



The Voter

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Ames, IA
Web-site: <http://www.ameslww.org>

August 2008

AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

Hello, League members and welcome to a new program year!

We invite you to a kick-off potluck where you can meet the new Board and hear something about what an exciting year we have planned for 2008-2009. The details are as follows:

Date: August 28

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Red Oak shelter at Inis Grove Park, located on Duff Avenue in Ames.

Please bring a dish to share and your own place setting. The League will provide beverages.

After we eat and visit, we will be treated to a presentation on the 2008 National Convention held in Portland, Oregon.

We will also enjoy an exercise focused on growing awareness and membership in the League that Lauris brought back with her from that convention.



We look forward to seeing you at Inis Grove!

From the President



Shout out a big HURRAH for the hundreds of board members who have served the LWV- Ames in our eight decades of existence.

The plenary sessions, workshops and caucuses at the 2008 National Convention of the League of Women Voters were filled with facts and ideas on organizational best practices, communication, fundraising, meetings, programs and membership recruitment.

The convention was held June 13 to 17 in Portland, Ore., a vibrant city with a pedestrian friendly downtown and wonderful views of the mountains in every direction.

Selva Lehman and I attended as our local League's voting members. Iowa was also represented by members from the Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Iowa City and Sioux City leagues.

It was invigorating to interact with intelligent, dedicated and determined leaders from across the nation. I return from the 2008 Conference motivated and optimistic. I also return with the message that in many respects, the Ames League of Women Voters has been "doing it right" for quite some time.

We also need to congratulate Jackie Manatt for persevering in her campaign to make LWVUS fundraising mailings less confusing and make LWVUS

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Mark Your Calendar

Thursday, August 28, at 6 PM
GENERAL MEETING - PICNIC - see above

Wednesday, September 3, at 5:30 PM
AMES SCOO BOARD CANDIDATES' FORUM
Ames City Council Chambers

Thursday, September 18, at 7:30 PM
GENERAL MEETING
NO Book Club until September

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staff more proactive in notifying state and local Leagues when people from their respective areas join League at the national level.

It took three days, a pointed dialogue with the LVWUS Development Director during a budget Q & A workshop, a revised resolution and a formal vote count, but the national delegation voted 273 to 224 to:

- Require the LVWUS staff within 12 months to redesign its funding requests so that they cannot be misconstrued as membership recruitment or dues notices.
- Require the LVWUS staff to enlist the help of responsive state and local Leagues to help or revise any fundraising or recruiting letters.

We owe a big 'thanks' to Jeannette Bohnenkamp for rewriting the "be it resolved" portions of my draft and making other on-point editing suggestions. I have no doubt that part of our success was the skillful wording.

If you would like to know more about what topics were "hot" at National and what the next two years are likely to bring for us, please plan on attending the August general meeting, which will include a picnic and a presentation on the National Convention.

Convention Recap

I'd like to devote the rest of the column to giving you an overview of the message we were asked to bring back to the local Leagues.

Nationwide, the League has 850 chapters, including 16 new local units since 2006. (One of the 16 is in Muscatine.) But most of the local Leagues have declining membership. The League has lost an average of 3.1 percent of its members for the last three years. As of January 2008, the League has 67,726 members. In January 2005, membership stood at 74,951.

As membership declines, the national League gets less of its operating budget from PMP (per member payments) and local Leagues have less human power to conduct voter services, studies and advocacy.

In addition, the number of non-profit organizations has topped 1.6 million. Several of these also address some of our program issues. It is becoming even more important that Leagues on every level position themselves as unique, distinctive and valuable to the public.

LVWUS staff and leaders have developed a strategy called the 360 Approach to counter declining membership and a crowded field of groups seeking funding.

The 360 Approach emphasizes Membership, Fundraising, Visibility and Action. State and local leagues are being asked to develop programming and operate their organizations so that at least one, but preferably all four, of the approach elements are incorporated.

LVWUS is also promoting FOCUS to the state and local leagues. **FOCUS** is broken down into:

- F**irst rule of League: Nonpartisanship
- O**utreach to your community: Program
- C**onsensus: Not going it alone (membership agreement and board consensus)
- U**s, the grassroots: Membership growth and diversity
- S**peaking with one voice: Consistent message from all levels

The Ames League is already using the message all Leagues should be promoting for the next two years:

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

I brought back some small group exercises on the 360 Approach that encourage members to incorporate the 360 Approach in their individual League interactions. The group exercises are fun and quick; so don't be surprised if we do one at the August picnic.

I want to thank you again for choosing me to lead us through the next year of change and growth as we FOCUS in 2008-09.

Lauris Olson
President

**Membership in the League offers personal involvement for the public good.
The League of Women Voters is
where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to
civic improvement.**

FALL CANDIDATES' FORUMS ARE SET

The Ames League of Women Voters will partner with the Ames Chamber of Commerce again this year to present local candidates' forums.

The forum for Ames Community School District forums will be from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 3. Two of the seven seats are on the ballot.

The forum for candidates to the Iowa State Legislature will be at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 20.

Voters will be choosing representatives for House Districts 10 (Story County except for Ames and Gilbert), 45 (Ames) and 46 (Ames).

The forum for candidates for Story County Supervisor, Story County Auditor, and Story County Sheriff will be at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 27.

We will need volunteers to staff these forums. To volunteer, call Randi Peters at 292-4722 or e-mail RandiP1970@aol.com.

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From Membership

The League of Women Voters' new season, with its many interesting and informative programs, is fast approaching. We would be delighted to have a good representation of our membership, guests and potential members at these meetings.

But in any organization, membership fluctuates, so the addition of new members is important for its vitality and continuation - and attendance at meetings.

This is where I need your help. If each of you would invite a guest/prospective member to a League program or forward a name (man or woman) to me so that I might contact them with information and an invitation to join League.

Personal contacts are so important and you

are important in this recruitment process.

My email address is bgwiasd@iastate.edu or 232-7582 or Angie Shirk ashirk1@hotmail.com, who is the assistant to the Membership Chariman Thank you so much.

Dues Remain Constant

Membership in LWV Ames continues to be a bargain. Even though LWVUS is raising the Per Member Payment (PMP) this year and next year, our local dues will remain the same.

This is possible due to generous support from our members and the Ames community at large as well as prudent use of funds by the local board of directors.

CELEBRATE SUFFRAGE OCTOBER 25, 2008

"Help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the only Woman's Suffrage Parade held in Iowa and one of the first held in the US." This invitation comes from the Boone Historical Society, the parade organizers. The day's program includes dedication of a Boone Suffrage Parade Monument, parade reenactment, an original play and other festivities. The reenactment parade will include participants in period costume playing the parts of original marchers. Additional information is available at www.celebratesuffrage2008.org.

The original parade was organized by two exceptional women, Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon and Rowena Edson Stevens. Gordon, from Des Moines, was president of the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association (IESA). Stevens, of



Boone, was the organizer of both the Ames Political Equality Club and the Boone Equality Club and past president of the IESA. Rowena Stevens and husband, Judge John Stevens, were Ames residents for a number of years. Also from Ames and marching in the parade was Mrs. Gilbert who had pledged money to IESA. Little else is known about Mrs. Gilbert.

The parade offers an unusual opportunity to learn about the long road to women's right to vote and to reenact history. Several Ames Leaguers are planning to participate. If you would like to join us, please contact Sharon Wirth as soon as possible (sharonwirth@yahoo.com) or register online at the above web site. If you can't march, plan to attend the festivities.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.