

VOTER

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November 2023

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy

Show Up for Democracy

Vote for school boards and city leadership on November 7: Constant Vigilance!

Democracy demands constant vigilance and citizen involvement. We need a well-educated public that makes the time to vote in every election. Thank you to the Vote411 committee and the Voter Services committee and the many forum volunteers for all their work this election season as we vote for School Boards and City Councils and Mayors Tuesday, November 7.

Our School Boards hire and guide our Superintendents and help create the priorities of our schools. The School Board decides how to try to comply with the new state law that bans books like *The Rape of Nanking*, *A Handmaid's Tale*, and *The Bluest Eye*. The Boards are responsible for making the ever tighter school budgets pay for quality teachers, special education support, job training, and providing technology to everyone to try to level the playing field.

City Councils directly impact our everyday lives. Councils create zoning and long term plans that affect affordable housing and sprawl. City Councils decide how much we fund our public libraries, recreation, police and maintenance departments. Councils hire the city managers and police chiefs and hold them accountable. Do we want our city to prioritize efficiency or transparency? How hard do city staff work on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion? How easy is it to recycle and take the bus? How is our city using the Tax Increment Financing process?

A huge thank you to Silvia Quezada for chairing the Voter Registration Committee, but currently we are looking for a new chair or co-chairs. We have years of tips and notes, a tent, a wagon, and boxes of forms, we just need a person or two to organize the events and send out SignUp Genius emails to the volunteers. Examples of Voter Registration Activities include registering voters in places with high turnover like food pantries and residential facilities, and reaching out to specific groups like new citizens or those with a felony in their past. Please let us know if you can help lead the Voter Registration Committee. We will help you out and there is a large group of experienced volunteers who will also help you.

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The *Voter* is issued the last Friday of the month to provide members advance notice of activities.
The December Voter deadline is November 20.

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Iowa state legislation is the name of the game as we move deeper into Fall. Mark your calendars for November 16, 7pm via Zoom. LWVIA lobbyist Amy Campbell will give us her forecast of *What to Expect in the 2024 Legislative Session*.

Join other members of LWVJC for our annual Membership Meeting and Legislative Luncheon on Saturday, December 9, 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel in Coralville. Watch for details in your email.

*Paula Vaughan and Miriam Timmer-Hackert
co-presidents*



VOTE411

VOTE411 is Live!! Our VOTE411 site is live as of October 18, the first day of early voting and the first day when absentee ballots may be turned in. To find the races in your area, simply go to www.VOTE411.org and enter your address. Follow the prompts and you will be able to see the races in your community and the responses from the candidates.

We still have much work to do to get the full potential of the site. A number of candidates did not respond so their “profiles” lack pictures or any narrative on their positions. Even after two follow-up contacts, some did not respond. VOTE411 is one of several surveys candidates are asked to respond to, so we need to make our site the go-to option for those running.

To that end it is our intention, prior to the next major election, to:

- drill deeper with some of those who did not respond to try to address their reluctance
- communicate with candidates individually prior to requesting their responses

- engage all political parties in encouraging their candidates to respond
- use newspapers and social media to advertise the benefits of VOTE411 prior to our next Launch

We know this is an effort that will take some time for people to become aware of the benefits of VOTE411. You can help by encouraging anyone you know who is running to send in their responses and encourage friends and family to use VOTE411 to learn about candidates. LWVUS tracks all the clicks, and we receive this data after the election, data we will use in our promotional efforts.

*Karin Franklin and Eliza Willis
VOTE411 team co-chairs*



Education Committee

A timely program on public education presented by Dr. Jean Donham has been added to the speaker series. A couple of weeks ago, TRAIL (Tools and Resources for Active, Independent Living) approached the committee with an opportunity to co-host Jean’s talk on *Public Education for the Public Good: Past, Present and Future*, in advance of the November election. The event will take place this coming Wednesday, November 1, 12-1 p.m. at the Iowa City Public Library Meeting Room A.

Also mark two future programs on your calendars:

- Thursday, January 25, 2024, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Matt Degner, superintendent of the Iowa City Community School District, will speak on *House File 68: Challenges and Changes for Public Schools*

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- Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Connie Mutel, noted local author, will speak on *Iowa, the Beautiful Land: Envisioning an Action Agenda for Nature and Agriculture*.

All programs take place at the Iowa City Public Library and are offered in-person and streamed live on the library's channel. ICPL staff also video record programs for rebroadcast. The LWVJC Lecture Series is co-sponsored by ICPL and the Iowa City *Press-Citizen*.

