



# The Voter

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Ames

January 2007

Editors Julie Snyder-Yuly and Marisa Stadlman

## From the Co-President

Our January 18 General Meeting for the League of Women Voters will be focused on how to advocate for LWV State and Local Priorities. We will hold an important pre-meeting at 7:00 PM centered on Observer Corps Inquiry: Eyes and Ears on Local/State Government. This pre-meeting is important for all LWV members and interested parties to learn more about ways to be involved on local issues. Please try to come.

Our topic for our general meeting at 7:30 PM will be centered on four State positions:

### Minimum wage/ living wage

We support increasing the wage so the families in Iowa may become self-sufficient.

### Water

The LWV supports policy changes to guard our water resources.

### Election reform/electronic filing

The LWV advocates for accurate, and accessible elections. We support public funding for clean elections.

### Tobacco

The LWV supports increasing taxes on tobacco for improving health issues for all Iowans.

We will also discuss local councils and commissions openings at the local level. Currently there are many openings on local boards and commissions. We would encourage more women to apply for these positions.

We will be sponsoring our first legislative wake-up on January 20 at Ames City council Chambers. Social time is at 8:30 AM and the Forum and broadcast will be from 8:45-10AM. Please come and support this very important forum.

We want to remind everyone that the League of Women of Iowa Lobby Day will be held in Des Moines on February 14. We will meet at the Calvary Baptist Church for update and the Iowa Statehouse for lobbying. This is important, so try to attend if you can. There will be an update on our legislative priorities and preparation for effective lobbying in the morning. There will be visits with our local representatives to lobby them on our issues in the afternoon. More on this later.

Our February meeting will be on Sentencing Reform State Study.

I hope to see you at these events. Let's make 2007 our best year!

*Randi Peters, co-president*

## Calendar

### Book Club

**January 24, 2007 (Wed).**

**1:30 p.m.** at the home of Mary Jo Brearley, 1537 Linden Dr. This month's book is *Dreams from My Father* by Barack Obama. Everyone welcome—Please RSVP to 232-1499.

### General Meeting

**January 18, 2007 (Thurs)**

**7:00 p.m.** pre-meeting

**7:30 p.m.** How to

Advocate for LWV State and Local Priorities, Northminster Presbyterian Church

### Board Meeting

TBA

### Other Meetings of Interest

#### Candidate Forum

January 20, 2007

Saturday

8:30 a.m. Social Time

8:45 a.m. Forum and Broadcast

**Consider joining the LWV Book Club. Anyone is welcome, even if you haven't read the book. The more the merrier!**

## **Ames Boards & Commissions: Vacancies**

You have a good opportunity to put your interests and expertise to work for the City of Ames. In early 2007, Ames boards and commissions will have 44 vacancies. You could be selected to serve on the Human Relations Commission, Library Board of Trustees, Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Transit Agency Board of Trustees, or one of many other bodies. For a complete list of vacancies and to learn about each body, visit the City's web site: [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org). Most terms begin on April 1.

The City is looking for people who are:

- of competence, good will, and sound, objective judgment;
- either new or long-time City of Ames residents;
- truly interested in the welfare of Ames and all its residents;
- sensitive to the long-term as well as the immediate impact of their decisions and recommendations;
- are willing and able to devote the time and energy necessary to fulfill their responsibilities.

League easily members fit these guidelines, so please think seriously about this!

To be considered, you must complete a brief application. You can find the form on the City's web site, pick one up at the City Clerk's Office or the Ames Public Library, or contact me. February 9, 2007, is the deadline for submitting your completed form to the City Clerk.

*Sandra McJimsey, Observer Corps Chair*

## **Observer Corps Needs YOU!**

Now is the time! As a former City Council member, I encourage you to complete an application and ask you to encourage others to do the same for one of the many openings on the City of Ames' Boards and Commissions. Part of the reason Ames is such a wonderful community is the involvement of its' citizens and their diverse backgrounds. A pool of applicants rich with diversity of race, gender,

ethnic background and from a variety of geographic locations is the first step toward ensuring balance on Boards and Commissions.

Feel like you want to know more about a particular Board or Commission? Consider attending one of their meetings or tuning into their meetings on Channel 12 where many are broadcast. Send in your application by February 9. Once you have sent it in, follow up to be sure it arrived in City Hall. Consider contacting Council members to introduce yourself and share why you are interested in serving. Whether or not you are appointed (unfortunately everyone won't be), stay involved and continue to learn more about YOUR city government. Everyone benefits when citizens are involved.

*Sharon Wirth, President Elect*

## **The January 18 LWV General Meeting: How to Advocate for LWV State and Local Priorities**

The January LWV General Meeting is *How to Advocate for LWV State and Local Priorities*, or it could be aptly titled Legislative Lobbying 101.

The meeting will be on Thursday, January 18, 2007 at 7:30 PM at Northminster Presbyterian Church, Fireplace Room, 1416 20th Street, Ames.

To be a responsible citizen, one needs to be an informed citizen. At the General Meeting, brief presentations on LWVIA Legislative Priorities 2007 will be given on **Minimum Wage** by Jan Beran; **Water Quality** by Erv Klaas; **Election Reform**, specifically electronic filing by Lauris Olson and **Tobacco Health Issues** by a co-meeting planner.

The presentations on the Legislative Priorities will provide us with the information to be participatory citizens. With this information the next step is to lobby our legislators through emails, letters, attendance at Legislative Wake-Ups and LWVIA Lobby Day (February 14). Be active citizens.

