



Illinois Voter

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Winter 2008-2009

SAVE THE DATE

LWVIL's *State of the State Luncheon* will be held Thursday, February 26, 2009, at the Union League Club in Chicago, from noon to 2:00 pm.



We are pleased to welcome **Carol Marin**, political reporter and columnist, as keynote speaker, and **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois** as recipient of the League's Civic Participation Award.

CONVENTION 2009

Everyone Counts...On League and In League is the theme of the LWVIL 2009 convention to be held June 12-14 in Peoria. Convention is a time to network with other members from across the state and learn how the State program comes together. It is your opportunity to meet with the current and incoming State Board members, as well as have an impact on LWVIL's program, budget and bylaws.



Friday afternoon will feature a tour and reception organized by the Peoria League. Friday and Saturday dinners feature award presentations and guest speakers. Throughout the weekend are caucuses on issues, workshops, and time for learning about other local League activities. Pubs & Wares feature LWV materials and gifts. The silent auction on Saturday night will provide a great variety of goods and services.

Delegates discuss and vote on LWVIL issues. Local LWVs are allowed one voting delegate for your President plus one for every twenty-five members. Alternates and Members-at-Large are also welcome as non-voting delegates. Contact your League President about attending the convention to learn more about League and have a good time too. **Hope to see you there!**

LWVIL Annual Issues Briefing

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2009

University Center - Conference Chicago - Lake Room
525 South State Street · Chicago

REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST AND NETWORKING
8:30 a.m.

ISSUES PROGRAMS

9:15 a.m.—Noon

The State of Illinois Government: How can Illinois move forward to meet its fiscal challenges? What plans does new leadership in the General Assembly have for this legislative session?

The 2010 Census: Why is a complete count important? What are the implications for Illinois regarding redistricting and services in Illinois?

LWV Advocacy & Front-Burner Issues: Updates on State Fiscal Policy, Environmental Protection & Pollution Control, and other action issues.

LUNCH:

Noon to 1 p.m.

WORKSHOPS:

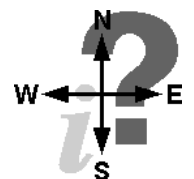
1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (select one)

- ⇒ **Environment/Climate Change:** What is the impact of pharmaceuticals on water quality? How can League implement Natural Resources positions, educate the public and promote action?
- ⇒ **Judicial Evaluation Commission:** What is it? How will it help the public make decisions to help elect better judges?
- ⇒ **Election Issues:** What voting processes could be improved in Illinois? Post Con-Con, what issues can be promoted by amendment; recall, term limits, progressive income tax, initiative and referendum?

To Register for the Issues Briefing, Complete and Return the Registration Form on page 3 by January 16, 2009 or register online at www.lwvil.org.

University Center is on the southeast corner of State Street and Congress Parkway.

For driving directions, parking and public transportation info: <http://www.universitycenter.com/conferences/general/location-map.html>



From the President

Fall election seasons are always very active times for the state and local Leagues. With two main LWWIL-led projects, *Illinois Student Vote* and **defeating the statewide ballot question calling for a Constitutional Convention**, the fall 2008 election season was clearly the most hectic in the ten years I have served on the LWWIL Board. Illinois Student Vote involved over 300,000 students in 800 schools throughout Illinois. Local League members helped coordinate and enhance the ISV programs in many of these schools. The League took a leadership role in educating the public on the Con-Con Ballot Question. We actively advocated for our position opposing the call for a Constitutional Convention by meeting with newspaper editorial boards, appearing on radio and TV, participating in panels debating the question, and sending letters to the editor. The League was a valuable partner of the Alliance to Protect the Illinois Constitution, the 'No Con-Con' coalition, since we had members from Rockford to Peoria to McLean County to Southern Illinois and throughout the Chicago Metropolitan area promoting our position.



Now it is time to focus on our current issues and action activities and to start planning for the future through the program planning process which leads to state convention this June. Attending the January 31 *Issues Briefing* and conducting *Legislative Interviews* with your state legislators will help us focus on both current issues and future needs. Should we continue our focus on funding of education and social services and judicial performance evaluation? Were there issues brought up in the discussion of the call for a Constitutional Convention that should be studied, such as recall of constitutional officers? Or should we work for changes permitting a graduated income tax, a better redistricting process, or initiative and referendum? Is there need for changes in election procedures?

Join your local League in its program planning discussion and the state League at *Issues Briefing*. The issues that we work on need to have broad member interest for us to be effective in our study and action. A way to work toward this goal is to have many members participate in these discussions. **We are counting on your input and interests to guide our decisions.**

Paula

Resources for Voter Services Chairs

With the challenges in putting together candidate forums, be sure you are familiar with State and local League policies on running forums fairly. The LWWIL policies on candidate forums are on the website at: http://lwwil.org/resources_voterservice.asp.



Also, the Voter Service listserv shares ideas for voter registrations and forums. To join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LWWIL-VoterServ>.

