



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LINN COUNTY

www.lwvlinncounty.org

August, 2016



Ten members of the League of Women Voters of Linn County met with county officials Joel Miller, Linn County Auditor, Tim Box, Deputy Commissioner of Elections and Nathan Schnell.

League Members Learn Just How Much Preparation and How Many Workers Elections Require

By Teel Salaun Thebeau

In a special session with Linn County elections officials LWVLC members got a first-hand look at what's involved in managing the voting process and making it as convenient as possible for you to vote. County elections officials held the meeting in the hope that some League members and others likewise concerned about the integrity of elections will consider applying for positions as Precinct Election Officials.

In a mid-July gathering at the Linn County Service Center Deputy Commissioner of Elections Tim Box explained that an election requires at least 650 Precinct Elections Officials, and about 100 of those positions need to be filled anew each year. Precinct Elections jobs are seasonal paid positions that require people who are politically neutral, good with numbers and good with people. The role of the Precinct Elections Official (PEO) is to help people exercise their right to vote and preserve the integrity of the election.

PEOs are needed to serve at the polls for a full day on election day – for a general election that is from 6 a.m. until around 10 p.m. – but that's not the only time the special staff is needed.

Needed additionally are:

- Teams of elections officials, one Democrat and one Republican, to take absentee ballots to health care facilities.
- About 32 election officials to serve on the Absentee Ballot Board to make sure all the absentee ballots are counted.
- Elections officials to staff satellite voting prior to the election which currently is scheduled at three area HyVee stores, at three area libraries and at area colleges.
- Office work – assisting with absentee voting at the Linn County Elections office prior to the election, clerical – separating and scanning the Linn County elections mail, data entry, answering phone calls and general customer service, managing ballot issues and serving as a greeter for ballot drop off.

The elections positions are paid jobs, \$160 for the full day on election day, and \$12 to \$14 an hour (depending on the skill sets required) for some other jobs prior to and after the election. Paid training sessions are included and are done about two weeks prior to the election.

Deputy commissioner of elections Box encourages any League members and other interested community people to apply and be interviewed for these jobs. He says it's only a short time to work but the community needs people who are concerned about the integrity of our elections and are the best fit for these roles. He notes that these jobs are convenient for retired people, recent college grads who don't yet have full time jobs or people who are under-employed or have other part time jobs. You can find a PEO application & brochure online at www.linncounty.org/157/Election-Services. A PDF of the Application and Brochure also is at the LWVLC website www.lwvlinncounty.org.

The general election is Tuesday, November 8 and absentee voting begins in the Linn County Elections office September 29.

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Linn County Auditor Joel Miller who welcomed League members and spoke for about ten minutes at the beginning of the July meeting about some of the abuses and concerns his office combats and encounters, says that they are expecting about a 78% voter turnout this November 8. The use of absentee ballots also is increasing and there were 48,000 absentee ballots cast last election cycle.

Along with Miller and Box, Elections Systems Administrator Eric Loecher, Elections Office Coordinator Nathan Schnell and Voter Outreach Coordinator Edwin Valladares described their roles in preparing for and organizing the work of conducting an election.

Report of Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States

By Myrna Loehrlein

Three members attended from Linn County – Karen Lewis, Mary Ann Nelson, and Myrna Loehrlein.

The convention met in Washington, DC, from June 16 to 19. Thursday, the 16th was a lobbying day on which members were encouraged to meet with their representatives in Washington. None of our Linn County delegation was able to be there to lobby, but Myrna and Mary Ann arrived later in the day. Karen spent an awful day and a good part of the night of the 16th at O'Hare airport where weather had her stranded. But intrepid traveler that she is, she arrived on Friday, the 17th and jumped into immediate action.

The work of the convention began at 7:15 Friday morning with caucus sessions on a number of topics such as Criminal Justice, our 501(c)3 status, Breaking Voting Barriers, and much more. Each day began at 7:15 with group meetings on these and many other topics. Each evening ended with another set of caucuses from 8:45-9:30 p.m. Days at convention are very full days!

