



The Voter

A Publication by the League of Women
Voters of Ames, IA
January 2006

From the Co-Presidents

Dear Members:

Happy New Year! I hope you had wonderful winter holidays.

Our League's year officially starts with the April Annual meeting, but in reality preparation is already starting. See the article on proposed changes in board positions. The January meeting is devoted to planning for next year for our Ames League and for LWVUS. The Nominating Committee will soon start to work

Thanks to Elizabeth Baird and Karen Bolluyt for another successful fund drive. They not only raised needed funds, but helped publicized the work of the League throughout the community. Thanks, also to the members who helped with preparing the letters for mailing.

Thanks to Jackie Manatt and Jan Flora for joining me in presenting a great Brown Bag Lunch program. It was a good start in moving Living Wage from study to action.

Thanks to Tom Jackson for arranging the meeting with our Iowa legislators, and the Ames League's first organized opportunity for advocacy. Thanks, also, to the other League members and Catt Associates who braved the snowy day to participate.

Jeannette Bohnenkamp
Co-President

Mark Your Calendar

Book Club

January 12, 2006 (Wednesday) 1:30 p.m.
Founding Mothers: The Women who Raised our Nation, by Cokie Robert. Led by Jeannette Bohnenkamp at the home of Ruth Jones, 2232 Hamilton Drive.

February 16, 2006 (Wednesday) 1:30 p.m.
The Progress Paradox, by Gregg Easterbrook. Led by Mary Jo Brearley at the the home of Frances Smith, 2159 Country Club Blvd.

Board Meeting

January 5, 2006 (Thursday) 7:00 p.m.
At the home of Miriam Patterson's home, 2810 Meadow Glen Rd.

General Meeting

January 19, 2006 (Thursday)
7:30 Local Unit Program Planning and REviewing National and State Programs
Somerset Clubhouse 2400 Aspen Drive.

February 16, 2006 (Thursday)
7:30 "Organizing for Local Advocacy"
Bethesda Lutheran Church - The Commons (next to the sanctuary) 1517 Northwestern Avenue

Legislative Wakeup

January 28, 2006 (Saturday)
8:30 a.m. Social Time
8:45-10:00 a.m. Forum and Broadcast
Ames City Council Chambers

League Information

Meet a Member Elizabeth Baird



I grew up in West Des Moines, Iowa, at a time I hear is now called "mid-century."

It's funny how one can look back and recall a person whose influence guided the choices in one's life. In my case, it was a mother, my high school English teacher, who gave me confidence to pursue writing. Her daughter, my high school government teacher, opened my eyes to the world of government and politics. The year was 1972, I was 18, and an excited new voter.

The writing interest led me to pursue a degree in journalism at Iowa State. I still recall the constant background of Watergate hearings in Hamilton Hall during my freshman year.

I became active in politics in the early 1980s. Working on Roxanne Conlin's campaign for Governor was a great memory, along with coordinating precinct "get out the vote" efforts from my living room. The world of nonpartisan politics first opened to me through the National and Iowa Women's Political Caucus and, later, by joining the League of Women Voters.

In the mid 1980s I moved from Des Moines to Ames where I met my future husband, Ken. I served as state president of the IWPC and then on the NWPC steering committee in a variety of capacities. I took a break from all things political in the early 90s. However, politics is addictive. In 1996, I became the legislative liaison for the Iowa Department of Transportation. Not long after I became legislative chairperson for the Ames League, and subsequently finance co-chairperson. I've also served as an observer, worked on two local league studies, and coordinated the state league's involvement in a national project on campaigns and political advertising.

My undergraduate degrees in Journalism and Mass Community and International Studies (emphasis in Latin America and Spanish) are from Iowa State. I have also done extensive graduate work in Community and Regional Planning and Public Administration at Iowa State.

Bylaw Proposal to Change Board Positions

The board has approved a bylaw proposal intended to re-define the position of president-elect and replace the position of Vice President with that of a General Meeting director. If members approve the revision at our April Annual Meeting, the President-elect and General Meeting Director can be elected and serve under the new bylaws.

