



# The Voter

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

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

## February 2008

### From the President



Seems like the last time I checked it was the holiday season. Now I turn around and it's February. As I talk to others, I find I am not alone with this feeling of time passing quickly.

January was a busy month for the LWV of Ames. We wrapped up and sent off our consensus as part of the National Study on immigration. Under the able leadership of Joyce Hertz, a dedicated group of members found their way through this complex topic. Jan 10<sup>th</sup>

brought a new event, new faces to our meeting and encouragement to continue this event in future years. Under the leadership of Mary Ann Dilla, a successful legislative wake up and legislative briefing was held on Jan 19<sup>th</sup>.

### Mark Your Calendar

#### February - February 13

##### LWVIA Lobby Day

Des Moines - IA

See Voter for date and place

#### February 16 Saturday

##### Legislative Wake-Up

Social Time: 8:30 AM

8:45 - 10 AM Forum and Broadcast

Ames City Council Chambers

#### February 21 Thursday

##### General Meeting 7:30 PM

Local Unit Program Planning:

Reviewing National and Local Programs

Northminster Presbyterian Church - Fireplace Room 1416 20<sup>th</sup>

#### February 27 Wednesday

**Book Club** - Daughter of the Desert: The Remarkable Life of Gertrude Bell by Georgina Howell and/or Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell by Janet Wallach led by Joyce Hertz as hostess, 2803 Torrey Pines Cr.

#### March 15 - Saturday

##### Legislative Wake-Up

Social Time: 8:30 AM

8:45 - 10 AM Forum and Broadcast

Ames City Council Chambers

#### March 26 Wednesday

**Book Club** - Watchdogs of Democracy? The Waning Washington Press Corps and How It Has Failed the Public by Helen Thomas led by Barbara Gwiasda as hostess, 3420 Eisenhower Ave.

#### March 27 - Thursday

Note: This is the fourth Thursday of March

##### PM General Meeting 7:30 PM

LWVIA Study:

"Delivery of Mental Health Services in Story County",

Northminster Presbyterian Church - Fireplace Room 1416 20<sup>th</sup>

February looks to be just as interesting with League activities. Plans include another legislative wake up on Feb 16, LWVIA Lobby Day on Feb 13, and our general meeting on Feb 21. The Feb 21<sup>st</sup> meeting is our program planning meeting—an important opportunity for all members to help shape next year's activities. Details about these activities can be found in this newsletter. I hope all of you will make time for one or all of these events during February. I'll end with a fitting quote from National, "membership in the League offers personal involvement for the public good. The LWV is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement." Ames citizens are blessed with an outstanding place to live and wonderful opportunities for participation. Please be involved.

By Sharon Wirth  
President

### Inside this issue:

Legislative Wake-Ups	2
Report on 'Ames Happenings'	2
February General Meeting Program Planning	3
Immigration Study Report	3
Catt Award nominations	4
Nominating Committee Request	4
New from LWVIA and Lobby Day	4
News from LWVUS	5

**LEGISLATIVE WAKE-UPS**

Kudos to one of our newer Ames League members, Mary Ann Dilla. You may recall that we told you in a previous newsletter that Mary Ann had volunteered to chair the committee producing the 2008 Legislative Wake-Up Forums.

The first forum, held on January 19, went well according to the feedback I received from a couple of the legislators, some members of the Channel 12 audience and a few members of the league.

Mary Ann deserves our special thanks because she handled both the coordination and moderation of the Wake Up Forum and the league’s annual legislators issues briefing that followed with little assistance from Ames League president Sharon Wirth or myself. We both had professional responsibilities elsewhere that morning. A big thank you also goes to Ames League member and Iowa League lobbyist Judie Hoffman for leading the issues briefing.

Sharon and I weren’t the only ones who had conflicts that Saturday morning. As Mary Ann called league members to ask for help in staffing the

January forum, she had several members tell her that they were already busy. A few others that she tried to reach did not return her calls. (Maybe there were sitting on a beach somewhere under a hot sun as warm breezes gently cooled them. Or maybe they were just too stiff from the recent cold to answer the phone.)

February’s forum is from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 16. If you aren’t on sitting on a tropical island that day, please come to the Ames City Council chambers and join us at the forum.

Better yet, consider helping with the forum, Set up begins at 8 a.m. Mary Ann also needs volunteers to keep track of time, answer the telephone for call in questions and serve coffee. You can contact her by calling 663-9390 or by e-mailing [mavdilla@yahoo.com](mailto:mavdilla@yahoo.com).

Thank you and try to stay warm!

