

Emily Hall '68

oters Service

HANDBOOK

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

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VOTERS SERVICE HANDBOOK

Introduction

This Handbook has been written as a reference manual which cannot attempt to cover the endless possibilities of League Voters Service. What any League can do in Voters Service is limited only by the imaginative and creative goals of its Board. An all-inclusive Handbook for Voters Service is an impossibility.

It is our hope that this Handbook will serve as a basic aid to stimulate the thinking of all Voters Service chairmen—not to overwhelm a new Voters Service chairman, nor to appear repetitive to a sophisticated, experienced chairman.

It is important that choices of Voters Service activity be made on a basis of sound planning by the whole League Board. It is NOT envisioned that any one League should try to do all or even most of the kinds of Voters Service treated in this manual. It is much more rewarding for the community and the League to do a few Voters Service activities well than many in less than outstanding fashion, tempting though a large Voters Service plan may be.

This Handbook represents a distilling of the Voters Service experience of many Leagues in many places over many years. But this does not mean that other methods to carry out Voters Service activities may not be used.

The techniques that are uniquely the League's and that must be executed with careful understanding have received detailed treatment—for example, candidates questionnaires and candidates meetings. Other Voters Service techniques involving learning about government and politics must be so tailor-made that a great deal of detail is not essential in such a Handbook.

The difference in treatment of various Voters Service techniques results in apparent imbalance in attention given to various subjects. But a neatly balanced literary production is not our aim.

Voters Service chairmen are unusually dedicated League leaders. We know your Voters Service will be both rewarding and fun.



"Ever since your Mom joined the League of Women Voters you think you know all about everything."

Stavin

Part One—Definition and Planning

I What Is Voters Service?

Definition

To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government is the purpose of the League of Women Voters and the very essence of Voters Service. To educate members and the public about government and politics by providing easily understandable information and encouragement to participate, and to reach as far as possible into the community—these are the goals of Voter Service.

Election Voters Service encourages people to register and to vote and enables them to vote as informed citizens by providing factual information about candidates and issues. Non-election Voters Service involves people in learning about and participating in government and politics at any level.

Nonpartisanship

As in all League activity, nonpartisanship is a basic philosophy of Voters Service. It is absolutely essential that the League never support or oppose a party, a faction of a party, or any candidate—whether in partisan or non-partisan elections.

Voters Service and Program

Voters Service is completely distinct from Program in the League. Work on Program

may result in the League's taking stands on issues. In contrast, the purpose of Voters Service is to provide the citizen with unbiased, factual information as a foundation for reaching his own decisions.

Voters Service and Program should be treated separately: it is strongly recommended that League support of or opposition to issues on the ballot not appear on any Voters Service material, that Program and Voters Service material be distributed separately, and that Voters Service speakers on ballot issues not mention League support or opposition unless directly questioned about League stands. In discussing a League stand, speakers should clearly distinguish between Voters Service and action on Program for their audiences.

Voters Service—For Whom?

Theoretically, Voters Service is directed at every citizen of voting age in the community. It also strives to motivate young adults to participate in government and politics. Practically, the League Board has to choose which groups of people to try to reach and which geographical areas to cover. To make such choices, the Board must consider overall goals for Voters Service based on community needs, current League interests, time, resources, and possibilities of cooperation with other organizations.

"Did we decide to have the Get Out The Vote Campaign before or after the election?"



Spicard

II Total Board Planning For Voters Service

That Voters Service planning is a responsibility of the *whole* League Board cannot be over-emphasized. The Board should not merely accept, reject, or modify proposals of the Voters Service Chairman, nor should planning be done in piecemeal fashion. Only after goals for the year's Voters Service have been established by the total Board should the Voters Service Committee make detailed plans for Board consideration. It is highly desirable that goals be set before summer to avoid delay in Committee planning.

One way to accomplish total Board discussion of Voters Service goals is to schedule Voters Service planning along the following lines:

1. The Voters Service Chairman is selected and forms a small Committee. She cooperates with the President in planning Board discussion.
2. It is helpful if the Committee can give briefing material to Board members before the discussion to aid them in deciding on goals.
3. The total Board discusses Voters Service for the coming year (or two) and sets specific goals.
4. The Committee prepares detailed plans to achieve goals for proposal to the whole Board.
5. The Board discusses proposals and decides on a detailed Voters Service plan for the whole year.
6. The Voters Service Committee implements the plan decided upon.

The Chairman and the Committee

If possible the Voters Service Chairman should serve for a two-year period, so that she can help carry out a well-rounded plan which includes both election and nonelection Voters Service. She should have a small permanent Committee to help plan but *not* necessarily to do the projects.

Board Briefing

If information on the following subjects is fairly easy to obtain from the Board of Elections and League Annual Reports and files, the Committee might well assemble it and get it to the full Board several days before the meeting at which goals will be discussed.

1. **An election calendar** to include these dates:
 - deadline for filing to run for office for each election
 - registration deadline for each election
 - precinct meeting dates
 - primary election dates
 - political party election date
 - presidential election date (if pertinent)
 - congressional election date
 - state election date
 - local election date
 - school board election date(An election calendar should be a stock item of every League—to publicize in the community, to print in the League bulletin, and to give to contributors, to the media, to schools, etc.)
2. **Lists of Voters Service techniques**—(election and nonelection, and for particular groups (see pages 50-51). From these lists Board members can see at a glance broad categories of Voters Service activities that Leagues sometimes plan. These are not definitive lists, especially for nonelection Voters Service because of its wide range of possibilities, but they will serve to crank up the Board's imagination and help to evolve an overall plan for the year.
3. **Registration and voting statistics for your League area.** These may be so helpful in planning that it is worth some effort to obtain them.
4. **A report and evaluation of the preceding year's Voters Service.**
5. **A brief description of patterns in your League's Voters Service over a longer period**—six or eight years for example. Voters Service pages from Annual Reports may point up the fact, for instance, that your League is in a rut in election Voters Service and has done next to nothing in nonelection Voters Service.

Setting Goals

The Board should first consider the possibility of conflict between *Voters Service and Program work* in terms of League resources, time, community image and also the likelihood of an action campaign on a Program item during an election year.

Are League resources sufficient to emphasize election Voters Service and also urge a YES (or a NO) vote on a ballot issue? Even if they are, would the election Voters Service take the punch away from an action campaign? Would the public have trouble distinguishing between Voters Service on ballot issues and League action on an issue? At times League Boards must choose between Voters Service or an action campaign, decide on a little of both, or perhaps emphasize Voters Service before the primaries and then switch to a concentrated action campaign for a YES (or a NO) vote in the general election.

Community Needs

The Board should also decide what the community needs most in Voters Service. The following questions can stimulate a Board's thinking while assessing community needs even if answers are not immediately available.

Registering and Voting

- What percentage of the people of voting age in your community are registered?
- What percentage of those registered vote—

| <i>in primaries for</i> | <i>in general elections for</i> | <i>in special elections for</i> |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| presidential election (if pertinent) | president members of Congress | bond issues charter revisions |
| congressional elections | state officials | annexations |
| state elections | the judiciary | consolidations |
| local elections | local officials school board | |

- Are registration and voting procedures convenient for all voters?
- If not, would more people register if mobile or neighborhood registration, or evening or weekend registration were available?
- Are segments of your community's population afraid to register because they believe registration lists are used for other purposes?
- Is there good coverage by the media of candidates' views and of simple explanations of ballot issues?
- Do voters have many opportunities to meet with candidates for public office?
- What do the registration and voting profiles show about the participation of various segments of your community? Do some groups need foreign language materials? Simplified election Voters Service materials?
- How many students finish high school each year in your community? Depending on your state's voting age, these persons will soon be first-time voters. Does your League do anything special to reach them?

Involvement in Government and Politics

- Is there an active two-party system in your community?
- Is there considerable grass roots participation in the political parties, or are they run by a few people?
- Do citizens show active interest in their local government, school board, schools? How?
- Is adult education in government and politics available?
- How well could your family and your neighbors answer the quiz questions in *Do You Know the ABC's of Your Town's Government?* (LWVUS).
- What are the biggest governmental problems in your community? Recreation? Planning and zoning? Schools? Tax rates? Transportation?
- Does a forum exist for community discussion of such problems?

Special Groups

- Do your schools offer courses in civics? Are classes well supplied with good material on government and politics? Are mock elections, mock governmental operations, or "Go-Sees" part of the courses?
- Are students at some point before graduation taken to visit the state legislature?
- Does your League offer speakers and materials to youth groups in your community—e.g., Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts working on citizenship badges?
- Are there many new residents who may want to know how their new community is governed?
- Do you know how many residents become naturalized citizens each year? Can the League do anything to help them become naturalized citizens and then to register and vote?
- Are there poverty programs in your community where the League can help with leadership and discussion techniques or with subject matter?
- Does your community have migrant workers who can use League help with elementary citizenship matters?

Pinpointing Needs

After considering these questions, your Board will have some picture of the way its community exercises political responsibility. It should now see clearly where the need is greatest for particular kinds of *both* election and nonelection Voters Service. Discussion of which Voters Service activities will best meet your community's needs can then be developed by referring to the lists of techniques in the briefing material. A long list of possible ways in which your League can fill community Voters Service needs may evolve, which can be pared down to practical length by determining those activities which will also best serve the interests of your League. The Board should consider:

- Which Voters Service projects has your community come to expect of the League? How would the League

- image be affected if this year the League decided against initiating any or all of these tried and true activities?
- Which are already being done or perhaps being planned by
 - other organizations?
 - schools or colleges?
 - newspapers, TV, or radio?
 - the parties?
- Which of these activities will enhance the relationship of the League with
 - the media?
 - the political parties?
 - public officials?
 - the schools?
- Which are likely to improve the League image in regard to
 - finance?
 - recruiting new members for the League?
 - activating presently nonactive members?
- Which might engender the most enthusiasm and cooperation of your members?
- Which would best utilize the experience and skills of your League? In other words, which activities might your League accomplish most successfully?
- Which would best stretch the minds and talents of your members?
- Which would be something new and challenging—possibly the most meaningful for the future of your League?

From the melding of (1) community needs, (2) relevant Voters Service projects, and (3) decisions as to which projects would be most rewarding to community and League will emerge overall Voters Service goals for the coming year (or two years)—broad goals for which detailed plans will later be tailored.

Developing Plans

Armed with a Board decision on goals, the Voters Service Committee now works up detailed plans to take back to the Board. Wherever possible, alternatives should be suggested to help the Board in its final decisions. Estimates of costs and necessary personnel should be included, but planning exactly to the penny of the Voters Service budget is not necessary as this comes later when the whole Board discusses plans.

Plans should include some innovations. Consider seriously what groups your Board wants most to reach. Establish some priorities. Take the initiative in exploring opportunities for cooperation; some other organization or the press may also be working on just this project. Read SWAP SHOPS from LWVUS or from state Leagues. Consider whether some of the

ideas new to your League would fit into your overall Voters Service goals. Draw up a *Voters Service calendar* in which the planned election and nonelection Voters Service activities are assigned approximate dates.

Board Responsibility

It is the Board's responsibility to evaluate Voters Service planning in terms both of the total League year operation and of the member's reaction. The Board guards League policies and determines priorities to keep plans in all League areas balanced and within the capabilities of leaders and members. When plans proposed by the Voters Service Committee are dovetailed into the total League calendar for the year (or for two years), how do they look?

Finance

When plans developed by the Committee are recommended to the Board, the time has arrived to talk money. A decision must be made as to how each project will be financed. Ideally, the amount budgeted for Voters Service represents challenging thinking and has been arrived at imaginatively. If so, it may be adequate for a forward-looking Voters Service plan.

On the other hand, some League Boards do not feel they should be limited by the budget and find ways to supplement budgeted Voters Service funds. Leagues often seek *extra funds in the community* for a specific Voters Service project—one which might have special appeal to an individual, a business firm or industry, an organization or foundation. For example, a student trip to the state legislature might be financed by a civic organization, or a business firm might pay for printing a registration flyer.

Many Leagues make a regular practice of *selling Voters Service materials* in quantity to business and industry, to organizations, to

labor unions, to political parties, and occasionally to individuals. It is all right to sell League Voters Service materials to a political party if the material has been made available to all parties. It is not essential that all parties buy it. Leagues will sometimes include a box in Voters Guides asking for contributions for Voters Service materials.

Leagues try to sell as many Voters Service materials as possible so they can distribute large amounts of free materials in such places as shopping centers, schools, or low-income areas. *Prepublication quantity orders* for registration flyers, candidates questionnaires, and pros and cons of ballot issues are solicited. Once a League has made a reputation for accurate, attractive, completely nonpartisan Voters Service materials, the public is eager to preorder. Business and industry buy Voters Service publications for employees as well as customers.

Sometimes Leagues seek *contributions of materials or services* from business and industry or from community organizations. Paper, posters, signs, and billboards are frequently donated, as are designing, art work, printing, and distribution of all kinds of Voters Service publications. Printing often is done at a discount as a public service. If approached well ahead of deadlines, printers have been known to donate to the League ends of paper left over from commercial runs. While the time element can be a drawback in using this kind of material, perhaps your League can do so effectively with a little extra planning. If materials or printing are free or at a reduced rate, the League can seldom dictate deadlines.

Another way to stretch Voters Service money is to seek *cooperation from newspapers* in printing candidates questionnaires and ballot explanations. If a newspaper will print the entire questionnaire or set of explanations either in the paper or as an inserted supplement, distribution is automatic to a sizable

segment of the community's adult population. Many newspapers will also print extra copies of the questionnaire for additional distribution by the League either free or at a cost lower than a commercial printer's because the type has already been set.

Cooperation with other organizations may prove fruitful in financing publications. This happens less frequently than with such activities as candidates meetings; however, some businesses do cooperate with Leagues on Voters Guides, registration flyers, etc.

Distribution costs can be sliced drastically through the *cooperation of business and community organizations*. For example, public utilities, banks, and department stores are often willing to enclose a Voters Service flyer in their monthly mailings. School systems occasionally distribute Voters Service publications by having each student take a copy home. Supermarkets cooperate by having their packers put Voters Service publications into grocery bags. Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts deliver Voters Service materials door to door, frequently covering each residence and place of business in a community. (For more on distribution methods, see page 49.) Television and radio are of course an important means of "distributing" Voters Service information without cost to the League. Leagues with extensive experience in TV programming for Voters Service have even *sold their production skills* to TV stations for this type of program.

Decisions involving money and resources for Voters Service really boil down to one basic generality: a League can *usually* find resources for any Voters Service it wants to do badly enough. Tremendous effort may be required, in a particular situation, to supplement the budget substantially or to find sufficient personnel. But if Voters Service goals, and the implementing plans, are truly challenging and enthusiastically sold to the membership, means can be found to carry out these plans.

