

**Local Leagues Reach Out and Touch Voters:  
Community Voter Education Programs Planned for January-February**

Voting and voter registration will be dramatically for the March 2006 primary. Local LWV chapters are co-sponsoring a community voter education program to prepare citizens for the changes. The program will be presented by the Office of the Cook County Clerk. Topics to be covered include:

- **New Voting Equipment:** Voters will cast ballots by marking their choices on a paper ballot or by touching a computer screen instead of punching out chads with a stylus. Both new systems provide paper records. The new equipment will be demonstrated.
- **Extended Voter Registration Deadline:** Standard voter registration (various locations by deputy registrars) still ends February 21 for the March 2006 primary, but voters can still register for two weeks following, in-person at the County Clerk Headquarters at 69 W. Washington.
- **Early Voting:** Illinois residents can vote in person at designated locations before Election Day without having to provide a reason or excuse. Early voting begins 22 days prior to the election and ends the Thursday before. Evanston residents will be able to vote at the Evanston City Clerk's office, 2100 Ridge.
- **Statewide Voter Registration Database:** The federally-mandated database is intended to reduce registration-related problems, enfranchise eligible voters and help elections run more smoothly. All states are required to have in place by January 1, 2006.
- **Statewide Voter Registration:** Deputy registrars in Illinois can register any Illinois resident no matter where in the state she or he lives. They can use their own county's form, give the voter a signed receipt, and turn in all forms to their own County Clerk. It will be the responsibility of the County Clerks to deliver the registration forms to the different counties and the City of Chicago.

The programs are co-sponsored by the LWV chapters of Evanston, Glencoe, Park Ridge, Wilmette, and Winnetka, as well as the Evanston Public Library. If you would like to assist with the planning and promotion of the voter education programs, contact Judy Hoffman, [judhof@aol.com](mailto:judhof@aol.com) or 847.491.6275.



Here's the voting machine you will be using in the March Primary Election. The voter education programs that **Judy Hoffman** organized will feature this Sequoia—a machine that allows voters to verify their choices before casting their ballots.

**ON THE CALENDAR**

**Voter Education Programs**

**Sat., Jan 21, 2:00 p.m.**  
Evanston Public Library  
1702 Orrington, Evanston  
847-866-0300

**Wed., Jan. 25, 7:00 p.m.**  
Glencoe Public Library  
320 Park Ave., Glencoe  
847-835-5056

**Wed., Feb. 8, 1:00 p.m.**  
North Shore Senior Center  
161 Northfield Rd.,  
Northfield  
847-784-6000.

**LWVE Board Meeting**

Thurs., Jan 12, 7:00  
King Home, 1500 Oak St.  
All members are welcome.

**Community Dinner March 12**

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
County Commissioner  
(13th District) Larry  
Suffredin (and his opponent  
if there is one at that time)  
will be a presenter.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I rarely make resolutions, but this year I have resolved to not let myself waste time and energy by being overwhelmed by the reports in the news; by the vision of great things that could be but seem impossible; by the frustration of having been born with just one body, brain, and pair of hands. A story that will help steel my resolution comes from one of the most beautiful books I've ever read: *My Grandfather's Blessings*, by Rachel Naomi Remen, M. D.

*Then she began to tell me a story about an old man who is walking along a beach at low tide, picking up starfish drying in the sun and gently throwing them back into the ocean. He has been doing this for some time when a jogger overtakes him and asks what he is doing. The old man explains that the starfish will die in the sun, and so he is throwing them back into the ocean. Astounded, the younger man begins to laugh. "Why, old fellow, don't waste your time. Can't you see that there are hundreds and hundreds of starfish on this beach? And thousands of beaches in this world? And another low tide tomorrow? What makes you think that you can make a difference?" And still laughing, he runs on down the beach.*

*The old man looks after him for a long while. Then he walks on and before long he passes another starfish. Stooping, he picks it up and looks at it thoughtfully. Then gently, he throws it back into the ocean. "Made a difference to that one," he says to himself.*

This month our League will be making an important difference to voters in Cook County. See Judy Hoffman's article on coming programs to educate all of us about the new Illinois voting laws and Cook County voting equipment. And, of course, our conscientious and faithful Observers have valuable information for you regarding the local committees and board meetings they observe.

I wish you a very happy – no, better than that – a happy and forward-looking new year!

*Karen*



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### THE INTERCOM January 2006 Vol. 84, No. 4

The *Intercom* is the newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Evanston. Ten issues are published each year.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through citizen education and advocacy.

