



# THE VOTER

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County, IA  
Website: <http://www.lwvlc.org>  
January/February 2010

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## From the President

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

As we embark on a new year, 2010, LWVJC (Iowa) offers you opportunities to be an informed, active participant in government. Yes, there is a Candidate Forum for the Johnson County Board of Supervisors Special Election on Thursday, January 7, 2010 at the Iowa City Public Library from 7-8:30 pm with social time 8:30 - 9 pm, co-sponsored by LWVJC and FAIR.

Next, we invite you to come with us to Lobby Day at the State Capitol in Des Moines Tuesday,

February 16, 2010. Our new lobbyist, Amy Campbell, will be working to promote our priority positions, knowing that the League priorities most likely to move forward in the 2010 Iowa General Assembly are those that can save money. Legislators must trim close to \$1 billion from the 2010-11 state budget, and that is where they will focus their efforts, was the message heard at our Legislators' Briefing in December at The Mill.

Check the calendar for our local Legislative Forums; they will be held at three sites in January, February and April, to address the fact that we are the League of Women Voters of Johnson County.

Celebrating the 90th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters will be a fun focus in February. See Pat Jensen's article in this VOTER issue. Did you know that LWVJC was the first League in Iowa? We will celebrate our accomplishments and strive to continue the legacy. I encourage you to share your reflection/memories of experiences as members of LWVJC in the Story Bank that LWVUS and our committee are collecting. ([www.lwv.org/storybank/](http://www.lwv.org/storybank/)) Save the date Wednesday, February 24, 2010 for our luncheon event!

Polly Horton  
*President*

## Calendar of Events

*January 7*  
Candidate Forum  
Board of Supervisors  
7:00—8:30 pm  
ICPL—Room A-C

*January 19th*  
90th Anniversary interviews  
7:00-9:00pm  
ICPL—Room A-B

*January 30*  
Legislative Forum  
9:30-11:30am  
Emma Harvat Hall—  
Iowa City City Hall

*February 1*  
Program Planning for LWVUS  
and LWVJC  
2:00-4:00pm  
ICPL—Room E, Second Floor

*February 16*  
Lobby Day  
Iowa State Capitol  
Des Moines, IA

*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  
12:00pm  
ICPL—Room A

*April 10*  
Legislative Forum  
9:30-11:30am  
North Liberty City Council  
Chambers

## Save the Date— Legislative Forums

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County legislative forums will again be held in 2010. The first will be held Saturday, January 30th at Emma Harvat Hall in the Iowa City Civic Center, from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. The other forums are February 27<sup>th</sup> in the Coralville City Council Chambers, and April 10th in the North Liberty City Council Chambers. All the legislative forums will begin at 9:30 a.m.



Senators Joe Bolcom, Robert Dvorsky, James Hahn and Becky Schmitz, and Representatives Nate Willems, Larry Marek, David Jacoby, Jeff Kaufmann, Vicki Lensing, and Mary Mascher have been invited.

The forums provide an opportunity for dialogue between the legislators and their constituents in Johnson County.

The legislators present five-minute summaries of critical issues before their respective houses that are of particular interest to them. The remainder of the forum is devoted to public comments and questions, beginning with questions from the co-sponsors. The microphone is then opened to members of the audience for questions.

### SAVE THE DATE:

January 30	Emma Harvat Hall in the Iowa City City Hall
February 27	Coralville City Council Chambers
April 10	North Liberty City Council Chambers

## Iowa Census 2010

Attend this interesting program to hear a brief history of the census, some facts and trends about Iowa, and why the census is so important. This event is co-sponsored with the Iowa City Public Library.

March 10, 12:00pm in Meeting Room A, Iowa City Public Library

### Mission Statement

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.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER  
to the League of Women Voters of Johnson  
County:  
*Gertrude Ann Wade*

## 90th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters—by Pat Jensen

In 1919, at the 50<sup>th</sup> convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Iowan Carrie Chapman Catt (NAWSA's president) proposed to suffragists from across the country a League of Women Voters "to finish the fight" for suffrage and eliminate other forms of political and legal discrimination against women. The following February, the League was launched as the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was on its way to ratification. Catt said the League would be "an anomaly; we are going to be a semi-political body. We want political things; we want legislation; we are going to educate for citizenship....we have got to be non-partisan and all-partisan."

