President’s Column
January 2014

Welcome to 2014 – and what a year it will be. By this time next year, half of Iowa’s delegates to Congress will be new to their position. The Iowa Legislature could also undergo significant changes.

The process starts the evening of January 21 with the Iowa Caucuses. Both parties will provide information about time and locations during the two weeks before the caucuses.

What happens at the caucuses when there isn’t a Presidential contest?

The parties will actually select their candidates for Congress and the Iowa Legislature in the primary elections on June 3. However, attending a caucus this month is a way to participate in the political process and in shaping our government. Attendees at both caucuses will:

• Select delegates to their party’s county central committee,
• Elect delegates to the county convention (the start of this process, which then goes to district, state, and in presidential elections, to national) and
• Adopt resolutions to be considered for the party’s platforms at the subsequent conventions.

The third purpose may be the most interesting for League members, as it provides an opportunity to engage your neighbors in discussion about issues that are important to you, and to help bring attention to the League’s positions.

If you plan to caucus and would like to propose a resolution in support of a State League priority, you might want to review the 2014 Public Policy Priorities, which can (Continued on page two)
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be found on the LWVIA website.

If you want to learn more about the issues, this link will take you to the 2013 Issues Briefing materials. http://www.lwvia.org/Publications.aspx

- Linda

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**Participate in the LWVIA Capitol Day February 18**

The Iowa Legislature convenes on January 13. Predictions are for a short session, and some funnel dates (the self-imposed dates that help determine which bills will move forward and which will “die” for the session) have been moved up.

LWVIA's Capitol Day on February 18 is an opportunity to speak in person with Legislators regarding the League’s priorities and are an important part of the League's lobbying efforts. Please contact Legislative Issues Co-Chair Carol Alexander Phillips if you are planning to attend, and for ride arrangements. caphill@mchsi.com or 232-0595.

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**Your City Government Needs You!**

It's that time of year again – the City of Ames is looking for smart, involved people to serve on City Boards and Commissions, and Mayor Campbell has asked for the League’s assistance in finding them. There are vacancies on sixteen bodies, from ASSET to Zoning.

To view the boards and commissions that have vacancies, go to www.cityofames.org and look under the “Our Government” tab. If you know just the right person for one of these openings, encourage her or him to apply. And maybe you are the right person! If so, get your application in there. The deadline for applying is February 7, 5:00 p.m.

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**In Memoriam - Joyce Samuels**

The Ames League sadly marks the sudden passing of recent board member and current member of the nominating committee Joyce Samuels.

Joyce was a long-time member of League, who before being a leader in Ames, was Voter Service chair in the Morgantown, West Virginia League, and later co-chair of Voter Service in the Charleston, West Virginia League.

Among other activities, she served on the Ames City Human Relations Commission for several years, and helped organize the DIALOGUES discussion groups from which FACES was born. Jan Beran, who served with her in those activities, said “I enjoyed her sense of humor and appreciated her forthrightness and wisdom.”

President Linda Murken said “As those of us who served on the League board with Joyce over the past few years know, she challenged us to become a more diverse organization, and did so much to help make that happen. And on a personal note, she was a joy to work with and a good friend. I know we will honor her memory by continuing her work and by remembering her wisdom and commitment.”
History of the LWVUS Position on Agriculture Policy

Based on an article written 7/05/2013 by Gretchen Knell; from the Nov/Dec 2013 Jasper County VOTER

In 1986, the League undertook a two-year study and member agreement process on the role of the federal government in U.S. agriculture policy, examining elements of federal farm policy, its contemporary setting, and policy alternatives. The resulting 1988 position on agriculture policy supports policies for sustainable agriculture and action to reduce the use of toxic chemicals on the farm. The position also supports targeting research programs and technological assistance to mid-sized farms and to sustainable agriculture. While many of the programs supported in the 1988 position—farm credit at reasonable terms and conditions and programs to enable farmers to use sustainable agriculture—may benefit family or mid-sized farms, the League supported these programs for all farms, regardless of size.

The position supports "decoupling" (moving away from direct payments based on production) as consistent with the strong League consensus in favor of greater reliance on the free market to determine prices. Reliance on the free market for price determination also can support a gradual reduction in loan rates. It did not envision total reliance on the free market to determine agriculture prices. In assessing programs that move agriculture toward greater reliance on the free market, consideration would include problems peculiar to agriculture, such as severe climate or natural disasters.

The 1988 position supports federally provided farm credit, but believes the federal government should be the lender of last resort. That position does not address supply controls, capping payments to farmers, protecting farm income or any particular commodity program. It supports the conservation reserve program and opposes the removal of lands prematurely from the conservation reserve.

In 1989, the League opposed legislation that would have preempted stricter state laws on the regulation of pesticides. In 1990, it urged the House to pass a farm bill that would protect land and water resources, reduce the use of toxic chemicals, and target research and technical assistance to developing environmentally sound agriculture practices. The League called for measures to strengthen conservation provisions, continue the conservation reserve, and permit retention of base payments and deficiency payments when farmers file and implement an approved plan for farming with environmentally beneficial practices. The League also called for national standards of organic production and opposed the export of pesticides that are illegal in the United States. In 1988-1991, the LWVEF worked with Public Voice for Food and Health Policy and state and local Leagues on a citizen education project on agricultural issues, including pesticide residues in food and water, sustainable agriculture, and research and technology.

