



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF EVANSTON  
**THE INTERCOM**

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

**Constitution Contest “Your Rights, Your Reasons”**

– by Betty Hayford

Once again the League of Women Voters of Evanston has partnered with District 65 to challenge seventh-graders to think carefully about the Constitution of the United States and how it can have an impact on their lives. This year’s theme – “Your Rights, Your Reasons” – offered all seventh graders in Evanston’s schools an opportunity to answer the question “What Amendment in the Bill of Rights is Most Important to You? Why?” Hundreds of the middle school students submitted entries, many writing essays and many using their creative abilities in the areas of visual arts or performing arts. Entries were displayed and awards were presented to the winners at a ceremony held at the District 65 headquarters on January 20.

Michelle Jordan again organized the annual contest, recruiting more than 20 judges including League members,



**Chute Middle School Finalists**

other community leaders, artists and elected officials. She worked closely with Jamilla Pitts, the District 65 Social Studies Coordinator, who for many years has contributed

*continued on page 3*

**How Evanston Women Initiated Movement for Women’s Suffrage**

– by Lori Osborne, Evanston History Center

Evanston women played a pivotal role in obtaining the vote for Illinois women in 1913. Illinois was the first state east of the Mississippi to give women the vote and this expansion of women’s rights in Illinois set the stage for national women’s suffrage. Though it may seem surprising for Illinois to have played this role, it actually makes historical sense. From the years just following the Civil War until the final passage of the 19th amendment in 1919, Illinois women were often at the forefront of developing the arguments and strategies that propelled the suffrage movement forward and eventually led to its success. And, many of these Illinois women called Evanston home and, naturally, later went on to found the Evanston League of Women Voters.



Hear more from Lori Osborne at a Special Event for LWV members and prospective members:

**Evanston Women and the Battle for Suffrage in Illinois**  
**February 2nd - details on page 5**

**Help Set the League’s 2012-13 Agenda**

With the beginning of the calendar year, we are once again faced with the responsibility of identifying issues of concern in Evanston and selecting one or two for focused investigation in the year to come. For 2012-2013, this planning discussion takes place on Thursday, Feb 9 at 7:00 pm at the James L. King Home, 1555 Oak Avenue in Evanston.

If you are interested in participating in this year’s planning process, contact Susan Black (seblack451@gmail.com) by Monday, Feb 6. Please also submit any ideas that you would like to propose in advance to Susan via email.

The Board of Directors will need to hold an executive session that evening after we have asked for input on local program concerns from our membership. This process is new and was voted on when the by-laws were presented at the May 2011 annual meeting.

In 2011-2012 the decision was also made to update positions held by the League instead of establishing two specific areas of study. The updated positions are now available for review on our League website [www.lwve.org](http://www.lwve.org)

# President's Letter

As we turn the calendar page over to begin the New Year, I pause and reflect on what an amazing year 2011 was for the Evanston League and how much I have to be grateful for as president. As we begin 2012, my most important resolution is to make the remaining six months of my presidency the best they can be for our League. Considering the phenomenal talent manifested in our board and League volunteers this should be a piece of cake.

The first layer of the cake actually started stirring in mid- to late-December when the board approved the creation of a Facebook page for the Evanston League. We have acknowledged for the last few years that it's time for a shift in our membership demographics and the optimal way to spread the wonders of the League of Women Voters is through social networking. Our Northwestern intern, Niabi Schmaltz, responded to this opportunity with professionalism and enthusiasm (traits that are music to the ears of any leader of a nonprofit organization). On her holiday break from Northwestern, she led the pack creating insightful ideas and creative postings to start the ball rolling.

The second layer of the cake was created on Monday, January 9 when, through the incredible talents of Gloria Callaci, we once again had the privilege of hearing the wisdom and wit of Jim Kenney, Executive Director of Common Ground in Deerfield. Jim did not disappoint the audience of 70 league members and guests, fascinating us with political facts and predictions. For more about Common Ground and how to join, please go to [www.cg.org](http://www.cg.org).