Personnel

Personnel is another League resource that must be measured by the Voters Service Committee in planning projects. Then the Board must make some decisions. Which projects can be directed by the Committee without additional leadership help? Should the Voters Service Chairman or someone else head a project? Perhaps some off-Board leadership assistance is needed for a particular activity. The Voters Service Chairman should not be overloaded with primary responsibility for individual projects to the point where she can no longer oversee the whole Voters Service operation. How many League members does each activity need as a minimum and as a maximum? (Projects can be overstaffed!) What will it take to sell League members on participating, for example, in registration drives, researching and writing ballot explanations, seeing Voters Service publications through to the printer, managing distribution, contacting schools about nonelection Voters Service programs, working with adult groups on simplified practical politics courses?



One-shot activities appeal to many League members who hesitate to become involved in year-around Program committee work. Voters Service is also a good way to involve new members in carrying out League purpose.

Well-conceived recruitment campaigns to enlist member participation are rewarding. Provocative shorts on Voters Service projects could be run in the League bulletin before recruitment begins. Members of the Voters Service Committee could visit the units (if not too numerous) or could attend the briefing meeting for the units to speak on upcoming projects to make them come to life. They could be described in terms of the groups of people you will be reaching—the difference Voters Service will make to the participation of these groups in government and politics.

When recruiting personnel, announce that briefing meetings will be held for workers on a big project. Briefing will give members confidence and make whatever they are doing more effective. Have them act out mock situations—door-to-door registration drives, telephone information service, speaking on ballot issues, even moderating a candidates meeting.

Acquiring personnel is really a matter of enthusiasm and salesmanship on the part of the Board and the Voters Service Committee. If the rewards of doing Voters Service are imaginatively projected, member participation will materialize. Former workers will want to be repeat workers; they already know the joy and fun of Voters Service.

Implementation

When proposed plans have been discussed in terms of financing and personnel and in terms of their relation to both overall Voters Service goals and total League activity for the year, the Board is ready to decide upon the recommendations of the Voters Service Committee. Its decisions then go back to the Committee for implementation.

Part Two—Techniques for Election Voters Service

I Encouraging People to be Candidates

Chronologically, enlisting the interest of qualified citizens to run for office is the first step in election Voters Service. Your Board has perhaps discussed this step and, recognizing its importance, may have decided to make an effort to encourage qualified persons to want to hold public office.

This kind of Voters Service is a selling job, with an unusual product. It must be done with special attention to the League's nonpartisanship. It is important in partisan elections and particularly in nonpartisan elections where there is seldom any kind of political organization to work on getting candidates for office.

The League's function is to provide information about running for office and to stimulate citizen motivation to seriously consider running for office. Months before the deadline for filing as candidates, the League may elaborate on the offices to be filled at the next election through newspaper articles, radio and TV interviews, speakers at many kinds of meetings, and letters to other organizations. It may describe in detail the responsibilities and duties of the positions, fit them into the overall picture of city or county government, mention where each job may lead to at a higher level, and emphasize the intangible rewards of public office for the individual and for the community.

The League can focus attention on the filing process itself, publicizing dates, places, fees and requirements such as signatures on filing petitions. This information should certainly be available in League files, and it could be used in League bulletins, on radio/TV programs, etc.

"Go-See" trips to government offices and to meetings of governmental bodies can stir up interest in officeholding. Sometimes Leagues schedule annual parties for their government officials. A strong observer program is an excellent way to educate League members about the work of public officials and perhaps to arouse in members an interest in running for office. Interviewing incumbents in a nonelection period or having them speak at open League meetings is another way to call a public office to the attention of people who are likely to be qualified to compete for the office. League members who are officeholders are glad to share with other members their reasons for seeking office and their experiences in office. League bulletins may suggest that members consider becoming candidates. The importance of qualified candidates can also be stressed indirectly at meetings on many League subjects.

II Encouraging People To Register

Your League Board may have decided to focus on registration and has determined the techniques it wishes to use. The Voters Service Committee plans and executes the details of these techniques. The League may work in at least three different ways to encourage registration: (1) by urging election officials to make registration as convenient as possible for all potential voters; (2) by informing as many potential voters as it can reach about the facts of registration; and (3) by carrying out special projects to urge people to register and actually helping them to register.

Making Registration Convenient

Any Voters Service activity to encourage registration should begin with a hard look at the registration process in your community for citizens of voting age wherever they may live or work or whatever their working hours may be. Do the existing registration procedures deter any citizens from registering? Not every person who wants to register can take time from his work to travel what might be a long distance to register during business hours on a weekday. And often he may find long lines of people ahead of him. The period in the year in which registration is permitted can also be an obstacle. The public's interest in voting increases as an election approaches; if it is not possible to register fairly close to election time, many people may needlessly be denied their right to vote.

First gather information on registration convenience in your community—dates, locations, hours, and the customary length of lines. If the existing circumstances are not conducive to easy registration, what can the League do to improve them?

Talk first with your election officials. Find out which aspects of registration are determined by state election law and which are decided by the local board of elections.

Qualifications for registration—age, residence requirements, literacy requirements, purging conditions, and registration period—are usually a matter of state law. But hours and locations are usually local matters which can be changed much more easily than state law. (A local League cannot take action in any matter involving a state election law, unless its state League has an election law item on its program on which consensus has been reached involving the particular point in question, and the local League has state permission to do so.)

Urge your election officials to make registration more accessible to all. Offer to help with paper work or to train additional registrars. Volunteer League members to be deputized as registrars if this is permitted in your state. Sometimes it is permitted but not promoted by a local board of elections.

Suggest neighborhood registration locations and ask to have some evening and weekend hours. Some communities have occasional registration in places such as libraries and firehouses. (The latter are sometimes a more popular location than are schools.)

The interest and help of your newspaper editors and radio/TV contacts as well as other organizations can be sought. In some communities all it takes to broaden opportunities to register is for the election officials to become convinced that the public does want additional hours or locations.

The process of registering by mail should be well publicized by the League, if in your state civilians can register by mail who do not come under the Federal Voting Assistance Act.¹ Almost half the states permit all qualified civilians to do this.

¹ Members of the Armed Forces, the Merchant Marine, civilian employees of the U.S. serving overseas and members of religious groups or welfare agencies assisting the members of the Armed Forces, their spouses and dependents are covered by the Federal Voting Assistance Act to varying degrees according to state election law.

Informing People About Registration

Describing the registration process is one of the most important tasks a League performs. Leagues do so in publications of many kinds (leaflets, flyers, cards, posters, mimeographed sheets), in talks to a variety of audiences, in announcements over radio and TV and in newspapers, over the telephone, door to door, from Voters Service booths. Sometimes registration information is combined with other voting information.

State Leagues often publish registration flyers for distribution by local Leagues; however, since detailed information about time and place come from the local board of elections, many local Leagues do flyers also. All League registration and voting publications should contain the name, address, and telephone number of the local board of elections and of the League if it has an office.

A potential voter needs to know *what registration is*:

- What questions he must answer, how he must identify himself, whether he must swear to accuracy of statements.
- Where to register (the Leagues sometimes produce maps of registration locations).
- When to register.
- Who can register *by mail* and how this is done.
- How to enroll in a political party and what commitment this entails.
- How to change party identification if he so desires.
- Whether he can register before the requirements are met (providing they will be met before the next election date).

He needs to know *who can register*, including the qualifications for registering:

- Citizens (in various states only citizens who are not criminals, idiots, insane, paupers).
- Naturalized citizens (what papers they must have to register).
- Proof of literacy (where pertinent).
- Residence—in state, county, city or town. Pay special attention to new legislation permitting newcomers to vote for President and Vice President only, before they are able to meet the state's residence requirement if they are otherwise qualified to register. Check also for legislation permitting former residents of the state to vote in presidential elections until they can qualify to register in their new state.

He needs to know *when to reregister*:

- In some states a voter must register before each election. In most states registration is permanent, providing the registered person votes in an election at specified intervals (every two or four years).
- After a name is changed by court action or marriage.
- Upon changing his address, a voter must notify the election board.

Urging People to Register

While an essential step, wide distribution of registration information seldom increases registration substantially. If your League Board has decided to make a really big registration effort, additional techniques must be used—with some person-to-person contact. Is your League seeking a gain in the whole community or in target areas of low registration and voting participation? Does it wish to make a special attempt to reach first-time voters, new residents, recently naturalized people, inner city people?

Working alone, Leagues can urge people to register in many ways. Cooperating with the board of elections, with individuals, and with groups, Leagues can plan other projects to promote registration. Some of these cooperative efforts might start with checking names of people already on registration lists against other lists—street directories, club rosters, church congregations, professional lists, lists of tenants, union membership, college personnel directories, or any other available list of adults living in your community. Then the project can make a special effort to reach those you find unregistered. This is arduous, time-consuming work but it pays off bountifully. On the other hand, if time is all important, a saturation door-to-door technique can be productive.

The League may give emphasis to first-time registrations by writing to former members of high school classes who should now be reaching voting age, urging them to register, enclosing information, and offering League help. Sometimes Leagues give Birthright Parties for first voters, often in cooperation with large business firms or colleges, or send Happy Birthright cards. A special "pitch" for college students to register before leaving home is a popular League technique. If students may register by mail in your state, publicize this. A special focus on absentee registration (and voting) by military personnel

and their families and by overseas federal employees should be part of any registration plan. Through newspaper articles residents are asked to remind absent relatives to make an effort to register.

To reach new citizens, your League may obtain lists of newly naturalized residents from the naturalization court nearest your community. Many Leagues attend naturalization ceremonies and then offer to accompany the new citizen immediately to the registration office. He has the necessary papers with him and is usually eager to use his new citizenship without delay.

Reaching Others

Names of new residents are often furnished to Leagues by utility companies, real estate agencies, or the school system. Although not yet qualified to vote in state and local elections, they may be able to vote in presidential elections. To do so, they must fill out special forms instead of registering.

New apartment houses, public housing developments, hospitals, and nursing homes are often special targets of person-to-person registration canvassing. Handicapped people can be offered special League help through a newspaper ad or a radio/TV announcement. To focus on particular voting precincts, either organize a door-to-door campaign or develop a list of unregistered residents (name, address and telephone number). Then telephone or call on these people and mail them registration flyers. If your League can provide babysitters or transportation to the registration location, this may enable some people to register, but usually few would-be voters avail themselves of these League services.

Techniques to Make An Impact

If your state permits deputizing, consider encouraging League members to act as registrars. (For a presidential election in one

large state, 750 League members registered over 50,000 people.)

Voters Service booths—on street corners, in shopping centers, supermarkets, and department stores—provide a way to call attention to registration, to distribute registration flyers, and actually to register voters and take changes in name and address, if League members may be deputized. Sometimes Leagues conduct special drives in banks, savings and loan associations, factories, offices of large business firms, union meeting halls, churches, retirement homes, convalescent hospitals, county fairs, and at meetings of other groups.

Your League can decorate a station wagon or some kind of truck, call it a "votemobile," and drive it in parades, around the city, park it at football and baseball games, at shopping centers and on college campuses. League members can distribute information from the votemobile and answer questions. They can also demonstrate a voting machine if the votemobile is large enough and a machine can be obtained.

Bumper stickers, posters, bus cards, billboards, and banners saying, for example, "Register Now—Vote Later," TV slides, postal meter slugs and marquee slogans, "Grippers Permits" for those who have registered—these and many other visual aids have been used effectively by many Leagues.

City-Wide or Target-Area Registration Campaigns

Recently more and more Leagues have discovered that well-organized registration campaigns utilizing the energies and talents of many groups in a community can be highly successful for city-wide registration or for specific target areas, such as inner city election precincts.

Depending on the size of your League and the size of your community, your League may be able to involve in a city-wide cooperative registration effort government officials, civic,

service and social organizations, youth groups, business and industry, educational institutions, churches, professional groups, political parties, labor organizations, newspapers, radio, and TV. The League as sponsoring organization might approach these groups with a plan in broad outline, perhaps a theme, some specific ideas, and concrete work materials. This kind of project needs intensive advance planning and requires the development of a clear presentation of objectives to use in urging cooperation. Additional ideas for the campaign should be solicited from the groups approached, and finally the League should ask them to suggest how they might contribute to this effort—for example, by giving their time, the use of facilities, and funds.

If your League is in a central city with surrounding suburban Leagues, after consulting your state League, consider asking suburban members to join in any kind of a massive city campaign you are planning. If the core-city League in your area is planning a large registration drive and yours is the suburban League, consider offering assistance.

In a target-area campaign the League may sometimes play a supportive role with indigenous groups more successfully than a leadership role. In many instances the planning and the execution of a campaign cannot be done effectively by other than residents of a target area, but the League techniques and materials may be adapted to good advantage by the indigenous groups.

In any kind of a community effort spearheaded by the League—whether it concerns registration, getting out the vote, or any other League activity—the League begins with the tremendous advantage of knowing government officials and being known by them, especially for nonpartisanship, accuracy, and practical accomplishment. The League is accustomed to producing effective literature, and it knows how to plan good publicity. The challenge is to help other groups to organize

into meaningful action, to seek out effective leadership, to acquire many extra workers, and to use League know-how in financing or obtaining contributions of services.

The rewards to your League of a concerted effort may go far beyond the immediate goals. They may consist of intangibles such as new

concepts of responsibility for League members and greatly increased communication within and between areas of your community.

See pages 44ff. regarding Voters Service with particular groups of voters. Refer to *Voting is People Power* (League of Women Voters Education Fund, April 1967). Voters Service SWAP SHOPS (LWVUS) describe a variety of League techniques for the entire community.



"No, Mom can't come to the phone. But I can tell you where to register."

"Election coming up!"



III Informing The Voter

I. Candidates Questionnaires

Candidates Questionnaires, Voters Guides, Candidates Information Sheets, Voters Scoreboards, Election Extras, Voters Information Bulletins—call them what you will—are without doubt the most popular of all Voters Service techniques. Once a community has seen this kind of League Voters Service performed effectively, it wants Voters Guides forevermore. And to provide voters with a means of comparing candidates' views in an unbiased fashion is to carry out League purpose very directly. Perhaps your Board has decided to publish a candidates questionnaire. If possible, it is wise to appoint a person other than the Voters Service Chairman to direct this project.

Responsibility

Responsibility for producing a candidates questionnaire is of several kinds.

Formulating the questions is the primary responsibility of the League at the level of government corresponding to that of the offices being contested although a League at a lower level may be permitted to add a question or to omit one. For example, a state League formulates questions for candidates for gov-

ernor or for state legislator; a local League formulates questions for candidates for mayor, city council, or the school board.

