



# The Voter

## January 2017

League of Women Voters Johnson County, Iowa

### From the President

**W**elcome to 2017! We hope you all emerged in one piece from the election and the holiday period and are now eager to see a new kind of slate: LWVJC activities for the year to come. This issue gives you a forecast of programs and excursions that will help you forget weather forecasts January through March.

On Wednesday, Jan. 18, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., at 445 Breconshire Lane, Coralville, come to hear Barbara Beaumont report on the progress of the League of Women Voters of Iowa's study of the uses of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in communities in Iowa at January's Making Connections event.

Join Voter Registration Coordinator Julie Wittig at the University of Iowa's Spring Volunteer Fair in the Iowa Memorial Union on Tuesday, Jan. 24, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you need more information before deciding to volunteer, contact her at [j903greenfields@gmail.com](mailto:j903greenfields@gmail.com).

Meet, greet and converse with your state representatives on four Saturday mornings, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.: Jan. 28 (City Hall, Iowa City), Feb. 25 (Coralville City Hall), March 25 (North Liberty City Hall) and April 29 (Iowa City TBA). If you prefer, join the excursion to the Iowa State Capitol on Wednesday, Feb. 22. Times and carpooling information will appear in the February *Voter*.

Enjoy a variety of programs at the Iowa City Public Library with the Sunday Speaker Series, the first one Jan. 29, from 2 to 3 p.m., will be about "Iowa's Economy and TIF in Iowa."

Come to the monthly Carrie Chapman Catt Book Club. The group usually meets regularly the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Coralville Public Library from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Next up for discussion on Jan. 17: Chapter 10 of Jay Parini's *Promised Land: Thirteen Books That Changed America* about Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936).

Or, if coffee and conversation is your preferred favorite winter pastime, come to the next Meet the New Members Coffee planned for Saturday, Feb. 4, from 10 a.m. to noon, at Winans Chocolates and Coffee, 470 First Avenue, Coralville, Iowa.

But above all, have a good New Year.

*Syndy M. Conger, President, LWVJC*

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### Board of Directors 2015-2016

President – Syndy Conger,  
[Syndymc67@gmail.com](mailto:Syndymc67@gmail.com)

Vice President - Nancy Lynch,  
[nancylynch1941@gmail.com](mailto:nancylynch1941@gmail.com)

Secretary – Sandy Keller,  
[sandykeller@hotmail.com](mailto:sandykeller@hotmail.com)

Treasurer – Linda Kroon,  
[linda-kroon@uiowa.edu](mailto:linda-kroon@uiowa.edu)

Cathy Eisenhofer,  
[cathyeisenhofer@gmail.com](mailto:cathyeisenhofer@gmail.com)

Katy Hansen,  
[katyhansen@oaknoll.com](mailto:katyhansen@oaknoll.com)

Diana Henry,  
[henry.diana@mchsi.com](mailto:henry.diana@mchsi.com)

Polly Horton,  
[pollyshorton@aol.com](mailto:pollyshorton@aol.com)

Pat Jensen,  
[dpjensen@mchsi.com](mailto:dpjensen@mchsi.com)

Patty McCarthy,  
[pmmccarthy1131@gmail.com](mailto:pmmccarthy1131@gmail.com)

Nancy Porter,  
[porternancy@msn.com](mailto:porternancy@msn.com)

Linda Schreiber,  
[lnschreiber@gmail.com](mailto:lnschreiber@gmail.com)

Paula Vaughan,  
[prvaughan@mchsi.com](mailto:prvaughan@mchsi.com)

Gaylen Wobeter,  
[gaywob@live.com](mailto:gaywob@live.com)

Julie Wittig,  
[j903greenfields@gmail.com](mailto:j903greenfields@gmail.com)

## What's Ahead

### New Members' Corner:

#### Advocacy, League Style

*Watch for the New Members' Corner in future issues of the Voter. Whether you are a new member wondering how the League works or a long-term member wishing to review that understanding, this new feature is for you.*

Advocacy is the last, but definitely not the least, important word in the League of Women Voters Mission Statement: *"to promote an informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy."*

Other nonpartisan nonprofit organizations might well have similar mission statements; what they may not have is the League's unique and grassroots approach to advocacy. For the League it is at least a three-stage process.

