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E D I T I O N

LWV LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
OF AMES & STORY COUNTY

the
VOTER

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Ames and Story County, Iowa
<http://www.ameslww.org>

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Community Information
Session on February 16,
2017 “Mental Health
in Iowa”

Annual Meeting
April 22, 2017 at
9:00am
SAVE THE DATE!!



Dear League Members,

I hope you are enjoying the beautiful seasonal change. The muted colors of fall seem to be nature’s way of injecting a shot of quiet and calmness in our lives. And if there was time when we need quiet and calmness it is now! Now that the election is over we have to adjust our political minds to accept the results and steady ourselves for a different style of governance whose political goal appears to be more about exclusion than inclusion. The presidential campaigns and subsequent election provide a wide range of topics to discuss most of which can be described by many as bewildering.

One of the confusing aspects of the election was the Electoral College Vote. In the days leading up to the election there was considerable amount of discussion focusing on the function of the Electoral College. On election night several political commentators were skeptical that America would have a repeat of the 2000 election, where the President-Elect lost the popular vote but won the election having more Electoral College Votes than his opponent. They were wrong!

President's Column Continued.....

According to political pundits, voters were dumbfounded and confused. After enduring a contentious presidential campaign and accepting the results of a perplexing election the United States remains a resilient and resolute nation. We the people must continue the 240 year march toward forming a more perfect union. A union that includes and embraces everyone! And as a participant in the march, the League of Women Voters will work steadily toward Making Democracy Work for all by encouraging full participation in the democratic process.

A political blogger described what voters were experiencing as “political Déjà vu”. This phenomenon does not help when trying to convince voters that their vote really counts when the Electoral College Vote says otherwise. It has been reported that at least 45% of eligible voters did not vote. Is possible the reason some voters didn't vote is because they truly believe their votes do not count? It is difficult to say. What can be said with certainty is that a concentrated effort should be made to educate voters on the functionality of the Electoral College before the next presidential election.

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In League,
Devita Harden

Voter Registration 2016

In the long run-up to this year's general election, the League of Women Voters of Ames and Story County formed relationships with ISU student organizations, the ISU administration, and election officials that enabled a multitude of young people to become informed and thoughtful voters. The numbers are "impressive": 1,307 voter registrations, 153 absentee ballot requests, 44 counties received registrations and/or absentee ballot request forms. Most importantly, the young people learned about polling places, satellite voting sites, the significance of party designation, and how prior registration and early voting can shorten the lines on election day. All were introduced to the down-ticket candidate information available through the League's VOTE411.org website. As a result, the young voters achieved a better understanding of how to be an informed voter.

The cooperation between the student government, Story County Election Officials, and Iowa State University was exemplary. Students wrote chalk messages on campus sidewalks, fraternities and sororities hosted registration nights in their chapter houses, and for National Voter Registration Day the ISU administration authorized a mass email blast to students informing them of registration sites and dates. The Catt Center at ISU provided essential support in the promotion effort on campus. Individual students stepped up to encourage and instruct their peers on the registration effort. The County Auditor, Lucy Martin, provided 10 days of staffed registration in the ISU Memorial Union as a partner with the League. We were pleased to have Secretary of State Paul Pate visit our voter registration site on campus on National Voter Registration Day.

The campus registration effort drew national and international attention. ABC News Washington DC interviewed and shot some video that got League volunteers two minutes on the evening news. Election observers from Romania and Germany were quite impressed with the Memorial Union Satellite location and the League VOTE411 information.

The League registration effort gained the enthusiastic participation of more than 25 members, who in addition to the ISU campus effort, worked at a wide-range of locations such as the Peace Walk on Ada Hayden Lake, retirement homes, supermarkets, farmers markets, and club meetings. The members find voter registration and information efforts to be profoundly satisfying. It brings the joy of camaraderie and the deep gratification that comes with knowing you have helped "Make Democracy Work".

