

LWV® *The League Letter*

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Lafayette, Indiana

January-February 2008

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization dedicated to the active and informed participation of citizens in government.

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Immigration Reform Consensus Meeting Tuesday, January 8, 7PM at TCPL

You all are thinking about immigration issues, maybe on a daily basis. Here is your chance to **do something about it, by helping the LWVUS form a position upon which it can base action in the U.S. House and Senate.** Leagues all around the country will be holding consensus meetings, and **ours will be Tuesday, January 8 at 7PM at the Tippecanoe County Public Library.**

Your participation is vitally important. Even if you have not been able to attend the information meetings presented by our local study committee—all members will be able to participate. If you follow the daily news, you will have some background to participate in this discussion. Please **look at the enclosed consensus questions.** They are a foretaste of an outstanding discussion. Come and be a part of our response to these insightful questions.

For more information, you can read four briefs from the June and October *National Voter*—each is one page long. You will find them, along with eight more extensive papers, on the LWVUS website. The address is www.lwv.org, then click on the immigration reform study link on the left of the page. If you have questions about our local meeting, contact Cathy Potter or Mida Grover. Call Cathy if you would like a ride to the meeting.

Annual legislative breakfast to be held Jan. 26

Everyone is invited to the 2008 League of Women Voters Legislative Breakfast on **Saturday, January 26, 2008** at MCL Cafeteria. Breakfast will be available at 9:15AM, with the program beginning at 10:00AM following Third House. This is an opportunity to hear from legislators about the current session and to ask questions. Full breakfast is \$8, or you can purchase coffee only for \$1.50. Advance registration is appreciated. Please contact Pat Corey with attendance plans by January 24.



Observer Corps revived!

Lately the board of LWVGL has received requests to have our League begin an Observer Corps.

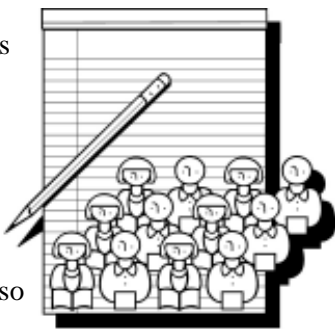
We need members who are willing to give a one-year commitment to attending all the meetings of a local governmental board or commission and report what business was transacted at each meeting. If two members wanted to “share” the responsibility for observing a single board, that would be fine. Most of the reporting will be done on a simple



(cont'd on p.2)

Observer Corps revived, *cont'd from p.1*

check-off form that has room for additional comments. The reports will be posted on our website so that our members and the wider public have access to the information.



There are many boards to choose from, and a list of many of them is posted on our League website (www.leaguelfayette.org). A suggestion of a few include the county commissioners, county common council, both city common councils, the area plan commission, both cities' boards of public works and safety, all three park and recreation boards, school boards, both library boards and the three human relations commissions. There is a lot of variety with the times of meetings, the number of meetings per year, as well as the duties of the various bodies.

There will be a training session for volunteers on **Sunday, January 20 at 2pm** at Winnie Adler's home in Lafayette. At that time volunteers will receive packets that include reporting forms, basic guidelines for observing, and our League's publications *This Is Your Community* and the *Directory of Government Officials*. Please let Winnie or Jean know if you plan to attend.

Pick a governmental unit that interests you and contact either Winnie Adler or Jean Andres to discuss possibilities and get your questions answered.

This is a great opportunity for members to become involved with building a stronger, safer, and well informed community. We hope to see many of you on January 20.

—Winnie Adler and Jean Andres

Program Planning session to be held Feb 19

This is your chance for input on prioritizing our efforts on local program positions for the coming year. You can review our local positions on our website at leaguelfayette.org. We're expecting some lively debate as we decide where to put our resources for the coming year. We will also be talking about national program and information about that is available from our local league site too.

Join us in the Walnut Room at the West Lafayette Library on **Tuesday Feb 19 at 6:30PM** to discuss what our emphasis should be in the coming year. It is your League; we need your help in deciding our direction.

—Jo Ann Mullen, V.P. for Program

Juvenile Justice Youth Center Forum to be held Feb 25

Do we NEED a Juvenile Justice Youth Center?

Can we afford to have it?

Can we afford not to have it?

Has any progress been made?

Good questions! Hear our local experts discuss these topics at the Juvenile Justice Youth Center Forum on **Monday, February 25 at 7pm** in the County Commissioner Room.

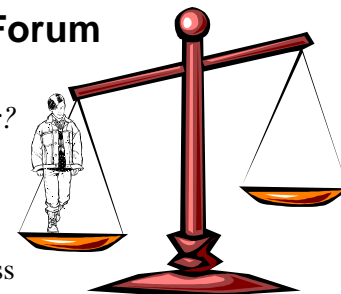
The panel will include:

- **Judge Loretta Rush**
- **Rebecca Humphrey**, Consultant for the Youth Center
- **Bill Glick**, Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force
- **Sheriff Tracey Brown**
- **K D Benson**, County Commissioner
- **Rick Crawley**, CEO, Wabash Valley Hospital

The panel will give presentations and take questions from the audience using the League format.

Members are encouraged to attend and help spread the word about this very important topic. Publicity efforts will be made to include as many stakeholders in our community as possible.

For more information, or to volunteer to help, contact Patsy Hoyer.



LWVGL and WALLA offer class on election issues

Our League is working with WALLA (Wabash Area Lifelong Learning Association) to present a short class on Election Issues in March, 2008.