This cake that we're creating will continue to add new layers and flavors bound to suit the taste of any League member who wants to be fully informed. Please plan to attend our next event on Thursday, February 2 when Lori Osborne, League member and archivist at the Evanston History Center, will enlighten us about the upcoming 100-year anniversary of Illinois women winning the right to vote. The history lesson will continue on March 13 as we have a return engagement featuring Professor Beth Kelly from DePaul University whose presentation will be on Eleanor Roosevelt: The White House Years.

With the politics of creating jobs on everyone's mind this election year, the Evanston League will be pleased to present Sacella Smith, Executive Director of the Youth Job Center (YJC) in Evanston, on February 23. Ms. Smith will discuss the programs created by the YJC to ensure the success of our young people in Evanston in an employment market which needs an infusion of new opportunities tailored to their talents and determination.

We look forward to sharing our excellent programming with you, and, if you haven't already, please log onto Facebook and "like" us, vote for us (whatever your pleasure). By all means, keep your hopes high and please do your part to strengthen democracy in this election year.

Best wishes to everyone,

*Susan*

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## League of Women Voters of Evanston

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Web Site: [www.lwve.org](http://www.lwve.org)

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### THE INTERCOM

January-February 2012

THE INTERCOM is the newsletter of the  
League of Women Voters® of Evanston

# Primary Election Calendar



**The Illinois primary election is coming up on Tuesday, March 20.**

Here are some important dates for registration and voting from Mary Morris, the LWVE voter service chair.

Evanston League Deputy Registrars will provide voter registration to the community on three Saturday afternoons: February 4, 11 & 18 from 12 noon to 3 pm at the Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Avenue. Voter registration closes on Tuesday, February 21.

Deputy registrars are asked to contact Mary Morris: 847-475-5572 or 550morris@live.com to participate.

## Important Dates:

- Feb 9 First day absentee ballot applications are accepted
- Feb 21 Last day to register to vote
- Feb 22 First day of grace period registration and voting
- Feb 27 First day of Early Voting
- Mar 13 Last day of grace period registration and voting
- Mar 15 Last day of Early Voting
- Mar 15 Last day to request a mail-in absentee ballot, including military and overseas voters
- Mar 16 In-person absentee voting begins at the Cook County Clerk's downtown Chicago office and five suburban courthouse mini-centers
- Mar 19 Last day voted mail-in absentee ballots can be postmarked for acceptance by the Clerk's office
- Mar 19 Last day of in-person absentee voting at the Clerk's downtown Chicago office and five suburban courthouse mini-centers

## Constitution Contest

*continued from page 1*

her time and energy to the contest and has provided a link between the League and the seventh grade teachers who assist their students in preparing entries. League funds provided first, second and third prizes to winners in each category. Winners were selected for the quality of their submissions and their ability to explain the meaning and relevance of the constitutional guarantees.

The League created the contest to encourage students to go beneath the surface as they study the Constitution—a state-mandated requirement for seventh graders. In this Presidential election year the contest is a reminder of the values of American government reflected in the electoral process. The contest has had the active support of District 65 Superintendent Hardy Murphy, who has praised it as an important link between the community and the schools.

Thanks to the volunteers who had the difficult task of selecting winners from among many fine entries:

- |                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Iona Beller                | Erin Haggerty       |
| Karen Berkowitz            | Betty Hayford       |
| Representative Daniel Biss | Ann Jennett         |
| Sue Brady                  | Diane Korling       |
| Sue Brenner                | Valerie Krejcie     |
| Gloria Callaci             | Gretchen Livingston |
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| Jessie Feldman             | Debby Spertus       |
| Mary Gavin                 | Kathy Tate-Bradish  |
| Toni Gilpin                | Cheryl Wollin       |



**Haven Middle School Finalists**



**Nichols Middle School Finalists**



**King Lab Finalists**

# Jim Kenney Analyzes Campaign 2012

– by Elizabeth Hayford

On January 9, the eve of the New Hampshire primary, Jim Kenney, Executive Director of Common Ground, provided an extensive overview of essential elements of the 2012 Presidential campaign to a large group of Evanston League members at a lunch meeting at the North Shore Retirement Hotel. From a self-defined “Progressive Perspective,” Kenney explored three main themes: dissecting the current political landscape in the United States; surveying the Republican primary campaigns and field of candidates; and presenting Democratic Party thinking on how President Obama can win re-election.

