



The Voter

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

From the Co-Presidents

Dear League Members:

It's hard to believe that this is my last letter as co-president. Thanks to all of you who help make this such a pleasant experience, to you who volunteer and/or readily accept requests for projects. I especially want to recognize Randi Peters, who accepted the position of co-president-elect, even without a partner, and to Selva Lehman, who, without title or recognition, did double duty working with Randi, and thereby acting as both co-president-elect and co-president this year!

Thanks, especially this month, to all who took part in Lobby Corps and Lobby Day, to the Nominating Committee, the Budget Committee, auditors, Catt Award Committee, and to those who have accepted nominations for the 2006-08 Board positions.

I really want to encourage you to attend the National Convention in Minneapolis. It's a great opportunity to learn more about the workings of the organization and to learn the concerns of other local Leagues. You will be impressed with how hard the delegates work and how long their days are. Of course, if you aren't a delegate, you don't have to stay for the very last meeting or workshop, but very probably you will want to. Getting to see Garrison Keillor without standing in line for tickets is an extra perk.

I'm sorry that the weather didn't cooperate for the February General meeting. The revised plan is published elsewhere in this Voter. See you at the March General Meeting—weather permitting!

Jeannette Bohnenkamp

Mark Your Calendar

Book Club

March 22nd (Wednesday) 1:30 p.m. at the home of Jean Peterson, 2227 Hamilton Drive, 296-5182. The discussion of the book, *Interpersonal Divide: The Search for Meaning in a Technological Age* will be led by Mary Jo Brearley. The author, Michael Bugeja, director of the Greenlee School of Journalism, will join the group.

Board Meeting

April 6, 2006 (Thursday) 7:00 p.m.
At the home of Tom Jackson, 1112 Ridgewood Avenue

General Meeting

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

Legislative Wake-Up

April 1, 2006 (Saturday)
8:30 a.m. Social Time
8:45-10-10:00 a.m. Forum and broadcast
Ames City Council chambers

Two Meetings in April!

Due to the bad weather that forced us to cancel the February General Meeting, we have rescheduled the meeting on advocacy on Living Wage position to Thursday, April 20, place to be announced later.

Due to Conflict of date with VEISHEA, the date of the Annual meeting has been changed to Saturday April 29th.

The Annual Reports Issue, with all the Annual reports and proposed changes in the By-laws will be sent to you by March 20. Please check there for meeting place.

League Information

Meet a Member Nancy Brown



I was born in Massachusetts, grew up in Vermont, and worked in Connecticut, Kansas, Tennessee, and Iowa. Although I have lived in Iowa for 38 years, I still consider myself to be a New Englander. My degrees are from the University of Vermont, Kansas State University, and Iowa State University. I retired from the Department of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management in 2000 after 30 years on the faculty.

I joined the League sometime in mid to late 1970s. My earliest assignments were to help find material for a storefront display on Carrie Chapman Catt, conduct a few interviews for updating "This is Story County", and keep track of League publications that might be of interest to local League members. I have been a member of the League Observer Corps for over a decade observing the Mary Greeley Medical Center Board of Trustees and have participated in two local League studies – Story County Hospital (position adopted in 1997) and co-chaired Transportation Needs in Story County (position adopted in 2003). As I neared retirement, I took on the position of president-elect and after retiring served 2 years as president (2000-2002). Then I moved on to the state board and am in my second 2-year term as secretary of the League of Women Voters of Iowa. My board assignment also includes being a member of the Advocacy Committee that sponsors the Legislative Briefings in October and Lobby Day in February.

Travel, both around the U.S. and internationally, is a real passion. I have been to all 50 states and visited 45 countries. Birding is a hobby that lends itself very nicely to travel adventures, and many of my trips are focused on this activity.

March 16th General Meeting Clean Elections – Can We Reclaim Our Government?

Citizens across the country are hearing stories of possible corruption by elected officials and lobbyists, particularly in the nation's capital. And public opinion nationwide, including in Iowa, shows that voters are becoming dissatisfied with the political system. They wonder why it isn't working.

League members have long understood that political campaigning and the electoral system need to be improved. And, the League of Women Voters has long worked for campaign finance reforms. The LWV of Iowa is currently focusing on educating voters about an electoral system called "clean elections" (also called voter-owned elections). The State League Advocacy Committee is working to educate League members and the general public across the state through a series of presentations on clean elections.

