



The Voter

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County, Iowa

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy

<http://www.lwvjc.org>

From the President

Happy 90th Anniversary! We are the League of Women Voters of Johnson County and we invite you to celebrate our history, goals and achievements toward **making democracy work.**

- ✓ Share your reflection/memories as a LWV in the LWVUS Story Bank (www.lwv.org/storybank)
- ✓ Watch the video "Conversations with the League" being replayed on Channel 4
- ✓ Come with us to Des Moines for Lobby Day Tuesday, February 16, 2010
- ✓ Listen to the [Talk of Iowa](#) on Iowa Public Radio @ noon Friday, February 12, 2010
- ✓ Join us for Luncheon at the [Linn Street Café](#) on Wednesday, February 24, 2010
- ✓ Participate on a Committee or the Board of Directors
- ✓ Attend a [Legislative Forum](#) (February 27 and April 10)
- ✓ Attend the program on **Iowa Census 2010 @ ICPL** on Wednesday, March 10, 2010

We are the League of Women Voters and we make democracy work! Come and get involved with us.

Encourage your friends to join!

Polly Horton,

2009-2010 LWVJC Officers and Directors

- President** Polly Spencer Horton
319-621-1685
- Vice President** Rebecca Reiter
319-354-7163
- Secretary** Mary Ann Bradford
351-2309
- Treasurer** Julie Pulkrabek
319-354-6633
- Directors** Susan Craig
337-3076
- Melanie Gross
354-3179
- Lolly Eggers
338-8963
- Pat Jensen
338-8123
- Dawn Suter
321-2601
- Kelly Thornburg
321-8199
- Gaylen Wobeter
338-5218

Welcome to new member, Lorelei Coffin!

League's 90th Anniversary Celebration Underway

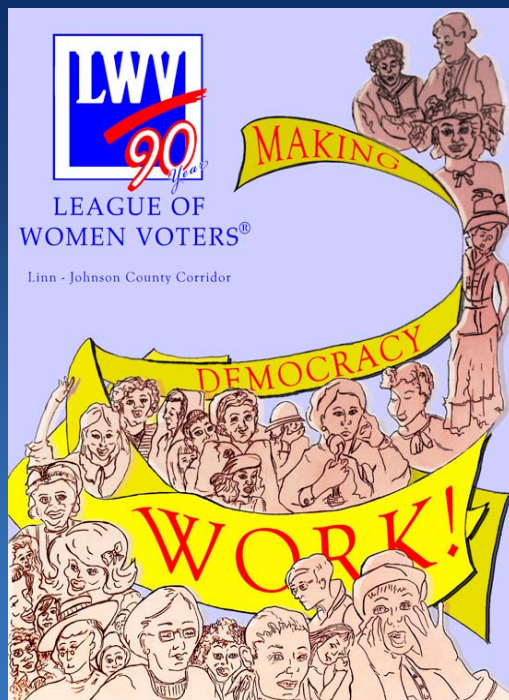
The League of Women Voters of Johnson County is off to a fast and creative start in commemorating and celebrating 90 years of the League and its work. Leagues across the country are celebrating our 90th birthday, specifically on February 14, 2010, but throughout the year. We want to particularly celebrate the LWV of Johnson County, the first local League in Iowa. We will reach out to the greater Iowa City community to tell them about the League, its history, goals and achievements. Our message to them is, *"The League of Women Voters makes democracy work!"* And we want to find and share with the LWVJC membership the value of the League to them and to the community.

In late January, "Conversations with the League" took place, calling on five long-time members – Lolly Eggers, Pat Jensen, Jean Lloyd Jones, Naomi Novick and Carol Spaziani – to talk of their own histories with the League. The lively discussion was taped and will soon be shown on our local government television channels. Be sure to watch; it will refresh your memories and remind you of the valuable role the Johnson County League has played in our community's history and development. – *Pat Jensen*



Board of Directors National League of Women Voters Chicago Convention, February 1920 - Photo from LWV.org

Top row: left to right: Miss Katherine Ludington, Hartford, Conn. Director 1st region; Mrs. Richard Edwards, Peru, Indiana, treasurer; Miss Della Dorth, Nashville, Tenn., director 3rd region; Mrs. George Gellhorn, St. Louis, MO. Vice chairman and director 6th region; Mrs. James Paige, Minneapolis, Minn., director 5th region; Mrs. Solon Jacobs, Birmingham, Ala., secretary. **Lower row:** left to right: Mrs. Maud Wood Park, Boston, President 1920-24; Mrs. Grace Wilbur Trout, Chicago, chairman hostess committee; Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, New York, honorary chairman.



Conversations with the League of Women Voters on Channel 4

Pat Jensen, Lolly Eggers, Jean Lloyd Jones, Carol Spaziani, and Naomi Novick talk about their experiences in the League of Women Voters on Channel 4.