To understand the American political landscape, Kenney devised a chart putting key groups on a grid reflecting degrees of commitment to ideology or reality against the progressive/conservative spectrum. It included progressive liberals, the religious left, labor and the old left in the progressive center, balanced by progressive conservatives, blue dog Democrats, mod-cons and paleo-cons also in the progressive center. Neo-conservatives, libertarians, anti-tax advocates and right-wing populists are all on the right with views more ideological than realistic. He declared that inflexible ideological positions used to be found on the left, but today are more common on the right, represented most clearly in strong anti-government views inspired among Republican voters by the novels of Ayn Rand.

In explaining the varieties of ideological groups shaping the Republican primaries, Kenney noted the strange character of the Presidential primary structure, starting in Iowa—a small

rural state with a complex caucus system—followed by New Hampshire, another small state that is not representative of the US electorate as a whole.

Kenney dissected strategies by which Democrats hope to re-elect Obama, starting with raising large amounts of money in order to build strong local organizations that will mobilize Obama supporters in key states. The strategy requires winning the states won by John Kerry in 2004 (and Obama in 2008) and then adding other key states. Various scenarios focusing on Florida, or Ohio, or Virginia and North Carolina, or several key mountain states, could bring victory. He cited the Nate Silver blog, *FiveThirtyEight.com*, as an excellent source for detailed, state by state, statistical analysis and prediction of voting patterns.

On the general political environment, Kenney rued the impact of the Citizens United Supreme Court decision ending restrictions on corporate and labor contributions to campaigns, a position echoed in several questions from the audience. He also asserted the importance of the Occupy Wall Street movement that popularized the concept of the wealthy one percent versus the ninety-nine percent, which could become a persuasive image.

Several questioners expressed concern about the rhetoric and distortion characterizing the primary campaigns, and wondered how the League commitment to transparency and sound information in the electoral process could be expanded. Many left the informative meeting thinking of ways to get involved in the months to come.

## LVWE Celebrates Women's History Month with Eleanor Roosevelt

The League of Women Voters of Evanston will mark Women's History Month on Tuesday, March 13, with a presentation by DePaul Professor Elizabeth Kelly on “Eleanor Roosevelt: The White House Years.” Those who attended Professor Kelly's lecture last year on how Mrs. Roosevelt came into her own in the realm of politics and women's issues, will want to join her again at the North Shore Retirement Hotel, 1611 Chicago Avenue. Check-in will be at 11:45 and lunch will be served at noon.

Professor Kelly will focus on how, as First Lady, Mrs. Roosevelt deepened her commitment to progressive causes and sharpened her skills in the public arena. Dr. Kelly is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at DePaul, and directs the DePaul Irish Studies Program. She has broad teaching interests, ranging from Classical Political Thought to Women and Law and Women in U.S. Politics. She is the author of **Education, Democracy and Public Knowledge** (1995) and more recently **Telling Our Lives: Conversations on Solidarity and Difference** (2005). She has a Master's Degree from Harvard University and a PhD. from Rutgers University.

League members are encouraged to come and bring guests. Make your reservations with the League office (847-866-7844) by March 8.



### Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

## LWVE Calendar At A Glance

**Thursday, February 2 -- 7:00 pm**  
**Evanston Women & the Battle for Suffrage in Illinois**  
**Lori Osborne**, Archivist, Evanston History Center  
**John Evans Alumni Center**  
1800 Sheridan Road (at Clark Street), Evanston  
Wine & cheese served. RSVP: 847-866-7844 by Jan 27  
Details in right column this page.

