



League of Women Voters of the South Bend Area Annual Report - June 10, 2020

Introduction / League Program

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 2019-2020, at its 2019 Annual Business Meeting, the membership voted to retain all current LWV South Bend Area positions for 2019-2020, 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 (ethical, fair, responsible and representative)

This report summarizes the League's activities for the period for the League's fiscal year July 2019 – June 2020.

Membership

128 Memberships as of 1-31-20 (official membership number used for per-member-payments to LWV United States and LWV Indiana)

142 Memberships noted "active" with LWVUS as of 6-10-20

112 Memberships with current dues payments as of 6-10-20 (number used to determine quorum today)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

LWV South Bend Area continued to develop programs that reflect its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in both principle and practice. Initiatives this year included:

- Continued waiver of membership fees for students, in accordance with LWV US recommendation and PMP waivers by LWVUS and LWV Indiana.
- Launch of Read IN with the League: Exploring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The program offers people an opportunity to learn together through reading and discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion in a civil and welcoming space. Events included:
 - *The Fire This Time* by Jesmyn Ward, Moderated by Marzy Bauer
October 16, 2019, Near Northwest Neighborhood Community Center
 - *White Fragility* by Robin DeAngelo, moderated by Terri Russ
February 12 and 19, 2020, River Park Branch, St. Joseph County Public Library
 - Planning for a discussion in May was postponed due to the pandemic.

- Assured that centennial celebrations recognized hard truths about the past, beginning with a *South Bend Tribune* “Viewpoint” by LWV Director of Administration Judy Bradford that acknowledged racism within the suffrage movement and reminded readers that the 19th amendment did not truly enfranchise women of color. The article stated, “As the League of Women Voters of the South Bend Area plans its celebrations for 2020, we will strive to be inclusive and truth-telling. We are sorry that racism played such a big part in the suffrage movement. While we cannot change the past, we can learn from it, and our local League is working to become more diverse and inclusive.”

Centennial Celebrations

- The League of Women Voters celebrates the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage in 2020 and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the national League of Women Voters organization on February 14. We celebrate the founding of the South Bend Area League on March 8.
- Our local League planned a full schedule of events to commemorate this historic milestone. Unfortunately, some of the planned events were canceled or postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

February 10	Joint Resolution County-City Building South Bend	The South Bend Common Council, Mishawaka City Council, and the St. Joseph County Council commemorated the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters by issuing a Joint Resolution at the regular meeting of the South Bend Common Council.
February 14	100 Years of Local League History Lunch with the League South Bend Chocolate Cafe	We celebrated the League's 100th Anniversary and 15 years of Lunch with the League with a history of our League through the decades researched and presented by Judy Bradford, Barbara Milon, Geri Pawelski, and Pam Wycliff.
March 10	100 Years of Suffrage Exhibit Francis Branch Library	With an opening reception held on March 10, the 100 Years of Suffrage Exhibit focused on the 100-year history of the LWV South Bend Area and featured newspaper articles, photos, flyers, and board records. The exhibit was to continue for a month, but the Library was forced to close due to the pandemic.
March 13	Voices of the League Lunch with the League South Bend Chocolate Cafe	League members John Hagen, Penny Hughes, Gladys Muhammad, and Lisa Plencner were scheduled to share their unique League stories. The event was postponed due to the pandemic.
March 15	Rhetoric and Reality: A Century of Votes for Women Saint Mary’s College	This lecture by Christina Wolbrecht, professor of political science and director of the Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy was to be a community centennial celebration. Wolbrecht, co-author with J. Kevin Corder of the recently published book <i>A Century of Votes for Women</i> , was to explore popular misunderstandings about women voters over

		the past century and show that women do not comprise a single voting bloc. The lecture and reception were postponed due to the pandemic.
May 30	Memorial Day Parade	League members were to participate in the South Bend West Side Memorial Day Parade, with members walking or riding in 1 of 2 convertibles.
April 6 to May 1	South Bend Civic Theater	"Securing the Vote: Women's Suffrage in Indiana," a traveling exhibit created by the Indiana Historical Society with help from the Lilly Endowment was to have been on display April 6 to May 1 during lobby hours at the beautiful South Bend Civic Theatre. The exhibit was postponed due to the pandemic.