Submitted by
Carolyn Klaus



VOTE411: New and Improved for the Fall 2016 General Election

VOTE411 Team: Barb Cobb, Donna Elliott, Cindy Frederickson, and Carol Thorson

VOTE411.org is an online Voter Guide offered by the League that serves as a “workbench” for voters – a one-stop experience that includes links to information such as voter registration, polling locations, as well as race and candidate information. There are numerous Voter Guides available on the internet (Ballotpedia and many others) – but we feel that VOTE411.org is unique in its mission to cover local races and candidates and to focus on local issues!

The Ames & Story County League began offering VOTE411.org to local citizens in the fall of 2015 and featured local school board and city council races, as well as one ballot measure. The Voter Guide was used again for the spring 2016 Primary Election cycle and provided information about both local and state races and candidates.

For the fall 2016 General Election, judicial retention and local nonpartisan race information were added. Our VOTE411 team developed a way to use the Voter Guide to support nonpartisan and judicial retention races. We worked with the LWVIA to provide state-wide judicial retention information, as well as our coverage of local district-level court judicial retention information. As far as we know, we were the ONLY local League to include retention information. Nonpartisan race descriptions and candidate names (hospital and township trustees, soil and water conservation) were also included in our Voter Guide and we were unique in doing so.

The VOTE411 team is currently gathering data to analyze the utilization and effectiveness of our Voter Guide. In our next report to you, we will share these results. Thanks for helping us get the word out to local citizens to educate voters and encourage participation in our democracy.

Issue Briefing - LWVIA 2017 Policy Priorities

Several members of the Ames League of Women Voters board attended the Iowa LWV 2017 Issues Briefing on Saturday, October 8, 2016. This article will summarize the meeting: 1) a TIF Study Update and a review of the 2017 Legislative Priorities by Mary Rae Bragg, LWVIA President, 2) a two-person panel on “Iowa’s Water Infrastructure Needs: Could Iowa be the Next Flint?,” and 3) a presentation on “Water Quality: Lots of Coalitions, But What’s the Solution?”

The 15-minute TIF Study Update focused on the impact of TIF on Iowa homeowners’ tax bills. The committee is asking for input from local leagues about TIF practices in their communities, specifically:

- Has TIF been used in your community more than two times in the last year?
- For what kinds of projects was TIF used?
- Were the TIF projects communicated to the community? Were they acceptable? Lauded? Controversial? Contentious?

The 10-minute review of the Proposed 2017 Legislative Priorities covered Voting Rights, Water Quality, Justice Reforms, Democracy, Violence against Women, Education and Health Care. (Nota Bene: The 2017 State Legislative Priorities have now been finalized. The final version is focused on fewer priorities and includes only Voting Rights, Water Quality, Justice Reforms and Mental Health.) To find out more, please go to www.lwvia.org.

“Iowa’s Water Infrastructure Needs: Could Iowa be the Next Flint?”

The next presentation was on water quality. Tim Whipple, Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities, and Emily Piper, Iowa Rural Water Association, discussed the state of Iowa’s water and wastewater infrastructure. They focused on what is needed to make sure rural, suburban and urban households have clean water coming from their taps.

A 20-year survey in 2011 pegged the need for drinking water infrastructure needs at around \$6 billion. Another 20-year study done in 2008 estimates \$3 billion is needed for wastewater infrastructure (not including nonpoint sources).

“Water Quality: Lots of Coalitions, But What’s the Solution?”

The last presentation was by Jan Glendening, Executive Director of The Nature Conservancy, and was also on water quality. Glendening said that everyone seems to be talking about water quality, but legislative action has been elusive. He is spearheading the IWILL Coalition. He desires help to advance this cause and help the audience understand more about three organizations that support the IWILL Coalition, specifically Iowa Agricultural Water Alliance, Midwest Row Crop Collaborative, and Iowa Water and Land Legacy.

