



League of Women Voters of the South Bend Area Annual Report - June 4, 2019

Introduction

The Bylaws of the League of Women Voters of the South Bend Area provide that the program shall consist of (a) action to protect the right to vote of every citizen, and (b) those local government issues chosen for concerted study and action.

For 2018-2019, at its 2018 Annual Business Meeting, the membership voted to retain all current LWV South Bend Area positions, proposed no local studies, and adopted a local program focus on issues and principles related to Making Democracy Work, in congruence with the current programs of LWV United States and LWV Indiana, including:

- Redistricting Reform
- Voting Rights & Voter Protection
- Voter/Civic Education
- "Good Government"

In support of its adopted program and goals set by its Board of Directors, the League carried out a dynamic program of education, advocacy, voter engagement, and community support. This report summarizes the League's activities for the period for the League's fiscal year July 2018 – June 2019.

Board Development

The Board is finishing its second year of operations utilizing a leadership structure created to more evenly distribute responsibility at the board level. The current structure is comprised of a Secretary, a Treasurer, six elected Directors, plus Directors of Voter Registration, Voter Services and Education, and Administration, who oversee the work of an effective set of committees with both on- and off-board chairs. The structure is working well, and the Board continues to refine and improve its processes.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

LWV South Bend Area has embraced the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) policy adopted by LWV United States at its 2018 convention. The policy:

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

Moving the policy to action, LWV South Bend Area has:

- Waived membership fees for students through January 2021 in order to make membership accessible for students. Since LWVUS and LWV Indiana have also waived the per-member-payment (PMP) for students during this period, students incur no membership cost during this period.
- Engaged in training offered by board member Terri Russ.
- Created a poll to gauge interest in a reading and discussion group with a focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Membership

122 Memberships as of 1-31-19

130 Memberships noted “active” with LWVUS as of 6-3-19

111 Memberships with current dues payments as of 6-3-19 (number used to determine quorum today)

Candidate Events

Cosponsored with American Democracy Project and Political Science Club of IU South Bend:

Fall 2018

September 25	School Board Candidate Forum – South Bend Community School Corporation
September 27	St. Joseph County Sheriff’s Debate (Indiana)
October 2	Candidate Debates: St. Joseph County Council
October 9	Indiana House District 5 Candidate Debate
October 11	Commissioner Debate – St. Joseph County
October 23	A scheduled St. Joseph County Probate Judge Debate was canceled due to the unavailability of a candidate.

Spring 2019

March 5	South Bend Mayoral Candidates – Candidate Forum and Policy Debate
March 7	District Debates: A Municipal Candidate Forum Featuring Districts 1, 3, and 6
March 14	Meet the Municipal Candidates – South Bend Mayor, Council, Clerk
March 19	Candidates-at-Large: A Municipal Candidate Forum Featuring the At-Large Council Candidates
March 21	Candi-Dating: South Bend Common Council District Candidates
March 28	Candi-Dating: South Bend Common Council At-Large Candidates
April 2	District Debates: A Municipal Candidate Forum Featuring Districts 2 and 4
April 9	Candi-Dating: South Bend Mayoral Candidates

Volunteers: Elizabeth Bennion, with assistance from her ADP interns, organized these events. Voter Registration volunteers staffed a table at each event, offered voter registration and League information, in addition to helping with organizational tasks and screening of audience questions.

Vote411.org Voter Guide

The League again published online voter guides for both the Fall 2018 General Election and the 2019 South Bend Municipal Primary Election, partnering with the American Democracy Project and the *South Bend Tribune*. The voter guide posed questions to all candidates in both elections. Statistics:

Election	All Races Response Rate	Contested Races Response Rate	Uncontested Races Response Rate
2018 General Election <i>County, State, & National Candidates Contacted by LWV South Bend Area</i>	89% 32 of 32 candidates	90% 26 of 29 candidates	86% 6 of 7 candidates
2019 Municipal Primary <i>South Bend Races</i>	82% 32 of 39 candidates	87.5% 28 of 32 candidates	57% 4 of 7 candidates

Committee: Elizabeth Bennion chaired this effort and was assisted by IUSB American Democracy Project intern Sarah Knowlton.

Voter Registration

Since 2012 the League has registered 5853 new voters in schools, community events, and Naturalization ceremonies through May 2019.

School Voter Registration Program

From July 2018 through May 2019, the League registered 57 new voters at 6 events at these four schools: Adams High School, South Bend Career Academy, Excel Center, and Ivy Tech. Please note, any registrations completed during the last month of this fiscal year, June 2019, are not yet available for inclusion in this report.

Naturalization Ceremony Voter Registration Program

From July 2018 through May 2019, the League registered 446 new voters at 11 ceremonies, including 64 new voters at a special naturalization ceremony held at the University of Notre Dame on April 4, 2019. Please note, an additional ceremony is scheduled for June 2019.

