization dedicated to the active and informed participation of citizens in government.

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Happy Birthday, Dear League

The League of Women Voters is turning 92 this February. What a wonderful milestone. As with all nonagenarians, this is an event to celebrate with pride and joy.

And like all nonagenarians, the League has much to offer us in wisdom and advice, based on years of real-life experience. Here are some of the things the League is telling us in 2012.

First and foremost, never take democracy for granted. Democracy is a wonderful system of government, but it is not an easy way to govern. It requires constant vigilance; citizens willing to remain informed and knowledgeable on the issues and the political process; and an investment of time in sharing ideas, thoughts and feelings with the elected officials so that government serves the people.

The League's experience proves that the League's goals are still worthy and are not yet completed. There are new threats to ensuring that everyone has the right and opportunity to vote. The voter ID laws proliferating across the country and certainly here in Indiana as well place demands for documentation on many individuals who may be unable to meet them, especially minorities, young people, women, the poor, and the elderly. The documentation that is required to obtain the voter ID may be expensive or even unobtainable. As a result, participation in the election process is expected to decline.

Another threat to the election process is the disproportionate influence of unlimited, anonymous monetary support that is flooding the political campaigns. Unsubstantiated attacks from unnamed sources have the potential to corrupt the integrity of elections. The voice of the people can be drowned out by the voice of the corporations and the super-wealthy funding their preferred candidates.

Even the functioning of the duly elected officials is in need of concerted effort. The dysfunction of Congress is alarming. With multiple problems needing to be addressed, the federal government seems unable to reach compromise on even the most pressing issues. Let's not forget our own Indiana State House this legislative session. Are you pleased with their actions? It is important for citizens to be informed and communicate to the legislators about the many issues, such as right-to-work; public taxes for private religious schools; township government reform; unopposed local candidates denied listing on ballots, and so much more.

At 92, the League is urging us once again to assume the role of



(Cont'd on page 2)

Note from the President

Welcome to the second printing of the Voter for 2011-12. Thanks to our editor, Marlee Posto and all the contributors.

In December the LWVGL Legislative Coffee included Representatives Brown, Truitt, Klinker and Lehe. With the approved reapportionment maps, Tippecanoe County will be served by five State House representatives for Districts 13, 25, 26, 27 and 41 and will continue with two State Senators for Districts 7 and 22. Our senators were unable to attend the coffee but we welcomed Don Lehe to the coffee for the first time since his district will include part of Tippecanoe County. A link to the newly approved districts maps is elsewhere in the Voter.

The Legislative Coffee format was altered somewhat this year and received good reviews from the members and legislators. Members of the LWVGL Board presented three policy issues of League concern and interest to the legislators and attendees prior to the usual Q&A. The issues presented included the redistricting process by Sue Scholer, local government reform, Sherry McLaughlan and school finance, Joanne Evers. Attendance by members and prospective members was good and everyone enjoyed the treats and festive atmosphere. If you have not attended in the past do consider doing so next year.

You will have an opportunity to ask questions of the legislators again at the upcoming breakfast on February 11. Please see details about this annual event later in the Voter or check out the website, www.leaguelafayette.org.

With a very important election year on our doorstep, the LWVGL board has decided to focus on voter registration, education of the voter ID requirement to vote, new district maps and candidate information. This is a large task and many volunteers will be needed. Please consider assisting in upcoming activities for 2012 to meet this voter education goal. Stayed tuned for a call out date!

Advocacy activities this past fall included the League speaking at the Tippecanoe County Commissioners meeting in relationship to transparency in government during a discussion of the Wildcat Creek Solid Waste District. In addition, the League spoke in support of allowing uncontested candidates on the November 8, 2011 ballot at the hearing in the Tippecanoe County Court House. The judge ruled in favor of allowing these candidates on the ballot in Tippecanoe County. LWVGL continues to be a member of the advocacy coalition, Health Access and Privacy Alliance, supporting women's reproductive healthcare.