There will be four class sessions offered from 1:15-2:30pm:

- **3/18 The Electoral College**, Prof. Will McLuchlan
- **3/20 The Potential for Voter Fraud and the Need for Voter IDs**, Linda Phillips, Heather Maddox, Will McLachlan
- **3/25 Reliability of Voting Machines**, Prof. Chris Clifton
- **3/27 Poll Workers: What They Do and How they Are Trained**, Linda Phillips, Heather Maddox, Joanne Evers

If you'd like more information about these classes, please contact Jo Ann Mullen.

—Jo Ann Mullen, V.P. for Programming

Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI)

MRI – no, it's not a medical test. But it is vital to the health of our nation. And we need your involvement to make it effective

Today the United States is facing many critical issues that threaten our democracy. At the same time, voter turnout is far below that in other nations. The League of Women Voters is committed to involving citizens in the democratic process, but there has been a disturbing decline in League membership in recent years, just when its services are so critically needed. The League is highly respected for its non-partisanship and thorough research of issues. It is up to us to let people know that they can make a difference by participating in the League.

As we reported in the last newsletter, our local League is one of five Indiana Leagues that have been selected to participate in the Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI) being led by the national League. Jean Andres, Winnie Adler and I attended an excellent training session in November, put on by national staff. We came back full of ideas of ways we can increase the membership in our local League and strengthen our impact on the health of our democracy. Ramona Lawson has joined us in brainstorming, and we are excited about the prospect of increasing our membership through increased visibility and new activities.

Here are some of the ideas being developed:

- Develop a concise, consistent description of the mission of the League and use it at every event and in every written document or news release.
- Increase public awareness of the mission of the League. We would like to get the name of the League in the media at least once a month. Winnie Adler will be publicizing the League activities and we will plan some guest editorials on issues of importance to the local community.
- Partner with allied organizations. Already we have agreed to offer a course on voting issues through WALLA, and we are working on ways to partner with other organizations, as well.
- Celebrate significant dates. Two that we are considering are Constitution Day and Sunshine Week.
- Reestablish the Observer Corps. The League does a great service by observing the actions of local governmental bodies and keeping members and the public aware of how they are functioning.
- Hold at least two major events. Candidate forums are a stand-by of the League and will be important in 2008. In addition, our local League Board has voted to institute a Making Democracy Work Award, to be given to a woman in the community who has made a significant contribution to the community.
- **Ask people to join!!!** It sounds so simple, but surprisingly, many people don't realize they can join the League without a special invitation. Let them know how important their participation can be. We hope every member will bring in a new member this year.

—Betty Doversberger, President

Reproductive rights alert for legislative session

The Indiana General Assembly will be in session on January 8 and several anti-choice bills have already been introduced. Members of HAPA (Health Access and Privacy Alliance) are looking for volunteers who will attend, in "Prevention Now" t-shirts, various meetings and hearings at the Statehouse. We want to constantly remind our elected officials that the citizens of Indiana demand common sense legislation on preventing unintended pregnancies. Watch for updates as well as tip sheets on what to expect when attending.

—Erin Kelley, Indianapolis LWV, and HAPA Secretary

League to host town hall forum on health care reform

On **March 4, 2008**, our League will be privileged to host a town hall forum on health care reform presented by Indiana University Healthcare Reform Study Group. The meeting will be held from **7:00-8:30PM at Ivy Tech**.

Karen and Robert Stone of the Monroe County League are organizers of this event. Dr. Stone is Director of Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan, State Coordinator of the Indiana Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Plan, and Assistant Clinical Professor of Emergency Medicine of the Indiana University School of Medicine.

Questions that the organizers have been addressing include:

- What can be done about the rising health care costs?
- How can the growing numbers of Hoosiers with no health insurance or inadequate health insurance be served?
- What about the uneven distribution of quality health care within the state?
- How can Hoosiers get higher quality healthcare for their money?
- What do we want and what are we willing to pay for?

This forum will provide opportunity for citizens in this area of the state to have a voice in the healthcare discussions and debate. Please put the time and date on your calendar and promote the forum with your friends and associates.

One of the issues on which public opinion has been coalescing is that our nation is experiencing a crisis in our health care system. The League of Women Voters of Greater Lafayette supports the national League position on health care reform (available on the League website, www.lwv.org).



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Help spread the word: the League website is a great source of info!

The League's web site, at <http://leaguelfayette.org>, is an easy and convenient place to find information on the League and our activities. It includes a calendar of activities, our positions, information on voting, and contacts.




It is growing in popularity, but would benefit from more promotion. Over the last three months, our web site has averaged 27 requests per day, with the most popular file being our Directory of Local Officials (downloaded 446 times). The next most requested are the elections information and the calendar.

More people would likely be interested in this information, so please share the link with organizations that would link to it.

—Jane Frankenger

The League Letter is published quarterly. The editor is Kaye McSpadden. Please send your articles to kaye7m@aol.com.



Keep track of upcoming events!

- **Tues Jan 8—Immigration Reform Consensus Meeting**, Tipp. Co. Public Library, 7PM
- **Sun Jan 20—Observer Corps Training** Winnie Adler's home, 2:00PM
- **Sat Jan 26—Annual Legislative Breakfast**, MCL, Breakfast 9:15AM, Program 10AM
- **Tues Feb 19—Program Planning Meeting**, W Laf Public Library, 6:30PM
- **Mon Feb 25—Juvenile Justice Youth Center Forum**, Co Commissioner Rm, 7PM
- **Tues Mar 4—Town Hall Forum on Health Care Reform**, Ivy Tech, 7PM
- **Mar 18-Mar 27, 2008—WALLA classes on election issues**, 1:15-2:30PM