

# THE VOTER



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF INDIANA

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OCTOBER 2011

## The LAN and Summer Study Committees

Paulette Vandegriff, LAN Coordinator



On Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, the Interim Study Committee on Redistricting met in the Senate Chambers of the State House. A speaker from the National Council of State Legislatures summarized redistricting processes in other states. Ann Wrenn, and Bob and Linda Shanks, members of the LWVIN redistricting study committee, also attended.

LWVIN, AARP, and Common Cause succeeded in a combined effort to bring Justin Levitt, author of the "Red Book," to present further information to the redistricting study committee on 7 October 2011. Members clearly found his presentation helpful and discovered much food for further thought. Karen Kay Leonard of LWVIN, Kelsey Coffman of DePauw University, and Julia Vaughn of Common Cause were among the others giving testimony.

Since the Redistricting study committee has a 2-year charge (through 2012), LWVIN hopes to be notified of further opportunities to attend its sessions. The Commission on the Courts held two meetings. These will be the only two meetings. The items discussed are lengthy so I will leave it to you to read the meeting minutes. The discussion involved requests for additional staff or a change in the status of a court. The agenda and minutes of all Interim Summer Study meetings are available at: <http://www.ai.org/legislative/index.html>



## No Name on the Ballot - But Elected Anyway?

Many of you know that on 1 July 2011, a new law took effect in Indiana: Intended to reduce costs, it directed county clerks not to print on ballots the names of unopposed municipal candidates. A surge of questions, protests, and challenges followed, as citizens realized the meaning of the change. Some judges have since handed down temporary injunctions, ruling that the names can be listed. State Rep. Kathy Richardson (R, Noblesville), who sponsored the legislation on behalf of the clerks' association, has expressed willingness for the 2012 General Assembly to review the law, perhaps offering each county election board the opportunity to decide the matter for its own jurisdiction.

As Leagues and as individuals, please talk with your legislators about the effects of this law. They need to field your questions and to hear your opinions. Press this message repeatedly: Voters need the fullest access and information any level of government can supply, not reforms which create uncertainty and confusion about an official's "election." Thank you for caring.



## Legislative Action Network – Some Changes and You Can Make A Difference! From the President's Pen

Dear League of Women Voters of Indiana,

LWVIN extends deep gratitude to Paulette Vandegriff for her work and leadership as coordinator of our Legislative Action Network (LAN) since 2007. This means that Paulette has followed League concerns, been present at the State House during much of the session -- as well as for select summer study committees -- and used every legitimate means to get the League's message in front of Indiana legislators. She has worked closely with our coalition allies on LWV issues. During each of the five sessions, she also has e-mailed a weekly report to local Leagues. For all her work, LWVIN has returned its thanks and reimbursed her expenses (mileage, parking, etc.)

Because of changes in family circumstances, Paulette – who also is a former LWVIN President – will be less available in 2012 than over the past few years. Therefore, it is time intensively to recruit and train a cadre of helpers who will follow a particular issue, write or comment on LWVIN testimony, observe and/or testify at committee hearings, and speak directly with legislators. We call such people "issue advocates," and they, too, are volunteers. Until now, most issue advocates have watched emerging legislation, alerting Paulette to LWV concerns, but relying on Paulette (or others) to write and deliver testimony. Such work is valuable, but we need participants who can do more. With Paulette's presence at the Capitol reduced, LWVIN will lose ground if our views are not heard directly by legislators. No one can do everything, but many of us can do something. This year, LWVIN must increase what it asks of issue advocates – perhaps attendance at a fall training, their help with drafting testimony, and sudden trips to Indianapolis for a day of watching and waiting in order to place a LWVIN position before legislators. Of course, we will need to reimburse their expenses, too.

### **What does the work require?**

**Knowledge** – Issue Advocates must know and feel able to apply the appropriate LWVIN position(s) in their area of interest and should also understand related LWVUS position(s).

**Perspective** – LWV always enters advocacy taking the "long view." The current legislative climate is unfriendly to much LWV viewpoint, a fact unlikely to change soon. Even if we feel that LWVIN is a "voice crying in the wilderness," we must advocate for fairness and the common good.

**Toughness** – LWV advocates must deflect attacks or criticisms by their willingness, first, to admit that they don't know all the answers (though we should offer to find out and respond to the questioner), and, second, to stand firmly within the approved position space, supporting the LWV viewpoint presented. Political sniping must not be taken personally. It must be recognized for what it is -- posturing.