Voter Registration Events

Since 2012 the League has registered 6,227 new voters in schools, community events, and Naturalization ceremonies through May 2020.

School Voter Registration Program

From July 2019 through May 2020, the League registered 41 new voters. While no school events were planned for fall 2019, 7 events were planned for spring 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic necessitated the cancellation of all 7 events, although the voter registration team delivered materials to Clay High School, enabling teachers to register 41 voters before schools closed. The voter registration team then delivered the registrations to the Voter Registration Office before the County-City Building closed. The 7 canceled events were:

March 10	Two Classroom Presentations	Clay High School
March 13	Lunch Voter Registration Table	LaVille High School
March 13	Lunch Voter Registration Table	John Glenn High School
March 16	Assembly and Lunch Voter Registration Table	John Adams High School
March 18	Assembly and Lunch Voter Registration Table	Washington High School
March 24	Lunch Voter Registration Table	The Excel Center
March 25	Lunch Voter Registration Table	Riley High School

Naturalization Ceremony Voter Registration Program

From July 2019 through May 2020, the League registered 321 new voters at 7 ceremonies. Unfortunately, ceremonies for the months March, April, May, and June were canceled due to the pandemic.

Community Voter Registration Events

At 21 community events, the League registered 21 new voters. At these events, the League often provides information on public policy issues such as redistricting reform, and voter

registration team members also serve as League ambassadors, providing opportunities for organizational networking and for community members to learn more about the work of the League. At the following events, the League registered 21 voters.

6/22/2019	Juneteenth	LaSalle Park
8/26/2019	Michiana Women Leaders	NCRHC
9/4/2019	Student Resource Fair	Saint Mary's College
9/24/2019	National Voter Registration Day Three Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main St. Joseph County Public Library •LaSalle Branch, St. Joseph County Public Library •Sr. Maura Brannick, C.S.C. Health Center
9/24/2019	Meet the Mishawaka Candidates	Mishawaka Public Library
9/30/2019	Meet the South Bend Candidates	Main St. Joseph County Public Library
10/1/2019	SB Mayoral Candidate Debate	IU South Bend
10/3/2019	Mishawaka At-Large Candidates	Mishawaka Public Library
10/6/2019	Faith in Indiana Peacemakers Summit	Pentecostal Cathedral Church
10/10/2019	SB Contested District Forum	IU South Bend
10/14/2019	Mishawaka Contested Candidates	Mishawaka Public Library
10/15/2019	SB CC At-Large Candidate Forum	IU South Bend
10/19/2019	Neighborhoods United	IU South Bend
10/29/2019	SB District 6 Candidate Forum	Civil Rights Heritage Center
1/20/2020	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration	Century Center
1/26/2020	People's Inauguration	Islamic Society of Michiana
1/29/2020	Gerrymandering and Math	Saint Mary's College
2/25/2020	Active Citizenship Event	Saint Mary's College
3/6/2020	Michiana Monologues	IU South Bend
The following planned events were canceled due to the pandemic.		
3/19/2020	Expo for Women	Century Center
3/25/2020	Non-partisan/Non-Biased News Lecture	Saint Mary's College
3/29/2020	Robert and Marcia Gammage Rally the Vote Event	Charles Black Center

Candidate Events

The League cosponsored these events with the American Democracy Project and Political Science Club of IU South Bend:

9/24/2019	Meet the Candidates Forum - Mishawaka	Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library
9/30/2019	Meet the Candidates - South Bend	St. Joseph County Public Library
10/1/2019	Candidate Debate – South Bend Mayor	IU South Bend, Live Televised Debate Broadcast on My Michiana TV Livestreamed at ABC57.org
10/3/2019	At-Large Candidate Forum - Mishawaka	Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library