Plenary sessions lasted from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. We adopted "Making Democracy Work for All," a Redistricting Concurrence, and a position on Behavioral Health position. These positions can be found at the LWVUS web site, lww.org.

The by-laws were changed to allow 16-years-olds to be voting members of the League and to allow persons not eligible to vote, including non-citizens to be voting members.

Each day featured outstanding speakers that helped us understand better ways to assist voters or to build our leagues. Edited videos of these speakers can be found on YouTube. Look for LWV or League of Women Voters.

A great deal more was learned and shared in these 4 days. We hope to use all this knowledge to enrich LWV Linn County.

LWVUS ILO UMMR, Upper Mississippi River Region – Inter League Organization

By Mary Ann Nelson

Clean Water has been a focus for our League, as well as many others in our state of Iowa. This is also true of surrounding states. So that we could combine our efforts to make changes, affect legislation, and educate the public, the ILO (Inter League Organization) was formed. The name of this ILO is UMRR (Upper Mississippi River Region). The four state leagues that are participating are Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois. Late this spring, the ILO was formally recognized as a LWVUS ILO UMMR.

The board has been meeting over the last year in various locations throughout the region. For example, this August we are meeting at the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge in Onalaska, WI, close to LaCrosse. On Monday, October 3, we are fortunate to have the board meet near Cedar Rapids at the Wikiup Hill Learning Center. All League members are welcome to the board meetings. Part of the day, most likely in the afternoon, there will be a general meeting with a speaker and activity for all members and the public. As we approach October 3, please watch for details of the program. Anyone interested in helping develop the program or become actively involved in the ILO, please contact Mary Ann Nelson. If you belong to a group who would be interested in a program on clean water, please invite them.

If you know anyone who is interested in helping with our effort, please invite them to participate.

Report on LWVIA Council Meeting

By Penny Foy

The LWVIA Council Meeting was held Saturday, June 11, at Marshalltown Community College.

Lobbyist's Amy Campbell and Craig Patterson gave a report on the 2016 Legislative Session.

1. \$9.6 million was reserved for the water quality initiative.
2. Non-violent drug offenders are now eligible for parole earlier and a less punitive class of robbery charges is now available. These changes resulted in a 180 person reduction in prison population and a cost savings.
3. Juvenile records are now confidential unless a judge orders them opened.

Challenges ahead include: water quality, regional mental health financing reform, payday lending, recycling, online voting for those with a driver's license, restoration of felon voter rights, personal privacy vs. public safety.

Bill tracker can be found at www.ialobby.com.

A video "Any Kid Anywhere" addressed the human trafficking issue.

The business meeting included: the president's report, the 2016-17 budget, and the election of Mary Rae Bragg from Dubuque as new state president.

In the afternoon session, people split up and there were 2 sessions on VOTE411.org. Training and MLD (Membership and Leadership Development) training.

Calendar

Wednesday, August 3: 10:00 am, Let's Talk League Meeting, Cedar Rapids Public Library

Saturday, August 6: 10:00 am, Let's Talk League Meeting, Mr. Beans, 1080 East Post Road, Marion

Thursday, August 11: 6:00 – 7:30 pm, Board of Directors Meeting, Christ Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids

Monday, August 15: 11:15 – 1:00, Luncheon Meeting, Hosted by Dawn Nylin at Greenwood Terrace, Methwick, 1300 13th St. NW, Cedar Rapids. Speakers from the ACLU will talk about voter suppression challenges in Iowa.

Friday, August 26: 6:15 pm, Women's Equality Day at Kirkwood Training and Outreach Services Center (Armar Plaza).