Before we advocate for an issue, we study it, choosing our sources carefully to get a fullest possible picture. At the moment, the state League, for example, is conducting a statewide study of the use of TIF or Tax Increment Financing by local governments. Deplored by some and adored by others, TIF is complex and citizens can find themselves bewildered as they read about TIFs in the newspapers. This is a perfect study for the League and will provide voters with needed objective information to decide for themselves whether they want their local governments to use TIFs in their communities.

In addition to making this information available to the public, the League of Women Voters of Iowa may also develop a position on TIF that will allow them to advocate at the state and local levels.

One of the most comprehensive studies done by our local Johnson County League recently was of our regional (cities and county) government. That study did ultimately lead to a

position, which is still used today to advocate for "regional cooperation in the delivery of local government services within Johnson County." Positions abound at the local (see [LWVJC.org](http://LWVJC.org)), state (see [LWVIA.org](http://LWVIA.org)), and national level (see Impact on Issues [LWV.org](http://LWV.org)).

Finally, when the moment to advocate arrives, Leagues "speak with one voice." That is, each League has one official spokesperson, usually the president, who advocates for an issue in the name of the League. The president may decide to urge all members to join in an advocacy campaign as individuals to amplify that voice. The state and national leagues may also send "calls to action" to local members from time to time to advocate – again as individuals – for a cause or even for a particular piece of legislation. Imagine the din in the halls of Congress when the national League asked members to advocate for a restoration of the Voting Rights Act!

If you are an advocate at heart, be sure to contact our local Advocacy Coordinator **Nancy Porter** ([porternancy@msn.com](mailto:porternancy@msn.com)). We would love to have our voices amplified by yours.

Sydney Conger, LWVJC President

### Volunteers Needed for Spring 2017 UI Volunteer Fair

Once again, the League of Women Voters of Johnson County will host a table at the **University of Iowa Spring 2107 Volunteer Fair, Tuesday, Jan. 24**, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help at this fun event held in the Iowa Memorial Union. About 50 community groups will also participate and this is the League's opportunity to interact with students, talk about the great work we do, register voters and invite them to join us at our upcoming events. If you have an hour to spare and would like to help, please contact **Julie Wittig**, Voter Registration Coordinator, at

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[j903greenfields@gmail.com](mailto:j903greenfields@gmail.com). This is a great opportunity to not only engage students, but also meet League members and other community groups.

Julie Wittig

### TIF Study Update

Did you know that as a result of business tax rollbacks and increasing number of local tax incentives Iowans may see an increase in their property tax bills? This means *your* tax bill.

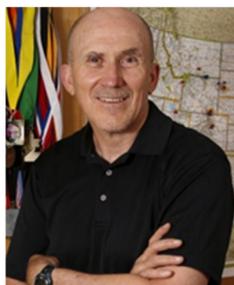
Come to the Making Connections meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 18, and learn about the LWVIA TIF (Tax Increment Financing) Study.

Barbara Beaumont

### Sunday Speaker Series

**Dave Swenson discusses “Iowa’s Economy & Economic Consequences / Tradeoffs of TIF” Sunday, Jan. 29, from 2—3 p.m. at the Iowa City Public Library**

An economist and Iowa State University associate scientist in the Department of Economics College of Agriculture & Life Science,



**Dave Swenson** also lectures in the graduate program in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Iowa. He opens the LWVJC Sunday Speaker Series in January. Mr. Swenson provides community economic analysis, technical assistance, outreach and economics education services to the public. He will provide a review of Iowa’s economy and the economic consequences and tradeoffs of TIF for Iowa communities.