LEADERSHIP RAP

League members met with LWWIL President Paula Lawson and other board members to discuss future programs, past problems and potential solutions to issues confronting Leagues. Here are some points covered during the lively discussion:

Issues: Syvia Tillman encouraged participants to attend the Issues Briefing on January 31 and stressed the importance of the legislative interviews scheduled for January. LWWIL has applied for a grant for *A True Census Count: A Program to Redistrict and Reform* project for the 2010 census. The accuracy of the census is important as it impacts legislative redistricting. Members hearing about legislation of interest to the League or wishing to discuss other issues should contact Syvia at issues@lwwil.org



Voter Service: Kathi Graffam discussed debates/forums, including how to handle difficult audiences, third party candidates, misuse of video from League debates, and dealing with new media such as live broadcasts on YouTube. Note: the IRS now allows organizations to have membership material at these events. For more info on any of these topics contact Kathi at voterservice@lwwil.org

Member Service: Valerie Krejcie reminded participants that she and her committee were available to train Leaguers in the Membership Recruitment Initiative program and for board training sessions. Also, she is putting together a list of successful, interesting local League programs to serve as a resource for other Leagues and ideas for encouraging new members. If you have suggestions, contact Valerie at membership@lwwil.org

Communications: Jeanne Davik discussed evaluating the new format of the League website, now a year old. If you would like to help, go to http://www.lwwil.org/resources_website_eval.asp and fill out the seven question evaluation form. You can also email your comments to Jeanne at webmaster@lwwil.org

Development Activities: Treasurer Nancy Marcus advised attendees the form for Education Fund activities was changed to more clearly address allocation of funds for multiple-League events. She encouraged all to publicize the **State of the State** luncheon on February 26 and local Leagues to participate in the net proceeds Sharing Policy for the luncheon. Also, she reminded Leaguers about the phonathon and how local Leagues can generate income for their Leagues by participating. Contact Nancy at treasurer@lwwil.org

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Program planning for local Leagues and LWWIL convention will happen soon in your local Leagues. Check your bulletin or with your League board to find out when and where so you are sure to participate.

Interviews with our state legislators will be taking place in January. Contact your local League president to be part of that interview process.

It's not too early to gather ideas and items for the Silent Auction for the LWWIL Convention in Peoria in June! We are **Counting On You!** Watch for more details soon.



Judy Lohr
Penny Shnay
(auction@lwwil.org)

JUDICIAL EVALUTION COMMISSION PROJECT

Support and authorization for a Judicial Evaluation Commission project was approved at the LWVIL 2007 Convention, and LWVIL was awarded a \$4,900 grant from LWVUS for this judicial independence project. Illinois is one of 39 states in which most of the judges are elected, and voters have little access to reliable, nonpartisan information about judicial candidates or the performance of sitting judges running for retention. To address this problem and identify meaningful ways to evaluate candidates and educate the voters about their choices, the Judicial Evaluation Commission (JEC) is being considered. The goal is to eliminate the guessing game when voting for judges. This does not alter the League's primary position supporting merit selection of judges.

In answer to the question of why we need another commission in Illinois and how it would differ from judicial evaluations performed by bar associations or individual organizations, a Judicial Evaluation Commission would be composed of a mix of people – not all attorneys or experienced judges, but also academics, plaintiffs, defendants and lay citizens. They would establish benchmarks for use in rating the candidates which would provide a fair and more accurate basis for comparison among candidates. The public would be provided with

voter guides to study in advance of an election. Judges could use these performance evaluations to modify and improve their performance on the bench.

The JEC project committee has been working with the Chicago Council of Lawyers, the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform (ICPR), judges and legislators throughout the state to stimulate interest in the project and to identify organizations willing to work with LWVIL on this effort. A model proposal is in the development stage and will be part of the presentation of the JEC workshop at the LWVIL January 31, 2009, Issues Briefing. We will also explore how local Leagues can get involved in educating the public about judicial choices and what qualities to seek in the candidates. Laurie Bergner and Michelle Jordan chair the project and may be contacted at issues@lwvil.org.



REGISTRATION FORM: Issues Briefing 2009

Name: _____ League: _____

_____ **\$50 per person** (includes continental breakfast, lunch, briefing packet and workshop materials)

_____ **MORNING Program only: \$30 per person** (includes continental breakfast and briefing packet)

_____ **AFTERNOON Program only: \$35 per person** (includes lunch and workshop materials)

Afternoon Workshops: (Select One)

___ **Environment**

___ **Judicial Evaluation Commission**

___ **Election Issues**

Forward your registration form and fees to:

League of Women Voters of Illinois
332 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1150
Chicago, IL 60604
Attn: Issues Briefing Registration

**Please make checks payable to LWVIL
or register online at www.lwvil.org**

Registration forms due by January 16, 2009

The League accepts Visa and MasterCard for your convenience.

Credit Card #: _____ **Exp. Date:** _____

Security Code: _____ **Signature (required):** _____



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF ILLINOIS

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LWVIL Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Illinois, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief in and commitment to diversity and pluralism. The LWVIL recognizes that diverse perspectives are necessary for responsible and effective decision-making in democratic organizations. LWVIL affirms its commitment to remove barriers to participation in any League activity on the basis of age, race, color, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin; and to actively be inclusive.

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Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. For membership information, call 312-939-5935.

Articles from the *Voter* may be reprinted in full with complete acknowledgement.

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