**Flexibility** – Plans change rapidly and daily at the State House. Committee meetings may shift locations, get postponed, or be continued that evening. There is no way to "nail down" the certainty that one need only be in Room B233 from 10 to 11am. Check online schedules at 6am, and bring a good book, as well as your note pad. Arrive with the possibility in mind of visiting legislators or their staff in your spare time. Regard the State House your home for the day.

**Civility** – Etiquette at the Capitol used to be more formal than now. In terms of attire, women appeared only in dresses or suits, full make-up, hats, gloves, nylons, and heels. Today, pant outfits and flats are the norm. Legislators

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League of Women Voters of Indiana

**Check out the  
LWVIN website:  
[www.lwvin.org](http://www.lwvin.org)**

## New League Development

Gail Pebworth, LWVIN Membership Chair

This is an exciting time for growth in the LWV of Indiana. **South Central Indiana MAL unit:** LWV of Indiana welcomes our new MAL Unit of South Central Indiana! The August 22<sup>nd</sup> Organizational Meeting, held at Preservation Station in Jeffersonville, attracted a packed room of 50 enthusiastic citizens including 26 new LWVIN Members-At-Large. Officers were elected with Teresa Perkins serving as the first President and a nonpartisanship policy was adopted. The jurisdiction will include Clark, Floyd and adjoining counties. The group discussed a variety of possible voter service projects. Susanne Gaudin, State Board member from Brown County, will serve as the South Central Indiana Advisor. We were pleased to have two of our new members attend the Bloomington Regional Workshop.

**Howard County Area:** The LWVIN Board has recommended to the LWVUS Board that our MAL Unit of the Howard County Area be recognized as a local League. This new League's work has been spearheaded by Sandy Grant who was elected president at their Annual Meeting. Howard County has sponsored an impressive number of citizen information events over the past 18 months and we are truly delighted to have this local League reorganized.



## Save the Date: President's Day Saturday, February 18, 2012, Indianapolis, Indiana

Each local president and two guests (one of them a "techie") are cordially invited to Indianapolis for this valuable conference.

## LWVIEF Grant Available

Sandy Grant, LWVIN 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

Voter service is a very big part of the work of the League of Women Voters. Education funds can be used to do this important work. Many locals have very small Ed Fund balances, whereas the state league has money available. On Saturday, September 17, 2011, the board of directors approved a plan for locals to write requests for grants. There will be a thirteen month trial period for this plan and a \$300 maximum. The forms are simple and the request should be easy to do. More information will be sent local presidents shortly.

## LWVIN Nominating Committee Wants You!

Joanne Evers, Nominating Committee Chair

It was a pleasure to meet many active members from across the state at the Northern and Southern Regional Workshops. I was excited by the interest many had in serving on the state board and would encourage others to consider this possibility as well.

As a reminder, the state board is comprised of local League members who have agreed to share their experience, talents and expertise on the state level. As a local League leader, you have the 'right stuff' to step up and serve on the state level. There is nothing magical about it.

The nominating committee members include Lisa Plencner (South Bend Area), Betty Lou Nault (LaPorte), Shannon O'Toole (Knox County), Gail Pebworth (Montgomery County) and Joanne Evers (Greater Lafayette). All committee members are accepting nominations for state board positions. Please contact us with a suggestion so that we may pursue individuals for state leadership. The board is keenly interested in expanding its role in voter service across the state and developing teams for advocacy of our positions. Those who have already expressed an interest will be hearing from us after the elections.

## Membership and Leadership Development Training

Gail Pebworth, LWVIN Membership Chair

LWV of Fort Wayne Area hosted the second Membership and Leadership Training Saturday, September 24 at the Allen County Downtown Public Library. League leaders from Calumet Area, Elkhart, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, and South Bend participated in this training receiving proven techniques and resources developed by the LWVUS to help local Leagues increase membership and develop new leaders. Gail Pebworth and Kimber Sorenson-Brugh from the LWVIN Board led the training. A third Membership and Leadership Development Training will be held in March for interested local Leagues in southern part of the state.



