

League of Women Voters

Bloomington - Monroe County



League Letter – January 2016

Calendar

Jan	6	Money in Politics Consensus Meeting, 11:30 a.m., MCPL Room 2A
Jan	9	Legislative Update, 9:30 a.m., City Council Chambers
Jan	11	Board meeting, 7:00 p.m., Bell Trace Community Room
Jan	15	Voter Service Committee Meeting, 11:30 a.m., MCPL Room 2A
Feb	3	Member meeting: National and local program planning, 11:30 a.m., MCPL Room 2A
Feb	4	Public event: Vi Simpson, “How Does the State School Funding Formula Work,” 7:00 p.m., MCPL Room 2B
Feb	6	Legislative Update, 9:30 a.m., City Council Chambers
Feb	8	Board meeting, 7:00 p.m., Bell Trace Community Room
Feb	24	Public event: Tim Thrasher, “Indiana State School Funding from the Local Perspective,” 7:00 p.m., MCPL Room 2B

What’s Inside

President’s Letter
Reports on Program
Reports on Voter Service
Events of Interest
Editor’s Note
In Memoriam
LWVB-MC History

Mission Statement

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



PRESIDENT'S LETTER: Kate Cruikshank

And suddenly it's 2016, which is undoubtedly going to be a very busy year. Some exciting developments are occurring at both the national and state level that may mesh with local League interests and concerns in ways not always evident in the past. Please read through the Report on Program excerpts from LWVUS President Elisabeth McNamara's recent League Update. Unless state or local Leagues make a compelling case for a new study, it sounds as though the LWVUS will focus in the next two years on action in the areas of voting rights, voter protection and service, and election reform, which is where many of our own members feel the central focus of the League should be.

At the state level, our LWVIN co-presidents are carrying out their promise to build networks among Indiana local Leagues and support efforts to coordinate our work. The primary example is the renewed effort to build an infrastructure among local Leagues whereby we can effectively advocate for League positions on issues being considered by the legislature. See the article below on "*Influencing the Indiana General Assembly*" for details and an "*action sheet*" to keep handy so that when an action alert comes through, you can send off an email quickly and be part of this effort to make the voice of the League heard. Barb Anderson of the South Central Indiana League, who is chairing the Issues Advocacy Committee, says she wants our network of League members to make its influence so strongly felt that the legislators will be coming to us for help in writing legislation. That's a lofty goal, but Barb is spot-on about the potential power of our collective efforts.

We need to remember that the League was established to focus the collective power of two million women who were about to be granted the right to vote. Individually we can doubt our ability to influence legislation, but there is no question as to whether we can make a difference when we work together. Developing our issues advocacy network is one potentially very effective way to do that. If you are interested in monitoring a particular issue and becoming an issue advocate, please let me know. Otherwise, just be ready to send off those emails when the action alerts arrive in your inbox. ***We CAN make a difference, and we will. Here's to more great work from the League in 2016!***

Reports on Program

LWVUS PROGRAM PROJECTION FOR 2016-2018

The following excerpts from the December 17 "*League Update*" from LWVUS President Elisabeth McNamara give us a preview of what program guidance we can expect from the LWVUS over the next two years.

"In the coming months the boards of state and local Leagues and ILOs (Inter-League Organizations) across the nation will have the opportunity to offer input for the League's program for the 2016-2018 biennium. The program planning process is one of the important ways through which the League focuses its grassroots work to align each part of the organization with the others and with the League's mission. See [LWVUS Bylaws Article XII, Principles and Program](#), for requirements for the program planning and adoption process.

“Program planning will culminate with adoption of a program of education and action at [LWVUS Convention 2016](#) in Washington, DC. The input of League boards will help shape the proposed program of study and action that will be submitted to convention delegates for debate and adoption....

“Program planning is a valuable League tool for identifying issues for focus and for insuring that League resources, human and financial, from our grassroots volunteers to our professional staff, are engaged where they have the most impact. This process is appropriate for all three levels of League. State Leagues undertake program planning before state conventions where a program of education and advocacy for the state League is adopted for the following biennium. Local Leagues do program planning before their annual meetings where local program is adopted for the following year.

“The deadline for submitting LWVUS Program Planning response forms is March 1, 2016. All forms must be submitted electronically.

For the upcoming biennium, the LWVUS Board suggests taking a close look at our current positions as found in [Impact on Issues](#) and, in some cases, in state and local program books. We have a large number of positions in many areas....

