

Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy

Monthly Executive Letter

I'm going to begin the new year with a shout out and a call out. First, to celebrate the incredible accomplishments our LWVGL committees and chairs have made in a year that proved anything but easy. Particular thanks go to Voter Services for drawing attention to voter registration, voter education, and voter accessibility. Tippecanoe County had a tremendous turnout for the November 2020 Election and I know that our League played a role in those numbers. Make sure you read the article that follows about the usage of VOTE411 this past fall – remarkable! As to the latter, I'm asking you to become more involved with the League through committee participation or even in a leadership role as a committee chair. Interested? Then get in touch with me - bclark3@purdue.edu - to learn about the many opportunities that would welcome your involvement. Onward to 2021!

Barb Clark,
Executive – Business



THE ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST
IN FEBRUARY IS GOING VIRTUAL.
DETAILS COMING SOON.

VOTE411 Usage in 2020 Elections Off the Charts!

VOTE411 is a one stop shopping guide for all things related to elections and voting including voter registration, candidates on the ballot, polling locations, election rules for each state and more. Since 2006 LWVUS has coordinated VOTE411 making improvements along the way and providing incredible support all year long. It is accessible 24/7 and has been available for Tippecanoe County candidates and voters since 2012. Each election local, state, and national Leagues prepare voter guides for easy access to candidate information.

The 2020 elections brought more voters out to the polls and to VOTE411. There is evidence as well that voting patterns were changed, possibly due to Covid-19. The usage of VOTE411 increased in September and October compared to past years both nationally and locally. It is thought that with the increase use of absentee ballots and a desire by voters to vote early, voters sought out information long before Election Day. For the whole election cycle, January 1-November 3, VOTE411 activity in Indiana increased 63% from 2018 to 2020 according to LWVUS. Lafayette and West Lafayette usage numbers are in the eight highest cities during this same period and have been increasing steadily over the years.



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Local candidates were eager to participate especially if they were in a competitive race. There was a 67% participation rate (45 candidates of 67). Of the 22 candidates who did not participate, 15 of them were not in a competitive race.

A tremendous amount of time, money, and energy went into promoting VOTE411 for the 2020 elections on a national, state, and local level. The state and national promotions are too numerous to list here but locally the promotion of VOTE411 started in February at the Legislative Breakfast and did not stop. Give-a-ways with the VOTE411 logo went to all participants. These items included a cloth bag, ballpoint pens and chap stick. As in the past VOTE411 was promoted on all the social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Messages were sent across Nextdoor and a Google Search Ad for a 20 miles radius from Lafayette led voters to VOTE411 through key voting terminology.

Additional give-a-ways of ball point pens and hand sanitizing wipes with the VOTE411 logo were purchased in early summer to use throughout the remaining election season. At every opportunity, these items were shared with prospective voters. This included voter registration events at high schools, Purdue, Farmers' Markets, and National Registration Day. During the summer and fall, LWVGL formed partnerships with local organizations who learned about VOTE411 and were eager to spread the word and share our VOTE411 give-a-ways as they interacted in the community.

Virtual interviews of school board candidates from Tippecanoe School Corporation and West Lafayette School Corporation as well as forums for judicial candidates and County Council candidates were heavily promoted via VOTE411. These taped events were aired on Star City Broadcasting and WLFI-TV18. Links to all the events were available on the LWVGL website.

In addition, 1000 postcards promoting VOTE411 and encouraging people to vote and join the League were sent to 1000 registered voters across three precincts in Lafayette. National sent 50,000 postcards across the state. What a bonus!

Vote411 was promoted to the Purdue Campus through the Exponent. Beginning in August and running through October, an ad was placed each week in the Exponent encouraging students to register, obtain an appropriate ID or vote. Each ad promoted VOTE411 for reliable candidate information. LWVGL partnered with the Purdue Votes Coalition for National Voter Registration Day providing them with signs and VOTE411 sanitizing wipes with the VOTE411 logo to distribute at voter registration locations on campus and in the residence halls.

Despite the limited face to face contact available with prospective voters, the Voter Services team and many additional volunteers reached out to the voters of Tippecanoe County. The high emotions of this General Election and the information provided by LWVGL assisted with a 60.72% voter turnout for Tippecanoe County. Hopefully, we can do better in the future, but it is a good start.

The complete 2020 VOTE411 report is available (for all you number junkies) on the LWVGL members-only website under publications. (<https://my.lwv.org/indiana/greater-lafayette/publications/vote411-reports>)



WELCOME NEW LWVGL MEMBERS!
The following have recently joined our League:

Monica and Philip Cardella
August Mathisrud

WINTER BOOK REVIEW: Celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the League of Women Voters

If you're still interested in the book review group that will meet virtually during the month of February to discuss the recently published work of Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, please complete the survey at https://survey.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7WWLF1cxfSaoLMV Jefferson-Jenkins was president of the League of Women Voters of the United States from 1998 to 2002, and her new book is entitled **The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters.**

REFLECTION ON BECOMING A NEW LEAGUE MEMBER

By Dr. Tanuja R. Sheth, PhD

This is the story of my path to membership within the League of Women Voters and how the power of one person can affect another in ways that are often not seen at the moment, but felt through time. This is the effect of one League member.

A young family with a toddler and a pregnant mom is invited to a "Welcome New Physician" dinner at the home of an older and established local pediatrician. I am that young mom, so desiring to make a good impression with my husband's new colleagues. We are settling in a new city where we hope to raise our family. This is a hot and steamy August of 1992.

