



The Brown County Voter

November 22, 2013

Calendar

- Tuesday, Dec. 3 Reality Store at BC Junior High
League adds voting table
- Thursday, Dec. 5 Kelley School of Business student presentation:
Brown County Wellness & Heritage Assets
7 pm, Courthouse Annex Salmon Room
Sponsored by the League
- Monday, Dec. 9 Membership Tea
4:00 downstairs at the Library
Followed by board meeting at 5:30
Everyone welcome

Please Join Us

by Julie Winn, President

The League of Women Voters of Brown County is pursuing several exciting initiatives in 2013, in addition to our schedule of usual programs.

As a follow-up to our three Community Conversations in the fall of 2011 on wellness and heritage tourism in Brown County, we are working with a team of Kelley School graduate students to develop an inventory of natural, historic and cultural assets. The team will make a public presentation at 7:00 p.m. on December 5 at the County Commissioners Meeting Room at the County Annex.

The League held a Community Conversation in July on the proposed plan for renovating the Brown County Courthouse. After a citizens' remonstrance suspended the plan, we joined the Brown County Community Foundation in facilitating fact finding on all options for addressing Courthouse needs, and will be offering a public

event on this process very soon.

The League is also participating in an assessment of Vision 2020 and the preceding 2008 Needs Assessment for the County, hoping to reenergize the implementation of this visioning initiative.

The League has not abandoned its ongoing commitment to an Observer Corps, citizens who attend the public meetings of our government bodies and follow their actions. We could definitely use your help in this regard. If you can volunteer, even occasionally, to attend a county, town or school board meeting, please contact Pam Raider at psage9@aol.com.

We would like to tell you more, as a Member/former Member/friend of the League, about what we've been doing and plan to do in future. We hope you will be available to come chat with us, learn more about our activities and share some holiday cheer at a special Board Meeting and Tea

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to be held from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 9, at the Brown County Public Library. A meeting of the League Board, to which you are also invited, will begin at 5:30. Please RSVP to me, Julie Winn, at

jmbwinn@hotmail.com.

We hope you will put the Kelley presentation December 5 and our Tea on December 9 on your calendars. We look forward to seeing you.

League Co-Sponsors Fact Finding on Courthouse

by Julie Winn

In the wake of a citizen remonstrance that suspended a proposed renovation/extension of the Courthouse for at least a year, the Brown County Community Foundation and the League of Women Voters of Brown County are partnering to pursue a fact finding initiative to support future decision-making on this topic. An ad hoc fact finding committee comprised of interested private citizens and representatives of county and town government convened October 23, and has met twice since.

The Courthouse is not meeting the current needs of its tenants and the diverse clientele that visit and use the building. The citizens who opposed the County's plan and signed the remonstrance, however, said at the time that they were concerned about cost, the process for arriving at the plan, the possibility that other options were not explored, or some combination of these.

The fact finding committee asks the community for their input. What options do you think should be at least considered? What questions do you believe need to be answered before a particular option can really be assessed? Do you have suggestions about folks in Brown County who could help answer these questions? The committee welcomes all input, which can be sent to larry@bccfn.org. The committee will hold at least one public conversation over the winter months to give the community the facts gathered and elicit further input.

Members of the ad hoc fact finding committee are Ken Birkemeier, Pam Raider, Debbie Dunbar, Al Cox, Pam Gould, Jim Schultz, Tom Vornholt, Andy Szakaly, Bob Kirlin, David Critser, John Kennard and Michel Thompson, as well as facilitators Larry Pejeau for the Brown County Community Foundation and Julie Winn for the League of Women Voters.

League Participates in Review/Update of Vision 2020 and 2008 Needs Assessment

by Julie Winn

League members have been participating in an initiative convened by the Partnership to review Vision 2020 and the 2008 Needs Assessment for Brown County, to look at progress and accomplishments and see where we need to refocus and reenergize the efforts of the county and community. Sectoral groups are meeting in November to do SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of and recommendations for the following sectors: Health, Education, Civic Leadership, Safety, Quality of Life/Environment, the Arts, Economic Development and Infrastructure, and Housing.

Dorothy Stewart Scholarship

Please think about a donation to the "Dorothy Stewart Scholarship" with the Brown County Community Foundation. Dorothy was one of our League founding members and its first president. She was killed by a pack of dogs while working on the 2000 Census. The scholarship will go to a Brown County graduating senior who is interested in a political or environmental field of study. Your tax-exempt donation provides scholarships to Brown County students interested in civics.

The Foundation is located at 91 W. Mound St. Unit 4 and the address is P.O. Box 191, Nashville 47448. This is the building at the corner of Mound and Jefferson Sts.