The proposal would assign the current responsibilities of Vice President or President-elect, i.e., of general meeting planning, to the new director position. The president-elect would serve as assistant to the president, essentially as co-president, for one year and continue as president the following year. The offices of President and President-elect would each be filled by one person for one year each. Other officer and director terms would not change, nor would the provision to allow co-directors.

The reasons for the proposal are to:

- reduce the total number of years a president-elect is expected to serve. For the past several years, presidents or co-presidents have served for two years, a system that has many advantages over a one-year term, so that presidents-elect have been making a three-year commitment. The proposal would require only two years.
- improve continuity with rotation, as the president-elect would be more involved in the duties of the president.
- reduce the number of board members with restricted political activity.

The bylaw proposal will be published in the April 2006 Voter, and the nominating committee will search for a president-elect candidate willing to serve under the proposed bylaw revision.

From the Observer Corps:

Thank you to Miriam Patterson for volunteering to serve as substitute observer for Ruth Larson at Ames City Council meetings.

January Meeting: Program Planning

This is your opportunity to influence the action of the League, as we devote the January General Meeting to program planning for the next fiscal year. Planning will include:

- Review of present national programs.
- Proposals for new studies. LWV of Illinois has invited us to join them in proposing opposition to the death penalty. LWVIA has such a position, but LWVUS does not.
- Proposals for new local studies. As we are in the early stages of the Story County Hospital study, any new study adoptions will depend on urgency and/or adequate resources to conduct a second study.
- General meeting program suggestions.

Proposals for the LWVUS will be submitted to the LWVUS Board. Delegates at the National Convention in Minneapolis will have an opportunity to vote on proposals. Proposals for studies for the Ames LWV will be reviewed by the Board and submitted to the membership at the Annual meeting. Suggestions for general meeting topics will be used for planning the 2006-2007 General Meetings. **Please bring your 2005-2006 Program and Directory to the meeting.**

Welcome New Members

Barbara Gwiasda

Katherine Mellen Charron - Assistant Professor of History at Iowa State University

Linda Galyon - Professor Emerita in the English department and former director of the Women's Studies program at Iowa State University

Pat Miller - Program Manager of the Lectures Program at Iowa State University

The City of Ames Needs You

The city invites you to apply for one of the 33 openings on 15 boards/commissions. Fourteen boards/commissions have vacancies for which the incumbent will not reapply, and must be filled by a new member.

The terms for these volunteer positions are from three to five years. They are filled by citizens who are interested in the welfare of the community. Members are appointed by the mayor.

Deadline for applications is February 10, 2006. New members will be installed April 1, 2006. For further information, call the City Clerk at 239-5105. Information and application forms are available at the Ames Public Library and at www.cityofames.org. Click on "City Government", then "Boards and Commissions."

Living Wage Study Group

Members of the Living Wage Study Group and Jeannette Bohnenkamp met in December. The group discussed actions to follow up on the living-wage position statement adopted by the Ames League this fall. The group's recommendations will be presented to the board in January.

LWVUS Convention to be in Minneapolis

The LWVUS National Convention will be held June 9-13, 2006, at the Hilton Minneapolis in Minneapolis, MN.

The Ames League is eligible to send two delegates, but we may send additional observers. Although only delegates may vote, all sessions, including workshops and training sessions, are open to all registered members.

We will publish registration fees and hotel rates as soon as they are available. We are fortunate to have the convention so close to Ames, as it will not be held in the Midwest again for several years.

This is an exceptional opportunity to meet members from other parts of the country and to become involved in the work of the national League.

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Jeanette Bohnenkamp
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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.

The 2005 Political Directory and Voter Guide has been distributed to the Ames Public Library, City Hall, Story County Auditor's office and many other places around town. It can also be found on LWV of Ames website at www.ames.ia.lwvnet.org.