If a local League wishes to include county-level candidates in its Voters Guide and if no county League or Council exists, it may obtain state League permission to cooperate with any other Leagues in the county to formulate questions for county-level candidates. If there is a county League or Council, the Leagues represented may rotate responsibility for the county questionnaire.

Contacting the candidates to answer the questionnaire, either by letter or by personal interview, and **gathering the replies** may be delegated to the League at the level that represents the candidates' constituency rather than that of his office. If a state League collects answers from candidates for state offices or from congressional candidates, it makes the replies available to local Leagues for their use.

Publishing the replies of the candidates of any level of government is a local League's privilege. If state Leagues publish candidates questionnaires covering candidates for state and congressional offices, local Leagues either distribute the state questionnaire with their local guides or incorporate the state material into their guides.

Nature of the Questionnaire

The who, what, when, where, and how of the questionnaire must be decided once the local League Board determines that a candidates questionnaire is to be done in this election year. The Voters Service Committee should make these decisions for Board approval.

Financing the questionnaire has already been decided by the Board when approving Voters Service plans for the year (see page 8). On this will depend how large a project the candidates questionnaire will be, the number of offices that can be covered, whether other than local candidates will be included, what format will be used, and what extra material will go into it (e.g., sample ballot, voting locations, etc.). Ideally, your League might aim for free distribution and saturation coverage for its community. Practically, the League will probably decide to charge for the candidates questionnaire wherever the traffic will bear it and have free distribution in other areas. Although Leagues, of course, welcome contributions for single copies of a questionnaire, such financing cannot be relied upon. Many Leagues now charge a small amount (2½ cents apiece, for example) to Voters Service customers such as industrial, commercial, educational, and political organizations. Candidates, of course, are *never* charged for questionnaires. Cooperation of this kind between the League and industry or the League and educational institutions provides good publicity. (For other ideas about Voters Service financing, turn to pages 6-7.)

Whether the candidates questionnaire should be done for the primary or the general election or both depends on money and political factors. Which of these elections will have the closest races, less coverage from the media, more voter interest? Do both major parties hold primaries? The latter question is not an arbitrarily decisive factor one way or another. If a questionnaire is done for candidates of a one-party primary, one

should also be done for general election candidates of both major parties.

When candidates questionnaires are published for a primary election and also for the general election, a new set of questions is not necessary for the second questionnaire. Most Leagues use the same questions for the general election, submitting them to any independent candidates and to the candidates of any party which did not hold a primary election. To the winners of the primary election, the League at the same time submits the answers candidates had provided for the questionnaire before the primary, in case they now wish to make any changes in their replies. A covering letter states that their earlier cooperation was appreciated and these replies will be used again for the general election candidates questionnaire unless they are heard from by a certain date.

In deciding **which offices to include**, consider the following points: Does the election cover more than one level of office? Will your state or county League publish a candidates questionnaire, or will it supply candidates' answers for use by the local League? Whether or not you incorporate state-wide candidates into your candidates questionnaire, you probably will want to include state representatives or congressional candidates running from your League area. Do the important offices receive wide press and radio/TV coverage? The minor offices? Whenever space permits, include less publicized offices in a questionnaire.

The possibility of newspaper cooperation in publishing the candidates questionnaire has top priority in committee planning for this will directly affect decisions about content, distribution, and costs. Every effort should be made by the League President, Voters Service Chairman, Public Relations Chairman, or whoever has the most rapport with your newspapers to convince one that printing a League candidates questionnaire in a regular edition is a good idea. Samples of such printings are on file in the national office of the

League of Women Voters of the U.S. Newspapers in cities and towns of all sizes do an effective job of publishing League candidates questionnaires, usually for no fee. Cooperating with a newspaper is not only much less expensive than doing a candidates questionnaire alone, but also takes a large part of the distribution burden off the League. Any extra time involved in working with the paper to compile questions or to tailor copy to newspaper space requirements is well worth the effort.

In working with newspapers, remember that while cooperation will be a two-way street, League policies should prevail if the League name appears on a questionnaire. All candidates for the same office should be treated alike, which means that views of minor party candidates for the office being covered should be included. If a newspaper plans to adapt League material, ask to review the adaptation, explaining your commitment to the candidates. Newspapers will sometimes want to aid in drafting questions as well as deciding what offices are to be covered and what biographical information is to be included. The questions must be unbiased and fair. If drastic cutting is necessary for printing, an office should be omitted rather than the views of some of the candidates.

The approach to editing a candidates questionnaire may be different for League and newspaper. Any difference should be ironed out in the beginning. League procedure is to state word limitations to the candidates and to assure that replies adhering to these limitations will not be edited. If editing becomes necessary, the edited replies must be resubmitted to the candidate for his signature. This may take time which newspapers frequently do not provide for. Try to get permission to proofread the newspaper copy.

If a newspaper is not going to publish your candidates questionnaire, **what other format** will be best? Quantity considerations rather

than quality should prevail. Newsprint is inexpensive and adequate for this one-shot purpose. Some Leagues use a full newspaper-sheet size; others find tabloid size more convenient. Black on white is the general rule, but occasionally a color is used on the cover. It is a good idea to use photographs of candidates whenever possible.

The most essential ingredient of the format is readability. Although not published for permanency, the questionnaire should be attractive and inviting to read through effective layout, white space, and the use of a type size that is easy to read. Occasionally a candidates questionnaire is almost worthless because no voter will make the effort to wade through hard-to-read material.

Most Leagues which have published guides over a long period have a particular format the voters recognize and look for at each election. But it is always useful to evaluate the effectiveness of any format being used. Leagues publishing for the first time or considering a new format may profitably write to their state League or the national office for examples.

Decisions are to be made concerning **other material** to appear in the candidates questionnaire in addition to the questions, answers, biographical information, and pictures of the candidates. It is strongly recommended that a **statement of the League's purpose and nonpartisanship** appear in a prominent place on the front page. In addition, Leagues include such extras as the following:

About the League

- names and addresses of President and Voters Service Chairman
- information on obtaining extra copies of the candidates questionnaire
- statement of open membership and method of financing of the League. The dues figure is sometimes included and invitations to join the League, with an address to write to for information

- explanation of League Voters Service with an invitation to the public to help finance it
- announcements about League candidates meetings and voting machine demonstrations

About the Election

- hours the polls are open
- location of polls, with maps labeled by ward or precinct number
- explanation of who can vote, if it is a primary election
- description of each office treated in the questionnaire—term, salary, duties
- list of other offices to be voted on
- sample ballot
- how to mark a ballot correctly
- how to use the voting machine
- how to vote a straight ticket
- how to split a ticket
- how to write in a candidate
- information about absentee ballots

Whether to consolidate explanations of pros and cons of ballot issues with the candidates questionnaire or to publish and distribute them separately depends somewhat on the number of issues on the ballot. State Leagues frequently publish a separate ballot-issue piece. Occasionally a local League will do only a ballot-issue publication. (See pages 22ff. for more on ballot issues.) Most local Leagues combine ballot-issue material with their questionnaires. However ballot issues are handled, no League stand should appear on a Voters Service publication.

Formulating the Questionnaire

Formulating questions for candidates is a difficult, time consuming, but important task. Not only does the questionnaire's effectiveness depend on the quality of the questions, but also the League's reputation in the community. The questions are drawn up by the Voters Service Committee and submitted to the Board for approval. It is helpful to ask the Board ahead of time to suggest issues or actual questions. Someone well informed on issues should check the pertinency of questions.

Questions should be such that the answers will inform the voting public of the political philosophy of the candidates as well as their views on major issues. Only those issues should be chosen which can be handled at the level of government of the office which the candidate is seeking. For example, questioning a state legislator on an issue that requires congressional action would not indicate to the voter how this candidate would act in the state legislature and is inappropriate.

A broad range of issues should appear in the questions. They should not be confined to issues on League program as such a limitation might possibly place the League (in the opinion of some) in apparent support of some candidates and opposition to others. This would not only make the League appear partisan but might endanger cooperation by candidates on questionnaires or for candidates meetings.

The number of questions decided upon is most important. Space requirements and type of question influence this judgment. After the Voters Service Committee has selected a group of issues, it should discuss whether the League wants a few general, open-ended questions to permit a candidate to explain his stands in some depth or more specific questions to pinpoint the candidate's views on particulars. Perhaps a questionnaire could mix the two types. Obviously questions that may be answered with a *yes* or a *no* are not very productive. Add a *please explain* after such a question.

When issues, types of questions, and number have been determined, then try the wording. Questions should be kept as simple as possible and truly unbiased. If technical language (e.g., "Home Rule") must be used, explain it briefly. Consider whether a proposed wording may be subtly and unintentionally loaded. Are weighted words used? Does the right answer jump out of the questions, leaving the candidate with no real

choice? In addition, are the questions phrased in such a way as to capture the voters' interest and really shed light on the candidates' views, rather than simply to promote controversy? The Committee must work out word limits and indicate them clearly, either for each issue and biographical question or for the issue questions as a whole and the biographical material as a whole.

Biographical Material

Biographical material is usually part of a candidates questionnaire. Specific questions are customarily asked on age, education, occupation, experience, and qualifications for the office. Many Leagues specify that no information be provided which indicates the religion of the candidate; however, school or organization affiliation sometimes does just that. If a top office is being treated and the candidates have had wide press coverage, relatively little space need be allotted to biographical material.

The Questionnaire Form

When the Board has approved the complete content, the questionnaire is typed or mimeographed in sufficient quantity to provide two copies for each candidate (one for his files), file copies for the League, and additional copies in case of need. The form includes a place for the candidate's signature and the date, under a statement that this material may be used for publication. In addition to the biographical questions, there are blanks for office sought, name of candidate, party, age, address, and telephone number. Include the name and address of the person to whom the questionnaire is to be returned and the deadline date. The questions on issues are on the reverse side of the mimeographed sheet.

Some Leagues use a disclaimer on all candidates questionnaires to the effect that in publishing the questionnaire they neither endorse nor reject the views of any candidate

quoted and do not and cannot assume responsibility for the contents of any candidate's reply or his motivation in making the same.

To answer Leagues who have had problems with candidates' quoting part of the League publication in the body of their paid ads and other similar activities, it is suggested that Leagues copyright all publications. (See page 48.)

Sending the Questionnaire

Questionnaires are mailed to candidates with a covering letter. Answers are compiled either from written replies or from oral replies obtained by League members in personal interviews with the candidates.

The covering letter (on League stationery and individually typed, if possible) is signed by either the League President or Voters Service Chairman, or both. Carbons should be made for the League files. The letter may be prepared before the closing date for filing and is mailed with the questionnaire to all candidates at the same time following the deadline. It briefly explains the League's purpose, its nonpartisanship, the candidates questionnaire, and its distribution. It asks the candidate to complete and personally sign the questionnaire on the form provided and to send a glossy print if photographs are to be used. It sets a deadline for reply to the League President or Voters Service Chairman with an address and telephone number. Word limits on the mimeographed form are repeated in the letter, and the editing or no-editing policy the League will use with the replies is explained. The release date for publication of the questionnaire may be mentioned.

The day after the filing deadline, the board of elections should be able to provide a list of all candidates on the ballot, their addresses, telephone numbers, and party affiliations. The list should be obtained in person from the

public official in charge of candidate filing and signed by him to authenticate its accuracy. From this source a list of all candidates for the offices to be covered in the questionnaire can quickly be compiled. Prior to the filing deadline, information on the term and salary for each office, as well as any local or county referendum, can be requested from the board of elections which can also tell you if there is an additional deadline for candidate withdrawals and substitutions.

The letter and questionnaire forms are usually sent by certified mail with reply requested—an expensive procedure if many offices are included, but vital for your League's protection. How else can your League prove that a candidate did receive his questionnaire if he objects when it is printed with his reply missing? Forms for certified mail should be obtained in advance from the post office.

A few days before the deadline, telephone candidates whose replies have not been received to remind them of the importance of the deadline. If you cannot reach them, send another registered letter. You might mention that their names will appear in the published candidates questionnaire with a notation "No reply received," and urge them to cooperate. If you set a "grace" date a day or two beyond the original deadline, stick to it. If a number of candidates refuse to reply, consider not publishing the candidates questionnaire. Keep all replies from the candidates in the League's files. This is of the utmost importance. Make a brief record of telephone conversations with candidates about questionnaires. Some Leagues set up a chart to note the progress of each questionnaire sent out.

The Interview Method

Leagues that have interviewed candidates to obtain replies to questionnaires are enthusiastic about this method. It serves several purposes: the candidates gain a better understanding of the League, especially of Voters Service, and those elected will be oriented

when the League approaches them about an issue. In addition, deadlines for replies are less likely to present problems. Of course, a candidate occasionally refuses to cooperate even with the interview technique.

In the covering letter the candidate could be given a choice of returning the questionnaire by mail or being interviewed by the League. Set a deadline for his return of the completed questionnaire and for your telephoning for an appointment; ten days after the mailing is adequate.

If the candidate prefers to be interviewed, two League members should take part—one to ask questions and the other to take notes. Often a candidate may ask for information; if you cannot provide it, offer to send it to him immediately afterward. If the candidate asks about a League position, explain it and the reasons briefly and factually. If his opinion differs, do *not* argue. Remember that program promotion has nothing to do with Voters Service.

If possible, the interview should follow the order of the questionnaire. This will simplify note taking and make it easier to read the answers back to the candidate for his approval and signature. He may change what you have written, but be sure his signature appears on the final version. If you find later that his answers are too long or unclear and need editing, be sure to clear the copy again with him. When the questionnaire is published, send copies to all candidates and to their wives.

Publishing the Questionnaire

The printer should be contacted early, and bids from several different printers are a good idea. Requests for bids should be made in a letter including all specifications: size, style, approximate amount of copy (estimate from past candidates questionnaires), quantity, quality of paper desired, and time schedule. Ask for bids in writing.

The time schedule is particularly important. The time between closing date for filing as a candidate and election day is usually well under two months. In this period you must produce and mail the questionnaire form, compile the answers, have the questionnaire

set in type, proofread, and printed, and then do all the distribution. Be sure you and the printer understand the schedule in detail and know what each expects of the other. In what form does he want the copy? What date is your absolutely final date for delivery?

When the deadline has passed for replies and after all candidates who have not replied have been contacted, you are ready to lay out the material. Use a sheet of paper the same size and shape you plan for your candidates questionnaire or use last year's questionnaire to help make up the layout. Most Leagues arrange the candidates as they appear on the ballot and this should be so stated on the questionnaire. If the number of *no replies* leave unexpected space to fill up, put it to good use with League information or an explanation of how the questionnaire was compiled. But remember the advantages of white space.

Do not change anything in the candidates' replies. The candidates' style should help to give the voters a full picture of the individual. Newspapers may insist on changing profanity, grammar, and punctuation.

If for any reason copy must be edited, return it for the candidate's signature. Telephone first to discuss the change with him and set a deadline for him to return it.