### **Evanston Leaguers Plan for the LWVUS's 2006 Convention**

The Evanston League along with the Illinois LWV is on record supporting an important issue going into the 2006 national convention in Minneapolis—ending the death penalty. **Janet Kittlaus** is leading the Illinois League's effort to bring the LWVUS on board in opposition to the death penalty— one issue on a crowded docket of significant concerns to be considered at the convention.

Carol Hirsch has graciously agreed to host an orientation session for Evanston Leaguers. The discussion, to prepare for the 2006 LWV Convention will focus on anticipated issues and strategies to make LWVE members effective participants. **President Karen Telser** urges you to mark your calendar for this pre-convention session to be held Sunday, February 12, at the home of Carol Hirsch, 2800 Lakeside Court, Evanston. Carol will provide cookies and warm drinks (tea, coffee, cider). Carol has suggested that donations of homemade cookies will be welcome.

### **Voting in 2006: Why Are There Changes?**

The changes Illinois voter will experience during the March 2006 primary election were mandated by national and state legislation, beginning with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passed by Congress in 2002. The Help America Vote Act (2002) is a response to what took place in November 2000 when the presidential election went undecided for 36 days after the official Election Day. For the most part, the stalemate revolved around voting procedures in Florida – ballots that were badly designed, votes that were hard to decipher, counting rules that changed from day to day.

HAVA creates new national standards for how citizens will register and vote. For the first time, the federal government is helping states and localities with funds to improve election procedures. Another essential change is that the law gives increased authority over elections to the state governments, with the goal of instituting uniform and nondiscriminatory practices within each state. A number of the changes in place for Illinois voters were a direct result of efforts initiated by the Office of the Cook County Clerk.

### **No Changes in Absentee Voting**

The laws governing absentee voting by mail have not changed as a result of early voting. Voters can vote by mail but must provide a reason as required under law. People physically unable to go to their polling places or who will be out of town on Election Day may vote a mail-in ballot. To obtain an application or to find out if qualified to vote absentee, visit [www.voterinfonet.com](http://www.voterinfonet.com) or call (312) 603-0944.

### **LWVE Supports Capital Punishment Post-Card Campaign**

As part of LWVIL's pre-convention education campaign regarding the death penalty, Janet Kittlaus sent postcards about the issue to all LWV chapters throughout the USA, an expensive mailing. To support this effort, LWVE has contributed \$250 to help defray the cost of the mailing.

### **Town—Gown Issues Recapped**

Lucile Krasnow, who is the Special Assistant for Community Relations at Northwestern University, presented her views on the relationship between the City of Evanston and Northwestern at the December, 2005 LWVE Board Meeting. She discussed some events in recent history: the Fair Share referendum, the proposed head tax referendum, the Historic District lawsuit, the fiber optics project, and the Central Street firehouse rehabilitation.

Ms. Krasnow's conclusion was that this is a "phenomenal time to look at the Northwestern University—City Of Evanston relationship," because the most recent aldermanic election significantly changed the nature of the City Council, and because we have a dynamic new City Manager (Julia Carroll). What had previously long been a contentious relationship is evolving into a positive one, which Lucile attributes at least partly to the efforts of the City Manager and Aldermen Delores Holmes, Elizabeth Tisdahl, and Cheryl Wollin. She recommended that the City of Evanston and Northwestern strive to disregard their past disagreements and work to develop an amicable and mutually beneficial one.

A committee of the Board is looking into the history of town/gown relationships.

**NEWS FROM THE OBSERVER CORPS**

Here are selected highlights from five of the civic bodies observed regularly by the members of the Observer Corps:

**Economic Development Committee:** In early November, the committee had an update on from the developers of Sherman Plaza. Condo sales are strong, they said, and there is strong interest from some upscale retailers for the remaining space. The garage opening is on schedule for the end of May and the condos for the end of summer. Developers are paying for the trolley available to Evanston shoppers for the holiday season. On Nov. 21 EvMark and the City sponsored a joint presentation of downtown development trends with a exercise for envisioning the future.

**Plan Commission:** The architect and lawyer for the proposed downtown Mather Development showed some revisions to original plans to the Commission members, and then two of the neighbors who will be affected by the development also presented their views. Following discussion, the motion to approve the project was passed unanimously. The proposal will now go to the Planning and Development committee.