By Lauris Olson  
President-elect

**‘AMES HAPPENING’ A GREAT SUCCESS**

A broad-based group of citizens attended the League’s “Ames Happening” on Jan 10. This event brought together Mayor Ann Campbell, Ames School Board President Gail Johnston, and Mary Greeley Medical Center Chairperson Sarah Buck to review the 2007 year and look ahead to events and issues of 2008. A question and answer session followed the presentations. The event was broadcast live on channel 12 and re-broadcast later. The event provided all citizens with the opportunity to hear first hand from these elected officials.

A common theme among the 3 speakers was the topic of inclusion. From access to the health care system to the educational system to being a welcoming community to all cultures and individuals, each speaker stressed the importance of respecting each individual and their many talents. Richard Florida in The Flight of the Creative Class talks about a new openness—to new people, new ideas and new dreams. He goes on to speak of how important this openness is to economic growth and our future. Interesting reading and thought provoking when contemplating the future of the Ames community as each speaker of the evening challenged us to do.

The League received positive feedback about the meeting and encouragement to make it an annual event.

**Our thanks to all who assisted with the event.**



**FEBRUARY 21 GENERAL MEETING**

The Ames League of Women Voters has a great track record of conducting studies on local issues that produce insightful information on topics important to the citizens of our community.

Our study on transportation issues in Ames led to the creation of CyRide. The study on the Story County Medical Center brought forth questions about the amount of tax dollars being spent to maintain an acute care facility averaging two inpatients per day. The recent study on what would constitute a Living Wage in Story County highlighted the wide gap between minimum wage, especially when it was \$5.15 per hour, and the necessary Living Wage to cover just basics and child care of around \$12 per hour.

Each of these local studies was suggested by an Ames League member. It's time for members once again to put forth study ideas.

Members (that includes you) can propose new studies for the Ames League to undertake when we get together for the general meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 21, at Northminster Presbyterian Church.

During the February meeting, we will also review the issue positions taken by the National League of Women Voters. Current priorities for the National League include:

- Campaign Finance Reform
- Civil Liberties

- DC Voting Rights
- Election Administration
- Ethics and Lobbying Reform
- Global Climate Change
- Health Care Reform

This month's meeting discussion will also include a time for making suggestions on program topics for the 2008-09 meeting season.

On a related note, if you were not able to attend the Feb. 21 meeting, would you please take 90 seconds to make a telephone call or send an e-mail to me commenting on why you won't attend?

Don't worry – there is no need to reveal family secrets or your secret addiction to karaoke singing. The board could just use some basic information on why average attendance at meetings represents only about 12 to 15 percent of our membership.

Does the day or time conflict with other activities? Are evening meetings difficult for you to attend? Do you find current programs uninviting? If so, why?

You can reach me at 233-3220 (days), 233-4675 (evenings and weekends) or by e-mail at [President\\_Elect@ameslww.org](mailto:President_Elect@ameslww.org)

Identities will remain confidential, if so requested.

By Lauris Olson  
President-elect

**IMMIGRATION STUDY UPDATE**

**LWV OF AMES COMPLETES IMMIGRATION CONSENSUS**

At the January General Meeting of the LWV of Ames, 21 members completed the second part of the LWVUS Immigration consensus process. Sandra McJimsey did a great job facilitating the discussion. A big **Thank You** is extended to all who participated in this complex, difficult issue.

The Immigration Study Team met one more time to confirm the results from the October and January consensus meetings and to draft the "Comments" paragraph, limited to 150 words. Later we learned that 150 words meant 1000 characters, and we literally could not send in our completed digital consensus form if we exceeded that number. On January 29 we successfully sent our completed form. Anyone wishing to see a copy of the results, please ask Selva Lehman.

February 1 was the deadline for Leagues all

over the U.S. to send their completed consensus forms. The LWVUS Immigration Study team will review the responses and then determine whether there is consensus for an Immigration position. We will be informed of their deliberation in the next few weeks. Until that time, no individual League is publicizing its results since they do not represent the whole.

The Immigration Study Team for the Ames League was outstanding. Please "high five" this wonderful group of twelve people: Jan Beran, Jeannette Bohnenkamp, Barbara Gwiasda, Joyce Hertz, Selva Lehman, Randi Peters, Jeri Prescott, Mary Richards, Jeanette Smithson, John Tait, Meg Tait, and Marlene Weisshaar.

Joyce Hertz,  
chair of Immigration Study group

**CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT AWARD**

Nominations for the Carrie Chapman Catt award are welcome now. Each year a member from our League is honored for her/his active participation in the goals and mission of the League of Women Voters, service to the wider community and significant individual accomplishment outside one's active profession.