When you take the copy to the printer, arrange a date for proofreading. Two people are needed to proofread—one to read out loud from the original copy and one to follow the proof. Do not hesitate to ask for second proofs if necessary, following the same procedure. Proofread with the greatest care, for the League's reputation for accuracy is at stake.

Distribution

Literally millions of candidates questionnaires are distributed throughout the country in a national election year, and in off years too. The number of copies to order will depend, of course, on money available and on the League's plans for distribution.

Mailing a Candidates Questionnaire to every residence in your community is costly but

hand delivery to every home may be practical. Scouts, Campfire Girls, Boys' Clubs, and milkmen often help to deliver.

Public places where candidates questionnaires may be left include libraries, banks, doctors' offices, barbershops, and beauty salons. Sometimes traveling libraries will take candidates questionnaires for pickup by book borrowers in rural areas. Because the questionnaires are so bulky, business firms will seldom send them out with bills but may distribute them to employees and make them available for pickup by customers.

Spot announcements on radio and TV and newspaper notices should include a League telephone number and address where additional copies are available. (See page 49 for other distribution ideas.)



"Now, Isabel, it's your turn to be charming, and yours, Marcia, to get the facts, for the Pros and Cons."

2. Ballot Issues

Making ballot issues intelligible to the average voter is a unique League service. State Leagues do this for state-wide issues, county Leagues for county issues, city Leagues for city issues, etc. A local League may publish and/or distribute information about ballot issues at any level, but the wording of the explanation must remain uniform throughout the state or county, whichever level of government is involved.

Constitutional amendments, referenda, propositions, questions, and bond issues are frequently submitted to the electorate. But voters more often than not have difficulty understanding the wording of an issue as it appears on the ballot or knowing what is involved in the issue or the arguments for and against it. Therefore they either ignore this part of the ballot or vote on issues haphazardly.

Leagues treat this problem in a number of ways. They publicize explanations of ballot issues and/or pro and con arguments in various forms depending upon the audience. As briefing material for Voters Service speakers, newspaper editors and news commentators, and for school use, such explanations may be written in detail to provide background and in-depth information for answering questions.

Voters, regardless of literate sophistication, appreciate as basic an explanation as possible. Work first to distill the issues into a bare, straightforward statement to get at the essence of the proposal. To translate a legalistic, sometimes technical, involved statement into simple, untechnical language without losing any essential meaning is difficult but rewarding.

A second step in simplifying a ballot issue is clarifying the effect it will have on the individual citizen, taxpayer, or family. Sometimes bringing the real meaning of an issue to an individual may be a disservice to those who wish the proposal to be passed by the voters. And sometimes, just the opposite may result. At least, there will always be the chance of some voter reaction if he fully understands the implication of the issue to him as an individual or head of a family. For example, a bond issue of \$2 million to build a new high school is being voted on. Such a sum conveys one of two impressions. It is so much money as to be meaningless; therefore, he will vote for it because he knows his town needs a new high school. Or, it sounds like such a vast sum of money that of course he is against spending it, even for a large, new high school which the town probably does need. In either case he is making a decision based on a vague impression. But if a \$2 million bond issue can be translated first into the specific of a higher tax rate each year for so many years to pay the interest on the loan and eventually to pay off the \$2 million, and then translated into what this tax increase might buy, then he can comprehend and evaluate the issue.

If the League decides to clarify a ballot issue proposal in this way, information on cost to an individual can be obtained from the persons who wrote the proposal.

Explanation or Pros and Cons?

Many Leagues use a combination of techniques, with a short explanation preceding pro and con arguments. Occasionally it is difficult to isolate pro and con arguments for an issue or to find arguments from reputable sources that balance; in such circumstances Leagues usually choose to do just an explanation. The proposed explanation should be carefully worked over until it becomes crystal clear that if a voter votes *yes* this and this will happen and if he votes *no* that and that will happen. The comparison should be full enough so that any large implications of a *yes* vote or a *no* vote are understood. Controversial areas should be pointed up if they exist.

Preparation

Get copies of official wording from the board of elections. Appoint a small committee to research and write an explanation and arguments. Sources of information are government officials proposing the measure, city or county attorneys, city or county administrative officers, and political science professors. One source may often direct the researcher to another. As many as possible proponents and opponents of the same measure should be interviewed. They too will often lead researchers to other sources, even to their opposition. Telephone interviews are sometimes rewarding. Written contacts may be necessary but are not as satisfactory as interviews. For a *comprehensive treatment* of a ballot issue, this listing of steps to be taken may be useful:

- Restate the issue briefly.
- Digest the principal provisions, indicating major changes from existing provisions.
- Supply factual and legal background, including the reasons for its proposal, the origin and development of the measure, and the change it is intended to effect. (Include in this section only verifiable facts.)
- Arrange arguments for and against the measure in order of importance, and try to balance the arguments

of both sides in content and in number. All the arguments given cannot always be used. Make it clear that these are the arguments of proponents and opponents rather than of the League.

- Be sure the basic issue or conflict confronting the voter is clear.
- Have all this material thoroughly checked by a reading committee consisting of persons interviewed (to check for accuracy), of League members (to check for clarity as well as objectivity and accuracy), and others such as newspaper editors and political scientists. Have someone look at the material strictly from the standpoint of whether it is understandable to the average voter.
- Include a statement of the League's nonpartisanship policy, address, and phone number.
- It is recommended that a League position on a ballot issue not appear in any Voters Service material.

Publicizing the Pros and Cons

All the regular Voters Service distribution methods may be effective for ballot issue publications. League speakers bureaus should especially make use of comprehensive explanations (see page 48). Workshops for Pro and Con speakers are also a good idea.

Simplified explanations or Pros and Cons should be distributed just as widely as the candidates questionnaire if they are published separately. They may be taped so that radio stations can easily use them, perhaps one a day if there are many issues on the ballot. Sometimes they are used for from three to five minutes at the end of a newscast. But remember that too large a dose of ballot issues at one time can become confusing. Special attention should be given to getting the simplified version of the issues to semiliterate voters (see pages 45-47). If a League community has voters who are more comfortable in a foreign language, consider translating and publishing the pro and con material in this language. Be sure to send it to foreign language newspapers, radio stations, and community ethnic groups. Voters Service information has been published or broadcast in a variety of languages including Arabic, Armenian, and Chinese.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN YOU

"That was one of the most stimulating 'Meet the Candidates' sessions ever!"



3. Candidates Meetings

Local Leagues rank candidates meetings second only to candidates questionnaires as an effective Voters Service technique. Although this League technique has been widely adopted by other community organizations, League-directed face-to-face confrontations and radio and TV meetings for candidates still flourish before every election. However, no League should feel under any compulsion whatsoever to hold a candidates meeting.

In deciding whether to plan a candidates meeting, many considerations depend on many others, and the final decision results from circular rather than straight-line reasoning. For example, whether to plan a meeting might depend on its scheduling, which could determine the choice of candidates, which could influence the kind of meeting to hold.

Imaginative and thorough planning is necessary for a good candidates meeting. Success also depends on good judgment in selecting the format, careful attention to the content, mechanics and conduct of the meeting, and hard but rewarding work by League members. There are many ways to present candidates to the voters. The suggestions that follow may prove helpful.

Preliminary Planning

In the initial planning stages it is important to evaluate the preelection situation, determine the attitude of League members and the community, assess the potential cooperation of the political parties and other organizations, consider the proper timing, and choose the offices. The date should be set after clearing with the political parties, and the location should be decided upon *at least two months before the meeting*.

Preelection Evaluation

Appraise the preelection situation even though you cannot, at this early date, know who the candidates will be.

- Which, if any, of the offices to be filled are of most public interest?
- What is the political situation in your community?
- Are there likely to be real races or will popular incumbents predominate on the slate?
- Will issues be discussed, or will the election revolve around personalities?
- How much exposure is likely to be given candidates by the press, radio, and TV?
- Are other community organizations likely to plan candidates meetings?

Determining Attitudes

Attitudes of both League members and the community should be assessed. Can the Board and especially the Voters Service Committee stimulate sufficient interest to get enough personnel and hours of work for this project? Are the media likely to cooperate? Having planned well and worked very hard, is the League likely to attract a sufficiently large audience (of both League members and the public) to make it all worthwhile—for the candidates, the community, and the League?

Types of Cooperation

Cooperation With Political Parties

Before approaching the political parties and their candidates, it is wise to consider what their attitudes may be.

- Will the major party organizations be cooperative, disinterested, or antagonistic?
- Will the individual candidates welcome the opportunity to attend a League candidates meeting?
- Will the incumbents running possibly boycott your meeting?

Even if you think their attitudes will be negative to a candidates meeting, you might *try* to interest them; their attitudes may have changed since they were last contacted by your League.

Cooperating with the political parties can facilitate the candidates' acceptance, their presence at the meeting, a larger audience, and perhaps increased publicity. It makes infinite good sense to work with the parties in selecting a date and, in some cases, a location for the meeting. The League should decide whether to permit the candidates to distribute campaign literature. Occasionally Leagues have been known to work with the party organizations as active collaborators in putting on the candidates meeting.

Cooperation With Other Organizations

If the League decides to seek the cooperation of other organizations, it must do so as soon as possible. Moreover, cooperating groups should be in on all decision making. How-

ever, all parties to the effort must understand that the League cannot waive in any way its nonpartisan policies and procedures. Whether cooperation can be obtained on League terms may be the deciding factor in whether to hold a candidates meeting.

It is also important to assess very practically the help the cooperating organization will provide. Since the League will be educating another organization in its techniques and sharing possible good public relations created by the meeting, a cooperating organization in return should make some contributions such as the following:

- a substantially increased amount of committed personnel to do the work—e.g., having Girl Scouts make and distribute posters and serve as ushers and pages at the meeting
- a more desirable meeting place
- additional means to publicize the meeting—e.g., flyers, posters, radio or TV time, membership publications for meeting announcements, and membership lists for invitations
- additional funds with which to finance the meeting (an area of cooperation which often proves disappointing)
- additional enticement for the candidates to accept the invitations, such as a substantially larger potential audience
- increased cooperation from the newspapers and radio/TV

Types of organizations that Leagues frequently cooperate with for a candidates meeting are service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, PTA's, student groups at universities, political parties, merchant associations, the County Farm Bureau, the Junior League, tenant associations and ethnic groups, civic associations.

A special kind of cooperation pays off very well—**cooperation between a number of Leagues** to present higher than local-level candidates. Leagues also cooperate on TV candidates shows, even when a metropolitan area crosses state lines.

Timing

Before setting a date for the meeting, consider all angles of the timing. When are the primary election and the general election? Before which election would a candidates meeting be more effective?

If one party dominates your community, a preprimary candidates meeting is often more worthwhile. If only one major party is having a primary, your League may hold a meeting for those candidates before the primary and another for the nominees of *both* parties before the general election. In this case it is almost essential to have the second candidates meeting.

Candidates To Be Included

Factors in this decision include the type of election, the levels of offices on the ballot, and the number of candidates for each office.

Type of Election

For a preprimary candidates meeting, the names of candidates should be obtained from the public official in charge of candidate filing the day after the deadline for filing as a candidate for a primary. If only one of the major parties holds a primary, only the candidates running against each other in that major party should be invited. Although the other major party may have already selected its candidates for the general election, such candidates should not participate in a candidates meeting with preprimary election candidates. If the League were to mix these two types of candidates, it would be giving unfair exposure to candidates who are not yet running in an election. This would also be unfair to independent candidates for the general election.

If both major parties have primaries, a primary candidates meeting should be planned so that the candidates from each party are presented in a group rather than alternately as is done at meetings before a general election. If your state has an open primary, a voter can best pick the party he wishes to vote in if he sees the DDD's together and the RRR's together—rather than the DR's, DR's, RD's, RD's. If your state has a closed primary, a voter should be able to see the candidates he has a choice of in a group.

Follow up any *primaries in which recounts are pending*. Decide whether to invite both candidates tentatively or to delay inviting either. If your state provides for *challenge primaries*, any such possibility should be followed up.

For a candidates meeting before the general election, invitations should go to primary winners for the offices to be invited, to candidates selected by party apparatus, and to independent candidates. To verify the names of persons who are official candidates in any of these categories (depending on your state), the Voters Service chairman should check with party chairmen and also with the public official in charge of candidate filing who can inform her about official certification for candidates and filing deadlines for the general election.

Levels of Government

Some Leagues have found that having candidates for more than one level of government at the same meeting is a disadvantage. If different levels are represented, each level should be treated separately at the meeting.

If a local League wishes to invite candidates from other than the local level of government, consult with the Inter-League Organization if one exists, with other Leagues in the county, or with the state League. This is of the utmost importance to facilitate the scheduling of meetings and to keep within practical limits the number of League invitations extended to particular candidates. If candidates are shared by other Leagues, decide whether they should be invited to hold the meeting with your League or merely asked to attend.

When considering candidates at the higher level, keep in mind these facts of political life: The single-minded aim of all candidates is to get elected. Candidates with large potential constituencies have to select carefully where they are going to spend their campaign time. They will want to pick occasions when they will be exposed to the greatest possible number of voters and especially to groups that include people whose minds they may change in their favor. Therefore, it is unrealistic to invite state-wide candidates, U.S. senatorial candidates, or presidential and vice presidential candidates to a meeting of a few hundred people or to a TV confrontation when the channel range is not wide. Moreover, the difficulties of getting an ironbound commitment from such politicians are limitless. For state-wide candidates attempts to do so should be made through the state League. Sometimes a number of Leagues cooperate in a meeting to insure a large enough audience to attract state-wide candidates.

Number of Candidates

It is important not to have too many candidates on one platform. Eight candidates are probably the maximum for an effective meeting if they are all to be on one platform; four to six make for thorough discussion. Consider whether candidates you are not inviting to speak should be invited just to be introduced. At a candidates fair where the candidates have individual booths, a larger number can take part.

Like Treatment of Candidates

Based on many years of experience by many Leagues, the national Board *strongly recommends* treating alike all candidates for the same office. If a League invites the major party candidates for an office to a candidates meeting, it should also invite the minor party candidates certified to appear on the ballot. This procedure safeguards the League's non-partisanship policy and is a good, safe rule. Admittedly, following it may create problems. It is time consuming if more than several candidates for the same office must be heard from. In addition, minor party candidates may sometimes belong to "the lunatic fringe," and major candidates may even refuse to appear on the same platform with them.

However, the essential point is that any portion of the service the League performs for the public should be nonpartisan and complete. Consider the difficulty minor party candidates have in getting a forum. And consider, too, that it is the minor parties that are likely to produce new, interesting ideas which may deserve an audience.

