



The Voter

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Ames, IA

Web-site: <http://www.ameslww.org>

February 2009

From the President

Seeking our League's next leaders

The Ames League will need a new president in 14 months. It is in our best interest to begin looking for a willing applicant now so that he or she can be elected as vice-president in April and spend the next 12 months easing into the position.

Serving as the League's president is fulfilling work, but I have found that it isn't always easy. Schedules get overbooked; details get overlooked. Fate and outside influences intervene.

But you get through it and move on – motivated by the respect the community has for the League, the importance of the work and the dedication of the membership, many who have been active for decades.

I'd like to think that there is no "perfect" way to do this job and
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Save the Date!

Ready to Run™ Iowa
 Friday, April 3, 2009

Say Yes!

The LWV of Ames will again be working to compile an informational notebook for distribution to Ready to Run participants. Help is needed in pulling together the contents and assembling the notebook. This work needs to be done in February or March. If you can help please contact Sharon Wirth (sharonwirth@yahoo.com) or 233-2415 or Betty Baird (eambaird@aol.com) or 232-5415

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Mark Your Calendar for February and beyond

- February 19**
Thursday
7:30 p.m. General Meeting
Local issue: Payday lending
"Protection from Predatory Lending"
Northminster Presbyterian Church
1416 20th.
- February 18**
Wednesday
9:30 a.m. Lobby Day
 Meet at Calvary Baptist Church
Des Moines
- March 25**
Book Club Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America
 by Michael Beschloss.
Marcia Thompson as hostess,
2728 Meadow Glen Rd.

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no “perfect” person to fill it.

For example, it’s my fault that there were no envelopes in the end-of-the-year fundraising mailing – I didn’t realize I had forgotten them until five of us were gathered to stuff and address the letters at Marlys Potter’s home the day after a major snowstorm. It’s also my fault that there was no January Voter – most of the content to be included was to be written by me but work priorities got in the way.

Mother Nature, however, has to take the blame for the cancellation of Ames Happening on Jan. 10.

For every frustration, there are many triumphs. Some new ideas, such as holding board meetings every other month, don’t work out. Others, such as creating more small, task-specific volunteer opportunities and increasing our membership recruitment efforts, take root and begin to produce results.

You give and you receive.

The president of the Ames League gets to work with and learn from wise and patient advisors. For those who may have never headed a volunteer-based organization before, the presidency offers personal growth and an expansion of leadership skills. While state League meetings are always open to all League members, attending these as a local president can provide a different perspective.

Please consider stepping up and stepping into the presidency or other leadership opportunities on the board. Nominating committee members are Jane Halliburton (232-8681 or jhstry@aol.com), Randi Peters (292-4722 or RandiP1970@aol.com) and Barb Munson (232-5077 or amesmunson@aol.com).

On another note, the board welcomes Renee Jerman as the new Voter editor and Webmaster. Renee is a web designer at the Iowa Department of Transportation in Ames. She joined the League last year at the invitation of member Betty Baird. This edition of the Voter is her first.

Selva Lehman, our previous Voter editor and Webmaster resigned in November. I think I am speaking for the entire membership when I say that we owe much of the League’s success in recent years to Selva and are deeply grateful for her service.

Ellen Fairchild resigned from the board in December. We also are grateful for her months of service as a meeting planner.

By Lauris Olson, President

Get involved. Get Ready to Run™ .



Thinking about becoming more politically active? Want to run for office? Or how about managing someone else’s campaign?

The Ames League of Women Voters is again co-sponsoring campaign training with the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics.

Ready to Run™ Iowa is a one-day, comprehensive, bi-partisan campaign training workshop, The Catt Center and the Ames League offered the first Ready to Run™ in 2007. It was so well-received that the two organizations have committed to offering it every other year.

Ready to Run™ Iowa is based on the very successful Ready to Run™ New Jersey campaign training for women initiated by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University in 1998. Of the nearly 1,000 women who have attended Ready to Run™ New Jersey, more than 25% have run for office and more than 70% of those who ran won their elections!

We are hoping to have the same impact in Iowa, which is still one of only four states that has not elected a woman to the U.S. Congress. Iowa has not elected a woman as governor and it ranks below the national average of 24.2% with 34 women (22.7%) in the State Legislature.

Although Ready to Run™ Iowa addresses topics unique to women as they seek greater participation in the political process, the campaign school is open to anyone who is interested in running for elected office, serving on public boards and commissions, and/or working on a political campaign.

Registration is underway for the 2009 Ready to Run™ Iowa campaign training school, which will be held on Friday, April 3, on the campus of Iowa State University. Registration is \$75 a person if postmarked by March 21, 2009, and \$100 per person after March 21. (Scholarships may be available to help cover travel and registration fees.)

The Ames League’s sponsorship includes both monetary and volunteer support.

Visit the Ready to Run™ link on the Catt Center web site to learn more about the history and content of this program, download registration forms and information about scholarships, see who is serving on the bi-partisan Advisory Board, and check out Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.las.iastate.edu/CattCenter/readytorun.shtml>

**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.**

February general meeting focuses on payday lending

“Protection from Predatory Lending..... LWVIA encourages the Iowa Legislature to pass legislation to reduce payday loan fees....” (LWVIA position)

So what are the facts—and the human stories—behind this 2009 State Legislative Priority?



**Thursday , February 19, 7:30 p.m.
Northminster Presbyterian Church**

Come listen to

Shazia Manus president and chief executive officer of Greater Iowa Credit Union.

