

2006 Legislative Luncheon will feature a legislator, a lobbyist, a journalist

The 2006 Legislative Luncheon will offer LWVE members a unique opportunity to examine the recently concluded legislative session from both inside and outside the Legislative chambers.

The side-by-side legislative review will be presented by a legislator (State Representative **Julie Hamon**), a lobbyist (Ralph Martine, director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, CTHA), and a journalist to be determined. Mr. Martine, executive director of the Center, is one of the leading forces behind Illinois school funding reform. He also serves as a regular columnist in the *Chicago Sun-Times* on issues involving government accountability, tax, fiscal and budget policies. The Center is a bipartisan think tank committed to ensuring that the Illinois tax system and budget are both fundamentally sound and fair, with a particular focus on the interests of low and moderate income workers.

The lunch program will take place on Wednesday, August 9, from 12:00-2:00 p.m. **Michelle Jordan** has graciously consented to host the lunch at her home at 2208 Lincolnwood in Evanston.

Reservations are required, so please call **Muriel Goodfriend** at 847-570-7852 by August 2. The lunch is \$15, payable at the door (check preferred). This is a perfect opportunity to introduce new friends to the League, so think of bringing a friend along with you.



Julie Hamon
Illinois State
Representative
18th District



Ralph Martine
Director
Center for Tax
and Budget
Accountability

On the Calendar

Tues., July 4
Evanston 4th of July Parade
League participants gather at
12 noon at Central and Cooper.
Cheer as your Evanston League
proudly displays the Stars and
Stripes.

Wed., August 9, 12-2 p.m.
Annual Legislative Luncheon
Michelle Jordan's home
2208 Lincolnwood

Thurs., Aug. 17, 7 p.m.
LWVE Board Meeting
King Home, 1500 Oak Ave.
All members are invited.

Fri., April 13, 2007
SAVE THE DATE
Spring fundraiser with author
Linda Greenhouse

Voter Service committee seeks Nov. election judges

We learned during the recent Primary Election that there is a great need for additional technologically comfortable election judges at the polls. LWVE members and their families and friends who have the interest and the ability can help make the elections run more smoothly.

The Voters Service committee of the LWVE will assist in linking interested persons with those responsible for making the judge assignments for the Cook County Clerk's office. The job requires attending one or two training sessions in Evanston and being available for the entire election day. It is a long day, but this civic service is key to ensuring that eligible voters can cast ballots easily and that the ballots will be counted promptly and accurately.

If you are interested in serving as an election judge, know someone who is, or want to learn more about this job, please contact **Jessica Feldman** (847-864-2199) or jessief@stcglobal.net. A Voter Service committee member will provide the information you need and send your name(s) to the appropriate persons.

Volunteers are needed for Greenhouse dinner

No, the League isn't having a dinner in a greenhouse. Linda Greenhouse, Pulitzer Prize-winning Supreme Court correspondent for *The New York Times*, will speak at our fundraising dinner April 13, 2007. Though the date seems distant, we need a dozen or so willing workers to nail down the arrangements. We'll need people to work on publicity, tickets, sponsors, budget/finance, speaker arrangements, invitations, programs, hospitality, nametags, seating, and more. League stalwarts **Cate Whitcomb** and **Karen Hunt** are making preliminary plans. There should be few meetings. To volunteer for the committee, please contact **Mike and Mary Ann Weston** at ra-weston@northwestern.edu or 847-328-1387. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



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Whether or not summers truly are times of reduced activity, of greater freedom and creativity, they have that *feel* about them. My summer muse has me reading *Becoming Justice Blackman*, a very personal biography and an education in the workings of the United States Supreme Court. The author, Linda Greenhouse, Chief Supreme Court Correspondent for *The New York Times* since 1978, Pulitzer Prize winner (1998), and frequent panelist on PBS' *Washington Week* since 1980, will be the speaker for our April 13, 2007 fund-raiser. I can't wait to hear what she has to say.

The summer muse also has me waxing poetic about the recent LWVUS convention in Minneapolis. The plenary sessions began with the rap of a gavel held by Susan B. Anthony in 1893. The sessions—in tone, content, process, and energy—made me feel proud to be a League member, and it gave me some hope for our country's future.

Furthermore, we now have a national position in support of abolishing the death penalty, for which, in large part, we can thank **Janet Kittlaug** and **Cheryl Wollin**. That was no small accomplishment; and having a national abolition position will encourage and empower League members and thousands of other activists throughout the country, in both the near and distant future.

The planning committee for our 2006-2007 monthly programs is already hard at work. Our Observer Corps, of course, is always on the job (and appears to grow younger as a result). Voter Service chair **Judy Hoffman** has her sleeves rolled up for the coming elections; she and her committee are zeroing in on a great Legislative Luncheon for late summer and have voter-education programs lined up for the fall.

This summer as you walk on a beach, or travel to a far-off state or land, or enjoy the beauty of a rose or the taste of a Farmer's Market tomato, listen for the voice of your summer muse. She may be encouraging you to join in the adventure of League activities next year!

Karen

YOUR DUES ARE DUE!

