



Highland Park League of Women Voters Bulletin

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Friday, September 25th, 12 Noon

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS

ENJOY AN ELEGANT LUNCHEON

HEAR AN INSIGHTFUL REVIEW OF

AMERICAN CREATION, BY JOSEPH ELLIS

Ellis is also the author of *Founding Brothers, the Revolutionary Generation*, where he posits the idea that character matters. *American Creation* focuses on key events, from Valley Forge through the Louisiana Purchase, giving us new perspectives on the unpredictable forces that shape history.

Review will be led by Elise Barack
At the home of Sue Wieseneck

Watch your mail for the invitation

CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Hard as it is to believe, the calendar tells us that summer is on its way to becoming just a memory and as we write this during the first week in August, the days are growing imperceptibly shorter.

Your new League Board has been busy since the Annual Meeting. A special Board meeting was held on July 14 at which our own Betsy Lassar conducted Board training.

We decided to begin the finance drive to the business community at this time and have sent letters to local businesses in Highland Park and Highwood describing League benefits to the community and asking for their support. If you can help in any way by encouraging businesses with whom you interact to respond to our appeal, please speak up for us. Our candidates' forums and voters' guides are shining examples of what we do.

Following the very successful book review program at our 80th anniversary luncheon, another is planned for September 25 - lunch at a lovely home and a professional review of a relevant book.

We hope to reinvigorate our Observer Corps this year and have already begun recruiting. Let us know what areas of local government interest you most - city planning, schools, parks, township, historic preservation, the environment - and we'll train you for the job.

An exciting opportunity is available in the new study adopted at the Annual Meeting calling for the development of criteria to evaluate and prioritize budgeting needs by the City - i.e. upgrading of City facilities (library), use of outmoded buildings (Karger Center), additions to City owned properties (Highland Park Theatre) - with emphasis on financing these kinds of projects. If you are interested in participating, please let us know. The City is about to start budget discussions and we want our voice to be heard.

We hope you have a wonderful rest of the summer - but we also hope we'll see and hear from you before it's over!

Margie, Rose and Ginny

81ST ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting was held on May 2, 2009, at the Birchwood Club.

During the morning business meeting, Local Program was adopted for 2009-2010 which included a new study to develop criteria to evaluate and prioritize budgeting needs by the city of Highland Park with regard to the financing of projects that pertain to the upgrading of city facilities, such as the Library, the use of outmoded buildings such as the Karger Center and the addition of properties such as the Highland Park Theatre. Despite obvious enthusiasm for this idea, it was recommended that the new study be contingent upon a positive participation response from the membership.

Members that were recognized for their contribution to the League were out-going co-presidents, Elaine Adler and Lila Trotsky, for their leadership during the past year and retiring directors, Gail Feiger Brown and Charla Reinganum, for their service to the board.

Nancie Blatt was presented with the Nora Licata award acknowledging her many years of devotion to the League, especially as Membership Chair.

After lunch, a very informative and relevant talk entitled "Analyzing the Credit Crisis" was presented by David Ruder, former head of the Securities and Exchange Commission. The interest of the audience was evident by the extended question and answer period.

The newly elected Officers and Board of Directors for 2009-2010 are:

Co-Presidents:	Rose Feder, Ginny Schulte, Margie Weiss	
Vice-Presidents:	Nancie Blatt, Faye Grossman	
Treasurer:	Ginger Seff	
Secretary:	Open	
Directors:	Elaine Adler	Peggy Malecki
	Judy Johnston	Beverly Rosenstein
	Joyce Juron	Lila Trotsky
	Carolann Klapper	Sue Wieseneck

54TH STATE BIENNIAL CONVENTION

Beverly Rosensten and Judy Johnston were there when the League of Women Voters of Illinois (LWVIL) held its Convention June 12-14 in East Peoria, Illinois. Two ILOs and 34 of the 44 local leagues were represented, with over 100 members in attendance. Highlights of the convention include:

Per Member Payments - The PMP (per member payment) will remain the same as the current year at \$26 for fiscal 2010, which begins July 1, 2009. To keep pace with steadily rising necessary fixed costs, the League approved a PMP increase to \$27 for fiscal year 2011, effective July 1, 2010.