When looking at our positions as a whole, it is clear that a main goal for which we are striving is *Making Democracy Work*®. Voting rights, voter protection and service, and election reform are crucial elements in achieving the goal, and the League is particularly noted for action in these areas. Currently, as part of the three-part Key Structures of Democracy program adopted at the 2014 Convention, Leagues nationwide are: engaging in the [Money in Politics Review](#) and Update of LWV’s campaign finance position, studying [the process of amending the U.S. Constitution](#); and [reviewing the redistricting process](#) for U.S. Congress, through the existing Redistricting Task Force, for the purpose of developing action steps.

We are ready to more fully engage in these issues to further our efforts in a campaign: *Making Democracy Work*®. The LWVUS Board asks you to consider seizing the opportunity for Leagues nationwide to meet this critical challenge.

To free up resources and unite Leagues across the country, we must focus. We suggest that, during your program planning efforts, you strongly consider the need to act versus adding new studies or reviews to the agenda for the 2016-2018 biennium. Let’s focus on taking action.”

Reports on Voter Service

VOTER SERVICE LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Diane Legomsky has volunteered to chair the Voter Service Committee with a particular focus on voter registration and voter education. The next meeting of the committee will be on Friday, January 15, at 11:30 a.m. at the MCPL in room 2A. If you are interested in working on new and expanded approaches in these areas, please contact Diane at diane.legomsky@gmail.com.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Legislative Updates will be January 9 and February 6 at 9:30 in the City Council chambers of the Showers Building. We can’t get the City Council Chambers for March 5, so the March update is up in the air. But stay tuned – we’ll have the information in the February newsletter. As in the past, these will be taped by CATS and rebroadcast. However, if you can attend in person, please plan to do so. The quality of the information we get depends to a great extent on the questions we ask.

KEYS TO THE CANDIDATES

We must have our questions for the candidates in the May primary ready for review by our board at their February meeting, which means we need to have a Keys committee in place by the board meeting on January 11. Candidates for whom we will be preparing questions are county offices (Commissioner for districts 2 and 3, Council at-large seats, Auditor, Treasurer, Coroner, Surveyor, and Judges from Divisions 1, 5 and 7); state representatives for districts 46, 60, 61, 62, and 65; and state senators for districts 40 and 44. So we need good questions on both county and state issues. The work of this committee has been done completely via email in the last two rounds, so there are no meetings to go to. If you are interested in working on this committee, please contact Kate Cruikshank, cruiksha@indiana.edu or 812-339-6096.

INFLUENCING THE INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY - Kate Cruikshank

The LWVIN, under the leadership of Barb Anderson of the South Central League, has set up an Issues Advocacy Committee, which is trying to build the infrastructure to help us exert collective pressure on the legislature in the 2016 session. Advocates for particular issues will monitor the bills introduced into the House and Senate and alert local League leaders of any action that is needed to let legislators know of League support or opposition to a bill. Local leaders will in turn send the action alert to members, asking that they email their legislators as individual constituents. With 1200 members across the state, local Leagues together can as constituents contact 80% of our senator and representatives and thus have real influence on legislation, if we are willing to take action quickly when needed. Here's how it's going to work.

Issues advocates, such as Jeanette Neagu of the La Porte League on environmental issues, or our own members, Rachel Guglielmo on legislation related to guns and Kate Cruikshank on voting rights, will monitor the Indiana General Assembly website daily to check for bills that have been introduced related to the issue they are monitoring. When a bill of interest is assigned to a committee, the advocate will create an "action alert" asking constituents of the members of that committee to contact their legislators to indicate support or opposition to the bill. That action alert will be sent first to the LWVIN Board and the Issues Advocacy Committee for vetting, to be sure it is consistent with League positions, then within 24 hours it will be revised or approved and sent out by the advocate to local League leaders all over the state. The action alert will give all the information that is needed to make it easy for League members to quickly send an email. Because the 2016 session is a "short session" (only 30 session days), things will be happening very fast, so responding immediately is going to be essential to being effective.

When bills are introduced (called the "first reading"), they are immediately assigned to committees, which is where their fate may be determined (many bills die in committees). So contacting the members of those committees right away to let them know constituents care about a bill is important. When an action alert comes, it may specify which committee needs to be contacted. The "action sheet" below shows which of the legislators representing Monroe County are on which committees and is intended to make it easy for you to send off that email. For more information, contact Kate Cruikshank (cruiksha@indiana.edu).