At the May 25 Annual Meeting LWVIL members approved membership dues of \$60 for 2006-2007. See page 5 for a reminder of all the bang we get for those bucks.

OH, AND:

If you have not yet sent your \$60, NOW is a great time to do so. Please include your e-mail address with your form.

YOUR DUES ARE DUE!

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THE INTERCOM

July/August 2006

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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.

LWVE lends support to Evanston preschool children

Your Board has approved the payment of a \$250 membership in the Evanston Early Childhood Collaboration. **Sue Brenner** has generously underwritten that fee. Those of you who attended the May 25 Annual Meeting may recall our speaker's passionate pitch for the need to support disadvantaged families with preschool children.

Way to go, Mimi!

Good news! President **Karen Teher** reports that we have received a check for \$912 from the Illinois League as our share of the proceeds from the April Phonathon. Phonathon Chair **Mimi Gilpin** led 11 talented callers for the fundraiser. Thank you, Mimi and crew, for the fabulous Phonathon outcome.



Members of your 2006-2007 LWVE Board gather after the Annual meeting
Row 1 (from left): Judy Hoffman, Jessie Feldman, Kathy Tate-Breadish, Teri Gilpin, Karen Teher, Karen Hunt; Row 2 (from left): Helen Heyman, Virginia Rosenberg, Sonia Evenstad, Terry Papangelis, Janet Kittlaus, Fayrene Muhammad

Meeting in the Middle: 2006 US League Convention in Minneapolis

LWVUS concurs with Illinois League; takes position to abolish capital punishment

After many months of meticulous preparation by LWVE's **Janet Kittlaus** on behalf of LWVIL, in the end it took only 3 minutes for those assembled for the biennial convention in Minneapolis to support concurrence with the Illinois League's position against the death penalty. Support came in the form of an overwhelming two-thirds plus vote. Janet said "We were elated, but . . ." She explained that in allotting so little time for debate, delegates missed out on an opportunity to hear how the LWVUS death penalty position will affect the work of some of the delegates and the Leagues they represent.

Janet Kittlaus explained, "The adoption of our death penalty concurrence was the result of a great collaborative effort. We received great support from all the state Leagues with death penalty positions and from our 'caucus bunch'—from Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio. This victory was a multi-State League effort. The death penalty concurrence issue didn't belong just to Illinois. Looking at the e-mail correspondence and the Leagues that supported us during program planning, we in Illinois can feel proud, not simply because we won. We can feel proud because our effort has resulted in a position that enables every League to advocate for justice more effectively. And it all began here in Evanston."

From Karen Hunt on the LWVUS Convention

As a first-time convention attendee, it seemed to me to represent the best of what the democratic process should be—individuals attempting to inform themselves about issues, discussion of divergent opinions in a measured and civil manner, and reaching consensus based on that process. Participating in a democracy is hard work. I concur with a recent review I read in *The New York Times*—I do not believe democracy is God given. I wish more League members and, indeed, more citizens (and some of our legislators) had the opportunity to watch League members at convention. Reaching good decisions takes information, patience and a willingness to collaborate. I wish I had joined the League 30 years ago instead of 5 years ago. I have learned so much both through our local League and experiences like the National Convention.

News from the Observer Corps

Narrow Corridor: An ordinance for a planned development of 27 affordable housing rental units, developed by the Housing Opportunities Development Corp. and the Evanston Community Development Corp was defeated in the May 25 City Council meeting by a vote of 5-4. Opponents objected on the basis that the development offered only rental units with no home ownership available until after 15 years; that management of the property would pose a problem, that parking was insufficient, and that the size of the building (4 stories) was out of scale with the neighborhood. Proponents said this was a productive use of a corner property which had been an eyesore for years; that these units would provide much needed affordable housing especially for locally employed residents; that the developer was asking for NO city money; and that this would begin to fulfill the commitment to further develop the West Side. After an emotional discussion, Aids Wynne, Bernstein, Tisdahl, Rainey and Hansen voted to defeat the plan, while Aids Woffin, Jean-Baptiste, Holmes and Moran strongly supported it. At the June 12 Council meeting, Bennett Johnson of Evanston and the Board Chair of HODC urged the Council members to vote to reconsider, but no alderman on the prevailing side was willing to make such a motion, so the original vote stands.

Inclusionary Housing: The Planning and Development (P&D) committee has had substantial discussion of the proposed Inclusionary Housing Ordinance at its two last meetings, May 8 and June 12. In between the two meetings, the City Manager held a meeting with the development community, with several aldermen attending. At the June 12 P&D meeting, several issues in the ordinance were resolved, but more work needs to be done, so the aldermen once again voted to hold the ordinance in committee. It will be revisited at the June 26 meeting.

Rules Committee: The Rules Committee, which is composed of all the aldermen, voted at its June 5 meeting to reestablish the Budget Policy Committee, which will meet on the third Monday of each month. The League Observer Corps will assign someone to this important new group. The Committee also voted to change the P&D meeting back to one of the smaller committee rooms without microphones—it had been meeting in the Council chambers where it is much easier for citizens to hear, see, and speak. The League will continue to document any difficulties for observers arising from the change of location.

