

December 2014 Opportunity for Guidance: League is Fun! Social Aspects of LWV

APPRECIATIVE ICEBREAKER

Take a moment and reflect on these questions:

- ✓ When you get together with your friends what activities do you enjoy doing?
- ✓ In what ways could you incorporate those activities into League?
- ✓ What are some of the most fun moments you've had in League?
- ✓ What types of social activities do you participate in with other groups you belong to?

GUIDANCE

When asked what their favorite part of League is, many people respond that it's the people they meet and the bonds they create with other people in their community that keeps them coming back to League. Time and time again, we hear that League members continue to be a part of our organization because they think the League is FUN! They enjoy the good people, lively conversations, and the ability to learn from the others in the League.

Because of this, it is important for us to make time for fun activities where League members can come together, enjoy each other's company and celebrate all of the hard work everyone has been doing. A great time to consider a purely fun event is around the League's birthday. On February 14, 2015, the League will turn 95! This is a great opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments, celebrate what we have achieved as an organization, and talk about our goals for the future. In short, it is a way to keep your members involved and engaged in the League, and it will also help members bond with and get to know one another. It also can be a great way for the public to get to know the League.

Fun Does Not Have to be Secondary

Often times, we think about the social aspect of League as being secondary in importance to the work that we do. This doesn't always have to be the case. Sometimes it is good to plan an event where there is no work agenda and just enjoy the company of other League members. Consider a cocktail party, a "field trip" to a museum or other local attraction, or even just a League picnic. Not only do these activities serve as a great way to unwind after a hectic election season, they also allow new and prospective members time to interact with League members in a low stress situation.

Just because we take on the important issues facing our communities does not mean we have to be serious all the time. Bring a bottle of wine or have a potluck at your next meeting. Have educational reception events - combining the League with some hors d'oeuvres or finger foods. Strictly social events can lift the spirits of League members and are just as important in creating change in the community. The League is a social network by nature and League friendships often last a lifetime. Why not make the time we spend together as enjoyable as possible?

Make it a Leadership Opportunity

One great thing about planning a party is that you don't need a lot of League experience to do it! This makes planning a "fun time" a great opportunity to give a new League member the reins and allow them to use their leadership skills. If one person isn't willing to take on the planning themselves, create a party planning committee; sometimes the planning stages are as fun as the party itself.

“Fun Ideas”

1. Consider hosting a party at your home or that of another LWV member, or at a local restaurant, bar or club. Invite your guests to come at least a half-hour before the start of any formal program so that you can get acquainted and socialize.
2. Encourage your guests to bring beverages and snacks (that way you won't be solely responsible and others will feel more ownership for the party).
3. Have a specific RSVP date and time (this helps you anticipate your party size, and makes your attendees accountable for showing up). Invite more potential guests than you can accommodate, and then do follow-up calls and/or emails. This ensures that you will have enough people in attendance. Ask non-League members to join. Just because someone is enjoying themselves doesn't mean that they will automatically make the leap to membership on their own. Be sure to make the ask!
4. Ask organizations that you are in coalition or partnership with to join you. Social gatherings are a great place to start building relationships with possible partner organizations as well as with individuals.
5. Use the sign-in sheet provided to keep track of who attended your party and sign them up for the League E-Voice, the League's monthly e-newsletter. They can sign up at <http://www.lwv.org/get-involved>. Keep in touch with everyone who attends your event, especially anyone who is not currently a League member. Invite participants to attend other League functions.
6. Get creative! Keep it fun! Enjoy the party as much as your guests!

If a stand-alone social event doesn't fit with your League's calendar, think about how some of these tips could be incorporated into our “must do” work, such as an annual meeting or program planning.

REAL LEAGUE SUCCESS STORY

[The League of Women Voters of McLean County \(IL\)](#) will host “Drinks and Dialogue” 4 times in 2014 and 2015, offering community members the chance to discuss topics of interest in a relaxed “happy hour” setting. Anyone is welcome to attend and the informality of “Drinks and Dialogue” allows considerable flexibility in choosing topics. Past topics have ranged from the social responsibility of businesses to the film “Miss Representation,” and the October 2014 meeting will address the statewide advisory questions and constitutional amendments set to appear on the November ballot. Originally started last year to help younger and newer members become more active and familiar with the League, the LWV of McLean County has brought it back for another year of fun, lively conversation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Success Story: Miami-Dade County Engages Community through Cocktails and Conversation](#)
- Chapter 4 of the MLD Handbook: [Being Visible All Year](#)
- Watch in the weekly *League Update* for templates and tools to use to celebrate the League's 95th anniversary