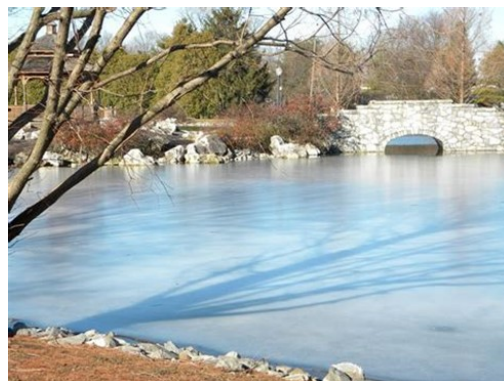
As we enter, we mingle and are introduced to the group of physician families. An older, spunky, joyful lady greets us with notebook and pen in hand. She introduces herself and says: "I will now register you to vote." There was no time for questions or hesitation. This was Eleanor Riggs. I wish I had kept that handwritten voter registration card that I can still see in my mind. We were signed up and ready to vote in Indiana. For those of you who know Eleanor, I'm sure you can see this image of her registering the new folks in town.

It is now the early 2000's and my husband, Ketan, comes home from work and tells me of a particularly stressful patient and how Wendell Riggs provided calm guidance and mentorship. They often consulted on patients when the intersection of Allergy and Pediatrics demanded it. Dr. Riggs was a calm and guiding person in both character and practice, just what you would expect from the elder statesman of the local medical community. My husband and I reminisce about how we became registered voters!

It is now 2020, my father has moved into Westminster Retirement Village in the independent living section. His neighbor in the apartment across the way is Eleanor Riggs. She greets him with friendly delight as they pass in the hallway. She may not remember us, and she may not know that her neighbor is my father, but none of that matters. I feel a relaxed comfort knowing that my dad has such a wonderful woman as a neighbor and that sets my mind at ease. I'm sure she has asked him if he is a registered voter!

We all have memories similar to what I have just described. I always knew that Eleanor Riggs was an active member of the League of Women Voters. I only hope that my involvement with this group can live up to what she has done in the past and that one day I can influence and motivate a new member to the same degree that she did with joy and dedication.

NOTE: If you have a League memory to share please contact the Voter editor at gretab23@hotmail.com



IN MEMORIAM



Long time League member Dee Tritschler passed away on December 12, 2020. Dee served the local League in many capacities including service on the board of directors. She was born in Rockford, Illinois and grew up in Michigan where she completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor and where she was among the first women to earn an M.B.A. Dee was also a pioneer at IBM where she taught clients to use its electronic products and services. The family moved to West Lafayette when her husband accepted a position on the Purdue faculty. There she earned an Indiana Teaching Certificate and Master's degree from Purdue. She endowed a Title IX Scholarship and qualified as Griffin member of Purdue President's Council.

Dee and Charlie (also a League member) married in 1958 in Flint, Michigan. As an adult, she lived in Finland, Argentina and Belgium where her children attended schools and her husband taught. She is survived by her husband and three children, Carol, Catherine and David as well as grandchildren and great grandchildren.

A faithful attendee of the League Link Lunch, Dee enjoyed the lively discussions around the table at Jane's Deli. Her support of League activities included attending candidate forums, helping with voter service, and serving on the Observer Corps. Her gracious and engaged manner will be missed by her many League friends.

LEAGUE LINGO “There are certain terms which have a unique meaning when used by the League of Women Voters.” Thanks go to Barb Clark, Joanne Evers, Donna Giroux and Taylor Flannery for assembling this list. This month’s terms are...

CONSENSUS: Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

CONCURRENCE: Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members or by another League.

CONVENTION: A state or national League meeting held every other year at which delegates elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt program, make bylaw changes and adopt a budget, usually for one year. Local Leagues send delegates to state convention, local and state Leagues send delegates to national convention.

COUNCIL: An assembly held in alternate years. Local Leagues send delegates to state council, state Leagues send delegates to national council.



JANUARY CALENDAR

Board Meeting Tuesday, January 5, 5:30 p.m., via Zoom

League Lunch Cancelled in January

Mix & Mingle (virtual) Wednesday, January 27, 5:30 p.m.

Mix & Mingle is back!

We'll be going virtual for our first Mix & Mingle of 2021 on January 27 at 5:30 pm. Grab a drink and log on to catch up with League members and friends. More details will be coming in early January.

Local Government Meeting Schedule

- County Council Meeting 2nd Tuesday of every month at 8:30 am Tippecanoe County Building
- County Commissioners Meeting 1st and 3rd Monday of every month at 10 am Tippecanoe County Building
- West Lafayette City Council 1st Monday of every month 6:30 pm Happy Hollow School
- Lafayette City Council 1st Monday of every month 6 pm Lafayette City Hall

NOTE: All meetings are subject to change or cancellation due to Covid-19 and you should check before attending.

Deadline for the February issue of The VOTER is January 8.

2020-2021 Board of Directors and Officers

Gretchen Bertolet, Communications
Barb Clark, Executive - Business
Joy Dietz, Secretary
Sallie Fahey, Environmental Sustainability
Beth Jones, Executive - Advocacy
Ken Jones, Voter Services
Deanna McMillan, Executive - Events
Denise Ottinger, Treasurer

SOME IMPORTANT LEAGUE ADDRESSES

Make sure you have the correct LWVGL addresses for our email, website and social media postings as follow:

Web www.leaguelafayette.org
Email league@leaguelafayette.org
Facebook: League of Women Voters of Greater Lafayette
or <https://www.facebook.com/leaguelafayette>
Twitter: @leaguelafayette
Instagram: @leaguelafayette

THE VOTER is published monthly. The editor is Gretchen Bertolet, the designer is Marlee Posto, and Donna Giroux is copyeditor. Please send your articles and/or suggestions to the LWVGL at league@leaguelafayette.org