**Thursday, February 9 -- 7:00 pm**  
**Annual Local Program Planning Meeting**  
**James L. King Home** 1555 Oak Avenue, Evanston

**Saturday, February 18 -- 6:00 pm**  
**Evening with wine enthusiast, Jerry Adler**  
**Bella Via Pizza & Restorante** 1890 Second St., Highland Park  
Cost \$45 includes appetizers, entree, dessert & superb wines.  
Send check made out to LWV Highland Park to Margie Weiss,  
260 Whistler Rd, Highland Park, IL 60035 by Feb 11

**Wednesday, February 23 -- 12 noon**  
**Presentation on Youth Job Center of Evanston**  
**Gio Restaurant** 1631 Chicago Ave, Evanston  
Speaker: **Sacella Smith, Youth Job Center of Evanston**  
Luncheon Cost: \$20 RSVP: 847-866-7844 by Feb 20  
Details in right column this page.

**Tuesday, March 13 -- 12 noon**  
**Eleanor Roosevelt: The White House Years**  
**Professor Elizabeth Kelly**, DePaul University  
**North Shore Retirement Hotel** 1611 Chicago Ave, Evanston  
Luncheon Cost: \$20. RSVP to 847-866-7844 by March 8  
Details on page 4.

**Tuesday, March 20**  
**Illinois Primary Election** Polls open from 6 am to 7 pm

**Upcoming Events -- Details to be announced:**

**Saturday, April 14 - 6:00 pm**  
**LWVE Progressive Dinner**  
Event to raise funds for LWVE Operating Fund.  
Fun details to be announced soon via email.

**LWVIL Phonathon**  
Event to raise funds for LWVIL Education Fund

**Tuesday, April 17**  
**Wind Farms and Green Buildings** Speaker: **Nate Kipnis**

All programs are free unless otherwise noted.  
For more information call 847-866-7844  
or visit **Calendar Updates** at: [www.lwve.org](http://www.lwve.org)



## League of Women Voters Evanston

presents a very special  
New Member Event

## Evanston Women & the Battle for Suffrage in Illinois

Speaker:  
**Lori Osborne**

**Thursday, February 2 ~ 7:00-9:00 pm**  
**John Evans Alumni Center** 1800 Sheridan Road, Evanston  
**Celebrate our heritage!**

Evanston women played a pivotal role in obtaining the vote for Illinois women. League members are encouraged to bring prospective members to this reception and talk.  
RSVP 847-866-7844

## Hear How Youth Job Center Addresses Evanston Needs

On Thursday, February 23, League members will have a chance to hear Sacella Smith, Executive Director of the Youth Job Center, explain the vital work that YJC is doing to address the challenge of finding jobs for young people, an important priority for Evanston and the whole country. Ms. Smith will be the guest speaker at a lunch meeting at Gio's Restaurant, 1631 Chicago Avenue, in Evanston. Check in at the door will begin at 11:45 and lunch will be served at noon.

Since its founding in 1983, the YJC has served almost 2500 clients. Last year the Center placed 615 young people in permanent jobs. The Center works successfully with its clients because it provides a plethora of programs to prepare them for the workforce by providing them with the skills they need, assisting them in contacting employers, and offering ongoing support to improve their skills and understand workplace expectations. The Center has over 200 employment partners that provide information on job openings and skills requirements, as well as offering internships. In recognition of Ms. Smith's leadership of YJC, the Evanston-North Shore NAACP last fall honored her with the Community Impact Award.

League members are encouraged to attend this meeting and learn more about solutions to the employment problems facing so many young people. Guests are also welcome. Please make a reservation by calling the League office at 847-866-7844 by Monday, February 20.

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# Observers Summary

– by Jan Otwell

League observers are our “eyes and ears” at the City Council and its standing committees, which set policy and direction for the City. This time we include a report on the District 65 School Board, and we hope to find a League member to continue observing this board. If you’d like to learn the nitty-gritty of local government, being an observer is a great way to start. Call Jessica Feldman, Observer Chair, at 847-864-2199 for more information. Here’s a summary of what happened since the last Intercom:

**Passage of the City Budget:** The City Council passed a budget of \$250 million for Evanston at its November 28 meeting, after a budget process that began in the spring and included specific opportunities for citizen input. During the final weeks the aldermen wrestled with ways to close a budget gap, considering staff reductions, imposition of fees, transfer of funds, and additional taxes. Citizens will see, among others, an increase in parking fees and fines, in water rates, and in fees for garbage pickup. The budget passed at the Nov. 28 Council meeting by a vote of 6-3, with Aldermen Burrus, Fiske, and Wilson voting no.