Support your local league with a tax deductible contribution to our education fund with a check made out to lwvin-ed. Send to PO Box 74, Nashville, IN 47448. Or, you can contribute directly to the Foundation, either to the Fund (i.e. endowment) or directly to this year's grant.

Reality Store 2013

by Judith East

The Community Resource Center, the Brown County Chamber of Commerce and many volunteers will present “Reality Store” to Brown County 8th graders on Dec. 3 this year. The Reality Store is a financial and career simulation. Many people claim that “kids today don’t know the value of money.” So how do they learn it? At the Reality Store, students confront some of the realities their parents might deal with concerning financial decisions on a limited budget. They also connect their career choices with an income based on their grades.

The students are told their income is based on being 28 years old. They are given career choices based on their GPAs and a salary based on those choices. The students then visit designated tables to spend their monthly budget on housing, cars, insurance, etc. The students also are given the option of having children and therefore child care expenses. Students who have completed college must also pay student loans. The students track their expenditures on a work sheet and must stay within their budgets. Volunteers help the students at each table with how much each option costs. Students who run out of money must either go back and reduce expenses or get a second job.

This year for the first time the League of Women Voters of Brown County will have a table for mock voter registration and voting. A map of Brown County will help students identify what voting district they live in. A paper ballot with three issues relevant to kids will be offered, and actual voting booths will be available. Students who vote will get “I Voted” stickers just like adults, and the results of the election will be reported.

Before the Reality Store, the students spend one period in their math class filling out a budget template to determine their monthly income. Many students comment afterwards that they now appreciate how much their parents have to pay for. Students also comment on how difficult it is to choose when budget determines what kind of car you drive or the house you can afford. Attaching career choices to Grade Point Average gives them a dose of “reality” in terms of how their education will affect for their income.

Observer Reports

November 2013

by Pam Raider

Important things happen in conversations or discussions that take place at the meetings which cannot be reported in the paper. By my next report, citizens should be able to view governmental meetings online; equipment to facilitate this is being installed this month.

In my report I try to spotlight what I consider most important. At the October 16 Commissioners meeting, the usual perfunctory review of claims turned into a heated discussion over the bill received from the Commissioners’ law firm, Barnes and Thornberg, in the amount of \$35,000. The Commissioners, especially Dave Anderson, were shocked to learn that they were charging \$550 an hour. John Kennard called it a costly lesson. They need to look more thoroughly at it before paying – in a subsequent meeting the bill had been paid and I learned another bill for \$18,000 has been incurred.

We heard a lengthy discussion about whether part-time employees (i.e. Commissioners and Council members) should get county health insurance. They voted no at this meeting; however, it was revisited at a later meeting - unsure how ACA affects it. Thrive Alliance has taken over the Area on Aging which has run our local Access van. When the contract runs out in December, they will not renew it as it is a big money loser. Commissioners are looking at Johnson County picking up the management of our county. We also learned there were four offers on the sock factory, at least one involving the unassembled building.

The County Council met on October 21 to finalize their 2014 budget and approve moving monies from different accounts. Dave Critzer announced that no money has been put in the rainy day fund this year and, with revenues projected to be \$500,000 short, there may have to be county lay-offs in four years. County Solid Waste Management makes a plea for CAGIT money for 2015 budget as decreasing revenues have challenged their ability to keep funding operations.

Commissioners meeting November 6: Judy Stewart made a presentation on recouping Title IVD monies back to the county which would total \$18,000

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to \$22,000. Sherriff Followell requested monies for new trucks. Sycamore Land Trust requires Commissioner's signature to apply for grant to buy 27 acres – Trevlac Bluffs. Changes were made to new logging ordinance due to one logger who has caused a lot of damage. Hickory Ridge will become new polling place in Hamblen 2 Township. We also learned from Sara Fox that our Emergency Management team got an award for most improved county.

And finally, I attended a meeting of the Nashville Arts Commission on November 13. Nashville is one of only five in state with designation of arts village. Soon after the first of the year, several outdoor art pieces will appear around town. Jim Connor has been engaged to make a leaf sculpture at the CVB plaza and similar leaves will be placed around town at various art and entertainment venues. T.C. Steele is also working on sculpture garden for next year. These

artist idea sharing meetings will continue.

Our League welcomes people to join the observer corps. It is fairly easy (and entertaining) since you don't have to present anything or give an opinion. If interested, contact Pam Raider at 988-0035

Partnership

by Janet Kramer

The October 22 meeting featured Larry Pejeau from the Brown County Coummunity Foundation and Julie Winn from the League discussing the next steps for the Courthouse needs and expansion. A "Community Conversation" will be scheduled to answer all the questions on all the options. But right now we need to gather the experts to determine the questions and concerns of the community and have complete clarification on the answers and provide a facilitator for the meeting.

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