(PLEASE PRINT AND USE AS REFERENCE)

**2016 ACTION SHEET FOR THE
BLOOMINGTON-MONROE COUNTY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

SENATE:

If the bill is assigned to this committee:	Contact this senator:	
Agriculture	Brent Steele	s44@iga.in.gov
Appropriations	Mark Stoops	s40@iga.in.gov
Corrections & Criminal Law	Brent Steele	s44@iga.in.gov
Education & Career Development	Mark Stoops	s40@iga.in.gov
Environmental Affairs	Mark Stoops	s40@iga.in.gov
Ethics	Brent Steele	s44@iga.in.gov
Health & Provider Services	Mark Stoops	s40@iga.in.gov
Homeland Security & Transportation	Mark Stoops	s40@iga.in.gov
Insurance & Financial Institutions	Brent Steele	s44@iga.in.gov
Judiciary	Brent Steele (Chr)	s44@iga.in.gov
Natural Resources	Brent Steele	s44@iga.in.gov
Rules & Legislative Procedure	Brent Steele	s44@iga.in.gov
Veterans Affairs & The Military	Mark Stoops	s40@iga.in.gov

HOUSE:

If the bill is assigned to this committee:	Contact this House member:	
Committee on Joint Rules	Matt Pierce	h61@iga.in.gov
Courts and Criminal Code	Matt Pierce	h61@iga.in.gov
Environmental Affairs	Matt Pierce	h61@iga.in.gov
Financial Institutions	Robert Heaton	h46@iga.in.gov
Insurance	Robert Heaton	h46@iga.in.gov
Insurance	Peggy Mayfield	h60@iga.in.gov
Natural Resources	Robert Heaton	h46@iga.in.gov
Rules and Legislative Procedures	Matt Pierce	h61@iga.in.gov
Rules and Legislative Procedures	Eric Allan Koch	h65@iga.in.gov
Utilities, Energy and Communications	Eric Allan Koch (Chr)	h65@iga.in.gov
Utilities, Energy and Communications	Matt Pierce	h61@iga.in.gov
Ways and Means	Peggy Mayfield	h60@iga.in.gov

Events of Interest

Bloomington Boards and Commissions Vacancies

Applications for term-end possible vacancies and current vacant positions appointed by the newly elected Mayor and newly elected Common Council are now being accepted for all Boards and Commissions. These positions are open to all city residents, with certain commissions accepting county residents. Application review will begin immediately and will continue into January and until the positions are filled.

City Boards and Commissions are citizen staffed and operated, and serve to advise the Common Council and the Administration on issues affecting Bloomington. A complete list and description of Boards and Commissions, in addition to application materials may be found at www.bloomington.in.gov/clerk. Information and applications also are available at the City Clerk's Office in Showers City Hall at 401 N. Morton. For more information or questions, please contact the City Clerk's Office at [812-349-3408](tel:812-349-3408).

Monroe County Boards and Commissions

Monroe County Commissioners & Council have a number of Board and Commission openings. The Commissions with open seats include the Women's Commission, Environmental Quality & Sustainability Commission and the Human Rights Commission. To see a complete list of Boards and Commissions please go to:

<http://www.co.monroe.in.us/tsd/Government/Commissioners/MonroeCountyBoardsandCommissions.aspx>

At the top of the page you will see a "link to board application". Use this link to apply to any Board or Commission - the information will be shared between the Council and the Commissioners. This is a great way to get involved in your local government!

Monroe County Citizens' Academy

The Monroe County Citizens' Academy will help you develop a thorough understanding of your county government. Participants will meet with department heads and elected officials to learn about services, operations, funding, and budgets. The County Citizens' Academy meetings will be held on Monday evenings from 6 to 9 pm February 8-April 4 2016. There is no fee to participate, but registration is required. Please visit <https://extension.purdue.edu/monroe/Pages/article.aspx?intItemID=8015> for more information.

City of Bloomington Citizen's Academy

Watch for the 2016 class information later this spring.

Editor's Note

DONATE BUTTON ON OUR WEBSITE – Doris Wittenburg, Editor

As reported last month, our website team of Peter Kaczmarczyk and Carol Walter added a “*donate*” button to our website, and we are hoping to make dues payable via the website in the near future. But in the meantime, you or your friends can make a donation to the League using this button. Since I've been one of the board members pushing to have this implemented, I had to try it! I made a donation, using my credit card; and it was pretty easy. So, give it a try yourself and then let all your friends know about this new feature of our website so they can donate to our just cause! Happy New Year all!