Community Voter Registration Events

At 25 community events, the League registered 94 new voters and often provided information on public policy issues such as redistricting reform. Additional events for next year are already on the schedule.

At these events, the voter registration team also served as League ambassadors, providing opportunities for organizational networking and for community members to learn more about the work of the League.

5/29/2018	Button-Making with the League at Best.Week.Ever, Rebel Art Fest, Potawatomi Park*
6/1/2018	Best.Week.Ever. KeyBank Plaza*
6/2/2018	Mom's Demand Action. Wear Orange for Gun Safety*
7/24/2018	University of Notre Dame, Football Team, Guglielmino Athletic Complex
8/11/2018	Get Down Town, Studebaker Plaza
8/21/2018	Celebrating Michiana Women Leaders, Civil Rights Heritage Center
9/25/2018	National Voter Registration Day, Civil Rights Heritage Center
9/27/2018	Sheriff Candidate debate, IUSB
9/29/2018	Farmers Market, Farmers Market
10/2/2018	County Council Debate - IUSB
10/5/2018	First Fridays, SB Chocolate Café

10/9/2018 Indiana House District 5 Debate, IUSB
 10/11/2018 SJC Commissioner District 1 Debate, IUSB
 10/29/2018 Meet the Candidates Forum, SJC Public Library, South Bend
 1/20/2019 People's Inauguration, Islamic Center of Michiana
 1/21/2019 MLK Day Celebration, Century Center
 3/5/2019 Mayoral Debate and Forum, IUSB
 3/7/2019 Common Council Districts 1, 3, 6 Debates, IUSB
 3/14/2019 Women's Expo, Century Center
 3/14/2019 Meet the Candidates, St. Joseph County Public Library
 3/19/2019 South Bend Common Council At-Large Candidates Debates, IUSB
 3/21/2019 Candi-Dating, IUSB
 3/24/2019 Faith in Indiana Candidate Event, Sinai Synagogue
 3/28/2019 Get-to-Know the Candidates, IUSB
 4/2/2019 South Bend Common Council Districts 2 and 4 Forum, IUSB
 4/9/2019 Get-to-Know the Candidates, IUSB
 4/13/2019 Lunafest, Saint Mary's College
 6/9/2019 Moms Demand Action, Charles Black Recreational Center
 6/15/2019 National Council of 100 Black Women, Robinson Community Center
 6/22-6/23/19 Juneteenth, LaSalle Park

*These events took place in previous fiscal year.

Voter Registration Volunteers

School and Community Program Co-chairs: Nancy Johnson (oversight), Dianne Schmitz (materials and supplies), Gwen Foose (scheduling)

Naturalization Program: Lisa Plencner

Dean Alvis	Susan Fischbach	Cheryl Nix
Marzy Bauer	Gwen Foose	Fred Nix
Elizabeth Bennion	Jo Ann Gabrich	Beth North
Barbara Black-Fredman	DeDe Guth	Geri Pawelski
Kathleen Bondi	Cynthia Heckman-Davis	Jennifer Peterson
Judy Bradford	Marti Heline	Kathy Platt
Barbara Brook	Janet Howard	Lisa Plencner
Marsha Brook	Nancy Johnson	Diane Sarnat
Anne Brown	Eileen Lindburg	Diane Schmitz
Barbara Carmichael	Mary Alice Lundergan	Ed Schmitz
Pam Claeys	Anngi Lynch	Melanie Smith-Guillaume
Lois Clark	Mary Malone	Kimber Sorenson-Brugh
Janice Clarkson	Ronnie Malone	Tamara Springer
Barbara Coleman	Barbara Milon	Mark Torma
Linda Conyers	Anne Montgomery	Jill Tulchinsky
Nimbilasha Cushing	Kate Murphy	Ruth Warren
Aladean DeRose	Sheila Niezgodski	Pam Wycliff

Lunch with the League

The League's signature speaker series continues to draw a crowd on the second Friday of each month at the South Bend Chocolate Café, thanks to a dedicated team of coordinators who arrange interesting speakers each month on a variety of topics. This year's line-up:

June, 2018	Jim Williams, Habitat for Humanity
July, 2018	Mayor Pete Buttigieg, City of South Bend
August, 2018	Kathy Schneider, St. Margaret's House
September, 2018	Julia Vaughn, All-IN for Democracy
October, 2018	Christina Brooks, City of South Bend
November, 2018	Latorya Green, Smoke-Free St. Joe
January, 2019	Aaron Nichols, South Bend Civil Theater
February, 2019	Linda Jung-Zimmerman, The Upper Room
March 2019	Terri Russ, Founder, Michiana Women Leaders, Inc.
May 2019	St. Joseph County Public Library
June 2019	Diana Mendelsohn, Green Earth and Gardens, Increasing Sustainability

Committee: Pam Wycliff, Chair; Melanie Smith-Guillaume, Kathy Platt

Citizen's Guide to Representative Government

The *2019 Guide* was updated after the 2018 General Election and 4000 copies were delivered in early March. The *Guide* is distributed at libraries, many organizations, and public offices in the County and at all League events. *Guide* sponsorships now fully support the *Guide* and provide significant support to other League programs.