*Rebecca Conard, Patricia McCarthy, Susan Enzle
Education Committee*

Bringing Economic Justice to the Justice System

Everyone is welcome to participate in the study group that is reading the LWV of Iowa's study on the justice system. We will look at how indigent Iowans are affected by the current system of bail, fees, and fines in the criminal justice system. The next meeting is on Monday, October 30, 6 p.m. at 321 Hutchinson Avenue. Contact Kathleen Kamerick if you are interested: kckamerick@gmail.com

Kathleen Kamerick



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The LWVJC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee collaborated with TRAIL (Tools and Resources for Active, Independent Living) of Johnson County and the Johnson County Senior Center this month to offer a two-session workshop. Ten participants spent time sharing experiences and exploring what it means to be actively involved in addressing local issues related to equity and inclusion. It was an insightful look into how our own life experiences can sometimes limit our ability to

understand others. We worked to identify ways to contribute to creating an accepting, caring community. Lots of discussion, reflection, readings and visuals supported our study. We currently have a thoughtful list of resources that relate to our work and continue looking for opportunities to further involve the community in learning and working for change.

*Anne Spencer
DEI Committee*



Voter Services Committee

It has been a very busy fall!

On September 26, the League sponsored a candidate forum for the Iowa City District A primary election. The forum was well attended with about 25 people in the room. It was a lively discourse with many questions from the audience. A recording of the forum is available on our Facebook page and on the LWVJC website.

On October 10, the League sponsored the candidate forum in Lone Tree and on October 12 in Hills. The number of attendees is fewer in these rural communities, but the League is committed to this outreach into the smaller towns in Johnson County. The candidates voiced appreciation for the opportunity to connect with their voters. Technology is limited in these venues, so these were in-person events only.

On October 16, the League hosted the Iowa City City Council candidate forum. There were about 30 people in attendance, and it was again a lively conversation about issues critical to the city of Iowa City. All candidates attended. A recording of the forum is available on our Facebook page and on the LWVJC website.

On October 18, the candidate forum for the ICCSD school board was held in partnership with the Districtwide Parent Organization. There were about 65 people attending and 6 of the 7

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candidates participated. Many more questions were generated than time allowed for, but the additional questions were made available to the candidates. The forum was live streamed on our Facebook page and the recording is available on the LWVJC website and the DPO website.

The Tiffin Mayor and City Council candidate forum was held on October 23 and was well attended. On Wednesday, October 25, we hosted the North Liberty City Council candidate forum, and the recording can be found on our Facebook page and on the LWVJV website.

The Voter Services committee would like to recognize the stellar support of the forum moderators and timekeepers. Serving as moderators were Joan Cook, Rebecca Conard, Bill Waldie, Shannon Patrick, Jean Donham, Gaylen Wobeter and Pat Heiden. Our timekeepers for the fall candidate forums were Bonnie Boothroy, Cathy Eisenhofer, Sally Stutsman, Patty McCarthy, Susie Corbin-Muir, Cecelia Roudabush, and Justin Whitty. The contributions of these league members are critical to the success of our forums. Thank you all! If any members are interested in helping out as moderators or timekeepers in the future, please contact Jeanne Bancroft.

Jnn.bancroft@gmail.com.

And thank you to the members of the Voter Services committee - Sally Stutsman, Jean Donham, Maggie Elliott, and Vicki Aden.

*Jeanne Bancroft
Voter Services Chair*



Advocacy Update

The Iowa Legislature may be out, but there's still work for Advocacy.

First, we have been working to secure commitments from legislators to attend our December member meeting and legislative

preview. We have four so far and hope to raise that number. Last year's event was enjoyable and educational, and we hope that you will join us in making this year a success as well. It will be held on Saturday, December 9th at the Coralville Radisson.

The other focus of our efforts is on the changes that were recommended to Iowa's boards and commissions. We have reason to think that these changes will be addressed early in the session, so we are reaching out to relevant committee members early to ask them for their positions, especially their position on eliminating the rule that Iowa's boards and commissions must attempt to be gender balanced. This rule has greatly helped to increase the representation of women in Iowa's government, but the governor's review panel recommended eliminating it.

While we are less active on the issues, we also continue to track the federal Farm Bill and the Iowa Attorney General's appeal against allowing voting materials in languages other than English.

*Shannon Patrick
Advocacy Chair*



Membership

LWVJC currently has 169 active members. Welcome to Derek Willard and Ann Satterly as new members in September. And joining in October we welcome Jan Weaver and Molly Abraham. Reminders to renew were sent with the request to renew in October or be moved to inactive status. If you have not yet renewed, please do so as soon as possible. We really need your support as members and thank you to everyone who has already renewed. Go to www.lwvjc.org to renew. You can renew online or mail it in per the directions on the website form.

