

LWVE ANNUAL MEETING**Thursday, May 8, 5:30 pm***The King Home, 1555 Oak St. Evanston*

Join board members old and new at LWVE's annual meeting, which will be held at the King Home, upstairs in its intriguing Hus Gallery – which is full of Oriental artifacts and other visual treasures. The conversation will be stimulating, the food appetizing, and the evening's business necessary.

All members are welcome, but advance registration is essential. The cost is \$25, payable at the door. Write RSVP@lwve.org or leave a message at 847.866.7844

In addition to approving slate of officers proposed by this years' nominating committee – Helen Heyrman, Karen Telser, and Gloria Callaci – members present will formally approve the LWVE Program and Action Foci for 2008-2009. These include the following:

- **Affordable Housing**
- **Global Climate Change / Environmental Protection**
- **Local Impact of No Child Left Behind Act**
- **Election Procedures**

For each of these positions, the LWVE board is proposing a task force to gather information, plan programs, and develop an action strategy to achieve desired goals.

**Proposed LWVE Nominating
Slate for 2008-2009**

The following slate of officers and directors will be voted on at the Annual Meeting

OFFICERS

*President – Karen Hunt
VP Monthly Programs – Toni Gilpin
VP Local Program Planning –
Gloria Callaci
Treasurer – Barbara Fowler
Secretary – Betty Hayford*

DIRECTORS

*Action Alerts – Sonia Evenstad
Newsletter – Karen Telser
Observer Corps – Nancy Bashook
Members Database – Susan Black
Membership – Kathy Tate-Bradish
Voter Service – Judy Hoffman
Members at Large –
Mimi Gilpin and Jessica Feldman*

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*Co-chairs—
Jeanie Ramsey and Valerie Krecjie*

DATES TO NOTE

**LWV Moderator Training,
Sunday, May 4, 2 – 5 pm**
King Home, 1555 Oak Ave.

**Evanston Climate Action Plan Presentation
Sunday, May 4, 1:45 – 5 pm**
See story on page 4.

**LWVE Annual Meeting,
Thursday, May 8, 5:30 pm.** .
Dinner meeting, all welcome. See above.

**Observer Corps Meeting
Saturday, May 17, 9:30 11 am**
See notice on page 6.

**LWVCC Annual Meeting
Monday, May 19, 9 am. Brookfield**
See announcement on page 7.

**Deputy Registrar Training
Saturday, May 31, 10 am**
See story on page 6.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Once upon a time there was pure democracy. Citizens took their turn at public service. Every citizen voted. Big units of government were sparsely populated, perhaps a requirement for direct participation of citizens. But those citizens of democracy past were men, born citizens in most cases with little room for naturalization, residents of a culturally homogeneous society. We only dream of pure, perhaps extreme, democracy.

As we looked with Larry Suffredin at the Constitutional Convention question on the Illinois ballot next fall, we considered, as the League of Women Voters of Illinois did in preparing study materials, the possibility of losing some cherished provisions of the Illinois Constitution, especially in the Bill of Rights portion of the document. A parallel consideration was fear of introducing at a convention new provisions cherished by special interest groups lobbying for their limited agenda. You can easily fill in several with which most League members would differ. Support for a *no* vote as a League position seemed strong. But more discussion led to several long-term members' raising another question for consideration: How can we support democratic government if we are unwilling to trust voters to make good decisions on the whole?

In the end the League of Women Voters of Evanston came to no consensus on whether to support either a *yes* vote or a *no*. The Board decided to forward a request that the LWVIL concentrate only on education about Constitutional Convention and its implications so citizens can make an informed choice when we vote in the fall.

Now we have received a request for concurrence on redistricting from the League of Women Voters of Virginia. The question will come up at the League's national convention in June. Provisions for redistricting by independent commissions that are bipartisan and are representative of demographic diversity are included. While retaining present requirements for equal population size, the position would endorse respecting voting strength of minority groups, respect communities of interest, and promote competitiveness.

While the commission would be **bipartisan**, it is easy to imagine "communities of interest" that fragment the electorate more than two ways, making the description obsolete. In respecting voting strength of "minority groups," it is easy to imagine another fragmentation. The questions are similar to those raised by Constitutional Convention. There are more details to be considered that I haven't room for here. Please let me know if you would like a copy of the entire request.

My question: Are we faced with the problem of developing a new way to express democratic ideals taking into account the influence of limited special interest groups, some of whom do not take a broad view of the common good?