Friday, August 26: 1:00-3:00 pm, Book Club, Marion Public Library

Thursday, September 8: 6:00 – 7:30 pm, Board of Directors Meeting, Christ Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids

Tuesday, September 13: 5:30 – 7:30 pm, Fall Picnic – 2141 Coldstream Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids, Hosted by Art and Susan Staed

Monday, September 19: 11:15 – 1:00, Let's Talk League Luncheon Meeting, 1433 Cardinal Ct. NE, Cedar Rapids, Hosted by Myrna Loehrlein

Friday, September 23: 1:00 – 3:00, Book Club, Marion Public Library

Saturday, September 24: Local Voter Registration Day

Monday, October 3: LWVUS Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization, All day meeting at Wickiup Hill Learning Center, Toddville (more details to follow)

Saturday, October 8: LWVIA Issues Briefing – TBD

Thursday, October 13: 6:00 – 7:30 pm, Board of Directors Meeting, Christ Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids

Monday, October 17: 11:15 – 1:00, Luncheon Meeting, Hosted by Abbie Smith, Details to follow

Friday, October 28: 1:00 – 3:00, Book Club, Marion Public Library. "The Witches" by Stacy Schiff

Tuesday, November 8: GENERAL ELECTION

Thursday, November 10: 6:00 – 7:30 pm. Board of Directors Meeting, Christ Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids

Women's Equality Day

The Women's Equality Day celebration will be held on Friday, August 26, at 6:15 p.m. at Kirkwood Training and Outreach Services (Armar Plaza). Four women will be honored.

Speaker will be Lynda Waddington of the Cedar Rapids Gazette. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door – \$6 for seniors. For further information, contact Nancy Ziese at z_nancy@hotmail.com or 366-4666.



A Message from LWVLC President Myrna Loehrlein

What is the most exciting thing you have heard this week? Well, maybe it isn't at the top of your list, but the recent 5th District decision about the Texas voter photo ID law could be right up there. Texas had one of the most restrictive voter photo ID laws in the country. For example, some people had to travel 100 miles or more to even apply for the ID or to obtain the documentation required to apply, and even then, limited office hours made the process that much more difficult. Unless, of course, you have a permit to carry a gun. That was an acceptable ID for voting.

The federal court decision did not overturn the ID law, but it did send the case back to the appellate court to work with the Texas legislature to find a modification of the law that would make getting an ID less onerous. That's in Texas. Iowa does not have a voter ID law. But we have no guarantee that we won't have. We must stay alert.

I suppose you watched or listened to the party conventions or at least heard reports of them. We have often said that democracy can be a messy process. That was well illustrated this month. But – it is so much better than any other form of government. Let's all celebrate the opportunity for such open discussions about who will lead us (while always hoping civility will prevail). Let's, also remember the League's reminder that "Democracy is not a spectator sport." In the days ahead, we can all have a part to play.

Myrna

LWV Linn County Book Club Selections for 2016-2017

All League members are invited to the book discussions which are held on the fourth Friday of the month at 1:00 in the small conference room of the Marion Public Library. All League members are encouraged to read "Give Us the Ballot" by Ari Berman, a history of the voting rights act.

Friday, August 26: 1:00 *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr

Friday, September 23: 1:00 *Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County: A Family, A Virginia Town, A Civil Rights Battle* by Kristen Green

Friday, October 28: 1:00 *The Witches* by Stacy Schiff

November-December 2: 1:00 *Tribe: on Homecoming and Belonging* by Sebastian Junger

Friday, January 27: 1:00 *The Heart Goes Last* by Margaret Atwood

Friday, February 27: 1:00 *Far and Away: Reporting From the Brink of Change: Seven Continents, Twenty-Five Years* by Andrew Solomon

Friday, March 24: 1:00 *Rise of the Rocket Girls: the Women Who Propelled Us From the Moon to Mars* by Nathalia Holt

Friday, April 28: 1:00 *A Sugar Creek Chronicle: Observing Climate Change From an American Woodland* by Cornelia F. Mutel

Friday, May 26: 1:00 *How the Post Office Created America* by Winifred Gallagher

Friday, June 23: 1:00 *Best Books of Each Decade: the 75 Best Books of the Past 75 Years* by Ann Patchett

Friday, July 28: 1:00 *Book Pick*

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