Prior to the January Meeting, there will be a Pre Meeting, an Observer Corps Inquiry for all interested LWV members, at 7:00 PM: *Eyes and Ears on Local/State Government*. This is an opportunity to learn about the Observer Corps and how you can participate. LWV needs to have its members in attendance at the meetings, boards, and commissions as observers; we need you to observe. Another way to be active citizens.

*Barbara Guisada, Meeting Planner*

## **A Report on the ConocoPhillips Breakfast Meeting**

ConocoPhillips invited AAUW and LWV to each send six members to a breakfast meeting with them. They revealed that the energy industry has a very poor public image, even lower than the tobacco industry. The purpose of the meeting in Ames and 32 other cities is to learn more about what people see as the prominent issues surrounding energy and its future. These meetings and public forums are also meant to educate the public and improve its perception of Conoco Phillips.

The United States cannot be energy independent but we can strive to be energy secure was stated by ConocoPhillips. They thought this can be accomplished by (1) developing energy alternatives to hydrocarbons; (2) using energy wisely and efficiently in our homes, cars, and factories; (3) being innovative by developing alternative energy sources through emerging technology and (4) being good environmental stewards by being mindful of the effects that the use of energy has on the climate, water and air quality. Along with these four points, ConocoPhillips feels that government lobbying and building relationships with oil producing countries is needed to be energy secure.

ConocoPhillips admitted to having large profits but much of it is reinvested in the company for research and development for the future; a fact they felt that the public did not know and should know.

Being a good citizen is a highly regarded value of the ConocoPhillips Company. The public is not aware of what they are doing as a good citizen because they have not done a good job in providing information to the people. A situation they are trying to rectify with public meetings and forums throughout the country and information gathering on the perception of the energy industry.

*Barbara Guisada, Meeting Planner*

## **Legislative Wake-Up Forums will have changes for 2007**

The 2007 Ames League of Women Voters Legislative Wake-Up Forums get underway this month and followers of the forums will notice a few changes this year, starting with the date selected for the first forum.

Iowa's state legislators convene for the 2007 session on Jan.8 and are scheduled to adjourn in mid- to late-April.

The League's first forum is set for Saturday, Jan. 20, a week earlier than in past years and subsequent monthly forums will occur mid-month instead of the usual last Saturday of the month in an attempt to improve voter access and dialogue with Story County's representatives in the Iowa General Assembly.

One goal the LWV has in sponsoring the forums is to give local constituents opportunities for direct public communication with their state representatives and senators while the legislature is considering issues.

Moving to the mid-month time frame should also provide more frequent and timely updates for at least some members of the community by spreading out legislative forums offered in Ames.

The Ames Chamber of Commerce also sponsors a monthly forum with Story County's legislators when the General Assembly is in session, said Olson. The chamber's forum is typically held the last Friday of the month and, like the league's Wake-Up Sessions, often covered by local media.

This year's Wake Up Forums will also bring back guest reaction panelists. Each month we will invite a representative of one large constituency group or the League of Women Voters to provide a 90-second commentary on an issue, using that as a springboard for the first question of the day.

The forums will be Jan. 20, Feb. 17, March 17 and April 14.

The times and location of the forums will remain the same. Coffee and rolls will be available from 8:30 to 8:45 a.m. The forums begin at 8:45 a.m. and will end at 10 a.m. All forums will be held in the Ames City Council Chambers at Ames City Hall. The forums will be broadcast live on Cable Channel 12 that morning and will be replayed several times.

If you would like to help make the forums a success, please contact Lauris Olson at 451-7293 or at [lauris\\_olson@mac.com](mailto:lauris_olson@mac.com). Help is needed with set up and serving, taking telephone questions, handling the audience microphone and tear down/clean-up. Recommendations for guest reaction issues/panelists are also welcome.

*Lauris Olson, Legislative Action*

League of Women Voters of Ames  
4037 Fletcher Boulevard  
Ames, IA 50014  
Co-Presidents:  
Joyce Hertz  
Randi Peterson

## Meet a Member

Marlys Potter – Co-Chair Membership

The short form is: born and raised in Des Moines, educated at the University of Iowa (I have been known to whisper “go hawks” on occasion) and soon headed for Chicago to find employment. After several years there, I happened to visit San Francisco during an ice storm in Chicago, and it was love at first sight. I demoralized my dear parents (only temporarily) by returning from that trip to announce I was going to move to SF at the earliest opportunity.

It was not hard to make friends there, and wonderful job opportunities were as plentiful as in Chicago. My Chicago experience made it possible to be hired as the assistant to the personnel director in a SF insurance company. Dreadful experience! At a party, I heard about the World Affairs Council of Northern California, and they were looking for a “special events secretary.” Eventually, I was reluctantly hired.

Ideally, I should have been born in SF and knowledgeable about the Levi Strauss family and many other civic leaders. But – we U of I grads can learn pretty fast. After 3 ½ years of too many 12-hour days, weekend seminars and night meetings, I was worn out. But the lure to remain was the opportunity to completely reorganize the membership department. By that time, I had formed a group of volunteers who felt sorry for the overworked staff still clacking away at non-electric typewriters. What happy fun years those were.

After a time, I took a job in Berkeley for Educational Testing Service. This job made me realize that my heart was with non-profit organizations. Along the way, I became the first director of volunteers for the American Conservatory Theatre. Later, I became a free-lance volunteer coordinator and continued to have a ton of fun most everyday.

Twenty-five years in SF seemed to evaporate too quickly into a big suitcase of memories, and it was time to return home. Having been introduced to the LWV during the turbulent 60's in SF, I was pleased to reconnect in Ames but was seldom able to be very active. Now it's time to get to work. Please help me by thinking of who among your friends and acquaintances should be invited to join the LWV, and I will carry on from there!

