

LWVUS Convention 2018

Overview

Introduction

I and Gwen Hanson attended the National (LWUS) Convention which met from June 28th through July 1 in Chicago. We are grateful for the support of the LWVGLC which enabled us to have this experience and be your representatives. We will share the best we can what we learned from our meetings and hopefully we can also share the inspiration that we experienced.

Plenary

Plenaries are meetings attended by all delegates to the Convention. LWVUS plenaries were held in our convention hotel, the downtown Chicago Hilton, in a lovely and large ballroom. Including volunteers, delegates, and visitors, there were over 1,100 in attendance. The technical support was good and we were able to hear the speakers and see them on two large screens on either side of the speakers' platform. Here business, both mundane, inspirational and everything in between, was conducted. These sessions were usually three to four hours long and there were four of them. It was our LWVGLC Annual Meeting on steroids. Below are some items of interest to our League.

*Monetarily, LWVUS is in good shape. After the 2016 election, giving rose quite precipitously, both individual, corporate and planned giving. There is now approximately a \$5.1 million dollar surplus to be used for programming and for updating League technology and consolidating operations.

*The basic goals of non-partisanship and "Making Democracy Work" remain the same. Areas of emphasis will be diversity/equity/inclusion, improving elections (abolishing the electoral college/National Popular Vote), money in politics, and redistricting.

*More active promotion of the Equal Rights Amendment was almost unanimously approved.

"... the League of Women Voters of the United States (will take) the required steps to see the Amendment through whatever judicial or other challenges may occur until we see the ERA added to the U.S. Constitution in clear, bold, black and white."

Caucuses

The caucuses were smaller group presentations by LWVUS, State and/or local Leagues sharing their projects with us. I attended caucuses on Open Primaries (LWV FL), Creating an Inclusive League Culture, Fundraising ("Party with a Purpose"), and Youth Voter Registration. Gwen attended caucuses on Telling the League Story to Raise Money for Your League, Redistricting, A Screening of "Age of Consequences" (A documentary about the global consequences of climate change) and The Time for ERA is NOW.

One caucus we could not attend but we gathered information about it from its creators. We hope it can be pursued further at some time in the future. It's called "The Voter Girl Project" which is a collaborative project between Girl Scouts and the League. It involves Leaguers using their knowledge

of voting and advocacy to provide workshops for scouts to earn their citizenship badges. Materials and tips are available from the LWV of Kent (Ohio). I have already mentioned this to a Girl Scout Leader I know and she has expressed enthusiasm and an interest in helping.

Training Sessions

LWVUS provided two training sessions by professionals. These sessions were two and a half hours long but very engaging. One was called, "Developing and Mobilizing Skills to Win in 2018" conducted by Wellstone Action. We learned how these skills can increase our impact. LWVUS has partnered with Wellstone Action which will provide an online learning series.

The other training session was "Using Diversity, Equity and an Inclusive Lens to Strengthen Social Impact and Collaboration" conducted by Diversity Dimensions. We were presented skills to not only be applied to internal organization building but to external election work. There was some very interesting and valuable information presented and exercises to do. (See the LWVUS Diversity Training sheets in the linked Handouts folder at the end).

Wares

This section was an important part of the National Convention. Ostensibly it was a marketing area for State and local Leagues to sell things. In actuality we found it a place to gather ideas as well as things to help our local League transmit its message to the public and to bolster and inspire our membership. I bought books, a shirt, a scarf, pins... but also found out information about a program of interest.

Inspiration

An excellent array of speakers was on hand at the Plenary Sessions. Many of these speakers were part of LWVUS. The National League was setting a good example of diversity with its featured speakers on various topics of vital interest to our programming. The ultimate speaker was saved for the last full day at the end of the banquet. She is a journalist and author of the book, "The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote" by Ellen Weiss. She was as good a speaker as she is a writer. Her sense of detail is superb and you live through the times of ratification, experiencing all the complexity of them, the many characters who were involved and the politics of the time (some of it eerily like our own). One jaded reviewer said he got goosebumps even though he knew how it ended. I have the book with the author's signed dedication to our League. It should be a must-read for Leaguers. Another polar opposite but engaging book is one for young children. It is written and illustrated in Dr. Seuss's style and is called "One Vote, Two Votes, I Vote, You Vote" with the Cat in the Hat. I even learned something from it.

I have included many pictures which will provide more detail if you wish to access them. They are organized in folders. The primary folder is called "LWVUS Convention Pictures 2018." Within the folders are both traditional pictures and pictures of slides which were posted at the plenary and at caucuses to summarize information. I have tried to name them so you will know what the subject matter is and you can select what is of interest to you. Enlarge them for easier reading.

You will need to copy and paste these links into your browser address bar.

The Pictures link is:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/cw6yw7hk0lsvr7d/AAAJ7sQcq5dIP_eyQ1Z3oE7Na?dl=0

A second folder is also available. It contains resource materials and handouts.

The Handouts link is:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ky3afwa6614zg5u/AAAUW04rj62DITkRLixm2v4La?dl=0>