Now, 90 years later, the League is as Catt foresaw. We have been true to her idea. And now we want to celebrate not only our organization but our history and ourselves. Members are aware that the League of Women Voters nationwide will be celebrating the organization's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 14, 2010. We want to particularly celebrate the LWV of Johnson County, which was the first League in Iowa, also begun in 1920. We intend to 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.

The LWVJC "90<sup>th</sup>" Committee is busy creatively making plans to celebrate throughout the month of February. Those who attended the December brunch began to focus on the celebration by participating in the suffrage/League quiz that Lolly Eggers so outstandingly researched and led. While further plans for February are not all finalized, the committee wants members to put some dates on their calendars and take some other actions:

- **Storybank** – The LWVUS has for several years had on its website a Storybank section seeking member stories about the League (how they happened to join, what the LWV has meant to them, etc.). We would like to have

all members participate in this website and then share it locally. Send a copy to Gaylen Wobeter [gaywob@mchsi.com](mailto:gaywob@mchsi.com) by January 15.

- **Storybank II** – Nancy Lynch has volunteered to videotape the stories of those who would like to take part. This is a great way to share our stories, histories, and make the tapes available to the University of Iowa Women's Archives.
- **Conversation with the League** – We plan to ask a group of local League members and leaders to sit down for a conversation with, and about, the League which will be videotaped and then aired on local government TV channels. This also will be given to the Archives. The "conversation" is open to all members and the public, on **Tuesday, January 19 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Iowa City Public Library, Rooms A and B.**
- **THE LUNCHEON** – On Wednesday, February 24, from **11:30 – 1:30, at The Linn Street Café**, there will be a celebratory luncheon. Come lift a glass of "bubbly" to the LWV and take part in a fun, historic, "telling" event.
- **Public Relations** – There will, of course, be outreach to the community. We will seek proclamations from our local governments about the League; send press releases and opinion pieces; and do an interview on Iowa Public Radio; as well our television exposure through the storybank.

President Polly Horton has invited the Cedar Rapids/Marion and Mt. Vernon/Lisbon Leagues to join us in our activities. CR member Mary Ann Nelson is working with our committee to design and produce a special 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary poster. Working on the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee are Pat Jensen (chair), Mary Ann Bradford, Polly Horton, Dawn Suter, Gaylen Wobeter and Audrey Moeller who has just joined us. Anyone else who is interested in having a fun and fulfilling time is welcome to come along. Give us a call!

**Remember to put January 19 and February 24 on your calendars and get busy adding your story to the LWV Storybank!! More to come in next month's VOTER and by e-mail from the committee.**

**PROGRAM PLANNING FOR LWVUS & LWVJC  
ON FEB 1, 2010 AT IOWA CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ROOM-E FROM 2:00-4:00 PM**



The Importance of Program for League

One of the reasons for the political effectiveness of the League is its reputation for thorough study. The League should be aware of the political complexion and sentiments of the community. It should consider the power structure of the community, the party in power, political leadership, viewpoints of other civic organizations, labor unions, religious groups, social agencies, etc. Networking with other Leagues doing similar studies can be productive.

The higher the participation is of the members in the process, the more “grass roots” the involvement in all stages of program, from adoption to study to action. While the study committee members may become experts on issues, they should remember that materials prepared for the League members and general public should focus on the information they need to make decisions as informed citizens, not as experts or specialists in the field.

If you haven’t had a new local program for a while, consider holding a “focus group” to brainstorm with some community leaders or meet with citizens to learn what is most on their minds.

“Action is agitating, organizing, educating, pleading and persuading” said Carrie Chapman Catt, a leader of the women’s suffrage movement and founder of the League of Women Voters. Action is whatever the League does to influence government officials to implement the League’s program goals.

Setting action priorities is essential because of the need to produce a plan of action that is divided into specific steps or strategies. Determine which strategies would be best for achieving the League’s purposes: lobbying officials, testifying at hearings, holding public forums, preparing information and fact sheets, writing letters to the editor or an Op-Ed piece, circulating petitions, monitoring, joining a coalition, or informal surveys or polls.

Flexibility is called for in case your issue dies during the legislative year. Usually there is another issue for which the time is right and you can divert your activities to it.

League’s public educational and advocacy efforts allow business leaders, professionals and the general citizenry to become aware of the capabilities of League’s processes and resources. This can lead to increased financial and in-kind support of the League’s projects and publications.

Program, that is study and action, gives the League visibility. It attracts new members. It increases respect and support for the League. An active local program is the single most important characteristic of a strong local League.