Worldly Goods Fundraiser Is A Success

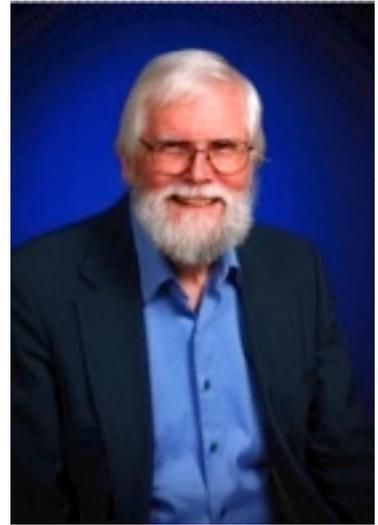


On November 30th, a portion of the sales at Worldly Goods in Ames was designated to the Ames and Story County League of Women Voters. On the particular day, sales exceeded the \$1,000 mark for a total of \$1,433.75. As a result, Worldly Goods will give the League 20% of the proceeds rather than only 15%. This calculates into \$286.75. Overall, it is considered a very successful fundraising event.

WELCOME NEW LEAGUE MEMBERS

TOM MEYER

Thomas (Tom Meyer) is a retired Adjunct Research Professor of Physics at Iowa State University. He was born and raised in the St. Louis area, and received a BA in mathematics from Wesleyan University, Middletown CT, and a PhD in Physics from Cornell University, Ithaca NY. Following postdoctoral appointments at Argonne National Laboratory and the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC), he joined Iowa State in 1978. He is an experimental particle physicist, and worked on experiments at SLAC and the CERN Laboratory in Geneva, Switzerland. He is an author on one of the two papers announcing the observation of the Higgs Boson in 2012. He retired in 2010.



Tom's political interests are social justice, campaign finance reform, judicial reform, restoration of voting rights, and global warming. His hobbies include playing classical guitar, photography, and many forms of outdoor activities. Tom is married to LWV member Kay Meyer, and they have two adult children.



KAY MEYER

I'm Midwest born, raised, and retired, but have also lived abroad in Japan, and Switzerland. I worked as an artist in Chicago before marrying Tom Meyer, a now retired high energy physicist. We raised two bright, happy, and talented children, who have good careers in Iowa, and California. My interests range from all the arts, to science, history and genealogy. Tom and I have supported science, education, and civil rights all our lives, but now we've become acutely aware of how much our voting rights, and judicial and criminal systems have been eroded, and have seen the need to become more active in social reform.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF AMES AND STORY COUNTY TO ADD LEGISLATIVE FORUM IN GILBERT

The League of Women Voters of Ames & Story County will host Legislative “Wake-Up” forums in Ames, Gilbert and Nevada during the 2016 State of Iowa Legislative session. All State Legislators representing Story County will be invited to 1) give brief presentations about the issues they think will be important during this legislative session and 2) answer your questions.

Legislature Convenes	Jan. 9	
1st Ames Wake-Up	Jan. 14	Ames City Council Chambers
1st Nevada Wake-Up	Jan. 28	Nevada City Hall
Gilbert Wake-Up	Feb. 11	Gilbert Community Room/Center
Funnel Date	Feb. 17	Bills must be out of committee - same Chamber
2nd Ames Wake-Up	Feb. 25	Ames City Council Chambers
Funnel Date	Mar. 10	Bills must be out of committee - other Chamber
3rd Ames Wake-Up	Mar. 11	Ames City Council Chambers
2nd Nevada Wake-Up	Mar. 25	Nevada City Hall
4th Ames Wake-Up	Apr. 8	Ames City Council Chambers
100th Day	Apr. 18	Not an election year for Legislators

For more information, go to www.lwvamesstory.org, and find our Calendar of Events under the Activities tab. We look forward to hosting our first Legislative Wake-Up forum in Gilbert and hope to see you on February 11th.

Donna Elliott
Chair, Legislative Action
League of Women Voters of Ames & Story County

UPCOMING EVENTS

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION

(open to the public)

February 16, 2017 (Th) “Mental Health in Iowa - Where Are We?”

Lisa Heddens, Executive Director, NAMI of Central Iowa

7:00pm -8:30pm in the PEO Room of the

Ames Public Library.

March 16, 2017 (Th) “Development Decisions in a Fast Growing Ames”

Presenter: TBA

7:00pm - 8:30pm Ames Public Library

ANNUAL MEETING & BREAKFAST

April 22, 2017 from 9:00am-11:30am at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center,
2100 Green Hills Drive, Ames