His areas of research and specialization include community and regional economic studies and evaluations, economic development research and technical assistance, input-output

(economic impact) studies, fiscal impact research, public finance and tax policy, community change and worker mobility issues, and public program and project evaluation.

Mr. Swenson also provides services to public and private organizations and local and state governments via research, on-site training and education programming, and seminars and public speaking appearances.

Linda Schreiber

### 2017 Legislative Forums

Saturday, Jan. 28, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., City Hall, Iowa City

Saturday, Feb. 25, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., Coralville City Hall

Saturday, March 25, 9:30 – 11:30, North Liberty City Hall

### New Members

Brittney Thomas and Ryan Betsworth  
Judith Hendershot  
Suzanne Cutler

### In Review

#### Record-Breaking Year for Johnson County Voter Registration

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County registered 382 voters in 2016, setting a new record. The League led an aggressive voter registration campaign throughout the year energized by the national election held Nov. 8 and voter's interest in the election.

Our goal was to register as many citizens as we could before the Oct. 29 deadline including new citizens, neglected citizens and youth. That said, we reached out to public libraries, local food pantries, a community mental health organization, newly naturalized citizens, citizens living with disabilities, and students attending Kirkwood Community College and University of Iowa. The League also partnered with the Iowa City Human Rights Commission

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to register voters residing in communities with relatively lower levels of voter registration and voter turnout in the Iowa City area.

Five events were held in the fall, three at neighborhood centers, one at a church and one at a housing complex for UI graduate students.

Looking back at 2016, it was a great year for making new contacts in the community. Many community groups welcomed the League to register voters and discuss the importance of voting. The future looks bright for more opportunities for voter registration and collaboration with interested community organizations.

The accomplishments of last year could not have been achieved without the help of so many League members volunteering their time to register voters and engage members of the community.

Thank you all for participating in this important League work. You made a difference in your community helping empower 382 citizens to have a voice at the polls.

Julie Wittig  
Voter Registration Coordinator

## League Members Engage with Our Local Legislators

On Friday, Dec. 2, Johnson County League members met at the Shares Restaurant in downtown Iowa City to hear from our Johnson County legislators. We had a smaller group than usual, of both members and legislators, but all agreed the dialogue was beneficial. Our legislators explained some of the challenges they will experience in the upcoming legislative session, and how they are hoping to reach out to other legislators in the opposite party to achieve some of their goals.

Water quality is the number one Iowa League priority, and the Johnson County legislators feel like the time may be right to go

forward on this issue.

**Amy Nielsen**, newly elected legislator from North Liberty who is replacing **Sally Stutsman** in the Iowa House, is a new face and we appreciated her presence and participation. Amy is a member of the LWVJC.

An open conversation between legislators and League members, and a good lunch of flat bread, was enjoyed by all.

Gaylen Wobeter

## 2016 Holiday Brunch with Secretary of State Paul Pate

A record number - 55 attendees - gathered together for our LWVJC Brunch at the Elks Club, Iowa City, on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2016.

Past LWVIA President **Bonnie Pitz** shared the LWVIA ACLU Award.

Advocacy Chair **Nancy Porter** introduced the

local elected officials in attendance. LWVIA President **Mary Rae Bragg** welcomed guests and introduced Iowa Secretary of State **Paul Pate**.

Sec. Pate spoke candidly about the Iowa Election system, stating Iowans fill out paper ballots in 99 counties that are counted electronically under the scrutiny of poll workers and poll watchers and verified by canvassers. Sec. Pate stayed after the event to answer individual questions.

Polly Horton

## Water Quality Study Group

The Water Quality Study Group met on Dec. 5 at Oaknoll. Attending were **Pat Ephgrave, Pat Jensen, Sandy Keller, Nancy Lynch, Becky Reiter** and **Carol Spaziani**.

