



The Brown County Voter

April 4, 2012

Calendar

April 9	League board meeting 10 am Library, Everyone welcome
April 12 and 19	Candidates forums
April 13	Booth at the Health Fair, YMCA
April 21	Booth at the Earth Day, YMCA
April 30 & May 1	Poll Worker training, 6:00
May 5-6	State League Convention in Kokomo
May 14	League Board meeting 10 am Library, Everyone welcome
May 24	Forum on vote centers
June 11	League Board meeting and Annual Meeting

Candidates Forums

by Pam Raider

In the interests of time management and to cut down on nonproductive questions and to accommodate new technology, the candidate forum committee has decided to implement a few changes in our procedure this year. We will be soliciting questions from the public (and candidates) beforehand through the *Democrat* website, email or regular mail. We will also be taking questions from the audience on 3x5 cards at the forum - the materials will be present. Also, since the forum will be online through *Democrat's* website, we have the capability to take questions from the at home audience. We are hoping this will cut down on duplicate questions and make the questions more concise.

February Partnership Meeting

by Janet Kramer

The focus of the meeting was how the Partnership will implement the continuation of the Vision 2020:

1. To define the Partnership's role in going forward.
2. To bring the participants together again to re-energize.
3. Have an accountability for projects, and leaders keep everyone up dated.
4. Update, condense, and fill gaps in projects.
5. Have a measurement of success to know when we are achieving the vision.

I volunteered the League to provide a light meal for the re-organizing meeting planned for April 24. More information later.

Brown County League hosts Membership & Leadership Development Workshop

by Judith East

Gail Penworth, our state League membership chairperson, traveled to Nashville on Saturday, March 24, to present a comprehensive workshop on Membership and Leadership Development for area Leagues. Unfortunately, only Karen Kay Leonard, our state League president, attended from outside Brown County. Our League, however, had six members in attendance, and I believe we all were glad to be there (a delicious pitch-in lunch was a factor).

Gail provided each of us with a 3-ring binder divided into ten sections:

- Introduction
- Engaging Your League Board
- Outreach Best Practices
- How to be Visible All Year
- Storytelling and the LWV Storybank
- The Welcoming League
- Engaging Members to Lead
- Structures for Success
- Leading Together
- Tools You Can Use

For each topic, Gail supplemented the written materials with Power Point examples and drew ideas from the group specific to our own circumstances. The suggestions were practical and inspiring. We came away determined to follow up beginning in May (as April is so busy for our League), when we are considering dividing up the topics and taking responsibility for implementing them. Our thanks to Gail for being so helpful, and to Karen Kay for participating with us.

Part of the State position statements (more to follow)

ELECTION PROCESS

Nomination of Candidates

The goal of the primary process should be to select the best possible candidates for the political parties, with the greatest possible voter participation.

Candidates of political parties for the office of Governor and U.S. Senator should be selected in open primaries where voters do not publicly declare a party but can vote for the candidates of one party only.

Primaries should be direct. A plurality vote is sufficient.

To be nominated for the primary, each candidate for state or national office should be required to file a petition signed by a specific number of registered voters distributed geographically.

A specific period for filing should be set, with a closing date which allows time for the certification of signatures and other administrative details necessary for the preparation of the ballot.

Purge and maintain an accurate statewide voter database

Voter Registration

Indiana should require registration to verify the identity and qualifications of voters, to prevent fraud, and to maintain accurate records. Records should be purged and updated regularly.

Government at all levels, the political parties, other groups, and individual citizens should encourage citizens to register.

State and local government and the political parties carry primary responsibility for implementing registration procedures, and all citizens, the federal government, and nonpartisan political groups should be allowed to participate in voter registration.

Registration should be easy and accessible. State and local governments carry the responsibility for publicizing registration deadlines and procedures. They should

have mail-in application forms readily and always available at public offices and libraries, as well as allow political parties and other organizations to distribute forms;

ensure that the offices are conveniently located at a variety of public sites during hours suitable for the working public, and that the forms will always be accepted;

publicize widely the dates for voter registration, where forms may be obtained and the office hours for these locations; and

purge and maintain an accurate statewide voter database

As stated in the Constitution of the State of Indiana, registration should be open to citizens who are at least eighteen years of age at Election Day and have resided in the precinct for thirty days before the election.

Poll Workers

To guarantee checks and balances at the polls, precinct officials should be selected by the two major parties working under equitable regulation.

To enhance the pool of applicants, poll workers should receive reasonable compensation, including for time spent in training.

Some workers at each polling place should be allowed to work shifts rather than the entire day.

Employers should regard poll service as an excused absence from regular work, like jury duty.

The League supports efforts to broaden the pool of potential poll workers by educating citizens about the need for workers, especially from diverse groups in our communities. Young voters and members of minorities and other underrepresented groups should be recruited. Qualified residents who are sixteen or seventeen years old should be permitted to serve under adequate supervision.

Training for poll workers should be standardized throughout the state. First-time workers and those assuming new positions should be trained in their new duties. Experienced workers should be trained in all changes in the laws and regulations and should be required to attend periodic review sessions.

Dissemination of Voting Information

Through various public media, election officials should provide adequate and timely information about registration procedures, lists of candidates on the ballot, polling places, and voting procedures.

Election Procedures

Voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.

To ensure uniform application of laws throughout the state and thereby assure each voter fair and equal treatment at the polls, the responsibility to interpret Indiana election laws should remain with the state. Also, the responsibility for evaluating and approving voting devices should remain with the state.

The responsibility for the selection of voting devices should remain at the local level.

In the approval and selection of voting devices, the most important factors must be secrecy of the vote, access for voters (including accessibility for voters who have special needs), protection against fraud, and accuracy of the vote count.

There must be assurances that qualified voters whose names are not on the poll list or who are challenged will be able to vote. There should be the following options for such voters:

Provisional ballots, which must be verified and counted in a fair and timely fashion.

Certificates of error, which ensure that votes will be counted at the polling place. A voter should be allowed to vote after a telephone confirmation that a certificate will be issued. The voter should not be required to wait until the certificate arrives at the polling place.

Absentee voting should be allowed by mail, or in person at designated sites. Where feasible, counties

should have the option of having vote centers as an alternative to precinct voting places. In all cases, the integrity of the ballot must be assured.

Description of Election Day procedures should be simple, understandable, and available at each polling place both for the voters and for the poll workers (precinct election officials). Poll workers must be able to reach the election board before the polls open, during voting hours, and until their work is completed after the polls close.

Voters should have easy access to information specifying the precincts in which specific addresses are located. Official lists of write-in candidates should be posted at the polling places.

Whenever a change is made in voting devices or procedures, comprehensive retraining of election officials, which includes addressing the issues of voters with special needs, should be mandatory.

The period between the primary and the general election should be reduced in order to lower campaign costs and to help sustain voter interest. Sixty to ninety days is sufficient to conduct a statewide campaign.

Twelve hours is a sufficient amount of time for all citizens to vote at the polling sites. Each voter should be allowed adequate time to cast a ballot.

Laws on electioneering should be strictly enforced.

History of “Election Procedures”

Adopted 1975. Reorganized 2002. Revised 2011.

“Election Procedures” was revised by concurrence, followed by a board vote on January 15, 2011.

For more details of the position’s background and the record of advocacy, see above under “Election Process.”

Election Recounts

The state should maintain uniform and equitable recount procedures for state and local offices.

Local and state election officials should fully cooperate with federal officials in recounts involving U.S. senators, representatives, or the president.

Redistricting

The county commissioner districts in each county should be as nearly equal to each other in population as possible.