Occasionally Leagues have invited two prominent major party candidates to address meetings or even to debate issues without regard for minor party candidates. Sometimes the candidates passed over by the League have objected vigorously and publicly. At other times the omission has not provoked comment.

Write-In Candidates

In rare instances a person not on the ballot may appear to be a real contender via the write-in process. To treat him as a bona fide candidate would be difficult, and perhaps unfair, since if voters can write in candidates' names at will, the League might invite some possible write-in candidates and ignore others.

Contested Candidates

What if a court is in the process of deciding whether a particular person's name will appear on the ballot? In this complex circumstance whatever choice the League makes may seem unfair to the contested candidate or to other candidates. To avoid argument, include in the invitation to candidates a sentence stating that only those are being invited whose names have been certified to appear on the ballot when the invitation is dated.

Meeting Format

A League can present candidates to the public through a wide variety of meetings, and meeting content will be determined somewhat by the format chosen. Will candidates speak in general on their qualifications and plans for office, or on a specific issue, or in answer to League questions? For the latter a list of questions or an indication of their nature should be included in the candidates' invitations.

Questions from the audience could follow any type of presentation. These should be screened by the moderator to avoid duplication, to alternate between candidates, and to insure that issues rather than personalities are discussed.

When possible, scheduling a rebuttal period between speeches and questions provides a good transition. If the type of meeting allows for a rebuttal, candidates should be informed in their invitations.

The Live Meeting

The basic form of a candidates meeting is a live meeting in which all the candidates for several different offices present their views in short individual speeches (two to five minutes) and then answer questions from the audience. It may take the form of a morning "Coffee for Candidates" in a busy shopping arcade, a lunch-hour get together in a business area, a sit-down luncheon in a hotel, a formal dinner meeting, an evening meeting in an auditorium—whatever imagination and opportunity dictate.

Variations include the formal debate, round-table discussion, "Meet the Press" format, and political forums on university campuses. Speeches at all of these meetings may be covered by TV or taped for later radio broadcast when appropriate.

The Candidates Fair

Still another kind of meeting is a candidates fair at which each candidate has a separate table, booth, or room. The audience moves at will from candidate to candidate, who may make a short speech, distribute his campaign literature, or just answer questions.

Fairs may be staged indoors in lobbies of hotels, gymnasiums, or auditoriums. This format is especially good for candidates for city councilmen or school board members if elected from districts. Or fairs may be held outdoors in the city streets or at a shopping center with a band to draw crowds and generate a carnival atmosphere. At outdoor fairs, candidates' booths may be arranged in a U-shape around a main platform from which each candidate speaks for a few minutes at intervals. Questions may be answered from the individual booths.

Leagues sometimes charge a flat fee for booth and use of hall or platform to candidates who are responsible for the cost of their own decorations. Leagues pay for decorations on the platform and in the League booth. The management of the place where the fair is held may pay for the microphones, clean-up, and newspapers ads. In return it gains goodwill and patronage.

Radio and Television

Radio and television, including educational TV, should always be given the opportunity to cover a candidates meeting. Talk over possibilities with the stations early. One person should be directly responsible for all arrangements for follow-through at the meeting. Often a candidates meeting is broadcast live and taped or televised for later use. In this way a wider audience than a League can assemble in one meeting place will be reached. This, of course, is a strong inducement to candidates, and the greatly increased audience means that the League is reaching many more voters. The League should have a clear understanding of who controls the use of radio and TV tapes of a League candidates meeting so that excerpts are not used later to the advantage of one candidate or another.

With the television cameras and sound equipment being used today, covering a meeting outside the studio is no longer the complicated process it once was. Candidates meetings can be held in the studio, but coverage is then limited to only one station. For radio and television interviews the candidates do not *have* to be in the same place at the same time. Interviews can be taped separately and the program put together later—a good talking point when enlisting the cooperation of more elusive candidates. This procedure, of course, eliminates rebuttal or question periods.

Occasionally, a League will do a daily radio or TV series for several weeks before an election, scheduling interviews of candidates for one office each day. The formal debate, the round-table discussion, and the "Meet the Press" format, with a panel of journalists or political scientists to question the candidates, all lend themselves well to TV coverage. Sometimes the candidates present short statements of their views and then submit to questions from the live audience or by telephone from listeners or viewers. When League members are chosen to interview the candi-

dates or moderate a discussion, TV presence should be a factor in their selection.

Here are some recommendations for candidates meetings covered by radio and television:

- When possible, have a studio audience and a warm-up period before the program goes on the air.
- Before air time brief the audience on what is expected (e.g., no demonstrations permitted, handling of questions, etc.).
- The moderator should have a complete plan for the meeting with the timing for each segment well in mind; he or she should have prepared a short, catchy opening and closing. For radio this can be written out, but for television it should be memorized and timed.
- A simple statement of the League's nonpartisanship (not an exhaustive analysis) should be made over the air toward the beginning and at the end of each program.
- One or two minutes should be spent on the ground rules—things that the listening audience should know as well as those in the studio.

These additional points are for radio and TV meetings held outside the studio:

- Make all announcements before broadcast time.
- Keep preliminaries short. The audience is interested in the candidates.
- If signs are used, keep them simple but legible and arranged to face the cameras.
- At a luncheon or a dinner meeting, select a menu that can be served while people are coming in. Arrange with the hotel not to clear tables of dessert and coffee until after the broadcast. Use only low table decorations.

Mechanics

The mechanics of a candidates meeting differ slightly according to format. However, the following suggestions for the basic type of meeting can be adapted to any format.

Chairman of the Meeting

If the candidates meeting will be a large project, the Voters Service Chairman frequently appoints a special chairman. She will be responsible for the meeting and will begin by expanding the Voters Service Committee to include an adequate number of League members to work before and at the meeting. A few extra people to fill in during last-minute emergencies may also be designated.

Date

Select several dates within the week the Board has chosen for the candidates meeting. First check with a number of organizations to make sure that some big community event has not already been scheduled for the dates being considered. If a community calendar exists, refer to it. Then work with the political parties to clear at least one of these dates. The League President, the Voters Service Chairman, or the special chairman for the candidates meeting should make these contacts—whoever has the most rapport with the parties. If possible, clear a date with the candidates themselves or with their campaign managers informally by telephone and confirm your conversation by mail.

Alert all the political organizations in the city, county, or area as soon as a definite date is set, and enter the League's date on the community calendar.

The Meeting Place

Once the date is firm, the meeting place should be engaged (in writing). In choosing a location, consider size, convenience, facilities, rental fee, and parking. Before the contract is signed, the availability of sufficient microphones and suitable possibilities for tape recorder wiring on the platform and in the audience should be carefully checked out. Table microphones as well as one for the podium are desirable. At the time the meeting place is engaged, arrangements for a social hour, if any, should be made and the closing time should be decided.

The meeting place should be opened for the committee a considerable time before the scheduled hour of the meeting. The building management should be alerted to this, and some person on the building staff completely familiar with the sound and lighting equipment should be there an hour before the meeting to check it. The meeting chairman, the moderator, hostess, and ushers should be

familiar with the platform setup, especially the seating of each leader on the platform, timekeepers, screening committee, press section, as well as the locations of fire exits, coat-rooms, restrooms, and public telephones.

Invitations

The same procedures are used with invitations to candidate meetings that are used with letters to candidates about candidates questionnaires (see pages 19ff). In addition to the exact date, time, and place, the purpose of the meeting, the offices to be included and the names of any participating organizations should be clearly stated. *Facts* about your local or state League or about the League of Women Voters of the United States may be enclosed.

So that the candidate will have some idea of the effort required of him if he accepts, indicate the time limit, the nature of the candidate's presentation, and the opportunity for rebuttal and question periods, if planned. Unless the Board has decided otherwise, state that no substitute will be permitted.

Provisions for replying should be clearly spelled out. Ask the candidates to reply within a week or ten days at the most. If no reply has been received by that time, repeat the invitation by telephone and ask for a written acceptance or regret. Even with written acceptances on file, Leagues often experience last-minute disappointment when candidates decide the day of the meeting they can spend their time to better advantage elsewhere.

The invitations need not include detailed information about meeting procedures, ground rules, questions, or details of timing. All of this can appear in the following letter once a candidate has accepted the invitation.

Follow-Up Letters

Letters spelling out the detailed arrangements should be sent to each candidate who has accepted. In this case, too, it is a good idea to use registered mail with return receipt requested. The date, time, and place of meeting

and directions should be repeated in the second letter. If candidates are from out of town, include minute directions and time estimates for reaching the meeting place. Marked road maps are helpful. Ground rules and a timed breakdown of the agenda should be included so the candidate will know when he must arrive (10 minutes before he is scheduled to speak) and when he might be free to leave if he wishes. Biographical material (with a word limit) should also be requested.

Policy Decisions

If the League Board has made some clear-cut policy decisions about holding or not holding the candidates meeting in case specific candidates cancel out before the meeting, it may be wise to state this in very general terms in the follow-up letter to the candidates who have accepted. The parties should be apprised of this, also.

For all candidates meetings except a preprimary meeting for the candidates of only one major party, nonpartisanship considerations dictate the need for some balance in the representation of the major parties. This seldom is an exact balance, but except in extraordinary circumstances each major party should be represented by at least a portion of the candidates on the program. Complete balance in each office, though desirable, is not always possible.

Occasionally in a community one party or the other decides to boycott a League candidates meeting and the word goes out that *no* candidate from that party can attend. This usually means that no meeting is held and the citizens of the community are the losers. After every effort is made to no avail to find times and places convenient to candidates from both parties, the League may wish to challenge the boycott of the unobliging party by a public announcement that a meeting will be held to which all candidates have been invited and that it will go on regardless of who accepts. This kind of drastic action is not advised except under extraordinary circumstances and in places where the nonpartisanship of the League is well established.

Suggested Ground Rules

1. Because the League of Women Voters is interested in **issues and not personalities**, presentations and questions should be confined strictly to issues.
2. **Biographical material** submitted by each candidate to the League two weeks before the candidates meeting might be distributed by the League at the meeting (or included in the candidates questionnaire available at the meeting).
3. **Substitutes**, spokesmen, or statements will (or will not) be permitted (except in specific circumstances). (Spell them out.)
4. **Order of speaking** may be determined by drawing lots or tossing coins (or whatever method has been selected).
5. **Timing** (on the subject of _____ or in reply to the questions listed in the invitation):
 - Each candidate may speak for _____ minutes, have _____ minutes for rebuttal, and then participate in the question-and-answer period which will follow presentations of each group of candidates.
 - Timekeepers will keep close watch on time limits. If the meeting is on the air, the candidate must stop the instant the timer's bell rings. (If the meeting is not being broadcast, the candidate may be permitted to finish a sentence. Thereafter, the moderator will interrupt.)
6. **Questions:**
 - Candidates are (or are not) invited to question each other after some time has been allotted to questions from the audience. A candidate may decline to answer a question. Questioners must identify themselves.
 - Only written questions will be permitted. Or, your League may decide to permit oral questions as well. Whatever has been decided on this point should be stated in the ground rules. For most meetings oral questions are definitely more effective. However, they are difficult to screen since the candidates and the audience hear the posed questions. Of course, the moderator can then refuse to permit the question and move on immediately to another questioner. But in some cases damage may have already been done to a candidate merely by the posing of a vicious question. (In other cases a candidate may welcome an opportunity to reply to such a question.)
 - The questioner must designate to which candidate the question is addressed. After this candidate has given his answer, the other candidates for the same office will have an opportunity to speak also, if they choose.
 - State the time limit on answers.
 - Describe screening procedures and stress the types of questions that are ruled out; personal, abusive, insinuating, and vicious questions as well as duplicates are ruled out.
7. A candidate is (or is not) permitted to distribute **campaign literature at the meeting**. (League members should have nothing to do with campaign materials or decorations so as not to endanger the League's nonpartisanship.)

The Moderator

In most types of candidates meetings the success of the meeting depends largely on the capability of the moderator. At least, a meeting can easily get off course with a moderator unable to maintain control. Before the meeting the moderator should make an effort to be aware of personalities or issues in the election which might cause any difficulty at the meeting. A moderator must be able to make quick decisions, have a reasonably good sense of humor, and be absolutely fair. She must keep the discussion in hand but with a light touch. Only she can prevent a candidate from taking more than his share of time or from trying to bring personalities into the meeting.

Some Leagues choose their most poised member—one who can say politely, if necessary, “Your question is out of order” and who can keep the entire meeting moving in a controlled but stimulating manner. Other Leagues prefer to use an outside moderator to insure objectivity, preferably a member of another League who should have a thorough knowledge of League procedures, philosophy, and nonpartisanship. (Some state Leagues have training sessions for moderators.)

The moderator need not be a League member if he or she is well regarded in the community and thoroughly understands League policies and procedures, especially the objectivity of League Voters Service. Possibilities are educators or political commentators from radio, TV, or newspapers. He or she should not be identified publicly with a political party, yet should be politically sophisticated and, of course, acceptable to the parties.

The following information should be given to the moderator in writing a week in advance:

- location of meeting—map and directions if necessary
- time—opening and closing time
- names of League President, Candidates Meeting chairman, and screening committee
- offices—length of term, salary, duties, unexpired terms, if any
- candidates—by office sought, by party affiliation, alphabetically, list of those who have accepted invitations, list of those invited who have not accepted, incumbents
- timed agenda
- issues on the ballot—brief, objective explanations
- ground rules of meeting—exactly as mailed to candidates, with listing of any changes not previously made
- announcements—if moderator is to make any
- prepared questions—to open question period, if necessary

Public Relations

The only way to get an audience for any kind of a candidates meeting is to publicize it widely and effectively for several weeks. The usual publicity media should be used to the greatest extent. Contact the press and radio/TV early, and prepare timed spot announcements. If the meeting is to be televised or broadcast over radio, the stations may provide some free publicity.

A “Letter to the Editor” is often an effective device. In addition, buy newspaper space for an advertisement if this seems a good way to use Voters Service money. A release to the effect that candidates for certain offices have been invited to a candidates meeting by the League of Women Voters and participating organizations, if any, should be sent to the press and radio/TV the day the invitations go out. The county central committees of political parties and community organizations should also be informed.

The aid of other community organizations can also be sought. Suggest they substitute attendance at the League of Women Voters candidates meeting for one of their monthly meetings. Send announcements to be read at their meetings and material for their bulletins and newsletters. Your League might also want to do this for the churches in your community. You might enlist the cooperation of the school board to send announcements home with pupils the day before the meeting. For school government classes the League might prepare an explanation of the purpose of a candidates meeting and perhaps set up a mock candidates meeting. Ask the Scouts and Brownies and Cub Scouts to make posters for the meeting and distribute them. Perhaps you can get the high school print shop to do handbills for grocery bag stuffers and door-to-door distribution. Mail handbills to newly registered voters, new residents, and new citizens if these lists are easily available. If a candidates fair is being held at a shopping center, the stores will be eager to cooperate with the League on publicity. Shopping newspapers will sometimes use pictures of the candidates.

