



The Voter

A Publication by the League of Women
Voters of Ames, IA
November 2005

From the Co-Presidents

From the Co-President

By the time you read this issue of the VOTER we would be ready to cast our vote or reading the results of the November 8th election. Whichever the case I hope that you will exercise the privilege that we have, in this country, to affect in some measure what happens in the political arena.

Whatever the results are on that day, our responsibility does not end there. Now is the time to support our elected officers and to continue to let our voices be heard on those issues on which, as the Ames League, we have taken a position. Citizens' involvement is needed if we want to see things happening.

Two areas that come to the forefront for me are Livable Wages and Affordable housing for all income levels. Randi Peters and myself have agreed to be part of a Steering Committee on Affordable Housing. This group was the follow up of the Housing Everyone Take 2 public meeting convened by the Interfaith Economic Justice Initiative. We have had our first meeting and in the next couple of months I hope we will be developing a strategy on how to impact the decision making process so that Ames develops enough Housing to meet the needs for all levels of income. I know that this will not happen as fast as I would like it, but as we educate and advocate I hope that we will see some needed changes.

Jeannette and Jackie attended a meeting in Minneapolis, dealing with Minimum Wages, so please read their report, which is included in this VOTER. I am anxious to hear their recommendations.

In February our General meeting will be one to help us move into action. We have studied, heard about different issues and taken a position, now it is time to do something about. It will be a working meeting and we need your presence and

input. Please mark the date of **February 16th** in your calendar and keep it open so that you can be sure to attend.

See you at our November meeting, which is the last one for this year.

Selva R. Lehman
Co-President

Mark Your Calendar

Book Club

November & December No Meeting

Board Meeting

January 5, 2006 (Thursday) At the home of Miriam Patterson, 2810 Meadow Glen Road.

General Meeting

November 17, 2005 (Thursday) 130 S. Sheldon
7:30 "What the League has Taught Me"
Collegiate United Methodist Church & Wesley Foundation
Annex - Use West Entrance

December No Meetings

January 19, 2006 (Thursday) 2400 Aspen Drive
7:30 "Reviewing National and State Programs"
Somerset Clubhouse

Other Important Dates

November 18, 2005 (Friday) 11:30-1:00
Brown Bag Lunch conversation about the State Minimum Wage Conference in St. Paul
Collegiate Methodist Church, 2622 West Lincoln Way, Ames.

League Information

November General Meeting

**Thursday, Nov. 17 at 7:30
At the Collegiate UMC/Wesley Annex
130 S. Sheldon
(use west doors)**

In November we'll do several things: We'll hear a panel of longtime Leaguers—Ann Campbell, Jane Greimann, Jane Halliburton, and Johnie Hammond—on the subject: **"What the League Taught Me."** These members learned, through their League experiences, how to become politically involved, and they'll share that information with us that night.

We'll **look for new members** who are interested in practicing nonpartisan politics. Anyone who is interested in running for office will want to come and learn and network with others of similar interests.

Current members, be sure to think of potential members to bring to this meeting. Let Judy Dolphin (dolphinames@yahoo.com) or Barbara Munson (amesmunson@aol.com) know of anyone who should receive a special postcard invitation.

We'll **celebrate the League's 85th birthday (with ice cream and cake)**, and we'll celebrate League's success at empowering and training women and men to work within the system to achieve their goals.

Special invitation to all 25-year and more Leaguers!

On Thursday, November 17, as part of our celebrating LWV's 85th birthday, we'll also be celebrating all members who have belonged since 1980 or before. Please come that night to receive your accolades!

Update of the Story County Hospital Position

At the October general meeting a panel discussed the current LWV position on the Story County Hospital (SCH). In the past 10 years since the study, we learned that there have been vast changes. The name has changed and the hospital is now called the Story County Medical Center and includes several rural medical clinics. The long-term care unit is no longer at capacity (~50%), the inpatient beds remain at less than one patient per day but the skilled beds are filling up (about 6 per day providing care which may not be available locally, except at SCH). This meeting made it clear that our position was outdated and confirmed our vote to update the Story County Hospital Study at our last annual meeting.

Ruth Swenson and Martha Isaacson have agreed to co-chair the study to develop a suggested updated position. If you have not already signed up to join the study group, please do so and learn more about the hospital which taxes Story County property owners about \$1,000,000 per year. All members are welcome and encouraged to join this group.

Ruth Swenson may be reached at 268-5212 or rswenson@iastate.edu

Martha Isaacson may be reached at misaacso@iastate.edu (traveling during November & December but back in Ames and available at 292-5233 January 2006)

2005-2006 Finance Drive

This year the LWV-Ames Finance drive will focus on encouraging the financial support of friends of the League. League members will not be receiving a finance drive letter. However, many members do provide financial support throughout the year, either as a contribution sent along with annual membership dues or a contribution made at another time.