This program will be cablecast on:

February 06, 2010 @ 06:45 PM
 February 07, 2010 @ 11:45 AM
 February 09, 2010 @ 02:45 AM
 February 09, 2010 @ 07:45 PM
 February 11, 2010 @ 10:45 AM
 February 12, 2010 @ 03:45 AM

For additional broadcasts go to <http://citychannel4.com>

Status of the League of Women Voters

2010 Legislative Priorities from LWVIA's Amy Campbell and Craig Patterson

The League of Women Voters of Iowa's top priorities this year are implementing the recommendations of the Criminal Code Restructuring Study Committee, mental health, and predatory lending.

Criminal Code Restructuring. There are no less than 29 bills introduced to date that enact the study committee's recommendations. The [LWVIA Bill Tracker](#) is only tracking those with significant changes (many others are clean-up and general housekeeping). These include bills: increase the amount of time off for good behavior from 1.2 to 1.5 days for every day served ([HF 2022](#)); create a new offense of robbery in the third degree to keep people that commit a minor assault while shoplifting out of prison ([HSB 648](#) & [SSB 3147](#)); allows a judge to extend probation for up to one year if probation has been violated, rather than send back to jail/prison ([HSB 644](#) & [SSB 3157](#)); equalizes the criminal penalty for all escapes or attempted escapes from custody ([HSB 642](#) & [SSB 3164](#)); makes a person who commits assault without intent to inflict serious injury to receive a suspended/deferred sentence or deferred judgment instead of class D felony conviction with required 70% of five-year sentence to be served ([HSB 645](#) & [SSB 3165](#)); and makes it easier to expunge the record for a conviction for public intoxication and underage alcohol possession after two years ([HSB 643](#) & [SSB 3166](#)); and revises the duties of the Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning Advisory Council and establishes a new Public Safety Advisory Board to further the work of the study committee ([HSB 649](#) & [SSB 3156](#)). Chances of most (if not all) changes are pretty good, as the recommendations are considered non-partisan.

Mental Health Parity. When we heard that the House Democratic Caucus had selected mental health parity as one of their top

But now it appears they were quite serious. The House Human Resources Committee used its third meeting of the year to pass out last year's mental health parity bill ([HF 234](#)) on a party line vote. As you might recall, this bill expands Iowa's limited biologically-based mental health parity law to require all state-regulated insurance plans pay for the treatment of any mental illness or substance use disorder. Rep. Mark Smith of Marshalltown and Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell of Ames hope to develop a bipartisan compromise before the House debates the bill. Because a compromise has not yet been reached, the committee voted out a committee amendment that will strike all language.

The amendment (H-8024) states the intent of the legislature to require health insurance coverage for costs of mental health conditions, including substance abuse. Rep. Janet Petersen (D-Des Moines) also requested a companion parity bill in the House Commerce Committee, which she chairs.

The bill ([HSB 590](#)) is identical to HF 234 (before the amendment). The House has been within a vote of being able to pass mental health parity, so chances of passage remain very tenuous.

More Mental Health News. The House Veterans Affairs Committee is working on a bill ([HF 2123](#)) that would give judges the authority to have a combat veteran who commits a crime evaluated to determine if the crime was the result of PTSD, substance abuse, or other psychological disorder stemming from combat service. If a connection is found, the court is allowed to place the veteran in a mental health or substance abuse facility with a history of successfully treating these disorders. Rep. Tymeson, a Brigadier General in the National Guard, sponsored the bill. Chances of this passing are relatively poor. On another matter, the Joint Health & Human Services Budget Subcommittee has not made any decisions related to the restructuring of the mental health/disability services system. That decision will be coming in the next month.

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LWV Legislative Priorities continued from page 3

Predatory Lending. This year's bill to curb the tide of predatory "pay day" lenders is [HF 2127](#), and it is sponsored by a whopping 34 legislators lead by House Commerce Committee Chair Rep. Janet Petersen of Des Moines. The first subcommittee on the bill was held on Monday, February 1, where persons that have fallen into the cycle of debt created by these lenders testified. This bill, deemed a compromise by advocates, gives lenders a choice of providing pay day loans at current unlimited rates but requiring them to submit detailed information about the loan, lender and payment history to a state database in the Banking Division or limiting them to a 36% APR with no reporting. The lender would have to file an affidavit with the Superintendent of Banking stating which option they choose. Chances of passage are about 50-50 right now. The Republicans on the House Commerce Committee have locked up against the bill, so Democrats need to convince either Rep. Doris Kelly of Waterloo or Rep. Mike Reasoner of Creston to vote for the bill. Both are saying they do not support even this compromise.

Lobbyist Reforms. Three high-profile ethical violations by lobbyists are driving a number of changes to lobbying laws to create more transparency. Lobbying laws have not really been revisited since the well-known incident at Mingo that drove most of the laws we have today. Several recent events are driving significant changes that most of the lobby are welcoming (including yours truly) - the failure of one organization to file the required reception reports after a legislator leaving the event was arrested for drunk driving; one lobbyist's misrepresentation of his client after changing their registration on a controversial bill to "opposed" without consulting them; and another lobbyist firm's registering all clients on bills that only one client cares about.