## Local League Activities Around the State

### Anderson

Welcome to the League" recruitment breakfast was held on September 10<sup>th</sup>. On September 28th, our co-president, Sheryl Monnier, was featured on local radio station WHBU to discuss the League. The League will host a mayoral candidate forum with WHBU on October 20th. League leader Norma Schlossberg, who has worked for the League and other civic groups for 50 years, is convalescing after an accident.

### Bloomington - Monroe County

We have begun to register voters at the Saturday Farmers' Market in Bloomington. To prepare for the LWVUS consensus on the role of the federal government in education we held a meeting with Judith DeMuth, newly appointed Superintendent of the Monroe Co. Comm. School Corp., who provided an excellent account of the challenges our schools face. "Keys to the Candidates" questions have been written and submitted to participants in the November elections. In an ongoing commitment, League Observers are busy attending the meetings of local elected and appointed officials.

### Brown County

LWV of Brown County League is holding three "Community Conversations" this fall. These are a continuation of the Vision 2020 project of 2008. The focus is on our League's Health and Wellness position encompassing outdoor recreation, the natural and cultural history and healthy living opportunities in Brown County.

### Calumet Area

We celebrated Constitution Day with Purdue University Calumet. The topic was how women have influenced politics since 1920 and the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. President Linda Hellems-Trinkle gave a brief history of the League and some of the laws which LWV has helped get passed, and we registered students to vote. Treasurer Klein has added more campaign finance reports to the LWV-CA web site. We are glad to be able to offer this information to the public in this format. Our website is at: <http://www.lwvcalumet.org/>

### Elkhart County

Elkhart's yearbook is at the printer and our first meeting was September 28<sup>th</sup>. The topic is the 17th Amendment. We are looking forward to a busy informative season.

### Fort Wayne Area

In cooperation with the YWCA and Women's Bureau, we hosted a workshop on writing effective letters to the editor as a program for Women's Equality Day. That same day we partnered with the Veterans Service Office at IPFW and Ivy Tech for a production of "Fighting Words", a readers theater play about the role of women in the US military from the Revolutionary War onward to today. We hosted, with the Downs Center for Indiana Politics, at-large candidates for the City Council. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, we will host a mayoral debate.

### Greater Lafayette

Election season has been a busy time with voter registration and candidate events. LWVGL co-sponsored a West Lafayette Mayoral Candidate forum with the Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association. It was well attended with good press coverage. We held meet and greet events in Lafayette and West Lafayette for the municipal candidates in early October. LWVGL had a presence at Purdue University for the celebration of Constitution Day. We are also celebrating our active website, Facebook and the addition of two new members.

### Greencastle

Two members attended the workshop in Bloomington and found it helpful. We are planning a 6 p.m. meeting on Sept 27<sup>th</sup> with our newly hired school Supt. Lori Richmond. She has been a Principal and Superintendent in other school districts and we are looking forward to hosting her at an "appetizer event," to ask questions and to hear her educational philosophy. She has had extensive experience in Bloomington and has recently received her doctorate.

### Hamilton County

With the upcoming elections this fall, the Hamilton County league is hosting three candidate forums in Fishers, Noblesville, and Westfield. We are also working on an educational opportunity for our community in the upcoming year, and our observer unit has visited four of their local city or town meetings. At our August meeting, we were visited by Karen Kay Leonard, LWVIN President, in her capacity as local league liaison from the state league. At this particular meeting, we surprised and honored Lorraine Jensen for her continued dedication to our league.

### Howard County Area

The League of Women Voters of Howard County Area (LWVHCA) has applied for official status. All nine exhibits have been submitted. Yeah, we made it! This process was started in February 2010. Our local has been very busy as a MAL unit in educating voters, holding candidate meet and greet events, sponsoring candidate forums, registering voters, and participating in LWVIN activities. Our members are a diverse group from four counties, hence, not a Kokomo local. We will continue to grow and be a positive force in the area. Good government comes about through informed citizenry.

### Indianapolis

This fall LWV members partnered with the Indianapolis Public Library to register voters and host an At-Large City-County Council Candidate. After 10 years we're also happy to announce that The Unigov Handbook has been reprinted just in time for the election season! On a membership recruitment & retention note, we hosted an info table at Sun King Brewery (and got one new member!) as well as a dinner and film-screening of "Iron Jawed Angels" for Women's Equality Day where we met several prospective members.