**March 20 Election: Three Referenda on Ballot:** (*The League of Women Voters of Evanston does not have a position on any of these referenda, but will be providing information.*)

- **Referendum: District 65 Funding:** One referendum on the March 20 ballot would provide authorization for funding of a K-5 school in Evanston’s central core as well as funding for upgrades for some middle schools. The November 16 community forum was one of three conducted by the District 65 school board to collect citizen comment. Twenty citizens addressed the Board, concentrating primarily on the proposed school, how it would answer the current problem of the Fifth Ward being the only ward without a local school, and that this is a matter of social justice.

- **Referendum: Township Dissolution:** An advisory referendum will be on the March 20 ballot, asking citizens if the question of township dissolution should be pursued. The Council wrestled with whether the referendum should be binding, but the aldermen were concerned that this might provoke a lawsuit. Exact wording of the referendum is being worked out and will be included on an information sheet to be distributed by the League. The Council, acting as Township Trustees, had considerable internal discussion about the various facets of the referendum, and the final vote for an advisory referendum was twofold: first, the vote on the advisory referendum itself was 5-3 (Alderman Rainey was absent from the

meeting) with Trustees Braithwaite, Holmes and Wilson voting no; and, second, the vote to ask the Illinois General Assembly to amend the Township Code and other relevant statutes to permit the dissolution of coterminous Evanston Township, which passed 6-2 with Trustees Braithwaite and Holmes voting against. Following those two votes at the Town Board Meeting on December 5, many citizens began asking questions and calling out from their seats, until Mayor Tisdahl established some order by using the usual Citizen Comment procedure. These questions came primarily from citizens of the Second and Fifth wards who expressed support for retaining the township functions of general assistance and tax assessment assistance. The City Manager attempted to answer their questions by assuring that the function of general assistance would be assumed by the City of Evanston and tax assessment assistance by Cook County.

- **Referendum: Electricity Aggregation:** Another referendum will ask voters whether they want to take advantage of a program called “Community Choice Aggregation.” Catherine Hurley, Evanston’s Sustainability Coordinator, made a presentation about how electricity aggregation could save residents and businesses money by allowing them to accept bids from the lowest bidder. She explained that this is a new option which many towns and cities have pursued and all have resulted in some savings. The City Council voted 9-0 to put this question on the primary election ballot..

**Increase in the Debt Limit:** A staff recommendation to increase the debt limit to \$120 million from the current \$90 million was presented to the Administration and Public Works Committee in early January, but the committee and, eventually, the Council reduced that to \$113 million. The ordinance passed 6-2 (one alderman absent) with Burrus and Wilson voting no.

**Short Takes: Mayor Tisdahl introduced Lori Osborne** at the November 28 City Council meeting to talk about Ten Ideas for our Future which were developed through the Evanston 150 process. To get involved with implementing these ideas by 2013, you can email [info@evanston150.org](mailto:info@evanston150.org) or phone 847-347-2013. **The Mayor also called on Alderman Fiske** who reported that the Board of Ethics had cleared her of charges brought by Padma Rao and her mother related to trees on the Kendall property. **James Maiworm has been hired to replace Suzette Robinson** as Director of Streets and Sanitation. **The Cook County Board voted in November to reduce the number of voting precincts in 2012.** Evanston will lose 11 of its 64 precincts. For more information: [www.DavidOrrCookCountyClerk.org](http://www.DavidOrrCookCountyClerk.org)



**League of Women Voters® of Evanston**

2100 Ridge Avenue in Evanston, IL 60201

**January-February 2012**

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