Arrange for a street banner if it is permitted in your community and if your League can afford one. Direction signs can be placed around the city as added publicity. Consult

your police department well in advance when making plans for this as regulations may forbid the posting of such signs.

Telephone all League members the weekend before the meeting to remind them to come. An announcement in the League bulletin is rarely sufficient to bring out a good percentage of League members. A free ticket to the candidates meeting is sometimes attached to each League bulletin as a reminder.

Conduct of the Meeting

Duties of the hostesses—Candidates are met on arrival by League hostesses who, if possible, know the candidates by sight. Large candidates' name tags also note the office for which they are running and their political party. A hostess should be responsible for “her” candidate, introduce him to the League President and to the moderator before the meeting, and see that he has refreshments during the social hour.

Public relations—The public relations subcommittee should be on hand to greet the press, service the press table, and explain League policies and techniques and the purpose of this meeting. The person designated as liaison for radio/TV should be at the meeting place an hour early. Committee members should also take care of the League publications table.

Ushers—Besides helping with seating, ushers distribute programs, pencils and cards for questions. Before the question period, they collect question cards from the audience to give the screening committee.

Opening remarks—If the moderator is a League member, she welcomes the candidates and the audience (and the press and radio/TV). She gives a one-minute description of the League of Women Voters, stressing the objectivity of League Voters Service. She introduces the chairman of the meeting. She then announces other League preelection activities (such as other candidates meeting or voting machine demonstrations). She states the purpose of the candidates meetings and introduces any invited candidates who are present but not scheduled to speak. (They may then leave if they wish.)

If there is a non-League moderator, the League President or Voters Service Chairman opens the meeting.

The moderator—At this time the moderator introduces the timekeeper and screening committee and goes over the ground rules (questions about ground rules should be avoided). If the meeting follows the basic format, the order in which the candidates are to be presented is explained. The moderator introduces the candidates for the first office on the program and gives a few details about the office—term, salary, duties, and qualifications. If the incumbent is present, she notes this fact. And then the first candidate begins his statement. If the meeting is a formal debate, a round-table discussion, or a “Meet the Press,” then all panelists would be introduced together before speeches or questioning begins. (For the protection of the League—and for the station if the meeting is broadcast—the moderator should have with her on the platform a file of the written acceptances and regrets of all candidates invited.)

The timekeeper—She should be placed in position to be easily seen by the candidates; she should use a bell (if the meeting is being broadcast). Two timekeepers may be preferred to avoid errors. Close watch should be kept over the time limits on questions and replies, especially if later radio and TV broadcast are planned.

Question period—If only written questions will be answered, a slight pause between the presentations (and rebuttal, if any) and the question period permits the audience to write questions and the ushers to collect and sort them by the name of person to whom the question is addressed before giving them to the *screening committee*. Four League members might compose this committee, two from each party. Two might check the questions for duplication and try to pick the best question on a subject. The other two members might select those on issues of most general interest and eliminate unsuitable questions such as those on personalities. While waiting for questions to be collected and screened, the moderator may wish to begin with several questions prepared in advance by the League—a must if the meeting is live on radio or TV. The moderator should keep questions from the floor brief to permit as many as possible within the allotted time and also to prevent speeches.

The moderator does not permit the question period to continue until the audience becomes restless. She announces just one more question before this point is reached. She then turns the meeting over to the League President, who thanks everyone and invites them to the social hour.

Additional Features of a Candidates Meeting

Printed or mimeographed programs—Consider whether you want to have a program which might contain the following information:

- a few sentences about the League and about Voters Service
- an invitation to join the League as a member or associate member
- an invitation to contribute to League Voters Service
- the name and address of the President of the League
- the purpose of a candidates meeting
- a list of the candidates for each office represented with party affiliation and a notation of an incumbent.
- description of each office for which candidates at the meeting are running—full title, salary, term, necessary qualifications, and duties
- biographical material for each candidate who has accepted (if this does not appear in a candidates questionnaire)
- ballot issues—exact wording, pros and cons, or simplified explanation (if not included in League's candidates questionnaire or presented in a separate publication)

League exhibits—Voting Precinct Maps with locations of polling places make a good exhibit, as do sample ballots when obtainable. If it is possible to have a voting machine or a table model of the one used in your community, this is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the machine to interested voters, before and after the meeting.

Publications—League Voters Service publications should be displayed with copies available for sale. *Facts About the League of Women Voters* should be available for anyone with a query about the League, in addition to any publication describing the work of your local League.

Many Leagues plan their Voters Service timetable so that their *Candidates Questionnaire* is published the day of the candidates meeting and distributed at the meeting. Others publish their candidates questionnaires sufficiently before their meetings so that the announcements of the dates and places and subjects of candidates meetings and meetings on ballot issues can be included.

After the Candidates Meeting

Proven to be most rewarding to any League are the three steps to be taken after the candidates meeting is over:

1. Letter of thanks should be written to each candidate, to the parties, to the press and radio/TV if pertinent, and to cooperating organizations.
2. A detailed overall report should be compiled by the chairman from the reports of the subcommittees. If possible, copies for the state League and for the national office would be helpful.
3. A meeting of the full candidates meeting committee should make an earnest attempt to evaluate the meeting. For future League use this evaluation should be written down in as much detail as possible.



“I think this Voters Service work is affecting my eyesight.”

4. Voting Machines

Leagues in communities where voting machines are used may want to consider demonstrating the machine, giving talks about its operation, or even publishing a flyer or leaflet describing it, perhaps in a foreign language. All of these techniques can be a great help in getting out the vote.

If a voting machine of the type used locally is available, the League may set it up and staff it in a variety of places—banks, department store lobbies or windows, county fairs, schools, television studios, open League meetings, or the League office. "Come in and Learn" is an effective pitch.

Table models of voting machines can sometimes be borrowed from the board of elections, from city and town clerks, and from election districts. (Occasionally, the manufacturer may be helpful.) Table models can be carried by speakers all over the community, taken on votemobiles, and to TV showings. Actual voting machines present more of a problem because of transportation and insurance costs but are much more effective for demonstration.

Sometimes county, city, or town governments will lend voting machines and transport them without charge to demonstration locations. Sometimes just transportation is charged. The necessary insurance is usually the League's responsibility and varies in cost according to the structure where the machine is to be housed. In some cases boards of elections insist that a person designated by the board set up the machine and charge a fee for this. A full book of instructions accompanies all machines and League members have set up machines. When voting machine demonstrations are held in department stores, businesses and industries, they usually pay at least part of the expenses.

Government bodies should be approached far in advance of the dates your League would like to demonstrate the machine. Some Leagues have week-long demonstrations just before election day. One-day demonstrations are popular also. Occasionally a TV station will make all the arrangements and ask the League to staff the demonstration.

Simple instructions for the user of the machine and additional instructions for the demonstrator must be written. The person staffing the demonstration needs some special training. She must be able to explain in simple terms how the machine operates: what to do when the voter enters the booth, how to vote a straight ticket, how to split a ticket, how to write in a candidate's name, how to change one's mind while voting, how to vote on questions, how the vote is recorded, and how the machine counts the votes. All this information could also be included in a leaflet.

The League performs a valuable service if it arranges to train non-League persons also to demonstrate voting machines in public places—for example, staff people in a YWCA, representatives of a church service club, neighborhood workers in a community center, or Scouts for a shopping center demonstration. They may be invited to training sessions scheduled for League personnel preparing to staff voting machine demonstrations.

If enough supervision is available, let children try the machine also. They often return with their parents or encourage parents to try it. In any kind of Voters Service work with minority groups, meetings that include a voting machine demonstration are more likely to have good attendance.

5. Absentee Voting

Explaining the circumstances under which citizens may vote absentee is doubtless part of your League's overall Voters Service plan. It can assist residents and visitors from other communities to vote absentee by publicizing the opportunities that exist in your state and in other states for such voting and the steps that must be taken. A separate flyer might be devoted to absentee voting in your state, or this information could be part of any registration and voting publication. Other ways to focus on absentee voting include newspaper announcements, spot announcements for radio and TV, notations for church and organization bulletins, and bulletin board announcements in colleges, businesses, industrial firms, department stores, shopping centers, etc.

Who may vote absentee differs from state to state. Get your state's election laws regarding absentee voting, in particular those covering federal employees and their families under the Federal Voting Assistance Act. In some states students and government employees are in a special category regarding absentee voting. Another state may permit absentee voting only if the voters are elsewhere within the state on election day. Many states have special absentee voting provisions for persons who have recently moved from these states and cannot yet qualify to register in the states in which they now live. In addition, whether absentee voting is permitted in both primary and general elections varies according to state.

As the first step in absentee voting, the registered voter must apply for an absentee ballot. Some states require completion of an official application form. Your election board can tell you where to apply for the various kinds of elections—to the county registrar of voters, to the city election board, or to the office of the school board. The deadline for application is extremely important, and your League should also spell out clearly the information the application must contain—for example, place of residence, reason for absence, address where the ballot is to be mailed, signature, and sometimes a doctor's verification in case of illness or disability.

The steps in filling out the ballot and having it validated, if necessary, should be described in some detail. Some states require that the ballot be filled out in the presence of the reg-

istrar in the voter's county or another specified official other than a notary public. In other states a witnessing of the signature by a notary public is sufficient. The deadline should be given for either completing the absentee ballot in the presence of an election official or for mailing it to the election board's office.

6. Getting Out the Vote

All that a League may have done to encourage qualified people to run for office, to make it easy for people to register, and to enable voters to make informed choices serves indirectly to urge people to vote. But in addition many Leagues make special Voters Service efforts directed toward getting people to the polls on election day, especially for elections less popular than, perhaps, a presidential election.

Get-out-the-vote activities consist mainly of projects to give information and to remind people to vote. At times Leagues also help people to get to the polls by offering free rides; however, the parties also do this, and League efforts usually do not net a substantial response.

Another League service tied directly to an election is recruiting and/or training election workers. Leagues often mimeograph material or even print flyers detailing the duties and procedures for election judges and clerks and standard voting procedures. When possible, League members also act as clerks or observers in polling places. And some Leagues hold classes in poll watching.



"Mom, do men vote, too?"

Information Giving

Using a variety of information-giving techniques (see pages 50 and 51), your League might try to provide, separately or with other Voters Service information, the following details about the approaching election and the steps to take election day.

- | | |
|--|---|
| -type of election (e.g., primary or general, congressional, state, school board) | -what the steps are in the actual voting |
| -date of election | identification of registered voter (if any) |
| -hours polls are open | getting a paper ballot from election clerk |
| -location of polls, with map of voting precincts | manner of legally marking a paper ballot |
| -address and telephone number of election board | giving completed paper ballot to election clerk to cast into ballot box or the voter doing it himself |
| -offices being voted on in this election | operating a voting machine (if pertinent) |
| -sample ballot or facsimile | splitting a ticket |
| -who may vote in this election | writing in a candidate's name |
| -what a voter must bring with him, if anything (e.g., registration card) | correcting a mistake made in marking ballot or operating a machine |
| -what a voter may take into the voting booth | |
| -what to do if someone says a person cannot vote | -how a blind person can be assisted at the polls |
| -what to do if the name of a person who thinks himself qualified is not in the election book | -how an otherwise disabled person who can get to the polls can be assisted in the voting booth |

"Tips for Voters" on a mimeographed sheet, Election Extras of League bulletins, printed "Facts for Voters" which include some of the above information, radio and TV spots covering one or two points at a time—the ways to disseminate this information are endless. Your League should consider having this material translated and published in a foreign language if such a need exists in your community.

The printed word and the broadcast word are frequently augmented by other League projects to spread election information. Leagues sometimes set up a Telephone Service before an election, occasionally on an area basis with the cooperation of other Leagues. Manning the phones for a month or so before election day are League members who have had some briefing in the subjects the public will be calling about. The Telephone Information Service itself should be well publicized throughout your League area.

Reminding People to Vote

Big get-out-the-vote campaigns might include, at one end of the spectrum of possibilities, torchlight parades with a cavalcade of candidates and floats decorated by civic organizations or documentary TV programs with audience participation (for example, "Will Your Vote Count on Election Day?").

At the other end of the spectrum might be bumper stickers urging people to vote and lapel buttons saying "Your Vote Makes a Difference" or "Have You Voted?" Cruising votemobiles, cars with loudspeakers, billboard signs, street banners, posters, bus cards, window displays, and parking meter decorations call the community's attention to the election date and hours of voting. A civic-minded telephone company may add a voting reminder to the time and weather information. TV slides and radio spots bring the voting message effectively into homes, offices, and cars. Newspaper ads are sometimes taken by Leagues to urge people to go to the polls.

Many Leagues organize a telephone service to urge registered voters to go to the polls. However, remember that party organizations do a great deal of telephoning on election day to voters registered in their party.

Part Three—Techniques For Nonelection Voters Service

Goals of Nonelection Voters Service

Political effectiveness is the aim of nonelection Voters Service, which involves people in learning about and participating in government and politics at any level. Therefore, it covers an extremely wide range of League activity. To be a truly effective citizen, an informed voter must know practical politics, for example; and if a citizen is well oriented in politics and government, he will certainly strive to be an informed voter.

Nonelection Voters Service is not directed toward any specific election, but election Voters Service sometimes creates opportunities for nonelection Voters Service. Actually, its relationship to election Voters Service is a circular one. Once a League has helped to inform a person about candidates and issues, and motivated him to vote, he may then want to learn about some phase of government and thus about politics too. On the other hand, sometimes people are motivated to become informed and to vote in a particular election because they have learned about the workings of government and politics through nonelection Voters Service.

Election Voters Service is aimed entirely at citizens of voting age. To only a slight extent does it try to involve young people in order to motivate them to vote when they reach legal age. But, tailored to suit particular needs, nonelection Voters Service can be for any group of people.

The recipients of nonelection Voters Service may be classified according to particular groups when making Voters Service plans:

- League members, relatives and friends
- new citizens
- new residents
- youth
- middle-class adult public
- low-income citizens
- minority citizens
- foreign language speaking groups
- migratory workers
- Indians

For more on Voters Service for particular groups, see pages 44ff.

Nonelection Activities

To be motivated to participate in politics and government, a person must first learn the relevance to him of a particular phase of politics or government. Then, if possible, he should be given an opportunity to see this phase in operation or even to take part in it.

In general, nonelection Voters Service projects must be custom designed for the particular needs and sophistication of the group to which they are beamed. Formats generally fall into customary League patterns: flyers or booklets; radio or TV programs; newspaper articles; meetings; workshops; institutes or complete courses; panels of government officials, party leaders, political scientists, or political editors; talks by League speakers to non-League groups; Go-Sees, observer programs; or mock political conventions.