Joyce Hertz and Martha Isaacson are on the selection committee this year. Please contact either of them with your recommendations.

**LWV NOMINATING 2008**

The nominating committee of your Ames League of Women Voters is gearing up for the task of filling open positions for the next 1-2 years. We ask your help in thinking about what you might like to do to help out your LWV.

A list of the open positions follows here so that you might think about where you would most like to work. Each position puts you on the board, which meets monthly on a schedule that suits most board members. You may hold a position on your own, or share it with a friend—or someone you don't yet even know. Think about someone you might like to work with or would like to get to know better. Then call or email one of us on the nominating committee with your ideas.

**Positions open:**

- President –elect
- Secretary
- Meeting planner(s)
- Voter editor (webmaster)
- Membership
- Finance
- Observer corps
- Legislative action
- Voter service
- Nominating committee

**Nominating Committee**

- Betty Baird (chair) 232-5415 or [eambaird@aol.com](mailto:eambaird@aol.com)
- Joyce Hertz 292-7782, [tjhertz@midiowa.net](mailto:tjhertz@midiowa.net)
- Barbara Munson, 232-5077, [amesmunson@aol.com](mailto:amesmunson@aol.com)

**NEWS FROM LWVIA**

**A message from its President**

**LWVIA supports Governor Culver's plan for expansion of the Bottle Bill**

We support expanding the cans and bottles to cover water, tea, juice, and sports drinks. We also want the consumer to receive all of the deposit back whether it be 5 cents or 10 cents. We support REAP funding, but not from the deposit. We support the redemption centers getting a penny increase.

Please contact your legislators and urge them to support this plan. Audrey Hauter, President

**LOBBY DAY**

**PLAN NOW TO ATTEND LWVIA LOBBY DAY 2008**

**When:** Wednesday February 13, 2008

**Why:** To get updates from key speakers on LWVIA priorities in the morning (bottle bill, pay day loans, treatment for special needs offenders in prisons, voting machines with paper trail and lobby your legislators over lunch or in the afternoon at the Capitol

**Time:** Registration and coffee from 9:30-10:00 with program to follow.

**Where:** Calvary Baptist Church at 606 E. 9th Street, one block northwest of the Capitol.

**Parking:** In the church lot or directly across the street at the Republican Headquarters.

Make arrangements in advance to meet with your legislators for lunch or in the afternoon. You will also have an opportunity to attend committee meetings and tour the Capitol.



## NATIONAL NEWS: ABOUT LWVUS FOR DETAILS ABOUT THESE ITEMS PLEASE GOT TO <http://www.lwv.org/>

### National Convention, June 13-17

All League members are invited to the National Convention in Portland, Oregon from June 13-17. Delegates will adopt the national program, elect officers and adopt the LWVUS budget. Educational sessions will include topics such as financial management, diversifying your League, empowering new citizens, growing membership and marketing the League. The convention sounds educational and inspiring. Consider attending. Online registration is available at <http://www.lwv.org/convention>.

### SHAPING ISSUES YOU CARE ABOUT

#### **NEWS: Supreme Court Hears Arguments in Voter ID Case**

This month, the League worked to put names and faces on the people negatively affected by an Indiana statute under review by the Supreme Court. The strict Voter ID requirement, argued this month, is among several state laws that disproportionately discourage minority, elderly, and poor voters from exercising their rights.

#### **NEWS: LWV Stands Up for Voters' Rights**

Phase II of the League's Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project is moving full steam ahead in key states this election year. The project, focused on preventing the disenfranchisement of eligible citizens through state-based advocacy, serves to educate citizens and impact change to make sure all eligible voters, especially underserved populations, are granted the rights they deserve. Learn more about our areas of focus at [www.lwv.org/PAVP](http://www.lwv.org/PAVP).

#### **NEWS: League Files Amicus Brief in NC Redistricting Case**

The League recently filed an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to take on a redistricting case that will determine how the Voting Rights Act applies in areas with large minority populations. Some courts have required a minority to constitute more than 50 percent of a district, others have not applied a rigid rule. The League has long been a leader in seeking to ensure that redistricting promotes full and fair political participation, and feels strongly that the Court should address this issue before the 2010 national census.

#### **NEWS: League Urges Speaker Pelosi to Enforce Ethics Rules**

The League is pressing House Speaker Pelosi to act swiftly and create an independent and professional entity to ensure the new congressional ethics rules are enforced properly.

*Want to get involved in our ethics and lobbying reform and other advocacy work?*

Go to <http://www.lwv.org> site and go to the Take Action page.

To receive more news from National League, why not subscribe to their e-letter?

You can do that at:

<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>