House Bill 182 – The League is calling upon its members to urge Governor Quinn to veto House Bill 182, which allows a person to carry a concealed handgun into another person's home.

True Census Count 2010 & Redistricting Reform – The League is urging all local leagues to get involved with the 2010 Census in their community to assure that its community members are counted. The Census directly impacts the number of congressional districts and the amount of federal dollars returned to the state. The League is recommending a review of the redistricting process.

Core Issues for 2009 - Fiscal Policy/Tax Reform/School Funding; Climate Change & Environmental Protection; Campaign Finance & Ethics Reform

LWV as Community Organizer – A workshop on coalition building, with an emphasis on identifying other community organizations with whom local leagues can partner, for example: Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, Illinois Council Against Gun Violence, teacher organizations such as the IEA and AFT.

We attended workshops covering Redistricting, Campaign Finance, Tax Reform and Ethics Issues, Taking Action on Issues, Membership and the New Media. Redrawing legislative district lines, ethics issues, and the state budget crisis drew most of the caucus attention and floor debate.

While there was considerable agreement on the need for more money to adequately fund education, government, health care and social services and to reduce state debt, delegates made it clear that transparency and accountability in the spending of tax dollars and property tax relief by providing increased state funding for education had to accompany support for raising the state income tax and broadening the sales tax. Your calls for action that come from the state League will help implement this.

Three "**Will of the Convention**" motions were adopted. In brief, delegates:

1. Called for the Governor and the General Assembly of the State of Illinois to restore the state's fiscal health and to provide for Illinois' future.
2. Urged the General Assembly to lower the campaign finance limits to the federal level and treat transfers and in-kind contributions from other candidates on the same basis.
3. Urged the Governor to veto HB 182, a bill that would allow a person to carry concealed handguns into another person's home.

LOCAL NEWS

TRUE CENSUS

Committees are being formed in each municipality in the United States beginning this fall to help local communities realize a true count of everyone living there. Census forms will be sent out in March and must be returned at the end of the month.

In past years, many people in Illinois have not been counted and thus Congressional seats have been lost in each of the last four counts. Besides restricting, census figures decide what monies we in Illinois receive from the federal government for schools and other programs.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois encourages our members to become involved on one of the following committees: education, faith based, media, business and housing.

If you are interested in serving either Highland Park or Highwood, please contact Faye Grossman at fayegro@comcast.net

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION FORUM

The Highland Park Environmental Commission held a well-attended public hearing regarding proposals to regulate non-recyclable disposable food ware and single-use plastic shopping bags on August 6 at City Hall. Bill Bogot, Environmental Commission chair, provided background material for the proposals. The first proposal would ban the use of disposable Styrofoam food ware for food prepared or packaged in Highland Park and would require that vendors use recyclable or biodegradable materials. The second would restrict single-use plastic shopping bags by retail establishments.

Regulation of Styrofoam is important for our environment and has been proven to work in other cities. Styrofoam, a petroleum product, is designed for a useful life of minutes, but continues to exist in our environment for hundreds or thousands of years. There continues to be no meaningful recycling of it in Illinois. In addition, there reportedly are potential health impacts from Styrofoam associated with its production and the leaching of some of its chemical components into food and drink. Recyclable and biodegradable food service ware is an affordable, safe, and ecologically sound alternative to Styrofoam and other non-recyclable single-use food ware. Similar proposals restricting Styrofoam food ware and/or requiring recyclable or biodegradable food ware have already been adopted in dozens of cities and counties across the nation.

Similarly, regulation of single-use plastic shopping bags is a smart decision for retailers and customers. Single-use plastic shopping bags are made from natural gas or petroleum and do not biodegrade. According to the Worldwatch Institute, less than 1% of the 100 billion free single-use plastic bags thrown away in the United States each year are recycled. Affordable, safe, and ecologically sound alternatives to single-use plastic shopping bags include paper bags, starch-based biodegradable plastic bags (which are virtually indistinguishable from regular plastic bags) and reusable bags. Similar proposals restricting single-use plastic shopping bags have already been adopted in dozens of countries around the world and numerous cities in the United States.

LOCAL NEWS

HEALTH CARE REFORM

In line with LWVUS social policy, this letter was sent to local publications on behalf of the LWVHP expressing the national position on health care reform.

