

League of Women Voters Bloomington - Monroe County

League Letter – July 2017



Calendar

- July 4** Fourth of July Parade, downtown Bloomington, 10:00 am
- July 9** Member meeting, MCPL Room 2A, 2:00 pm–3:30 pm
- July 10** Board meeting, Bell Trace Community Room, 7:00 pm
- July 11** Voter registration training, Election Central (401 W. 7th St.), 10:00–11:30 am
Please sign up at www.SignUpGenius.com/go/4090F4CAA82BA2FF2-voter
(Seating is limited.)
- July 16** Gerrymander Meander, Childs Elementary School, 2:00 pm
- July 18** Voter registration training, Election Central (401 W. 7th St.), 2:00–3:30 pm
Please sign up at www.SignUpGenius.com/go/4090F4CAA82BA2FF2-voter
(Seating is limited.)
- July 18** Redistricting reform task force, 2608 W. Windermere Woods Dr., 7:00 pm
- July 27-August 5** LWVBMC Booth, Monroe County Fair, 4:00 pm–10:00 pm
- August 13** Member meeting, MCPL Room 2A, 2:00 pm–3:30 pm
- August 14** Board meeting, Bell Trace Community Room, 7:00 pm
- September 10** Member meeting, MCPL Room 2A, 2:00–3:30 pm
- September 11** Board meeting, Bell Trace Community Room, 7:00 pm

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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



If our League traditionally takes the summer off, you'd never be able to tell it this year. In addition to joining in support of Octi, the corporate person, for the July 4 parade, the amazing subcommittee of our powerhouse redistricting task force is exploding with plans for the Gerrymander Meander on July 16 (rain date July 23). George Hegeman, Vickie Dacey, and Nancy Brinegar are creating a wonderful event, sparked by the task force leadership of Tomi Allison and assisted by Elaine Gaul (civic education), and Ann Birch (communications). And, we are returning to the county fair under the leadership of Vicki Polansky and her team, Elaine Gaul, Ellen Mills, Kaye Hill, and Ann Heath (the great salamander maker) with plans for decor, activities, and handouts.

So it is time for some fun and fellowship and celebration along with our work. I hope as many of you as possible will sign up to help with these events, wearing your wonderful League T-shirt, of course. (Ann Heath has a new order in, by the way, if you haven't gotten yours.) It will be a great way of getting to know one another.

Please also be sure to note (see below) that there will be two voter registration training sessions before the county fair, in the morning of July 11 and the afternoon of July 18. One thing that has been evident to me from the July 4 parades is that the League is a recognized entity in our community (people actually cheer for us when we walk by!). The phone calls that come in on the League phone during the election season confirm that people assume that we are the authorities on voting and elections. This is a wonderful reputation to have, and our voter registration training sessions will help us maintain that by giving us all a crash course/refresher in not only voter registration, but all things related to elections.

So let's get out there and get those voters revved up!

League Updates

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME COMING UP – Ann Heath

Membership renewal for 2017–2018 starts July 1. Kate Cruikshank will send an email in July attaching the membership form. Or, you can go to <http://bmclwv.org/pdfs/LWVBMC-Form-Membership-2017-2018.pdf>, download the form, and send it in with your dues. We plan by this time next year to have online renewal active, but we're not quite there yet. Best of all, all dues and donations are now completely tax deductible! Questions? Call Ann Heath (812-327-9637).

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS...AND NEIGHBORS – Ann Birch



The communications group continues to grow. Our objective is to support League activities and functions by providing experienced people to help with publicizing events, developing materials, and presenting a consistent League presence. We're fortunate to have many talented individuals in our group, including Chaz Mottinger, who joined the League this year. Chaz is a professional photographer, and she will be coordinating photography for League events. If you enjoy photography and would like to help with this effort, please contact Chaz (219-331-1985). We need a "bank" of photographers so that one person doesn't end up doing all the work. Please step in.

On another communications note, how many of you are active in *Nextdoor*, the online neighborhood network, or in a neighborhood email group? You can help publicize League events by posting an event notice on *Nextdoor* or notifying your neighbors in your email group. We have three events detailed in this newsletter that could use your help: the July 4th Parade walk with Octi, the Gerrymander Meander, and the League County Fair booth. Just take information from the articles below and spread the word among your neighbors. Thanks!

Reports on Program

ARE YOU READY FOR THE MEANDER? – George Hegeman

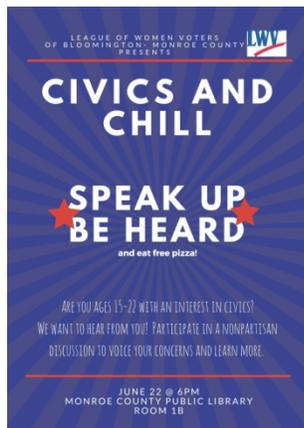
On the eve of Elbridge Gerry's birthday, July 16, the LWVBMC will sponsor a leisurely walk around the borders between Indiana House districts 60, 61, and 62. In 1812, Gerry lent his name to just such an oddly shaped bit of creative district-drawing around Boston that resembled a

salamander, thus the name “Gerrymander.” Gerrymandered districts are noncompetitive, generally favor incumbents, and result in low voter turn-outs due to the predictability of election outcomes. Redistricting and how to do it better is a nonpartisan, good-government issue. A truly nonpartisan commission including citizen representation is needed to reform the current process in our state, where legislators draw district lines to favor the party in power.