Members discussed a previous meeting with our local legislators who had told us that there was very little chance of significant funding available for prevention or remediation of

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agricultural water pollution because the makeup of the Iowa Legislature, the lack of support by the Farm Bureau, and probable state budget limitations for the coming two years. Even so, a majority of those attending agreed to continue our intention of gathering as much information as possible about water quality in Johnson County. Our initial efforts will be to:

1. Find data from previous water testing by citizen volunteers as part of the lowater program.
2. Talk with environmental staff at Johnson County Health Department about numbers of private wells and septic tanks in the county and current regulations for them.
3. Gather data from community water and waste treatment facilities to determine if their regulated standards are being met.

The group agreed to meet again after the holidays, but a meeting date and time were not set.

Nancy Lynch

### CCC Book Club to meet Jan. 17

The CCC Book Club will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 17, (Note: the change of date) at the Coralville Public Library, Meeting Room B, at 7 p.m. The discussion, led by **Ann Valenta**, will be on the book "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie.



All members are welcome.

## Member Profile

**Linda Schreiber** was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and raised on her family's century farm in Warren County. She moved to Iowa City where she earned a B.B.A in Business Administration majoring in human resource management and marketing and a master's degree in Communication and Journalism from the University of Iowa. Now retired, Linda worked as an administrator, journalist and editor. She is the author of "*Before 52340: A Place in Time*," which describes 100 years of settlement in Clear Creek Township and Tiffin, Iowa, from the mid-1800s to the 1950s. Today, Linda spends her time writing, gardening and volunteering to assist nonprofit organizations.



Last summer, Linda received the Governor's Volunteer Award by Gov. Terry Branstad in recognition of her gardening efforts in Downtown City Gardens.

For nearly 40 years, Linda lived in rural Johnson County with her husband Steve; they moved to Iowa City in October 2012. They are the parents of John Mosher and grandparents to John and Joanna's two daughters, Eva and Zoe.

She is serving a second term on the LWVJC Board of Directors.

The LWVJC has been busy and we're just getting started. Check out our video on Facebook: [LWVJC: 2016 - A Year in Review](#). Or connect online at:

<https://spark.adobe.com/video/cTHmF920fv99V?w= 5826>

## Calendar of Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Program</b>
Tuesday, Jan. 10	3 – 4:30 p.m.	Jensen home, 13 Lakeview Drive NE, Iowa City	100th Anniversary Planning Session
Saturday, Jan. 14	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Cedar Rapids	LWVIA Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, Jan. 16	12 – 1:30 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library, Room B	LWVJC Board Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 17	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Coralville Public Library	Carrie Chapman Catt Book Club: <i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i>
Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2017	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Club Moeller, 445 Breconshire Lane, Coralville	Making Connections: LWVIA TIF Study (Beaumont)
Tuesday, Jan. 24	11 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Iowa Memorial Union	University of Iowa Volunteer Fair
Saturday, Jan. 28	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.	City Hall, Iowa City	Legislative Forum: Education topics
Sunday, Jan. 29	2 – 3 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	LWVJC Speakers Series: “Iowa’s Economy and TIF in Iowa” by Iowa economist Dave Swenson
Saturday, Feb. 4	10 a.m. – noon	Winans Chocolates and Coffee, 470 First Avenue, Coralville	Winter Blahs Coffee Hour: Meet the New Members
Sunday, Feb. 19	2 – 3 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	Sunday Speakers Series, “Invisible Hawkeyes,” authors Michael and Lena Hill
Monday, Feb. 20	12 – 1:30 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library Meeting Rm B	LWVJC Board Meeting
Wednesday, Feb. 22	TBA in February	Capitol Building, Des Moines, Iowa	Capitol Day
Saturday, Feb. 25	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Coralville City Hall	Legislative Forum: Environmental topics
Saturday, March 25	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.	North Liberty City Hall	Legislative Forum: Labor, UW, ACLU, Affordable Housing
Sunday, March 26	1:30 – 4 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	Sunday Speaker Series “Suffragette” movie, introduced by Meenakshi “Gigi” Durham
Saturday, April 29	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.	City Hall, Iowa City	Final Legislative Forum
Friday and Saturday, June 9-10	TBA	LWVIA Convention	Grinnell College Campus