The March meeting of the League of Women Voters of Ames will highlight the issue of campaign finance reform with the presentation of a program, "Clean Elections: Can We Reclaim Our Government?" The meeting, to be held on March 16th will discuss what the problems are, why we have them, and what might be done to correct them. Patricia Johnson from Decorah and Nancy Brown from Ames will be presenting the program. Both of them are members of the Advocacy Committee of the LWVIA, and they will speak to why Iowa needs reform, how clean elections work in other states, and how electoral reform might be achieved here.

The meeting will be held at 7 PM on March 16 at Bethesda Lutheran Church, 1517 Northwestern Ave. Your League Board encourages all members to participate.

The winter issue of *The LWV IOWA VOTER* contains an article about clean elections, which provides some excellent background information about the issue.

Thank You League of Women Voters of Ames

The students of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics' ACT Learning Community and Catt Associates student organization would like to extend a big thank you to the Ames League for allowing us to join them on Lobby Day! You made our trip to the Capitol informational, educational and fun.

League Activities

Catt Center Students Join League Members for Lobby Day at the Capitol

The Catt Associates and the ACT learning community joined the League at the capitol in Des Moines on February 21 to take part in their lobbying efforts. Catt Associates is a student organization at Iowa State University that aims to develop a cohesive group that will help raise civic awareness and encourage women's leadership. ACT, a freshman learning community at ISU, seeks to increase participants' knowledge of political and women's issues.

Last year, several members of Catt Associates attended the Lobby Day and had a rewarding experience, so the group decided to return this year. This year's group included five members of Catt Associates and ten members of the learning community. Again, the students found the day to be an engaging and fun learning experience.



Catt Associates Nicole Vance, Brittany Hoover, Marisa Stadlman, Renee Oehlerking & Melissa Gibbs

"Learning how to lobby and discussing the various issues the League was interested in was informative and influential," said Brittany Hoover, a Catt Associates member and a junior in community and regional planning.

The two student groups sat in on the League's Lobby Day informational session in the morning, had lunch at Spaghetti Works, and returned to the capitol to participate

in the activities. While there, they met and spoke with their legislators and took a guided tour of the capitol. For many students, this was their first time visiting the building. "I'm glad we had this opportunity. It's not often a group of female students gets to see such an organized and motivated group of women work hard to directly influence politics," said Renee Oehlerking, a Catt Associates member and sophomore in journalism.

Both Catt Associates and ACT would like to thank the Ames League for allowing them to participate in the Lobby Day activities and welcoming them warmly.

Marisa Stadlman

Co-President of Catt Associates

New Member of the Ames League of Women Voters



The 2005-2006 ACT Learning Community and their Advisor Chris Fowler pose on the steps of the Capitol.

Board Allocates funds for LWVUS National Convention in Minneapolis, June 10-13, 2006

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.

The LWVUS National Convention will be held June 10-13, 2006, with Pre-Convention training the afternoon of June 9, at the Hilton Minneapolis in Minneapolis, MN.

Some of the non-business highlights include the banquet on Monday night (June 12) with Garrison Keillor as the featured speaker.

The Ames League is eligible to send two delegates, but we may send additional non-voting members. The Ames LWV Board allocated \$2,000 to subsidize non-voting member fees. If you want to attend and to apply for funds (\$285 for the entire convention, including the banquet, or \$125 for one day), please contact Jackie Manatt 232-0202 or e-mail: rmanatt@iastate.edu by **April 30**. Registration deadline for the convention is May 16. All sessions, including workshops and training sessions, are open to all registered members.

Further details may be found in the National Voter and on the LWVUS website: www.lwv.org/convention

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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.

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend to Serve as Catt Center's Mary Louise Smith Chair

Wednesday, March 29th

8 p.m. Sun Room, Memorial Union

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the first woman Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, will be speaking at Iowa State University. Born in Greenwich, Connecticut on the 4th of July, she is a cum laude graduate of Harvard University and a graduate of the University of New Mexico Law School.

As lieutenant governor, she was also at the forefront on issues such as quality education and healthcare. Every step of the way she has sought to draw citizens into the process and remained focused on getting results. Before becoming Lt. Governor, Townsend served as Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the U.S. Department of Justice, during which time she worked to establish community-policing programs across the country. She is the founder of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award, the former Chair of the Board of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, and serves on the Board of Directors of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation.

The oldest of the Kennedy family's younger generation, Townsend discusses issues ranging from education, technology and worker training, to her family's rich historical and political legacy. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend will speak at 8 p.m. in the Sun Room on "Gender and Executive Leadership: Are We Ready for a Woman President?"



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.