Manus was named to this position in February 2006. Prior to her appointment, she served as the interim CEO, chief deposit officer and internal audit and compliance officer at Greater Iowa. She has received numerous awards and recognition within the credit union industry. A native of Bangladesh, Manus began her financial career in the micro financing industry in her native county. Manus holds a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from Iowa State University.

She served on Iowa Credit Union League's Payday Loan Commission and is considered an expert on predatory lending practices in Iowa. She has participated in speaking engagements for local community groups on payday lending and how credit unions across the state are working with its membership and communities to help underserved communities.

and

Linda Voit has been planting seeds of transformation in individuals and organizations for more than two decades. After earning her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in broadcast journalism and sociology, she's held positions as Marketing Director for a training and consulting company, sales representative in radio, instructor of Sales and Promotion at UW-Eau Claire and, for 9 years served at VP-Marketing for Capital Credit Union before becoming an independent consultant, trainer, writer and facilitator.

She gained her interest in and knowledge of the payday lending industry through her membership on the Economic Justice Research Team of A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS) - Ames Cluster. She will review the information the team has gathered and shared with state legislators regarding the payday lending industry and the need for a reasonable rate cap.

You know her, so nominate her

The Ames LWV has presented the Carrie Chapman Catt Award since 1993 to a league member who has made significant contributions to the League through its many projects or heightened public awareness of the mission and activities of the LWV. This year's committee of Selva Lehman, Jackie Manatt and Johnie Hammond (all past recipients) are seeking nominations for the 2009 award. You may nominate a League colleague or nominate yourself. Contact Selva at 232-5571 or selvarl@mchsi.com.

Your Input Eagerly Solicited!

At the February 5 Board meeting we held a “brainstorming session” on ideas for general meeting programs for next year. Here are ideas we came up with:

--Review of and suggestions for improving the election process:



-National Popular Vote for President (eliminating the electoral college)

-Directed Primary (eliminating run-offs while assuring a majority vote for the winner)

-Revisiting the Iowa caucus system

-Limiting campaign duration

--Health Care

--Energy

Coal Plant Moratorium

Local energy sources

Rebates for renewable energy use

--Water Quality, Control, Conservation, and Availability

--Iowa as a Tourist Destination (including use of Hotel-Motel & other taxes)

So, what do you think of these ideas? What others would you suggest? What speakers would you propose? Are there any good field trips that would be appropriate? When it comes to meeting planning, the more suggestions the better, so please add yours to the mix by calling or e-mailing Mary Richards (292-8174; maryrich@isunet.net).



Book Club announces spring readings and meetings

The Ames League of Women Voters Book Club will discuss books by Michael Beschloss and Jenna Blum this spring.

On March 25, the club will discuss "Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America" by Michael Beschloss. Nancy Brown will lead the discussion. Marcia Thompson will host the club at her home, 2728 Meadow Glen Rd.

Jenna Blum's "Those Who Save Us" will be the topic at the book club's April 22 meeting. Jeannette Bohnenkamp will lead. Selva Lehman, 4037 Fletcher Rd, will be hostess.

Frances Smith
296-5137

Talk to legislators where they work

Members of the Iowa Leagues are invited to travel to Des Moines on Feb. 18 for the annual League Lobby Day at the Iowa Capital.

The day's schedule:

9:30 a.m., coffee and conversation at Calvary Baptist Church at 606 E. 9th Street, just a block from the Capitol.

At 9:45 a.m., hear updates on LWVIA priorities from key legislators. Parking is limited at the church, but additional parking is available across the street at the Republican Headquarters.

Next, move to the Capitol for lunch and an opportunity to meet with legislators and to attend committee meetings. Talk to your legislators in advance and plan to have lunch with them if possible. This is a wonderful opportunity to get informed and updated on issues.

For more information, contact Myrna Loehrlein, 2008 Lobby Day organizer, at mloehr@imonmail.com.

Correction for the 2008-2009 Program and Directory Books

Long-time League member Zora Zimmerman was inadvertently omitted from this year's directory. Please include her with the following information:
Zora Zimmerman
2718 Kellogg Ave.
Ames, IA 50010

The Iowa League of Women Voters priorities for the 2009 legislative session are:

Prevent Future Flooding by Better Land Management:

Promote and enforce conservation policies that control erosion, improve water quality and help prevent flooding.

Protection from Predatory Lending and Consumer Fraud:

LWVIA encourages the Iowa Legislature to pass legislation to reduce payday loan fees and to allow Iowa consumers to sue when they think they have been defrauded. Iowa is the only state in the country where an individual cannot sue under the state's Consumer Fraud Act.

Immigration:

LWVIA urges the Iowa Legislature to support legislation that provides:

- penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers
- due process for all persons including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal, and right to humane treatment
- increased funding for English language classes



Sentencing and Corrections:

LWVIA urges the Iowa Legislature to:

- consider recommendations from the Criminal Code Reorganization Committee report
- fund more community based correction programs and programs that facilitate prisoner reentry into the community,
- increase funding for programs that treat the special needs offender.

Other Areas of Interest:

- Returnable Beverage Container Legislation (Bottle Bill)
- Campaign Finance Reform
- Strengthen Iowa's Open Meetings law

New - Moratorium on New Coal-Fired Electric Power Plants:

Support for a ten-year moratorium on new construction of coal-fired electric power plants. This action is based on LWVUS environmental and energy positions and will reinforce the work the League is doing around the country to combat global climate change.

League of Women Voters of Ames
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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.