

Host a Movie Watching Party or Create a League Book Club

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 other individuals in the League. Incorporating some fun activities, which are still related to the work of the League, is a great way to keep your members involved and engaged in the League. It will also help members bond with and get to know one another.

Moving watching parties and book clubs can be used to help generate dialogue about issues important to your community and to the country in a new way. For instance, one way to mark Women's History Month is to host a viewing of the HBO film, *Iron Jawed Angels*, which chronicles "the struggle of suffragists who fought for the passage of the 19th Amendment," or to screen the film *Patriocracy*, which discusses the heightened partisanship of our current political era.

Leagues may want to partner with an allied organization in the community that will help to reach potential new members for a movie watching event or book club meeting. An important element of this visibility opportunity is to ensure the presence of potential new members and to recruit them into your League.

Hosting an LWV Movie Watching Party

You and your guests are going to have a good time, especially if you pick a good film! Here's why....

- It offers an opportunity to educate people about a chosen topic and to recruit new members to the League.
- It offers an opportunity to create visibility for your League if you do a media advisory, press release, and/or Op Ed relating the movie to current voter engagement or other League efforts in your community.
- It offers an opportunity to talk about your League's current activities, connecting the past and the present.
- A good film can have a high entertainment value, and can also be extremely inspiring.



Following the film, Leagues may host a discussion about the topic at hand or about the movie in general. The League president could facilitate the discussion in partnership with the allied organization's president and/or spokesperson. Leagues should also be sure to incorporate messages about the value of League membership and issue an invitation to join the League.



Party Points:

1. Consider hosting it at someone's home, a local university, a local restaurant, bar or club. Invite your guests to come at least a half-hour before the start of the film.
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).
4. Invite more potential guests than you can accommodate, and then do follow-up calls and/or e-mails.
5. Use the sign-in sheet provided to keep track of who attended your party.
6. Give your guests directions to the party location. It's always helpful to include a map of the area (check out Map Quest at www.mapquest.com).
7. Keep in touch with everyone who attends your event, especially anyone who is not currently a League member. This is an excellent opportunity to recruit and retain new members and engage new members. Invite participants to attend other League functions, such as an upcoming candidate forum.
8. Ask non-League members to join the League to continue the work of strengthening women's roles in our democracy and in our communities.
9. Get creative! Keep it fun! Enjoy the movie as much as your guests!

Party Points for Pre-Movie Discussions:

If you anticipate your group leaving directly after the movie, give yourself enough time to have a discussion before the film begins.

1. Invite people over an hour or more beforehand. Have food and drink! (See above.)
2. Do your best to keep your discussion related to the film. Inevitably people will want to discuss other things, which is fine, but as the host it will be your responsibility to bring it back to task every so often. (Remember this is a FUN event, too. Try to be gentle with reminders to get back to the movie.)
3. Because you will be discussing something you may not have seen, the most powerful tool for your group will be planting seeds of thought. Ask the group to think about a few points while watching the movie.

Party Points for Post-Movie Discussions:

1. It will be up to you as the host (or someone you designate) to get a discussion going after the film. Generate a list of discussion topics before the party and use it to steer the discussion. Feel free to have participants ask questions to the group, too.
2. Some films will be sure to get your group riled up. Take advantage of that energy! If you are gathering as a group who supports a specific cause, discuss what you can do to create solidarity surrounding your issue.

Creating an LWV Book Club

A book club offers the same opportunities as a movie-watching event. There is potential for fun, joint learning, and engaging new members in the League.

And, as with planning a movie event, there are some things to consider prior to setting up a book club. Thinking through these points will be especially important if the book club will meet regularly (e.g, every month).

What to think about prior to setting up the book club:

What is the purpose of the book club? What do you hope to get out of it?

- Be sure the purpose of the club is transparent to all members and that the book selection is parallel to club's theme.

Who do you want to make up the club? How diverse do you want the group and how will you reach out to non-members? What is the minimum and maximum number of participants (this could be reliant on the space)?

- Make announcements at every League Meeting, post notices at the local library, bookstores, and Town Hall or advertise online. Be sure to include the organizer's contact information! And, think about your League's target audience for recruiting members. Where is it best to advertise for them and what's the best method to do that (e.g., social media, fliers, word of mouth)?

Who will lead the club and how will they be selected?

- Decide before the first meeting if you will rotate moderators or if there will be one person to lead the discussion on a regular basis. This is great opportunity to develop new leaders!

How much time will be devoted to each meeting? Where will they be held and will refreshments be provided?

- It is generally best to meet in a public space, perhaps where you normally have League meetings.

How often do you plan to meet?

- Setting a regularized schedule will help to get regular participants. Individuals can mark their calendar well in advance and will be there.

How will the books be selected? Will the book be decided by the group or selected by the moderator?

- It is helpful to provide a list of retailers or libraries for members to purchase or borrow the book selected for each meeting.





Important Reminders for Your Book Club

1. Prior to the first meeting, send everyone an e-mail detailing the basic ground rules for the group – e.g. What type of books the group will read, how long each meeting will last. It is a good idea to start on online blog or forum to keep track of the discussions. This is especially useful for recruiting new members.
2. Be sure to welcome each participant at the beginning of each meeting and introduce everyone. Ensure that group is warm and welcoming. Have membership materials available!
3. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak his or her opinion. Be sure the moderator is comfortable steering the conversation away should it become dominated by one view or person.
4. If a discussion becomes heated, be sure to remind everyone to have fun and respect the other members' opinions. At this point, you could start a new discussion.

Selecting a Good Book

There are many online sites that offer suggestions for different books.

1. Bookbrowse and Penguin allow you to search for books according to topic, such as Current Affairs.
2. You can also search on many popular bookseller website, such as Barnes and Noble or Amazon, to see the latest titles in a certain genre.
3. Another great resource is your local library. You could contact a librarian directly for a recommendation or access their card catalog in the branch or online to look up different book options.

Resources:

<http://school.familyeducation.com/reading/fiction/37737.html>

http://articles.cnn.com/2009-12-18/living/obc.book.club_1_book-club-prospective-members-first-meeting?_s=PM:LIVING

http://www.ehow.com/how_2171570_run-book-club.html#ixzz1DDCXLeFu

<http://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Book-Group>

<http://www.realsimple.com/work-life/start-book-club-checklist-0000000001100/index.html>