*Jeanne Bancroft
Membership Chair*

Photo Gallery



Above: Author Joanne Ramos signing copies of her book *The Farm* on October 8. The League was a sponsor of this One Community One Book event.

Below: Left to right, a voter completes their voter registration with the assistance of League members Syndy Conger, Susan Enzle and Nancy Pacha at Oaknoll on October 10.



Left: Someone was rummaging through the LWVUS historical photos and came across this gem with a timely message –

MAKE A NOTE, BE SURE TO VOTE!



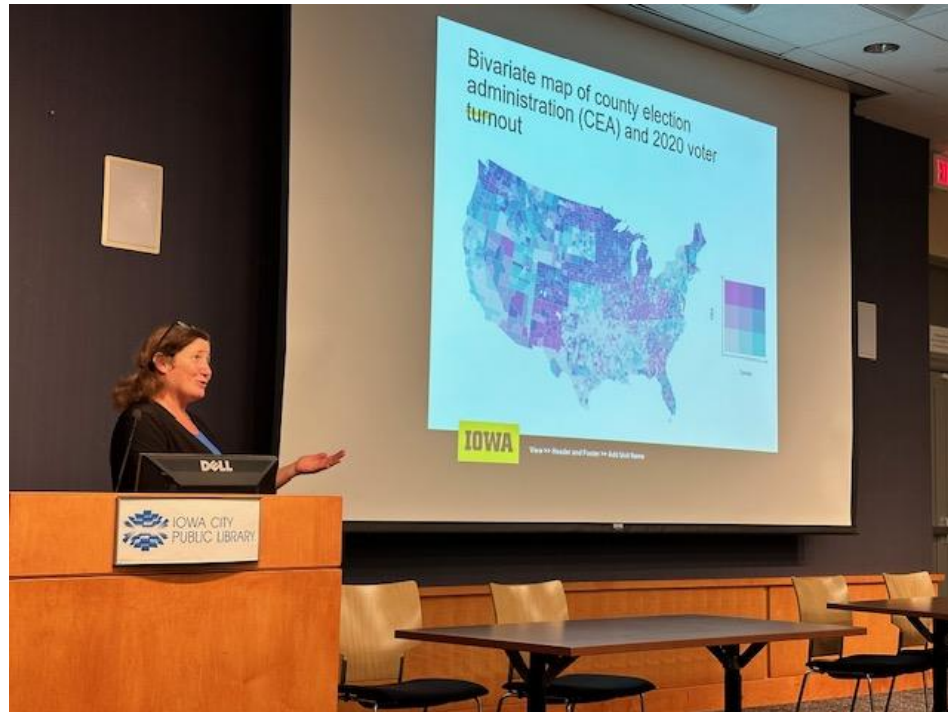
Above Left: Scenes from the Iowa City City Council candidate forum on October 16. Above Right: The Tiffin Mayor and City Council candidate forum on October 23.

Below Left: The ICCSD School Board candidate forum on October 18. Below Right: The North Liberty City Council candidate forum on October 25.



MAKING
DEMOCRACY WORK®

The Education Committee's League Lecture Series hosted Dr. Caroline Tolbert discussing *Why People Don't Vote: Disaffected Voters and the Process of Democracy* on Tuesday, October 24. It was an insightful talk on how to increase voter turnout and improve county election administration. If you missed it, it is recorded to the ICPL Library Channel.



Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Wednesday, November 1	12-1 pm	Iowa City Public Library	<i>Public Education for the Public Good: Past, Present and Future with Dr. Jean Donham</i>
Tuesday, November 7	7 am - 8 pm		Election Day: city councils, school districts
Wednesday, November 8	10 am	Poindexter Coffee, Graduate Hotel, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Monday, November 13	6:30-8 pm	virtual	Board meeting
Thursday, November 16	7pm	virtual	<i>What to Expect in 2024 Legislative Session with LWVIA lobbyists</i>
Thursday, November 16	7 pm	virtual	<i>How to Talk to Legislators, Connie Ryan of Interfaith Alliance</i>
Saturday, December 9	11-1:30 pm	Radisson Hotel, 1220 1st Ave, Coralville	Annual Membership Meeting and Legislative Lunch
Monday, December 11	6:30-8 pm	virtual	Board meeting
Wednesday, December 13	10 am	Poindexter Coffee, Graduate Hotel, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Thursday, January 25, 2024		Iowa City Public Library	<i>House File 68: Challenges & Changes for Public Schools with Matt Degner</i>



**COMING SOON TO YOUR INBOX FROM
JOHNSON COUNTY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS:
THE WEEK AHEAD IN OUR LEAGUE**