Committee: Judy Bradford (Chair), Geri Pawelski (sponsors), Elizabeth Bennion, Nancy Johnson, Diane (DeDe) Guth, Marti Heline, Lisa Plencner, Janet Howard, Eileen Lindburg, Debbie Ladyga-Block, Linda Conyers, Cynthia Heckman-Davis, Tamara Springer and Nimbilasha Cushing.

Redistricting Reform Education and Advocacy

LWV South Bend Area continued its work to educate the public and advocate for redistricting reform with these activities:

- League member Lisa Plencner spoke at Temple Beth-el August 19
- Julia Vaughn of All-IN for Democracy spoke at Lunch with the League September 14
- Supported the work of the Indiana Coalition for Redistricting Reform (All-IN for Democracy) by issuing action alerts and encouraging participation in redistricting rallies

Unfortunately, all significant reform bills introduced in the Indiana General Assembly failed. The Coalition plans to introduce legislation in the 2020 session and also to engage in public education and advocacy related to the next 10-year redistricting process.

Friend-Raiser and Making Democracy Work Award

At this well-attended community event, the League recognized Nanci Flores with the 2018 Making Democracy Work Award for her work at La Casa de Amistad. Pianist Del'Shawn Taylor provided entertainment. The event was held October 24 at First Unitarian Church of South Bend. The event raised substantial funds through a silent auction and donations.

Committee: Sheila Niezgodski and Jill Tulchinsky, Co-Chairs, Judy Bradford, Susan Fischbach, Marti Heline, Nancy Johnson, Geri Pawelski, Kathy Platt, Diane Schmitz. Jill LaFountain photographed the event and several members donated food, beverages and auction items.

Maud Wood Park Award

The 2018 Maud Wood Park Award was presented to Susan Fishbach and Linda Wolfson at the Annual Business Meeting. The award recognizes significant contributions to the growth and strength of the League or to the advancement of civic engagement in our community. Previous honorees are Geri Pawelski (2017), Nancy Johnson (2016), Elizabeth Bennion (2015), Glenda Rae Hernandez (2014), and Lisa Plencner (2013).

Celebration of Women's Equality Day

The League again celebrated Women's Equality Day on August 26, 2018 with Celebrating Michiana Women Leaders exhibit and event at the Civil Rights Heritage Center. St. Joseph County, South Bend, and Mishawaka issued a proclamation, and approximately 130 people attended. These twelve women were honored: Nanci Flores, Diana Hess, Penny Hughes, Jann Joseph, Jeanne M. Jourdan, Julia Nabaa, Maritza Robles, Kathy Schuth, Blaire Topash-Caldwell, Albertina Wassenhove, Regina Williams-Preston, Linda Wolfson.
League Committee: Geri Pawelski, Terri Russ, and Jill Tulchinsky

Additional League Gatherings and Events

- **Annual Business Meeting** – May 30, 2018 at Papa Vino's.
- **Holiday Dinner** – December 12, 2018, at Carmela's. Guest speaker was Maria Stancati of Dismas House, to which League members made donations.
- **New Member Parties** – August 7, 2018; November 14, 2018; April 23, 2019
- **Voter Registration Training** – September 10, 2018
- **LWV Indiana State Convention** – South Bend Area sent a 6-person delegation (Elizabeth Bennion, Judy Bradford, Marti Heline, Kelly Sanford, Tami Springer, Myrna Thomas)
- **LWV United States Convention** – LWV South Bend Area sent a 2-person delegation (Elizabeth Bennion and Judy Bradford)

Additional Community Outreach and Support

In addition to the many community events at which the League conducted voter registration (see above), the League supported and/or participated in these community organizations and events:

- **Pride Networking Event**, June 12, Aloft Hotel
- **Poll Location Changes** – The League coordinated with the St. Joseph County Election Board and Voter Registration Office to publicize location changes for the 2018 General Election, including the placement of signs at polling places that changed.
- **"I Voted" Stickers** – The League coordinated with the St. Joseph County Election Board and the Republican and Democratic parties, serving as a clearinghouse to collect donations and write a check for the stickers. The League also donated \$100 to the initiative
- **Little Taste of Peace** – Cosponsored event and donated (\$25).

Website and Social Media

Geri Pawelski maintained the League's website. Geri Pawelski and Elizabeth Bennion shared social media duties.

Grants, Donations, Fundraising

- \$2,730 – Citizen's Guide Sponsorships.
- \$ 900 – LWVUS Grant for New Citizen Voter Registration (2018).
- \$1,000 – LWVUS Grant for Youth Voter Registration (2019).
- \$1,400 – 2019 Friend-Raiser. In addition, there were donated materials totaling \$540.64.
- \$ 300 – 2018 LWV Indiana Grant, which supported Celebrating Michiana Women Leaders.