10/10/2019	Contested District Candidate Forum - South Bend Common Council	IU South Bend
10/14/2019	Contested District Candidate Forum - Mishawaka Common Council	Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library
10/15/2019	At-Large Candidate Forum - South Bend Common Council	IU South Bend
3/9/2020	Candidate Debate - St. Joseph County Commissioner District 2	IU South Bend
5/13/2020	Candidate Debate – Indiana House District 6	Presented via Zoom Conferencing. This event is the League’s first-ever virtual debate.
Due to the pandemic, the following candidate events were canceled.		
3/24/2020	Candidate Debate - Indiana House District 6	IU South Bend
3/25/2020	Candidate Debate - U.S. House of Representatives District 2	IU South Bend
3/30/2020	Meet the Candidates Forum	IU South Bend
4/6/2020	Candidate Debate - Indiana Senate District 10	IU South Bend

Lunch with the League

Our monthly speaker series featuring community leaders talking about topical issues marked its 15th year in 2020. The program consistently draws more than 15 people, often more than 20, and sometimes up to 30. We thank the downtown South Bend Chocolate Café for its hospitality each month. This year’s line-up was cut short by the pandemic, but we’ll be back!

6/14/2019	Dianna Mendelsohn	Sustainability in the Workplace and Schools
7/12/2019	Hospice Foundation	Mike Wargo
8/9/2019	Women and Fair Trade in India	Courtney Kubly
9/13/2019	Andrei Popescu	Populism and the Women’s Political Leadership
10/11/2019	Todd Cummings	South Bend Community Schools Superintendent
11/8/2020	Isaac Hunt	Gun Violence
1/10/2020	Anne Mannix	Affordable Housing
2/14/2020	Team of League Members	100 Years of South Bend Area League History

Annual Awards

Making Democracy Work Award Recipient – Oletha Jones

The annual Making Democracy Work Award recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to our community through the advancement of democracy and civic engagement. The award was presented at the League’s Friend-Raiser, October 19, 2019.

Maud Wood Park Award Recipient – Jill Tulchinsky

The Maud Wood Park Award celebrates League members who have served the League by making significant contributions to the growth and strength of the League or to the advancement of civic engagement in our community by promoting voter education, encouraging citizen participation in the

democratic process, or advocating for public policy issues. The award was presented at the League's Annual Business Meeting, June 4, 2019.

Leadership and Board Development

The work of the League was carried out by its dedicated members with direction, leadership, and planning guided by the board of the directors and off-board committee chairs. Those during the past year included:

2019-2020 Officers and Directors

Director of Voter Services and Education	Elizabeth Bennion	2021
Director of Voter Registration	Diane Schmitz	2020
Director of Administration	Judy Bradford	2021
Secretary	Tami Springer*	2021
Treasurer	Glenda Rae Hernandez	2020
Director	Marti Heline	2020
Director	Nimbilasha Cushing*	2021
Director	Melissa Westphal-Benefiel*	2021
Director	Terri Russ	2020
Director	Geri Pawelski	2020
Director	Barbara Milon	2021
Nominating Chair	Pam Claeys	2020

*Terms not completed due to other obligations.

Committees and Chairs

Debates and Forums • Elizabeth Bennion
Correspondence • Judy Bradford
Environment • Lisa Harris
Events • Kathy Platt
Finance • Glenda Rae Hernandez
Fundraising • Melissa Westphal Benefiel
Historian • Terri Russ
Lunch with the League • Pam Wycliff
Membership • Judy Bradford, Marti Heline

Nominations • Pam Claeys
Publicity, Website, Social Media • Geri Pawelski
Program Tami Chapman • Springer
Vote411 • Elizabeth Bennion
Voter Registration Materials • Nimbilasha Cushing
Voter Registration Scheduling • Gwen Foose
Voter Registration - Naturalization • Lisa Plencner
100 Year Celebrations • Judy Bradford, Pam Wycliff

Board Development. For the upcoming 2020-2021 year, the board has approved the creation of new volunteer positions based on a recommendation made by the Nominating Committee that the "LWVSBA support ways to encourage more members to participate in small, potentially sustainable ways." These are reflected in the coming year's election slate and committee list.