Ag Study Committee Proposal

The Ames LWV Proposed Revision to LWV Agricultural Policy Position drafted 10/15/13, revised 10/31/13 is as follows:

The League’s Position

The LWVUS believes that federal agriculture policies should promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers, farms that are economically viable, and farm

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practices that are environmentally sound. Policies should support the government’s role to support and to maintain a safe and healthy food supply.

**Sustainable Agriculture:** Federal policy should encourage a system of sustainable, regenerative agricultural production that moves toward an environmentally sound agricultural sector. This includes promoting stewardship to preserve and to protect the country’s human and natural agricultural resources through cross compliance that ties subsidized crop insurance to compliance with conservation programs.

**Research and Development:** Agricultural research, development and technical assistance should continue to be for the public good and continue to be a major federal function. Federal and state agencies should invest in research and extension at land grant universities in the US. Resources should be targeted to developing sustainable agricultural practices and addressing the needs of US small and diversified farms.

**Agricultural Prices:** The LWVUS supports improving the balance between free market and public good; agricultural prices should incorporate environmental and other externalities; an affordable and nutritious food supply available to all people in the United States; and an implicit role of government because this will not happen naturally through the market.

**Agriculture and Trade:** U.S. efforts should be directed toward diversifying our agricultural production. US agricultural export policies should be consistent with the ability of developing nations to produce their own food and develop the livelihoods of their people and agricultural products while U.S. trade policies should not negatively affect the ability of developing countries to produce food for their own people.

**Farm Credit:** Farmers, particularly underserved and beginning farmers, should have access to credit with reasonable terms and conditions. Federally provided farm credit is essential to maintaining the viability of farm operations when the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the credit farmers need.

The League believes the most essential policy for the future of agriculture is encouraging sustainable agriculture by providing research, information, and technical assistance to agricultural producers.

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**For Comparison,** see the original LWVUS Agricultural Position drafted in October 1988 which can be found on this website: http://www.lwv.org/content/agriculture-policy

**Spring 2014 Legislative Wake-Ups**

The League will hold four Legislative Wake-Ups this spring on Saturday mornings in the Ames City Hall Council Chambers. Refreshments are served from 8:30-8:45 a.m. From 8:45-10:00 a.m. participants can ask questions of their local area Iowa representatives and senators. Here are the dates and the four co-sponsors who will provide refreshments and ask the first question.

Jan. 25 Ames Area Conservative Women
Feb. 22 NAMI
Mar. 29 AMOS
Apr. 26 AAUW

For further information, contact Legislative Co-Chairs, Carol Alexander Phillips caphill@mchsi.com or Mary Ann Silence, momsilence@aol.com
January General Meeting

Beat the January Blahs:
join us for the
Annual Program Planning and
Soup and Salad Supper

6 p.m. Thursday, January 16, Northminster Presbyterian Church

Bring: your table setting, a salad to share and your program ideas

Furnished: soups, desserts, cups and bowls for the soup

After dinner, Maureen Wilt will lead us in program planning for next year. See you there!

Voter Registration News

Why a voter registration photo in the middle of winter? Because a sharp-eyed Ames Leaguer (Carolyn Klaus) noted an inappropriate qualification question on the state’s voter registration form. The state League and the ACLU petitioned to remove the question (that has to do with restoration of rights after a felony conviction, which is also dealt with in the affidavit section) and the petition was unanimously adopted by the state Voter Registration Commission at a December 18 meeting. Way to go, Carolyn!

LWVIA Blog

Have you become comfortable with social media? Try out the national League blog (on the national website). Here is a sample of the topics covered:

Leagues File Suit to Protect Voters in Proof-of-Citizenship Case: By: Stephanie Drahan 11/22/2013.

The League of Women Voters has challenged requirements that voters provide documentary proof-of-citizenship with their voter registration application forms in Kansas and Arizona.

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NC Governor: Slashing Early Voting “Compacts the Calendar;” We Call It Voter Suppression: By: Renee Davidson 11/21/2013

North Carolina Gov. McCrory alleged that slashing early voting was just a way of “compacting the calendar,” but the League believes that cutting early voting is clear and simple voter suppression.

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The League’s Work on Immigration Reform and Gun Control By: Renee Davidson 11/26/2013

What the League has done to lead efforts on comprehensive immigration reform and gun control legislation.
Keep an eye on democracy—be part of the Observer Corps.

The Observer Corps needs YOU, either regularly, or once or twice a month, or as an occasional substitute, to sit in on one of these meetings: Story County Board of Supervisors; Ames School Board, or Ames City Council.

League observers cannot participate in the meetings they are observing. Contact Nancy Marks for more information: nancy.marks@me.com, 515-233-6953

Book Club Schedule

January 22 -

The Federalist Papers,  
by James Madison,  
Alexander Hamilton, and  
John Jay

Hostess: Jeannette Bohnenkamp,  
2222 Barr Dr.  
1:00 p.m. Please notify hostess if you are attending

February 26 -

Lies My Teacher Told Me  
2008 revision, by James W. Loewen

Ames League of Women Voters  
3217 West Street  
Ames, Iowa 50014