All the best, Joanne Evers

SEE GOVERNMENT IN ACTION: BECOME A LEAGUE OBSERVER

There are over 25 elected or government appointed boards and commissions in Tippecanoe County. The League has member observers for five of these. We need more. By watching a unit of local government in action, a League observer gains a better understanding of the structure and function of that unit, creates a community image of the League, and keeps the League up-to-date on current governmental issues.

The basic requirements for members to become official observers are:

1. Make a one year commitment to observe a specific local governmental board, commission or committee.
2. Attend a short training session.
3. Become familiar with relevant League positions.
4. Do a short report on each meeting.

Citizen participation in government is vital to democracy. If you are interested in becoming an observer, contact Jean Andres, phone 449-7041, email: andres1003@comcast.net.

—Winnie Adler

(Happy Birthday, cont'd from page 1)

protector of democracy. Yes, this is a time to celebrate the monumental achievements of the League over the years. But most of all, it is a time to resolve to continue the good work of those who have gone before us, to increase our efforts to ensure that our government is representative of the people of our country, to educate citizens for participation in the election process, to expect that our elected officials put the welfare of the country first and work together for solutions to problems, and to demand that transparency and accountability are foremost throughout our democratic process.

So Happy Birthday, dear League. We rejoice in your past achievements and we are committed to working to ensure that the work goes forward.

Betty Doversberger

This is Your Community



For several years now LWVGL has planned a Brown Bag Lunch series called 'This is Your Community'. The goal is to bring community leaders and community members together to learn about what is happening in our own backyards. The presentations are held at the Unitarian Universalist Church on the third Thursday of the month from noon to 1:00 PM.

During Fall of 2011 speakers included Ted Bumbleberg, Director of the Lafayette Parks and Recreation, Barb Clark, Facilitator of the Diversity Roundtable, Diane Damico, of the West Lafayette Go Greener Commission, and Faye Cole of the Community Cancer Network.

The next program will be held on February 16 and the speaker is Jeff Phillips from the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service. Jeff will define Cooperative Extension and the services it provides to the community. He will explain how to get involved in 4-H, Master Gardeners, Community Gardens, Health and Human Sciences programs and more.

Check the calendar in the Voter and on the website for other programs through May 2012. It's a great way to learn about the community, eat lunch, meet new and interesting people and socialize with friends. Hope to see you there!

—*Deb Schwarte, Publicity Coordinator*

This is Your Community Series 2012

Third Thursday of the Month, Noon-1PM, Unitarian Universalist Church, 333 Meridian St., West Lafayette (Bring your lunch, beverages provided)

February 16—Jeff Phillips, Purdue Cooperative Extension Educator

March 15—Clare Lutgen, Principal of Oakland Alternative High School, Lafayette

April 19—Bill Hooper, Lafayette Citizen's Band

May 17—Kathryn Redd, Director Tipp Co. Project Safe Neighborhoods Anti-gang Initiative

Additional Scheduled Events

February 9, March 8, April 12, Noon—League Link Lunch at Jane's Deli. All current and prospective members welcome.

February 11—Legislative Breakfast, MCL Restaurant and Bakery, 9:15 a.m. breakfast, 10:00 a.m. program

February 18, Indianapolis—LWVIN Presidents Day

February 20, 6:30-7:30 PM, WLPL, Elm Room—National and Local Programming Meeting

April 7—Last day to register to vote in the May Primary Election; Absentee Voting Begins

May 8— Primary Election Day

LWVGL Board Meetings:

All members are welcome

Third Monday of the Month 5:30PM,
West Lafayette Public Library

We did it! Study Reports Completed

It's taken almost three years, but the **Local Government Study Committee** has completed its assignment. Eight members worked on township governance in Tippecanoe County: Jean Andres, chair, KD Benson, Kathy Dale, Peg Dunkle, Joanne Evers, Sherry McLauchlan, Susan Schechter and Sue Scholer. The report was issued in October of 2010 and a power point developed. Letters were sent to over 20 local groups offering to make a presentation giving the highlights of the report. Rotary, WALLA and Kiwanis took us up on the offer and we made a presentation for the public at the Tippecanoe County Public Library. The report is posted on our website; the insiders scoop on the responsibilities of township government, how service is being provided, and suggestions for improvements at all levels: townships, county and state—they all need to act.