So, we will walk to urge our legislators to act. At 2:00 pm on Sunday, July 16, we will gather at Childs Elementary School on South High St. and walk two blocks south to Jackson Creek Trail. This is a family-friendly event to which the public is invited. Jackson Creek Trail is a 0.6-mile, paved walkway that marks the eastern edge of the “Goat Farm,” a city park property that also happens, in its odd finger-like outline, to define the boundaries between the three electoral districts. At about 3:00 pm, we will gather back at Childs School to cut a suitably decorated birthday cake and hear from some interested parties about the effect of the way Bloomington city and Monroe County districts are drawn. The event should conclude by 4:30 pm. We need helpers as well as walkers. If you’d like to help with this event, contact George Hegeman (812-336-2709).

The Redistricting Reform Task Force has a number of other projects on its plate, such as investigating house parties as a means of spreading the message and participating in the planned events at the Fourth of July Parade and Monroe County Fair. If you’d like to contribute to this important effort, contact Tomi Allison (812-336-6671).

CIVIC EDUCATION: CIVICS AND CHILL – Chaz Mottinger



We held our first civic education event for young adults on June 22 at the Monroe County Public Library. Our objective was to get a start at promoting civic education and engagement to young people, which could also lead to increased youth membership in the League. Six young adults joined us at “Civics and Chill,” ranging in age from 13 to 22. Having a relatively small group was advantageous for this first event, leading to more intimate conversations. Overall, the group felt that, because of their age, no one cares about their opinions. It was a good beginning to developing an outlet for their voices. As an added bonus, the LWVBMC members present received a lesson on the different types of skateboards!

Thanks to Kate Cruikshank and Elaine Gaul for helping with this event.

This fall, after school starts, we’re planning on building on this first effort by spreading the word and engaging more students. Please contact Chaz (219-331-1985) if you’re interested in working with young adults or Kathy Loser (812-272-8881) if you’d like to become involved in the overall civic education effort.

Advocacy and Activism

JULY 4 PARADE: OCTI NEEDS A HAND TO HOLD – Kate Cruikshank

This is just a reminder that the League will be “walking along with Octi” at the July 4 parade in Bloomington along with Reverse Citizens United and other groups. Octi is a metaphor for all the ways unregulated dark money (most notably unleashed in the 2010 Supreme Court decision Citizens United v. FEC) is affecting our lives.

We still need some help with this event. Here’s the current plan: Three of us will be with Octi, two holding the tentacle (and making it do octopus-like things), and one holding the sign designating that tentacle as invading voting rights. Then behind Octi, two of us will carry our League banner, and others can carry signs linking voting rights to gerrymandering and redistricting. We would love to have a real showing, all in our wonderful T-shirts, of course! If you can help with the fun and worthwhile event, please sign up at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F4CAA82BA2FF2-july>. If you have questions, call Kate Cruikshank (812-361-3969).



COUNTY FAIR: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Vicki Polansky

As part of our voter outreach and education efforts on the issues of redistricting reform, voting rights, and good government, the League has decided to revive an old tradition—hosting a booth at the Monroe County Fair (July 27–August 5). We’re looking for enthusiastic and energetic volunteers to help plan and set up the booth as well as provide staffing during the fair (4:00–10:00 pm). For our longtime members, please let me know if you remember what was done in the past or if you’re stashing pieces of the display somewhere. We want to draw on all your memories and ideas to make this fun and memorable for everyone. Vicki Polansky (812-360-8845)

Reports on Voter Service

VOTER REGISTRATION TRAINING – Kate Cruikshank

As preparation for our booth at the county fair, Karen Wheeler, the director of Election Central, is offering to us two sessions for training not only in how to register voters but also how to answer the many expected and unexpected questions they may have about voting, voter ID, the upcoming races, and how elections are managed. In the wake of the reports of Russian hacking and the proliferation of hacking in general, we can probably expect questions about the integrity of our voting system, so this is going to be important information for us to have. The sessions are scheduled on July 11 from 10:00 to 11:30 am and on July 18 from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. Seating is limited at Election Central, so please sign up online to be sure there is space for everyone.

Sign-up is at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F4CAA82BA2FF2-voter>.

Observer's Report

CITY PLAN COMMISSION MEETS – Joyce Pace

At the City Plan Commission meeting on June 12, I was surprised to see the Lewis Development Company on the agenda as a Consent Agenda item, which means it would be automatically approved as long as the Plan Commission members agreed. All conditions have now been met by the petitioner and the members immediately agreed. There had been much discussion at previous hearings and the petition had been denied by the commissioners at the May hearing.

There was a second hearing of Mecca's petition to rezone eight acres from residential single-family to a planned unit development (PUD). This is a preliminary plan to allow a new affordable housing multi-family apartment complex. The property is 90% wooded with steep slopes and sinkholes. The plan calls for 70% affordable housing and 20% market rate. One person from the audience who lives in the area was very opposed, citing disadvantages of high density affordable housing, such as drug use, as well as the presence of copperhead snakes on that property, which would be dangerous for children. The new planning department director spoke in favor of the petition, and said that Mayor Hamilton supports it. The vote was five in favor and three opposed, so the petition was approved.

The commissioners also approved:

- An amendment to the city's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that would allow a pilot program of 30 accessory dwelling units, known as granny flats, within single-family zoning districts. Neighborhood associations were opposed.
- An amendment to the UDO to permit "pocket neighborhoods." These are clusters of homes around a common area to reduce infrastructure costs.
- A site plan for a four-story, mixed-use building at 201 S. College. It will include 10 one-bedroom apartments atop the Serendipity Martini Bar.

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