## Local League Activities Around the State continued

### LaPorte County

With hints of autumn, the LWV of LaPorte County exits vacation mode to reengage with our community. Our first Lunch with the League of the new "League" year was a terrific success. We had a very interesting speaker who is working with women who are incarcerated in our community. (We have two prisons in LaPorte County.) We are now receiving responses from our Candidate meeting. We hope the State's ruling on candidates who are unopposed in the Election does not make a travesty of our traditional Forum. We look forward to a busy autumn.

### Muncie-Delaware County

Our 2011 Garden Party was a very successful fundraiser. We had our half-day retreat and Karen Kay Leonard and Kimber Sorenson-Brugh were our guest speakers. All reported that they benefitted from the membership and leadership information and voter service tip sheets. Our calendar is planned through December with forums in October, a program on Vote Centers with guest speakers from Tippecanoe County, and in December Paulette Vandegriff is coming to talk about the LAN and the "hot" issues that will be coming up in the Legislature January 2012.

### Montgomery County

This summer we held our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Green Issues Movie Series." Approximately once a month, we showed an environmentally-themed movie, open to the public, with discussion time afterwards. By partnering with the Wabash College Library, we were able to show movies at no cost (i.e., the

### (Montgomery County continue)

college had already purchased public performance rights to them). League members provided refreshments with a local foods theme – garden veggies, homemade zucchini bread and more. We invited attendees to bring their own reusable beverage cups to cut down on waste.

### South Bend Area

Our big push is high school voter registration. We plan to register students in six public high schools with assistance from volunteers in other civic and college groups. We will reach students through social studies classes and educate them about participating in government. New registrants (and anyone interested) will receive our Citizen's Guide. On Oct. 6th, we host a Wine and Chocolate Fall Friend-Raiser with a silent auction, wine-cork pull and dramatic readings to bring in guests, funding and raise awareness. Also in October, we will co-host three debates for mayoral and city council candidates.

### Vigo County

Geri Black and Barbara Norman attended the LWVIN Southern Regional Conference. We sponsored a county-wide registration drive on November 10<sup>th</sup>. A news article appeared in The Terre Haute Tribune-Star to remind potential voters to register and vote. We will co-host a candidate debate on November 1st (6-9 pm) for the office of Terre Haute Mayor at the Vigo County Public Library. Plans are being made for our annual holiday gathering. We are glad to welcome three new members! Legislative Updates will be scheduled in the spring.

### From the President's Pen continued from Page 2

previously displayed courtly etiquette when someone wearing a League button entered the room. Today, the Leaguer may not be acknowledged or even invited to sit down.

**Text** – LWVIN always works from a written copy of testimony which has been approved by the president or president's designee. Enough copies should be carried that the testifier can leave one with the committee chair and others with members of the press.

**Logistics** (Money, Parking, Security, Food) – Parking is cheapest (still \$1.50 for 3 hours) at the Circle Center Mall garage, a couple of blocks south of the Capitol. Security checks include every person entering the building; so you and your carry-in goods will be examined. Often volunteers must either take a lunch or eat out. Cafeterias are available in the basements of Government Centers South and North, and various other eateries are close by, with access via the tunnel or by crossing the street. Advocates need enough disposable income to pay for their own fuel, parking fees, etc., before claiming reimbursement.

**Want an assignment?** LWVIN needs to watch various arenas, from voting rights and elections, through schools and reproductive rights, to civil rights and natural resources. If the above descriptions set your adrenaline pumping, and if you have a heartfelt passion for one particular LWV issue, please email <[kleonard@lwvin.org](mailto:kleonard@lwvin.org)> me in the coming week!

*Karen Kay*



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# League of Women Voters of Indiana

**Mission Statement:** The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership is open to all women and men who are ages 18 years or older and are U.S. citizens. All others who join the League shall be associate members.

Activities are funded through membership dues and donations. If you would like to help fund this important work, please send a donation to: LWVIN, 445 N Pennsylvania Street, #910, Indianapolis IN 46204. Checks should be made out to LWVIN. Donations to our Education Fund are tax exempt. Checks for the Education Fund should be made out to LWVIEF.

For additional information, visit [www.lwvin.org](http://www.lwvin.org)

Submissions to *The Voter* can be sent to  
Dee Naylor (dnaylor@lwvin.org)  
Deadline for Next Submission: January 27, 2012

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