Occasionally a League is asked to give instruction in basic techniques such as holding a meeting, contacting government officials, attending hearings, preparing testimony, or testifying at a hearing. Role playing by the audience should be part of the teaching technique whenever possible.

Often Leagues schedule units or general meetings for their own members on nonelection Voters Service subjects. Bulletins carry question-and-answer columns or excerpts from longer articles which are especially popular.

Learning About Government

League Publications

League publications on government are legion. Although some may have been published under a League Program, or at a League level other than local, if factual and unbiased they provide a wealth of material with which to educate the general adult public as well as League members. *Know Your City, County, or State, You and Your National Government, How a Bill Becomes a*

Law (in particular states and at the national level), *Choosing the President, Do You Know the ABC's of Your Town's Government?* are such basic tools. "How To" Voters Service pieces such as *How to Write Your Congressman and Why, How To Lobby, and How To Visit City Hall or Your State Legislature* are also used in this kind of Voters Service activity.

A different type of nonelection publication is the political directory, sometimes labeled *They Represent You*, which contains the names and titles of government officials, how to address them, and information about meeting dates and places of governmental bodies. This valuable material has to be redone frequently as elections and appointments bring changes to the roster of officials.

Still another kind of League publication is the *Voters Manual* or *Voters Handbook* or *Guide for Citizens*, which is a cross between a registration and voting piece and a small-scale *Know Your Local Government*. This kind of publication is much less dated than a political directory since it does not relate to a particular election nor does it contain the names of officeholders.

League Projects

Voters Service projects about government range from single meetings where government officials speak and are questioned by the audience to full-scale cooperative ventures where a whole city government is involved with the League in a huge street fair or indoor festival with displays of the work of all the departments being explained to the public by department officials. In between may lie lecture series, workshops, institutes, or courses on government cosponsored by the adult education division of your public school system or by universities.

There may be *Go-See trips* for League members and the public to city hall or the county building, various government departments and agencies, schools, jails, or public institu-

tions for dependent children, for the elderly, poor, and the sick. Tour members may be briefed first by the officials involved, or a question period may follow the tour. Go-Sees may often be planned around League Program, but sometimes they may also be purely a Voters Service technique.

Know-Your-City-Council meetings; walking tours through the downtown section of your city; bus tours to outlying areas; library visits; party pilgrimages to pre-primary party conventions; health hops to city hospitals, public clinics, city water supply and filter plants, and sewage disposals facilities; court days to visit the police department and local and county courts; and school days to attend school board meetings or tour school facilities are just some examples of this kind of Voters Service activity.

Visits to the state legislature may also be either Program-oriented or simply Voters Service for League members and the public. This activity is sometimes directed by the state board legislative chairman or by a local legislative chairman, but it can be tailored completely to the purposes of Voters Service with, of course, no lobbying of any kind. Before making the visit, League members should be briefed on legislative techniques—what to look for in committee meetings and what to watch in particular when observing a session of the whole legislature. It is always helpful to arrange a meeting with your own legislators before beginning the visit. They will be eager to help you make the most of it.

Another highly regarded Voters Service function is to provide a *forum*, if one is lacking, *for the discussion of issues in the community*. This technique is completely divorced from League Program and may be used for controversial issues of all kinds if they require governmental solutions. However, issues which merit this kind of attention by League Voters Service should be high on the list of citizen concerns. The League can perform a unique service for its community by offering

an opportunity for the views of many persons or organizations to be aired.

If your League is considering this kind of project, be sure to contact all the media when your planning begins. Radio and TV may want to carry the meeting; newsmen might be panel members or might want to give the meeting special coverage.

Regularly scheduled League radio and TV programs are often devoted to government topics. Public officials are interviewed by League members over the air and sometimes viewer or listener participation takes place through an open telephone line into the studio. League speakers are often requested to give talks to other organizations on various aspects of government. Sometimes the League provides an opportunity for members and the public to meet the people who represent them in office and in the political parties at social events such as coffees, luncheons, or even sherry parties.

Observer Programs

The League observer program (perhaps the best possible way to develop a knowledge of what constitutes political effectiveness) falls loosely into the category of Voters Service. It provides an effective method of orienting to government and politics the League members who regularly attend meetings of all kinds of governmental bodies to observe only.

The membership too may profit from such activity if the observers pass on the gist of what has transpired at meetings to the whole League membership either through the bulletin or through reports at meetings.

Learning About Politics

Practical Politics Courses

In this area of Voters Service, publications and meetings are popular learning devices. "The Parties and Political Effectiveness," "Your Place in Party Politics," "It's Your

Party," "Politics—Your Business and Mine," "The Three Party System or Are You a Mugwump?" "Party Politics and Government," "The Dynamics of State and County Politics"—these are titles of meetings or of whole courses in politics that make use of outside speakers who are practicing politicians, teachers of political science, or political editors.

When first discussing a course in practical politics, it is an excellent idea to consult the Adult Education Department of your public school system. Cooperation would be most valuable. It might include providing the location for the course, audio-visual equipment and personnel to run it, janitorial service, and publicity. It takes a great deal of persuasive publicity to convince people that they should give up a number of evenings for an extra activity. The public school system may contribute its publicity resources, including flyers to be sent home by students. Another cooperative item might be the taping of the course, using school facilities and making tapes available afterward to both the schools and the League.

Practical politics courses differ in emphasis. One may focus on the structure and function of political parties with speakers from various organization levels of the major parties to talk about party organization, and party work during elections and between elections. The role of party organization in creating slates of candidates at various levels from which the electorate makes its choices could be explained in detail. A meeting could be devoted to the party platform—its purpose, its standard features, the effect it has on candidates and on the party, the way in which pressure groups can influence it.

Another course may concentrate on explaining the various kinds of elections—partisan and nonpartisan, primary and general, presidential, congressional, gubernatorial, elections for state offices other than the governor, judicial elections, county or local office and school board elections, initiative petition and referenda elections, including bond issues,

charter changes, and other special elections. Officeholders might discuss their campaigns—the elements that entered into their decisions to become candidates, the process by which they were nominated, and the means they used to attract votes.

Financing political campaigns might well be the topic for one meeting of a course. Another meeting might be devoted to political clubs, their role in elections and in between elections. One session on the political history of your state and your immediate area (especially if it is given by current political figures) is a good way to begin almost any practical politics course.

Still another course might be devoted to political issues with existing case studies used for problem-solving situations. Students could be presented with a specific situation with many political implications, and the class would be asked to propose solutions. One problem, for example, could be getting a certain piece of legislation passed by a state legislature in the face of well-defined odds.

Practical politics courses provide a good opportunity to feature publications and films (League and otherwise) about politics—*It's Your Party*, *Politics Is Your Business*, *Who's Who In the Party*. Booklets, flyers, and documentaries can all be used to supplement the “how to” talks by experienced politicians. If courses about politics are well planned, they bring to a League many dividends in the form of new members, contributor interest, rewarding publicity, increased rapport with the parties as well as increased political effectiveness for the members who have taken the course and the leadership involved in putting it on.

Political Quizzes

There are other ways to highlight the importance of politics. A series of quizzes called “Know Your Town's Political Structure” might have questions about elections, voters,

issues, the power structure, citizen opinion. “What's Your Political I.Q.?” is another title for a quiz framework. Quizzes are such a popular gimmick that they find ready acceptance by the media.

Political Party Participation

Because the purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government, it necessarily follows that the League urge members and the public to participate in politics. And the League does just that. It urges its members to participate and interest others in the role of political parties in the nomination of candidates for public office, in providing exposure for candidates during the pre-election period, in raising and spending campaign funds, and in formulating platforms for candidates to run on.

Many League members do not understand the opportunities (even the responsibilities) that they can enjoy in party work because it has been stressed that League Board members cannot, in the interest of League nonpartisanship, participate actively in party politics during their term of leadership. It is an advantage to a League to have politically active members, and it is rewarding for the members as individuals to be politically active.

Leagues place special emphasis on promoting *political party participation* in many different ways for members and for the public (but not for League Board members). Flyers and booklets focusing on party participation are produced by both state and local Leagues—*You Are Invited to Join a Party*, *Who Me, Go To a Precinct Caucus?* *From Precinct to President*, *Precinct Power*, *How To Wield It in Your State*, *Join the Party* for example. Names and addresses of local and county party

organization leaders are publicized by the League as well as times and places of party meetings.

Attention is focused especially on the process of nominating candidates—by party committee, caucus-convention, or primary election. In a presidential election year methods of selecting delegates to national nominating conventions are highlighted because information on this critical political operation should be, and rarely is, common citizen knowledge. Opportunity, or lack thereof, for citizen participation in the nominating process is relevant subject matter for League consideration.

Your League might also enlist the help of the media in educating members and the public about party organization and operation. A TV show might feature a panel of party leaders being interviewed by a few politically adept League members, with additional questions telephoned in by the viewing audience. A series of “Do You Know's” in the newspaper on this subject is effective. Party politics makes a good topic for the League speakers bureau, and your Voters Service Committee might also develop programs about political party participation for students.



"It's party time," she said, primarily.

Part Four—Voters Service Focusing on Particular Groups

The goal of Voters Service differs not one whit with whatever particular group a League is attempting to reach. However, since degree and kind of incentive to acquire political responsibility and also environmental and educational background differ widely among groups of citizens (and sometimes among individuals within a group), Voters Service technique must be tailored to motivate most effectively the many groups of people the League is working with.

Youth

When seeking to motivate young people to participate in government and politics, try to involve them individually in projects such as registration drives, Go-See tours of local government, visits to the state legislature and political party work at election time, etc.

If your Board has decided to emphasize Voters Service work for the youth in your community, many possibilities exist. Leagues often supply Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts with information about government and politics which the Scouts may use to satisfy the requirements of government or citizenship merit badges. Leagues have created special kits with outlines of talks and appropriate publications for this purpose, and League speakers talk to Scout groups. Sometimes a League puts on a Government Day with public officials as speakers for a number of Scout troops. In addition, Leagues frequently work with Campfire Girls, 4-H Clubs, and the YMCA and YWCA, etc.

Schools and colleges are interested in material and presentation techniques to make government and politics come alive for their students. Leagues often work directly to meet this need. In addition to introducing League publications about government and politics, Leagues often help put on mock political conventions or elections or develop programs for civic or political science classes which may include

speakers who are government officials or political leaders. If voting machines can be made available to schools for class elections, the League can demonstrate the machines and emphasize the importance of registering and voting at the same time.

Concentrating on reaching first-time voters, Leagues occasionally produce special publications, *Your First Vote Makes a Difference*, to inspire young people to use their voting right as soon as it is possible. These may be used in League campaigns on college campuses or at vocational schools to bring information to students about registration and voting techniques and the functions of primary and general elections. Students can also be involved in helping Leagues with specific election Voters Service techniques—for example, a massive high-school-manned registration drive with the cooperation of election officials.

The League can do much to encourage the youth of its community to participate in party politics while still teen-agers. The major political parties have teen-age groups that provide opportunity for varied political activity which is rewarding and interesting in itself and which may lead to deeper involvement in political work as adults.

During preelection campaigning, teen-agers work at the party's or candidate's headquarters answering phones, greeting visitors, and mailing campaign material. They may accompany the candidate on shopping-center or house-to-house tours, handing out his material. Alone, they may canvass whole communities, talking with residents about their candidate. Some teen-agers volunteer to drive the candidate on weekends. Candidates' booths in downtown or neighborhood shopping centers may be manned by teen-agers, and they may assist adult party members or team up together in precinct canvassing or in conducting surveys for the party organization or candi-

date. They may organize telephone brigades to invite people to rallies or to remind them to vote. On election day teen-agers perform valuable service by babysitting, driving voters to the polls, handing out candidate material near polling places.

New Citizens

This group is perhaps the most highly motivated of all groups to acquire political responsibility. (See page 12 for registering new citizens.) Special publications addressed to new citizens are produced by some local Leagues. *Welcome, New Citizen* and *Welcome, New Voter—Your Community Needs You* are typical titles.

Subjects treated deal with how to become a voter, how many different elections are held and when, where to vote, whether joining a political party is required, how to use a voting machine or mark a ballot, whether anyone knows for whom a citizen votes.

Helping the prospective new citizen to pass the citizenship examination is sometimes a League Voters Service project. Citizenship schools have been established with the help of interpreters, teachers, the media, high schools, political scientists, and the naturalization courts.

New Residents

These people may be considerably motivated to learn about their new community, but they may not know how to inform themselves.

Whatever a League can do to bring together new residents and their government officials to urge them to register and vote as soon as qualified and to involve them in their government and in political parties is a distinct service to a community. Some Leagues stage large community meetings of new residents and public officials. Others give a series of neighborhood coffees. Still others invite new residents to accompany League observers to governmental meetings, to Go-See tours, and to League meetings.



"Will you join the GO SEE tour tomorrow morning to meet your new city officials?"

Minority Groups

Such groups as inner-city residents; low-income whites and Negroes; Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, and other foreign language-speaking minorities; migratory workers and the rural poor; and Indians present a challenge to League Voters Service because techniques must be evolved which best fit the desire and the needs of each of these groups. Often these techniques are quite different from those which the League has been using for years.

Since at least 1963 Leagues have been learning a considerable amount about cooperation and communication and motivation by working with these groups. This is an area of League Voters Service which is developing with great rapidity, in particular to meet the needs of residents of inner cities. Therefore, we suggest that your League contact the national office of the LWVUS for up-to-date developments in this area of Voters Service and for examples of what other Leagues are doing.

Minority Groups, (cont.)

Leagues first began to reach out to all the citizens in their communities in the form of election Voters Service. From this have evolved opportunities for nonelection Voters Service, which takes many forms. Leagues are learning a great deal as they accept these opportunities.

For example, a big city League which first did a course in government in simple style through an adult education course in an inner city high school used techniques that were more or less the same as those in use for many years with citizens from the suburbs. In evaluating what it had learned from this attempt, the League decided that empathy was the most important ingredient in this kind of Voters Service, that a conversation rather than a lecture was needed, that leaders should use the audience's everyday language, that an outline could be used but material should never be read in the class, that the students should be asked to talk as much as possible during the class, that leaders should speak slowly and repeat and sum up several times, that name tags should be used and everyone should be called Mr., Mrs., or Miss

The following year this League worked with a neighborhood poverty center on a program requested by the center which consisted of several meetings showing what happens in an election. A skit was used at each meeting, and neighborhood people were in the skits. The knowledge gained by the people who attended very definitely fanned out into the neighborhood. It was *their* program, not the League's.

Before the 1964 presidential election Leagues from Maine to California worked alone and also cooperated with other community groups in registering and giving voting information to minority and low income voters. They gave voting machine demonstrations and published foreign language materials about registration and voting, candidates and ballot issues.