LWVIN also asked local Leagues to study local public library services, and four of the committee members soldiered on: Jean Andres, chair, KD Benson, Joanne Evers and Sherry McLauchlan. The report on Tippecanoe County public library services was printed in December of 2011. The full report is available on our League's website (www.leaguelfayette.org). Information on finances, services and users is included in the report as are comments from library professionals and our committee's suggestions. The committee will be giving a public informational meeting this winter—date yet to be determined. Watch for it!

—*Jean Andres*

Link to Revised District Maps:

To view the revised Tippecanoe County and State District Maps approved in 2011 as a result of the 2010 census, follow this link:

<http://www.tippecanoe.in.gov/egov/docs/1326143360505.htm>

New Event – Success!

The municipal elections in the fall of 2011 created a challenge for the LWVGL. We co-hosted a debate/forum between the mayoral candidates in West Lafayette with our WALLA friends, but wanted to try something new for voters to meet the City Council, Clerk and WL City Judge candidates for Lafayette and West Lafayette. Since there were about 50 candidates running for city offices, a traditional forum would not suffice. After careful consideration, two new events were organized called **Meet and Greet the Candidates**.

The first week of October brought the Lafayette candidates to Ivy Tech Lilly Hall in Lafayette while Morton Center in West Lafayette was the setting for the West Lafayette candidates. Invitations and announcements were sent, League volunteers provided refreshments, and district maps were printed for reference. The format was an informal gathering of voters and district and at-large council candidates to meet and discuss local policy, opinions and concerns. This event provided an opportunity to get to know the candidates and, in contested races, the option existed to explore differences between candidates.

While turnout was small, especially in Lafayette, those who did attend were pleased with the format and the opportunity to meet and talk one-on-one with council candidates. In addition to the council, West Lafayette candidates for mayor and city judge were present. In Lafayette, the city clerk attended to greet voters.

We look forward to the possibility of using this format again in the future; perhaps for school board or county council, where there will be several candidates with similar concerns and issues. Comments on the format are appreciated!

—KD Benson

Money in Election\$



Fair and clean elections, determined by the votes of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy. In the wake of *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), which threw out vital protections against corporate and union spending in elections, as well as recent efforts to destroy the presidential public financing system the League's Money and Elections work takes even greater precedence. While special interest money was always a concern in elections, corporations—including foreign corporations—may now intervene directly in elections, taking power away from voters. To mitigate the corruption that will inevitably increase following the Court's tragic mistake, the League strongly supports legislation that will enhance disclosure, fix the public financing system for presidential candidates and establish congressional public financing.

LWVUS website

For more information go to: <http://www.lwv.org/our-work/improving-elections/money-in-elections>

LWVGL Legislative Breakfast

Please plan to attend the annual **League Legislative Breakfast** at MCL Restaurant and Bakery on **February 11, 2012**. This is a chance to hear from our legislators and bring up questions on issues in which you have an interest.

Cost and format are the same with a Continental Breakfast at 9:15 a.m. for \$8.00. Coffee is available for \$1.50. Pay at the door.

The program will start at 10 a.m. with a forum that includes remarks by legislators and questions submitted from attendees. League members will group the questions for presentation to the legislators.

Reservations are due February 3rd, so please call Sue Scholer at 765-463-2641 right away if you have not already made a reservation. Hope to see you there!

—Sue Scholer



League Advocacy in the State House

The League of Women Voters is present in the State House for the Second Session of the 116th General Assembly through Paulette Vandegriff. Paulette continues to volunteer to follow priorities of the League and testify as needed in committee hearings and in the chambers on issues of importance to the League. Each week she reports to us on the progress of the bills and provides us with links to learn more. LWVIN selected four priorities this year but others could be added if the state board chooses. The current four issues are education reform, local government reform, reproductive rights, and election law. Look for Paulette's reports in your email each week from Donna Giroux. Remember to contact your legislators. Ours is a participatory, representative democracy and your involvement keeps it strong.