The Observer Corps consists of 13 members of LWVE who observe the City Council and several of its major committees. If you would like to join the Corps, call **Betty Papangelis**, Chair, at 847-864-9353.

Welcome, New Member

Nancy Robn
2722 Thayer
Evanston 60001
847-866-9101
nrob@ad.com

New Membership Directory

We will be printing a new membership directory in Sept. To be included, be sure to send your membership form asap.

LWVE Local Government committee may need your help

At the Annual Meeting, the Local Government committee reported that in the coming year members would be incorporating into its work a review of the City's boards and commissions. It will focus on the City's strategic planning goal #11: To utilize boards and commissions more effectively.

To this end, a small group from the LWVE Local Government committee met June 8 with members of the City staff committee assigned to addressing this Strategic Plan goal. Those present agreed to undertake as a joint effort this study/review of the 38 City boards and commissions. **Jessica Feldman** will chair the Observer Corps sub-committee that will work with the city.

The joint committee will review the function, responsibility and structure of all the Boards and Commissions. Recommendations for changes will be submitted to the City Council and the individual boards and commissions. In addition, as a result of the study findings, improved recruitment processes, standardized training/orientation and succession planning for members and assigned staff could be developed and implemented.

Jessica Feldman will be recruiting League members for the working groups. These will be task oriented with minimal group meetings. In addition the committee wants to create a resource bank of League members who have been or are currently members of a board and/or commission who may be called upon for additional perspectives or suggestions about how boards and/or commissions could work more effectively. Do you want to participate in this project? If so, contact Jessica Feldman at 847-864-2199 or jessief@shcglobal.net.

LWVE Membership: What Does It Buy You?

LWVE members voted at the May 25 Annual Meeting to raise annual dues from \$50 to \$60 for this year—a large increase. This is an explanation of why we thought the raise was necessary, as well as how membership dues are used.

When you send in your membership form and check, you join the League of Women Voters at three "levels": local (LWVF), state (LWVIL), and national (LWVUS). And, because we are in Cook County, our League is a member of the LWVCC InterLeague Organization.

Of the \$60 membership fee, \$26.30 per-member-payment (PMP) goes to the LWVUS. The amount of the PMP was determined by delegates from local Leagues (including ours) at the 2006 LWVUS convention.

- A \$24 PMP will be sent to the LWVIL. The fee was set at the 2005 LWVIL convention.

- We will send a \$1.50 PMP to the Cook County InterLeague Organization. A vote on that figure was taken at their Annual Meeting.

Why do we willingly give most of our dues money to other levels of League? Because they stand ready to provide local Leagues with a broad spectrum of support services, as well as engaging in advocacy and lobbying on our behalf, and conducting studies as agreed upon at convention or annual meeting.

The LWVUS, headquartered in Washington, D. C., represents the entire League at the national level. The Board and staff work to provide consulting assistance to state League committee chairs; give assistance and guidance for candidate debates; maintain a database of members nationwide; and host biennial conventions for delegates from the local Leagues. They lobby Congress and the Executive Branch on League positions and maintain the Grass Roots Lobby Corps.

The LWVUS produces a broad range of publications, such as voter education materials, legislative updates, and the National Voter magazine. They maintain the www.lwv.org Web site, enabling League members to directly lobby their elected officials and to easily contact their newspaper editors (www.capwiz.com/lwv/home). In addition, they maintain seven Internet Listservs, facilitating e-mail communications among League groups far and wide.

The LWVIL serves as liaison between the LWVUS and the 46 local Leagues in Illinois. Housed at 332 S. Michigan Avenue in Chicago, the Board and staff at the LWVIL serve as consultants to local Boards, giving advice, assistance, and information. They issue a State Board Report explaining their efforts in Springfield, how local Leagues can support League positions, and how to organize meetings. Their publication, *Where We Stand*, provides a thorough description of all state-level positions and is updated every two years.

The LWVIL hosts biennial conventions for local League delegates from Illinois. It publishes the Illinois Voter four times a year, describing the programs, activities, and events of the local Leagues. The Web site www.lwvil.org provides links to four Listservs for League presidents, Public Relations chairs, Voter Service chairs, and bulletin editors. Like the Web site of the national League, the LWVIL's site is chock full of League, voting, and current events information.

The LWVCC shares office space with the LWVIL, on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Members at that level observe and interact with Cook County officials and facilities, seeking to become knowledgeable about County government and to inform other members of what they have learned. To view information about and from the LWVCC, visit www.cookcounty.il.gov/net.org.

How can we survive on a PMP of \$5.20. If we have 200 members (which is close to today's actual number), then we will have \$1,040 in our coffers to cover operating expenses, such as rent at the Civic Center, duplication of and postage for the Intercom and other mailings.

We raise additional money through fund-raisers. We use theater events, Community Dinners, book-wrappings and progressive dinners, architectural tours—whatever types of event seem a good idea in a given year. Further some members generously choose to pay more than the standard membership fee.

While most of us have money anxieties, we League members are committed to prioritizing our time, energy, and money. And it is probably safe to say that we all feel richer for it.