Legislators want clients to be notified when their lobbyist registers or changes registration on a bill, require clients to fully disclose payments to lobbyists, strengthen penalties for ethics violations, and require electronic filing of all registrations and reports so they are fully and immediately available to the public. We'll track these closer after the funnel - when we know which of the reforms moves forward. Chances of passage of some reforms are very likely.

Election Reform. Minor adjustments to the state's voting laws were introduced by the Secretary of State this week, but all are considered clean-up and of no real significance. Legislators say they are not likely to take up any serious reforms. One reform that is getting some support is SSB 3068 - the bill that addresses concerns raised when the "Recruit Branstad" committee began advocating for former Governor Terry Branstad to run for governor. The bill, drafted at the request of the Iowa Campaign Finance & Ethics Board, would require such committees to file campaign finance reports as if they were the candidate, disclosing contributions and expenditures once the \$750 threshold of spending or contributions has been met.



League Lobby Day Tuesday February 16 *Celebrate 90 years of League*

Agenda

9:30-10:00

Greeting and Coffee at Calvary Baptist Church, 606 E 9th St. Des Moines

10:00-11:30

Issues Updates: Tom Chapman - predatory lending, Amy Campbell - mental health parity, Amy Campbell - government reorganization

11:30 - 1:00

Visit Capitol Building for conversations with legislators & ATTEND PROCLAMATION SIGNING WITH GOVERNOR

1:00 - 2:00

Be in House Gallery to be recognized with a Resolution recognizing our 90th Anniversary

2:00 - 3:00

Return to Church for Birthday Cake, and wrap-up

3:00 On your way home Contact *
* Polly Horton pollyshorton@aol.com
or 319-621-1685 to confirm space in carpool.



The League of Women Voters of Johnson County

90th Anniversary Members Lunch

Wednesday, February 24th

11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Linn Street Café

121 N. Linn St.

Menu

11:30 - Sparkling wine and Appetizers

12:00 - Main Course

Lobster bisque

Portobello Mushroom Risotto Or Grilled Salmon Salad

1:00 - Dessert: Flourless Chocolate Torte

*"I always feel the movement is a sort of mosaic. Each of us put
in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic in the end."*

Alice Paul

The cost of the lunch for members is \$16.
Please indicate your entrée choice and send your check to
Julie Pulkrabek, Treasurer
League of Women Voters of Johnson County
4698 Fox Lane NE, Iowa City IA 52240
Iowa City Iowa

Please respond by Friday, February 19, 2010

<http://www.LWVJC.org> or

League of Women Voters—Johnson County on
Facebook

Call 319-321-2601 for more information

Iowa and the 2010 Census

March 10, 2010

Meeting Room A, Iowa City Public Library

Beth Henning, State Data Center Coordinator will give an informative talk about the importance of the census, how it may affect Iowa, as well as some interesting historical background. The program is co-sponsored with the *Iowa City Public Library*.

For more information about the upcoming Census, go to <http://www.census.gov/>



The League of Women Voters on IPR

President Mary Wilson, of the League of Women Voters of the United States will "drop in" by phone to join an interview on Iowa Public Radio, Friday, February 12th. Tune in to "The Exchange", aired at 12:00 noon on WSUI, 910 AM and hear State President Myrna Loehrlein, our own Pat Jensen and new board member Dawn Suter talk about the League's history and its ongoing contributions to the lives of Iowan's. The interview is part of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County's events celebrating the achievement of the League's 90th anniversary.

Spring Events

February 1

Program Planning for LWVUS and LWVJC

2:00-4:00pm

ICPL - Room E, Second Floor

February 16

Lobby Day

9:30 – 3:00 PM

Des Moines – Calvary Baptist Church

& Capitol Building

February 24

90th Anniversary Luncheon

11:30am-1:30pm

Linn Street Café

February 27

Legislative Forum

9:30-11:30am

Coralville City Council Chambers

March 10

Census Program

12:00 PM

ICPL – Room A

April 10

Legislative Forum

9:30 – 11:30 AM

North Liberty City Council Chambers

2010 Nominations Committee has convened!

We would encourage you to share your time and talents with LWVJC. Think about the skills and experience you can bring to the League. If you value participatory government and an open, honest political process, consider joining a LWVJC committee or board.

LWVJC is an organization that serves to make democracy work at the grassroots level. Holding political candidate forums, ballot issue forums, and legislative forums is one way the League does that. These allow voters to hear from candidates, ask questions directly of candidates, and express their own views. Observing city and county boards and commissions is another way. Studying key issues to learn the facts, develop policy positions based on member input, help educate voters and advocate our positions to our lawmakers is another way. These all require the effort of volunteers.

We encourage you to seek and accept a position on a LWVJC committee or on the Board of Directors. Plus, suggest it to your friend and nominate her or him. *Polly Horton*

2010 Nominations Committee

Alison Smith

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Carol Nordquist

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Melanie Gross

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