Taking Action— Local Positions

At the 2011 Annual Meeting, the membership approved a review and rewrite of two current positions including 'Solid Waste Management' and 'Problems of Women and Women with Children Who Are Victims of Domestic Violence'. Committees were formed and their work is now complete. The committee to review the domestic violence position submitted a rewrite to the LWVGL board. The board approved the revised position in November 2011. The revised position can be found on the website under Positions on Issues, Taking Action -- Local Positions or by [clicking here](#).

A committee formed to review the Solid Waste Management position submitted a proposal to the board requesting a complete restudy of the issue due to the changes in science and technology and greater awareness of environmental issues. The request will be discussed at the local program planning meeting on February 20.

In addition, the Local Government Study Committee completed the study of library services in Tippecanoe County. The report is on the website under League Activities and can also be found on the Members Only Page.



Congratulations and thank you to all who completed this work!

Domestic and Relationship Violence Committee – Beth Goodman, chair, Jasmine Dowd, Deb Schwarte

Solid Waste Management Committee – Karen Griggs, chair, Diane Damico, Bill Evers

Library Services Report – Jean Andres, chair, KD Benson, Sherry McLaughlan, Joanne Evers

—Joanne Evers

LWV of Indiana has a new home. The state League no longer contracts for services through Work-PointAdvisors but has rented space at the address below. The long standing phone number is now a cell phone so the League is always on call.

League of Women Voters of Indiana

**5610 Crawfordsville Rd,
Suite 1500**

Indianapolis, IN 46224

317-241-VOTE (8683)

Local League Community Events Calendars are now available for half price. Contact Joanne Evers at 497-1040 or at eversjd@comcast.net. They will also be at the Legislative Breakfast, February 11.



Sound Judgment

“**Sound Judgment: A Discussion of Judicial Selection and Ethics for the 21st Century**” was the title of a luncheon seminar sponsored by Common Cause/Indiana, League of Women Voters of Indiana, and AARP Indiana December 16. Held in the House of Representative Chambers at the Indiana State House, the seminar was designed for attorneys and advocates interested in how we choose judges and the state of judicial ethics in Indiana and elsewhere. **READ MORE** and view a video of the entire program at www.leaguelafayette.org.

The LWVGL Voter is published quarterly. The editor is Marlee Pierce Posto. Please send your articles to marlee.pierce@gmail.com



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Public School Financing

Public schools are the foundation of our representative democracy grounded in the need for an educated electorate. There is no greater responsibility than providing and protecting the education of the next generation.

Responsibility of providing ample resources to insure access, opportunity and an optimal learning environment for all children falls to all the citizens through tax revenue.

Any drain on these funds undermines the integrity of the public school system and in turn our collective responsibility. Public school reform cannot be accomplished with a mandate of doing more with less.

Tax revenues intended for public schools are ending up in the coffers of private schools through the Choice Scholarship Program. Most of these private schools have religious affiliations. A total of 226 private schools or 94% of the total schools receiving these scholarships are religiously affiliated. They are receiving \$16.3 million or 89% of all voucher money.*

LWVGL believes the Choice Scholarship program is hurting public education. It opposes the diversion of public funds into private and charter schools in any form. The repeal of this legislation is requested. Positive school reform measures are encouraged including the necessary funds to complete full implementation of any needed change and reform.

—Joanne Evers and Kathy Dale

*Based on IDOE statistics and communication

Election Changes!

School Board Elections have been moved! Once a local decision, state law mandates school board elections take place in November's general election and can no longer take place in the May primary. This change is part of the education reform passed by the 2011 General Assembly.

The time change is new for most of the surrounding corporations including Tippecanoe School and West Lafayette Community School Corporations. Unaffected are the Benton and Lafayette School Corporations, as these elections are currently held in November. School board candidates continue to be non-partisan and will now appear on the general election ballot.

—Kathy Dale