Virginia Rosenberg



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF EVANSTON

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Website: www.lwve.org

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President	Virginia Rosenberg
VP/ Local Programs	Toni Gilpin
VP/ Monthly Programs	Karen Hunt
VP/Membership	Kathy Tate-Bradish
Treasurer	Barbara Fowler
Secretary	Betty Hayford

DIRECTORS / 2007-2008

Observer Corps	Nancy Bashook
Programs	Gloria Callaci
Voter Service	Maidel Cason
	Melinda Dworkin
Intercom Editor	Connie Goddard
At-Large	Jessica Feldman
	Mimi Gilpin
	Melissa Leasia

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Elected	Helen Heyrman
	Karen Telser
Appointed	Gloria Callaci

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Cate Whitcomb (webmistress), Katy Compere Pendleton (office coordinator), Janet Kittlaus (database administrator), Patrick Keenan-Devlin (publicity)

THE INTERCOM

May 2008 /Vol.86, No. 9

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 informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through citizen education and advocacy.

LWVE welcomes men and encourages members of Evanston's diverse communities to participate.

ILLINOIS CONSTITUTION CONVENTION – POTENTIAL ISSUES

Periodic referendum will be on November ballot

On April 4, Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin spoke to LWVE members about the upcoming Illinois vote on a Constitutional Convention. Highlights from his talk are offered below from frequent contributor and LWVE board member Gloria Callaci, who is also married to Commissioner Suffredin.

Every 20 years the Illinois Constitution approved in 1970 requires a referendum to be placed on the ballot regarding calling a Constitutional Convention. The last referendum was in 1988 and was defeated. The 2008 Constitutional Convention Referendum will be on the November ballot.

Four issues may influence voters, depending on whether or not they are placed on the ballot separately from the Convention referendum.

First, Recall of Elected Officials. This proposed amendment has passed the Illinois House and must pass the Illinois Senate by May 4, 2008. If this amendment is not placed on the ballot, many voters who are upset with current elected officials may push for a Convention.

Second, Limitation on Income Taxation. This prohibits a graduated tax rate and requires a ratio of 8 to 5 shall not be exceeded as the rate of tax for corporations to individuals. There appears to be no consensus on the best form of such an amendment.

Third, Merit Selection of Judges. This debate has gone on since at least 1948. Currently there are no proposed amendments on this subject.

Fourth, Funding of Public Schools. The current law states that “The State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education.” The Illinois Supreme Court has ruled that this does not mean the State has the responsibility to fund the majority of public education. Many believe this is the reason Illinois is 48th in school funding. Currently there are no proposals on this subject.

In addition to these issues, others may influence voters, including: 1) the definition of marriage; 2) changing the number of votes to raise taxes from a simple majority to a 3/5th vote; 3) limitation on home rule governments; 4) abortion; 5) gun ownership; and 6) binding citizen referendums.

The 43 delegates from the 1968 Constitutional Convention still living all seem to be opposed to a new Convention. They believe they did the best that could be done and a convention now would be a fight over individual rights currently protected. There is an urgent need for the electorate to be educated on this referendum prior to the November election.


Gloria Callaci



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CITY POISED TO TAKE AGGRESSIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

In October 2006, the Evanston City Council authorized Mayor Lorraine Morton to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, thereby committing the city to reduce Evanston's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by seven percent below 1990 levels by the year 2012 — the target set by the Kyoto Protocol for developed countries like the United States. To assist Evanston in meeting this goal, State Representative Julie Hamos obtained a grant that enabled the city to hire a sustainability coordinator to lead this effort.

Upon joining the city staff in May 2007, new coordinator Carolyn Collopy's first task was to conduct a baseline GHG emissions inventory and determine Evanston's emissions reduction goal. She found that Evanston will need to reduce its projected emissions by almost 15 percent over the next four years in order to comply with the Kyoto Protocol.

In November, a joint city-community planning initiative was launched to develop a climate action plan for Evanston. Well over 100 citizens turned out for the kick-off meeting; there they learned about the planning process and signed up to participate in one of the nine task forces charged with developing the plan. Each task force is co-chaired by community representatives and a city staff member.

Creating a Climate for Change
Presenting Evanston's Climate Action Plan
Sunday, May 4, 2008 — 1:45 to 5:00 pm
 Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation
 303 Dodge Avenue, Evanston

Over the next four months, the task forces developed objectives and strategies for their area of focus, e.g., transportation, buildings, renewable energy, recycling, and so on. They outlined action steps for both city operations and the broader community. These recommendations have been compiled into a report to be presented to the community at Evanston's annual earth month event, Creating a Climate for Change. It will be held on Sunday, May 4, from 1:45 to 5:00 pm, at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation on Dodge Avenue.