**Administration and Public Works Committee:** Discussion was held in several A&PW meetings about the presence of minors, especially Northwestern students, in bars which have a license to stay open until 3 a.m. NU students say they need to be able to hold fundraisers in the bars to attract sufficient numbers of students to raise substantial funds. Students and bar owners say they take precautions to prevent minors from drinking, but several incidents have occurred with underage drinking. After attempts to amend the ordinance, it was passed as is by the Council.

**Planning and Development Committee:** As one of the major issues coming before it, this Committee of Nine (all aldermen serve on it) has worked on an Affordable Housing Demolition Tax which would be \$10,000 for a single family home, \$10,000 for town homes, and \$10,000 or \$3000 per unit (whichever is larger) for multi-family homes. The proposed ordinance was passed unanimously in committee. In a related matter, the Committee has taken up discussion on an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, and will hold a special meeting to have discussion.

**City Council:** Attempts to extend the periods of time that leaf blowers may be used was thoroughly discussed in committee and on the Council floor, but the Council voted soundly to defeat the extended use. Environmental concerns and noise were the factors which led to the retention of the present form of the ordinance. And, after discussion at several meetings, the Council at its Dec. 12 meeting voted 5-4 against the Mayor's proposed appointment, which she strongly supported, of Northwestern University's Ronald Naylor to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

*Jan Otwell*

**WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS**

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**Alice Tybout**  
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## MacArthur Foundation Grant Underwrites LWVUS Dialog

Earlier this year, with a grant from the MacArthur Foundation, the LWVUS conducted focus groups, convened a series of public dialogs across the country, and analyzed data collected in recent national polls (the Washington Post, USA Today, Gallup and Harris surveys, to mention a few). The result was a report titled "Local Voices: Conversations on Civil Liberties and Secure Communities."

This report was presented to members of Congress at a September 7 event at the Capitol, and to other policy-makers as the USA Patriot Act is being reviewed. It describes the work done and the perceptions identified, and makes recommendations for policy-makers in government, community institutions, the public in general, and Leagues in specific.

If you have a particular interest in the interrelationship between civil rights and the new Homeland Security initiative, you can view this report on the LWVUS Web site, [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

## Directory Changes

To keep your 2005 LWV Membership Directory current make the following changes:

- Under "Directors," add Judy Hoffman as Voter Service Chair
- Correct or add these e-mail addresses  
Barbara Fowler  
[financial.planners@prodigy.net](mailto:financial.planners@prodigy.net)  
Nancy Hagstrom  
[nbhagstrom@yahoo.com](mailto:nbhagstrom@yahoo.com)

## LAKE MICHIGAN – KEEPING IT ALIVE, WELL, AND BEAUTIFUL

An "Interleague Organization" is a group of local Leagues, recognized by the LWVUS, and organized to take action on county, metropolitan, or regional governmental matters. The local Leagues residing in the four states in Lake Michigan's basin – Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin – are members of the Lake Michigan Interleague Organization (LMILO). The LMILO studies, writes positions, and takes actions on concerns regarding Lake Michigan. Currently at issue are water diversion and a Federal bill that is being introduced for the restoration of the Great Lakes (similar to what has been done to restore the Florida Everglades).

The LMILO and the LWV of Michigan are members of a coalition called "Healing Our Waters," which was formed with support from the Wedge Entomological Research Foundation, Joyce Foundation, National Parks Conservation Association, National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, Izaak Walton League of America, Ducks Unlimited, and many other groups. This is the first time all of these groups have come together; their focus is restoration of the Great Lakes.

If you have a special affection for Lake Michigan, or if you are concerned about its health and future, consider attending a meeting of the LMILO. Its Board meets quarterly in Chicago, and an all-member meeting occurs annually. This year's annual meeting, held in Grand Haven, Michigan, in October, featured Michigan Senator Patricia Birkholz, a member of the Holland Area LWV. Senator Birkholz heads Michigan's Senate Natural

## That's a Wrap!



Marge Wold, Emily Guthrie, and Shirley Shevick gift-wrap a book for appreciative shopper Larry Rehage.

Twenty-two gift wrappers worked at the Evanston Border's (9 AM-10:30 PM on December 22nd) and Barnes & Noble (10-2 on the 23rd), including 20 League members and 2 kind non-members, Fred Anrod and Kay Stelzer. Those who wrapped enjoyed the opportunity to chat with customers and with each other, to get gift and book-club ideas, and to be out in the midst of the holiday festivities. The main reason to do this (other than sheer generosity of spirit) was to enhance our visibility in the community; but we also collected about \$300 in contributions. The general consensus was, "Let's do this again!"