Leagues set up information booths or registration booths in chain stores in low income neighborhoods, in urban renewal projects, in low income housing developments. They trained precinct workers for the parties, writing basic voting instructions and simplified ballot issue explanations. League speakers trained community workers to do pro and con explanations of issues for their own groups. In most instances this kind of Voters Service was a first for Leagues in 1964.

As League experience in disadvantaged areas has developed since 1964, it is largely through League contacts with community organizations working to combat poverty that League members have been able to reach residents of the inner city. The League has sometimes been called in to help set up and actually run poverty elections and model city elections; the League has trained neighborhood workers in poverty agencies both in League techniques and in Voters Service subject matter. And the League has succeeded in first reaching indigenous leaders and through them, either directly or indirectly, their constituents, the less articulate mass of city residents. What are some of the ways in which this has been accomplished?

Leagues have first been invited to help with election Voters Service, which usually is much easier to adapt to the needs of any segment of the community than is nonelection Voters Service. It helps with registration information or by actually registering people when possible, with voting machine demonstrations, with ballot issue explanations, with get-out-the-vote techniques. These are quite tangible activities which often lead to opportunities for a more intangible type of effort—training for political participation in situations other than elections. The following examples of League experience illustrate the kind of cooperation that is very rewarding for League and community in the inner city. It is also the kind of cooperative election effort that may lead to opportunities for nonelection work in the inner city.

Minority Groups, (cont.)

A big city League started its inner city Voters Service by working through its poverty agency and neighborhood stations and substations in the poverty target area. A registration drive before the primary election was the first project with neighborhood registration arranged by the League. A student government election at a Job Corps Center was an opportunity for this League to assist the corpswomen to learn about the mechanics of an election as well as the principles of representative government. Election precincts were set up in the dormitories, a form of registration was instituted, nominations were made, the nominees campaigned for election, rallies were held, voting machines were demonstrated. The election was held with an excellent voter turnout, and the project was a great success.

Another large city League arranged a massive registration project with the help of the city housing authority. Registration information booths were set up in large housing authority projects. The leaders of the tenant groups were responsible for conducting a registration information service. Timing coincided with the period when the tenants came to pay their rent. The League produced a do-it-yourself kit to be used by tenant volunteers, and League members briefed them on how to conduct the information service. Tenant newsletters helped to publicize the service and carried a question-and-answer column on registration requirements. The indigenous leaders were better able than League members to overcome two important reasons for low registration among the poor: timidity in participating in an unknown procedure before a government official and a feeling that their vote would make no difference in their lot.

Other Leagues have learned by their Voters Service experiences first of all that gut issues which participants identify—housing, playgrounds, street lighting—are a motivating force; that door-to-door canvassing is almost

fruitless in a very low income neighborhood; that information and materials can best be distributed by neighborhood groups, especially by tenant associations, etc.; that the League must work in the beginning to find natural leaders of the already established organizations and that it is more fruitful for neighborhood residents to give information about registration and voting and government and politics to others as part of the program of regular meetings of established organizations than it sometimes is to set up separate meetings or even separate organizations. If voting machine demonstrations can be arranged, they are a great attraction and an easy way to prove to people that their vote is secret.

Basic skills which the League can share with others (see page 39) are sometimes the first essentials when working with disadvantaged groups. The League can help in the training of employees and volunteer staffs of inner city organizations, who will pass on their knowledge to other people they come in contact with.

Personal contact, communication in the terms of the citizens involved, training of neighborhood workers whether it be for a registration drive or for a group wanting to learn how to make their voices heard at City Hall—these are some of the ingredients of Voters Service efforts with minority groups.

Suburban and exurban Leagues are helping urban Leagues in inner city Voters Service work. If yours is such a League, get in touch with your nearest city League or with your state League to learn about what is being done in this kind of Voters Service and how your League members may participate.

The Education Fund of the LWVUS has had a series of pilot projects in inner city situations both in registration and voting and in citizenship education. Its manual, *Voting is People Power*, explains in detail inner city registration and get-out-the-vote drives. *A Tale of Three Cities* describes the citizen education activities.



"I thought we were going to talk about the issues, sir."

Part Five—Communication and Distribution

Radio and Television

The vast use that Leagues make of radio and TV in Voters Service cannot be overemphasized. Almost every technique in both election and nonelection Voters Service lends itself well to radio and TV coverage. Candidates meetings, voting machine demonstrations, audience participation quizzes, and interviews with public officials are just a few of the Voters Service techniques frequently aired. Consult the LWVUS public relations manual, *Tips on Reaching the Public*, Chapter VI, for suggestions.

Speakers Bureaus

Chapter IV of *Tips on Reaching the Public* contains information on organizing and operating a speakers bureau. League speakers use a wide range of Voters Service topics, particularly in a prelection period. Nominating processes and ballot issues are almost exclusively League topics (see page 23). The importance of and the mechanics of registering are other popular subjects. So, too, is operating a voting machine (see page 36).

In addition to this kind of factual speech, Leagues are often asked to provide speakers on more general topics such as "Why Citizens Should Concern Themselves in Government and Politics," "Why Citizens Should Use Their Right To Vote," "Your Vote Makes a Difference—How One Vote Can Win (or Lose) an Election," "Choosing the President—How It Is Done," "How To Watch a National Nominating Convention," "The Role of Political Parties," and "The Importance of Primaries." While talks such as these sometimes take an excessive

amount of time to prepare the first time, they do make friends for the League and for that reason alone are important.

Publishing

Copyrighting League Voters Service publications is widely done as protection against having them used in a manner not acceptable to the League and as protection against partisanship implications if the materials are distributed by a candidate who stamps them with his name and address or that of a political party. To obtain a copyright, your League must reproduce some copies with the copyright line included, even if the publishing is being done by a newspaper or financed by a benefactor. Copyright application forms may be obtained from the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540, to be returned with two copies of your publication and the copyright fee, which is nominal.

If a League receives contributions specifically for a Voters Service publication and *its benefactor wants a by-line*, the following procedure is suggested: State in the publication "This material was prepared by the League of Women Voters of _____." Then add "Distributed through the generosity of _____" or "This distribution was made possible by the gift of _____" or "The distribution of this Voters Guide (for example) was paid for by _____." The community should know that no one but the League had a hand in preparing the material.

Distribution

Outlets and contacts to be considered when planning distribution of free material and material to sell include these:

For Direct Use by the League

- booths and votemobiles
- telephone answering service
- direct mail
- newspapers, press associations, and radio/TV
- League speakers
- LWV meetings
- LWV member enterprises in their own neighborhoods

By Direct Mail

- all households in community
- mailing lists of shopping news, etc.
- all registered voters, or households with one or more registered voters
- new voters (newly naturalized, just 21, new residents)

House-to-House Distribution (mailboxes should not be used)

- community-wide, with assistance from other groups
- sections of the community not well covered otherwise

Built-In Contacts

- members and prospective members, their husbands and other relatives, and people they know
- finance contributors and prospects
- long-time recipients of materials
- cooperating groups on other ventures in the community
- community personnel—elected and appointed—on all levels
- candidates included in any materials (for free distribution only)

- League business connections (stationers, printers, landlords, etc.)
- speaking engagement contacts

Gathering Places (usually for free distribution)

- banks
- supermarkets, drug stores, filling stations
- libraries (including book-mobile projects)
- commuter railroad and bus stations, airports
- offices of doctors, dentists, etc.
- barber shops and beauty parlors
- churches and temples
- clubs (all kinds — meetings and lounges)
- concert halls, museums, art galleries, etc.
- YWCA, YMCA, community centers, etc.

Groups that May Assist the League (by buying materials and/or helping to get them into circulation)

- radio and TV
- banks (with statements to customers and for employees) and insurance companies and department stores (in bills)
- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, school service clubs
- Adult education system, students in colleges and universities
- Junior Chamber of Commerce
- Chamber of Commerce (in mailings to members)
- civic and service groups
- chain stores—drug and supermarkets
- business firms and stores (in pay envelopes and bills)
- utility companies (in pay envelopes and bills)

- telephone—time and weather service
- universities (in mailboxes and in pay envelopes)
- PTA councils and other council-level organizations
- industry (for employees and customers and financing League ads)
- labor unions
- business and trade associations
- professional groups
- welcome wagon
- garbage collectors
- milk companies

Special Cooperation

- housing authority
- housing developments
- school systems
- newspapers (for printing candidates' questionnaires, in particular)
- special interest groups on subjects among ballot issues
- special interest groups in League action items
- home-extension departments
- settlement houses, civil rights organizations, anti-poverty groups

Groups with Special Needs

- hospitals and nursing homes
- the blind
- the aged in special centers and people who serve the aged
- new voters—new residents, 21-year-olds, newly naturalized citizens
- people with language and reading problems

Military and Overseas Vote

- churches and service clubs
- U.S.O.
- military posts
- overseas voters who request information

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Part Six—Lists of Voters Service Techniques

I Election Voters Service Techniques

This is not intended as a definitive list—just some suggestions that may be helpful in setting overall Voters Service goals.

A. Encouraging people to be candidates

1. Provide information about running for office
 - offices on ballot
 - filing procedures with dates and fees
2. Stimulate motivation to run for office
 - meetings to present officials, Go Sees
 - media cooperation

B. Encouraging people to register

1. Urge convenient registration
2. Inform people about registration
 - publications—leaflets, flyers, mimeographed sheets, cards, billboards, bus cards, banners
 - talks to community groups
 - announcements—radio and TV, newspapers, bulletins
 - telephone campaigns
 - door-to-door personal contact
 - Voters Service booths
3. Urge people to register
 - check registration lists against organization lists
 - telephone or write to the unregistered
 - write to high school alumni of voting age
 - give Birthright Parties for young voters
 - urge college students and faculty to register
 - focus on military personnel and their families
 - reach new citizens, contact new residents
 - offer help in registering the handicapped
 - provide baby-sitters or transportation
 - encourage League members to be deputized as registrars (where possible)
 - set up Voters Service booths to take registrations (where possible)
 - organize special registration drives in banks, savings and loan associations, factories, offices of large business firms, union meeting halls, churches, retirement homes, convalescent hospitals, county fairs, etc.
 - drive votemobiles in parades, around the city, to sports events, shopping centers, colleges
 - city-wide or target-area registration campaigns, involving government officials, civic, service, and social organizations
 - youth groups
 - political parties, labor organizations
 - concentrate on particular voting precincts
 - play supportive role with indigenous groups (rather than leadership role) to register in particular areas of the community
 - consider cooperation between suburban and core city Leagues for registration drives

C. Informing the Voter

1. Candidates questionnaires
 - compiled with answers requested by mail
 - compiled with answers obtained in interviews

- published with newspaper cooperation
 - published independently by the League
 - covering local offices only
 - covering offices at other government levels
 - including ballot issues
 - including other election information
2. Ballot issues
 - pros and cons
 - comprehensive explanations
 - in foreign languages
 3. Candidates meetings
 - pre-primary or pre-general election
 - cooperation with other organizations
 - offices to be covered
 - straight meeting, candidates fair
 - round-table discussion
 - radio and/or TV, additional features
 4. Voting machine demonstrations
 - training demonstrators, giving talks
 - demonstrating for community organizations or for the public
 - publishing flyers on operation of the voting machine—perhaps in a foreign language
 5. Publicizing absentee voting opportunities
 - for local residents through League bulletins, flyers
 - newspaper and radio and TV announcements
 - notations for community newsletters
 - bulletin board announcements for organizations, business, industry, churches
 - for residents of other areas by distributing LWVUS publication with voting information for all states
 - contacting local firms and organizations with personnel in other states
 6. Getting Out the Vote
 - recruiting and training election workers—classes in poll watching
 - information giving
 - publications, perhaps in a foreign language
 - newspaper and radio and TV announcements
 - reminding citizens to vote
 - torchlight parades with cavalcade of candidates and floats
 - documentary TV with audience participation
 - votemobiles, cars with loudspeakers, billboard signs, street banners
 - bumper stickers, lapel tags, posters, bus cards, window displays, parking meter decorations
 - telephone company reminders with weather and time information
 - TV slides and radio spots, newspaper ads
 - assistance
 - telephone information service, rides to the polls

II Nonelection Voters Service Techniques

Because of the wide range of possible NONELECTION VOTERS SERVICE techniques, this list is simply a starter.

A. Instruction in basic techniques

- holding a meeting
- contacting government officials
- attending hearings
- preparing testimony
- testifying at hearings

B. Learning about government

1. Publications
 - Know Your City (or County)
 - Do You Know the ABC's of Your Town's Government?
 - How to Visit City Hall
 - Political Directory
 - They Represent You
 - Voters Handbook
 - Guide for Citizens
2. Projects
 - single meetings where local officials speak
 - displays in a street fair or indoor festival of work of all departments of a local government
 - lecture series, workshops, institutes, courses on government
 - visits to the state legislature (not program oriented)
 - Go-Sees
 - public forum for discussion of issues, perhaps with radio/TV coverage
 - regularly scheduled League radio and TV programs on government topics
 - League talks to other organizations on government
 - coffee, luncheons, etc., for public officials
 - League observer programs

C. Learning about politics

- practical politics courses
- campaigns to encourage party participation
- publications, meetings, films, tapes
- quizzes and speeches for community organizations
- cooperation with adult education department of local school system
- media cooperation to educate the public about party organization and operation
- TV interviews of party leaders
- programs for students

III Voters Service Techniques Focusing on Particular Groups

This list, which is far from complete, supplements the preceding lists of ELECTION and NONELECTION VOTERS SERVICE TECHNIQUES.

A. Youth

- distribution of information about government and politics to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, 4-H Clubs, the YMCA and YWCA, etc.
- mock political conventions, campaigns, elections
- programs for civics or political science classes
- perhaps with government officials or political leaders as speakers
- demonstrating voting machines in high schools and colleges and arranging for their use in school elections
- encouraging youth participation in party politics
- special publications such as *Your First Vote Makes a Difference*
- registration and voting campaigns on college campuses or at vocational schools
- community registration drives manned by high school students

B. New citizens

- special publications—e.g., *Welcome, New Citizen*
- assistance in preparing for citizenship examination
- assistance in registering following naturalization ceremony

C. New residents

- community meetings with public officials
- series of neighborhood meetings

D. Minority groups

- registration drives
- publicizing voting information
- voting machine demonstrations with basic voting instructions
- publications and radio and TV presentations in foreign languages
- information and registration booths in low-income neighborhoods
- simplified ballot explanations
- setting up and operating poverty elections
- setting up and operating model city elections
- training neighborhood workers in League techniques and in Voters Service subject matter
- arranging mock nominating conventions and elections

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE UNITED STATES

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