Break-out sessions will follow the presentation of the plan, giving attendees a chance to discuss it in detail with members of the various task forces. There will also be an opportunity to tour the LEED-certified synagogue.

The plan will be submitted to the City Council for approval in early summer. Then the hard work of implementation will begin. Engaging the community in this effort will be critical to Evanston's ability to make measurable progress in reducing its collective carbon footprint. The League can play a key role in motivating all of us to take the action steps necessary to safeguard the future of our environment.

Eleanor Revelle

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NORTHWESTERN EXPERT OFFERS APPRAISAL OF NCLB

In March, Northwestern Professor Thomas Cook spoke before the Districts 65 and 202 Joint Legislative Task Force on proposals for revamping the No Child Left Behind Act. Both districts are currently dealing with ramifications of the act.

Last fall, Cook served on a Congressionally appointed review panel that studied implementation of NCLB. The LWVE board had tried to arrange a program with him then; we hope to make that happen this fall. In the meantime, here are highlights from Cook's talk to the task force.

1. Implementation of NCLB has varied widely from state to state, resulting in inconsistent standards to date.
2. The burden falls most heavily on cities and suburbs with high levels of poverty and/or with substantial ethnic diversity.
3. Schools that are failing to meet AYP targets try to address problems by marshalling additional resources for doing basically more of the same.
4. In general, parents are poorly informed of their option to switch schools.
5. Though there was an increase in federal funding in the act's first years, it has since been flat.
6. The ideology of choice (charter and other

alternative schools) undermines some views of public education.

7. Evidence from the National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) tests does not support the conclusion that NCLB is having a notable positive impact.
8. The states that have taken NCLB seriously should show a steeper climb in achievement if NCLB were working.
9. Consensus among researchers suggests there are currently no educational innovations likely to be radically transformative.

Cook outlined some proposals for revising the act, which include increased funding and reconsideration of criteria for failing schools. He noted that piecemeal revisions have been made by executive decree, mainly to soften the act's impact on states. Congressional Democrats, he added, are leery of the decrees and want other changes.

Connie Goddard

Editor's Note: Members seeking further information on the act and its impact would find Linda Perlstein's *Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade* (2007) informative. A distinguished reporter for the *Washington Post*, Perlstein spent a year studying a low-income school in Annapolis, MD, for this book.



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TRAIN TO BE A DEPUTY REGISTRAR

Do you want to register voters for the 2008 election? If so, you must be trained and deputized by the Office of the Cook County Clerk. Any LWVE member interested in becoming a registrar should attend one of the following 90 minute sessions:

- Saturday, May 31 (rsvp by May 27)
- Saturday, July 26 (rsvp by July 22)
- Saturday, August 9 (rsvp by August 5)

All training sessions begin at 10 am and will be held in the Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St. (just west of intersection with Lincoln Ave. and Niles Center Rd.).

If you are interested in attending, RSVP to Judy Hoffman, judhof@aol.com, or 847-491-6275. Please confirm your current address in your message.

Local Government Committee Observer Meeting

**Saturday, May 17th
9:30 – 11:00 am**

Hosted by: Nancy Bashook
1126 Austin, Evanston

(located one block west of Ridge, one block south of Oakton -- on the southeast corner of Barton and Austin)

You are encouraged to come to our annual Observer Meeting and listen to the reports of the LWVE's city council and committee observers. It has been a fascinating year and there is much to share.



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NEW MEMBER TEA

LWVE's ever-hospitable membership chair again opened her gracious home to new and prospective members on Saturday, April 26 – too late, alas for photos of attendees in the *Intercom*.

But we do have news of one new national member who joined in April – so please welcome her.

Ellen Plotkin, 1319 Chicago Ave., #405
Evanston 60201 – 847.570.9359
budellen@aol.com

And don't forget . . .

ANNUAL MEETING – COOK COUNTY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Monday, May 19, in the Discover Center at the Brookfield Zoo in Riverside

The Shakman Decree: Its History and Present-Day Impact

Featuring Michael Shakman

The annual meeting begins at 9 am; Mr. Shakman will speak at 11 am, followed by lunch at the Zoo Stop. RSVP by May 9 at cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org or to 312.939.5935

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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- **Coverage of Constitutional Convention issues**
- **Presentation of Evanston Climate Action Plan**
- **Comments on NCLB by Northwestern expert**
- **Plus deputy registrar training and Observers Brunch**



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