



IOWA VOTER

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

LWVIA CALENDAR	2
LOBBY DAY	2
ISSUES BRIEFING	2
NEW BOARD MEMBERS	3
STATE CONVENTION	4

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Aren't you proud to be a member of LWV? So much of what a person hears about our governing process can be emotional and accusatory. This attitude is *almost* understandable when we remember that the work of government influences many aspects of our lives and the lives of those we care about. Members of the League care as deeply as anyone else. The difference is that we take the time to learn the facts and find ways to present our position with civility.

I have had the opportunity to visit most local leagues in Iowa in the past year or so. The visits have included local board meetings, local programs, and legislative forums. These events have always been well reasoned, civil, and productive. In some cases, League has offered the leadership to ensure that everyone present is treated with the respect we all deserve.

But the influence of the League is in serious danger. Our membership numbers have been diminishing for the past 10 years or more. I know nearly every group is experiencing this membership loss, but I am not willing to accept it as inevitable. Is membership a KEY component of every one of your events? Are there membership forms always available? Do you invite at least three people to join at every league event? As a member of the League, you can be very proud of what you contribute to your community. Don't keep this opportunity from others. Invite them to join.

Good ideas about membership, presented in an enjoyable format, can be found at this link. Read, enjoy, and be inspired.

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Membership_Moments1&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=221&ContentID=16127

Myrna, President

2011 LEAGUE CALENDAR

**2011**

Tuesday, February 15	Lobby Day
Friday, March 11	Final Submission Day for LWVIA by-laws changes
Saturday, April 2	Board Meeting
Saturday, June 4	Convention – Cedar Rapids

LOBBY DAY DETAILS FOR FEBRUARY 15, 2011

Agenda:

- 9:30 – 10:00: Cavalry Baptist Church ABC, registration, coffee and rolls
- 10:00 – 11:00: Welcome, overview of legislation, and lobby day practicum 101
- 11:00 – 2:30: Capitol to lobby key legislators on our issues and lunch with legislators
- 2:30 – 3:00: Debriefing at Cavalry Baptist Church ABC

Weather Cancellation:

Please e-mail LWVIA Advocacy Chair Karen Person, kp19203@yahoo.com if you plan to attend this year's lobby day. Should threat of bad weather cause us to cancel, then you will be notified by 4:00 p.m. the afternoon of February 14.

ISSUES BRIEFING IS THE FOUNDATION OF LOBBY DAY

The Issues Briefing Day in early October was highly successful. Attending were 38 League members from Ames, Black Hawk-Bremer, Cedar Rapids-Marion, Grinnell, Hamilton County, Jasper County, and Metro Des Moines.

Two issues covered at Issue Day will be pursued with legislators. First, two young men spoke on Predatory Pay Day Lending. They had a powerful power point presentation that illustrated the changes that have taken place in debt levels for citizens in the last 20 years and more. They were very well prepared and gave an engaging talk. They are also available to give talks to local leagues who request the presentation. The materials they included contain information on Predatory Lending background, talking points and the current status of this issue.

Power Point presentation can be found at www.lwvia.org under Pay Day Lending.

Representative Mark Smith, 2010 Chair of the House Human Resources Committee spoke about "Improving Iowa's Mental Health System." He has been a mental health professional since 1988. In his talk he spoke about some of the history of mental health in Iowa including the contributions of former Governor Hughes, later Senator Hughes, including in 1972 the Substance Abuse Treatment Act which Senator Hughes took national. Smith has introduced a mental health parity bill each year of his service in the house. Written handouts included current status of mental health, background material, talking points, and current status of legislation for 2011.

Gun registration and voter ID requirements will be the other two issues discussed with legislators.

Join us on February 15th!

MEET BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**SUE RICHARDSON – Public Relations Director**

Sue is a retired teacher in the Ottumwa public school system and an active musician in the community. Currently she is the membership chair person for the Ottumwa League. Her special League interests are campaign funding reform and water issues. Husband, Jim, is frequently away on Mission work in Haiti, Cuba, and Nigeria. Their family includes five grown children, five grandchildren, and one great granddaughter.

BONNIE PITZ

I joined the League of Women Voters of Jasper County about ten years ago. I served as secretary a few years, then President Co-Chair and the last two years as President. We have a strong core group of members who make sure that we do a good job with Legislative Coffees, monthly programs, Candidate Forums and Lobbying efforts. In past years we have partnered with our local OPEN organization to host foreign visitors and made extra efforts to extend our Observer Corps from City Council meetings to city owned Skiff Hospital Board meetings and most recently School Board meetings. I am very proud of the good work League does locally, statewide and nationally. My husband Dave and I enjoy being active in community activities in Newton. We also enjoy our family time, as a blended family we have seven children between us and 18 grandchildren. I am retired from the education world, 29 years, the last 17 as a High School Guidance Counselor. In my free time I love gardening, reading, going to Y, and taking care of grandkids. I am very excited to be part of the LWVIA Board.

KAREN PERSON – Advocacy Chair

As a child growing up in Ft. Dodge, I remember my mother taking me to various political events including League meetings. I joined Black Hawk – Bremer League in the 1980's. I enjoyed attending League meetings and legislative forums for many years, but did not get involved in the organization. In 1999, JoAnne Finkenbinder and I organized a Black Hawk – Bremer League forum on sentencing issues in Iowa. Then Chair of the Department of Corrections presented a power point on the dilemmas facing the DOC due to sentencing. These issues were then addressed by a police officer, a prosecutor, a judge, a community corrections officer, a board member from the DOC, and a criminologist. The meeting made the front page headlines of the next day's Waterloo Courier - from then on, I was hooked on League! That meeting eventually led to a statewide study on sentencing and the positions currently taken by the LWVIA. I switched jobs as a school psychologist in 2003, moved to Des Moines, and joined the Metropolitan Des Moines League. In 2008 I became the president for my local and completed my two-year term just this spring. I am now semi-retired and looking forward to helping on the LWV IA Board.

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STATE CONVENTION – JUNE 4, 2011

The League of Women Voters of Iowa will meet in Cedar Rapids on Saturday, June 4, 2011.

Location: Cedar Rapids – Long Branch Hotel and Conference Center

Cost: \$30 per person includes lunch

SERVE ON YOUR STATE BOARD – GROW, LEARN, AND MEET GREAT PEOPLE

The following positions will be elected at our convention, June 4, in Cedar Rapids. Please nominate yourself or suggest someone else for:

President, Vice President, Secretary, or one of 6 possible director positions

Specific duties of directors include Program Chair, Newsletter Coordinator, Membership Director and others. If you have an area of interest, please let us know. You can email your nominations to Jean Dell at: jeandell@lisco.com