In Memoriam



The League has lost another of our 50-year members, Aase Loescher. She passed away on November 24, 2015, after a brief illness, at the age of 87. Aase felt called to serve her community and to promote peace. She believed that government, NGO's, and businesses should meet the needs of the people. To that end, she was an active member of the League of Women Voters and other organizations which she felt could make a difference in the world. In her more active years, Aase served as both a League member and a board member. She will be missed by the League and the greater community.

An Item of LWVB-MC History

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE LWVB-MC PLAN COMMITTEE – Marge and Jim Faber

The Plan Committee of the League of Women Voters of Bloomington/Monroe County was an outgrowth of the Local Government Committee. In 1973 Local Planning was adopted as a study item and consensus was reached in 1974. The impetus for this study was land use around the new Monroe Reservoir. By 1984 Local Planning was well established as the Plan Committee.

The period from 1974 to the present day has seen the implementation of City and County zoning in an area that had been virtually unzoned. In a 1970's newspaper article in the Plan Committee files, the city attorney stated that there was no teeth in the zoning ordinances, which allowed developers to do as they wished. The County Health Inspector said that most septic permit applications were for houses already built or underway.

For a time the Plan Committee first met with the Environmental Committee, meeting for lunch at Lennie's. When the Plan Committee met separately, it met in the evenings at the Faber's residence. When driving after dark became difficult for members, the group began to meet at the Tortilla Flat Restaurant during the lunch hour. After Tortilla Flat closed, the meeting was moved to the Upland Restaurant. It became too noisy to carry on conversations that could be heard by all members so the meeting place was changed to the Sweet Grass Restaurant. It currently meets at Juannita's.

The Plan Committee had a number of informative meetings both for League members and meetings for the general public where City and County Officials presented information. The LWVB-MC has acted in areas of concern, writing letters and speaking at appropriate meetings.

The Plan Committee has been an active one, meeting monthly and sharing information from the various City and County Planning Committees and Subcommittees that were being observed by members. Meetings of the Plan Committee are normally on the second Wednesday of the month at 11:45AM. The Committee welcomes anyone interested in observing a City or County group to come and share comments.

League Leadership:

President: Kate Cruikshank (cruiksha@indiana.com) (H) 812-339-6096 (W) 812-856-4061

Vice President: Nancy Brinegar (bttnancy@bluemarble.net)

Secretary: Diane Legomsky (diane.legomsky@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Carol Walter (carol.walter@sbcglobal.net)

Membership Chair: Ann Heath (awheath504@comcast.net)

Observer Corp: Diedre Todd (diedretodd@alumni.iu.edu)

Newsletter Editor: Doris Wittenburg (dwittenb@indiana.edu)

Directors:

Rachel Guglielmo

Ann Heath

George Hegeman

Albrecht Holschuh

Peter Kaczmarczyk

Bill Milroy

Doris Wittenburg

Program Committee:

Diane Legomsky, chair (diane.legomsky@gmail.com)

Velma Davis (cuchi2009@att.net)

Ann Heath (awheath504@comcast.net)

Kate Cruikshank (cruiksha@indiana.edu)

Membership Committee:

Ann Heath, chair (awheath504@comcast.net)

George Hegeman (hegemang@indiana.edu)

Carol Walter (carolwalter@sbcglobal.net)

Voter Service Committee:

Diane Legomsky, chair (diane.legomsky@gmail.com)

Kathy Byers (kvbyers@indiana.edu)

Kate Cruikshank (cruiksha@indiana.edu)

Velma Davis (cuchi2009@att.net)

Kathy Dilcher (kdilch@hotmail.com)

Jan Ellis (ellis.jan@gmail.com)

Rachel Guglielmo (Rachel_guglielmo@yahoo.com)

Ann Heath (awheath504@comcast.net)
Helen Hollingsworth (hlhollin59@att.net)
Peter Kaczmarczyk (ghouse2@yahoo.com)
Diane Legomsky (diane.legomsky@gmail.com)
Lou Malcomb (malcomb@indiana.edu)
Bill Milroy (milroy41.bm@gmail.com)
Linda Shanks (lshanks61@gmail.com)
Laura Trout (ltrout@homefinder.org)