If you wish to make a donation, please mail it to Jackie Manatt, LWV Treasurer, 2926 Monroe Drive, Ames, Iowa 50010-4362. Questions: Call Betty Baird at 232-5415. Thanks!

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.

State Minimum Wage Conference

Did you know that 44% on the US population lives in areas with a minimum wage higher than \$5.15?

Did you know that Washington and Oregon have the highest state minimum wages, while Santa Fe, NM has the highest city minimum wage?

These are just a few of the interesting fact that we learned at the State Minimum Wage Conference in St. Paul, MN, held October 26-27.

While the national conference focused on state minimum wages, there was much of value that relates to our new local position on living wage.

Join Jackie Manatt, Jan Flora and Jeannette Bohnenkamp for a Brown Bag Lunch as they share information from the State Minimum Wage Conference in St. Paul, MN.

The Brown Bag Lunch will be held at Collegiate Methodist Church on Friday, November 18, to share in the information that we can use locally to advocate for our position on living wage. There is parking south and west of the church. If you enter through the door on the west, you'll see signs to tell you where to go fore the meeting.

Please bring a friend and join us for this interesting and important topic!

Get to Know Our New Members

Alissa Stoehr is a 22-year resident of Ames. She has kept busy as a community activist around the areas of affordable housing and poverty in Story County. Alissa also just received the Property Manager position at Eastwood Apartments, a low-income HUD housing complex in Ames.

Marlene Weisshaar is a returning LWV of Ames member. Here's why she came back: "I received complimentary copies of The Voter and realized that I missed being in contact with these vital, interesting people. Then Marion Weiss informed me about the Reading Club. It's good to be back after a long absence."

LWVIA Issues Briefing

Six Ames Leaguers were in West Des Moines on Saturday, October 15, for a briefing on LWVIA's focus issues for the upcoming legislative session. Judie Hoffman arranged the day with knowledgeable presenters, with Mary Richards being one of those knowledgeable presenters. Other attendees included Tom Jackson, Jan Beran, Herman Quirmbach, and Jackie Manatt.

Topics included (1) Update on restoration of felon voting rights, (2) Why we need to raise the tobacco tax in Iowa and how to do it, (3) Voting system security in Iowa and HAVA update, (4) Why we don't need a death penalty in Iowa, and (5) Mandatory minimum sentences: where do we go from here?

The restoration of felon voting rights moved forward as a result of a government class project at a Cedar Rapids high school. Wouldn't it be interesting to watch the number of students from that class who become politically involved?

We also learned that a 6th grade teacher in Johnson County takes students to legislative forums to ask questions.

Our future is in the hands of our youth—and they appear to be taking their assignment seriously.

Want to receive news from LWVUS? Subscribe to their E-Voice Newsletter

We invite you to sign up for the LeaguE-Voice, the new electronic newsletter published by the League of Women Voters of the United States. Sent monthly, the newsletter includes timely action alerts and press releases as well as program updates and upcoming events.

Go to their website, <http://www.lwv.org>, and under LIBRARY click **E-Voice Newsletter**

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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.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2006

INCREASE IN TOBACCO TAX

The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports an increase in taxes on all tobacco products to improve the health of Iowans by reducing tobacco use. This will save lives and result in lower health-care costs for all.

JUSTICE: DEATH PENALTY, SENTENCING, CORRECTIONS

The League of Women Voters of Iowa opposes capital punishment and its reinstatement in Iowa. We support the present penalty of life imprisonment without parole for capital crimes.

The LWVIA supports the repeal or reduction of mandatory minimum sentences.

We also support Iowa's system of community based corrections (CBCs) and believe they should be expanded. We support legislation that considers offenders with special needs (i.e. inmates identified as mentally ill, substance abusers, geriatric, and medically needy).

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The League of Women Voters of Iowa is opposed to a public referendum on taxes. We support an equitable and flexible Iowa tax system that is progressive and provides sufficient revenue. We are opposed to the proposed constitutional amendment, which has passed the Iowa Legislature once and must pass again before going to the public for a vote. The proposal calls for voter approval to increase any sales, income or property tax or fee by more than one percent of state revenues.

VOTING SYSTEM SECURITY

The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports the implementation of voting systems and procedures that are secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible in order to safeguard the vote and to insure integrity and voter confidence in elections. We support a requirement that all touch-screen voting machines print Voter Verified Paper Ballots; voters can verify that their votes are recorded correctly, and the paper ballots are available if a recount is ordered.

MANDATORY ELECTRONIC FILING OF CAMPAIGN FINANCES

The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports mandatory electronic filing of campaign finance reports by all candidates for the Iowa Legislature. This is important so all finance reports are accessible to the public and press at the same time.