Our opinion was stated as follows:

The League of Women Voters of Highland Park realizes that while it is encouraging that Senate and House committees are beginning to seriously consider health care reform legislation, it is critical that the U.S. Congress takes action and passes real health care reform.

America is facing a health care crisis caused by a combination of skyrocketing costs and an insurance system that leaves 47 million of us without any coverage. The current health care system is endangering both our economy and our health, and voters have made it clear that they want change. According to a study reported in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 70 percent of Americans surveyed believe the health care system needs major changes, if not a complete overhaul.

Health care reform legislation must guarantee quality, affordable health care to all U.S. residents. It is universal coverage that will determine the humanity of our system, and all Americans must have health care coverage, including the choice of a quality, affordable public insurance plan. In addition, it is essential that comparative data on treatments, benefits packages and medical outcomes be made publicly available so that individuals can make informed health decisions.

Congress needs to take additional strong action to reduce the costs of health care for individuals, businesses and communities. As a nation, we are spending \$1 out of every \$6 we earn on health care. Legislation must provide effective cost controls, equitable distribution of services and allow for efficient and economical delivery of care. Offering everyone a government administered health insurance plan like Medicare that would compete with private health insurance plans will be key.

Achieving this kind of comprehensive, system-wide reform will take a shared effort by citizens and Congress. Senators Durbin and Burriss and Representative Kirk need to support real health care reform.

Ed note: Add your voice by contacting those legislators by phone, letter, or email. See the LWVUS website www.lwv.org for more background information and continuing reports from the League's health care task force.

STATE/NATIONAL NEWS

A BILL FOR CLEANER WATER

After years of hard work, one of Senator Susan Garrett’s bills has just been signed into law by Governor Quinn: **Senate Bill 178, which establishes a program through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to rid traces of pharmaceuticals from Illinois water supplies.** It also declares that in conjunction with the Department of Public Health, the IEPA must create and implement a public education program pertaining to household waste drop-off points that accept pharmaceutical products. The IEPA must also work with the Illinois State Board of Education to develop signs that furnish information on the proper disposal of drugs and distribute one of the signs to each pharmacy in the State.

The legislation requires the IEPA to develop a system for managing household wastes such as pharmaceutical products, personal care products, in addition to batteries, paints, automotive fluids, compact fluorescent light bulbs, mercury thermometers, mercury thermostats, and other wastes from general household waste stream.

LWVUS Convenes Redistricting Conference

From president Mary Wilson comes this latest: In partnership with the Campaign Legal Center, the League convened a group of leaders and activists from the reform community to examine possible redistricting strategies and tactics for 2011 and beyond. LWVUS President Mary Wilson, Executive Director Nancy Tate and Advocacy Director Lloyd Leonard represented the LWVUS. Leagues of FL, OH, CA and PA, were also represented.

At the conclusion of this gathering, participants joined together in support of a Statement of Essential Principles in Redistricting which will be publicly released by the League early in September. The LWVUS will be working with state Leagues to develop a plan for forming important partnerships, strategies and messaging that can have real impact on the redistricting efforts in individual states. **Please watch for further information on this.** And, remember that the work you do now to encourage an accurate and complete Census 2010 count will be a key element for subsequent advocacy on redistricting.

WAIT WAIT ... DON'T TELL ME!

Thursday, September 17, 7:00 pm
Chase Bank Auditorium
10 S. Dearborn, Chicago

Following last year’s successful event, League of Women Voters of Illinois has again conspired with host Peter Sagal to make a fun-filled evening of the NPR news quiz show, joking with (at?) the League of Women Voters. The \$60 price includes your ticket and entre to the reception after the show.

Contact Mo Ormiston at the state office for questions and tickets: 312-939-5935, ext. 37.



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LEAGUE CALENDAR

Call **847-432-4732** or email **info@lwhvp.org** to carpool to any of these events.

MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO ATTEND BOARD MEETINGS

AUGUST	26	7:00	BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER	17	7:00	WAIT WAIT DON'T TELL ME –LWVIL BENEFIT
	23	7:00	BOARD MEETING
	25	12:00	LWVHP BENEFIT – LUNCHEON/BOOK REVIEW
OCTOBER	2-3		LAKE MICHIGAN LWV ANNUAL MEETING – SAUGATUCK, MI
	28	7:00	BOARD MEETING